

A FACTLESS BIOGRAPHY

(01)	HANNAH ARENDT	'The Social Question' from <i>On Revolution</i>	(1963)
(02)	MINA LOY	'International Psycho-Democracy' from <i>The Lost Lunaan Baedeker</i>	(1923)
(03)	MINA LOY	Ibid.	(1923)
(04)	THE INVISIBLE COMMITTEE	'I am what I am' from <i>The Coming Insurrection</i>	(2007)
(05)	JAMES BALDWIN	'My Dungeon Shook: Letter to my Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation' from <i>The Fire Next Time</i>	(1963)
(06)	JAMES BALDWIN	Ibid.	(1963)
(07)	JAMES BALDWIN	Ibid.	(1963)
(08)	JAMES BALDWIN	Ibid.	(1963)
(09)	JAMES BALDWIN	'Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in my Mind' from <i>The Fire Next Time</i>	(1963)
(10)	W. G. SEBALD	<i>On the Natural History of Destruction</i>	(1999)
(11)	SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK	<i>First as Tragedy, then as Farce</i>	(2009)
(12)	RUST COLE	from <i>True Detective</i>	(2014)
(13)	FERNANDO PESSOA	<i>The Book of Disquiet</i>	(1982)
(14)	THE INVISIBLE COMMITTEE	<i>The Coming Insurrection</i>	(2007)
(15)	ZYGMUNT BAUMAN	<i>Liquid Times</i>	(2007)
(16)	ALASDAIR MACINTYRE	<i>After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory</i>	(1980)
(17)	JORGE LUIS BORGES	<i>The Cruel Redeemer Lazarus Morell</i>	(1935)
(18)	BELL HOOKS	<i>Marginality as Site of Resistance</i>	(1990)
(19)	MICHEL DE CERTEAU	<i>The Practice of Everyday Life</i>	(1984)
(20)	JACQUES DERRIDA	from the documentary <i>Derrida</i> by Dick and Kofman	(2002)
(21)	JAMES BALDWIN	<i>The Fire Next Time</i>	(1963)
(22)	FERNANDO PESSOA	<i>The Book of Disquiet</i>	(1982)
(23)	ZYGMUNT BAUMAN	<i>Liquid Times</i>	(2007)
(24)	JEREMY SEABROOK	<i>Consuming Cultures: Globalization and Local Lives</i>	(2004)
(25)	HAN KANG	<i>The White Book</i>	(2017)
(26)	JAMES BALDWIN	from <i>debate against William F. Buckley, Cambridge</i>	(1965)
(27)	SIMONE WEIL	<i>Human Personality</i>	(1942)

The inborn paradox of capitalism, and in the long run its doom: capitalism is like a snake that feeds on its own tail... Alternatively, we may say, [...] capitalism draws its life-giving energy from 'asset stripping', a practice recently brought into the daylight by the common operation of 'hostile mergers', a practice needing ever new assets to be stripped—yet sooner or later, once it is applied globally, supplies are bound to be exhausted, or reduced below the level required for its sustenance. 'Assets' that are 'stripped' are the outcome of the other producers' labour—but as those producers are deprived of their assets and so gradually yet relentlessly eliminated, a point is bound to be reached when there are no assets left to be 'stripped'.

[...] Rosa Luxembourgh envisaged a capitalism dying for lack of food: starving to death because it had eaten up the last meadow of 'otherness' on which it grazed. But a hundred years later it seems that a fatal, possibly the most fatal result of modernity's global triumph, is the acute crisis of the 'human waste' disposal industry, as each new outpost conquered by capitalist markets adds new thousands or millions to the mass of men and women already deprived of their lands, workshops, and communal safety nets. (23)

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Hence the predicament of the poor after their self-preservation has been assured is that their lives are without consequence, and that they remain excluded from the light of the public realm where excellence can shine; they stand in darkness wherever they go. As John Adams saw it: 'the poor man's conscience is clear; yet he is ashamed... He feels himself out of the sight of others, groping in the dark. Mankind takes no notice of him. He rambles and wanders unheeded. In the midst of a crowd, at church, in the market... he is in as much obscurity as he would be in a garret or a cellar. He is not disapproved, censured, or reproached; he is only not seen... To be wholly overlooked, and to know it, are intolerable.' (01)

In the very near future the fact that it is considered either normal or necessary for millions of men and women to wear out their organisms with no reward but the maintenance of those organisms, imperfectly functioning, and that this social condition should be safeguarded and preserved by the blowing up of other millions of human organisms will appear as the nightmare of a criminal lunatic. (03)

I know what the world has done to my brother and how narrowly he has survived it. And I know, which is much worse, and this is the crime of which I accuse my country and my countrymen, and for which neither I nor time nor history will ever forgive them, that they have destroyed and are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives and do not know it and do not want to know it. One can be, indeed one must strive to become, tough and philosophical concerning destruction and death, for this is what most of mankind has been best at since we have heard of man. But it is not permissible that the authors of devastation should also be innocent. It is the innocence, which constitutes the crime. (05)

This innocent country set you down in a ghetto in which, in fact, it intended that you should perish. Let me spell out precisely what I mean by that, for the heart of the matter is here, and the root of my dispute with my country. You were born where you were born and faced the future that you faced because you were black and for no other reason. The limits of your ambition were, thus, expected to be set forever. You were born into a society, which spelled out with brutal clarity, and in as many ways as possible, that you were a worthless human being. You were not expected to aspire to excellence: you were expected to make peace with mediocrity. (06)

Please try to be clear, dear James, through the storm which rages about your youthful head today, about the reality which lies behind the words *acceptance* and *integration*. There is no reason for you to try to become like white people and there is no basis whatever for their impertinent

assumption that *they* must accept *you*. [...] You must accept them and accept them with love. For these innocent people have no other hope. They are, in effect, still trapped in a history, which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it. They have had to believe for many years, and for innumerable reasons, that black men are inferior to white men. Many of them, indeed, know better, but, as you will discover, people find it very difficult to act on what they know. To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. (07)

I spent my childhood and youth on the outskirts of the Alps, in a region that was largely spared the immediate effects of the so-called hostilities. At the end of the war I was just one year old, so I can hardly have any impressions of that period of destruction based on personal experience. Yet to this day, when I see photographs or documentary films dating from the war I feel as if I were its child, so to speak, as if those horrors I did not experience cast a shadow over me... I see pictures merging before my mind's eye—paths through the fields, river meadows, and mountain pastures mingling with images of destruction—and oddly enough, it is the latter, not the now entirely unreal idylls of my early childhood, that make me feel rather as if I were coming home... (10)

No intelligent idea can gain general acceptance unless some stupidity is mixed in with it. Collective thought is stupid because it is collective. Nothing passes into the realm of the collective without leaving at the border—like a toll—most of the intelligence it contained. (13)

Fear is arguably the most sinister of the demons nesting in the open societies of our time. But it is the insecurity of the present and uncertainty about the future that hatch and breed the most awesome and least bearable of our fears. That insecurity and that uncertainty, in their turn, are born of a sense of impotence: we seem to be no longer in control, whether singly, severally or collectively—and to make things still worse we lack the tools that would allow politics to be lifted to the level where power has already settled, so enabling us to recover and repossess control over the forces shaping our shared condition while setting the range of our possibilities and the limits of our freedom to choose: a control which has now slipped or has been torn out of our hands. (15)

Once mama said to me as I was about to go again to the predominately white university, 'You can take what the white people have to offer but you do not have to love them.'

Now understanding her cultural codes I know that she was not saying to me not to love people of other races. She was speaking about colonization and the reality of what it means to be taught in a cul-

ture of domination by those who dominate. She was insisting on my power to be able to separate useful knowledge that I might get from the dominating group from participation in ways of knowing that would lead to estrangement, alienation, and, worse, assimilation and co-option. (18)

The future is that which—tomorrow, later, next century—will be. There is a future, which is predictable, programmed, scheduled, foreseeable. But there is a future, *l'avenir* (to come), which refers to someone who comes, whose arrival is totally unexpected. That which is totally unpredictable. The Other who comes without my being able to anticipate their arrival. (20)

The day she was born was one of frost rather than snow, yet her father chose seol, snow, as one of the characters for his daughter's name. Growing up, she was unusually sensitive to the cold, and resented the chill embedded in her name. But she liked to tread the frost-covered ground and feel the semi-frozen earth through the soles of her trainers. The first frost, as yet untrodden, has the fine crystals of pure salt. The sun's rays pale slightly as the frost begins to form. White clouds of breath bloom from warm mouths. Trees shiver off their leaves, incrementally lightening their burden. Solid objects like stones or buildings appear subtly more dense. Seen from behind, men and women bundled up in heavy coats are saturated with a mute presentiment, that of people beginning to endure. (25)

We are sitting in this room, and we are all, at least I'd like to think we are, relatively civilised, and we can talk to each other at least on certain levels so that we could walk out of here assuming that the measure of our enlightenment, or at least, our politeness, has some effect on the world. It may not... (26)

Apart from intelligence, the only human faculty, which has an interest in public freedom of expression, is that point in the heart, which cries out against evil. But as it cannot express itself, freedom is of little use to it.

What is first needed is a system of public education capable of providing it, so far as possible, with a means of expression; and next a regime in which the public freedom of expression is characterized not so much by freedom as by an attentive silence in which this faint and inept cry can make itself heard; and finally, institutions are needed of the a sort which will, so far as possible, put power into the hands of those who are able and anxious to hear and understand it. (27)