

○ BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP IN THE AGE OF BIO-POWER

ALBERT SCHWEITZER AND THE DEGENERATE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS

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Cinema Theory has for a long time been haunted by the question: is *noir* a genre of its own kind or a kind of anamorphic distortion affecting different genres? From the very beginning, *noir* was not limited to hard-boiled detective stories: reverberations of *noir* motifs are easily discernible in comedies (*Arsenic and Old Lace*), in westerns (*Pursued*), in political and social dramas (*All the King's Men*, *The Lost Weekend*), etc. Do we have here a secondary impact of something that originally constitutes a genre of its own (the *noir* crime universe), or is the crime film only one of the possible fields of application of the *noir* logic? That is, is *noir* a predicate that entertains toward the crime universe the same relationship as toward comedy or western, a kind of logical operator introducing the same anamorphic distortion in every genre to which it is applied, so that finding its strongest application in the crime film turns on nothing but historical contingency (Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, 1993, pp. 9-10)?

INTRODUCTION: TOWARD A *NOIR* BIBLICAL CRITICISM – OR, HOW SHOULD HISTORICAL CRITICISM RESPOND TO THE FACT THAT A BRACKETING OF ‘THEOLOGY’ HAS NOT RESULTED IN A REDEMPTIVE CLOSURE OF WHAT BIBLICAL ‘HISTORY’ IS?

It must be said at the beginning – we have failed to say it for too long now – that the story of modern biblical scholarship is a much more kinky affair than most of our scholarly summaries tend to admit. Moreover, the reticence of most scholars to acknowledge these kinks in our scholarly chain is undoubtedly tied to the fact that the field has yet to formulate self-definitions whereby these kinks could be theorized or read as something besides mere accidents or mere contingencies coming from ‘outside’ the discipline. In this respect, thinking through the systemic self-obstructions that Slavoj Žižek describes as a ‘*noir* logic’ can be of crucial significance for biblical studies, particularly as we attempt to avoid the tiresome dead ends to which our traditional forms of self-description have led us. More pointedly still, if we are to call the many kinks in our scholarly lineage by their true names, biblical studies must add itself to the list of cultural sites in which operates this remarkable ‘*noir* logic’.

Thus it is the formal framework of Žižek’s philosophical and psychoanalytic discussions of ‘*noir* logic’ that concerns me here. This implies at least two things. First, as can already be seen in the brief quote above, Žižek is not simply thinking about *noir* film. Indeed, his entire theoretical oeuvre may be read as an extended reflection on a Hegelian and Lacanian logic of self-obstruction that he here exemplifies by way of film *noir*.¹ Second, to speak of an interest in the formal moves of Žižek here highlights the fact that it would be wrong to miss the way other formalizing philosophico-analytic devices could function just as well as Žižek’s psychoanalytic

framework. We could, for example, interrogate the history of biblical studies in exactly the same way as I do here by thinking from out of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory and its analyses of the way an initial act of closure or exclusion constitutes the openness or possibility of a system's existence. In Žižek and Luhmann alike, the limit, failure, or breakdown registered by the system necessarily doubles as a moment in the self-replication or self-expression of that system itself. What is most crucial about the basic thought in relation to biblical studies, whether the self-obstructive limits of Žižek's *noir* or Luhmann's analysis of selection and perception, is that it encourages us to imagine new forms of immanent critique in relation to the operations of biblical studies itself.²

To add biblical scholarship to detective, comedy, or romantic film as a significant site from which to think the *noir* dynamics Žižek has in view is, of course, to take us well beyond the typical modes of thought governing an analysis of this field. Indeed, it demands a bracketing of, or a placing under erasure, some of the basic distinctions by which biblical scholarship has for more than two hundred years made sense of itself. As we will see, however, there is a price to be paid for not questioning this basic horizon – or the basic promise – within which historical criticism's self-descriptions once appeared convincing. A quick illustration will begin to clarify some of the stakes of this revolution. Consider the frequently repeated suggestion among biblical scholars that our disciplinary history is marked by an often repeated 'fall' of the (otherwise) historical critic into a desiring form of interpretation we call 'theology'. Better, as anyone who has been around the guild of biblical scholarship for any length of time will recognize, this type of self-distinction (that 'historical' critics are what they are only when they are not being 'theological') frequently doubles as a temporalising distinction that reveals the difference between a 'past' 'failure' of biblical interpretation to produce what it will, the gesture implies, one day succeed in producing, a genuinely 'historical' account of ancient religion.³ Kümmel's classic narration of historical criticism of the New Testament is a wonderful example of this self-descriptive strategy, as he finds no better way to depict an historical interpretation as *passé* or a mere 'dead letter' than to call it 'theological'. Such a designation establishes a taboo against the idea that there is any contemporaneity in the interpretation under review that might spur our thinking on to that fully 'historical' reconstruction to come. The history of biblical studies that spins out of the basic distinction, therefore, proceeds by way of a consistent oscillation between a radically 'historical' school whose work constitutes the real progress of the discipline even as it must always advance despite the sporadic resistances and counter-attacks of 'theologically' interested scholars. This distinction in its temporalising function constitutes the major way Kümmel's history of biblical scholarship functions as an elaborate and narrative version of his how-to handbook for student exegesis. There, too, he repeats the basic distinction at the level of the discretely schizo students he imagines as his audience, with their alternately 'objective' or 'subjective' interests in the Bible (Kümmel and Kaiser, 1963).

Never acknowledged by most historical critics, there is therefore a surprisingly messianic element to the otherwise positivistic aspirations of New Testament historiography and its waiting for the mere 'history' to come, finally liberated as it will be from the prejudices of religious desire or 'theology'.⁴ Moreover, the messianic or promissory nature of such accounts is accompanied by a fairly predictable form of messianic *askēsis*: we have only to purify ourselves of ('theological') desire and the truth will be revealed for what it is, mere history, which will soon appear in order

to do away with all those interpretive pretenders that have so long deceived us. Given the continued and fundamental significance such a form of self-description exerts within the field (whether as a tool for hierarchicalising different historical readings or, in its temporalising function, as a means to narrate disciplinary history), it is crucial that we struggle toward a clarification of this basic distinction on which the very identity of ‘historical’ criticism seems to hang.

As my initial formalization of the basic self-descriptive mechanisms suggests, it is crucial to remember that the frequent opposition of ‘theology’ and ‘history’ in this literature is a distinction being made by the historical critics. As such, the distinction may be read quite simply – and more abstractly or formally – as the means by which the field differentiates ‘good’ from ‘bad’ historical-critical productions. As we will see, this apparently simple assertion manifests a self-obstructive or *noir* logic that has operated within this field as a constitutive blind spot, guaranteeing its smooth (if unconscious) functioning for more than two centuries.

One of the radical implications of this simple recognition, for example, is that it allows us to do away with an analysis of biblical studies in terms of its ever-repeated ‘fall’ into a different discipline (‘theology’) or different mode of thought (‘religion’) which, New Testament historiography continues to assure itself, it itself is not. Instead, we can suggest that such narrations are, in fact, obfuscating forms of disciplinary self-understanding, forms that need to be replaced with a reflexive disciplinary history that is forced to read its ‘successes’ or ‘failures’ as its own, in terms more radically immanent to the discipline itself.

‘THEOLOGY’ OR ‘RELIGION’ AS THE (FETISHISTIC) SUPPLEMENT TO THE OPEN-ENDED OR FISSURED IDENTITY OF HISTORICAL CRITICISM

To interrogate the modern history of biblical studies from this vantage point, of course, is to read it through a radical epoch of its beloved opposition between ‘history’ and ‘theology’. Admittedly, in light of the genuine obsession with this traditional touchstone of self-understanding for biblical scholars, this is a radical intellectual gesture and one that brackets the basic horizon within which historical criticism could ever have appeared as historical reason or as something other than the ‘religion’ or ‘theology’ it purported to explain. To question this opposition, therefore, is to tinker with the basic mode in which the field has differentiated the historical (and modern) interpreter from its (ancient) religious object of enquiry.

It is only within the space of this transformative gamble, however, that our thinking can be liberated to explore the immanent or *noir* logic operating within our discipline, otherwise content as we are to think ourselves only through ‘theology’ as a kind of necessary ‘supplement’ or fetishistic stand-in allowing the discipline to disavow the open-endedness of its own epistemic techniques. Quite radically, therefore, if we call such a ‘theology’ (deployed by historical critics as a guarantor of their own academic productions) by its true name – the ‘supplement’ of an otherwise fissured historical-critical identity – we are freed to analyze the way ‘historical criticism’ seems to ‘work’ as a mode of knowing only because it imagines itself against a backdrop of its ever-repeated ‘fall’ into ‘theology’. Once the basic epoch is in place, therefore, one is able to see that the fundamental distinction governing two centuries of biblical scholarship may be read as an increasingly desperate attempt to conjure a kind of closure or end game for itself through a displacement of its own finitude or open-endedness onto ‘theology’. Strikingly, it is only through

‘theology’ that ‘historical criticism’ has thus far been able to present itself as ‘critical’ – or as an ‘overcoming’ of a prior (religious) prejudice.

The issue we must think about, therefore, is not (as has been asserted by two centuries of biblical studies) why biblical studies continues to fall into ‘theology’ after all these years, thus hindering our otherwise progressive advance toward a purely ‘historical’ representation. On the contrary, our question must be the distinctively ‘*noir*’ and kinky inversion of the traditional formulation: why is it, rather, that biblical studies refuses to grasp itself as a discipline except through such a staging of its own incompleteness in the form of a ghostly intruder, ‘theology’, an ‘outsider’ whose continual breaking in on historical criticism always steals from us our most precious treasure, our final discovery of a merely ‘historical’ account of religion?

Such is a kinky question to ask of our traditional mode of self-description, certainly, but the cost of not asking it is becoming increasingly – and painfully – clear. I will mention here only one example in passing. At the end of her wonderful exploration of Christian origins in *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity*, Paula Fredriksen reactivates the well-worn distinction between ‘history’ and ‘theology’ as a difference the New Testament historian deploys in order to distinguish her own productions from ‘other’ modes of interpretation.⁵ She suggests, with that ready-made distinction we have all heard before, that ‘theology’ wants to know what ‘Jesus means’ to contemporary audiences, whereas the historian denies herself such a (self-interested) question and asks only ‘what Jesus meant’ to the (non-contemporary or non-self-interested) interests of first century society (Fredriksen, 2000, p. 269). Once the basic distinction is evoked, of course, the panoply of related binary oppositions almost write themselves: theology/history, interest/disinterestedness, one’s own desire/desire of another, subject pole/object pole, interpretation/fact – in short, ‘bad’ versus ‘good’ forms of historical reconstruction. Fredriksen’s summary alludes to all of these permutations of the basic antithesis or the basic form of self-description from which she begins.

She is speaking in the traditional manner of the historical critic of the Bible, therefore, when she summarizes this (modern morality) tale of ‘the two ways’ like this: ‘The task of the current quest for the historical Jesus is fundamentally different, and its points of principle distinguish it from theology both ancient and modern’ (Fredriksen, 2000, p. 269). One of the guarantees of this allegedly fundamental and principled distinction, the self-description continues, is that theology (representing the desiring subject pole) cannot help but produce as ‘many different theological interpretations... as there are churches’ (p. 269). History, the implication runs, is not so open-ended, nor its gaze, purged as it is from such self-interested desire, as prolific.

With this fundamental distinction in place, Fredriksen’s analysis is freed from the burden of further, reflexive analysis. Given the implicit self-valorization of her opposition between ‘history’ and ‘theology’, for example, it would hardly do to explore the possibility that there may be as ‘many different’ historical interpretations as there are economic classes of historians, gendered classes of historians, regional classes of historians, types of institutional investment among historians, types of book markets for which historians write, and so on. On the contrary, ‘history’ – all tricked out here as the other of desiring interpretation – promises closure, an endgame, or the arrival of first century reality as it was (and this, apparently, in the singular)! While Fredriksen does not, in this text, translate such a self-distinction into a narrative of biblical scholarship, it is easy to see how perfectly she has set the phantasmatic stage for yet another ready-made explan-

ation of the (apparently inexplicable but nevertheless inevitable) diversity of historical-critical readings. The diversity would appear, as on scripted cue, as yet another ‘fall’ of the otherwise singular gaze of the historian into the desiring multiplicity of ‘theology’, freeing the historical critic from the analytic burden of dealing with such multiplicity in terms of her own field and as a function of historical criticism itself. At any rate, the ‘swerve’ or fund of desiring multiplicity remains as that classic ‘other’ of historical criticism, an other we tend to call ‘theology’.

As Fredriksen’s reference to ‘theological’ desire as the cause of ‘as many interpretations as there are churches’ suggests, the opposition put into play here has long since become an obstruction to any real thinking about what historical criticism is. If the discipline once upon a time struggled against the theological faculty in order to gain autonomy for its own modes of analysis, it now seems that this same historical criticism refuses to shoulder the analytic burden this autonomy implies. Even more, there is a perverse manner in which this refusal of autonomous reflexivity now masquerades as a bold declaration of its autonomous difference from ‘theology’! These are indeed kinky and self-deceptive circuits of self-description.

Without this convenient foil in religious desire or ‘theological’ modes of thinking, historical criticism would be forced to evaluate the sometimes maddening absence of agreement among historians on its own terms, without the scapegoat that has for a long time now represented not a real threat to the autonomy of historical readings but only a manufactured illusion that our otherwise secular thinking seems incapable of doing without. The type of self-description I want to liberate, therefore – and this through the bracketing of the phantasmatic staging with which we have made sense of ourselves for so long – is a ‘noir’ biblical criticism. Indeed, we need a ‘noir’ historical criticism in the precise sense that our finitude or systemic lack of closure must be accepted as historical criticism’s own, rather than foisted upon a scapegoated ‘outsider’ who always creeps in to steal the closure our discipline would otherwise attain.

To understand the history of biblical scholarship otherwise than through the fetishistic supplement of ‘theology’, it is important for us today to go back to Schweitzer’s account of the history of New Testament scholarship in *Von Reimarus zu Wrede: Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (1906/1913).⁶ Schweitzer was beginning to theorize historical Jesus scholarship in a way that does not always defer to the intrusive ghost limbs of ‘theology’ in order to explain its own history of ‘failure’ to achieve its completion as a project. As such, Schweitzer’s work offers us a site from which to think historical criticism’s ‘noir logic’ otherwise than through the hallucinatory mirroring of ‘history’ and ‘theology’. Second, if a crossing of our fundamental and phantasmatic self-descriptive scenario over against ‘theology’ demands a *noir* focus on the systemic or self-obstructions constituting biblical scholarship, Schweitzer’s *fin-de-siècle* narration of the modern history of Jesus research is likewise a good place to start. His summary and evaluation of modern New Testament scholarship, as we will see, puts a *noir* kink back into the chain of modern biblical scholarship, and this at several levels.

THE SERIAL FRAMEWORK OF SCHWEITZER’S HISTORY OF JESUS RESEARCH: A BRIEF (NOIR) SUMMARY OF VON REIMARUS ZU WREDE

Schweitzer’s narration of Jesus research from Reimarus (whose work emerged in the last quarter of the eighteenth century) to very early twentieth century biblical scholarship (which includes Schweitzer’s own) is a remarkable piece of *fin-de-siècle* analysis, in part because it presents itself

as the capstone (or headstone) of a dying epoch he alternately calls ‘modern’ and (more specifically in relation to the latter part of this ‘modern’ period) ‘liberal’.⁷ As is obvious to anyone who has worked through this classic summary of biblical scholarship, Schweitzer’s narrative operates through the repetition of a serialized tableau consisting of tumultuous misunderstanding, failed rendezvous, and a cliff-hanger expectation that, now, at long last, the biblical scholar’s union with the truly ‘historical’ Jesus might be consummated. Jesus, to say it with the peculiarly erotic texture pervading Schweitzer’s narrative, has never been had before. The first century figure has, up to this point (new generations of biblical scholars always need this assurance, apparently), eluded the advances of all previous scholars. As if to complete a love triangle through which Schweitzer narrates the history of scholarship, his serial tableau links this imagined escape of Jesus from former ‘questers’ to a fantasy that these former suitors, one and all, must have been tainted in such a way as to render them unworthy to attain their quarry. These others have only ever laid hold of cheap imitations, the serial runs, never the (ever virginal) Jesus of history.

In a phrase whose significance New Testament historiography has yet to register, Schweitzer describes his history of ‘modern’ biblical scholarship as ‘the constant succession of unsuccessful attempts (*immer wieder aufeinanderfolgenden verfehlten Versuchen*)’ to lay hold of its longed-for object of research.⁸ Within the larger narrative, however, the ever-repeated failure of biblical scholarship functions as the necessary condition for further research, as it is precisely this imagined failure that lures or spurs further researchers to be the first to crack the code or attain the elusive presence of the historical Jesus. Schweitzer does not frequently theorize this kinky deadlock, though he repeats the basic scenario endlessly. The two basic figures of the tableau are, therefore, intimately intertwined. The solicitation to a final accomplishment of the quest arrives with the promise that previous scholarship has failed, having missed the point (or the appointment). By the same token, the sense that previous scholarship has failed always carries with it a come-hither suggestion that there remains a consummation to come. Failure appears in the same moment as a promise that the password to the secret chambers of Jesus is about to be discovered or some new scheme invented that is sure to gain entrance to the ever so sweetly desired presence of the ‘historical’ Jesus, finally real and as he was – in the flesh. The narrative progress of Schweitzer’s depiction of the ‘succession of failed attempts’ to attain the historical Jesus adds to this basically ‘*noir*’ or self-obstructive plotline several twists and turns, however, which are worth plotting in more detail.

According to Schweitzer, ‘Before Reimarus, no one had attempted to form an historical conception of (*historisch zu erfassen*) the life of Jesus’ (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 14 (13)). Before Reimarus, in other words, interpreters attempted to call out the real or ‘historical’ Jesus for a go with the inadequately appealing language of the traditional creeds. ‘Come out, beloved, thou second person of the Trinity, thou incarnate divine’. Such a come on seems to Schweitzer destined to have failed, though whether or not this wooing strategy was effective for them how could we ever know (a lady never tells, and it is worth questioning whether one scholarly epoch could ever do otherwise than to fail to communicate such things to another)? Within Schweitzer’s tableau, moreover, would not such a conviction that Jesus had been discovered itself toll the death knell of the very desire that drives historical research onward? It is worth asking, therefore, whether an acceptance of another’s boast to have finally uncovered the historical Jesus could ever be tolerable to new generations of historical-Jesus scholarship, at least within the narrative structures

of Schweitzer's tale. At any rate, in the eyes of later prospects like Schweitzer, this earlier generation must certainly have failed to attain its goal. These dogmatic interpreters, Reimarus would claim, were moving much too fast to have been successful with the young thing they were hoping to attract, leaping on him as they were with their mature lingo from a developed ecclesiastical orthodoxy. Schweitzer agrees:

If, therefore, we desire to gain a historical understanding (*historisch begreifen*) of Jesus' teaching, we must leave behind what we learned in our catechism about the metaphysical divine sonship, the Trinity, and similar dogmatic conceptions, and go out into a wholly Jewish world of thought (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 18 (16)).

Schweitzer goes on to use more striking imagery to describe the 'historical' demolition of these earlier orthodox readings, particularly when he describes that world they apparently did not teach you about in (catechetical) school, the one into which all prospects must enter in order to attain the presence that eluded earlier suitors. At one point, for example, Schweitzer suggests the great historical demolitions of Reimarus and D. F. Strauss emerged because these interpreters experienced a fierce resentment toward these images of Jesus – all tricked out with those trappings of divinity he had inherited. Schweitzer explains, 'It was hate not so much of the person of Jesus as of the supernatural nimbus with which it was so easy to surround him' (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 6 (4)). Resentful of such a setting, Reimarus and Strauss became 'eager to picture [Jesus] as an ordinary person (*darstellen als einen einfachen Menschen*), to strip from him the robes of splendor with which he had been appareled...' Anxious to overcome the uppity self-refusal of Jesus amid that 'nimbus' with which he had been surrounded, these two demanded instead that he be pictured in 'the more coarse garments in which he had walked in Galilee'.

In terms of an erotic stratagem to possess the object of desire, the new tactic of Reimarus and Strauss is obvious enough in relation to the (alleged, always alleged) failure of the earlier interpreters to attain their goal. Jesus will only ever be laid hold of, they gamble, if we approach him through his youth, through that delectably naïve, spontaneous, and innocent 'history' that must have preceded all those binding formulae and oath-worthy commitments that were to emerge as Jesus came of age in the life of the church. Moreover, judging by the shock-effect these reconstructions evoked from their late eighteenth and nineteenth century readership, it seems that Reimarus and Strauss achieved considerable success with this tactic. Both, in fact, uncovered a very naughty young Jesus indeed. According to Schweitzer, the shrewd detective work of Reimarus, for example, unearthed a picture of Jesus the shock for which 'there had been nothing to prepare the world' (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 15 (14)). Schweitzer, however, confesses himself to have been strangely moved by the shocking picture, suggesting that he admired Reimarus' writing as, on the one hand, 'the language of a man who is not engaged in literary composition but is wholly concerned with the facts' (p. 16 (15)). On the other hand, Schweitzer continues, Reimarus' hard-boiled or just-the-facts approach to the aggressive stripping of the 'nimbus' that once clothed Jesus likewise 'rises to heights of passionate feeling, and then it is as though the fires of a volcano were painting lurid pictures upon dark clouds'. This stripping of Jesus, at once carefully methodical and yet swollen with passion, so shocked more pious contemporaries of Reimarus that they refused to countenance the scholar's lurid pictures, refusing to believe (after all) that the naïve

early years of Jesus had been so free-wheeling as all that. As Schweitzer suggests, the painter of such scenes was 'before his time' and found audiences (outside of Schweitzer himself) unable to bear what he wanted to show them.

Following Schweitzer's survey, new suitors would try for more than a century a less aggressive, less resentful wooing strategy, namely, 'to bring Jesus to life at the call of love (*mit der Liebe zum Leben erwecken*)' (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 7 (5)). Alas, however, (Schweitzer holding to his promise to present a 'succession of failed attempts' to consummate this quest) if Jesus had not been laid hold of by the vengeful stripping of Reimarus and Strauss, this new tactic would not avail either. These crooning scholars of orthodoxy, attempting to get a rise out of Jesus with their declarations of love, 'found it a cruel task to be honest'. Indeed, we are told, 'the world had never seen before and will never see again' a romance 'so full of pain and renunciation' as this one. Reading between the lines of one such scholarly reconstruction – which Schweitzer had already eroticized as a declaration of love – our narrator 'senses...the marks of the struggle in which [the scholar] gives up, bit by bit' all those libidinally invested pieces of his imagined beloved, such things as he 'never dreamed he would have to give up'.

One of the names under which Schweitzer narrates this era of the traumatic quest for an unattainable object is 'rationalism'. If Reimarus had resorted to a violent aggression that attempted to strip bare a Jesus with which modernity could only refuse to identify, the 'rationalists' were forever trying to heal the breach between such 'lurid pictures' of the young Jesus and those later, more developed creedal formulations by which Jesus remained respectable in modern society. If Schweitzer's *noir* 'succession of failed attempts' is to be believed, the real Jesus must have found both suitors alike intolerable, the one lusty but destructive, the other unacceptably milktoast. Schweitzer's tale rolls onward, therefore, once again leaving 'history' to designate that sweet intercourse with the 'real' Jesus that New Testament historians are compelled to imagine as missing from all prior reconstructive scenarios.

The serial running on without interruption, Schweitzer soon lands on the work of D. F. Strauss, which he narrates as the most important 'landmark' for his own understanding of the history of scholarship. Indeed, Schweitzer's survey of biblical scholarship categorizes all Jesus research according to whether it was produced before or after Strauss (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 11 (10)). What is most significant for our *noir* focus on Schweitzer's narration is the way this messianic splitting of time coincides with the moment biblical criticism began to be explicit about the fact that it only ever approaches its desired object through the desire of the other. Strauss, after all, installed New Testament studies snugly within the reflective erotics of Hegel whose Logic Strauss had enjoyed teaching before he lost his academic posts in the furor created by his *Das Leben Jesu Kritisch Bearbeitet* (1835/1840).⁹ Reading the Gospel stories of Jesus as the products of individual and collective desire, Strauss' category of 'myth' promised a form of disclosure that had not yet appeared in this august history of scholarship. Find out what they, the (first century) other, wanted from Jesus, Strauss gambled, and you will uncover the real thing.

After Strauss, there is really only one more crucial player in the story of repeated failure that sets the stage for Schweitzer's depiction of his own (now, finally, at last) final breakthrough in this story of erotic deferral. Predictably enough, Strauss' approach was deemed unacceptable by those trying to build a (narcissistic) bridge between the young Jesus and those matured images with which they identified both him and themselves. Strauss was called, therefore, 'too skeptical',

or ‘too critical’, just as Reimarus’ had been. This time Schweitzer’s narrative presents the subsequent suitors as establishing a variation of the earlier ‘rationalist’ bridge-building approach, a variation that would be the hegemonic form of Jesus research through the end of the nineteenth century. This new approach Schweitzer calls the ‘liberal’ epoch of ‘modern’ scholarship, and, once again, the erotic gamble of these questers was on a basic (and attractive) sameness between themselves and their beloved object. Like their ‘rationalist’ predecessors, they hoped to join together the eighteenth century appeal to the mature (and, as these things go, ever expanding) church and its theological interpretation of Jesus with a less lurid image of the innocent young thing.

In religio-political terms, the result of such a gamble was a strange half century of scholarship issuing in one after another ode to the exuberant young thing who had, in addition to this youthful spontaneity (and this is the real trick of the ‘liberal’ lives of Jesus), a plan to take over the world. These were deliciously paradoxical years for biblical scholarship, fueled as they were by an enticing vision of world domination without the ickiness of institutions or creedal promises. The ‘liberal’ Jesus was at once spontaneous, individualistic, free, and the architect of a new and expansive world kingdom. By the late nineteenth century, the inherent tensions within this basic model were leaving people cold – and not just within biblical studies. Most important for our purposes, Schweitzer presents his own work as part of a turn against this kind of thinking. Indeed, as if he were now ready to be caught up in his own *noir* narrative, Schweitzer appears on the scene in order to claim his own new approach as the one, now, at long last, has finally gone all the way with Jesus. He even designates his interpretation as the one that renders Jesus ‘fully eschatological’. By this, Schweitzer meant that he had uncovered the Jewish and apocalyptic *mentalité* by which Jesus made sense of himself and the world. True to form, however, and in good *noir* fashion, this longed for event of consummation results in a surprising and traumatic reversal. Among other things, we must consider what biblical studies almost never explores, the fact that this final tryst resulted in Jesus coming down with a diagnosable disorder and a one-way ticket to the asylum.

GOING ALL THE WAY: THE END OF ‘MODERN’ OR ‘LIBERAL’ SCHOLARSHIP AND THE LAST BIBLICAL CRITIC

As he did quite often, Schweitzer strikes a Hegelian pose in the introductory and concluding sections of his survey.¹⁰ There Schweitzer gestures directly to the *noir* devices we are uncovering when he summarizes his narrative of ‘the constant succession of unsuccessful attempts’ to experience the real Jesus by claiming repeatedly that the passionate longings of previous seekers had, ironically, been the very obstruction blocking their way to the desired object (Schweitzer, 2001, pp. 3-4, cf. 479). On the other hand, he sets himself up to repeat the (endlessly repeated) moment of failed rendezvous when he claims that he himself, now at last, has solved the puzzle, attaining the real Jesus through a ‘fully eschatological approach’. Schweitzer is not at all peevisish, after all, about claiming that, with this approach, he has gone all the way, or that Jesus has become ‘fully’ eschatological and, therefore, finally laid bare as he is in the flesh. As his well-known conclusion to the survey of Jesus research suggests (a notorious day-after bragging session), the trick to capturing this elusive presence was to approach Jesus ‘as one unknown (als ein Unbekannter)’

(Schweitzer, 2001, p. 487 (642)). Jesus responds to the anonymous encounter, apparently, and, Schweitzer continues, even solicits or ‘approaches’ us in this mode.

The names that were given to Jesus as a result of the late-Jewish circumstances in which he lived, such as Messiah, Son of Man, and Son of God, have become historical parables for us. By adopting these titles for himself he was expressing in language of his own time his idea of himself as an authoritative ruler. We have no terms today that can express what he means for us.

He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside,
he came to those men who did not know who he was (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 487
(642)).

No one else in the entire history of the quest for the historical Jesus, Schweitzer tells us, had been willing to let Jesus be totally different from us – or, as he puts it elsewhere, a ‘stranger or a riddle (ein Fremdling odern ein Rätsel) to our time’ (Schweitzer, 1906, p. 397).¹¹ For this refusal, they have all paid with a failure to unite with their longed-for object of desire. As Schweitzer famously asserts, all the others had only ever ‘seen themselves’ in that very moment they thought to have laid hold of the real Jesus. By contrast, he implies, the ‘fully eschatological’ approach has actually broken through to the other side of these masturbatory or narcissistic fantasies. Schweitzer has seen Jesus in his non-modern otherness.

There is much more at stake here than is generally recognized among historical critics quick to repeat Schweitzer’s praise of ‘history’ or the fact that he describes a ‘fully eschatological Jesus’ as the most accurate fulfillment of such a method.¹² Again, Schweitzer’s understanding of ‘eschatology’ is not far from Hegel’s: ‘eschatology’, for Schweitzer, may be said to be an expression of a radical otherness that negates all those worlds through which the ‘rationalists’ or ‘liberals’ of the ‘modern’ epoch had hoped to find some basic link uniting them to Jesus. As Schweitzer makes absolutely clear, ‘eschatology’ is a word for a subjective withdrawal from the established order, a radical ‘negativity’, that renders Jesus a ‘destroyer of worlds’ (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 4). Indeed, in the Hegelian terms Schweitzer’s own narrative echoes, the fantastically mythical or anti-realist realm of ‘eschatology’ may be said to be another name of that

night, the interior of nature, existing here – pure self – in phantasmagoric representations it is night everywhere: here a bloody head suddenly shoots up and there another white shape, only to disappear as suddenly. We see this night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a night which turns terrifying (Hegel, 1983, p. 87).

It is only in the light of such comparisons that Schweitzer’s basic gamble on the ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus makes sense. For Schweitzer, the one who sees the ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus sees him in his implacable demand that the ‘world’ undergo a revolutionary *Destruktion* that unleashes its suppressed potential. At the same moment, such a vision brings the (otherwise) ‘modern’ or ‘liberal’ scholar face to face with an otherness against which, Schweitzer claims, the ‘world’ of calculable, totalisable, and foundational structures of modern thought exists to exclude.

The crucial point to be made at the moment, however, is that, in good *noir* fashion, Schweitzer’s final (or *fin-de-siècle*) moment of triumphant consummation with the ‘historical’ Jesus somehow, inexplicably, becomes a moment of betrayal and devastation of the beloved object.

This affair, to be sure, ended badly. To understand the remarkable manner in which Schweitzer's work thus becomes entangled in his own *noir* devices, we need to let this picture of the jubilant finale of the Quest fade to black. Then, after a brief delay, our field of vision opens out once more onto a book Schweitzer wrote seven years after that final jubilant scene. The new book is called *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus*.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN THE AGE OF BIO-POWER: SCHWEITZER'S 'FULLY ESCHATOLOGICAL' CHRIST AND THE DEGENERATE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS.

Significantly, in this respect, Schweitzer wrote *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus* after he left his academic post in biblical studies and as he was on his way to becoming a licensed medical doctor.¹³ In fact, the study was completed in partial fulfillment of requirements for a degree in medicine, which Schweitzer would go on to use to establish a medical mission in the French colony of Lambaréné, Africa. At the beginning of this work, the former biblical critic's voiceover brings us up to speed:

I have undertaken in the present book to examine thoroughly the conjecture which first appeared in David Friedrich Strauss, and which more recently has been repeated by many a historian and doctor, that the Jesus who lived in the world of ideas contained in the Book of Daniel and in the late Jewish apocalyptic literature and who considered himself the 'Son of Man' and the 'Messiah' soon to appear in supernatural glory, is to be adjudged in some fashion as psychopathic.

I have felt a certain compulsion to undertake this task, since in my *Geschichte der Leben-Jesus-Forschung* I have brought out the visionary in the Nazarene's thought-world more vividly than any of the investigator's who formerly worked in this field, and so had been constantly reminded by H. J. Holtzmann and others that I had portrayed a Jesus whose object-world looked like a structure of fantasies. There were warning allusions – on occasion – to the medical books which believed that the 'paranoia' of the Jewish Messiah had been proved (Schweitzer, 1948, p. 27f (italics added)).

Žižek's 'hard boiled' *noir* films could not play the scene any better. After the affair, after finally going all the way with the (now) 'fully' eschatological Jesus, Schweitzer finds himself lamenting that he has discovered in Jesus that fascinating realm of the 'non-modern' or the 'totally different' only to realize that this realm has been taken over by an elaborate panoply of clinical practices ready to ferret out, lay bare, diagnose, and treat many of the exotic experiences Schweitzer claimed to have discovered in Jesus. Indeed, the ready and admiring reception of Schweitzer's work among the growing number of 'psychopathological' interpreters of religion shocked the biblical critic who seemed now to have said too much or to have gone too far in handing over Jesus to 'his own time', and this as the (ironically trans-historical) 'destroyer of worlds'. The unexpected and ironic reception is indeed one of the more remarkable dramas of biblical scholarship in the age of bio-power: the fascinating realm of cultural otherness turns out to coincide,

in this case, with the realm of a ‘degenerate’ physiology and a fevered object-world structured around a ‘tissue of fantasies’. Schweitzer had gazed deeply into that dark ‘night of the world’ he perceived within the eye of the ‘eschatological’ other only to realize, with dismay, that the psychopathological interpreters were there looking with him – and dreaming up a cure for such anti-realist self-extractions or such world-negating ‘otherness’. Moreover, these psychopathological writers were inclined to consider Schweitzer’s historical analyses as mere prolegomena for a more sure mode of knowing derived from the natural sciences. If one really wants to break through to an understanding of the otherness of the other, apparently, one needs to be able to operate directly on the body.¹⁴

This is not to say that Schweitzer’s shock and dismay was translated into a critique of the medicalising gaze as a technological form of control over that ‘life’ about which he (a former student of the sociologist and life-philosopher Georg Simmel) was so fond of writing.¹⁵ On the contrary, Schweitzer attacked these pathologising interpretations with only very specific weapons of the *Geisteswissenschaften* as these were made available to him from his former career as a biblical scholar. That he does so at the very moment of leaving biblical studies for medicine, and this in order to perform ‘a direct service for humanity’ that was unavailable to him as a philosopher or Bible scholar, is an irony he seems not to have recognized (Schweitzer, 1933, p. 103). On his way to the field of ‘medical missions’, after all, the master of the human sciences (and that biblical scholarship to which this epistemic regime gave birth) seems not so different from the pathologising functionaries of a mechanistically imagined religious body – at least not so different as Schweitzer claims to be in *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus*. All of them, after all, seem to have come to identify the body itself as the locus of religion’s truth.¹⁶

Instead, Schweitzer’s critique of the natural sciences in *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus* occurs in name only, and the book is, therefore, a mere spectacle of the contest between the natural and the human sciences. In fact, there are more than a few comical moments to be found in the book as Schweitzer argues against assertions that Jesus was psychologically ‘diseased’ – and this because of a ‘hybrid’ heredity leaving him prone to paranoia, delusions of grandeur, and a disdain of healthy family life or normal sexual relations – by claiming that the psychopathological interpreters rely too much on John over the Synoptics or that their implicit answer to the Synoptic problem is insufficient! Schweitzer is a ship passing in the night.

When he does come around to reflect directly on the chasm separating these types of enquiry, Schweitzer simply dismisses the claims of his opponents as the misguided notions of those who have gone ‘too far’ in their biological reduction of human experience. It is safe to say, therefore, that the biblical critic never really strays from the methods of more traditional historiography in order to engage those who would pathologise religion – and his ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus – as one or another form of a degenerative nervous disorder. One could say the same for the pathologists of history, of course, as they did not often trouble themselves about many of the basic conclusions to be gleaned from the historical study of earliest Christianity or even about the problematic nature of the ancient sources through which they could have any access to the (degenerate) body of the historical Jesus in the first place. To be sure, Schweitzer’s own lack of engagement with the fundamental issues here may be due to the fact that he was taking a piece of his own advice about degree requirements. As he would later encourage Edwin Mellon – who

also left his career (as an oil baron and cattle rancher) in order to ‘do something for humanity’ as a ‘medical missionary’:

Above all: do not try to pass your exams brilliantly. Be satisfied with simply getting through them somewhat honorably.

And don’t write a pretentious doctoral thesis! Take a limited subject that won’t require vast amounts of research... just enough to get your degree (Schweitzer, 1996, p. 7).

As if to totally ignore the psychopathological interpretations in the very act of engaging them, in fact, Schweitzer’s analysis returns to the history of biblical scholarship he knew so well. He even returns to that work that divided his narrative of ‘modern’ biblical scholarship into a ‘before’ and ‘after’ – *Das Leben Jesu* of D. F. Strauss. In another comical moment, Schweitzer claims that even the suspicion about Jesus’ precarious mental health ‘first appeared in David Friedrich Strauss’ (Schweitzer, 1948, p. 28). To be sure, Strauss’ accusation that Jesus was insane was more an aesthetic flourish than a medical diagnosis, and the mention of his name here is the first of many attempts by Schweitzer to reign in the appropriation of history by the natural sciences by relying on the old, familiar techniques of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. Instead of reflecting specifically on the disparity of the basic possibilities of these two modes of inquiry, he opts instead to juxtapose naively these types of studies as if they were speaking the same language. While Schweitzer may have elided – or eluded – the stakes of this interpretive contest for the *Geisteswissenschaften*, the author of the most influential psychopathological study of Jesus does not do so. On the contrary, there is a way in which the main ‘psychopathological interpreter’ Schweitzer engages is more aggressive than the biblical critic in acknowledging the depth and the stakes of this struggle between the natural and human sciences to be the guarantor of religion’s truth. This author, Charles Binet-Sanglé, in fact, presents his own psychopathological reading of Jesus as the fulfillment of the modern history of biblical interpretation.

BINET-SANGLÉ AND THE END OF BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP AS A HUMAN SCIENCE: THE NEW QUEST FOR AN ENTROPIC RELIGIOUS BODY OF JESUS

In the preface to the second edition of his *La Folie de Jésus: son Hérité, sa Constitution, sa Physiologie*, the psychopathologist Binet-Sanglé describes his surprise at the way certain people of ‘significant worldly stature’ have been able to praise his work, and he thanks those review editors who were not afraid to publish discussions of his book despite their fear of losing affluent backers (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. ii). Significantly, Binet-Sanglé proceeds to list, in four synoptic columns, other ‘scandalous and subversive theories’ that were, at one time or another, condemned by the ecclesiastical powers. Thus, in the tradition of Columbus and Lamarck, Binet-Sanglé presents his own work, a scandalous and subversive breakthrough of modern science.

Indeed, with this new leap forward, Binet-Sanglé claims to have produced a new scientific device that enables him to go beyond all previous investigations of the historical Jesus. Mentioning Ernest Renan and D. F. Strauss, Binet-Sanglé asks himself whether the analysis of Jesus had not been performed ‘many times before and by men of valor’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 5). Binet-Sanglé is unimpressed by the implicit prohibition implied by his own rhetorical question, however,

claiming that, despite ‘a man’s valor’ the individual necessarily remains within the ‘media of his epoch’ – and the documents and methods this mediating environment makes available to the individual in question (p. 5).

To make his point clear, Binet-Sanglé cites an example of these evolutionary environmental leaps that are of more significance than the individual researcher. He invites his readers to imagine the slow and painstaking progress of astronomers in their discovery of new stars until (‘imagined by a physician, designed by an engineer, and constructed by craftsmen’), a much more powerful telescope makes possible the discovery of many new stars by even ‘the most humble seeker’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 6). Within this systems-focused reading of the history of science, Binet-Sanglé articulates biblical studies as a *passé* mode of operation, adding that since the work of Renan and Strauss, ‘innumerable and anonymous collaborations of men of genius’ have worked unceasingly not only in the historical sciences but also in anthropology, psychology, and the psychology of pathology (p. 6). The historical methodologies of Strauss and Renan have become outmoded, therefore, not by virtue of a linear advance within biblical studies, but by the emergence of a new assemblage cutting across various fields, produced by unceasing and essentially ‘anonymous’ collaborations. The ‘media’ within which knowledge occurs, in other words, no longer favor the old methods of biblical studies.

As if to placate the anxieties of the human sciences he claims to displace, Binet-Sanglé goes on to suggest that the investigation of Christian origins requires an ‘ataraxia’ or an ‘absolute impartiality’ that only the ‘man of science (*l’homme de science*)’ – with his newly engineered and implemented visual technologies – is able to provide. The statement is a pointed criticism against the *Geisteswissenschaften*, and Binet-Sanglé chides previous biblical scholarship for its lack of natural scientific rigor, a problem it can only resolve through ‘the method of the natural sciences’, making sure to specify in this respect, ‘psychology’ as a ‘branch of anthropology’. Binet-Sanglé even cites the objections of the Parisian professor Edmond Stapfer, author of the multi-volume *Jésus-Christ avant son ministère*, who claimed against interpreters like Binet-Sanglé that one should not ‘study the moral and religious life as one studies natural history’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 7).

Compared to Schweitzer’s own avoidance of any real engagement between the basic question of the distinction between the natural and human sciences, Binet-Sanglé’s arguments are at least pointed and direct. Stapfer, Binet-Sanglé narrates, shored up his resistance to the use of scientific models in explaining religious or moral experience by referring to Pascal’s famous dictum that the heart has reasons reason itself cannot comprehend. Apart from the fact that Stapfer already cedes much of the debate by equating the human sciences with the ‘heart’ and the natural sciences with the ‘head’, his use of Pascal would prove unfortunate. Binet-Sanglé, after all, had written another book about the beloved French philosopher, concluding that such comments of Pascal should be interpreted as the weak-minded ravings of a neurasthenic disorder!¹⁷¹⁸

Binet-Sanglé will have nothing to do with the tabooed and protected space in which Stapfer places the inner regions of psychic experience, unreachable as they would be there by the normal conditions of ‘objective’ knowing. If Stapfer claims that ‘the soul is able to have intuitions of truth that objective observations would never yield to the scientist’, Binet-Sanglé counters by accusing the New Testament scholar of trying to throw out the thinking brains of a modern readership so they will not recognize the weakness of Stapfer’s (or Pascal’s) ‘merely witty’ argu-

mentation. The very resistance to the natural sciences suggests to the psychopathologist a culture of shoddy thinking and – worse – widespread mental degeneration. Binet-Sanglé goes on to orientalise the problem by claiming that Europe is caught up in a ‘Japanese struggle’ in which ‘speaking takes the place of power (*l’adresse tient lieu de vigueur*)’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 7). As a further twist of this medicalising and orientalising screw, Binet-Sanglé adds that the triumph of the intuitive and soulish knowing of a Stapfer or Pascal would render Europe unable to reject either the ‘analogies of the orthodox writers’ or other forms of mystical musings from ‘the Lalitavistara of the Hindu authors to the passive meditations of Henriett Couesdon’ (pp. 7-8).

Binet-Sanglé, of course, is not so easily duped as a degenerate general readership might be, and neither will he be duped by his opponents’ ‘oriental’ modes of argumentation. He refuses, in short, to transmit a thinking that originates in mechanical-physical or neurasthenic breakdown: ‘Now the heart does not have reasons, that is incontestable. On the other hand, as the author of the *Pensées* wrote this phrase, he was suffering from a cerebral ailment that showed itself, in the autopsy, by the presence of softening tissue’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 7). Softening brains make for reasonless thinking and lame dicta that may influence the easily duped mass reader or the ‘Japanese’ – but not the ‘man of science’ or his methodological apparatus. Intuitive hearts may not have reasons, but a mechanistic focus on the religious body of such visionaries certainly does. Indeed, against the passionate intuition that hopes to transcend the limiting authority of ‘objective’ experience, Binet-Sanglé opposes the mechanisms of a calculable and extended space in which the ‘objective’ may appear for measurement, calculation, and diagnosis. These mechanisms are the perfect medicine for the ‘negativity’ and subjective ‘world-negation’ discovered in Schweitzer’s ‘fully eschatological Jesus’. As Binet-Sanglé explains:

We know that a man is the product of his heredity and his environment and that physiological and psychological phenomena are as rigorously determined as physical and chemical phenomena. We know that we are machines to which is applicable the law of the conservation of energy. We know that the ignorant, the hypocrite, the liar, and the criminal are as little responsible for their feelings or their actions as the electric machine is for its burning hot and sparking or the fatal accidents it can cause (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 3).

Only within such a calculable space of discrete cause and effect can one replace the causeless cause (or reasonless reason) of the ‘heart’ with the controllable mechanisms of the ‘man of science’. Against the biblical scholar Stapfer, therefore, the psychopathologist asserts that there must be but one mode of access to the soul of humanity, that mode made possible by what Binet-Sanglé goes on to call, significantly, an ‘arsenal’ of ‘psychological laboratories’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 14). This arsenal makes possible a negotiation of Christian origins that all the biblical scholarship up to this point could not have imagined.

One of the critiques he levies against the historians, for example, is that their methods lack a secure ground (in the diagnosable neurasthenic or entropic body of the historical Jesus) from which they might combat the proliferation of intuitive fancy and its multitude of conflicting interpretations. Without this foundation, historians can do nothing more than make ever more complex the textual difficulties surrounding the interpretation of Jesus.¹⁹ Binet-Sanglé opts instead for a more controllable, positivistic, and immediate relation to the biblical texts as sources,

claiming that ‘it is extremely rare’ that ancient historians offer accounts ‘invented from whole cloth’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 14). Scientific investigators should take the ancient stories as ‘true (*vrai*)’ unless the story can be shown to be created through the bad faith of an author, false because of the universal laws of nature, or contradicted by some other and more reliable account (p. 14). One simply cannot get a significant grip on the neurasthenic body of the historical Jesus unless one accepts that the canonical Gospels were, as Binet-Sanglé suggests, ‘naïve and sincere biographies of incontestable historical value’ (p. 15).

It is in the name of a desire to ground meaning in the mechanized religious body, however, that Binet-Sanglé condemns D. F. Strauss for having ‘lost himself in mythism’ and having, thereby, substituted a literary study of allegory and symbol for a more circumscribed form of investigation in psychopathological phenomena that one could interpret as symptoms of mechanistic entropies (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 15). Binet-Sanglé necessarily replaces Strauss’s focus on the desire of the first century other (which produces the mythical texts in question) with naïve but sincere historical documents that promise access to the historical body of Jesus.

In light of the way biblical scholarship continues to repeat many of Binet-Sanglé’s distinctions in the form of ‘history’ versus ‘theology’, it is worth pointing out here that Binet-Sanglé’s metaphors about the ‘arsenal’ of psychological apparatuses or his expressed desire to prod the sick body of Jesus are not at all incidental. The controls of the laboratory and the grounding presence of the mechanistic (and, thereby, controllable) religious body are a necessary component of that apparatus which promises to excavate a solitary truth of natural science over against the plural and uncontrollable resources of a ‘heart’ that has run free of its (brain-softened) head. Returning once more to the intuitions of Stapfer, Binet-Sanglé eventually summarizes: ‘The tragedy is that ideas acquired in this [intuitive] manner constitute in their ensemble an incoherent and contradictory system, while the data of science form a totally homogenous and coherent [system]’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 80). To repeat Binet-Sanglé in Foucauldian terms, we may say that it is only the drive to a unitary meaning that assures the larger system it will find in the interpretation of religion a ‘docile’ fact or a functional, usable piece of ‘objective’ reality. The rest is an excess that must be mapped onto this system of ‘objective’ reality or else disavowed as dangerous, meaningless, or both.

Indeed, as if harboring a chaos that would forever resist its inclusion within scientific systematization, Stapfer’s ‘pietistic’ and ‘Protestant’ intuitions must necessarily be excluded from any place of shelter within the socially recognized space of rationality. Above all, Binet-Sanglé argues, one must resist the temptation to allow religion to be held to a different standard than scientific rationality. On this point stands or falls the beneficent rule of scientific knowledge over the otherwise chaotic world: ‘If there were two modes of studying humanity, one destined for the vulgar, the other reserved for mystics, all the god-crazed in our asylums would have the right to censure the work of the psychiatric wardens (alienistes) by the [very] faculties of [Stapfer’s] Protestant theology’ (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 8).

Thus, much more clearly than Schweitzer, Binet-Sanglé begins to uncover some of the real hermeneutical stakes of biblical interpretation in an age of the clinic. The psychopathological interpreter, at least, is ready to proceed with an exegetical autopsy of the early Christian texts and the mechanistic and entropic body they have come to signify within the scientific ‘arsenal’ or the ‘media’ of knowledge at the turn of the twentieth century. In this respect, there is a striking pathos in the fact that *La Folie de Jésus* pictures on its title page a facsimile copy of Holbein’s

striking rendition of Jesus' emaciated and ashen corpse, laid out on a slab in such a way that it offers a perfect side-view of the body (Binet-Sanglé 1908). The image haunts Binet-Sanglé's entire discussion, as Jesus remains at play in this struggle between the human and natural sciences – and, indeed, between Schweitzer and Binet-Sanglé – precisely because his corpse cannot be procured as evidence or because it cannot thus be laid out on an operating table.

Unlike the case of Pascal, apparently, an effective diagnosis of the entropic neurological makeup of Jesus must forever remain at the level of a more indirect and symptomatological exercise. The missing corpse of Jesus will not suffer the necessary prodding that could otherwise reveal the promised secrets of the psychopathological method. This is the great tragedy of the psychopathological method, perhaps, as it might otherwise have been able to declare Jesus' more radical sayings something akin to the entropic sparking or breakdowns of a machine – at any rate, not something for which the degenerate could be held responsible. Nevertheless, Binet-Sanglé urges, the enterprise is not a total loss, even if the autopsy in question must be performed on a textual proxy rather than Jesus himself, those 'naïve but sincere' 'biographies' of Jesus we find in the Bible. All is not lost, even if the autopsy must be carried out in the space of a library instead of modernity's 'arsenal' of 'psychology labs' (Binet-Sanglé, 1908, p. 14). In lieu of digging around in the brainpan, the 'man of science' must console himself in this case with a realization that the library also 'contains psychological ore of considerable value'.

BEYOND BINET-SANGLÉ: BIBLICAL STUDIES IN/AS THE AGE OF BIO-POWER

The missed encounter between Binet-Sanglé and Schweitzer, not to mention the epistemic regimes these two represent, mirrors intimately the missed encounter with the body of the historical Jesus that haunts every page of Binet-Sanglé's remarkable *La Folie de Jésus*. Without that sunken corpse the volume so exquisitely portrays on its title page, Binet-Sanglé is forced to substitute texts for the body he really wishes he could probe, measure, and diagnose. Jesus' body, after all, would have been the only guarantor of that truth promised by the apparatuses of regularizing control and measurement Binet-Sanglé believed to be the great leap forward in recent science, subversive and scandalous at it might first appear to the rear-guard among the traditional historians. Had the body been available for such a fitting up with these regimens and instruments of analysis, it could have functioned as the site of this final confrontation between the two forms of knowing, a final place of contestation from which one or the other could have emerged, finally, as the guarantor of what religion is, or how religion is to be known – the indistinguishability of these two questions marking the limits of modernity's thinking of the religious.

Within the limits of that *noir* logic that is not disconnected from the productions of bio-power more generally, such a final settling of accounts would only have lasted for a time. Even if, as Binet-Sanglé promised, biblical criticism were to be ousted or proclaimed a now *passé* guarantor of religion's truth by the newly emergent 'arsenal' of the psychopathologists, this could only mean that the natural sciences themselves would soon have begun to experience in relation to Jesus that '*noir* logic' which establishes a perpetual gap between what the field has 'proven' and the imagined 'reality' for which it believes itself to be searching. That '*noir* logic' of self-obstruction – or the systemic and necessary failure that functions, ironically, to guarantee the possibility of further research – would have begun to haunt the natural sciences in relation to Jesus just as it had the human sciences for so long. This gap would have spurred them ever onward to produce

more studies and newer tactics that would (now, finally, at last) overcome all the ‘failures’ that had yet delayed the consummation of their quest.

This is important to say inasmuch as we hope to recognize the methodological and structural similarities between a ‘*noir* logic’, ‘bio-power’, the ‘*Geisteswissenschaften*’, and the ‘natural sciences’. At a certain formal level they are not distinct, however, and it is extremely important to say so. In a Heideggerian manner of speaking, all exemplify a drive to make ‘reality’ totally accessible for use (or, for ‘knowledge’) and, therefore, they must all bear the wounds of an ironic reversal in which such a drive itself produces ‘unknown’ regions that forever spur the process to new exploits of disclosure. As Foucault suggests similarly in the conclusion to the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, the (dialectical) irony of ‘bio-power’ is that its very attempt to make everything efficiently available (or, as he liked to say, ‘docile’) is the force that produces more and more territories that have, it imagines, ‘escaped’ its systematization, this dynamic driving the system toward ever new forms of disclosure and control (Foucault, 1978, pp. 135-159).²⁰

Even if Binet-Sanglé had ‘won’ the struggle for disciplinary ownership of Jesus through some magical conjuration of that figure’s degenerate and neurasthenic body, the psychopathologist would still have fallen prey to the ‘*noir* logic’ of the necessary failure that spurs our forms of knowing onward within an epoch of bio-power. As it turned out, the natural sciences left this albatross for the human sciences, at least in regard to the historical Jesus – mostly because that site which could have guaranteed a return on an investment by their newly constructed apparatuses and methods (thus exemplifying their disclosive effectiveness) could not be procured. In the absence of this decisive performance, biblical studies would muddle on much as it did before the missed encounter that constituted the heart of this simulated showdown.

Several significant conclusions can be drawn from this peculiar moment of the missed encounter between Binet-Sanglé and Schweitzer, however. First, it seems significant to me, once more, that there is more to say about the troubled interstice between the natural and human sciences in relation to biblical studies than the simple fact that Schweitzer’s proclamation of a fetishised ‘otherness’ of Jesus was, at the turn of the century, subject to appropriation by a medicalising ‘arsenal’ in which such an ‘otherness’ could be diagnosed and, in theory at least, fixed. If only Binet-Sanglé could have had access to that body, the ‘tissue of fantasies’ constituting Jesus’ ‘eschatology’ as a negation of the ‘objective’ world may have been diagnosed and solved. The mechanical ‘breakdown’ could have been fixed and Jesus re-inserted within the common system of ‘objective’ reality.

Such an articulation of the striking *noir* twist waiting for Schweitzer’s own revelation of the (finally) ‘historical’ Jesus is true enough as far as it goes. Indeed, there could hardly be a better example of the age of ‘bio-power’ and its ever-modified efforts to transform an open-ended or chaotic force (like Binet-Sanglé’s ‘Protestant intuition’) into a useful, structured, efficient, or ‘docile’ part of the larger cultural complex in which it finds its ‘objectivity’. When religious ‘intuition’ and the utterance of a madman become indistinguishable – both alike consigned to the ‘asylum’ within which the pronouncements of scientific guarantors of the ‘objective’ world are immune to critique – we are undoubtedly witnessing, and in a dramatic way, the ‘anatomopolitical’ directions of the psychopathological method. If the one is allowed, Binet-Sanglé asserts, the other cannot be controlled, with the implication that both must be warehoused and guarded – this exclusion guaranteeing the reality of the ‘objective’ world.

While New Testament studies tend to follow Schweitzer in seeing only a basic difference between such pathologising methods and the ‘human sciences’ with which we continue to imagine ourselves, we must not forget that Binet-Sanglé makes such assertions about the asylum in the name of an ‘objective’ reality whose right to existence can only be guaranteed by suppressing all such ‘intuitive’ rebellions against it – whether the ‘madman’ or the desiring productions of ‘religion’ more generally. In this respect, and as Fredriksen’s initial juxtaposition of the unitary reading of ‘historical’ reason over against the polymorphous (and, therefore, perverse) productions of ‘theology’ makes clear, the basic form of self-definition deployed by many New Testament historians today is structurally homologous (if more polite) to that of Binet-Sanglé. Both share a power-laden gesture to the ‘objective’ world ‘as it is (or was)’ – a sphere that can only be disclosed truly through the ‘arsenal’ of methods the speaker of such distinctions thinks herself to wield. Once the initial bid to power is made, ‘other’ readings are left to be read as merely ‘subjective’, one form or another of a ‘tissue of fantasies’ that cannot be compared to the authoritative pronouncements of the *‘l’homme de science’*.

Similarly, as our elaboration of the *‘noir logic’* of Schweitzer’s work makes clear, he did not escape the basic and productive aporiae that Foucault (or Heidegger) believed to be driving forward modernity’s epistemic regimes of truth-as-control either. At the same time, it should be mentioned in closing that Schweitzer’s description of the ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus doubled as an initial attempt to break the aporetic deadlock that a *‘noir logic’* or ‘bio-power’ establishes within historical criticism of the Bible.

CONCLUSION: PAINT IT BLACK, OR, WHY THE FUTURE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES SHOULD ACCEPT ITS OWN FINITUDE AND SAY YES TO ITS *NOIR* LOGIC!

There is, in other words, an intriguing oscillation within Schweitzer’s work. On the one hand, it often seems that he was himself caught up in that *noir* narrative he trots out so wonderfully as the story (operating behind the back) of a century of biblical scholarship. On the other hand, his attempt to designate a ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus as an irrepressible and world-destroying force may be read as an attempt to step out of the *‘noir logic’* he so accurately diagnosed within modern biblical scholarship – and this by attempting to name the alterity or the unsayable that inhabits historical criticism itself, plaguing it from within, compelling it to produce its ‘history of failed attempts’ to catch its quarry. In short, there are moments in Schweitzer’s writings when he seems to be doing what I am urging historical critics to do now, to claim the finitude of historical criticism as our own rather than to disavow such a constitutive limit by projecting it onto another discipline or some other ‘outside’ of the field.

Consider the generally unrecognized but striking way that Schweitzer claims to ‘hand over’ Jesus to ‘his own’ historical epoch, and this ‘more thoroughly’ than everyone before him, only to find in that ‘historical’ Jesus a trans-historical ‘otherness’ that itself exceeds all forms of explicability in terms of historical analysis. This is a remarkable claim, particularly as it comes from a thinker who is often paraded about as a champion of ‘history’ over other modes of discourse. As we have seen, Schweitzer claims that ‘modern’ and ‘liberal’ historical criticism had been about a fool’s errand of trying to build a universal edifice of worldhood from an essentially world-negating restlessness of spirit (or subjective ‘negativity’) that Schweitzer calls Jesus’ ‘eschatology’. In so doing the ‘modern’ and ‘liberal’ thinkers committed themselves to an impossible gamble

on a basic similarity or universality through which modern readers might link themselves to Jesus in solidarity. This gamble and the bridges it would build Schweitzer claims to have proven false. From out of the ashes of this demolished foundation on which ‘modernity’ had hoped to establish its world, however, the biblical critic claims to observe the rising of a ‘spiritual force’ which historical modes of knowing cannot comprehend. As he remarks at one point, ‘Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from him and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any kind of historical discovery’ (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 479 (632)).

In fact, Schweitzer suggests, ‘history’ has always been incapable of unleashing the spiritual energies he claims to observe precisely in this post-‘modern’ or post-‘liberal’ and (therefore) ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus. The historians had thought to find in Jesus a foundation for effective world-building – the structure of a ‘modern’ or ‘liberal’ world – only to realize that Jesus was, instead, a ‘destroyer of worlds’ and the embodiment of an ‘otherness’ against which modernity’s own project could only ever exclude or misrecognize as sameness. These ideas constitute the gist of both the introduction and conclusion of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*. In good Hegelian (and *noir*) fashion, the accomplishment of the ‘historical’ task, ironically enough, throws its own ligatures out of joint. ‘History’ fulfills its project in Schweitzer’s ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus only to realize that it has undermined its own authority at the very moment of its greatest accomplishment, and this by revealing through history a restless force of alterity that is itself transcendent or incomprehensible to the very historiography from which it emerged.

We should not miss the way Schweitzer’s project may thus be read as an attempt to articulate an ‘otherness’ that the modern epistemic regime of ‘bio-power’ (whether as the natural or human sciences) could not organize, control, understand, or know. Schweitzer asserts, for example, that the ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus is a ‘spiritual power’ transcendent to ‘our human standards’ and the realities capable of manifesting themselves within the systems of knowing constituting the objective world, including (he makes sure to point out) ‘psychology’ or historiography (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 479 (632)). Against the panoply of knowledge-tactics that could be employed by the human sciences to domesticate or suppress any appearance ‘otherness’, Schweitzer opposes a ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus, the one who (we might say in a Lacanian vein) refuses to ‘cede his desire’ to the structured and recognizable realities of the ‘world’ (Schweitzer, 2001, p. cf. xlv). In the process, Jesus’ irrepressible demand qualifies him as ‘destroyer of worlds’, a force capable of establishing a violent but revolutionary ‘clearing’ for a new world to come.²¹ With this move Schweitzer hopes to guarantee through historicism something that, necessarily, transcends historicism and hints at a realm beyond the ‘modern’ or ‘liberal’ basis of existence-through-knowing altogether.

Schweitzer’s work in *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, therefore, may be read as an elaborate *Destruktion* of the very historiographical tools of the human sciences he used to unearth his ‘fully eschatological’ or radically ‘world denying’ Jesus in the first place. As such, it is an elaborate reflection and performative evocation of the end of modernity and its ways of thinking about what is ‘real’. New Testament scholarship’s forgetfulness of this aspect of Schweitzer’s work guarantees its misrecognition of Schweitzer’s ‘apocalyptic’ or ‘eschatological’ focus as a focus on a system of ideas or beliefs with which apocalypticism or eschatology is thought to be interchangeable.²²

Better yet, we could consider whether we might take Schweitzer's thinking yet further. On one hand, Schweitzer continued to locate a thinking of the alterity that continually exceeds 'modern' forms of knowing – including historical investigation – in the figure of Jesus. On the other hand, and paradoxically, Schweitzer is clear that it is the 'historical' Jesus who thus exceeds the limitations and forms of judgment constituting historiographical thinking. And perhaps we are stuck with this aporia, as historical critics are (like other disciplines) consigned to think what their discipline cannot say only by thinking along the shadowy edges and among the interstices of what it can indeed say, and this with all the authority its embedded academic techniques conjure at the time of their enunciation. Perhaps we will also, like Schweitzer, always locate the haunting substance that exceeds the limits of our discourse by calling it those names of the early Christian realities we find ourselves discussing. But it is possible to catch a glimpse of the way we are even here enacting a systemic problematic that is in fact more general.

Here I have argued that biblical studies does not escape its own '*noir* logic' – and that it is only through a systemically necessary 'failure' that we can continue talking, discovering, or disclosing the truth of earliest Christian religion at all. What is most pressing to say about this inevitable finitude and our negotiation of it, however, is that we should recognize this finitude and, indeed, claim it, as our own! We will remain haunted by what we cannot say – or, as Agamben once said, by that 'gigantic loss of memory' and 'incurable speech defect' that opens up the possibility of all our remembering and talking (Agamben, 2000, p. 59.0). But it has not helped us thus far to misrecognize the deadlocks of our own disciplinary finitude by displacing them onto phantasmatic scenes in which another discipline or some other 'outside' to the discipline – even one so enticingly powerful as 'theology' – stands in as our fetishistic disavowal of a limitation that is all our own. As I have suggested, such a detour leads only to the worst obfuscations and refusals to analyze our own practices and the hierarchies they support or imply. It is time we acknowledged that the bracketing of another academic discipline 'theology' (or 'theology' as our own most dearly held beliefs – so the story goes) has not, in two hundred years, resulted in a closure of what 'history' can or will be. Nor will it do so in the future.

As Schweitzer's prescient reflections show, the abyss of an unsayable that is all our own will never be contained in the discrete division between 'history' and 'theology' anyway. The only way 'out' of the aporetic deadlock is to recognize it for what it is and to embrace that inescapable '*noir* logic' that structures our own form of knowing – whether or not we ever allow what counts as 'theology' to dictate how we work. It is time we accepted, in short, as a finitude all our own, the painful trial of what we cannot say.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ More specifically, the logic Žižek finds so clearly laid out in *film noir* is one he frequently calls ‘modern’, a problematic of self-grounding limitation that can likewise be associated with Kant. This is important to say here, as my analysis will follow Žižek in its formal focus, particularly as I eventually compare *noir* logic to the epistemic and political regime Foucault called ‘bio-power’. In the chapter quoted above and in some of his other discussions of ‘*noir* logic’, Žižek reads Kant through *noir* and *noir* through Kant (Žižek, 1993b). This is also important to say, as there are a panoply of possible comparisons to be made between biblical studies and a ‘*noir*’ aesthetic. Indeed, the field of *film noir* studies is so developed that it can now begin to question whether *noir* even exists! Several influential examples of the theme can be found in the various volumes of the *Film Noir Reader* (Silver and Ursini, 1996). For the moment it is enough to highlight the connection between self-obstruction as a system’s failure to coincide with itself and the lack/desire this failure sets in motion.
- ² Žižek briefly considers the isomorphism I am suggesting here between his reception of Hegel and systems theory in (Žižek and Daly, 2004, pp. 136-138). Compare the wonderful reflections on second order observation and self-organization in (Luhmann, 1998; Luhmann, 2002).
- ³ As will become clear, my interest in theology here extends only so far as it functions as a designation of what ‘historical criticism’ is *not*. I am interested in the way historical critics, in other words, use the word ‘theology’, and this to name what they do *not* do. ‘Theology’ per se is of no particular interest here, as I am attempting to illumine the formal, systemic function of this designation *within historical criticism*. We could just as well speak about the ‘devil’ or ‘capital’ as ‘theology’, though we do not tend to do so. The formal ‘*noir* logic’ would operate within biblical studies the same way in each case. Consider how the lamentations of the historical critic, describing the deferral or failure of ‘historical criticism’ to accomplish what it should – and this because of the intrusive hand of ‘theology’, – are interchangeable with the problematic of the hero in Žižek’s *noir* films:
- The outcome of the quest is therefore in both cases [*Blade Runner* and *Angel Heart*] the radical undermining of self-identity masterminded by a mysterious, all-powerful agency, in the first place the Devil himself (‘Louis Cypher’), in the second case the Tyrell corporation, which succeeded in fabricating replicants unaware of their replicant status; i.e., replicants misperceiving themselves as humans’ (Žižek, 1993a, p. 10).
- Again, once we realize that ‘theology’ – that sneaky force operating behind our backs and stealing from us the satisfaction of the fulfillment of our historical critical quest – is structurally interchangeable with the ‘devil’ or ‘capital’, we immediately step outside of that game by which historical critics made sense of themselves for more than two centuries.
- ⁴ Once more, my point here is only to call the bluff of a would-be secular criticism, not because I want to install ‘theology’ as a queen of the sciences – far from it – but because I believe our self-descriptions, which portray us as producing ‘historical’ critiques of an otherwise hegemonic ‘theological’ mode of interpretation, have long since become mere simulacra of the authentic Enlightenment gesture. The refusal of a would-be secular biblical criticism to recognize this, I believe, has become a refusal of biblical studies to undergo its own traumatic ‘dialectic of Enlightenment’, a movement of thought in which we will indeed be haunted by a return of the religion we thought we had left behind, even as this reversal seems to me the farthest thing from a polite ‘return’ of historiography to pre-Enlightenment theologies. What is emerging may rightly be called ‘post-secular’, but it should not be missed that this ‘return’ of the religious in the form of a basic indistinguishability between ‘religion’ and the ‘historical critic’ only arises when we perform the original gesture of autonomy more radically! For these reasons, my own project is in profound solidarity with the ‘hyper-modern’ thinking of Luhmann or the rethinking of modern thought as or in terms of a ‘return of religion’ (De Vries, 1999).

5 I mention this example (from a host of contemporary examples) of the old, old self-descriptive mantra not only because it comes from the sometimes wonderful work of a fine historian, but also because Fredriksen claims in this chapter to recognize the performative (rather than positivistically representational) nature of historiographical discourse. She all too quickly forgets the recognition, however, once she sets about the re-deployment of the old history/theology distinction. It is, once more the formal gesture that interests me here, though we should never miss the way such references to ‘theology’ as the phantasmatic ‘other’ or ‘outside’ of historical-criticism have always and continue to obscure alternative and more rigorous (not to mention more illuminating) forms of self-understanding than the mythological reference to ‘theology’ will ever be able to countenance. That many of us still make a living by playing the history/theology card I think goes without saying, so I will not multiply contemporary examples.

6 (Schweitzer, 1906). A second, expanded edition of this work appeared seven years later (Schweitzer, 1913). This edition has been translated (Schweitzer, 2001).

7 As such, Schweitzer’s work on Jesus should be read as part of his larger project to delineate a ‘crisis’ of intellectual and material culture that signals the bitter end of modernity and the beginning of a new, non-foundational epoch of thought he eventually designated a ‘reverence for life’. I discuss the remarkable interconnections between Schweitzer’s biblical criticism and his *Kulturphilosophie*, as well as the striking similarity between Schweitzer and the young Heidegger, in my forthcoming, *Displacing Christian Origins*.

8 (Schweitzer, 2001, p. 7). Generally, I will include references to the 1913 edition of Schweitzer’s work in brackets after the English translation. I am using Schweitzer, 1913, p. 6 here.

9 (Strauss, 1840). Translated as Strauss (1846).

10 This is not to suggest that the young reader of the New Testament and modern philosophy (remember, his first two books were about Kant) was not also very critical of Hegel, particularly the Berlin professor’s sense that reason must necessarily lag behind the real epoch-making ruptures of history. Among other places, Schweitzer summarizes his thinking about Hegel in his *Philosophy of Civilization* (Schweitzer, 1964). Ernst Cassirer also provides an interesting overview of Schweitzer’s criticisms of Hegel and nineteenth century philosophy more generally in his essay, ‘Albert Schweitzer as Critic of Nineteenth Century Ethics’ (Cassirer, 1946).

11 In light of a similar association between early Christian apocalypticism and ‘death drive’ in the work of Žižek, it is worth pointing out that Schweitzer praised Kant for being the first since Plato to recognize the force of the ethical as that ‘mysterious force within us (*rätselhafte Tatsache in uns*)’ that raises us above all the forms of calculation and recognition constituting knowledge. In Žižek’s terminology, Schweitzer is fond of the way a ‘fully eschatological’ Jesus represents to the structures of the modern subject a demand that exceeds the homeostatic equilibria of the symbolic order.

12 Strictly speaking, the last part of this sentence is not entirely accurate, as it was precisely Schweitzer’s point (like Heidegger’s) that the breaks, gaps, and transitions of historical narration were accomplished by exceptional moments and the irruption of strange powers that were not themselves susceptible to the ‘method’ of historiography. In this respect, Schweitzer himself was thinking a *great deal* more about historiography than most who find themselves repeating Schweitzer today.

13 One of Schweitzer’s own narrations of the event can be found in his autobiography, *Out of My Life and Thought* (Schweitzer, 1933, p. 106ff.)

14 Of course, there is no ‘breaking through’ to otherness, and the disclosive techniques of the clinic could only ever dispel ‘otherness’ by way of the very disclosive techniques that disclosed it in the first place. This dialectical tension between otherness and the almost paranoid proliferation of epistemic regimes to destroy it, clearly shown in the work of Binet-Sanglé, is one of the fundamental problematics indicated by Foucault’s ‘bio-power’ and Žižek’s thinking of finitude or self-limitation.

15 One of the reasons biblical scholars do not often catch the philosophical and theological overtones
of Schweitzer's remarkably synthetic work is that we are no longer reading philosophy to the same
extent that he and many of his colleagues were. Not only did Schweitzer study at Strassburg with the
neo-Kantians Wilhelm Windelband and Theobald Ziegler, but a Goll scholarship allowed him to
study philosophy in Paris (at the Sorbonne) and Berlin (where he took courses from Simmel).

16 Or, rather, the body as it is susceptible to the medical techniques of the time. This is an important
caveat, as (to play on the words of Nietzsche) we should not yet presume to know what a body can
believe.

17 (Binet-Sanglé, 1899). Pascal's entropic neurological state would later figure prominently in Binet-
Sanglé's history of religion as a history of nervous states in (Binet-Sanglé, 1907). These studies were
in significant ways mere prolegomena for Binet-Sanglé's monumental *opus*, entitled, significantly,
The End of the Secret (Binet-Sanglé, 1922).

18 Charles Binet-Sanglé, *La maladie de Blaise Pascal* (Paris: Annales médico-psychologiques, 1899).

19 Remember that he earlier opposed speaking to force. In the absence of power, there are mere words.

20 Once again, here is the interesting connection between Žižek's thinking of self-obstruction or the
desiring failure of the modern subject to coincide with itself and the *noir* motifs of a desire that betrays
or destructively consumes all who submit to it. Like Žižek, Joan Copjec provides a similarly Kantian
phenomenological foundation for such connections (Copjec, 1993).

21 The motif is a commonplace within his *Kulturphilosophie*, though also one that darts in and out of
his discussions of the subjective demands of 'eschatology' against the recognizable claims of the world.
See, for example Schweitzer (2001, p. 4),

22 It is no surprise, therefore, that recently those who have come closest to recognizing this revolutionary
or 'world-negating' aspect of our tradition have been philosophers rather than New Testament histo-
rians. See, for example, the way Slavoj Žižek equates early Christian apocalypticism with 'death
drive', the (destructive) demand forceful enough to produce a revolutionary 'clearing', in *The Puppet
and the Dwarf* (Žižek, 2003, p. 107ff.). I have elaborated some of the archival connections at stake
here in 'Apocalyptic Materialities: Return(s) of Early Christian Motifs in Slavoj Žižek's Depiction of
the Materialist Subject' (Blanton, 2004). Badiou makes a similar point about the 'exceptionality' that
irrupts with power sufficient to demand a withdrawal or restructuring of the symbolic structures of
the world, in his book on Paul (Badiou, 2003).

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