

THE
SABBATH
WORLD

—
GLIMPSES OF A
DIFFERENT ORDER OF TIME

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PART SEVEN

REMEMBERING THE SABBATH

1.

CAN WE DO NOTHING MORE THAN TURN THE SABBATH OVER IN OUR minds, the way we would a poem, and extract from it anything worth having?

The answer is obvious: obviously yes, and obviously no. Of course the Sabbath is worth mulling over—everything is—and of course you can't derive much lasting benefit from a regularly observed period of rest if you don't observe it regularly. Even if you do nothing but remember the Sabbath, though, you press your nose up against a different order of time, and that has its uses. For one thing, it will make you appreciate the near-impossibility of bringing it back. We have changed too much to contemplate its return, at least in its old form, even though the bulk of that change has happened in a short span of time.

As recently as at the beginning of the past century—to revert to that great lurch toward modernity—Sunday mornings in the United States were still filled “with Sunday school [and] church,” as the American historian Alexis McCrossen writes, as well as “excursions, picnics, movies, and trolley rides.” In 1908, G. Stanley Hall, the psy-

chologist and, most famously, the Clark University president who invited Sigmund Freud to visit America, eulogized Sunday's domestic charms: “freedom from all slavery to the clock, better and more leisurely toilets and meals, the hush of noise on the deserted street, the greatly intensified charm of the sky, sunshine, trees, fields, pleasant morning anticipations for the day, more zest for reading and perhaps study, converse with friends, calls, visits, correspondence, as well as rest pure and simple, for body and mind.”

Hall's lovely essay, however, laid bare the contradiction that doomed his high-minded Sabbatarianism. Hall, a churchgoing Protestant and a man of practical bent, begged Americans to adopt “the scientific Sunday”—the psychologically and physically hygienic day that Dickens pressed for, a day of exercise, highbrow entertainment, and family “walks and talks and nature lessons.” Innocent and appealing as this “scientific” Sunday sounds, it spelled the end of the Sabbatarian Sunday.

Before we can understand why, though, we have to remember the kind of Sabbath Hall was reacting to. In 1908, strict Sunday-closing laws remained in force in seventeen states and in Indian territory. They banned amusements, fishing, and hunting, as well as selling and working. Hall's own Sunday had a milder rigor to it, but a rigor nonetheless. In his home state of Massachusetts, he had the right to buy a Sunday paper, that amalgam of news and gossip and fashion advice that Sabbatarian ministers still railed against. He could smoke a pipe; Massachusetts did not forbid the sale of tobacco. By comparison, many of the western states, which passed their Sunday-closing laws just as the old-time behavioral codes had begun to lose their force, were far more permissive. In Wyoming, as Hall points out, he could send a telegraph, repair farm equipment, smelt metal and glass, and buy ice cream, milk, fresh meat, and bread. In New Mexico, he could conduct business as usual on Sunday; only the kinds of work and amusements that might disturb congregations and families were prohibited.

Hall applauded this latter sort of active and permissive Sabbath, as long as it preserved a Christian decorum. Let “mild drinks” be served,

so that “gross intoxication” would not be sought. Let there be innocent entertainments at which the sexes could commingle, so that vice would not be indulged in. Let children out of doors to play sports and games, and let adults play their sports and games, too. America had to make Sunday a day of leisure, Hall argued, if it was to have a Sunday at all.

Not that such changes weren’t already under way. In the previous half century, museums, libraries, and world’s fairs had all begun opening on Sundays, along with movie theaters and baseball stadiums. And those places were where the contradictions between the “scientific” and the “Sabbatarian” Sunday became unavoidable. The problem with substituting cultural consumption and active leisure for rest is that one person’s recreation is another person’s work. If museums, libraries, and baseball stadiums are to stay open, then security guards and librarians have to work, and baseball players have to play.

Legislators tried to keep pace with changing mores by expanding the scope of “works of necessity and charity”; that is, the work required for the maintenance of expected standards of living and the enjoyment of leisure. Utilities were to keep providing power and water on Sundays; deliverymen were to keep depositing ice and milk at front doors. Presses kept printing, operators kept connecting telephone calls, radio and television stations kept broadcasting. Amusement parks, national parks, opera houses, restaurants, cigar stores, train stations, and airports kept serving up all the other goods and services required by their customers and patrons.

What destroyed the reign of blue laws, though, wasn’t just that everyone went to work on Sunday—the Sunday service sector remained relatively small in proportion to the rest of the economy—but also that the definition of “necessity and charity” broadened until the line it drew between life and work began to seem laughable. The distinctions between permissible and non-permissible Sunday commerce had always varied from state to state and county to county, but the laws had evinced a rough consensus of what was proper on Sunday and what wasn’t. By the middle of the twentieth century, though, you could dine at a restaurant in one city but not in another. Even if

you stayed within city lines, you could buy an item in one neighborhood but not in another, or you could buy *this* item at a store but not *that* one at the same store. Tackle shops and beach burger shacks stayed open; downtown department stores didn’t. You could buy film from a photo shop on the boardwalk, but not the camera needed to use it.

Sunday-closing laws came under attack in the courts for failing to pass what is called a “rational basis test.” They discriminated so unpredictably among activities, varied so widely from one region to another, and were enforced so randomly that they violated the due-process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees equal protection to all citizens. The other criticism that emerged was that Sunday-closing laws violated the First Amendment, which forbids the establishment of a particular religion and endorses freedom of religious practice. Religious minorities, such as Seventh-Day Adventists and Orthodox Jews, began to file lawsuits objecting to having to close their stores for two days of the week, Saturday and Sunday. In response to those challenges, several states began to make exceptions for Saturday Sabbath-keepers.

The Supreme Court’s decision in *McGowan et al. v. Maryland* (1961) upheld Sunday-closing laws on the grounds that the government’s interest in the well-being of the majority of its citizens overrode whatever burdens Sunday laws imposed on the minority. Justice Felix Frankfurter, recognizing that to the unsympathetic eye the laws looked like what one skeptic later called a “gallimaufry,” or potpourri, insisted that they were not irrational. It was possible to draw a “reasonable line of demarcation” between those activities that “add enjoyment” to Sunday and those that needlessly deprive employees of their day.

But the sense of urgency that held that line of demarcation was ebbing away. McCrossen points out that the success of the labor movement also helped dim Sunday’s luster. In the earlier decades of the twentieth century, activists agitating for shorter hours—with occasional though unreliable support from Sunday Sabbatarian organizations—had managed to shorten the workweek to five days from six

or seven, and the workday to eight hours from ten or twelve. The first five-day workweek was granted in 1908 at a New England mill that employed many Jewish workers. Henry Ford was the first major manufacturer to adopt the five-day week; he grasped that the American people needed more time to shop if they were going to buy his cars. In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act established the forty-hour workweek and eight-hour day as the norm and gave the ordinary working person so many more free hours that the labor-free Sunday seemed less urgent than before.

The group that really turned Sunday inside out, though, was women. As they poured into the workforce in the 1960s and the 1970s, they had less time to shop during the week. More of women's traditional domestic duties—cooking, cleaning, child care—had to be outsourced. Divorce became more common, and with it single parents, male as well as female, who had no choice but to shop on weekends.

Businesses quickly perceived the demand for Sunday shopping hours and began lobbying state legislatures to make those hours legal. Not all businesses supported repeal of the Sunday laws. Some department-store owners actually preferred the old way of doing things, in some cases out of personal religious conviction and in some cases because they doubted that opening on Sunday would actually increase sales, rather than spread the same quantity of sales over seven days instead of six. Many small businesses resisted opening on Sunday, too, fearing that the cost of Sunday labor—proportionally greater for them than for larger establishments—would make it harder for them to compete. Some small businesses enjoyed special exemptions that allowed them to stay open on Sunday (which businesses qualified for exemptions varied state by state); these gave mom-and-pop stores an extra weapon in their arsenal in the battle to ward off the chain stores, so they had no interest in changing the status quo.

It was the chain stores that worked hardest to persuade legislatures to do away with Sunday laws. Some states abolished their blue laws only after campaigns organized and funded by chain retailers, such as Kmart, Toys “R” Us, Sears, Walgreens, Bradlees, Stop & Shop, and

Home Depot. And while the enemies of blue laws acted in their own self-interest, they also made an argument that was designed to appeal to politicians and their constituents. By dampening competition, they said, Sunday restrictions kept retail prices artificially high. Protecting small businesses may have been good public policy, but, the bigger businesses argued, it was bad economics. States that repealed the laws would be able to cut prices, attract new businesses, and create jobs.

In 1961, when *McGowan et al. v. Maryland* was handed down, forty-nine states outlawed something on Sunday that was legal the other six days of the week, even if the forbidden activity was nothing more threatening to the Sunday peace than barbering or the sale of liquor. (Alaska was the only state that had no blue laws at the time.) Today, a majority of states have such laws on the books, but they do little to preserve Frankfurter's “atmosphere of entire community repose,” nor do they back up his claim that the line of demarcation between permissible and non-permissible activities is “reasonable.” These days, no two sets of blue laws look remotely alike; each is riddled with oddly specific proscriptions and exceptions; all are laxly or inconsistently enforced; and very few people even know they exist.

The most common blue laws restrict sales of alcohol on some period on Sunday, usually the morning. But there is indeed a potpourri of other proscriptions. Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Maine, and New Hampshire outlaw Sunday horse racing. Maine enjoins boxing, air circuses, and wrestling. Arkansas disallows Sunday dog racing. Connecticut and Tennessee forbid Sunday car racing. Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, and North Carolina impose complicated and highly qualified restrictions on Sunday hunting. New Jersey and Virginia forbid oyster fishing on Sunday. Baltimore County, in Maryland, prohibits bingo on Sunday, while New Jersey bans all Sunday “games of chance.” Tennessee requires that all “adult” establishments shut down for the day. Several states shut down car showrooms on Sunday, although that particular prohibition has been singled out for attack in recent years and is fast disappearing.

To make matters more confusing, many states allow cities and counties to opt out of the blue laws if they want to. A large number

do, or make exceptions for kinds of labor or business that happen to be important to their economies. For instance, South Carolina bans “worldly work . . . and business” but exempts rubber and plastic mold-making, as well as textile manufacturing. New Jersey allows municipalities to opt *in* to its blue laws; naturally, few do. (Paramus, which lies right across the Hudson River from New York City and has a high concentration of big-box stores, is one borough that has opted in, a fact that occasions bitter complaints from New Yorkers looking for weekend access to cheaper merchandise.)

It can be argued (and has been argued) that Sunday-closing laws reflect the interventions of so many special interests that they can no longer protect the communal aspect of the day of rest. One legal scholar goes further, declaring that since many of the laws that remain prohibit not work but recreational activities such as gambling and hunting, they can be interpreted only as fossils from America’s theocratic days and should be ruled unconstitutional.

2.

IT’S TRUE. The Sabbath *is* a fossil. It’s the past hardened into rock, whereas time becomes more fluid with each passing day. Cell-phone and text-messaging and social-networking technologies have begun to wash away at adamantine “mechanical time,” the unyielding time of clocks, and to suspend us within “mobile time,” which can be made to flow whichever way we want. Whereas what is called Universal Time emanates from an atomic clock at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England, the time of mobile communications emanates from each of us individually. Universal Time coordinates local time around the globe, so that institutions and the public know when to interact with one another. Using our cell phones and other devices, we micro-coordinate our time with that of our associates, which allows us to bypass Universal Time and operate on what I would call Particular Time—time that can constantly be adjusted to fit our own idiosyncratic needs. If we encounter traffic jams on our way to a rendezvous, we can call or text and prepare our friends or colleagues for

late arrivals. If six college friends don’t know enough about their schedules in the morning to make a plan for the evening, they can simply communicate with one another electronically over the course of the next several hours until they arrive at one. “The mobile telephone relaxes the implicit contracts around time,” the sociologist Richard Ling writes. “It softens the schedule.”

As we grow accustomed to ever softer time contracts, the Sabbath’s granitic temporality begins to seem ever more unreasonable. Very few situations require fanatical punctuality anymore. Moreover, a softer schedule uses time more efficiently. No longer need we squander precious minutes waiting for dates who don’t show up, or on other scheduling mishaps (although it should be said that we lose some of that saved time in making and refining our plans). As a result, accommodating ourselves to the uncompromising demands of the Sabbath schedule becomes less a matter of fitting it into our calendars than of forcing ourselves to conform to a kind of time that seems obsolete. Remembering and keeping the Sabbath under these conditions also exact a higher social price. More friends and colleagues lift a querying eyebrow when we say that we can’t be reached or disturbed for a full twenty-five hours than were likely to have done so in the days before phone calls and emails could track us down at any location. In short, the advent of mobile time erodes the plausibility of the Sabbath the way coastal waters turn boulders into sand.

This sea change isn’t as complete as it may yet become. The large temporal frameworks of our lives remain fairly firm. We still work comparatively standard hours or go to school from morning till afternoon, fall through spring. But to the degree that electronics take over our activities and our interactions, personal time becomes more fungible. We shop when it’s convenient, not when stores are open. We watch movies and television on DVDs and On Demand and TiVo, not according to published schedules. We correspond via email and Twitter and Facebook in instant, staccato bursts throughout the day, or over the course of several days, not when the mail is delivered.

Mobile time is time that *we’re* in charge of, and who would want to lose that? Ling says that he has found a “gendered dimension” to

the way people talk about this kind of time in interviews. Temporal flexibility finds its most passionate advocates among those with the sharpest conflicts between personal time and public time, which is to say working mothers (although this description also fits working caregivers of all kinds). These women often find themselves coordinating the loose, task-oriented time of child rearing and home maintenance with the closely measured, more fixed time of the workplace. Mothers today can call babysitters at any hour, be reached anywhere in case of emergency, be asked to pick up milk or antibiotic ointment and Band-Aids on their way home even if they've already left the office. All this allows them to manage their complicated lives with an ease their mothers would never have dreamed of.

But being in perpetual contact can also make us feel as if time is in charge of us. In that case, we may be experiencing what sociologists call the Lazarus effect, the nagging consciousness of "dead" time that wouldn't strike us as wasted if we didn't have a mobile device in our hands. Micro-coordination, being more efficient, also sets a more exacting standard of time use. It used to be possible to wiggle free of the Lazarus effect by taking yourself off the grid, but that option is fast vanishing. Five years ago, when I went on summer vacation, I could tell my friends and colleagues that it might be days before I could log on and get their messages because the impoverished Catskill Mountain town where I rented a house hadn't yet been wired for broadband. Now that the region has entered the twenty-first century, that excuse no longer works.

We might, if we were inventive grammarians, call this state of being incessantly *on* the "embryonic progressive tense." "Progressive" in the grammatical sense—in the progressive tense we don't complete an action, we are in the process of doing it—because we are available and attached to others on a continuing basis, not just in the present but also in the past, and in all likelihood in the future, too. And "embryonic" because cell phones function like umbilical cords, tethering friends and family who might otherwise drift off and become artifacts of our personal histories, and because social-network sites fish out of oblivion the high-school classmates, office co-workers, and one-night

stands who would otherwise vanish without a trace. In the embryonic progressive, nothing ends. The Sabbath, by contrast, demands of us a hard and tragic sense of beginnings and ends.

3.

WHEN AND IF THE SABBATH GOES, here are the forms of time that might go, too: non-instrumental time, bounded time, shared time, and rhythmic time. We need non-instrumental time to remember our "human condition," as Arendt put it; we need bounded and shared time to become a society; and we need rhythmic time to make the previous three a habit. But two questions remain. First, hasn't our enhanced connectedness made it unnecessary to set aside time to be together? And, second, are habits really all that great?

Electronic communications may turn out to increase the frequency of real-world contacts, rather than replace them. After all, our heightened ability to synchronize our schedules has made it easier to get together. So maybe we have all the community we can handle, and what we want is to be alone! Besides, mobile communication liberates us. It alleviates the burdens of self-presentation. It's a lot easier to be ourselves typing at home in our underwear than talking face-to-face.

There is one big difference, though, between face-to-face and electronic interlocution. That is what psychologists call "co-presence," which provides, they say, "attunement." The value of physical togetherness lies in the possibility of aligning ourselves to others at the deepest physical level. Tests have shown that people laughing together soon begin to gasp and whoop to the same convulsive beat. People happily talking together mirror one another's blinks, nods, and finger taps. Electroencephalograph (EEG) recordings of the brains of infants and adults exchanging coos show that their brain waves rise and fall at the same time. "Face-to-face social interaction takes place among physiological systems, not merely among individuals as cognitive systems or bodily actors," the sociologist Randall Collins writes. "From an evolutionary perspective, it is not surprising that human beings,

like other animals, are neurologically wired to respond to each other; and social situations that call forth these responses are experienced as highly rewarding.”

Perhaps we have begun to forget why being together feels good. Being shy myself, I'd almost always rather type than talk. Or maybe the pleasure of owning a cool gadget is greater than the pleasures described above. Still possessed of an old-fashioned clamshell cell phone, I certainly have iPhone envy. In any case, we are witnessing a decline in the status of the physical. A tellingly coarse term has emerged to describe real-time and real-space encounters: “flesh meets.” I once watched a young rabbi sitting next to me at a seminar-sized meeting furtively tapping on his BlackBerry under the lip of the table, even as the courtly elderly director of a major Jewish charity went around the room introducing one person to another. The fact that even a rabbi felt entitled to withdraw his fullest attention from the events in the room during the performance of such an important social ritual said, I thought, everything.

Is it possible to imagine what might happen to, say, family or community life without the regular—that is, habitual and scheduled—coordination of our physiological systems? Yes, because we have seen what happens when a society dispenses altogether with the common calendar that makes this possible. In 1929, one year into the Soviet Union's First Five-Year Plan to speed up industrialization, the Council of People's Commissars adopted the continuous workweek, the *nepreryvka*, so that no production facility need ever lie idle. The idea was to divide the working population into subgroups and stagger each group's day of rest. At the same time, the Council reduced the week from seven days to five by eliminating Saturday and Sunday. This was probably meant as an attack on religion, since both days were tainted by their association with the religious calendar.

Eviatar Zerubavel tells the story in *The Seven Day Circle*. He writes: “The Soviet authorities essentially divided the entire society into five separate populations, staggered vis-à-vis one another like the different voices in a polyphonic, five-voice fugue.” On any given day, 80 percent of the labor force would be at work and 20 percent at

home—but not necessarily with the rest of their families. By then many Soviet women worked, and no effort was made to coordinate their schedules with those of their husbands and children. The reformers may even have meant to break up families, since according to Marxist ideology the family was irredeemably bourgeois. But your *nepreryvka* worker on his or her day off was hard-pressed to come up with company. Clubs, shows, and even (God forbid) churches struggled to stay open, since none of them could attract much attendance on any given day. Workers' meetings puttered to a halt. Bored and lonely, Soviet workers had no choice but to socialize with people who were on the same schedule. Each day was given its own color—the “first day” was yellow, the “second day” was peach, and so on. Zerubavel reports that people began categorizing one another in their address books according to their color.

What made the continuous workweek a flop from Stalin's point of view, though, was that it slowed production. Workers resented the strain on family life. They didn't like the new schedule's effect on the workplace, either. To deal with workers' absences every fifth day, managers had to move people around, assigning them to fill in on this task, then that one. Workers felt cut off from their jobs, their machines, their co-workers—from everything that had previously given them pride and pleasure in their work. In June of 1931, Stalin gave a speech in which he said that, as a result of the *nepreryvka*, “we have the lack of any sense of responsibility, careless handling of machines, mass breakage, and the absence of an incentive to increase the productivity of labor.” Five months later, the Council discontinued the continuous workweek, although it waited nine more years to reinstate the seven-day week.

The *nepreryvka* didn't just disrupt family life; it disrupted long-standing patterns of work and rest, which, when shared by the general society, are usually called customs. So are customs per se worth preserving? Certainly a long line of philosophers and psychologists have thought so. Customs, as David Hume famously said, are “the great guide of human life.” William James called habit—by which he meant both habits and customs—“the enormous flywheel of society, its

most precious conservative agent.” In his book *The Metronomic Society* (1988), the sociologist Michael Young speculated that humans are genetically programmed to turn memories into customs, since they’re such unimpeachable devices of social self-replication.

We don’t generally see habits as assets. The word *habit* usually invokes behaviors that we would rather get rid of. Habits are mindless, obsessive, animal-like. We are *creatures* of habit; we’d rather be masters of our fate.

James, however, argued that habit is both necessary and efficient—it reduces unnecessary expenditures of physical and intellectual energy and facilitates higher-level thinking. In *The Principles of Psychology*, he quotes an eloquent Dr. Carpenter on the subject: “When we are learning to walk, to ride, to swim, skate, fence, write, play, or sing, we interrupt ourselves at every step by unnecessary movements and false notes. When we are proficient, on the contrary, the results not only follow with the very minimum of muscular action requisite to bring them forth, they also follow from a single instantaneous ‘cue.’ The marksman sees the bird, and, before he knows it, he has aimed and shot.” A pilot whose flying skills hadn’t become instinctive would have had less attention to devote to saving his plane when a flock of birds struck his engines. Businesses that don’t standardize their procedures to the point where they become a part of institutional second nature would never be able to coordinate their production processes.

It is true that habit is unconscious. Brain scans of people acting out of habit show that the mental correlate of the activity bypasses the prefrontal cortex, which houses consciousness as well as explicit memories. Instead, habits light up the subcortical structures of the brain, the cerebellum and the basal ganglia, where we store implicit or subconscious memories. Habits even change the shape of the brain. The biologist Eric R. Kandel reports that, nearly half a century ago, he and other neuroscientists discovered that habituation in animals—conditioning that makes them respond automatically to a stimulus—alters the connections between their synapses.

Teachers understand the power of habit; that’s why they stress

good study habits. Parents and bosses do, too. They also know that the best way to get you to agree to do something is to get you to do it. Since habits defy the belief that our wills should be sovereign, we tell ourselves that we *meant* to do things that way. Max Weber elevates this psychological trick to a sociological dictum: “The mere fact of regular recurrence of certain events somehow confers on them the dignity of oughtness.”

Recent experiments by psychologists have demonstrated that we’re likely to categorize something as true simply because we’ve heard it before, rather than because we have good reason to believe it to be true. The psychologist Christian Unkelbach, having conducted one such test, speculates that familiar statements are easier to process, and that we mistake this ease for truth: “Processing fluency,” says Unkelbach, creates a “truth-effect.”

On the other hand, just because something has a “truth-effect” doesn’t mean that it isn’t true. Familiarity *is* a likely indicator of truth. A statement may be true in only one way, but it can be wrong in a million different ways. The earth is round, not flat or cylindrical or bolus-shaped. We tend to hear true statements more often than false ones.

P, the priestly writer of the Bible and the codifier of Sabbath law, also had a deep—you might say neurotheological—grasp of how habits and customs work on the mind. There is a curious moment in Exodus when Moses reads the laws to the Israelites gathered at Mount Sinai and the Israelites respond, *Na’aseh v’nishma*—“We do and we hear.” The verbs, as commentators have pointed out, are in the wrong order. Shouldn’t the people have *heard* before they agreed to *do*? But it is in the doing that we hear what a ritual, or a law, or a custom, has come to tell us, and in the doing that we begin to believe it to be the right thing to do.

4.

THE UTILITARIAN ARGUMENT for remembering the Sabbath, then, would be that it reminds us to get in the habit of not working and

spending quality time with the people around us. Doing that—and thereby coming to believe that it was the right thing to do—would benefit us, our families, our neighborhoods, and our nation, nurturing all the informal and formal associations that go into the making of our civil society.

Another argument for remembering the Sabbath is less hygienic; it appeals instead to what Presidents Lincoln and Obama have called the better angels of our nature. This is Wordsworth's spot in time in which we cultivate our negative capabilities. I should say that this argument is only rarely advanced in the name of the Sabbath. It more often takes the form of a lament for the lost art of leisure, as elevated to its highest form by the ancient Greeks and Romans. In 1948, as Germany grimly set about to rebuild its shattered economy, the German Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper wrote a book on leisure in which he begged his readers not to succumb to the ethos of "total work" and forget the ancient understanding of leisure as the highest good, the point of life, that which makes possible the highest achievements of the human spirit, philosophy and music. "Leisure," wrote Pieper, "is a form of silence, of that silence which is the prerequisite of the apprehension of reality." In 1962, the American political philosopher Sebastian de Grazia defended leisure in the name of Aristotle, who thought that a citizen could not be free without leisure and the ability to use it well.

More recently, David Levy, a professor at the Information School at the University of Washington, has updated both the utilitarian and the humanistic arguments for the networked age by calling for a new "informational environmentalism." Just as we fight to save marshlands and old-growth forests from development and pollution, he says, so we need to fight to save ourselves from the "pollutants" of communications overload: the overabundance of information that turns us into triagers and managers, rather than readers; the proliferation of bad or useless or ersatz information; the forces that push us to process information quickly rather than thoughtfully. If we don't fend off those pollutants, he cautions, we risk becoming cut off from the world, rather than more connected; less able to make wise decisions,

rather than better informed; and, in the end, less human. "Much as the modern-day environmental movement has worked to cultivate and preserve certain natural habitats, such as wetlands and old-growth forests, for the health of the planet, so too should we now begin to cultivate and preserve human habitats for the sake of our own well-being," Levy writes.

How would we go about this? Levy models his answer, he says, on the environmentalist movement. Just as environmentalists no longer try to shut down factories or get rid of cities, information environmentalists should not try to slow down the pace of life or limit the information revolution. Instead, he says, "we will need to cultivate unhurried activities and quiet places, sanctuaries in time and space for reflection and contemplation." Which sanctuary in time does he have in mind? The Sabbath, of course. "I by no means want to argue for the broad-scale adoption of traditional Sabbath practices . . . by the larger population," he says. What does he want to argue for? He is loath to say: "I could speak to the ways I myself am experimenting with such ideas at home and in the workplace, but effective change will most importantly come through collective reflection, experimentation, and action: local communities creating sanctuaries that fit their particular circumstances."

5.

SO WHAT IF, having remembered the Sabbath, we *did* want to bring it back? What aspect would we find desirable? How would we go about doing something so eccentric and retrograde?

We have, it seems to me, two options. We could bring it back individually or we could bring it back collectively. Cultivating a Sabbath habit one person at a time has an obvious appeal. Every good Jewish missionary—that is, a person whose job is to lure Jews back into the fold—knows that it is best to start one's evangelizing by preaching the virtues of Shabbat. Chabad houses, run by a Hasidic group from Brooklyn known as the Lubavitchers, send forth battalions of young black-hatted Jews to invite college students and lonely Jewish travel-

ers to celebrate Shabbat in Lubavitch homes around the world. At the Orthodox synagogue that I sometimes visit with my husband on Friday nights, men vie with one another to invite us to their homes, where their wives have cooked elaborate meals. Reform and Conservative congregations launch campaigns to increase Saturday attendance that have names like “Celebrate Shabbat” or “Shabbat Club.”

Classical Jewish theology presents the Sabbath as a communal good, rather than an individual one, but communitarianism can be a hard sell in a land of rugged individuals. When the anthropologist Riv-Ellen Prell studied some of these synagogue programs, she found that congregants responded most enthusiastically to pitches that emphasized personal well-being. Celebrating Shabbat met their need for “relaxation and self-reflection . . . family . . . a break from busy-ness, technology, consumerism, and modernity.”

Christian Sabbatarianism has also begun to make a comeback, stressing the psychological benefits to the individual rather than the rightness of obeying God. A strictly unscientific survey on Amazon.com turned up more than twenty guides to bringing the Sabbath back into your life, all published in the past decade. To the degree that Christianity enters into the discussion at all, it is seen as a tool of self-improvement. And a secular Sabbath has emerged that is largely a way of curing an addiction to technology. Adherents to what’s called a “technology Sabbath”—naturally, they stay in touch via the Internet—speak of themselves in language that evokes Alcoholics Anonymous testimonials: “I love technology. I’m not a Luddite. But I realized it was a problem when I would sit down to check my e-mail and it was almost like I would wake up six hours later and find I was watching videos of puppies on YouTube,” Ariel Meadow Stallings, a blogger from Seattle, told the Reuters news agency in April 2008. “I’d try and think what I had been doing for the past two hours and I had no idea. I associate that kind of time loss with black-outs when you’re drunk.”

In its celebration of self-discipline, secular Sabbatarianism has a surface resemblance to the Orthodox and Puritan Sabbaths, but it has

a deeper affinity to other, recent movements in which Americans take themselves off the grid: the voluntary simplicity movement, the green or sustainability movement, the frugality movement. There are rules to these movements, and you are urged to keep them; the voluntary simplicity movement, for instance, discourages eating out and eating high on the food chain (meat) and unnecessary consumption. But in the end you are accountable to no one but yourself. You have the good of society in mind but all you can expect to change is your own behavior, and maybe that of a few people around you.

The philosopher Michel Foucault had a name for such personal quests for transformation: He called them techniques of the self. He did not mean to be derogatory. In the third volume of *The History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self*, Foucault locates the origins of the technique of the self in the writings of the ancients—Seneca and Marcus Aurelius and Plutarch and Epictetus. These philosophers sought, among other things, to achieve sexual moderation in cultures rife with promiscuity. They shared “a mistrust of the pleasures, an emphasis on the consequences of their abuse for the body and the soul, a valorization of marriage and marital obligations, a disaffection with regard to the spiritual meanings imputed to the love of boys,” Foucault wrote. This was not a puritanical backlash, exactly; it was more like applied philosophy. Plato, too, stressed “taking care of oneself.” In the Socratic dialogues with the young future statesman and general Alcibiades—who apparently had a wild streak—Socrates scolds him for wanting to take charge of Athens when he has not learned to govern himself. He had yet to learn, said Socrates, the *techne tou biou*, “the art of existence.”

An appealing feature of the technique of the self is that it is voluntary. There is no talk of legislating morality. Nor is the regimen meant for everybody. On the contrary, being able to stick to the rules is what distinguished the adept from the throng. This austere self-discipline became the basis, in part, of Christian monasticism; it seeped into rabbinic thought. The Greeks and the Romans attained transcendence through determined moderation; monks, saints, and

mystics by giving up the pleasures of the flesh; and the great rabbinic sages by performing heroic feats of Torah study and demonstrating piety above and beyond the Law.

Today's neo-Sabbatarians, in other words, are the latest in a long line of philosophical and spiritual élites. They give things up in a spirit of protest or in an effort to bring holiness into their lives. But their reforms play out in very limited spheres, often on the margins of society. People suffering from time deprivation or information overload may not be addicted or driven or out of touch with the higher purpose of life. They may be tied to their meetings and computers against their will—by the need to hold on to a job. Individualized Sabbatarianism may change life for the lucky few, but it won't help the many.

6.

THE OTHER WAY to bring back the Sabbath would be to re-regulate, collectively, the use of our time. Do I mean mean bringing back blue laws? These happen to be underrated, in my opinion. However complicated, unsystematic, and occasionally unjust they may have been, they did succeed in staving off the encroachments of the market and the specter of 24/7 labor—Stalin's continuous workweek—for quite a long time.

But restricting Sunday commerce makes no sense anymore. For one thing, it places the burden on the people who can least afford to carry it—the women, usually, who are already juggling children, households, and full-time jobs. For another, it's nonsensical to proscribe activities, such as the purchase of alcohol, that nobody frowns on anymore, especially if everything else is for sale. In any case, it is no longer possible to draw a “reasonable line of demarcation” between shopping and recreation, since shopping has evolved into a kind of entertainment and entertainment has largely devolved into a series of long-form commercials for worldwide celebrity brands.

The emphasis on commerce seems misplaced, anyway. The Fourth Commandment doesn't explicitly forbid us to shop. It tells us not to work, and not to force others to work. Now, no modern soci-

ety, no matter how Sabbatarian—Israel is a good example—can avoid putting some people to work on the Sabbath. Any high-functioning state needs uninterrupted access to hospitals, drugstores, the military, food, water, transportation, and other basic services; indeed, Israel makes all those things available to its citizens on Saturday. Any society with a large secular population will also require a full panoply of recreational and self-care options on its days off, including, I would argue, retail shopping. Israel has plenty of that, too, although owing to inconsistent enforcement of its Sabbath laws it is not entirely clear how much Saturday commerce and labor is legal and how much simply flouts the laws.

Nor does the Fourth Commandment tell us not to work too hard, or too long. Indeed, as the Puritans stressed, we're *supposed* to work the other six days. The Fourth Commandment tells us to remember to (1) stop working, (2) stop working at the same time, and (3) stop working at regular intervals. The implication is that a society has a right, and perhaps an obligation, to marshal its temporal resources for the benefit of the greatest number, even at the risk of harming the few.

The United States, in the twenty-first century, happens to be particularly oblivious to this particular Bible lesson. We have remarkably few laws governing the use and abuse of workers' time. Two out of three countries in the world have laws that dictate the maximum number of hours employees can be expected to work (usually between forty-eight and sixty hours a week). The United States is not among them. Employees in most countries are entitled to rest breaks, but American employees are not. America has fewer public holidays than most industrialized nations. American workers have no legal right to take a vacation; vacation policy is determined by the employer. Most European countries require employers to give workers three to six weeks of paid vacation.

America does, of course, have the Fair Labor Standards Act. Adopted at the height of the Great Depression, the FLSA was passed less to protect workers than to fix a broken economy: It was meant to redistribute employment from the few who had it and who worked

long hours (the average workweek was forty-eight hours), to include the many who were out of a job. The history of the FLSA, it should be said, tells a cautionary tale about the unintended consequences of regulating time, for it appears to have fostered the current climate of overwork. In the 1950s, the era of the organization man, working overtime at time and a half became a way to climb from the lower-middle class to the middle-middle class, as well as the obligatory proof of one's seriousness about one's job. Because the FLSA exempted executive, administrative, and professional employees (in addition to farmworkers, whose work was assumed to require long hours), it wound up contributing to "the time divide"—the gap in American society between high-earning salaried élites who either drive themselves or are pressured into working much longer than forty hours, and, on the other hand, low-earning workers whose hours are deliberately kept below forty hours a week. Some of these workers may put in more than forty hours, but only by combining part-time jobs. As a result, they don't get overtime—or health benefits, either.

In any case, a lot has changed since the FLSA was passed. For one thing, in 1938 it was assumed that the forty hours of the workweek would be allocated in even chunks across five days (Monday through Friday). That assumption can no longer be made. Another assumption underlying the forty-hour week is that it represented forty hours of paid work per household, with the same amount of time or more being devoted, usually by a wife, to all the essential unpaid duties. The rise of dual-earning couples, with the increase in single-parent families, means that each household has less time to devote to those activities. The loss of non-work time in these families has made it harder for them to cope with the needs of family members on different schedules, such as schoolchildren and elderly parents; that is why workers are asking for, and receiving, flextime.

This steady stream of small adjustments to the common work schedule is another way in which we are edging closer to Pieper's specter of "total work." When American courts and labor arbitrators hear "disputes at the boundaries of time," as the law professor Todd Rakoff calls them—that is, tugs-of-war between workers and man-

agement over the proper use of workers' time—their decisions tend to favor companies over individuals, the time of the organizations over the time of families. For instance, a worker who refuses to work overtime has very little legal protection against being fired or disciplined for doing so; the right to refuse overtime is negotiated contract by contract, usually by unions, except in the case of government workers, who enjoy the protections of civil-service law. When an employee is fired or disciplined for refusing to work overtime because he or she needed to pick up a child from school or day care—a situation that generates its fair share of labor disputes—judges and arbitrators have generally held that the worker was required to make a "reasonable" effort to come up with some other arrangement before saying no. One such decision featured a carpenter who walked out on a job where he was working overtime because he had to pick up his two young children from a day-care center that was about to close. The arbitrator ruled that he should have left the children at the day-care center. He didn't need to leave just then, because he knew that the day-care center would have taken care of the children for an extra fee.

Rakoff suggests three possible reasons for the law's reluctance to protect non-work time. One is the imbalance of power between workers and management. Another is the outmoded assumption that workers have someone at home who can take care of such things. Both reasons seem true but remediable. Rakoff's third explanation lays the blame on a more intractable, because more elusive, condition: "cultural blindness" about time. That is, we have a hard time seeing non-work time as anything but formless leisure, rather than time spent doing things that have to be done if society is to thrive, and done regularly and collectively.

What might neo-Sabbatarian laws—laws that protect coordinated, rhythmic social time—look like? We have dedicated so few brain cells to the problem during the past half century that it's hard to envision the exact dimensions of a solution. Who knows what a team of crack labor-policy wonks might come up with? But if we do make the collective decision that this kind of time is worth protecting, two things should become apparent: one, that the market is unlikely to

protect it for us, and two, that we have more tools at our disposal than simple legal proscriptions.

We could start by tackling overwork. We could adopt European Union vacation policies (a minimum of four weeks), shorter work-weeks (thirty-five hours, say), paid parental leave, and limits on overtime. We could emulate Germany and the Netherlands and give workers the right to reduce their hours and their pay, unless companies can prove that this would constitute a hardship.

But while such reforms would help Americans balance work and family life, and might even generate jobs in this age of underemployment, they don't address the problem of *coordinating* social time. It would be impossible, and probably undesirable, to forbid people to work at night or on weekends. But we could create a web of incentives and disincentives that might make it easier on those who do, and also remedy the harm done to society. We could tax off-hours labor and use the money to bolster the civic institutions weakened by the diminution of the pool of available volunteers. We could mandate higher pay or graduated bonuses for protracted or irregular schedules that reflect the hidden social and personal costs of staggered hours. We could strengthen a worker's right to refuse overtime or a job reassignment that entailed working non-standard hours.

Each of these measures might have negative and unforeseen consequences, and we should instruct our labor-policy wonks to model all possible outcomes. And we should concede that a full day of rest in the global era is probably a fantasy. But Henry Ward Beecher was right: The idea does have uplift. Who thinks in terms of preserving public culture anymore? Everybody talks about popular culture, but pop culture is a creature of segmented markets, not common ones. Sunday once gave Americans an experience that was national in scope, personal in character, and religiously neutral. As soon as religion was disestablished, no one had to go to church—or anywhere else, for that matter.

As for the common day of rest falling on Sunday, Frankfurter, in *McGowan et al. v. Maryland*, pointed out that to share a day of rest, you had to pick one, and it might as well be the one that most people al-

ready observed. The secular Sunday was implicitly a national holiday. One day a week—it is worth remembering—the country honored life beyond duty and the imperatives of the marketplace. For twenty-four hours, we stayed home and ate huge family dinners, or went to church, or set off on afternoon drives. And we not only did these things with members of our inner circle; we did them with the knowledge that everyone else was doing them, too. That gave us permission not to work, too, along with the rest of the nation. We had fewer choices, but that lack of choice, in retrospect, was liberating, because our inexhaustible options trail behind them the realization that we're not doing everything we could be doing. We embraced laziness, goofiness, random reading, desultory conversation, neighbors and relatives both pleasant and unpleasant—the kinds of things that knit us together even as they made us more ourselves.

7.

THE CONVENTIONS of spiritual autobiography require me to conclude by telling you how I keep the Sabbath now, as opposed to when I began this book. The answer is, I have not changed all that much, and everything has changed for me. I keep the Sabbath, but only halfway—by strict Jewish standards, at least—which sometimes feels fine and sometimes feels shameful but has come to feel inevitable.

My husband and I work hard at the celebratory aspects of the Sabbath. We spend the week scouring farmers' markets for fresh fruits and vegetables, and on Friday mornings and afternoons we make an elaborate dinner, and sometimes, if we get home in time, take baths and dress up, and we invite friends over or we go to their homes, and we light the candles, and we bless the children, the wine, the challah, and the washing of our hands. As for the negative proscriptions—the “do nots”—we observe those largely by keeping our electronic devices off, including cell phones. These we use only if we *really, really* need to. We put our wallets away, with the same resolution about money, which is not to be handled on the Sabbath.

But we live in New York City, and amid the many temptations it's

easy to confuse need with desire. We no longer drive to synagogue, but sometimes the children's whining about the thirteen-block walk forces us into a cab, which entails driving *and* handling money. The period after services poses a problem, and on those winter days when we have failed to wangle an invitation to someone's home for lunch or lack the energy to put on a spread ourselves, when the seconds tick slowly and the children grow restless, we go to a museum. In that case, we may not have to pay—we can usually go to the ones at which we can flash membership cards—but we're sure to take our wallets back out when it comes to buying food, drink, maybe even toys. I recently confronted the specter of Saturday-morning soccer practice, and was defeated by it. My son now plays soccer instead of going to synagogue, and my husband goes with him.

I feel guilty about not building better fences around the day, but apparently not guilty enough. Partly, it's because each step up in observance paralyzes me with indecision. Why follow this rule and not that one? Where to begin? But also, I think, it's because my religious commitments remain too abstract to overcome the inconvenience of making them. Probably the only way for me to trick myself into being *shomer Shabbat* would be to restrict myself to circles where such behavior is the norm, not subject to constant question.

Anyway, I still like the idea of the fully observed Sabbath more than I like observing it. I like the idea of being commanded, too, in the same ambivalent way, because I believe that I am. Being commanded strikes me as a succinct way of saying "being born into the world." Being commanded means that customs come upon us from the outside, like the language that we learn from our parents, and from the inside, like the still small voice of conscience. What others call God, I call ritual.

I like to think that I share this view with Kafka. At least that's how I read his famous parable of the leopards:

Leopards break into the temple and drink the sacrificial chalices dry; this occurs repeatedly, again and again: finally it can be reckoned on beforehand and becomes a part of the ceremony.

In one run-on sentence Kafka provides a history of ritual, a definition of God, and a theory of habit. *Ritual* tames the trauma caused by the leopards—the random violence of life—by incorporating them into a routine. *Religion* is the sum of such routines. *God* is what we make of the leopards. After all, the wine in the sacrificial chalices had been set aside for God. If leopards drink the wine again and again, and if that action has become central to a ritual script, then according to that script leopards play the part of God. And if they do that, why then, soon enough, we're bound to perceive them *as* God, or as gods. And very good gods they make, too: terrifying, beautiful, unpredictable, susceptible to domestication.

God, then, is the ungovernable reality commemorated by ritual. Ritual reflects the highly contingent anthropological, geographical, agricultural, and historical facts that conditioned our neural pathways and tribal behaviors and the forms and customs that became religion, and that even now determine through force of repetition the way things ought to be. Or maybe I've just naïvely inflated a random evolutionary outcome—the human predisposition to incarnate memory in custom, and those customs themselves—into an overblown fantasy called God. God, then, is my parents, and my parents' parents, and all those who came before. God is the ancestors, which is probably how our ancestors saw the matter.

Not long ago, my six-year-old son, Moses, a boy with many reservations about his Jewish-day-school education, informed me, with genuine sorrow, that he didn't believe in God. "Sometimes," he said, "I think God is a story someone made up a long time ago and told to his children, and his children told it to his children, and so on, until we all got into the habit of thinking it was true." Though sometimes, he added, he thinks that he's wrong, and that God will punish him harshly for daring to think such things.

I realized with chagrin that I am one of Moses' children, in all the senses of that phrase. I tell the story of God to my children so that they will tell it to their children. I keep the Sabbath more or less the way my parents kept it, and chances are that my children will keep it more or less the same way. Actually, I suspect that my Moses will not

keep it at all, but that, too, is a part of his heritage, a way for him to stay loyal to me. Will the ancestors take revenge on him, as he fears they will? Probably. They did on me. I grapple with them every Saturday.

Freud also thought ritual—which he equated with obsessive-compulsiveness and neurosis—was the revenge of the dead. In *Totem and Taboo*, he gave his Oedipal history of religion: It came into being when a group of brothers killed their father, who had denied them access to women. Instantly, they felt remorse. Their guilt required expiation, so they invented ritual as a form of self-punishment. They also ate the father, an event that becomes the basis for religious festivals, and everything else besides. The totem meal, Freud wrote, was “a repetition and a commemoration of this memorable and criminal deed,” as well as “the beginning of so many things—of social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion.”

The autobiographical moment for which this fantasy is said to have been a screen can be found in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Here Freud tells a tale that is usually characterized as one of his earliest encounters with anti-Semitism and, therefore, a primal scene that explains his defensively dismissive attitude toward religion. Curiously, it's also a tale of the Sabbath. When Freud was ten or twelve years old, he went on a walk with his father, Jakob Freud—perhaps a Sabbath walk, since Jakob was known to take them—during which Jakob told a story that was meant to explain to Sigmund that life had improved a great deal for Jews over the course of Jakob's lifetime. The events described in Jakob's story, in any case, definitely take place on a Sabbath walk:

“When I was a young man,” said Jakob Freud, “I went for a walk one Saturday in the streets of your birthplace; I was well dressed, and had a new fur cap on my head. A Christian came up to me and with a single blow knocked off my cap into the mud and shouted: ‘Jew! get off the pavement!’ ”

“And what did you do?” asked young Sigmund.

“I went into the roadway and picked up my cap,” Jakob quietly replied.

The young Freud was dismayed: “This struck me as unheroic conduct on the part of the big, strong man who was holding the little boy by the hand.” Whenever he thought about the incident, he substituted for the disturbing image of his submissive father another that he liked better: a scene in which the Carthaginian general Hannibal's father “made his boy swear before the household altar to take vengeance on the Romans.”

Some background is required to understand all this. Jakob Freud was raised in a Hasidic family and well trained in Jewish literature and ritual; indeed, there is evidence that he homeschooled Sigmund until he was seven and taught him Hebrew, Torah, and Talmud, even though Freud sometimes denied having had enough Jewish education to distinguish Yiddish from Hebrew. Given Jakob's upbringing, it seems distinctly possible that the hat that was knocked off his head was a *shtreimel*, a round, flat ring of fur worn by Hasidic men on the Sabbath and on Jewish holidays. The *shtreimel*, if that's what Jakob Freud was wearing, was a flagrant display of ritual headgear; and if that is not what he was wearing, Jakob was still obviously dressed up for the Sabbath, a fact that would not have escaped his son.

This story, then, gives us another way to imagine the relationship between ritual and trauma, especially as Freud saw it. Ritual is not only an expiation for, or a defense against, trauma, as per *Totem and Taboo*. Ritual itself traumatizes. The singular Jewishness of Jakob Freud's Sabbath hat singled him out for violence. On six days he passed as a regular German (the incident took place in Freiburg, a town in what is now the Czech Republic, which is where the Freud family lived before they moved to Vienna); on the seventh day he was a Jew, and assaulted as such. What the story comes to teach us is that if ritual is born of trauma the aversion to ritual is also born of trauma—the trauma of ritual. Keeping the Sabbath as our forefathers did strait-jackets us in an identity that we did not choose and for which we may not want to take the consequences. It goes against our yearning for a world of infinite possibility. It exposes us to violence, ridicule, prejudice, ostracism.

On the other hand, we are often as irrationally opposed to ritual

as ritual is irrational in its demands upon us. Freud's marriage to his much-beloved Martha, who had been raised in a deeply observant Jewish home, nearly failed to take place because he refused to participate in a Jewish ceremony. Shortly thereafter, he forbade Martha to light the Sabbath candles, a bit of marital high-handedness that she remained bitter about throughout their otherwise apparently happy marriage. (She began lighting candles again after he died.)

Rituals are not just idealized visions of how things can be. They are also artifacts of history. Why choose Sunday as the American day of rest? Because that is what it has always been, and tradition has its virtues. Or maybe it doesn't. Maybe what the choice of Sunday commemorates is the rage and insecurity at the heart of Christianity about Jews and their Sabbath, feelings that had homicidal and even genocidal consequences. Maybe we ought not to honor so ignoble a history. Or maybe it is more honest to let Sunday continue to remind us of its problematic origins. The philosopher Jürgen Habermas once argued that one of the advantages of secular societies is that they substitute rational discourse or speech for the manipulatively symbolic communications of ritual. If you can discuss the way things should be, rather than simply enact your vision of them or let them impose their history on you, you have a hope of arriving at a reasoned, reflective consensus about the good life. Should we rest on Sunday or Saturday, or any day in seven? Let us hold a conference on the subject.

The problem with Habermas's Platonic reasonableness is that it would banish the poets, along with their poetry. The Sabbath may have defensible social value, in that it offers excellent ideas about time and society, but it also bears testimony to that which can't be defended, only re-experienced: men and women mute with the disjunctions of exile and the awkwardness of living in a time that does not feel like theirs and mournful with the wish to find a home, if not in space, then in time. And because the Sabbath, Sunday as well as Saturday, is a day those men and women kept, and not a conversation they had, the men and women who came after them remembered it. And when they, too, felt discomfited by their world, they were able to do something about that feeling and assuage their pain a bit. Or

maybe they didn't do what they had been taught to do, because it no longer gave them comfort, but not doing while feeling uncomfortable about it is also a way of remembering.

So why remember the Sabbath? Because the Sabbath comes to us out of the past—out of the bodies of our mothers and fathers, out of the churches on our streets, out of our own dreams—to train us to pay attention to it. And why do we need to be trained? Consider the mystery surrounding God's first Sabbath. Why *did* God stop, anyway? In the eighteenth century, Rabbi Elijah of Vilna (the Vilna Gaon) ventured this explanation: God stopped to show us that what we create becomes meaningful only once we stop creating it and start remembering why it was worth creating in the first place. Or—if this is the thought to which our critical impulses lead us—why it *wasn't* worth creating, why it isn't up to snuff and should be created anew. After all, God, contemplating his first Creation, decided to destroy it in a flood. We could let the world wind us up and set us to working, like dolls that go until they fall over because they have no way of stopping. But that would make us less than human. We have to remember to stop because we have to stop to remember.

PART SIX SCENES OF INSTRUCTION

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