

#1: “I know everything, you see...The beginning, the present, the end. Everything. You now, you see the past and the present, like other low creatures: no higher faculties than memory and perception. But dragons, my boy...we see from the mountaintop: all time, all space. We see in one instant the passionate vision and the blowout...If you with your knowledge of present and past recall that a certain man slipped on, say, a banana peel, or fell off his chair, or drowned in a river, that recollection does not mean that you *caused* him to slip, or to fall, or drown. Correct? Of course it’s correct! It happened, and you know it, but knowledge is not *cause*....My knowledge of the future does not *cause* the future. It merely *sees* it...And even if, say, I interfere...even then I do not change the future, I merely do what I saw from the beginning...So much for free will and intercession.” (pg. 62-63)

#2: “Man...They only think they think. No total vision, total system, merely schemes with a vague family resemblance, no more identity than bridges and, say, spiderwebs. But they rush across chasms on spiderwebs, and sometimes they make it, and that, they think, settles that! I could tell you a thousand tiresome stories of their absurdity. They’d map out roads through Hell with their crackpot theories, there here-to-the-moon-and-back lists of paltry facts...Simple facts in isolation, and facts to connect them—ands and buts—are the *sine qua non* of all their glorious achievement...They build the whole world out of teeth deprived of bodies to chew or be chewed on...They sense that, of course, from time to time; have uneasy feelings that all they live is by nonsense...That’s where the Shaper saves them. Provides an illusion of reality—puts together all their facts with a gluey whine of connectedness.” (pg. 64-65)

#3: “In all discussion of Nature, we must try to remember the differences of scale, and in particular the differences of time-span. We (by which I mean you, not us) are apt to take modes of observable functioning in our own bodies as setting an absolute scale. But as a matter of fact, it’s extremely rash to extend conclusions derived from observation far beyond the scale of magnitude to which the observation was confined. For example, the apparent absence of change within a second of time tells nothing as to the change within a thousand years. Also, no appearance of change within a thousand years tells anything concerning what might happen in, say, a million years; and no apparent change within a million years tells anything about a million million years. We can extend this progression indefinitely; there is no absolute standard of magnitude.” (pg. 65-66)

#4: “In the case of vegetables, we find expressive bodily organizations which lack any one center of experience with a higher complexity either of expressions received or of inborn data. Another democracy, but with qualifications, as we shall see. An animal, on the other hand is dominated by one or more centers of experience. If the dominate activity be severed from the rest of the body—if, for example, we cut off the head—the whole coordination collapses, and the animal dies. Whereas in the case of the vegetable, the democracy can be sub-divided into minor democracies which easily survive without much apparent loss of functional expression....An angry man does not usually shake his fist at the universe in general. He makes a selection and knocks his neighbor down. A piece of rock, on the other hand, impartially attracts the universe according to the law of gravitation.” (pg. 69)

#5: “You improve them, my boy! Can’t you see that yourself? You stimulate them! You make them think and scheme. You drive them to poetry, science, religion, all that makes them what they are for as long as they last. You are, so to speak, the brute existent by which they learn to define themselves. The exile, captivity, death they shrink from—the blunt facts of their mortality, their abandonment—that’s what you make them recognize, embrace! You *are* mankind, or man’s condition: inseparable as the mountain-climber and the mountain. If you withdraw, you’ll instantly be replaced. Brute existents, you know, are a dime a dozen. No sentimental trash, then. If man’s the irrelevance that interests you, stick with him! Scare him to glory!” (pg. 73)

#6: “Poetry’s trash, mere clouds of words, comfort to the hopeless... You think me deluded. Tricked by my own walking fairytale. You think I came without a hope of winning—came to escape indignity by suicide... Go ahead, scoff... Except in the life of a hero, the whole world’s meaningless. The hero sees values beyond what’s possible. That’s the *nature* of a hero. It kills him, of course, ultimately. But it makes the whole struggle of humanity worthwhile.” (pg. 88-89)

“He lives on, bitter, feebly challenging my midnight raids from time to time... crazy with shame that he alone is always spared, and furiously jealous of the dead... So much for heroism. So much for the harvest-virgin. So much, also, for the alternative visions of blind old poets and dragons.” (pg. 90)

#7: “[*He searches the moonlit world for signs, shading his eyes against the dimness, standing on one shaggy foot, just slightly bloodstained, one toe missing from an old encounter with an ax...On a frostbitten hill in the distance, men on horses. “Over here!” he screams. Waves his arms. They hesitate, feign deafness, ride away north. Shoddy, he observes. The whole chilly universe, shoddy.*]...Enough of that!...Except, alas, he has killed his quota for the season. Care, take care of the gold-egg-laying goose! There is no limit to desire but desire’s needs. (Grendel’s law.)...I will count my numberless blessings one by one.

I. My teeth are sound.

I. The roof of my cave is sound

I. I have not committed the ultimate act of nihilism: I have not killed the queen.

I. Yet” (pg. 93)

#8: “The old king watched with thoughtful eyes, moved as he’d have been by the Shaper’s music, except that it was different: not visions of glorious things that might be or sly revisions of the bloody past but present beauty that made time’s flow seem illusory, some lower law that now had been suspended. Meaning as quality. When drunken men argued, pitting theory against theory, bludgeoning each other’s absurdities, she [Weltheow] came between them, wordless, uncondemning, pouring out mead like a mother’s love, and they softened, reminded of their humanness, exactly as they might have been softened by the cry of a child in danger, or an old man’s suffering, or spring. The Shaper sang things that had never crossed his mind before: comfort, beauty, a wisdom softer, more permanent, than Hrothgar’s.” (pg. 102-103)

#9: “The incitement to violence depends upon total transvaluation of the ordinary values. By a single stroke, the most criminal acts must be converted to heroic and meritorious deeds. If the Revolution comes to grief, it will be because you and those you lead have become alarmed at your own brutality...The total ruin of institutions and morals is an act of creation. A *religious* act. Murder and mayhem are the life and soul of revolution...What does a kingdom pretend to do? Save the values of the community—regulate compromise—improve the quality of the commonwealth! In other words, protect the power of the people in power and keep the others down...If the lowest workers start grumbling, claim that the power of the state stands above society, regulating it moderating it, keeping it within the bounds of order—an impersonal and higher authority of justice...The state is an organization of violence, a monopoly in what it is pleased to call *legitimate* violence.” (pg. 117-119)

#10: “Lesson on lesson they’ve suffered through, recognizing, more profoundly each time, their indignity, shame, triviality. It will continue...How, if I know all this, you may ask, could I hound him—shatter him again and again, drive him deeper and deeper into woe? I have no answer, except perhaps this: why should I *not*?...Ha! This nobility of his, this dignity: are they not *my* work? What was he before? Nothing!...Have I not a right to test my own creation? Enough! Who says I have to defend myself? I’m a machine, like you. Like all of you. Blood-lust and rage are my character...In any case, I too am learning, ordeal by ordeal, my indignity. It’s all I have, my only weapon for smashing through these stiff coffin-walls of the world. So I dance in the moonlight, make foul jokes, or labor to shake the foundations of night with my heaped-up howls of rage. Something is bound to come of all this. I cannot believe such monstrous energy of grief can lead to nothing!” (pg. 122-123)

Ms. Engels' Example One: “Law rules the land. Men’s violence chained to good (i.e., to the king): legitimate force that chops the bread-thief’s neck and wipes its ax.—Death by book...Think, sweating beast! Look up and think! Whence came these furs on the backs of your kind protectors?...Why does the bread-thief die and the murdering thane escape by a sleight by the costliest of advocates?...*Violence hacked this shack-filled hole in the woods where you play freedom games. Violence no more legitimate then than a wolf’s. And now by violence they lock us in—you and me, old man: subdue our vile unkingly violence.*” (pg. 114)