The Beast & the Sovereign

Volume I

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The [feminine] beast and the [masculine] sovereign, la...la.  
1. The [feminine] beast and the [masculine] sovereign, la...la.

What and who? Who or what? Go figure [Allez savoir].

Go figure what who, that’s what who our question will be made of today.

The beast and [et] the sovereign, the beast [est] the sovereign, that’s how our couple seems first to show up, a couple, a duo or even a duel, but also an alliance, almost a hymen, whose boisterous tête-à-tête we already began to interrogate last week. Tête-à-tête or face-to-face, haunted by virtual sexual differences, between, on the one hand, the simple conjunction (and [et]), which seems to pose, oppose, or juxtapose them as two species of living beings radically heterogeneous to each other, the one infrahuman, the other human or even superhuman, and, on the other hand, the copula (is [est]), which seems to couple them in a sort of ontologico-sexual attraction, a mutual fascination, a communitarian attachment, or even a narcissistic resemblance, the one recognizing in the other a sort of double, the one becoming the other (the “is” then having the value of a process, a becoming, an identificatory metamorphosis), the beast being the sovereign, the sovereign being the beast, the one and the other being each engaged, in truth changed or even exchanged, in a becoming-beast of the sovereign or in a becoming-sovereign of the beast, the passage from the one to the other, the analogy, the resemblance, the alliance, the hymen depending on the fact that they both share that very singular position of being outlaws, above or at a distance from the law, the beast ignorant of right and the sovereign having the right to suspend right, to place himself above the law that he is, that he makes, that he institutes, as to which he decides, sovereignly. The sovereign is not an angel, but, one might say, he who plays the sovereign plays the beast.  

2. [Translator's note: faire l'ange fait l'erreur, faire l'erreur fait l'ange. The English is: “Eh,” “Us,” and “en.”

3. [Translator's note: faire l'ange fait l'erreur, faire l'erreur fait l'ange. The English is: “Eh,” “Us,” and “en.”

4. [Translator's note: faire l'ange fait l'erreur, faire l'erreur fait l'ange. The English is: “Eh,” “Us,” and “en.”

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the beast. The sovereign makes himself the beast, has himself the beast, sometimes in the most troubling sense of a zoophilia or even a bestiality the historical symptoms of which we would need to inventory, detect, or even interpret. That's our first impetus, the nerve of our et/et analogy. Our *eh eh*, undecided or even undecidable. Because every decision (by its essence a decision is exceptional and sovereign) must escape the order of the possible, of what is already possible and programmable for the supposed subject of the decision, because every decision worthy of the name must be this exceptional scandal of a passive decision or decision of the other, the difference between the deciding decision and the undecided decision itself becomes undecidable, and then the supposed decision, the exceptionally sovereign decision looks, like two peas in a pod, just like an indecision, an unwilling, a nonliberty, a nonintention, an unconsciousness and an irrationality, etc.; and then the supposed sovereign subject begins, by an invincible attraction, to look like the beast he is supposed to subject to himself (and we already know, having often—last time too—verified it, that in place of the beast one can put, in the same hierarchy, the slave, the woman, the child).

I'm now going to offer for your reflection a French expression that is heavily equivocal, also undecidable and no doubt untranslatable, to wit [*faire savoir*] "faire savoir" (Board).

What does "faire savoir" [make to know] mean?

What is meant in "make to know" by this coupling of two such charged verbs, "make" and "know"? What is one making known when one says *faire savoir*?

Let us leave this question suspended. No doubt we shall return to it shortly or tout à l'heure. Right on time [toute à l'heure], it will come back at its own time. Remember Zarathustra talking about "his hour" of his "my hour," the stillest *(die stillste Stunde)*, about his own sovereign hour which

2. [Translator's note:] French readers would immediately recognize the reference to Pascal's *Penseé* that reads, "L'homme n'est ni ange ni bête, et le malheur veut que qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête" [Man is neither angel not beast, and the misery of it is that whoever tries to act the angel acts the beast]. (No. 678 in the Lafuma classification.)

3. [Translator's note:] The standard interjection "eh" (which can correspond to English "Eh," "Uh," "Um," "Er," "Heh," among others) is homophonous with both "et" and "est."

4. [Translator's note:] Literally "to make to know" or "to have [someone] know," "to make known," but "faire" also means simply "to do," and "savoir" is also a noun meaning "knowledge" or, especially in the expression "savoir-faire," "know-how."
addressed him to tell him, almost in silence, murmuring, the story of what comes at its own time "on dove’s feet."

The reason of the strongest is always the best,
As we shall shortly show.

These are the first words, and the moral, as they say, of a fable, The Wolf and the Lamb, which is to occupy us for some time. Starting next week. In a sense the “Nous l’allons montrer tout à l’heure” can be translated by a “We’re going to make known,” “We will not delay in making known”; and the difference between monstration and demonstration, between the intuitive image of the story, which is an audiovisual scene, and the discursive reasoning of the moral, is here suspended, as on television: we are going to make it known to you, by showing images and an audiovisual story, in an immediately sensory way, as though it were live, we are going to demonstrate what we want to show, namely that “The reason of the strongest is always the best.”

In principle, in the noblest tradition of the university institution, a seminar is not a kind of fable. It does not belong to the genre of the fable. It can, of course, on occasion, present itself as a discourse of knowledge on the subject of that law of genre that is called the fable; it can no doubt give itself out as a learned, historical, critical, theoretical, philosophical discourse, a discourse of knowledge on the fable, on the subject of the fabulous in general.

But in principle, and according to its statutory vocation, according to its law and the contract it presupposes, the discourse of teaching ought not to be fabular. It gives something to be known, it dispenses knowledge, and knowledge must be without fable. And you must make known without fable. Similarly, in the prevalent or hegemonic tradition of the political, a political discourse, and above all a political action, should in no case come under the category of the fabular, of that type of simulacrum called fabular, that type of speech known as the fab, be it the fable in general, or the fable as determinate literary genre in the European West. For, as its Latin name indicates, a fable is always and before all else a speech—fari, is to speak, to say, to celebrate, to sing, to predict, and fabula is first of all something said, a familiar piece of speech, a conversation, and then a mythical narrative, without historical knowledge, a legend, sometimes a theatrical play, in any case a fiction that claims to teach us something, a fiction supposed to give something to be known, a fiction supposed to make known faire savoir, make so as to know, in a double sense: (1) in the sense of bringing some knowledge to the awareness of the other, to inform the other, share with the other, <make> the other know knowledge [faire savoir], i.e. give the effect of knowledge, resembling knowing, in the latter case of fake knowledge is a pretend knowing, a mask of knowing, something else were talking about last time. But rhetoric, an art of the simulacrum, a matter of knowing, where the other.

One of our questions could be, classical seminar discourse, i.e. course, a discourse of knowledge philosophy: What would happen if the political action welded to it be known where one does not off the making-known, and what hors-d’oeuvre of some narrative, according to which political, and which must be always, through and through to give meaning and credit to a story indissociable from a moral humans, on stage, a supposedly story, fictive, put up, artificial destined to educate, to teach, to knowledge.

The fabular dimensions of the political action, limited to discursive operations, and writings of political decisions, great and good, citizens or the would not be limited to the sayings, that concerns politics in the past also, beyond the sayings, writings, military operations, the sayings, puttings-to-death of military terrorism, or civil or international without condemnation to death.

What is fabulous in the fable of
the other, \(<\text{make}>\) the other know, and (2) in the sense of "making like" knowledge ["faire" savoir], i.e. giving the impression of knowing, giving the effect of knowledge, resembling knowing where there isn't necessarily any knowing: in the latter case of faire savoir, giving the effect of knowing, the knowing is a pretend knowing, a false knowing, a simulacrum of knowing, a mask of knowing, something like that loup over a person's face that we were talking about last time. But there must be a technique, there must be a rhetoric, an art of the simulacrum, a savoir-faire to faire savoir where it is not a matter of knowing, where there is no knowing worthy of the name.

One of our questions could then be announced as follows, within a classical seminar discourse, i.e. a theoretical, philosophical, constative discourse, a discourse of knowledge, or even a reflection within political philosophy: What would happen if, for example, political discourse, or even the political action welded to it and indissociable from it, were constituted or even instituted by something fabular, by that sort of narrative simulacrum, the convention of some historical as if, by that fictive modality of "storytelling" that is called fabulous or fabular, which supposes giving to be known where one does not know, fraudulently affecting or showing off the making-known, and which administers, right in the work of the hors-d'oeuvre of some narrative, a moral lesson, a "moral"? A hypothesis according to which political, and even politicians', logic and rhetoric would be always, through and through, the putting to work of a fable, a strategy to give meaning and credit to a fable, an affabulation—and therefore to a story indissociable from a moral, the putting of living beings, animals or humans, on stage, a supposedly instructive, informative, pedagogical, edifying, story, fictive, put up, artificial, even invented from whole cloth, but destined to educate, to teach, to make known, to share a knowledge, to bring to knowledge.

The fabular dimensions of this political logic and rhetoric would not be limited to discursive operations, to spoken words, as they say, to the sayings and writings of political decision-makers, heads of state, sovereigns and the great and good, citizens or the media; in other words, these affabulations would not be limited to the sayings, writings, or even images of everything that concerns politics in the public space. The fabular dimension would also, beyond the sayings, writings, and images, determine the political actions, military operations, the sound of arms, the din of explosions and killings, puttings-to-death of military and civilians, so-called acts of war or of terrorism, or civil or international war, the war of partisans, etc., with or without condemnation to death according to the law.

What is fabulous in the fable does not only depend on its linguistic nature,
on the fact that the fable is made up of words. The fabulous also engages act, gesture, action, if only the operation that consists in producing narrative, in organizing, disposing discourse in such a way as to recount, to put living beings on stage, to accredit the interpretation of a narrative, to faire savoir, to make knowledge, to make performative, to operate knowledge (a bit like the way Augustine spoke of making the truth, veritatem factiare). Well, given this, the fabulous deployment of information, of the teletchnologies of information and of the media today, is perhaps only spreading the empire of the fabulous. What has been happening on big and small television channels, for a long time now, but in particular in time of war, for example over the last few months, attests to this becoming-fabulous of political action and discourse, be it described as military or civil, warlike or terroristic. A certain effectivity, a certain efficacy, including the irreversible actuality of death, are not excluded from this affabulation. Death and suffering, which are not fabulous, are yet carried off and inscribed in the affabulatory score.

We could take countless examples of this. I’ll do no more than recall a few of them. One wonders what would have been the sense and efficacy of an operation of so-called “international terrorism” (we shall no doubt have the opportunity to return to this notion, which for the moment I shall do no more than cite) [one wonders what would have been the sense and efficacy of an operation of so-called “international terrorism”] if the image of the airplanes gutting the Twin Towers, if the image of <what> I would call, between two languages, the collapsus of the World Trade Center towers, had not been, as an image, precisely, recorded, not only archived and filmed but indefinitely reproducible and compulsively reproduced, immediately, throughout the USA, but also, all but instantaneously, via CNN for example, from New York to Paris, from London to Berlin, Moscow, Tokyo, Islamabad, Cairo, even Shanghai, where I happened to be at that moment. This technical reproducibility is an integral part of the event itself, from its origin on. As are the making-known (faire-savoir) and the know-how (savoir-faire) of the making-known that are immediately at work, put to work in organized fashion on both sides of the front, by the supposed aggressor no less than by the supposed victim who have an equal interest in knowing how to make this making-known as efficient, powerful, reproducible, and widely broadcast as possible. In other words, the technical reproducibility of the archive does not come along after the fact to accompany it, but conditions its very putting-to-work, its efficacy, its scope and its very meaning, if there is a meaning. Even if the interminable looped repetition of these disaster-movie images could serve, in a sort of jubilatory grief, both the work of mourning and the deadening of a trauma which depended less on the announced vulnerability of the risk of attributable weapons, etc., this making-fabulous of the blow struck (let’s say reduced, scarcely reported) or America, every day weekend of the embargo, but natural hurricanes or table, do not wealth and let us of this observe also condition the situation, and then, both the link between so-called human law, and political not, later, in it makes are qua reproducible. reproductive, for well for the image, and best word by the change than one sense.

Among which refers plus tôt, that the event the beginning, for example...
on the announced numbers of “innocent victims” and the suffering pro-
voked by a terrible aggression in the past, than on the experience of the
vulnerability of the invulnerable, on anxiety about what was to come, about
the risk of attacks to come, which threaten to be still worse, still more ter-
rible (similar attacks, or the use of nuclear, biochemical, or bacteriological
weapons, etc.). Without the deployment and the logic of image-effects, of
this making-known, this supposed making-known, without this “news,”
the blow struck would have been, if not nothing, at least massively reduced
(let’s say reduced to what is made of the news of a famine or a typhoon
scarcely reported or felt when they come from a county far from Europe
or America, or reduced to the number of traffic accidents in all the holi-
day weekends in a year, or those dead from AIDS in Africa, or the effects
of the embargo on Iraq, so many human catastrophes which are anything
but natural and inevitable accidents like an earthquake—and even there,
hurricanes or earthquakes, qua catastrophes said to be natural and inevi-
table, do not produce the same effects, as we know so well, according to the
wealth and level of development of the country concerned. Which reminds
us of this obvious fact: the effect and repercussion of these cataclysms are
also conditioned, in their breadth and their impact, by a politico-economical
situation, and therefore by the power of the media, a signifying power,
then, both ethological and ethical, the ethos of ethology here making the
link between the organization of the natural habitat and ethics, therefore
so-called human responsibility in the fields of economics, ecology, morality,
law, and politics). The putting to work of the image, as we well know, is
not, then, limited to archiving, in the sense of a preserving recording, but
it makes archiving an active interpretation, one that is selective, productive
qua reproductive, productive of a “making-known” narrative as much as
reproductive of images: know-how of making-known which works just as
well for the collapsus of the Twin Towers as for the name, and much less
the image, of the Pentagon, as much for the apparitions (I think that’s the
best word) of Osama bin Laden on screens the world over, initially relayed
by the channel Al Jazeera, whose role in this process would be worth more
than one seminar.

Among the innumerable indices of this power of high-tech archiving
which conditions the political efficacy of the event, rather, earlier [plutot,
plus tôt], than it records it so as to preserve it, which produces, co-produces
the event that it is supposed merely to reproduce and archive, I am think-
ing, for example (there would be so many other examples), of what I saw

5. [Translator’s note:] The words “high tech” are in English in the text.
on television when I was in New York two weeks or so after September 11. On the one hand, even beyond the censorship or half-imposed half-spontaneous control over the main radio and TV channels (so beyond hetero- or autocensorship, in a distinction to which it is harder and harder to give credit), at the very moment when, given that the logic of the market is part of the logic of war, capitalist control of the news consisted quite simply in the American administration’s buying (as was clearly its right in the logic of a globalized world), buying all the images taken and broadcast by a satellite able to see and make seen every inch of Afghanistan, and therefore to make known to the whole world what was happening on the ground, and in particular the victims among the civilian population, the real effects of the bombing—at that very moment, at the apparently opposite extreme of this control of making-known by purchasing power, by the political savoir-faire of the market, at the apparently opposite extreme, at the pole of archiving and public broadcasting of the archive, of panoptical and panauditory transparency, one could have access to an extraordinary recording. And what was it? Well, during the attack on the Twin Towers and their collapse, an anonymous private individual, a very well-equipped amateur radio enthusiast in San Francisco, woken by a phone call at 6:00 a.m. on September 11 (given the time difference between East and West coasts), had immediately fired up a sophisticated system, as they say, that he had set up and that allowed him clandestinely to intercept and record, from San Francisco, all the messages exchanged around the Twin Towers, by the New York police and fire department (NYPD, FDNY), cries of victims and all, on the other side of the country. This man testified on camera and placed his recordings at the disposal of the TV channels (he probably sold them, he no doubt sold his know-how-to-make-known), so that to all those mute images, all those photographic and cinematographic images taken in public by who knows how many cameras and broadcast continually for days and days (with the order never to show a body—it is true that most of the bodies had disappeared, with only the “disappeared” remaining), to all these images taken in public by who knows how many cameras and broadcast continually for days and days, one could henceforth add a soundtrack, sound images of nonpublic discourse, which could have remained secret among the police, the firemen, and so on. In this way it was possible to have the impression, illusory or not, of having at one’s disposal the total archive, both public and nonpublic, of the totality of the event, all making-known in an exhaustive making-known (with the obvious exception of the death experienced within the towers by those who disappeared without even leaving a body). This disappearance of the bodies, this death in general ability of mass mourning as it remains to do the worst thing to do, how to do anything to cause fear, on both sides of this contrast past or future that all this goes via fable, real and false violence also simultaneously, credit—no corroboration, no efficaciously making known concretely by terror, the body, the terror, be it actual, be it virtual.

We really were in Leviathan politics. If we thought, initially, as a solution to the question of human rights, if we thought, of knowing times highly civil population and government, political theory of knowing-here, subjectivity, action. And this is, as it were, an example. Let us fear of a
obvious that this is more than difficult, and that’s why we are working, why we are working at it and allowing ourselves to be worked on by it.

When I say “slow and differentiated deconstruction,” what do I mean by that? First, that the rhythm of this deconstruction cannot be that of a seminar or a discourse ex cathedra. This rhythm is first of all the rhythm of what is happening in the world. This deconstruction is what is happening, as I often say, and what is happening today in the world—through crises, wars, phenomena of so-called national and international terrorism, massacres that are declared or not, the transformation of the global market and of international law—what is happening is so many events that are affecting the classical concept of sovereignty and making trouble for it. In this seminar, we are only beginning to reflect on, and take into account, as consequentially as we can, what is happening. On the other hand, as we are already realizing—and this is why I say “slow” but especially “differentiated,” it cannot be a matter, under the pretext of deconstruction, of purely and simply, frontally, opposing sovereignty. There is not SOVEREIGNTY or the sovereign. There is not THE beast and THE sovereign. There are different and sometimes antagonistic forms of sovereignty, and it is always in the name of one that one attacks another: for example (we were alluding to this earlier), it is in the name of a sovereignty of man, or even of the personal subject, of his autonomy (for autonomy and liberty are also sovereignty, and one cannot without warning and without threatening by the same token all liberty, purely and simply attack the motifs or the rallying cries of independence, autonomy, and even nation-state sovereignty, in the name of which some weak peoples are struggling against the colonial and imperial hegemony of more powerful states).

In a certain sense, there is no contrary of sovereignty, even if there are things other than sovereignty. Even in politics (and the question remains of knowing if the concept of sovereignty is political through and through)—even in politics, the choice is not between sovereignty and nonsovereignty, but among several forms of partings, partitions, divisions, conditions that come along to breach a sovereignty that is always supposed to be indivisible and unconditional. Whence the difficulty, awkwardness, aporia even, and the slowness, the always unequal development of such a deconstruction. This is less than ever the equivalent of a destruction. But recognizing that sovereignty is divisible, that it divides and partitions, even where there is any sovereignty left, is already to begin to deconstruct a pure concept of sovereignty that presupposes indivisibility. A divisible sovereignty is a pure and empty concept.

Where can we understand more than the recent history of terrorism, of the liberation of territories, of the identity of peoples, of the deconstruction of the state, of the transformations of international law, without a return to the understanding of the relation between despotism and democracy, between the subject and the sovereign, without an understanding of the modern and of the modernity of despotism? And without an understanding of the modernity of despotism, and of the need to question the forms of sovereignty, how can we understand the necessity of a recognition of sovereignty as an act of recognition of the difference between the sovereign and the subject, the difference between the absolute and the contingent, the difference between the state of nature and the state of society? It is necessary to question sovereignty, to understand the different forms of sovereignty, to understand the conditions under which sovereignty is exercised, to understand the consequences of sovereignty, to understand the reasons for sovereignty, to understand the forms of sovereignty, to understand the nature of sovereignty.

This is why I say “slow but differentiated.” This is not a matter of deconstructing sovereignty without a return to its historical and political dimensions. This is not a matter of deconstructing sovereignty without a return to the understanding of the relation between despotism and democracy, between the subject and the sovereign, between the absolute and the contingent, between the state of nature and the state of society. This is not a matter of deconstructing sovereignty without a return to the understanding of the modernity of despotism, of the transformations of international law, of the liberation of territories, of the identity of peoples, without a return to the understanding of the relation between despotism and democracy, between the subject and the sovereign, between the absolute and the contingent, between the state of nature and the state of society.
eignty is no longer a sovereignty, a sovereignty worthy of the name, i.e. pure and unconditional.

Whether or not one agrees with these propositions of Schmitt's, one can understand why, even though they come from a right-wing Catholic who was more than compromised a few years later with Nazism and anti-Semitism, they should have seduced, and still today retain their power of seduction on the Left for all those who are ready at least to share this vigilance with respect to "humanistic" and "humanitarian" ruses and allegations, which constitute the rhetorical weapon but also the weapon pure and simple, and sometimes a hugely murderous weapon, of new political or economical imperialisms. This argument of Schmitt's, and this is all I want to retain from it for now, is that there is no politics, no politicity of the political without affirmation of sovereignty, that the privileged if not unique form of that sovereignty is the state, state sovereignty, and that such a political sovereignty in the form of the state presupposes the determination of an enemy; and this determination of the enemy can in no case take place, by definition, in the name of humanity. The concept of this sovereignty which never goes without an enemy, which needs the enemy to be what it is, is not necessarily linked or limited to such or such a state structure (monarchical, oligarchical, democratic, or republican). Even when the sovereign is the people or the nation, this does not damage the law, structure, or vocation of sovereignty, as Schmitt defines it (the positing of an enemy without humanist or humanitarian invocation; the right to exception; the right to suspend right; the right to be outside the law).

This is why Schmitt will have quoted, before the passage I just read, an eloquent declaration in this respect by the Committee for Public Safety, in 1793. This declaration, quoted by Schmitt, is first quoted by Ernst Friesen­hahn <in> Der politische Eid (The Political Oath). (I recall this title to re­inscribe this statement in a logic of the oath that makes of the affirmation of sovereignty a performative, a commitment, an act of sworn faith, of war declared against a sworn enemy: sovereignty is a posited law, a thesis or a prosthesis, and not a natural given, it is the sworn institution — a faith sworn, and therefore structurally fictional, figural, invented, conventional, as Hobbes clearly shows, moreover — the institution of a law that was never found in nature; but precisely the question then returns of the link between this right, the force of law and force tout court, the disposition of force tout court, of a force that makes right, of a reason of the strongest which is or is not the best; but I emphasize this reference to oath and fidelity to sworn faith to announce a detour that we shall need to make in a moment, toward Machiavelli's Prince and his wolf — that we must not forget). Now this Dec-
THIRD SESSION

Since the French people manifested its will [so, by this manifestation of a will, the French people posited itself as the French people and as its own sovereign], everything that is opposed to it is outside the sovereign; everything that is outside the sovereign is an enemy. . . . Between the people and its enemies there is nothing left in common but the sword. 14

Which is what is called sworn faith, and sworn enemy.

Pack [rneutte] of wolves. For a first reconnaissance of these territories, you remember, we had begun to ameuter (to whip up, literally to raise, to put in motion, motus), to whip up, if not to hunt, not dogs but wolves. Never forget the wolves, all the wolves. Many wolves will have crossed the room. You have understood that all of that was, among other things, a way of preparing us, of advancing us, stealthy as wolves, toward this fable of La Fontaine, The Wolf and the Lamb, which begins, as we ourselves began, with

The reason of the strongest is always the best
As we shall shortly show.

We began thus, saying also that no seminar should begin that way, like a fable, nor should it recommend or command that one begin that way, by “we shall shortly show.”

Show—what? Well, that “the reason of the strongest is always the best.” A violently tautological proposition, then, pragmatically tautological (in La Fontaine and here too, as though this still remained, as a seminar, a fable or an affabulation) since I am here using, by force of law, taking into account my accredited position as a professor authorized to speak ex cathedra for hours, weeks, and years (accredited by a convention or by a fiction the honesty of which remains to be proved, by you or by me, and even then an always revisable and renewable consensus gives force of law to the force of law), a violently tautological proposition, then, pragmatically tautological, for if “we shall shortly show,” what are we going to show, with La Fontaine? Well, that the reason of the strongest is always the best. As the reason of the strongest is always the best, I authorize myself by the reason of the strongest (that I am here, by situation, by hetero- and autoposition) to defer the moment at which I shall show or demonstrate that the reason of the

14. [Translator’s note:] This passage is omitted from the English translation of Schmitt’s book; I have translated from the text as given by Derrida.
strongest is always the best; but in fact, I’ve already shown it, already shown it in fact by the very fact of deferring, authorizing myself to defer, I’ve already demonstrated this prevalence of fact over right. My demonstration is performative avant la lettre, as it were, and pragmatic before being juridical and rational and philosophical. I show by the very movement, by doing it, as I go along, by producing the event of which I speak and that I announce I shall speak of, I demonstrate that force wins out over right and determines right, and I do so without waiting. Because it is already demonstrated at the moment I announce that you’ll have to wait a little. A violently tautological proposition, then, since I am here using, taking account of, my accredited position as a professor authorized to speak, ex cathedra, of the reason of the strongest, I am using my power, which consists in beginning this way not that way, beginning by having you wait, by deferring, warning you not to forget the wolf, or the werewolf or the outlaw, making you wait for the moment when I’ll show you what I promise I will show and demonstrate. The reason of the strongest is at work right here, at the very moment at which I claim to interrogate it, or even to place it in question or even merely to defer the demonstration. The demonstration has already taken place, in the very promise and in the differance, the act of deferring the demonstration. Unless one proves the stronger and belies what I say, but in making me a liar, in contradicting me, you will merely displace the site of the greatest force, and the reason of the strongest will (still and) always be the best.

As if I were myself, let’s never forget it, a wolf, or even the werewolf. That could be, we’re coming to it and we’re going to show it in a moment, a quotation, more than a quotation, from Rousseau, who, several times, compared himself to a werewolf. Let’s never forget the he-wolf and the she-wolf, we were saying. One always forgets a wolf along the way. For example, in the last session, even as I was pointing out that homo homini lupus was to be found, literally, long before Montaigne and Hobbes, in Plautus, I neglected or pretended to neglect, I had omitted if not forgotten, a wolf in Machiavelli (another great positive hero, for Schmitt, of the theory of the political), a Machiavelli that Hobbes must have read and a Machiavelli whose Prince, precisely, also names the wolf loud and clear. But if I pretended to forget this wolf, to suppress or repress it, to chase it away like another one I’ll come to in a moment (Machiavelli will tell us how to beat back, chase away, or hunt this wolf), it was intentionally, for reasons I’m going to show you in a moment, with the intention of drawing your attention today to composite figures, fabulous grafts of man-beasts or human animals, mixes—that we haven’t yet talked about. Now, of course Leviathan is a marine monster, a monstrous animal which, like the whale in Moby-Dick, belongs to the
aquatic element in which it intends to reign, but the Leviathan is not a composite of man and beast. If there is something prosthstatic in it, this is not by reason of a composition, of a synthesis, of a composite essence of man and beast, like those we are getting ready to encounter. The Leviathan, a monstrous animal, is not monstrous after the fashion of Khimaira, the chimera, a monster from Lycia, born of Typhon and Echidna, with three heads, lion, goat, dragon spitting flames, killed by Bellerophon, and which, having descended to a common noun, has given its name to all sorts of fabulations, fantasies, mythical productions, or hallucinations (even in Descartes) which are precisely the element of what is of interest to us here, the element of fabulation in which the analogies between beast and sovereign find their resources and their schemata. I’m using the word *schema* by analogy, but primarily to signal toward analogy, precisely, i.e. toward the mediating element or the mixed. Just as Kant said that the schema of the imagination was the mediation between intuition and the concept of the understanding, participating in both at once, so we are dealing here with schematic and imaginative and fantastic and fabulous and chimerical and synthetic figures that mediate between two orders and participate in two organizations of the living creature, what is still called the animal and what is still called man, or again what is called beast and what is called sovereign. But if it is indeed this fantastic and synthetic and prosthetic composition that matters to us here, today it is neither on the side of the Leviathan nor on the side of the Chimera that we shall search for or encounter our monsters, but on the side of another logic of composition, graft, mixture, and biosynthetic alloy. (On the horizon of this encounter is a double question, which I leave open: in the first place, why, in the great corpus of animal figures that people the fable of the political, do we find this or that animal and not others? We can make the most open and liberal list, from the wolf to the fox, from the lion to the lamb, from the serpent to the eagle, to ants or frogs, but we’ll have to concede that not all the animals of earth and sky are represented, do not seem to be as prone, as equally appropriate, to political figuration. Why? Is it because of the regions of the world, with their specific fauna, because of the geographical and ethological areas in which this fabulous discourse on the political was born and developed its history: the Middle East, Greece, the Mediterranean, Europe? Perhaps. Is it because of the proper nature, the form, and the psychology *supposed* (I stress "supposed") by fiction, anthropomorphized in advance to pertain to such animals (the supposed cunning of the fox, the tranquil strength of the lion, the voracious violence of the wolf, who can also turn protective, paternal, and maternal)? Perhaps. In any case the necessity for a typology and a taxonomy is already looming, in this least like Noah’s Ark, to mean to talk of the question of the abundance of reflections of posing hands to this protracted and to the computational philosophers in holding a confusedly represent a man, at least to push these questions, push or fantastic animal but also of the due consideration which is inter­

15. One...

graph, on p. 43.
looming, in this rhetoric that runs the risk of looking, if not like the order of Noah’s Ark (which certainly did not house all the animals on earth), at least like the order of menageries, zoological parks, or circuses, which I mean to talk to you about quite soon and at some length). That is the first question of this couple of questions I am leaving open. The second, which is linked to it, would be the following: in the obvious though surprising abundance of animal figures that invade discourses on the political, the reflections of political philosophy, how to give due consideration on the one hand to this profound necessity that we are precisely in the process of interrogating and trying to interpret in this seminar, but also, on the other hand, to the compulsion (let’s call it psychic and libidinal) that seems to push the philosophers of the political, all of those who are passionately interested in holding a discourse on power, on political power, and who would supposedly represent for their part a certain type of man or woman (usually a man, at least until now), the irresistible compulsion which seems either to push them or to attract them toward zoomorphic visions or hallucinations, push or attract them toward a field where there is a greater chance of fantastic animal apparitions (I say “apparitions” in the sense of phenomena, but also of visionary epiphanies, be they chimerical or not)? How to give due consideration to this element of inventive and passionate hallucination, which is interested, compulsive, which is itself possible only if an intrinsic necessity, which we are analyzing here, indeed increases the chances of fantastic and fabulous apparitions in the field of power and therefore of political sovereignty? How to give due consideration to that element and distinguish it from the other element, that of a rhetorical codification, a law of genre which has long meant that one uses metaphors and metonymies or even codified allegories, in any case animal fables attributing cunning to the fox, strength to the lion, voracious and violent and cruel savagery to the wolf (or some wolves at least). But there too, in the element of codified rhetoric and the law of genre, there really must be involved what at the beginning would belong to a nature or an essential structure of the field of the political as such, of political power and political sovereignty: it would properly belong to it to produce in particularly fertile and irresistible fashion such a proliferation of fantastic beasts and zoopoetic visions. So I’ll leave this double question open and suspended above our whole seminar. Let’s not forget it. And let’s not forget the wolves. I insist on the forgetting as much as on the wolves and the genelycology because what we should not
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stint on here \( \text{faire l'\'economie de} \) is the economy of forgetting as repression, and some logic of the political unconscious which busies itself around all these proliferating productions and all these chasing after so many animal monsters, fantastic beasts, chimeras, and centaurs that the point, in chasing them, is to cause them to flee, to forget them, repress them, of course, but also (and it is not simply the contrary), on the contrary, to capture them, domesticate them, humanize them, anthropomorphize them, tame them, cultivate them, park them, which is possible only by animizing man and letting so many symptoms show up on the surface of political and politological discourse. All of which follows in the wake that we had situated the last times in looking again at Totem and Taboo.

The forgotten wolf in Machiavelli, then. The Prince\(^{16}\) (dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici—who could have been a prince but did not care to become one—The Prince, then, dedicated to a virtual prince, as La Fontaine's Fables would be dedicated and thus submitted to Monseigneur le Dauphin, The Prince, which was published in 1532, five years after Machiavelli’s death but written almost a century and a half before the Leviathan (1651), The Prince, which you will read or reread, includes a chapter 18, entitled “In What Mode Faith Should Be Kept by Princes”\(^{17}\) (or, in the old French translation by a certain Guiraudet undertaken on the pressing demand or the advice of General Bonaparte, “Whether Princes Should Be Faithful to Their Commitments” [Si les princes doivent être fidèles à leurs engagements] [repeat both titles]), on a question that could not be more current (not only the respect of armistices, of cease-fires, of peace treaties, but also, and basically the way it always was, since this is the very structure of any contract and any oath, the respect of sovereigns' commitments before an institution or a qualified and authorized third party: for example, the respect or not of UN resolutions by the USA or Israel, everything that concerns UN resolutions but also the commitments made by the UN with respect to so-called international terrorism (a concept judged to be problematic by the UN itself, we talked about it) and the consequences that it drew from the current situation, with

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16. This sentence is unfinished in the typescript.
17. [Translator’s note:] Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). I have occasionally modified the translation for the sake of consistency with the versions Derrida is using. Derrida refers to the French version by Peries which translates the title of chapter 18 as “Comment les princes doivent tenir leur parole [How Princes Must (or Ought to) Keep Their Word].”
the authorization given to the USA to ensure its legitimate defense by any means judged appropriate by the USA alone).

Now in this chapter on the faith to be kept by princes, on the question of knowing “in what mode faith should be kept by princes,” or “whether princes should be faithful to their commitments,” this same question of the fidelity of the prince to his given word or sworn faith appears to be inseparable from the question of what is “proper to man.” And this double question, which appears in truth to be but one, is treated in a way that is interesting for us. You’ll see the wolf go by, but also more composite animals. The question of the proper of man is indeed placed at the center of a debate about the force of law, between force and law. In this chapter, which passes for one of the most Machiavellian in Machiavelli, he begins by admitting a fact (I stress the word fact): in fact, de facto, one judges praiseworthy the fidelity of a prince to his commitments. It is praiseworthy, one must agree. After what looks like a concession (yes, it’s good, it’s praiseworthy, it’s a recognized fact that, in principle, by rights, a prince ought to keep his word), Machiavelli comes back to the fact, which in fact he has never left. It is a fact that everyone regards the fidelity of the prince to his given word as laudable, but, in fact, few princes are faithful, few princes respect their commitments, and most of them use cunning: they almost all use cunning with their commitments. For they are constrained, in fact, to do so. We saw, he says, we have been in a position to see that the strongest princes, those who won out, beat those who, on the contrary, took as a rule the respect of their oath (this is why I announced a while ago that I would talk about the oath).

Machiavelli’s rhetoric is remarkable, as is his logic. For after having noted this fact (the nonrespect of the oath that wins in fact, perjury that wins de facto, cunning that in reality beats fidelity), he concludes from this fact, always in the constative and realistic regime, that political reason must take account and render account of this fact. Political reason must count and calculate with the fact that, in fact, there are two ways to fight. Following paragraph, then: “There are two kinds of combat: one with laws, the other with force” (p. 69). The old Giraudet translation [as is the case in the English one by Mansfield] accentuates this constative regime, which is the regime of theoretical knowledge, of the factual description of what one must know, of the knowledge-of-what-one-needs-to-know: “You should then know [Machiavelli is addressing Lorenzo de Medicis as much as the reader] that there are two ways of combating, one with laws, the other with force.”

So sometimes with right, justice, fidelity, respect for the laws, contracts,
commitments, conventions, institutions, with sworn faith, and sometimes with betrayal of commitments, lies, perjury, lack of respect for promises, plain brutal use of force: "the reason of the strongest".

From there, from this attested fact that one can combat in two ways, with laws or with force (and Machiavelli starts from a situation of war and not peaceful management of the city; he does not speak of the ordinary exercise of power by the prince but of a situation of war, which seems to him to be more revealing, exemplary, more paradigmatic of the essence of the vocation of the prince, namely response or riposte to the enemy, dealing with the other city as enemy city), Machiavelli draws strange conclusions, which we must analyze closely. Combat with laws (and so according to fidelity to one's commitments, as a sincere prince respectful of the laws) is, he says, proper to man. These are his words ("proper to man"), a Kantian argument in its principle, as it were: not to lie, to have the duty not to lie or perjure, is proper to man and his dignity. When one lies, when one betrays, which one can always do, in fact one is not speaking as a man, not as a man worthy of human dignity [digne de la dignité humaine]; in fact, one is not speaking, one is not addressing the other as a man, as another man. One is not speaking to one's fellow man [son semblable] (hold on to this value of semblable which will occupy us a great deal later). But what comes next in Machiavelli, who is not here speaking from an ethical point of view but from a political point of view, and who is measuring the possibility of the political, the law of the political against the test of war—what comes next in Machiavelli's discourse is, as we might expect, less Kantian. The second way to combat, he says (combat with force) is that of beasts. No longer man but the beast. Force and not law, the reason of the strongest, is what is proper to the beast. After this second moment, Machiavelli notes in a third moment of the argumentation that, in fact, the first way to combat (with the law) is insufficient, and remains, in fact, impotent. So one must, in fact, resort to the other. Thus the prince must combat with both weapons, both law and force. He must then behave both as man and as beast. "Therefore it is necessary for a prince to know how to use as appropriate the beast and the man" (p. 69; translation modified; Derrida's emphasis). This "it is necessary," specified by the "as appropriate" (according to the circumstances, fitting in an appropriate manner his response to the urgency of a situation or a singular injunction, etc., to a polemology, a war or a singular machology, a singular conjunction of combat), this "it is necessary" makes one move from the constative or descriptive regime to the prescriptive regime. When action by the law (fidelity to one's oath, etc.) is impotent, impotent, it is necessary to behave as a beast. They were a beast. Machiavelli does not mean at the same time, that he has a double nature from putting this double nature of man and beast. Machiavelli does not unite these two essences as if it were the case—and Machiavelli would here call two imports [poids import]. The pedagogical import of this quasi-double nature of the prince, man and beast. Pedagogy in the use, what the writers of antiquity were thinking will have taken an allegorical or "animal" fabulation, what the writers called in animal figures. They take nothing but a man-horse analogy: the animal but of a man-horse (the name Chiron allegedly comes from putting this double import: the name of centaurs [1929].

To remain with the minimum of centaurs (often represented, in their articulation of a human front, rear, in a horizontal order, then, in the bottom) also present another animal (equine) animal. For they are both terribly natural and, on the other hand, allegories, initiators into the art of medicine, etc. On the one hand, and Apollodorus will say of them:

18. The typescript has "the other."
to one's oath, etc.) is impotent, does not work, is weak, too weak, then it is necessary to behave as a beast. The human prince must behave as though he were a beast. Machiavelli does not say that the prince is man and beast at the same time, that he has a double nature, but he is not far from saying so and from putting this double nature under the authority of an "it is necessary."

If the prince is not man and beast at the same time, if in his very essence he does not unite these two essential attributes, he must nonetheless behave as if it were the case—and Machiavelli recognizes in this "as if" what I would here call two imports [portées], a pedagogical import and a rhetorical import. The pedagogical import is itself double and touches doubly on this quasi-double nature of the prince, who must act as if he were at once man and beast. Pedagogy in the first place because that is, Machiavelli tells us, what the writers of antiquity teach and have taught us. And this teaching will have taken an allegorical form (that is Machiavelli's word). It is by allegory or "animal" fabulation, the better to be heard, that these ancient writers called in animal figures. But this time it is not a question of this or that animal but of a man-horse mix, the centaur Chiron (Kentauros, the noun; the Greek adjective kantons meant worthy of a centaur, i.e. brutal, coarse, bestial). The Kentauros was a hybrid being, born of Kentauros and Thessalian mares: a huge history to which I refer you. One could devote more than one seminar to it. There is a book by Dumézil on the problem of centaurs (1929).

To remain with the minimum that matters to us here, I recall that centaurs (often represented, in their double—human and animal—nature by the articulation of a human front (human trunk and face) and an equine rear, in a horizontal order, then, not vertical, front and rear and not top and bottom) also present another ambiguity, besides that of the human and the (equine) animal. For they are both savages, savage beasts (ther), barbarian, terribly natural and, on the other hand, civilizing heroes, masters, pedagogues, initiators into the most diverse domains, skillful with their hands (the name Chiron allegedly comes from cheir, hand, whence surgery, and centaurs have not only human trunk and face but also human arms and hands), initiators, then, in the art of hunting, and hence cynegetics, music, medicine, etc. On the one hand, they represent the most asocial savagery, and Apollodorus will say of them that they are "savage, without social or-

organization, of unpredictable behavior," in particular because of their unbridled sexuality, which makes them attack women and wine. Sexuality is most often held to be bestial in itself; sexual desire is the beast in man, the most boisterous and most avid, the most voracious beast. But—and this is the case of the centaur Chiron, mentioned by Machiavelli, centaurs are also virtuous pedagogues. Chiron teaches medicine to Aesculapius. Achilles, as also evoked by Machiavelli, receives a princely education in the world of the centaurs, and Chiron teaches him to subdue boars and bears with his bare hands; he also teaches him music and medicine. Homer says of Chiron that he is "the most just among centaurs," a model of ethics. If this genealogical thing interests you, reread the story of the Argonauts and the Golden Fleece, where you'll find an abundant population of wolves and the centaur Chiron. Among the seven sons of Aeolus, one, Athamas, king of Boetia, went mad, because that is what the gods decided, because the gods made him go mad and delirious to punish him for having planned to kill some of his children, children of a first marriage. Banished, wandering, Athamas can only settle where the wild wolves offer him hospitality, in Thessaly. He does not meet these wolves at just any moment, and the hospitality they offer him is not just any hospitality. He stumbles upon them as they are sharing some lambs they have just killed. On the basis of this lycophilanthropic hospitality, Athamas founds a city, after marrying Themisto. He is still held by men to be a wolf, because he had planned to kill his children. But he returns to the city of men after a detour via the city of wolves, resocialized after and thanks to the scene of sacrificial sharing. Herodotus's version says that the city of wolves, the polis of wolves, always dissolves rapidly, that the social bond immediately comes undone, but that the dissolution of the social bond between the wolves coincides in this case with the hospitality offered to Athamas, namely a young man more wolf than they, who consequently, by sitting at their table, takes a place from which they are expropriated. As though (I'm taking a risk and improvising this interpretation) hospitality led to the end of the social bond for the hospitable city, which, by giving up on itself, as it were, by dissolving itself, abdicates into the hands of the guest who becomes sovereign. This is to say that it is necessary for a prince to pursue and appropriate the thread of another wolf by eating the wolves' left life as a lone wolf comes to another Cretheus, king of Iolcos in The Iliad, Cretheus's son Aeson, grandson of Cretheus, wants to put his newborn son into the sea; and that's where we find the Golden Fleece. If we return to Machiavelli of the ancients about these hybrids, something the ancients taught us, especially Chiron, were teachers; the centaurs taught and what the centaurs taught was allegorical teaching about a teacher and animals); and we are going to teach by double masters is to know how to be double, to know how to be double, to know how to be double, to know half beast. Therefore it is necessary for a prince to have half beast and the man. This was what Homer wrote that Achilles and especially Chiron, were teachers, centaurs taught and what the centaur Chiron to be fed a wolf and a wolf. By this indeed, and by this a prince must have as it were the support of the other. (p. 69, translation mine.)

So what the ancients meant to teach, is that one of the greatest differences between a being with a man's head and an animal is that what this hybrid taught the prince is that he must have half beast and half man, half man and half beast, by the support of the man, by the support of the centaur, and the man in the body and the legs of the horse. But this is not exactly the path the prince that he must have a half going to pursue and appropriate...
who becomes sovereign. This is also the move from beast to what is proper to man. For at that moment Athamas becomes a man again, stops being a wolf by eating the wolves’ leftovers. His humanity is returned to him, his life as a lone wolf comes to an end thanks to the wolves’ sacrifice. If now you follow the thread of another descendant of Aeolus, another of his sons, Cretheus, king of Ioleos in Thessaly, you will encounter the centaur Chiron. Cretheus’s son Aeson, grandson of Aeolus, chased out by a usurper, Pelias, wants to put his newborn son into safety. The son is Jason, who receives his name, Jason, from the centaur Chiron, to whom his father entrusted him to allow him to escape from Pelias, and to have him educated and brought up. And that’s where we find the Chiron mentioned by Machiavelli.

If we return to Machiavelli’s text, we see that it invokes the teaching of the ancients about these hybrid creatures, centaurs, and especially about something the ancients teach us, namely that the centaurs themselves, and especially Chiron, were teachers. The ancients teach us allegorically that the centaurs taught and what the centaurs taught. A double teaching, then, an allegorical teaching about a teaching dispensed by double beings (humans and animals); and we are going to see that the content of this teaching about teaching by double masters is that it is necessary to be double, necessary to know how to be double, to know how to divide or multiply oneself: animal and man, half man half beast. Let me quote first:

Therefore it is necessary for a prince to know how to use as appropriate the beast and the man. This was taught to us allegorically by ancient writers, who wrote that Achilles and many other ancient heroes were entrusted to the centaur Chiron to be fed and raised.

By this indeed, and by this half-man half-beast teacher, they meant that a prince must have as it were two natures, and that each needs support from the other. (p. 69, translation modified)

So what the ancients meant to teach us, by recounting this story about teaching, is that one of the greats, a hero, Achilles for example, was raised by a being with a man’s head and a horse’s body, half-man half-beast, and that what this hybrid taught him is to be, in his image, qua prince, both beast and man, half beast, half man. In this double nature, the beast needs the support of the man, by the face and hands and heart of man (the front of the centaur), and the man needs the support of the body, the rest of the body and the legs of the horse, which allow him to walk and stand upright. But this is not exactly the path followed by Machiavelli, once he has said of the prince that he must have a double nature, half man, half beast. He is going to pursue and appropriate for himself the allegory by having other
The phallus, I mean the phallos, is it proper to man?

And if said phallus were proper to the sovereign, would it still be proper to man? Would it be the proper in what sense? And of man in what sense, proper to man in what sense? And what if the phallus were bètise itself?

Let’s leave these questions to prepare themselves in the wings or in their dressing rooms, they will come back on stage and into the glare of the limelight, and surprise us when the moment comes.

That’s it too, the art of the marionette—or the marionette theater.

As if a marionette, far from being content to react after the fashion of a beast, supposed, by our classical thinkers, able only to react rather than respond—as if a marionette, then, rather than being content to react and even to respond, still had the power to ask us questions, in the wings. As if it were still asking us:

The [feminine] beast and the [masculine] sovereign, so what? So who?

Between the two, between the beast and the sovereign, would be the art of the marionette, the two arts of the marionette, that we’re keeping waiting, and the wolves, so many wolves! Not weather fit for dogs, but so, so many wolves! Not weather fit for dogs, but so, so many wolves! [Non pas temps de chien, mais tant et tant de loups]!

Wolves of the world—I leave you to complete or supply...

Wolves of the world, there’s a call that seems to have been resounding for months across the spaces of this seminar. So many wolves have already responded, from so many different places, countries, and states, so many different cultures, mythologies, and fables. Every wolf in this genlycol-ogy or this politic-eco-lycology could hear this call, both as beast and as...
sovereign, as Beast and Sovereign, be the wolf an outlaw or be he above the
laws like the werewolf, be he outside the law insofar as he makes the law
or above the law like the sovereign possessing the right of pardon, of life or
death over his subjects.

The wolf is then also the sovereign, the lord, the sire, the sir, Mon Sieur
or His Majesty.


This is what the lamb calls him, you remember, Sie sich, this is
how the lamb addresses the wolf when he speaks in La Fontaine's The Wolf
and the Lamb:

Sire, replies the lamb, may Your Majesty
Not grow angry;
And rather consider
That I am slaking my thirst
In the current
More than twenty paces below Him.?

It was with this fable that we began ("IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE FABLE,
says Valéry), in order to ask on the threshold of the seminar the question of
force and right; not force and justice but force and right, the right which,
Kant reminds us, with good sense itself, already in its concept implies the
means, and thereby the coercive force, of its application and its implemen­
tation: a right without force is not a right worthy of the name; and it is
primarily for this reason that the troubling problem imposes itself, which
is the very problem of sovereignty (the sovereign always representing the
most powerful power, the highest, greatest power, all-power, the strongest
strength, the most eminent capital or capitalization, the extreme monopo­
lization of force or violence—Gewalt — in the figure of the state, the ab­
solute superlative of power)—the troubling problem of a force, then, that
because it is indispensable to the exercise of right, because it is implied in
the very concept of right, would give right or found right, and would give
reason in advance to force, as is said in the first line of this fable, as the first
line of the fable with which we opened this seminar:

The reason of the strongest is always the best
As we shall shortly show.

2. La Fontaine, "Le loup et l'agneau" (see session 1 above, n. 10), p. 41. [Translator's
note: In the French text, the capitalized pronoun is the feminine "Elle," corresponding
to the grammatical gender of "Votre Majesté." ]
“Always” (in "always the best") bespeaks universality and recurrence or regularity: always thus, everywhere and all the time, every day, in all places and at all times; always already bespeaks the law, the day, and the phenomenal appearing of the universality of the law, the daylight of all the days of the law, or a natural and observable law, describable (in fact this is always how it is, it's clear even if it is not just) or on the contrary the other light of a prescriptive law: it must be thus, it is good and just that it be thus, one must act so that it remain always thus.

This equivocation of the concept of the law, of a law described or a law prescribed, prescribing, this equivocation that concentrates the whole problem and thus lurks in the "always"—this equivocation had already marked the use—there too highly idiomatic —of the word "reason" (in "the reason of the strongest is always the best"). The word "reason" denotes or designates both and equally two things: on the one hand, the reason given, alleged, presumed by the stronger, whether or not he be right [avoir raison], whether or not this reason be rational or not (I can advance a reason, my reason, even if I am not right); and "reason," on the other hand, can name the right that he has [la raison qu'il a], the good and just reason he has to exercise his force and make it predominate, his greater and higher power, his sovereign power, his all-power, his superlative power, his sovereignty.

Whence this third meaning or third implication of the idiomatic use of the word "reason," namely that the sovereign (or the wolf in the fable) acts as if he had reason to judge just and legitimate the reason he gives because he is the strongest, i.e. because, in the relation of force that here makes right, that here gives reason, the strongest one, the sovereign, is he who, as we say in French, a raison des autres [prevails over the others], who wins out over the less strong, and treads on the sovereignty or even the reason [or sanity] of the others.

Is there any point recalling so many examples from our modernity when, as Hannah Arendt insisted, it is the most powerful sovereign states which, making international right and bending it to their interests, propose and in fact produce limitations on the sovereignty of the weakest states, sometimes, as we were saying at the beginning of the seminar, going so far as to violate or not respect the international right they have helped institute.

3. [Translator's note:] Derrida exploits several possibilities of the French "raison" in what follows. In the most general sense, "raison" is reason. "Avoir raison" is literally to have reason, but idiomatically to be right. "Avoir raison de ..." is to prevail, to win out over.
and, in so doing, to violate the institutions of that international right, all the while accusing the weaker states of not respecting international right and of being rogue states, i.e. outlaw states, like those animals said to be “rogue” animals, which don’t even bend to the law of their own animal society? Those powerful states that always give, and give themselves, reasons to justify themselves, but are not necessarily right, have reason of the less powerful; they then unleash themselves like cruel, savage, beasts, or beast full of rage. And this is just how La Fontaine describes the sovereign wolf in the fable. The wolf is described as, I quote, “that animal full of rage,” ready to launch punitive, even preventive or vengeful expeditions. Listen to the wolf when he takes the lamb to task and prepares a preventive offensive against the one who might take over his wells or food sources:

Who makes you so bold as to muddy my drink?
Said this animal full of rage;
You will be punished for your temerity.

Punishment and penal law. The motif of revenge comes to close and seal the fable, as if at bottom the penal law exercised by the strongest, as if the punishment it inflicts (“You will be punished”) were always retaliation or revenge, *talis*, an eye for an eye, rather than justice. “I must avenge myself,” says the wolf at the end.

Note, with what are called “current events” in mind, that in La Fontaine’s fable revenge has to unleash itself blindly against all those who are presumed to be related, allied, socially or by blood, by a link of fraternity, with the presumed guilty party, be it a child, a powerless lamb that is basically accused of being guilty before even being born. The lamb is accused of having muddied the wolf’s water, his source or his resource, before even being born. And when the lamb argues back and says, “I wasn’t born yet,” the wolf replies forthwith and without a moment’s hesitation the famous phrase that accumulates all the perversions of collective, transgenerational, familial or national, nationalistic and fraternalistic accusation: “If not you, your brother, then” [*Si ce n’est toi, c’est donc ton frère*]. You are therefore guilty at birth, by your birth, guilty for being born what you were born. Orininary culpability, responsibility, or liability, *ursprüngliche Schuldigkeit* of the lamb the figure of which you can, if you like, reinterpret either on the basis of the Bible and the Gospels (the Christly lamb), or against a Greek background (you remember the passage from Plato’s *Phaedrus* that I quoted.

4. [Translator’s note:] “Rogue States” is in English (capitalized) in the text.
at the beginning of the seminar: it also put on stage, in an erotic scene this time, the appetite of the lover who loves his beloved as the wolf loves the lamb, to the point of eating it).

At this point I can only encourage you to read a text that ought to be quoted and studied in extenso for an infinite amount of time. This text is entitled "The Love of the Wolf;" "The Love of the Wolf," ten pages by Hélène Cixous published in the theater review La Métaphore. Through readings of a very large number of texts, from Pushkin to Shakespeare, from Tsvetaeva to Ingeborg Bachmann and Afaanassiev, via Little Red Riding Hood and the Eumenides, or . . . Hélène Cixous deploys all the paradoxes, reversals, and hyperbole that are at work in the genitive in "love of the wolf," the ambiguous expression "love of the wolf," which gives her text's title all its potential: objective genitive or subjective genitive, love of the wolf by the lamb or love of the lamb by the wolf, the lamb loves the wolf who loves the lamb, love of the wolf that sometimes drives to "renunciation," she says, among so many other things, with "Christly love," those are her words, and "sacrifice of the wolf." Hélène Cixous makes very clear, and this is precisely the strength of her text and her argument, how the love of the wolf can be inseparable from love of fear. And all the force of force, the force of desire, the force of love, the force of fear conjugate here. The text says: "We love the wolf. We love the love of the wolf. We love the fear of the wolf..." The fear of the wolf can also be heard according to a double genitive: the fear of the wolf who has fear of the lamb who has fear of the wolf. We have fear of the wolf who has fear of us and that is the whole love of the wolf. "But happiness is when a real wolf does not eat us." So read "The Love of the Wolf."

I would say, diverting a bit, that the wolf boasts of loving the lamb, of loving his enemy's weakness, of loving it to the point of taking it into himself, consuming his love, consuming himself with love in consummating his love, i.e. in eating him with one bite. The wolf boasts of loving the lamb, who loves him back. The love of the other is their strength, and you see where it leads them... Nothing is stronger than love, save death.

In La Fontaine's fable, when the lamb protests his innocence and says that he could not have muddied the water and the drink of His Majesty the

7. Ibid., p. 23.
8. Ibid., p. 33.
9. [Translator's note:] "Se fait fort de": boasts of, but literally "makes himself strong by."
Wolf because he is lower, so much lower than He, His Majesty the Wolf replies, and you are going to see once more the association between the motif of sovereignty and that of cruelty, of the "cruel beast":

— You are muddying it, replied this cruel beast, And I know that you spoke ill of me last year.
— How could I if I was not yet born? Replied the Lamb; I still suckle my mother.10
— If not you, your brother, then.
— I have no brother. — So one of your people:
For you scarce spare me,
You, your shepherds, and your dogs.
People have told me so: I must take my revenge.
And with this, to the depth of the forests
The Wolf carries him off, and then eats him,
Without further ado.

"Without further ado" [sans autre forme de procès: without any other form of trial]: an exercise of force, then, as punitive justice in the interests of the sovereign who sets up no tribunal, not even an exceptional or military tribunal and who, in the name of his self-defense,11 his self-protection, his supposed "legitimate defense," annihilates the defenseless enemy, the enemy who doesn't even have the defense given by a defense counsel in a regular trial, etc.

In this fable dedicated, in 1668, like La Fontaine's other fables — like the whole volume of Fables — to Monseigneur le Dauphin — in this fable, then, The Wolf and the Lamb [of which Chamfort already said, "Everyone knows this fable, even those who know only this one"],12 in The Wolf and the Lamb, then, the wolf is called "Sire" and "Your Majesty." The wolf figures the King, the grandeur and highness of King and Dauphin, a grandeur and highness that the dedication evokes literally. Once we have allowed for convention and a generic law for this type of dedicatory address, we cannot fail to notice a certain analogy or magnetic attraction of vocabulary in recalling The Wolf and the Lamb, and especially the language of the lamb, a humble citizen addressing the sovereign, His Majesty the Wolf:

Sire, replies the lamb, may Your Majesty
Not grow angry;

10. This line was omitted in Derrida's transcription.
11. [Translator's note:] "self-defense" is in English in the text.
And rather consider
That I am slaking my thirst
In the current
More than twenty paces below Him.

[One cannot fail to notice] the dedication or rather the *envoi* in prose, before the dedication in verse. This *envoi* also names the Majesty of the father King, the father of the Dauphin, who is six and a half years old at the time, the Majesty of the father, the King, Louis XIV, known as Louis le Grand; and the same *envoi* to Monseigneur le Dauphin insists on these figures of highness and grandeur which are proper to majesty, to *maiestas*. La Fontaine speaks humbly of "him on whom His Majesty [and so your father] cast his eyes to instruct you." Casting an eye is what a lord does, from high to low. There follows the praise of the Monarch, of the "qualities that our invincible Monarch gave you with your birth." What follows is all about the great European designs of Louis le Grand, of his wars, wars that are always imposed upon him by aggressions but that are always in the end triumphs for him; Louis le Grand is also compared to Augustus and Alexander (Alexander the Great, and "Alexander" also means the great man). Everything converges, we may well say, on the figure of grandeur, on the eminent erection, the eminently phallic, excellently eminent and excellently phallic erection of sovereign highness, its transcendence, political grandeur, but also the "grandeur of soul" that the Dauphin has inherited from his father ("I invoke as testimony those noble worries, that vivacity, that ardor, those marks of spirit, of courage and of grandeur of soul [the kid is six and a half] that you show at every moment.")

And the metaphor of grandeur, highness, erection (i.e. of phallic eminence) comes close to the signature, almost to conclude the *envoi*; the irresistible growth and erection of an immense tree, a ligneous line that dominates and covers its whole domain: "It is a highly agreeable spectacle for the universe to see growing thus a young plant that will one day cover with its shade so many people and nations."

Grandeur and highness, erection, majesty.

In *The Wolf and the Lamb*, the expression "twenty feet below Him" [capital "H"], this precision as to the inferior place in which the lamb is humbly situated, clearly signifies, like the capital letter on Sire or Majesty, that what

13. La Fontaine, "À Monseigneur le Dauphin," in *Fables*, ed. Fumaroli (see session I above, n. 10), pp. 3-4.
marks Majesty is grandeur and highness. Sire is not far from Sir and sieur and the Monsieur Teste that we were talking about last time.

Even before *The Wolf and the Lamb*, and still on the theme of "the reason of the strongest is always the best," or at bottom the theme of might making right, might giving right, the "right of the stronger," in the fable entitled *The Heifer, the Goat, and the Ewe in Society with the Lion*, this latter, the lion, attributes to himself, along with the right to divide up the stag, their common prey (and in so doing he makes the law; he is the law; he is the law above the laws, the law is always a law of dividing up, nomos, nem-nein)—[the lion attributes to himself, along with the right to divide up the stag], the right to keep everything for himself, to monopolize everything, and he does so in his capacity as Sire. And it is as Sire that he declares the right of the strongest, that he says what he is doing in doing what he says, authorizing himself with the very performative that he declares himself.

Then into so many parts the stag he cut;
Took for himself the first in his capacity as Sire:
It should be mine, said he, and the reason

I emphasize again this appeal to reason, to a reason that is not one, which is only, as reason given, as reason alleged, the *fact* of the name and the force of the stronger.

Is that I'm called Lion:
Nothing to be said to that.

Arbitrariness of the name, which has no sense or justification: I am who I am, my name is lion, that's my quality as Sire, and from my birth no one could change anything about it, not even I: nothing to be said.

The second by rights should fall to me too:
the second portion of the stag: he's just taken the first

This right, as you know, is the right of the strongest.
As the most valiant I claim the third.
And if any one of you girls touches the fourth,
I'll strangle her right now."

And so, progressively, one, two, three, four, on the pretext of sovereignty making the law of the division into four, he appropriates it all in the name

15. La Fontaine, "La génisse, la chèvre et la brebis, en société avec le Lion," Livre premier, fable VI, in *Œuvres complètes*, 1:37.
of the right of the strongest, a right of the strongest that moreover he states, emits, both produces and performs himself. First, the first portion, in his quality as Sire, in the name of his name ("Lion"); then, second, the second portion, by right (common right, indeed, since they are four of them sharing it, he is also like the others: so he is both king and subject; the king has the same rights, he has no fewer rights than his subjects even if he also has more rights than they and in fact every right, and he also posits this right to every right as "right of the strongest"); third, the third portion, the courage and valiance he shows and that give him the right to take and do what he has the courage to take and do in saying so: the courage of the absolute performative; finally, fourth, the fourth portion, the threat or fear that he inspires in the others (remember Hobbes: one becomes subject to the sovereign out of fear, here not fear of the wolf but fear of the lion):

And if any one of you girls [si quelqu'une] touches the fourth, I'll strangle her right now.

This "quelqu'une" reminds us that the lion possesses and subjugates to himself, hence subjects to himself, while violating their rights, three beasts the names of which, in French, are feminine and all three of which have a certain relationship, a certain family resemblance, to the lamb: la génisse, la chèvre, and la brebis. La bête and le souverain: la génisse, la chèvre, and la brebis in society with le lion. La bête in society with le souverain, the beasts and the sovereign, who is the only one to name himself, to refer himself, ipse, to himself, to his title, to his name, and to his might. To his ipseity.

The beast and His Majesty the sovereign, his grandeur the sovereign, his highness the sovereign. What is majesty? You know that this Latin word (majestas, which comes from magnus, major), signifies grandeur, highness, dignity (at bottom, Kant's Würde is a majesty of man, a dignity attached to the human person as an end in itself). In Latin, in Roman, majestas is also sovereignty, that of the state or that of the Roman people. Jean Bodin, who passes for the first great theorist of sovereignty, opens chapter 8 of his book (The Six Books of the Republic), entitled "Of Sovereignty," by recalling that "Sovereignty is the absolute and perpetual power of a Republic, which the Latins call majestatem, the Greeks akran exousian, and kurian arch' and kurion politeuma, the Italians segnoria, [...] the Hebrews call it Tismar schabel, etc."16 "Majesty" is thus another name for the sovereignty

of the sovereign. And *Majestas* indeed names, as the superlative of magnitude or grandeur, the majority of the great, of the *magnus*, the *major*, the male erection of a grandeur grander than grandeur. The king, the monarch, the emperor is upped ([majod], erected (and I mean "erected" for a reason that will come out in a moment when we speak about marionettes again) [erected] to a height that is majestic, upped, augmented, exaggerated, higher than the height of the great, incomparably higher than height itself, even sublimely higher than height, and this is already the height of the Most High: the Sovereign in its Majesty is most high, greater than great. He is great like Louis the Great. This standing, erect, augmented grandeur, infinitely upped, this height superior to every other superiority is not merely a trope, a figure of rhetoric, a sensory way of representing the sovereign. First, it is not just sensory, since the majestic Most High rises above all comparable and sensory height (whereby it is also sublime, or in any case lays claim to being meta-metaphorical and meta-physical, more than natural and more than sensory). So this is not a figure, but an essential feature of sovereign power, an essential attribute of sovereignty, its absolute erection, without weakness or without detumescence, its unique, stiff, rigid, solitary, absolute, singular erection. And concretely, this translates, in the political effectivity of the thing, not only as an all-power of the state over life-death, the right of pardon, generation, birth, sexual potency as generative and demographic power, but also the height from which the state has the power to see everything, to see the whole, having literally, potentially, a right of inspection over everything. I was quoting a moment ago the praise of Louis le Grand and his Dauphin by La Fontaine. This was praise of majestic height that covers not only, like a tree reaching to the sky, the whole national territory of its subjects but virtually the whole world ("It is a highly agreeable spectacle for the universe to see growing thus a young plant that will one day cover with its shade so many people and nations"). And today, the sovereign power, the international power of a national sovereignty is also proportionate to its power to see, power to have under surveillance, to observe, take in, archive from a superterrestrial height, by satellite, the whole globalized surface of the earth, to the centimeter, and this in the service of the economic strategy of the market as well as of military strategy. This erection toward height is always the sign of the sovereignty of the sovereign, of the head of state or simply the Head, the Dictator we were talking about recently, *Il Duce*, *the Führer*, or quite
simply the political leader, his "leadership." Of course we shall soon see how and why this erection to the heights, to the height of the head or the capital, can give rise to the marionette, to a becoming-marionette. Translated into the theatrical space of the politics of our time, namely the public space called television media, all political leaders, heads of state, or heads of parties, all the supposedly decisive and deciding actors of the political field are consecrated as such by the election of their erection to the status of marionette in the puppet show, translated as it happens into French as the *Bébête Show*, so many animal marionettes, anthropo-zoological puppets, so many fables for our time, the most significant feature of the thing being the desire of said notables to be elected to this erection to the status of marionettes. Election to the erection. Their ambition, the declared sign of their ambition, is the urgency of the desire with which they hope, expect, demand, sometimes with considerable edginess, champing at the bit to appear on the *Bébête Show*, as though this election to the status of marionette was the true and ultimate selection, as though the metamorphosis into a *bête bête* were the supreme legitimation: "As long as you don't appear," they seem to say to themselves, "as a *bête bête* on the *Bébête Show*, you have no chance of becoming sovereign, prime minister or Head of State." That's what Ovid's *Metamorphoses* have become today on Canal Plus.

The word "Majesty" (*Majestat*) appears at least once in Celan's "Meridian," which we are getting close to. The word *Majestat* appears at least once in

17. [Translator's note:] "Leadership" is in English in the text.
18. [Translator's note:] "Puppet show" is in English in the text.
19. An allusion to the *Bébête Show*, a satirical program inspired by *The Muppet Show* and broadcast on the French TV station TF1, from 1983 to 1995. *Les Guignols de l'Info*, a satirical program first broadcast in 1983 on the subscription channel Canal Plus, was for a time a rival of the *Bébête Show* until the latter's disappearance. [Translator's note: *Bébête*, meaning "childish," "silly," derives from *bête*, and the concept of the show was to have politicians appear in the form of animal puppets. *Les Guignols de l'Info* is something like "The Punch and Judy Newshour."]
20. This part of the session (pp. 217–20 and then 229–35) and part of the next session (pp. 259–73), which both concern Derrida's reading of Celan's "The Meridian" from the point of view of political and poetic sovereignties, were translated by Outi Pasanen, in a modified and abridged version (especially in the quotations from Celan commented by Derrida), under the title "Majesties," in Jacques Derrida, *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), pp. 108–34. [Translator's note: I have retranslated these passages in the interest of consistency.]
the German text, and we shall see it later picked up or repeated a second time in the [French] translation of this text by Jean Launay, the exemplary translator and editor of this admirable volume.

In "The Meridian," the word "Majesty" stands in the vicinity of the word and the lexicon of "monarchy," which was so much at issue in this speech, the monarchy decapitated during the French Revolution, but this vicinity is there for contrast, as we shall see, to mark a difference between the majesty Celan is talking about and the majesty of monarchy. But it is too soon to make this clear: we have to wait a little. And proceed by slow and prudent approaches, for things are more complex and subtle and evasive, more undecided even, than ever.

Let us return to the marionette. There is more than one of them, we were saying. We are going to approach Celan's ("Die Kunst, das ist, Sie err­nern sich, ein marionettenhaftes [. . . ] kinderloses Wesen") at the point where, as I was suggesting last time, the marionette of "The Meridian" comes to us, gives itself to be read and thought, through an experience of the foreign (das Fremde) and of the Unheimliche (das Unheimliche) that all Monsieur Teste's marionettes and marionettes' marionettes seemed most often (I want to be prudent)—seemed most often to try to reduce or suppress, repress, purify of equivocation.

Marionette and marionette. There is marionette and marionette, that's the hypothesis and the wager I risked last time. There are two experiences, rather, let's also say two arts of the marionette. But also, perhaps, two fables of the marionette. Two marionettes whose fables intersect, two marionettes.

If I place so much emphasis on the fable and the fabulous, it is undoubtedly, and too obviously, because of fables, like La Fontaine's, that put on the political and anthropological stage beasts that play a role in civil society or in the state, and often the statutory roles of subject or sovereign. But there's another reason for my emphasizing the fabulous. The point is, as the fables themselves show, that the essence of political force and power, where that power makes the law, where it gives itself right, where it appropriates legitimate violence and legitimizes its own arbitrary violence—this unchaining and enchaining of power passes via the fable, i.e. speech that is both fictional and performative, speech that consists in saying: well, I'm right because yes, I'm right because, yes, I'm called Lion and, you'll listen to me, I'm talking to you, be afraid, I am the most valiant and I'll strangle you if you object. In the fable, within a narrative that is itself fabulous, it
THIRTEENTH SESSION

and the sovereign,” to the operation of lexicologists or academic semanti-
cians or of literary traductology: it really is the whole of the history of the
Western world that is in play in these operations of translation, and thus in
the definition of the relations between the beast and the sovereign, since the
relations between the beast and the sovereign are also relations between an
animal, a zoon supposed to be without reason, and a zoon supposed to be ra-
tional, the sovereign being posited as human, on the divine model, and as a
human who naturally has reason, responsibility, etc. And so we are dealing
with questions of translation that are absolutely determining, determining
and difficult to determine, difficult to circumscribe: there are no limits, no
frontiers that can contain these issues of translation.

But before returning to a couple of texts that I wanted to look at quickly
with you, so that the year wouldn’t end without our having at least looked
at Aristotle’s text (I had meant to last week but didn’t manage it...), I
wanted to read to you a text I discovered a short while ago and that I regret
not knowing when we invited so many wolves into our seminar. I’ve chosen
to read this text, and I shall do so, because, let me recall briefly, you must
have noticed that the historical corpus, a particular historical corpus (this
was not premeditated on my part, it happened to me during preparation
and at the beginning of the year, I didn’t think that that was how it was
going to be in December) imposed itself on us, on me, a historico-political
corpus that to a large extent has been that of a French sequence—and I
want to emphasize that we have had a French seminar (the sessions devoted
to bestiality in Lacan and Deleuze, were French problems, the
Frenchness of which had to be thought). Well, the historico-political corpus
on the question of the sovereign that imposed itself on us and in any case on
me was, broadly speaking, that of a sequence that runs from the great age
of French royalty, the “Grand Siècle,” and a little before, up to the French
Revolution, decapitation, the guillotine, the history of Capet, of Louis Ca-
pet, and, whether directly or through Celan’s “Meridian,” it was always the
question of the French Revolution that happened to the sovereign, to the
absolute sovereign, to absolute monarchy, in France, at the time of the Rev-
olution, that concerned us, necessarily and inevitably. Well, the interesting
thing about the text I’m going to read to you is that it deals with the wolf
from the point of view of French royalty — we spoke of the Dauphin, the
Dauphin and the wolf—and to link it to a concept, or in any case to a word,
which is that of translation, translato. It’s from a book by Jean-Clet Martin,
Ossuaires: Anatomie du Moyen Âge roman that I’d like to read to you — like
the last day of grade school, just before vacation, when we were children,
they would read us stories for a break — I’m going to read you this text on the wolves and the king. It starts on page 163 of Osmaire, in a chapter called “A Political Hagiography”:

Everything happens, as it were, between Reims, Laon, and Soissons. A suspended wing-beat that goes from Louis IV to Louis VI. Here a rare and precious parenthesis opens in which very different forces confront each other but turn indecisive on a line opposing Cluny to the bishoprics, king to lords [remember the opposition in which the word Dauphin, also an untranslatable French word, which allies the dolphin to the figure of the crown prince, in a sequence that had to do with the annexation of the Dauphiné, the Peace of God to the state, to the Church, the saints to the popes, all according to a skein of metastable tracks, perpetually in breach, a skein capable of addressing the people, the event-power of the people — 1038, a year of revolt and insurrectional jubilation — popular compositions about which André de Fleury tries to understand how “the mass of unarmed people was able, like armed troops, to sow fear among the warriors and scare them to such an extent that they fled, abandoning their châteaux, before the humble rustic cohorts, as though before the most powerful of kings.” How could that have been possible without the intercession of the holy names and their relics, those names that the Capetians in turn were to confront in the form of the legend of Saint Marcoul?

Between Reims and Laon, Laon and Soissons, spreads the forest. There, in this triangle, the legend configures its desert, redistributing the topos of power that it is feudalizing in new relations. In this dark forest prowls a wolf without equal [a wolf that we are adding, then, to our innumerable pack: here’s one more ...]. Enormous [we’re only dealing with enormous animals — remember Louis XIV’s elephant — next year maybe we’ll deal with smaller animals: this year it was the big ones]. An animal. Of course, an animal! But an animal whose name becomes something else [this is the beginning of the translation], by designating a heterogeneous multiplicity, a procedure that with Abelard we thought of as a chimera.

It is this shadowy wolf, both animal and symptom, astride [a wolf on horseback!] forests and towns, which he protects by spreading his disease, an animal that King Louis [one of the Louis, one of the many we have talked about] will confront, at the end of the summer of 954, an animal in which the other Louis

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5. [Translator’s note:] The interpolation in square brackets is syntactically incomplete in the French edition.
It is a translation of a wolf [translation again], the ethos on which it branches out defining a set of similarities, a series of variables that he links up again like the stained-glass window in Poitiers, where movements-spaces capable of conserving the greatest distances, of respecting their respective anatomies, are articulated together. Wolf rises up like a shadow, like a wolf, something extending its name toward incommensurable meanings [translation of wolf "extending its name toward incommensurable meanings": the wolf in translation, then, in translation] juxtaposed in a sort of diagram. This name, the name "wolf," unfolds the diagram or the ramified volume according to which a rubric takes shape, a noncategorial rubric, since it bites [a rubric that bites] into universes of similarity the topos of which are not the same: a set-up that will make possible the configuration of the Capetian dynasty to the detriment of the last Carolingians, whom this name never stops cursing, designating the illness they are suffering [a war between two dynasties, basically].

Cursed by this enormous wolf, which unseats him, King Louis dies of an elephantic, elephantine affection—a lipullation that pulls up on the royal genealogy as a contagion called "Lupus Vulgaris." An illness that on the threshold of the XIIIth century will be designated by the simple word "wolf" [so "wolf" is the name of an illness, as we already mentioned]. In short, from the wolf, whose terrifying shadow comes to cross the King's path, is detached a nominal simulacrum [also called a "species"... ] capable of describing the royal illness, a statement that the becoming of the name disperses according to an ethos in which can be distributed similarities that, not belonging to the same topos, necessarily bifurcate. Which is why, keola [so it's the outlaw, the keola, and you recall that the werewolf—we were talking about it in the early sessions—is the keola, the outlaw that, like the sovereign, makes the law from a place external to the law that is outside the law, and you remember that in English loup-garou [in Rousseau] is translated by "outlaw"], the name escapes, fibers out into similar echoes, caught up in other conditions of space and time. Then there are gatherings of discords as remote as those that separate from animal tuberculosis the animal, the saint, the landscape whose contour and drunken diagonal it marks.

6. [Translator's note:] This is a reference to Maupassant's famous horror story "Le Horla."
Marcwulf, the wolf from the forest, defines a nominal complex, a differently orientable, modulable, plank or Plaint, a *planctus* on which illness diffuses, carrying off the last Carolingians. But this plain is also the surface on which the people begins to pullulate, of the legend that carves it up and feudalizes it to make a place for the Capetian king. The wolf, the king will then be incorporated [incorporation of the beast and the sovereign] into a set-up in which each term will express a function that the other feudalizes according to a new function. Feudality is here the index of a multiple-subjection function, an assemblage that the name “Marcwulf” delimits and individualizes much better that the ceremony of the consecration, unable to account for the process of subjectivation capable of inscribing the saint and the king, the king and the wolf into one and the same heterotopic ethos.

Marcwulf, the “wolf of the marches” [“march” in the sense of limit, or limen, frontier], the processual wolf, designates this popular chimera that the people constantly celebrates as the machination of its own consistency, an animal sent from the people like the *leitmotiv* of a social crystallography, a motif capable of configuring the forces that traverse it and that relaunch themselves as a multiform, thaumaturgical king [remember the thaumaturgical kings we mentioned when we were reading Marin, and in connection with Kantorowicz’s *King’s Two Bodies*, preceded by Marc Bloch’s book *Les rois thaumaturges*]. A king who, moreover, depends more on the saint and the wolf, to whom he will be like a vassal, than on the foundational consecration conceived of as a sticking point, a blockage of dubbings. There is of course no doubt that the consecration, the ceremony of investiture, succeeded in the end in taking hold of the feudal machine to make it into that state apparatus magnified by Adalberon, a royalty allied to the pope and to the reformed Church [this is of course a huge story … I’m reading fast and you’d need to read the whole book]. But the fact that the confrontation of the feudal machine be abolished in the mesh of power knotted vertically around a centralized state does not prevent that fact that there was a confrontation, a suspension of political singularities, in the passage from the Carolingians to the Capetian dynasty.7

I’ll finish my quotation here. You can see clearly that it’s also about a conflict for sovereignty between two dynasties, with the stake being the affirmation of a state sovereignty on the basis of feudal structures, a war between lords and king. I especially wanted to read you this text, not only because of the wolves and the Capetians and the Carolingians, but also because what’s going on here is a translating operation, rhetorical, metonymical, a force that displaces names, and there too, in a sense, it’s about *logos*. What I want to

say very quickly about *logos* is this: at bottom, what one might call—what I myself have long called—"logocentrism," precisely, which in my usage has always designated a forced hegemony; a forcing, imposing a hegemony, does not only signify the authority of *logos* as speech, as language—that's already an interpretation—but also signifies an operation that is properly, I would say, in quotes, "European," which gathers together biblical traditions (we saw a certain passage from Philo the Jew to John the Evangelist) and then the philosophical tradition: broadly speaking the monotheistic religions, the Abrahamic religions, and philosophy. This logocentrism of the Abrahamic religions and of philosophy signifying not so much that the *logos* was simply the center of everything, but that it was in a situation, precisely, of sovereign hegemony, organizing everything on the basis of its forced translations.

So, on that basis, I suggest two things for the twenty minutes or so we have left: first to have a quick look at *logos* in Aristotle's *Politics*, in the famous passage in which Aristotle defines man as *zoon logon ekhon*, and then, if we have time, a word about the Bible, with which I meant to start at the very beginning.

As I was saying very quickly last time, it's the very beginning of book 1 of the *Politics*, that's where it starts, and Aristotle is defining the *polis*, the state as a sort of community (*koinonia*), which, as a community, is constituted with a view to a certain good. The state is a community organized with a view to a good, *agathon*. One might say that this *agathon* is naturally sought, as a good, by every community, even an animal community, but what Aristotle announces from the start is that the state as human community, as human *koinonia*, is organized with a view to the good as sovereign good! this is the standard translation, and of course the word translated as sovereign is, as you'll remember from when we were talking about Bodin, the word that is most often used in Greek to designate sovereignty, *kurios*:

"... it is obvious that all aim at a certain good and that precisely the sovereign good [*kurionton*, the sovereign good, the supreme good] among all goods is the end of the community that is sovereign [*kurionton*] among all the community is basically sovereign over all, and so the notion of sovereignty is defined here, from the start, inscribed into the very concept of state, *polis*; and community] and includes all the others: the one called the City or the political community [*e koinonia e politike*]. (1252a)"

9. [Translator's note:] Although I have consulted and to some extent followed the Jowett translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, in the interests of consistency with Derrida's commentary I have quite often (especially in these opening passages) altered the transla-
Then, in the following paragraph, he will define, precisely, what is called a master or a king, a man of state:

All those who imagine that a statesman (or magistrate), a king, a head of household, a master of slaves [despotikon] are identical, do not express themselves correctly so he will distinguish between the statesman [politikon], the king, the head of household, the slave-master: those who imagine that these are the same thing, are identical, are wrong, are not expressing themselves correctly, do not choose their words well; indeed they see in each of these only a difference of degree and not of kind: for example, if one exercises authority over a small number, one is a master; if over a greater number, a head of household; if a still greater number, a statesman or a king, as though there were no difference between a large family and a small City [in other words—and this is a tradition that will run up until Schmitt, you must not imagine that the state is simply an enlarged family; so there is a structural difference between a family community and a state community]; as for statesman and king: if a man exercises power alone, he is a king; if on the contrary he exercises it following the norms of political science, being in turn governor and governed, he is a statesman. But this is not true, and what I have to say about it will be obvious to anyone who examines the question following our normal method." 

There follows a methodological exposé which tries, which claims, to go back ex archè, to the beginning (the word archè, I recall, is the commencement and the commandment): "so it is in examining things develop from their origin [ex archè] that here as elsewhere we can come to the best view of them." So let's go back to the origin:

In the first place there must be a union of those who cannot exist without each other; namely, of male and female, that the race may continue (and this is a union which is formed, not of deliberate purpose, but because, in common with other animals and with plants, mankind have a natural desire to leave behind them an image of themselves) [in other words, generation and reproduction is the proper or all living beings, be they plants, animals, or humans], and of natural ruler and subject, that both may be preserved [this is natural, by nature, phusei]. For that which can foresee by the exercise of mind is by nature [still phusei] intended to be lord and master, and that which can with its body give effect to such foresight is a subject, and by nature a slave; hence master and slave have the same interest. Now nature [always phusei] has distinguished between the female and the slave. For she is not niggardly, like the smith who fashions the Delphian knife for many
uses; she makes each thing for a single use [. . .]. But among barbarians no distinction is made between women and slaves, because there is no natural ruler among them [i.e. neither woman nor slave has what naturally rules]: they are a community of slaves, male and female. Wherefore the poets say, "It is meet that Hellenes should rule over barbarians"; as if they thought that the barbarian and the slave were by nature one.

Out of these two relationships between man and woman, master and slave, the first thing to arise is the family [I'm reading rather fast to come on quicker to the zoon logon ekhon], and Hesiod is right when he says, "First house and wife and ox for the plough," for the ox is the poor man's slave. The family is the association established by nature for the supply of men's everyday wants, and the members of it are called by Charondas "companions of the cupboard," and by Ephesides the Cretan, "companions of the manger." But when several families are united, and the association aims at something more than the supply of daily needs, the first society to be formed is the village. And the most natural form of the village appears to be that of a colony from the family, composed of the children and grandchildren, who are said to be suckled "with the same milk." And this is the reason why Hellenic states were originally governed by kings, because the Hellenes were under royal rule before they came together, as the barbarians still are. Every family is ruled by the eldest, and therefore in the colonies of the family the kingly form of government prevailed because they were of the same blood. As Homer says (etc.).

And this is where we come to things that are decisive for us:

The community born of several villages is the City, perfect, now reaching, as it were, the level of complete self-sufficiency [autarkia, independence], then, the fact of commanding oneself, to have its own archê within itself: being formed to permit life [here, it's zên, the verb for zoon, the fact of living], it exists in order to allow one to live well (eu zên). And so it's from this truth, as it were, this essence of the polis that Aristotle will go on to the definition of man as he who, precisely, has the logos. This is why every city exists naturally [still phusêr], just like the first communities; it is indeed, their end, and the nature of a thing is its end; because what we call the nature of each thing is what it is when its growth is complete, for example, a man, a horse, or a family. What is more, the final cause and the end is what is best; now to be self-sufficient (autarkia) is both an end and what is best. That's the ontological definition of sovereignty, namely that it's better—since we're trying to live well (eu zên)—to live in autarchy, i.e. having in

11. Ibid., 1252a 27–1252b 22.
12. Ibid., 1252b 27–1253a 4.