Chapter 7

To Speak of Suffering

Art's Ethical Obligation

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When faced with tragedy, human language often fails, forcing us to admit that there are some experiences that words cannot explain. No words can justify the death of a loved one to the bereaved. No precise description fully captures the experience of walking through a season of despair. No explanations are satisfying for the absurdity of feeling disconnected and isolated from others and from the world. No conversation rationalizes away the sorrow felt from broken relationships. Silence follows an experience of tragedy because words lack the power to express the depth of the pain. Not only does suffering bring silence to our spoken language, it can also quiet the inaudible language in our minds. In Emmanuel Falque's recent book *Hors-Phénomène*, he argues that in certain times of intense suffering, we may lose the ability to speak or even think about the suffering. He calls these experiences the Extra-Phenomenal or Outside the Phenomena (*Hors phénomène*), because they are circumstances that appear to be external to any meaning that can normally be found in the phenomena of life. We are sometimes prevented from even practicing the discipline of phenomenology, because in such tragic moments, we cannot study the phenomena to make sense of them and they appear to be bankrupt of all meaning. Falque writes:

> Out of time, even out of space and out of the subject, the 'Extra-Phenomenal' leaves one speechless [*bouche-bée*], and in this stupefaction there is no longer even an unthought, but only the unthinkable remains – namely the annihilation, at least initially, of the capacity to think.[1]

Descriptions of the event and the facts surrounding it speak *about* it, but they cannot speak *to* the event directly in a meaningful way, leaving us speechless or mute (*bouche-bée*).

If suffering is found then in the silent, unspoken places of our lives, is it impossible to express? Can we ever speak about it all? In his book, *Suffering and the Remedy of Art*, Harold Schweizer begins with a similar question: "But if suffering is in the unbearable, silent body rather than in the sharable, disembodied language of its narratives, how then can suffering speak? How can one hear the unspeakable?"[2] Søren Kierkegaard gives us a poignant example of the inability to speak about a

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tragic event in his *Fear and Trembling* when he writes of the necessary silence of Abraham after God has asked him to sacrifice his son, Isaac.[3] Kierkegaard argues that it is not that Abraham chooses not to speak but that he *cannot* speak; he is unable to put together any words or phrases that would be intelligible to anyone. Kierkegaard writes, "Speak he cannot; he speaks no human language. Even if he understood all the languages of the world, even if those loved ones also understood them, he still cannot speak – he speaks in a divine language, he speaks in tongues."[4] Perhaps there would be a divine language, a language of the angels, that could tell of his task, but in terms of human language, the decision to kill his son for God cannot be explained with any words known to humans.

In these silent spaces of deep suffering, I believe that art has the power to speak to us, giving a voice to our lived pain. Art does not use a normal human language, but, like the divine language that Kierkegaard mentions, it speaks the unspeakable according to a different mode of expression. Drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's idea that art arises out of silence and Friedrich Nietzsche's famous claim that art justifies existence, I will first offer further proof for why it is that art must speak of suffering. Because no human language – not even the language of phenomenology – can offer us satisfying explanations for tragedy, I will argue that art has an ethical obligation to speak to us in the midst of personal and communal suffering. Next, I will describe *how* art fulfills this obligation due to its facility with the vocabulary surrounding suffering including death, despair, absurdity and brokenness as seen in illustrations from the art of the French existentialists, Simone de Beauvoir, Gabriel Marcel, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Lastly, I will present *what* art says to us in suffering to demonstrate its indispensability; for the uncompromising message of aesthetic expression reveals to us the fullness of reality, the hard and the good, unlike anything else.

Although I believe that art can be broader than this, for the sake of this chapter, I am referring to art as a creative mode of expression, that includes beauty, meaning or craftsmanship, as seen in artworks such as paintings, novels, plays, sculptures and music. Furthermore, when I say that art has the ability to do something, I do not mean that every single piece of art does this but rather that art, as a practice, has this capacity. The characteristics discussed in this chapter are not necessarily found (nor should they be found) in each individual work of art.

A. The Obligation of Art

Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes the way that art speaks to us out of silence, and while he is not specifically thinking here of tragedy, his articulation of art as a voice of silence can be expanded to include the silence found in suffering. His essay "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," helps us see the ability and even the necessity of art to speak particularly during times of suffering.[5] He writes first of the way that all meaning comes out of silence, because meaning can never be fully attached to a "point for point correspondence" to words; he argues,

> Now if we rid our minds of the idea that our language is the translation or cipher of an *original text*, we shall see that the idea of *complete* expression is

> nonsensical, and that all language is indirect or allusive – that it is, if you wish, silence.[6]

It is impossible to defend the idea that meaning can be completely located in a series of words or categories because true meaning evades all constraints and goes beyond mere words. Yes, there *is* meaning in the words themselves, but the full meaning must include the silence that rests between the words. This general sense of silence, which grounds all meaning, is not a lack of something, as Glen Johnson comments: "Silence is not a negative phenomenon for Merleau-Ponty, the sheer absence of thought or meaning."[7] Instead, silence is the spirit of meaning that cannot be reduced to the words that have been said. This means that silence and language cannot be separated from each other as each contributes to one another, intertwining with one another to express sense. To illustrate this, Glen Mazis states that we must see "Merleau-Ponty's treatment of silence as being not the mere absence of sound or simply the opposite of language, but as being its other side."[8] This idea of silence, or deep silence as Mazis writes, is the other side to language and signifies a general openness to encountering the world.[9]

While meaning is present in all forms of silence found in human experiences, meaning in silence is often best illustrated in a work of art, because in art, we no longer have the expectation that its meaning will be contained in the words used to describe it. In this way, art often gives us a way to think and to reflect on things that words on their own, even words found in a philosophical analysis, cannot accomplish. To demonstrate this, Merleau-Ponty writes that the problem with formalism, as a method of art criticism, is not that it tries to categorize art according to a "form," but rather because "it detaches [the form] from meaning."[10] Instead, we must see that it is the form of the work of art that gives us access to a world beyond the form:

> What is irreplaceable in the work of art, what makes it, far more than a means of pleasure, a spiritual organ [*un organe de l'esprit*] whose analogue is found in all productive philosophical or political thought, is the fact that it contains, better than ideas, *matrices of ideas* [*matrices d'idées*] – providing us with emblems whose meaning we never stop developing [*dont nous n'avons jamais fini de développer le sens*]. Precisely because it dwells and makes us dwell in a world [*parce qu'elle s'installe et nous installe dans un monde*] we do not have the key to, the work of art teaches us to see and ultimately gives us something to think about as no analytical work can; for when we analyze an object, we find only what we have put into it.[11]

Nothing can replace the power of art to speak to us, to teach us to see and to give us fresh thoughts. It cannot just be for entertainment, a way to feel pleasure, because it is like an organ of the mind or spirit (*l'esprit*) which unlocks the door to a world and places us (*nous installe*) in that world. We can try to push the door open on our own, through logical analysis for example, but it will not budge, because we need a matrix, a grid or an opening to the world (*matrices d'idées*) beyond the categories

themselves. It is not that art is the only discourse that can open the world to us; philosophical and political discourses can mirror this type of access if they leave behind a reliance on formal analysis. But art cannot be substituted with anything else because we need it to instruct us that analysis cannot provide the full picture. To conclude his essay, Merleau-Ponty writes, "In short, language speaks [*dit*], and the voices of painting are the voices of silence."[12] Both language and art tell (*dire*) something, but in spoken language, we falsely assume that the meaning is expressed only in the words. It is the mute or "silent forms of expression" (*formes muettes de l'expression*) found in painting that remind us that silence is essential to accessing true meaning.[13]

Art is irreplaceable because it helps us navigate the world; it is no longer a side benefit or a nice hobby but is actually necessary in order to make sense of the world. Applying this particularly to tragedy, we find that our usual narratives cannot contain the silent and unbearable weight of suffering, and so we need a new language that can actually speak to us. In response to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter of "How then can suffering speak? How can one hear the unspeakable?" Schweizer writes, "Perhaps the very language of the aesthetic, a language without any meaning other than its own occurrence, might echo the mysterious occurrence of suffering."[14] The language of art does not contain meaning like other human languages, because its occurrence, its mode of expression, is its meaning. Drawing from different illustrations than what will be offered in this chapter, Schweizer applies literature and poetry to studies in medicine and argues that there is an analogous nature between suffering and art, and this is exactly why art must be the voice of suffering. Thinking of the analogy in terms of silence, it is precisely because tragic silence is always bound up with suffering that art, the expert at expressing something out of silence as Merleau-Ponty demonstrates, is able to give us a message.[15]

Unfortunately, we do not always recognize the duty that art has to speak to us in suffering, because we become too obsessed with the ideal, what is given in the "phenomenologies of good health," as Falque puts it, and, as a result, we ignore experiences of suffering, death, chaos and solitude.[16] Phenomenologists, for example, focus on a 'general silence' as a way of putting the world back together, a way of giving unity to the world, but can forget about the importance of the 'tragic silence' as a way of experiencing the world as falling apart, a sense of it being broken into pieces.[17] Merleau-Ponty, himself, leaves space for the tragic element of existence, but does not fully explore it and thus needs to be supplemented with others who are willing to engage the darker sides to existence. We might consider Martin Heidegger, for example, as someone who is sensitive both to the tragic found in life (with his idea of 'being toward death') and to the importance of art, but he actually does not explicitly bring these together. Working outside phenomenology, Theodor Adorno can offer a corrective to this as he does see the important relation between art and suffering. Discussing political movements rather than personal suffering, he writes that art's reason for existing is that there is "something in reality" which "objectively *demands* art and it *demands* an art that *speaks* for what the veil hides."[18] The veil of rational knowledge hides suffering, "the incomprehensible horror" of

this world, for "suffering remains foreign to knowledge . . . suffering conceptualized remains mute and inconsequential."[19] Making truth concrete, then, can only be done by art, for the "darkening of the world makes the irrationality of art rational."[20] Adorno writes that suffering demands that art must speak of it – it dictates that art must express it – because rational discourse cannot give it a proper voice.

Applying Adorno's ideas to all contexts of suffering, we would do well to pay closer attention to Nietzsche's famous repeated claims in *The Birth of Tragedy* on the obligatory role of art in the face of the suffering of existence: "For only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* is existence and the world eternally *justified*."[21] To exist in the world without the mediation of art is not possible according to Nietzsche. On its own, raw existence is unpalatable; its weight will crush us. With the advent of the modern age and the death of myth, all past comforts have failed, as he laments, "now, no solace has any effect" as man can only see "what is terrible or absurd in existence wherever he looks."[22] Nietzsche sees art as a justification for horrors of existence not in spite of suffering but in freely embracing the suffering. Through the miraculous unity between the aesthetic drives of the Apolline, which represents the calm, dreamy, individual and truthful drive, and the Dionysiac, which represents the intoxicated, musical, communal and surreal drive, a true work of art allows us to embrace the absurdity of reality while finding joy in this acceptance.

Even during his so-called positivist period in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche never loses sight of our desperate need for art due to the suffering of existence. Honesty, on its own, he writes, would only "lead to nausea and suicide," and so we must turn to art.[23] He then repeats a slightly-altered version of the statement from *The Birth of Tragedy*: "As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* to us."[24] Again, this is not to fix the suffering but to choose to find beauty in the suffering as seen in his famous *Amor Fati* (love of fate): "I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them – thus I will be one of those who make things beautiful."[25] Suffering is a determined part of existence, as Nietzsche learned from Schopenhauer, but art is not a way to escape existence, because art creates a space of freedom where I can make things beautiful even in the suffering. Kathleen Higgins and Robert Solomon capture this well: "To see the world as beautiful, in spite of suffering – even because of suffering – remains one of the explicit aspirations throughout [Nietzsche's] philosophy."[26]

What makes art's obligation *ethical* is that without art, we have nowhere else to turn. It is up to art to speak to us of suffering, help us find meaning in it and carry us through our sorrows, or we will be left with nothing. Art has the ability to provide meaning to us, unlike anything else, and thus, it must act on our behalf so that we can accept our existence. For the way in which art allows us to accept and even enjoy reality is how it justifies existence to us. Certainly, this is not 'justification' in the manner that we normally think; art does not offer a rational proof that the good of existence somehow outweighs the bad.[27] This is why art is so critical in moments of tragedy when rational justification is impossible: we need a nonrational justification which gives us a love for life when life doesn't make sense. The gift that art gives us is something outside of ourselves; as Daniel Came writes, "it is clear that

the value of art for Nietzsche is extrinsic."[28] Through art, we *feel* that existence is worth it and *feel* that life has something of merit, because we are drawn out of the individual self and caught up in an aesthetic experience. It is simply the moment of the occurrence, the moment of the aesthetic experience, as Schweizer writes, that offers meaning to the experience of suffering.

B. The Language of Art

To fulfill its obligation, art is able to draw on an unspoken vocabulary which includes themes of death, despair, absurdity and brokenness in order to speak to us *honestly* and *deeply* during experiences of suffering. Although many illustrations are possible to demonstrate art's facility with this vocabulary, I believe that the practices in "existentialist aesthetics" are especially helpful to us for two reasons: first, these French 20th-century philosophers are also artists themselves such that the making of art is intimately connected to their practice of philosophy, and second, they are particularly sensitive to the personal and global experiences of suffering after the events of World War II.[29]

1. Death

Because death serves as a crude reminder that there is something not quite right in this world, any effort to explain death will always fall short, creating a kind of silence around it. For the existential philosopher and artist, art's ability to speak into the silence of death begins surprisingly not in any experience of human death, but rather it first faces a metaphysical death: the death of God.[30] Following Nietzsche's observation that "God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!" in *The Gay Science*, existentialist aesthetics argues that art must be created without any recourse to divine answers or spiritual illusions.[31] Art must begin with the acceptance of the death of God; for even if God exists, God cannot be a metaphysical placeholder used to fit reality together and could only be experienced after an acceptance of God's death.

Simone de Beauvoir reflects on her experience of encountering the absence of God as a young girl of 15 years old, gazing out at a cherry tree outside her window:

> 'I no longer believe in God,' I told myself, with no great surprise . . . For a long time now the concept I had had of Him had been purified and refined, sublimated to the point where He no longer had any countenance divine, any concrete link with the earth or therefore any being. His perfection cancelled out His reality. That is why I felt so little surprise when I became aware of His absence in heaven and in my heart . . . Until then . . . all things murmured softly of His glory. Suddenly everything fell silent. And what a silence! . . . Alone: for the first time I understood the terrible significance of that word.[32]

The more God becomes for her an abstract entity, too perfect and distinct from this world, the more Beauvoir realizes that this God could not possibly exist. Out

of the silence that arises with the death of God, art provides a way for Beauvoir to express herself; it gives her the freedom to fight against the loneliness and emptiness. This fight is vividly illustrated in the life of her character, Françoise, in her first novel, *She Came to Stay*. The story revolves around the challenges that come when Françoise and her partner, Pierre, invite a young woman, Xavière, into their relationship. With God absent from the narrative, Françoise must learn not to rely on anybody else but herself to arrange her life, as she instructs Xavière, "I think you make yourself what you are of your own free will."[33] This making of yourself, for Beauvoir, is the artistic expression, as seen in writing novels and more broadly, living life, which combats the suffering felt at God's death.

In a similar way, Gabriel Marcel writes of accepting the absence of God early in his own life; looking back at his childhood, he feels that he was raised under the assumption that God is dead. He writes, "It was only much later that I would become acquainted with Nietzsche's 'God is dead'; but in a way everything during my childhood, and even at the beginning of my adolescence, happened as though in fact God were dead."[34] As a playwright, Marcel attempts to describe the helplessness experienced in life when there is "no faith to guide it."[35] In his play *Ariadne* (*Le Chemin de crête*), Violetta, a poor, single mother who is having an affair with a married man, laments the deception of her life: "more lies – *more* lies coiled in the very heart of our life."[36] Surrounded by her own lies and the lies of others, she feels as though she is being swallowed up by a false world and wonders if there is any escape from the darkness. Although Marcel comes to believe that there is hope in an experience of God, he argues that art must express all experiences of death; it must even speak of the darkness at the loss of God without providing "some kind of ready made truth [to] absorb like a calming drug or tranquilizer."[37]

Just as art responds to the silence at the death of God, it can also speak to the death of self. Art expresses the deep angst that comes with suicidal thoughts, as Jean-Paul Sartre poignantly displays in his character, Roquentin, in his famous novel, *Nausea*:

> I . . . was *In the way* [*Moi aussi j'étais de trop*] . . . I dreamed vaguely of killing myself to wipe out at least one of these superfluous lives. But even my death would have been *In the way* [*de trop*]. *In the way* [*De trop*], my corpse, my blood on these stones, between these plants, at the back of this smiling garden. And the decomposed flesh would have been *In the way* [*de trop*] in the earth which would receive my bones, at last, cleaned, stripped, peeled, proper and clean as teeth, it would have been *In the way* [*de trop*]: I was *In the way* [*de trop*] for eternity.[38]

In life and in death – in fact, for all eternity – Roquentin feels like he is too much (*de trop*); that he is in the way of everything, alone and without purpose. Sartre describes this so well perhaps by drawing on his own feeling of superfluousness when he was a young boy. He writes in his autobiography:

> I did continue to feel that one is born superfluous unless one is brought into the world with the special purpose of fulfilling an expectation. My pride and

> forlornness were such at the time that I wished I were dead or that I were needed by the whole world.[39]

Art has a way of speaking to the feeling of being unneeded, superfluous and excessive and, ultimately, to the desire to be rid of the self.

Thinking about the possibility of suicide, Marcel describes how life can feel like being "imprisoned in a cell the walls of which draw imperceptibly closer together at every minute."[40] He displays this feeling of helplessness in his main character, Claude, in his most popular play, *A Man of God* (*Un homme de Dieu*). Throughout the play, Claude wrestles with his own existence due to the unwinding of his marriage, his family and his faith.[41] Plagued by despair, he contemplates suicide by the end of the play, and the spectator is left wondering whether he will actually kill himself or if his forgotten faith will yet save him.

Art also has the language to speak of the death of a loved one. Music, for example, is often known for expressing the fullness of grief with us. As a pianist, Marcel reflects on the way that music invites us into a deeper sense of reality than can be spoken.[42] He writes: "It is music almost exclusively . . . which has been for me an unshakable testimony of a deeper reality."[43] This is why one of Marcel's characters, Doris, asks in the play, *Quartet in F sharp*: "Isn't music like the immortality of everything we think is dead but in fact lives on?"[44] Because music is never fixed in a time or place, it testifies to the deeper reality that the presence of our loved one retains an eternal significance.

Sculptures also have a way of presenting something timeless which Sartre calls the "unreal" or "irreal" (*irréel*). In "The Quest for the Absolute," Sartre writes that when speaking of the full meaning of a sculpture, "there is no real distance between us" and the sculpture, because it also dwells beyond the real, material world.[45] The transcendence of time and space reflected in a sculpture also can speak to death of a loved one. In Michelangelo's *Pietà* statue, we find Mary forever holding the dead body of her child (see Image 7.1). Here, the pain of losing a child never ends but is continually expressed in the facial expression and posture of Mary.[46]

From these illustrations, it becomes clear that it is the language of art that is able to speak of the experience of death. No other language can capture something like the intense helplessness experienced without the aid of God, as seen in Beauvoir's Françoise and Marcel's Violetta. It is only an aesthetic expression of angst, as seen in the stories of Sartre's Roquentin and Marcel's Claude, that can match the feeling of purposelessness behind the desire for one's own death. Nothing communicates the endless grief of losing a loved one like a work of art, as seen in the timeless power of piece of music or the fixed expression of a sculpture, such as that of Mary in the *Pietà*.

2. *Despair*

Despair at one's existence is another experience of suffering of which art can speak. Sartre writes of his despair as a young boy in his autobiography: "*I was*

Image 7.1 *Pietà*
Michelangelo, 1499

not substantial or permanent . . . In short, I had no soul" and later, "I was *nothing*: an ineffaceable transparency."[47] Like the silence of suffering, the nothingness of existence is empty, without sound or substance. Such emptiness due to the loss of identity brings on an overwhelming sense of despair. Art can speak into this empty silent space of despair as seen in Sartre's play *The Flies*. In the play, the character Zeus tries to persuade Orestes to keep the people under the false pretense that there is hope in religion and a purpose in life; otherwise, they may see their lives as repugnant and pointless:

Zeus: You will tear from their eyes the veils I had laid on them, and they will see their lives as they are, foul and futile, a barren boon . . . what will they make of it?

Orestes: What they choose. They're free; and human life begins on the far side of despair [*désespoir*].[48]

To take on this necessary despair and to get rid of any false hope (*espoir*), Orestes must pay a high price: he murders the queen and king, who are his own mother and step-father. Through this homicide, he allows the people of his kingdom to be free, no longer held captive by their oppressive regime, and encounter the despair found in facing true reality. And yet the despair here is not entirely without hope; somehow in just the dialogue of the play, there is a kind of meaning experienced by the spectator, a hope that honesty will prevail over falsehood.

In a similar way, we can consider again Marcel's character Violetta in his *Ariadne* as another example of a meaningful expression of despair. In the play, Violetta has a conversation with Jerome, a married man whom she loves, asking, "since we're condemned to live in the dark and to wander without hope, oughtn't we to – oh, how can I put it? – oughtn't we to draw the power to help others from the very darkness of our own despair [*désespoir*]?"[49] The darkness and the hopelessness are felt here in this story, and yet, at the same time, there is a sense of the deep desire to commune with others for solace.

Despair, in existentialist art, is often seen as provoking a response of nausea. Sartre's description of nausea in his novel shows the strong link between the emotional feeling of despair and the bodily reaction of nausea to it; aesthetic expression, here, has a way of capturing the way suffering is experienced in the whole person, body and mind. At first, the nausea for Roquentin seems to come from the objects around him:

> Now I see: I recall better what I felt the other day at the seashore when I held the pebble. It was a sort of sweetish sickness. How unpleasant it was! It came from the stone. I'm sure of it, it passed from the stone to my hand. Yes, that's it, that's just it – a sort of nausea in the hands.[50]

In a feeling of despair, even the smallest objects bother him and bring him a feeling of sickness. Selected quotes from the novel cannot do justice to reading it as it gradually and slowly presents the nausea to the readers. And although Roquentin tries hard to avoid these bouts of nausea, it often sneaks up on him when he is unprepared. Later, he wonders if this nausea is not due to objects but due to himself: "The Nausea has not left me and I don't believe it will leave me so soon; but I no longer have to bear it, it is no longer an illness or a passing fit: it is I."[51] Facing the truth, Roquentin realizes that his nausea comes from himself, his own lack of identity.

Through these illustrations, we see the power of art to speak of a profound experience of despair, the kind of despair that comes when our worst fears have been realized. Art encapsulates what it is like when we are forced to face the harsh truth – the tearing away of the veils from the citizens' eyes as seen in Sartre's *The Flies* or the exposure of the lies at the heart of life as seen in Marcel's *Ariadne* – in a way that nothing else can quite capture. Furthermore, it is

aesthetic expression that clearly exhibits the way suffering can be felt in our bodies, like the visceral response of nausea to the feeling of despair as seen in Sartre's Roquentin.

3. *Absurdity*

An encounter with the 'absurdity' of suffering is perhaps not referred to as often as death and despair. But drawing on Albert Camus's definition of absurdity, we will recognize how it pervades human life and is another element of human suffering aptly shown by art. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus writes: "Absurd is not in man . . . nor in the world, but in their presence together. For the moment it is the only bond uniting them."[52] For Camus, absurdity is found at the most basic level in the unexplainable connection between humans and the world. We are dependent on our bond with the world for existence, but to attempt to say why it is there based on our lived experience is impossible. In fact, any explanations for our absurd existence are what Camus calls a "leap" or an "appeal" because we have to go beyond existential reality in order to try and make sense of things. Camus argues, "The leap in all its forms, rushing into the divine or the eternal, surrendering to the illusions of the everyday or of the idea – all these screens hide the absurd."[53] Genuine art, then, will not offer us any illusions, from the divine or the eternal, that will hide away the absurd foundation for reality. Camus writes how a person walking in this absurdity "wants to find out if it is possible to live *without appeal*" and then realizes that life "will be lived all the better if it has no meaning."[54] Perhaps lived experience eventually reveals the divine, but before taking this leap, we must first start by facing the absurdity of reality, and it is to art that we must turn to make sense of it.

Camus presents the Greek mythological figure Sisyphus as an example of person willing to embrace an absurd existence. Sisyphus is condemned by the gods to roll a heavy stone up a mountain in Hades; every time he makes it to the top, the stone rolls back down only for him to repeat the process again and again. For all eternity, he rolls the stone up the mountain, watches the stone roll back down, and starts all over again. In the deep moments of suffering, we sometimes feel that our lives are like the fate of Sisyphus. Devoid of meaning, we may continue to work on a project or pursue a relationship, even while knowing that our efforts are in vain, just like rolling a stone up a mountain, knowing it will come back down. Camus's expression of Sisyphus as the "absurd hero" profoundly relates to this feeling of meaninglessness.[55]

Absurdity is one of the primary manifestations of meaningless suffering, as Emmanuel Levinas notes in his short essay, "Useless Suffering." Speaking against any kind of explanation or 'use' of suffering, he states: "All evil refers to suffering . . . The evil of pain, the harm itself, is the explosion and most profound articulation of absurdity."[56] Levinas remains skeptical whether art can display suffering, because it may just distract us and make us feel "indifferent to the world's suffering."[57] But if art is done in a certain way, Levinas reflects,

perhaps there is a way to make visible some of the absurdity of suffering. In an interview on the works of Sacha Sosno, Levinas comments that there is an ethical dimension to the "art of obliteration" done by Sosno which "exposes the ease and lighthearted casualness of the beautiful, and recalls the wear and tear of being, the 'repairs' which art covers over . . . to appear and show itself."[58] In other words, art has the ability to profoundly display the beauty of being, but at the same time illustrate the rough or hidden parts of being. Sosno does this in his *Vénus oblitérée*, which is a beautifully crafted torso of a Venus sculpture with a rectangle cut out from its center; such strangeness forces us to imagine what is missing (see Image 7.2).

As even Levinas admits, art has a way of communicating something that can't be communicated: the irrational and absurd experiences of our lives. Art expresses the suffering that comes from monotonous and pointless work, as seen in Camus's retelling of Sisyphus, or the frustration from the absurd gaps in our existence, as seen in Sosno's sculptures, and it is art's honesty about this feeling of meaninglessness that intensely resonates with us.

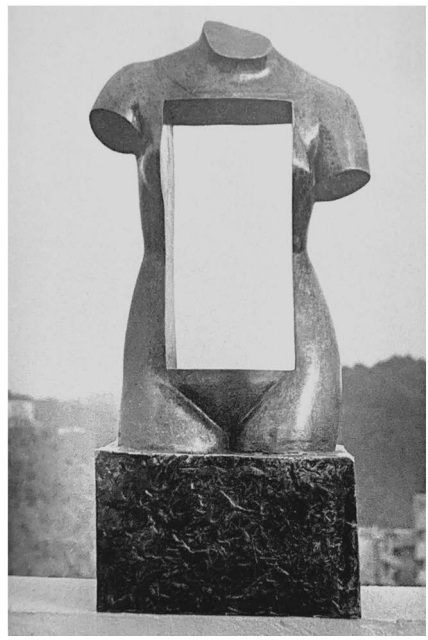

Image 7.2 *Vénus oblitérée*

Sacha Sosno, 1980

4. Brokenness

Broken objects, broken bodies and broken relationships are all ways that we encounter the suffering of brokenness in our personal lives. Although sometimes these things can be fixed – objects glued back together, broken bones healed and relationships reconciled – there are other times that we know that there is no way to repair the fragmented pieces. When no solution presents itself, we feel stuck, unable to act or speak, living in a space of passivity and silence. Here, art speaks to us, conveying the depth of personal suffering, but also signaling to us the brokenness of the larger world around us.

In the play *The Broken World* (*Le monde cassé*), Marcel portrays a young, accomplished woman, Christiane, who loved a man who ended up choosing the monastic life; through this choice, he severed his connection with everyone and unknowingly broke her heart. To escape her grief, Christiane enters into marriage with a man she does not love. She confides in her friend, Denise:

> *Christiane:* Don't you feel sometimes that we are living . . . if you can call it living . . . in a broken world [*un monde cassé*]? Yes, broken like a broken watch. The mainspring has stopped working. Just look at it, nothing has changed. Everything is in place. But put the watch to your ear, and you don't hear any ticking. You know what I'm talking about, the world . . . it seems to me it must have had a heart at one time, but today you would say the heart had stopped beating.[59]

The world, like a broken watch, looks fine on the outside, but suffering makes us recognize that none of the hands ever move and no sound is ever made. In this broken world, due to her lost love, Christiane feels that she has personally lost her own identity: "Since then I have been beside myself . . . I no longer know who I am."[60] The people around her also seem empty, without care for others or for the world: "Each one wrapped up in himself, his own little thing, his own little interests. They meet, clash, with a rattling noise."[61] To try and cope with it all, she surrounds herself with a group of male flatterers, and since her husband no longer shows her love, she has an affair with another man that she does not love. The despair in all areas of life leads her to despise religious ideas and anything that tries to make sense of reality.[62] Christiane's personal brokenness taps her into the general brokenness she feels all around her.[63]

Art also expresses brokenness on larger scales as seen in Camus's *The Plague*. Here Camus describes a small town in Algeria, Oran, that is struck with an awful plague and is closed off from the rest of the world as hundreds and hundreds die from the untreatable disease. The brokenness becomes palpable for the reader when the narrator writes:

> Without memory and without hope, they settled into the present. In truth, everything became present for them. It must be said that the plague had

> taken away from everyone the possibility of love and even the possibility of friendship. For love requires a little bit of future, and we had only a few moments left.[64]

At the end of the novel, the plague has finally subsided, and the doctor makes his routine visit to an asthmatic who comments on those who want to be honored for their work during the plague: "They might as well be asking for a medal. But what does it mean, the plague? It's life, that's all."[65] The story of a plague is simply an honest story about life; by alluding to plagues that took place in Algeria in the past and to the Nazi occupation of France and to many other crises, Camus's art exposes us to our harsh reality, but in the creative telling of it, he gives us an awareness of the world that pulls us outside of ourselves.

It is only through an experience of art that our personal brokenness is opened up to global brokenness; in short, art has a way of telling me, 'It's not just me, it's the whole world that feels off.' Nothing can describe so honestly the way brokenness invades all aspects of our lives like a work of art, as seen in Christiane's acute disillusion with life, others and God in Marcel's play. Art pulls us out to face the greater brokenness of the world, as seen in Camus's depiction of the town of Oran; no longer is a world crisis just an abstract problem, because art calls on our hearts to recognize brokenness beyond our individual lives.

C. The Message of Art

Through the glimpses provided by existential art, we can start to see how art speaks to us with authenticity and profundity in the silent moments of suffering. But the power of aesthetic expression is found not only in *how* it is being said but also in *what* is being said. Art offers us an uncompromising message for two reasons: because of its refusal to soften or diminish reality and because of its intolerance for passivity.

Beginning with the first, art refuses to make light of the pain of suffering because it presents it in the fullness of its reality. The message of art is not didactic nor prescriptive, at least at first, but is rather just one of understanding. In a lecture, Camus states, "The aim of art . . . is not to legislate or to reign supreme, but rather to understand first of all."[66] Art's ability to understand is due to the way it captures all of reality, the hard and the good, the rational and the irrational. Considering first the way art conveys the weight of the suffering, we can think of how art faithfully depicts something that we have personally experienced. Thinking again of Michelangelo's *Pietà*, if parents who have lost a child encounter this work of art, they will resonate with it in a distinct way, knowing that they too have felt that kind of suffering (see again Image 7.1). The unspoken pain of losing a child is not diminished but is revealed in its gravity.

Furthermore, the unexplained and irrational aspects of suffering can be said by art because it can communicate, unlike a rational discourse, things outside of reason.[67] This is why the 'meaning' that is expressed through art is not a rationalization of the suffering, for the suffering itself will still feel unjustifiable; rather, it is

the creation of something out of the suffering that provides a new kind of meaning to it. As David M. Goodman and M. Mookie C. Manalili write in their preface to an edited volume on political and cultural suffering, we, as humans, must create meaning out of what feels meaningless: "meaning-making is part of human life . . . meaning here also captures the enactment of values, rather than the explanatory set to reduce suffering's implications."[68] The full disclosure of suffering offered by art is part of the new creation of meaning, which portrays lived values rather than analysis. In her chapter on bereavement, Kathleen Higgins beautifully describes how our experience of time and space changes during times of suffering and how desperate we are for something that will make sense of this. She writes, "Artistic modes of communication can help convey features of experiences when direct verbal statement seems to fail."[69] Spoken sentences fall short in describing our instability, but art helps us feel understood by conveying irrational aspects of our experience.

Turning now to the second reason for art's uncompromising message, we also see that art cannot fully accept the reality of suffering, because it cannot tolerate passivity. Art will not allow complacency in suffering but instead awakens us and calls us to respond. Although sometimes hidden or implicit in the work, the message of art contains in itself a call to action, a silent rebellious cry against injustice. Camus explains:

> Art is neither complete rejection nor complete acceptance of what is. It is simultaneously rejection and acceptance . . . The artist constantly lives in such a state of ambiguity, incapable of denying reality and yet eternally bound to question it in its eternally unfinished aspects. In order to paint a still life, there must be a confrontation and mutual adjustment between a painter and an apple.[70]

Art cannot totally refuse reality, nor can it consent completely to it; in this ambiguity, the artist must present what is real but, at the same time put out a call for action to change what is wrong in this world. Just like in a still life, an artist works to display the reality of an apple but, at the same time, confronts it and adjusts it in order to tell us something about that reality. For, as Camus adds later, "art disputes reality, but does not hide from it."[71] It does not hide the truth of suffering but, at the same time, pushes back against it. In a painting about death, the painter walks in the ambiguity between depicting the reality of death and expressing a new perspective on it. Paul Cézanne's *La maison du pendu* (*The hanged man's house*) presents a scene of stillness and silence that might reflect the loss of death through its muted and gray colors (see Image 7.3). At the same time, though, it invites us to actively participate in the solitude and perhaps ponder the reason for the man's death, whether by suicide or punishment.[72]

This call to the action found in the message of art is what both Marcel and Merleau-Ponty describe as art's power to awaken us. In Marcel's autobiography, he explains his thought process behind his art:

> I don't think that a playwright . . . should have to worry about reassuring anyone. Of course, this doesn't mean that . . . the writer has to ignore what the

Image 7.3 *La maison du pendu*

Paul Cézanne, 1873

> spectator could think or experience. But . . . the writer has to treat the spectator *as an awareness to be awakened* . . . There could be no question of providing him with some kind of ready made truth that he would have to absorb like a calming drug or tranquilizer . . . the theater should help renew him interiorly.[73]

Marcel desires his art to awaken people and make them aware of what is going on around them and in themselves. It may not be a comfortable feeling; we recall the angst that we feel at the end of many of his plays, but this angst is an active angst that drives us to action while at the same time it inwardly transforms us.

In his article "Cézanne's Doubt," Merleau-Ponty writes also of the need for art to wake us up: "It is not enough for a painter like Cézanne, an artist, or a philosopher, to create and express an idea; they must also *awaken* the experiences which will make their idea take root in the consciousness of others."[74] Yes, artists must genuinely express reality, but not only that, they must do it in such a way as to awaken in us a response. Cézanne's *La maison du pendu* can call us to reflect on the silence of death while at the same time rousing in us a longing for peace, solitude and justice (see again Image 7.3).

D. Conclusion

Rational explanations, and even phenomenological descriptions, are not sufficient when we encounter suffering and tragedy. It is the voice of art that must pierce the

silence of these moments, because it alone has a language that can be heard. I am certainly giving a tall order to art in this chapter: it must speak of suffering, it must not let us sit in utter silence, it must tell us honestly of reality and it must provoke us to fight. I will even add to this list: Art must speak of all tragedies. There is no tragedy that art cannot face. Because art's goal is never to justify or rationalize suffering, art can face all suffering and, as a result, it has the responsibility to voice the things that nothing else can articulate. Now, this is certainly not the only goal for art as art also can communicate experiences of unspeakable joy and delight. Thus, as mentioned in the opening, every artwork does not need to convey suffering, but art, as a discipline, must. To fully accomplish this task, our definition of art will need to be expanded. In this chapter, I have focused on the narrow view of art, but the role that the traditional forms of art play in our lives actually points us to how the broader forms of art are necessary as well, such as creating one's life as a work of art and creating relationships with others and the divine in a dynamic and aesthetic way.

Limiting ourselves to the confines of this chapter, however, we can conclude that because art can speak to a general silence, as Merleau-Ponty argued, and because art offers a justification for existence, as Nietzsche claims, all the more it can and must speak into tragic silence. As seen in the examples from literature, plays, music, statues and paintings, aesthetic expression utilizes a vocabulary that surrounds suffering, including themes of death, despair, absurdity and brokenness, to communicate to us in a genuine and deep way. The content of art's message is simple and uncompromising: It tells us the whole truth and tells us not to stand still. It's an unspoken message that somehow still speaks; through the power of its voice, it provides us the first step in accepting suffering, the first step in fighting against what's wrong, the first step in creating our new identity and the first step in finding new hope.

Notes

1 Emmanuel Falque, *Hors phénomène: Essai aux confins de la phénoménalité* (Paris: Hermann, 2021), 181, my translation: "Hors temps, voire Hors espace et Hors sujet, le << Hors phénomène >> laisse bouche-bée, dans cette sidération il n'y a même plus d'impensé, mais seul demeure l'impensable – à savoir l'annihilation, au moins dans un premier temps, des capacités de penser."

2 Harold Schweizer, *Suffering and the Remedy of Art* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 12–13.

3 Kierkegaard is drawing on the Biblical story found in Genesis 22. The verses of Genesis 22 do not explicitly say that Abraham did not tell others what God asked him to do, but his two recorded responses to his servants ("Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.") and to Isaac ("God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering.") seem to imply that he does not reveal the full truth of his errand to others (Genesis 22:5, 8).

4 Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, trans. C. Stephen Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101.

5 Published in July 1952, this was Merleau-Ponty's final essay in *Les Temps Modernes*, the journal that he founded with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. The essay is a response to Andre Malraux's *The Voices of Silence* and Jean-Paul Sartre's *What is Literature?* He is both affirming and criticizing Malraux and Sartre here in this essay.

For further information on this, see Galen A. Johnson's introduction: "Structures and Painting: 'Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence'" in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 14–34.

6 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, 80, italics his.

7 Johnson, "Structures and Painting," 33.

8 Glen A. Mazis, *Merleau-Ponty and the Face of the World: Silence, Ethics, Imagination and Poetic Ontology* (New York: SUNY, 2016), xiii.

9 Mazis, *Merleau-Ponty and the Face of the World*, 11–12. Mazis is using the category of "deep silence" from Bernard Dauenhauer's *Silence, The Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance*.

10 Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," 114.

11 Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," 114, italics his. French: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le langage indirect et les voix du silence," in *Signes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 96–97, italics his.

12 Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," 117. French: Merleau-Ponty, "Le langage indirect et les voix du silence," 101.

13 Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," 118. French: Merleau-Ponty, "Le langage indirect et les voix du silence," 101.

14 Schweizer, *Suffering and the Remedy of Art*, 13.

15 To illustrate this ability of art to speak of suffering from a historical perspective, please see the volume edited by Celinscak and Hutt on artworks over history which have displayed suffering. In the opening to the volume, they write: "Some artists attempt to heal themselves and the world through exposing and reconciling us to past and present horrors. Indeed, art offers a way to approach the unspeakable" (Mark Celinscak and Curtis Hutt, "Preface: Art and Suffering," in *Artistic Representations of Suffering: Rights, Resistance, and Remembrance*, ed. Mark Celinscak and Curtis Hutt (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2021), xvi).

16 Falque, *Hors phénomène: Essai aux confins de la phénoménalité*, 8: "phénoménologies de la bonne santé." Falque's book on the extra-phenomenal (*hors phénomène*) is written as a corrective to the over-emphasis on the ideal found in phenomenology.

17 Mazis's work provides an excellent reflection on Merleau-Ponty's ideas of silence, ethics and poetry, but he highlights mostly a positive silence which is ultimately the "source for ethics" (Mazis, *Merleau-Ponty and the Face of the World*, 8). Steven Bindeman's *Silence in Philosophy, Literature and Art* also tends to focus on the positive side to silence by defining silence as an indirect discourse which "reflects what surrounds it" (Steven Bindeman, *Silence in Philosophy, Literature and Art* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 3). He does, however, argue for two interconnected types of silence, disruptive silence and healing silence (Bindeman, *Silence in Philosophy, Literature and Art*, 3). His disruptive silence is more of an overall disconnection with self in linear time, but I think we could expand it to include tragic silence as seen in his discussion of silence and the Holocaust (Bindeman, *Silence in Philosophy, Literature and Art*, 129–134).

18 Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 18, italics mine.

19 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 18.

20 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 19.

21 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Section 5, p. 33, italics his. The second quotation reads: "I repeat my earlier sentence that only as an aesthetic phenomenon do existence and the world appear justified" (Section 24, p. 113).

22 Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Section 7, p. 40.

23 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nackhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Book 2, Section 108, p. 104.
24 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Book 2, Section 107, p. 104, italics his. To see comments on how this statement might differ from the earlier one in *The Birth of Tragedy*, see Daniel Came, "The Aesthetic Justification of Existence," in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 39–57.
25 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Book 4, Section 276, p. 157.
26 Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins, *What Nietzsche Really Said* (New York: Schocken Books, 2000), 182.
27 See Daniel Came: "When Nietzsche speaks of the aesthetic justifying life, he does not mean that it shows us that life is *actually* justified but rather that it educes an affectively positive attitude towards life that is *epistemically neutral*" (Came, "The Aesthetic Justification of Existence," 42). In other words, art does not give us more positive knowledge to counter the epistemically negative aspects of life, but it does produce in us an attitude that positively accepts existence.
28 Came, "The Aesthetic Justification of Existence," 47.
29 Almost all the examples of art in this chapter are from the actual works of art created by the existentialists, which means there will be a privileging of prose, theatre and music, but to diversify, I have added a couple of additional examples from other forms of art and have then included commentary from one of the thinkers. Also, for further confirmation on the pivotal role of art in existentialism, see the research presented here: Jean-Philippe Deranty, "Existentialist Aesthetics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta. URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/aesthetics-existentialist/>.
30 See Philip Pacey, *A Sense of What Is Real: The Arts and Existential Man* (London: Bentham Press, 1977), 5: "Existentialism begins here – with the despair of man without proof of God."
31 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Book 3, Section 125, p. 120.
32 Simone de Beauvoir, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, trans. James Kirkup (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), 137–138.
33 Simone de Beauvoir, *She Came to Stay* (New York: Norton & Company, 1999), 245.
34 Gabriel Marcel, Music in My Life and Works, in *Music and Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005), 45.
35 Gabriel Marcel, *The Existential Background of Human Dignity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 113: Here, Marcel is commenting that his play *Ariadne* (*Le Chemin de crête*) ends similarly to his play *A Man of God* (*Un homme de Dieu*), as there is an "inarticulate cry for help," but, for the character of Ariadne, there is "no faith to guide it."
36 Gabriel Marcel, Ariadne, in *Three Plays with a Preface on the Drama of the Soul in Exile*, trans. Rosalind Heywood (London: Secker & Warburg, 1952), 201.
37 Gabriel Marcel, *Awakenings*, trans. Peter S. Rogers (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2002), 147.
38 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2007), 128–129, italics his. French: Jean-Paul Sartre, *La nausée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), 183.
39 Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Braziller, 1964), 165–166.
40 Gabriel Marcel, *Creative Fidelity*, trans. Robert Rosthal (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 141.
41 Gabriel Marcel, A Man of God, in *Three Plays with a Preface on the Drama of the Soul in Exile*, 35–114.
42 While none of his compositions are well known, Marcel wrote over thirty pieces for the piano and often improvised on the piano. See Marcel, *Awakenings*, 175–177.

43 Gabriel Marcel, *The Existential Background of Human Dignity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 21.
44 Marcel, *Quartet in F Sharp*, as quoted in Music in My Life and Works, 55.
45 Jean-Paul Sartre, The Quest of the Absolute, in *Essays in Aesthetics*, ed. Wade Baskin (New York: The Citadel Press, 1963), 86, italics his. (He is referring to a sculpture of Ganymede in this quote).
46 For two additional examples on art speaking of the death of a loved one, see Kofod's chapter on the expression of poetry after losing a child (Ester Holte Kofod, Poetic Representations of Parental Grief, in *Cultural, Existential and Phenomenological Dimensions of Grief Experience*, ed. Allan Køster and Ester Holte Kofod (London: Routledge, 2021, 119–136) and see Cumming's preface on the power of Velasquez's painting, *Las Meninas*, on speaking to her after the death of her father (Laura Cumming, *The Vanishing Velázquez: A nineteenth Century Bookseller's Obsession with a Lost Masterpiece* (New York: Scribner, 2016), 4).
47 Sartre, *The Words*, 88, 90, italics his.
48 Jean-Paul Sartre, The Flies, in *No Exit and Three Other Plays*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 119. French: Jean-Paul Sartre, Les mouches, in *Huis clos suivi de Les mouches* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 238.
49 Marcel, Ariadne, 184. French: Gabriel Marcel, *Le chemin de crête*, in *Cinq Pièces Majeures* (Paris: Plon, 1973), 304.
50 Sartre, *Nausea*, 11.
51 Sartre, *Nausea*, 126.
52 Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 30.
53 Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 91.
54 Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 53, italics his.
55 Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, 120.
56 Emmanuel Levinas, "Useless Suffering," in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (New York: Routledge, 1988), 157.
57 Emmanuel Levinas, *On Obliteration: An Interview with Françoise Armengaud Concerning the Work of Sacha Sosno*, trans. Richard Cohen (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2019), 29. Please see Leanor Reis's helpful dissertation on Levinas's view on art: Leonor Neves da Costa Luis dos Reis, "Art in Spite of Itself: The Ambiguity of Art in the Work of Emmanuel Levinas" (Unpublished Dissertation, 2023), especially 145–147 on art and suffering.
58 Levinas, *On Obliteration*, 31.
59 Gabriel Marcel, The Broken World, in *The Existentialist Drama of Gabriel Marcel, I: The Broken World and the Rebellious Heart*, ed. Francis J. Lescoe (West Hartford, CT: McAuley Institute of Religious Studies, 1974), 36. French: Gabriel Marcel, "*Le monde cassé*," in *Cinq Pièces Majeures* (Paris: Plon, 1973), 121. "Le monde cassé" (The Broken World) is a key phrase that Marcel uses to describe suffering.
60 Marcel, *The Broken World*, 137.
61 Marcel, *The Broken World*, 36, translation slightly modified.
62 Marcel, *The Broken World*, 138.
63 Robert Wood helpfully characterizes these three aspects of brokenness as brokenness with self, others and God. See Robert E. Wood, "Introduction," in *Music and Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005), 15.
64 Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. Laura Marris (New York: Vintage Books, 2022), 194.
65 Camus, *The Plague*, 330.
66 Albert Camus, "Create Dangerously," in *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 266. This is a lecture given at the University of Uppsala in 1957.

67 See again Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 19: "darkening of the world makes the irrationality of art rational."
68 David M. Goodman and M. Mookie C. Manalili, "Introduction: Problematizing Meaningful Suffering," in *Meaningless Suffering: Traumatic Marginalization and Ethical Responsibility*, ed. David M. Goodman and M. Mookie C. Manalili (New York: Routledge, 2024), 203.
69 Kathleen Higgins, "Distorted Space, Unmoving Time – Aesthetic Practices in Bereavement," in *Cultural, Existential and Phenomenological Dimensions of Grief Experience*, ed. Allan Køster and Ester Holte Kofod (London: Routledge, 2021), 62.
70 Camus, "Create Dangerously," 264.
71 Camus, "Create Dangerously," 224.
72 Although the viewer may naturally think of death from the title of the painting, it's possible that it was not Cézanne's intention and that the name reflected a person or poem.
73 Marcel, *Awakenings*, 147, italics mine.
74 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 70.

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