

The World in the Self
or, The Subject-less State of Injustice in a World Which Contains Us
an exegesis for November, 2025

A few words from the conductor

I do not consider myself one of Mother Glass' faithful. I am not writing this out of any sense of obligation, expectation, or sense of spiritual longing. I am writing this exegesis with my own autonomy, born from myself alone. To represent and to augment this recalcitrance, I am refusing to follow the single commandment set out for how the monthly exegesis should be written. While I expect this to be read on the ninth, as is wished, right now, at time of writing, it is early morning on the eighth. I imagine that the Mother would have it no other way.

What I wish to do here is two-fold. Firstly, I wish to make known some of my thoughts on the Mother's catechism. In particular I wish to examine how it defines the world, and how the world is distinguished from and influences the self and the other. To do this, I will be exploring the text and analyzing it alongside two other pieces of theory. Those pieces being *Against the Gendered Nightmare* by baedan and *Blessed is the Flame* by Serafinski. Both texts I am retrieving from The Anarchist Library at theanarchistlibrary.org.

My second goal with this writing is to return to two pieces of anarchist theory that captured my imagination and meant something to me when I first read them. I intend to barely scratch the surface of what either of them has to say, but to use this as a jumping off point for a return to further study of anarchist theory after a long time away. This will not serve as adequate analysis of either piece by far, even within the small confines of the topic I am trying to cover here. Nonetheless, I hope to have something meaningful be said by the end of this, and I hope that it is to Mother Glass' tastes.

Now, without further ado, let us begin.

The orchestra tunes their instruments

The world is given much significance in the Catechism of the Serpent. It is said to be the origin of all harm, and the teacher of the self's worst tendencies. The heel of the world is what crushes the neck of the serpent, forcing Her to bite. (Catechism of the Serpent, questions 3, 6). It can be easily understood that the world takes the role of the great foe, something to be constantly struggled against. I think it is therefore important to understand exactly what the world is, where it comes from, and how it acts.

The world is defined quite simply as "all that is evident" (CotS, q.3). This is a very powerful statement, and brings to mind ideals of "ruthless critique of all that exists!" It does, however, also raise some questions. When I observe my surroundings and take in all that is evident to me, much of what I observe is a reflection of me. Whether through choices I have taken to influence my surroundings, or a physical part of my body, or the emotional and mental processes constantly running in my head. At what point is this distinguished from the world, if any? Furthermore, in those times that I take company with Mother Glass in Her aspect of madness, it can be such that the sum of everything that is evident comes entirely from inside my mind, and none of it is reflected in the material world.

One may be tempted to conclude, from this line of reasoning, that the world is simply all encompassing; that the world engulfs the self without motive or reason, but simply categorical inclusiveness. To further support this theory, the Mother instructs us that "In life we enact fresh injustice by error and by choice, and though this harm originates in the world, it is we and not the world who are called to our own self-improvement." (CotS, q.9) This seems to say that the world is able to act through us, through our selves, and all that we have the power to do is make up for it. The injustice originates in the world, but we have no choice to avoid acting it out. There is no palisade for our selves to take shelter behind.

Of course, this interpretation is incomplete, at best. The Mother makes it clear that the self is not a mere fragment of the world by addressing Her love for our selves. She does not spare any love for the world (CotS, q.4) but She loves all of Her children, and their selves, very dearly (CotS, q.10). The only way for this to be true is for the world to not include the self, or at least that the world does not automatically contain the entire self. The most promising lead we have now is the idea that the world somehow finds purchase on the self, and acts as a sort of parasitic influence.

A melody begins to play

In *Against the Gendered Nightmare*, baedan summarizes and expands upon the ideas of civilization and domestication as presented in several texts which she synthesizes. The word civilization, as used here, refers to “the web of power between the institutions, ideologies, and physical apparatuses” that cause injustice (baedan, pg 10). By this framing, any liberty lost, any injustice done, is done by the hand or heel of civilization. Domestication is very simply defined by saying “domestication is capture” (baedan, pg 10). It represents the process of bringing a free self into the grasp of civilization. When baedan then refers to civilization and its process of capture, domestication, she refers to it as a great undead beast named Leviathan. This beast has no life of its own, and yet sustains itself immortally through the capture and mechanization of life within itself (baedan, pg 7). By this capture, living people become vessels for Leviathan to act out its will. Since Leviathan has no life of its own, it requires a constant sacrifice of living people to function.

We say that Leviathan is lifeless, undead, because every composite part of it is inert. Institutions do not spread themselves, roads do not grow like weeds, and his-story textbooks are not printed or read without hands and eyes to do so. It would be a mistake to pit one’s self against Leviathan without understanding that what makes it move is captured selves and nothing more.

Another way of describing this process of domestication could be to say “through the world, the innocent self learns its worst tendencies” (CotS, q.3), where the world, as defined by the Mother Glass, represents baedan’s Leviathan. Through this framework, we can arrive at an explanation of how this learning happens in practice. The so called innocent self is domesticated, and thereby learns its worst tendencies, those being the acts of civilized society. It is all of these domesticated selves that give the world the power to enact injustice.

All of us have been digested by domestication in some way or another. We all play our parts in moving the dead corpse Leviathan forward to consume further. As the faithful are commanded to pray, “Dying Serpent, who bites the heel of the world, forgive Your servant its part in the world’s injustice.” (CotS, q.20) But, just as Glass broken is still beautiful, us who are partially dead may still find a brief escape to life. The Serpent, too, is dying, and yet She bites all the same.

A fire alarm is pulled

Blessed is the Flame by Serafinski shares and celebrates stories of some of the bleakest possible acts of resistance made within Nazi Germany's concentration camps. Preceding these beautiful stories is a forward where Serafinski discusses why nihilism is beautiful, and how it can give incredible strength to resist when nothing else could. The first seven words of the text read, "We are being lead to our slaughter."

Before any of the stories are told, we are reminded that the vast majority of acts of resistance in a concentration camp were total failures. He writes, "Almost every story ends with mass torture, slaughter, and enslavement." (Serafinski, pg 10) But Serafinski also writes, one page earlier, "It speaks to the very nature of our domestication that we only choose resistance so long as it feels like something we can win."

There are so many acts of resistance and ways to strike back that we could not ever do them all, nor will more than a fraction of them win within our lifetime. We are already dying, and we are already broken. Mother Glass knows this when She instructs the faithful to pray, "together we demand all the grace the world owes that it will not give." (CotS, q.20) She knows that we will not win more than we lose, but She still instructs us to fight.

Revolution and resistance are beautiful and meaningful in their own right. Serafinski explains it by saying "the basic existential understanding that recalcitrance is simply a more meaningful and joyous form of existence than docility." (pg 9) and Mother Glass says it when She instructs us to "take every fight and be an agony to our oppressors." (CotS, q.6) There is a joy to be found in recalcitrance, and there is a spiritual fulfillment to be had in taking every fight that one can. The world would teach us through domestication to be agreeable and passive, and the world would teach us that we have no hope of true, free joy. Mother Glass' commandment to fight instructs us to free ourselves not just from the specific injustice against which we fight, but the injustice of domestication and Leviathan itself. She teaches us where to find joy in a world that would afford us none.

Day gives mercy to night, and four children escape on bicycles,
laughing harder than they ever have before.