

"There is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another" (Elizabeth Costello, p 35).

if there is no other, who are we?

I think this requires sympathy as Elizabeth later notes and a compassion in order to think ourselves into the being of another - especially when this another is an animal whose we've once had very little regard for.

stepping into another's shoes, harder to do when it's but still necessary

but: possible?
really?

~~no~~

Is thinking of yourself into ~~the~~ the being of another something you need to ask permission for?

Is it something you need training for? How to learn to do this?

- I think we learn who we are by knowing who we are not, so maybe we're doing it all the time, but in a mode of rejection rather than embrace.

I agree, but I also think it's important to recognize the impossibility of empathy/sympathy. It's important to attempt to understand, but realize that understanding is unattainable.

"Throw out [philosophy] I say.
What good do its padding distinctions do?"
(p 66)

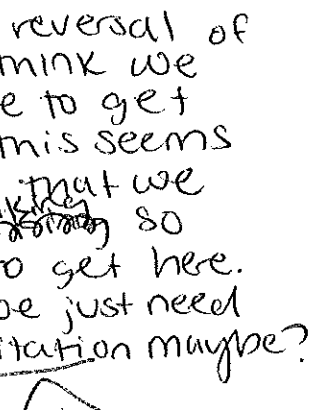
~~padding~~ Is this indicating the removal of philosophy for
animals? Humans? Both?

or is it saying
that all the
work of philosophy -
all the distinction -
making & defining
& logic - is useless
cherry too small
for the task
(2 hands)

Is she suggesting that we
use ethics instead? or is
she saying the we need
a new discipline to get to
the root of this?

"The level of behavior you want to reach is too elemental to be reached by talk" (p 58)

This seems like a reversal of logic. Usually we think we need to ~~think~~^{talk} more to get somewhere, but this seems to be suggesting that we should stop ~~thinking~~^{talk} so much in order to get here. Actually, maybe we just need to ~~think less~~^{think more}. Meditation maybe?



"Here, There, It will soon be over."
(p. 69)

death?

Reassuring?

we're being medicated.

placating.

Attempting to comfort by bringing up the concept of inevitability
of how everything must end

But what could happen
before the inevitable end?
what of resistance?

I really do not know what to do

if this is the last line of the novel -

does it just show us how clueless her son is?

Accentuate the wrenching of her torment (help gone)?

How inadequate as
a respondent to
her pleas?

"It comes out of a desire
to save my soul" (p 43).

Early in the first lecture, Elizabeth makes a claim
that all humans can agree that committing a crime
burdens one's soul. I disagree with this as a matter of general-
ization. She cannot claim anything for anybody's soul,
other than her own. Indeed, she cannot even assume others
have a soul. So while she may be able to save her own soul,
she cannot extrapolate this claim to anyone else.

But what of her motivation → to call for
the abolition of mad-lady.. to save her soul?
What has that to do w/ her audience?
What of their souls? Is she trying to save them, too?

Maybe she wants them
to come to this realization or
a kind of realization on their
own.. so she presents her
experience as a case study,
rather than a guide..

Why can't she
assume that other
people have a
soul and therefore
make claims about it?
She can do both of these
things. What she cannot
do is that the "It" comes
at the same price for
everyone, which is what
she does.

" I don't know what I want to do.
I just don't want to sit
silent" (p 59)

maybe people who do not have
consciousness need to sit and
be silent, but about those who
do have it? this second question
is being addressed through his quote

Elizabeth speaks in regards to a distinct act of
separation that is committed when animals (and
other beings) are taken as prisoners of war.

By holding contempt for other beings, we are,
to put it plainly closing ourselves off to other
life forms - and it is an incorrect behavior.

Although we may not be yet conscious of
this, when (if) we do, we may realize the
pain which our contempt has caused to other
beings. - and to conscious life at large.

Elizabeth entitles
this as "embodied soul"

sitting silently
is doing something.

Doing something powerful, I think.

↑
human cl.
find this important
to think about

↑
how long do we sit
silent? If we do this
forever, ~~nothing gets done~~
then everyone is still and
silent and I would like
to interact with others
at some point. ~~then~~

Did this
work on
you this way?
Did you open up?
it more than the
polemic message we've
been hearing?

"If principles are what you want to take away
from this talk, I would have to respond, open to
your heart & listen to what your heart says!"

Nice!

It's strange to think of fiction dictating principles, but it makes sense. Maybe people would be more open to ideas if they thought what they were reading wasn't "true." Maybe osmosis is the best way to absorb principles?

fiction allows
us to suspend
distorted
and in that moment
of vulnerability,
we can
imagine
moral
alternatives

I think fiction has a way of targeting emotions in a way that non-fiction doesn't. There is always some sort of emotion at the heart of fiction that author is allowed to highlight. Emotions cannot be highlighted in non-fiction b/c we view emotion as distortion of facts. However, emotion is everpresent in all our lives, so maybe fiction is the true non-fiction.

Emotions grrrr

Reminds me of "A Million Little Pieces" scandal - author produced best selling work that he claimed was a memoir only to later admit he made the entire thing up. People felt outraged & betrayed but I had to wonder if it made the book any less true or good? People liked it because they related to main characters emotions/feelings

"There is no position outside of reason where you can stand and lecture about reason and pass judgement on reason." (48)

What do we do when we don't reason?

~~there~~ I don't think we can totally abolish reason - and these ways to reason through feeling?

- But how can one define reason? Isn't reason a concept whose definition evolves over time and is at least times dependent on circumstances?

don't it necessary to step outside of reason to better be able to comment on it? Returning to earlier discussion of whether one can properly criticize something while being deeply involved in it

NOTHING
REASONABLE

→ I feel like you can never ^{fully} define anything "outside" anything - to sometimes in "stepping outside" we cannot see the full complexities that are being on the "inside" .. to be removed is to undervalue the full + intricate meaning of something. Then again, to be wholly inside ~~is~~ is also a way of being unable to see - maybe we need the flexibility of both?

why does one suggest we do this anyway?

"Why can't she just come out and say what she wants to say?" (135)

-she can't really come out and say what she means today because even by doing so, her audience still won't understand her views and she believes she is unable to explain ~~it~~ because it is part of her own unique thought process

↳ But this is a tautology. Because she believes no one will understand her, she doesn't attempt, and her lack of effort prevents people from trying to understand her. This gets her no where, and is problematic.



It's a bit self-indulgent on her part that she doesn't try to ~~understand~~ explain how she thinks because she believes that no one will understand. In ~~the~~ academia it's your job to at least try to make your ideas understood, at least if you are voicing them publicly.

↳ yet she believes in the power of fiction to open our hearts, in the possibility for moving representation...

! That is why poetry and prose forms can be ^{more} accurate representations → they change and reflect more than pure description and delineation, especially through form.

I will take it that you concede me the rhetorical power to evoke these horrors and bring them to you with adequate force, and leave it at that, reminding you only that the horrors I here omit are nevertheless at the center of this lecture.

How can you fully appreciate her lecture without taking these horrors as fact? Why would you deny that they are facts? Perhaps "horror" is too strong of a word?

necessity
of recognizing
implicit

Do we need to state everything ^{good pt!} directly in order for them to be present?

Does being confronted by the horrors talked about in the lecture actually allow us to face what makes us uncomfortable and slowly make it appear less uncomfortable to us? Is that the power of such a rhetoric style?

I'm unsure, because although it may ~~not~~ serve as a catalyst for a call to action, it may just as easily make someone feel hopeless in their state of affairs & just go about their daily as usual

Perhaps a more radical style should be used? Or less direct? Or less fear-inducing?

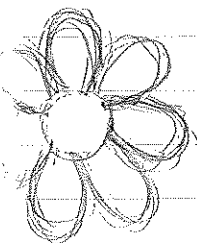
Radical position

What's really ever changed anything in our world?

fear or love (?)

or pure hatred?

love of fear, fear of love



"Malcolm Gladwell - storytelling ~~danger?~~
 we are experts at creating stories to make up explanations for anything we do not understand"

Reason and logic comfort us with respect to calming our minds when confronted with things we don't understand.

"of course reason will validate reason as the first principle of the universe - what else should it do? Dethrone itself?"

that's a possibility. my mom told me that her goal as a teacher was to get her students to a point at which they no longer needed her - teaching so that teaching wouldn't be needed, and students knew how to learn.



You can only argue against reason with more reason. So why don't we just accept reason?

Because this is a circular argument, a tautology. Plus, who came up with our contemporary notions of reason, anyway? Why don't we question them and their motives?

couldn't "reason" validate something independent or more advanced than reason?

Principles promote a sense of predictability, concrete however they are no guarantee too removed from emotion.

What terms does Elizabeth Costello question the value of reason? Why does she hope "not to evaluate principles," why is she not interested in "prescriptions" (p 37)? What's wrong w/ living in accord w/ such principles?

I think we have yet to rediscover as true nature before we understand. As far as human beings are concerned, we seem to be quite content with NOT understanding.

We are the managers of the ecology — we managers understand the greater dance, therefore we can decide how many trout may be fished or how many jaguar may be trapped before the stability of the dance is upset.

p. 54

sarcasm?

Why do "we" want this kind of authority/responsibility? Why are we always the heroes?

We have given ourselves this responsibility because since we're the only species that thinks & reasons the way we do (so we believe) that this gives us automatic authority to do whatever we want (or so we believe).

I feel like we are called to take that authority and use it well, otherwise we are led to believe (w/ substantial evidence) that someone else will surely take that authority and abuse it.

idea of ecology as a "greater dance" is appealing, but whether we can truly follow this dance is questionable.

but we've taken this authority & have abused it many times over — born with a first act / being subject to an action that was out of line with our highest potential (beings of sympathy and open-hearted love, devoid of pain & fear)

(if ever) this was possible.

Why is the answer to
principles →

"If principles are what you want
to take away from this talk, I
would have to respond, open to
your heart + listen to what your
heart says"

Can "the heart" - an poorly defined place - contain principles,
OR are the outlawed here?

~~Right.~~

Yes. I have never understood the distinction between
feeling and thinking. They are the same thing.