

# THE KALAHARI HEIDEGGER

## A fiction by Michael Picardie

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"Agriculture is now a motorized food industry, the same thing in its essence as the production of corpses in the gas chambers and the extermination camps, the same thing as blockades and the reduction of countries to famine, the same thing as the manufacture of hydrogen bombs."

I said that in Bremen in 1949. People were shocked. I had put abattoirs in the same category as gas-chambers. But we, all *homo sapiens*, are animals, although with consciousness which can alienate us from the fullness of Being or fulfil Being. Russian communists and American capitalists – the total planetary technology turns us into *dehumanized animalised* beings. Civilization doesn't civilize us, not with a man like Hitler around, and the Weimar Republic and the Great War preparing the way in the form of anarchy, death and destruction so that we longed for an iron-hard hateful order, under a maniacal Fuhrer bringing about the resuscitated glory of a Germany united in war. Look at Mussolini, Franco, Hirohito. Civilized Italy, civilized Spain, civilized Japan. Barbarians at heart.

I am ready to apologize in this my African journal for joining the Nazi party which I utterly renounce, reject and repudiate. It was a piece of opportunism to further my ambition to lead Germany ideologically towards a kind of deconstructive resurgence which I call *Dasein* – Being There. I admit there is a lot of pompous nonsense in my philosophy, willfully obscure.

I notice my writing style has changed. I still think in German. English is more laconic. Less complex, less compounded. But I assure you this is still Heidegger. What I sought were answers to the question: "What does it mean to be?" It means to be able to ask the question: "How I am in the world?"

Even as I write I am ashamed of my *hubris*. Alfred Rosenberg and the disgusting *Die Sturmer* of Julius Streicher with its caricature of the revolting, greasy, hook-nosed, grasping Jew fit only for total destruction - the most disgraceful mass-murder in the history of so-called western civilization.

In '45 the French occupying army concluded their investigation of me. I was pronounced a collaborator and banned from teaching till 1951. It is the early summer of 1950. Next year I will teach again at Freiburg. Hannah Arendt spoke for me to the French tribunal. She returned to New York. People in America who knew we had been lovers when she was my student back in the 20s called her a Jewish-Nazi bitch.

I have apologized to her a thousand times. Then there was Elisabeth Blochmann. I helped her leave Germany before the mass-murders began during the war. We still see each other. I have confessed all of this to my wife, and she has confessed her infidelities to me. We have an admirable marriage, an authentic marriage, not a bourgeois marriage, admittedly. You cannot imagine what pain it costs to admit that infidelity is difficult, impossible, since we are part animal, part-god (the best of us – Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Jesus).

I came here in the Christmas of 1949 and have stayed right through 1950 in the village of Gaborone. I think I am having a nervous breakdown of sorts. An Indian doctor, a woman, Dr Singh gives me sodium amytal to calm me. I have been reading English poetry left on the shelves of various dwellings by European ex-patriates here in Bechuanaland. T.S.Eliot of all writers: "I should have been a pair of claws scuttling across the floors of oceans." Sartre had the right idea. Writing novels, plays. His great tome *Being and Nothingness* is nothing compared to his novel *Nausea*.

I too want to vomit remembering that I betrayed all standards of human decency. I left out Kant from my *Being and Time*. Ethics, the categorical imperative, "act as if you are acting for mankind, but do your duty" – but what if the two are in conflict? Compromise?

I wanted to get away from Germany and the war and my whole responsibility for being in the Nazi Party. Sometimes I think of walking into the Kalahari Wilderness unarmed - to feed myself to the lions, wild dogs, hyenas and vultures. To pass through the guts of real animals and become excrement in the ravenous beauty of this place.

There is a Jesuit - who teaches here. I would have become a Jesuit if I had not a psychosomatic heart condition according to the Jesuit's doctor in Messkirch when I left school. This Bechuanaland Jesuit teaches theology in the university college the British have established in Gaborone which will be the capital when Bechuanaland Protectorate becomes - I don't know what it will be called - Botswana perhaps - in a few years' time.

I confess to Father Albrecht in his little African thatched hut which serves as a Catholic church and school. He absolves me. As a result of my Bremen statement I am to some extent exculpated. In his heart of hearts, I wonder if he forgives me: "I am gall, I am heartburn." Some thoughtful expatriate English person left books in the back room of the corrugated iron-roofed colonial bungalow I rented. The front room and veranda of which is a post office. A collection of some Welsh poet. Hopkins, I think, another Jesuit. I taste, smell, feel myself. I am gall, I am heartburn. I am ashamed.

This is because I have not apologized publically for the mass-murder of the Jews or for what I wrote about Edmund Husserl my predecessor in the Freiburg chair of philosophy in my black notebooks which mysteriously have become semi-public knowledge.

I referred to Husserl's Jewishness as the reason why he could not accept the historicity of the idea of Being.

What nonsense.

Every educated Jew knows that atheism is a distinct possibility and that theology and the Being of God is an idea partly determined by history.

A warlike, tribal, vengeful God made Israelite and Judean society possible in tribally divided ancient Palestine.

But Husserl never believed it worthwhile to see the (changing?) idea of God as a concrete being - as other than a subject for reduction into its constituent parts – his famous *epoche*. But that is not a racially "Jewish" obstinacy. It is just phenomenology.

It's too late now. Everybody knows I betrayed my benefactor. I did not even go to his funeral in 1938. I did not intervene when he was refused access to the university library after his retirement. I did not protest when all the Jewish faculty members all over Germany and Austria were thrown out of their jobs. As rector at Freiburg I stopped an anti-Semitic book-burning, anti-Semitic posters, but I kept in touch with Nazi students and did not for a moment condemn them.

Hannah Arendt called me a murderer. She said I murdered my benefactor Husserl not only because of our academic *falling-out*, but by *falling in* with Nazi propaganda *collusively*, not contradicting the Nazis' blaming the Jews for being the race that spread Bolshevism and American capitalism. *As well as that* I additionally murdered Husserl for accusing him and the whole Jewish race of not recognizing the historicity of being and time. But Husserl had become a Christian. I recoil in horror and shrink into a depressive non-being at the thought of criticizing Husserl for being a racial Jew. Perhaps I shall commit suicide physically as I have committed professional suicide.

Father Albrecht suggested that I fast and pray. In the heat, I don't trust the municipal tap-water. I buy soda-water, tonic-water with quinine to potentiate my anti-malaria immunization, eat only salads, avoid meat, have nuts and fruit. I look thin again although on the verge of late middle age but not old.

And this is the African version of the western civilization that I supposedly re-wrote in *Being and Time*. Alone here without my wife and sons, in this vast wilderness, I realize what an insignificant piece of humanity I became, a piece of *drek. Sheiss*. The Afrikaners say: *Gaan kak in die bosse*. Go and shit in the bushes. That is all I am good for.

I have plenty to confess and I suffer for it. Whenever I go to the chemist shop – in Gaborone village with my prescription - a Jewish pharmacist called Abrahamson confronts me calling me by my name and tells me he shouldn't serve me and asks me why the devil I have come here to spread my slime in this otherwise lovely place.

God knows how my notoriety has spread to this beautiful semi-desert. Well, people talk. Jews especially, understandably, *have* to talk to protect themselves from the latest *goyishke* persecution.

I have asked Father Albrecht about how the hell I am to get out of hell.

He says what is called for is a public apology for my Nazism. Someone from the university college has called on me in my colonial tin-roofed bungalow the front room of which is the local post-office. He warns me that the Israelis who live, teach and work here as volunteers here are not beyond helping their Mossad kidnap me and put me on trial in Jerusalem for being a Nazi supporter. Or just taking a pot shot at me and leaving me for the vultures on the rubbish heap outside the town.

Hannah Arendt though says I murdered Husserl through my ingratitude. The Nazis made fun of me, refused to let me publish, found my work to be gibberish. Nevertheless, I refused to make a grovelling apology which would have made the anti-Nazis despise me for yet a further opportune move. Adorno calls all this *the jargon of authenticity*. All the fine Jewish social theorists above all the Frankfurt School who managed to get to America before Hitler slaughtered them *detest me!* How I manage to go on from day to day suffering this depression in the face of being-in-the-world-of-Reality – is beyond me. Resolution. Utter resolution not to be destroyed by my lack of political and moral judgement. *When I feel bad I must remember: "Gaan kak in die bosse"*

Father Albrecht says confession to him and God is not enough to make a difference in the moral world. He says by the end of the century – well after I have left this earth – the Bushpeople will be “villagised” and the Kalahari will be commercialised for tourists. There is talk of diamonds near the surface of the Kalahari. Why don’t I drop my philosophising and do something for the Bushpeople who are being riddled with alcoholism: – home brewed beer using granulated sugar bought at general stores - and they, the Bushpeople, are afflicted with venereal diseases. That’s what Father Albrecht asks of me.

I have attended their trance-dances during which they cure people of psychological illnesses like anxiety and depression with the ecstasy of the dancer’s mood and the application of his sweat. They attribute the cure to //Gauna, their God-Spirit, and /kia the shaman’s psychic energy generated in the dance to put every into a trance. What is to us an ecstatic sense of Being which is for us also therapeutic is for the Bushpeople, the San, /kia. Or some other tribes of Bushpeople call it /num. Theirs is a difficult clicking language.

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Father Albrecht is giving me elocution lessons. He smiles and calls them “electrocution” lessons. Many a true word.... He wants me to help him teach his congregation - the Batswana and the Bushpeople - in English – for obvious reasons in British Bechuanaland – the basics of literacy and numeracy. I have to try to lose something of my German accent as he has done otherwise the outcome will be confusing. With all my learning, I still speak a heavily Teutonic English. He has given me gramophone records of perfectly accented standard English.

I practice with Father Albrecht’s tape recorder – reading a grammar book or a book of basic arithmetic – and then he listens and corrects my Germanic pronunciation. His own accent is quite slight. And so on until I sound almost like the English wife of the District Commissioner, who, with evident reluctance, given my reputation, mitigated only by Albrecht, allows me to rent what they call here a *rondavel* in the garden of the D.C.’s house. So, I have left the tin-roofed bungalow, the front room of which is a local post-office which was very noisy with people milling about collecting letters and sending off money-orders. Strangely the D.C. is a German anthropologist and is Jewish, a man called Goldmann. The British colonial office apparently like the idea that an expert in African cultures looks after the interests of the native peoples - this is a Protectorate not a colony. We knew each other in Marburg when I was professor there. Amazingly he knows some of the dialects of the languages of the Bushpeople – whom I believe the European scientists now call the San. I am astonished that a Jew, an ex-German Jew, knowing who Heidegger was and that he became rector of Freiburg University in the very year, 1933, that Hitler came to power, and swore an oath of allegiance to the Fuhrer (the alternative to which would have been to do as Karl Jaspers did – resign and stay home to look after his secretly hidden Jewish wife which wouldn’t have applied to me – although I could have been fired for speaking out and nothing else would have happened to

me. Perhaps the Nazis would have sent me to a labour camp). It is astonishing - that a Jew and an Englishwoman can bear my presence at all.

To show my appreciation of Goldmann I have given him and his wife my treasured copy of Holderin's poetry translated into English so that Mrs Goldmann might read it too. She, originally, a Lady Salisbury closely related to the Marquis of Salisbury the present Colonial and Commonwealth secretary, is sniffy, as the English put it – graphically so. Goldmann and I had a few glasses of Pinotage Cape wine I brought along to their dinner party and Goldmann, being the very heart of courtesy, asked me to read a few poems in my now increasingly refined English accent. So, this is how it went – in between indignant sniffs. (I overheard them arguing in the kitchen about why Henry Goldmann – originally Heinrich – invited a Nazi sympathiser over in the first place and how soon she could evict me from their *rondavel*. She said he should have told her who I really was before offering me the tenancy of the *rondavel*. Henry said he was sorry for me. At which point Lady Salisbury asked: “And what about the Jews? The Gypsies? The Slavs? The homosexuals? Is he not sorry for them?”)

When they returned from the kitchen I happened to ask why the British government – the Marquis of Salisbury included, Lady Salisbury's second cousin I think – has deposed and exiled the King of the Bamangwato tribe, Seretse Khama, for the indiscretion of marrying a white woman in England, Ruth Williams. They have deposed the leading native king, an educated barrister, so as to placate the apartheid government of Bechuanaland's neighbour, South Africa!

Lady Salisbury is embarrassed.

I read out loud from Holderin to interrupt what was turning into a debacle:

“AGES OF LIFE”

“Euphrates' cities and  
Palmyra's streets and you  
Forests of columns in the level desert  
What are you now?  
Your crowns, because  
You crossed the boundary  
Of breath,  
Were taken off  
In Heaven's smoke and flame;  
But I sit under clouds (each one

Of which has peace) among  
The ordered oaks, upon  
The deer's heath, and strange  
And dead the ghosts of the blessed ones  
Appear to me."

At this point Lady Salisbury appeared to cry in protest at my effrontery. "Ghosts indeed of the blessed ones, how many millions? Jews? Gypsies? Nice British *and German* boys! And Russians? 50 million human beings? And you come to Bechuanaland – to recover your sanity – and Henry – my *Jewish* husband vouched for you! You wouldn't have intervened to stop him being *gassed* would you?"

I retorted: "And why has the Marquis of Salisbury the Commonwealth and Colonial secretary of the British government exiled Serestse Khama for marrying a white woman, Ruth Williams to placate the racist government next door, South Africa?"

Lady Salisbury expostulated: "Deposed and exiled not *gassed!*" and rang a bell for the servants to clear away the main course of braised springbok haunch in some sort of sauce made from herbs growing in their kitchen garden sheltered from the scorching African sun. I could see tears spurting from her eyes which she dabbed with a white, starched table napkin no doubt laundered by the Bushpeople and Batswana servants now cooking the meal in the kitchen. And why not? They are not slaves, although ineluctably drawn into a capitalist economy as units of labour.

Lady Salisbury muttered: "Your crowns, because / You crossed the boundary / Of breath, / Were taken off / In Heaven's smoke and flame." What does it mean? You see I have perfect recall. But what does it mean?

"It means the human being – who just breathes – can will destruction of the colonnade of an ancient temple crowned with merely sculptured majesty if the gods so will it – the gods meaning arbitrary fate – meaning armies enacting an other-worldly scenario, the Arabs conquering the Babylonian and Roman empires."

Perhaps he thought I had suffered enough from guilt and he took the book from me and found another poem which touched on Being which he read aloud, announcing at first: "We must try to forgive ourselves".

"ANOTHER DAY"

"Another day. I follow another path,  
Enter the leafing woodland, visit the spring  
Or the rocks where the roses bloom  
Or search from a look-out, but nowhere

Love are you to be seen in the light of day  
And down the wind go the words of our once so  
Beneficent conversation...

Your beloved face has gone beyond my sight,  
The music of your life is dying away  
Beyond my hearing and all the songs  
That worked a miracle of peace once on

My heart, where are they now? It was long ago,  
So long and the youth I was has aged nor is  
Even the earth that smiled at me then  
The same. Farewell. Live with that word always.

For the soul goes from me to return to you  
Day after day and my eyes shed tears that they  
Cannot look over to where you are  
And see you clearly ever again. “

Lady Salisbury having resorted to a bread-roll and a glass of my Cape wine appeared now to be in a better mood. She asked for the book and found a third poem:

“ONCE THERE WERE GODS”

“Once there were gods, on earth, with people, the heavenly muses  
And Apollo, the youth, healing, inspiring, like you.  
And you are like them to me, as though one of the blessed  
Sent me out into life: where I go my comrade's  
Image goes with me wherever I suffer and build, with love  
Unto death; for I learned this and have this from her.

Let us live, oh you who are with me in sorrow, with me in faith  
And heart and loyalty struggling for better times!  
For such we are! And if ever in the coming years they knew  
Of us two when the spirit matters again  
They would say: lovers in those days, alone, they created  
Their secret world that only the gods knew. For who  
Cares only for things that will die: the earth will have them, but  
Nearer the light, into the clarities come  
Those keeping faith with the heart's love and holy spirit who were  
Hopeful, patient, still, and got the better of fate. “<sup>1</sup>

Thanks be to – whatever it is that rules fate – and Holderlin - we managed to get through the evening without further aggravation. I spared them an interrogation of the presence of Being in the poet's references to the gods, fate, holy spirit. I doubt whether Lady Salisbury has read Parmenides, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Aristotle or Sophocles. On the other hand, genocide of the Nazi type but

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<sup>1</sup> These translations from Friederich Holderlin's poems were made by David Constantine and are published by Bloodaxe Books, Newcastle Upon Tyne in 1996 to whom I owe a debt of gratitude.

not scale may have happened in British or English-speaking territories historically as in Australia and North America, but not on the scale instituted by the house painter from Linz after he was gassed in the trenches of World War One and awarded his Iron Cross by his Jewish captain.

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Serowe is the royal capital of Bechuanaland. It is the site of the residences of the leading and ruling tribe, the Bamangwato. Their family name is "Khama". Seretse Khama, the king or paramount chief and his white English wife, Ruth Williams, have been deposed and exiled to England because of pressure against a multi-racial marriage on their borders by the apartheid government in South Africa which is ideologically offensive to the whites there – subversive!

The British government, heavily in debt after the war, is dependent on South Africa for cheap supplies of various minerals like gold and uranium. Lord Salisbury, Commonwealth and Colonial Secretary who is a distant cousin of Lady Salisbury the wife of the D.C. has given way to Afrikaner nationalist pressure. This is a British government which fought a war against German racism. However, unlike the British, we Germans, in South West Africa which was our colony before and during the First World War, committed genocide against colonial peoples such as the Herero – a rehearsal perhaps for the mass-murder of the Jews.

It seems that in crossing the channel the Anglo-Saxons and before them the Celts and ancient Britons absorbed something of the greater gentleness of the English countryside. Not that the British are to be utterly forgiven for the slave trade and what they did when they became Americans and Australians.

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A fellow German, Wilhelm Bleek and his relative a Miss Lucy Lloyd recorded the Bushpeople's stories in the 1870s in the Cape – from amongst the few San who were left after the Dutch/Afrikaner genocide in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Father Albrecht has allowed me to memorise them from his copy of the book for my story-telling class in his little school in the thatch-roofed church in Naledi, a growing African township near Gaborone.

Guilt and depression must be overcome by acts of generous concern, care, solicitude. I help the children in the Naledi Roman Catholic church school read and write a Bushpeople's story – the original of which is in Bleek and Lloyd. How I wish Hannah could come to me in Bechuanaland so that we could work through this terrible mistake I have made from which I seek redemption, for without her love, only the pity of Father Albrecht, District Commissioner Goldmann, and some insight from Lady Salisbury now that she has seen some of my longing in Holderin – I am without a meaningful life here or in Germany. Elfride my wife and our sons Jorg and Hermann write me worried letters to which I spend hours in replying.

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Thank God Hannah has responded to my letter and has come to visit me in Bechuanaland. She flew to Johannesburg from New York via London and then caught the train to Gaborone. A hotel where

we stay overnight has been built in Gaborone perhaps in preparation for when Bechuanaland becomes independent in the near future.

We hire a car, a four-wheel kind of jeep which can be closed in. The sand/earth roads are bad. I am allowed to hire a rifle and ammunition for self-protection because no hunting, other than by the San, is allowed. We drive through the Kalahari Wilderness and see wonderful herds of game and predators waiting for the late afternoon and the early morning when they do their hunting.

We come to our destination which is an animal sanctuary in the central Kalahari game reserve run by a veterinary surgeon, an old Jewish friend of mine from Freiburg who started off doing philosophy and then, wisely, changed to something more useful, and his Jewish family. Hannah and I are greeted warmly by Hans Loewenthal and his wife Frieda but the teenage children and the grandparents who were saved from – they call it *the* Holocaust - now look at Hannah and me with reserve bordering on suspicion. I feel my nervous breakdown coming over me again until night when Hannah and I have separate rooms and, clandestinely, we move into a double-bed in her room and I find comfort, security, consolation in her arms.

Hannah suggests that we do some empirical research together. After all, here we are in the middle of an African paradise. Does what I wrote in *Being and Time* about *Being-There* in the human being apply to all human beings? Perhaps so. Or perhaps the terms have to be reframed. Hans asks a neighboring group of San people if anyone wants to help the German professors from Europe and America do research, to educate themselves? Besides they will pay the San in gratitude for their hospitality in pounds, shillings and pence. Everyone claps and I and Hannah shell out about five South African pounds in small change amongst a group of twenty adults and the same number of children and adolescents. There is a descendent of the /Xam amongst them who has worked for the Afrikaners of the Ghanzi farms in the west of the country and he speaks Afrikaans which a German speaker can more or less follow. He tells us a variation of story of the lion and the man which was first recorded in /Xam and translated into English by Bleek and Lloyd. He is called Dia!kwain. The visiting San who have brought necklaces of crocodile teeth, skins of buck and hyenas to trade for sugar, tea, coffee, mealie meal, beer. They have been given roasted meat and bottled South African beer at the Loewenthal's barbecue – called a *braaivleis* here, and are in a good mood. Dia!kwain begins and people clap, laugh, dance, and the children mime the actions of the young man and the lion.

“Once upon a time there was a man who went hunting for his wife and children and his family who lived in a village where each house was made of tree branches where they stayed with other families till the animals moved away to where there was rain and water and fresh green bushes and trees with nuts. Then the /Xam, our tribe of Bushpeople, moved on to another camp following the game and the fresh veld-vegetables and fruit”.

“He got separated from the other men who were hunting buck because he suddenly got tired. He said, ‘I am just going to rest in that cave over there, because I am overcome with sleep’. The other men left him and went on with the hunt.”

“Now this happened in ancient times when lions might be sorcerers. The lion had made him sleepy by magic. Having made him fall into a deep sleep the lion took the man into his mouth but did not bite him to death immediately, because he wanted to have a drink of water first – the noonday heat had made the lion very thirsty.”

“Still inside the lion’s mouth the man woke up and was very frightened, but dared not move in case the lion killed him. He thought the lion believed he, the man, was dead, so he did not move in case the lion realized that he was alive and killed him.”

“And the lion carried him to a tree and pressed the man into the fork of the tree, because unless the lion had a drink first he would get too thirsty just eating the man. But the man fell out of the tree so the lion picked him up and put him back into the fork of the tree. But the stems and branches of the tree were sticking into the man’s back and he wept in pain. The lion licked the man’s tears. And the man opened his eyes a little to see if the lion noticed that he, the man, was not dead. The lion was happy that they man seemed dead, for lions, even lions who are sorcerers are not like us people, who are sorry if an animal kills a person. The lion liked the saltiness of the man’s tears.”

“So the lion had a long, cooling drink at the stream and thought happily of how he would enjoy eating the young man and drinking his salty tears when he was no longer thirsty. And while the lion was quenching his thirst the young man realized that it was now or never! He had to escape! So whilst the lion was down by the water concealed by the hill the young man jumped out of the tree and ran like the devil [*hy het gehardloop soos die duivel*] zig-zagging all the way home to make it harder for the lion to smell and see his spoor to where the people had made their camp.”

“And the young man said to the people: ‘I am being pursued by a lion, who licked my tears and so loved the saltiness that he wants to eat the rest of me! Wrap me up in mats and hartebeest skins and cover me over with branches of trees so the lion won’t smell me and eat me!’ And the people, who loved the young man as much as his mother, wrapped him up in hartebeest skins.”

“And the young man’s mother came out of her hut of branches and greeted her son happily and called out to the other men to shoot the lion before it could kill her son. So, they got their quivers of arrows and their bows and some had assegai spears.”

“Then the lion appeared over the hill in the valley of which they had made their huts looking for the young man. And the people shot him with their arrows and stabbed him with assegais but the lion would not die, for he wanted the young man whose tears he had licked and an old man said: ‘Don’t you understand? This lion is a sorcerer and that is why we can’t kill him!’ The people tried to feed the lion with other children and girls but the lion wasn’t interested. And the lion went around the village smashing up the huts looking for the young man.”

“So, the people went to the young man’s mother and begged her, even though her son was the child of her heart, to let them give the young man to the lion who would have destroyed the whole village. So, sad though she was, she and the people had to unwrap the young man from the mats and the hartebeest skins. And the lion killed him and began to eat him, but the lion also died for

now he had got what he wanted – the young man who wept tears – and so both of them lay dead – side by side. His magic disappeared as soon as his hunger was satisfied”.

The whole crowd of San people erupted into applause. What did it all mean? All the separate parts of the story were so human and even humorous because ripped out of the normal context of everyday life. Even the magic was made credible because of the potency of the images of the weeping man and the inhuman lion who only appreciated the salt of tears not their human meaning.

What magic did was to link the human and the inhuman, the world of people and the world of animals. The lion as sorcerer *almost* understood the meaning of tears. Fate too is ineluctable for the lion *wants* tears and the man *wants* not to weep, but the conjunction of merely salty tears and human weeping in agony at the prospect of pain and death is the transcendent meaning: thus what was merely present-at-hand – tears, hungry thirsty lion, tears as salt, tears as agony – are linked together. They become “ready-to-hand” in the myth.

Here indeed is Being, human being, quite like ours. Not all the tears at the Cross can save the Son from death, the hungry lion. But knowing that He is the Son, means that He through His own and our tears of compassion, compose a myth of Being-in-the-world-with-God. In death we are just salt and other chemicals. In divine life, life of *ruach*, the spirit, what the Jews call *Shekhina*, our tears move the heart of those who truly sense Being.

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