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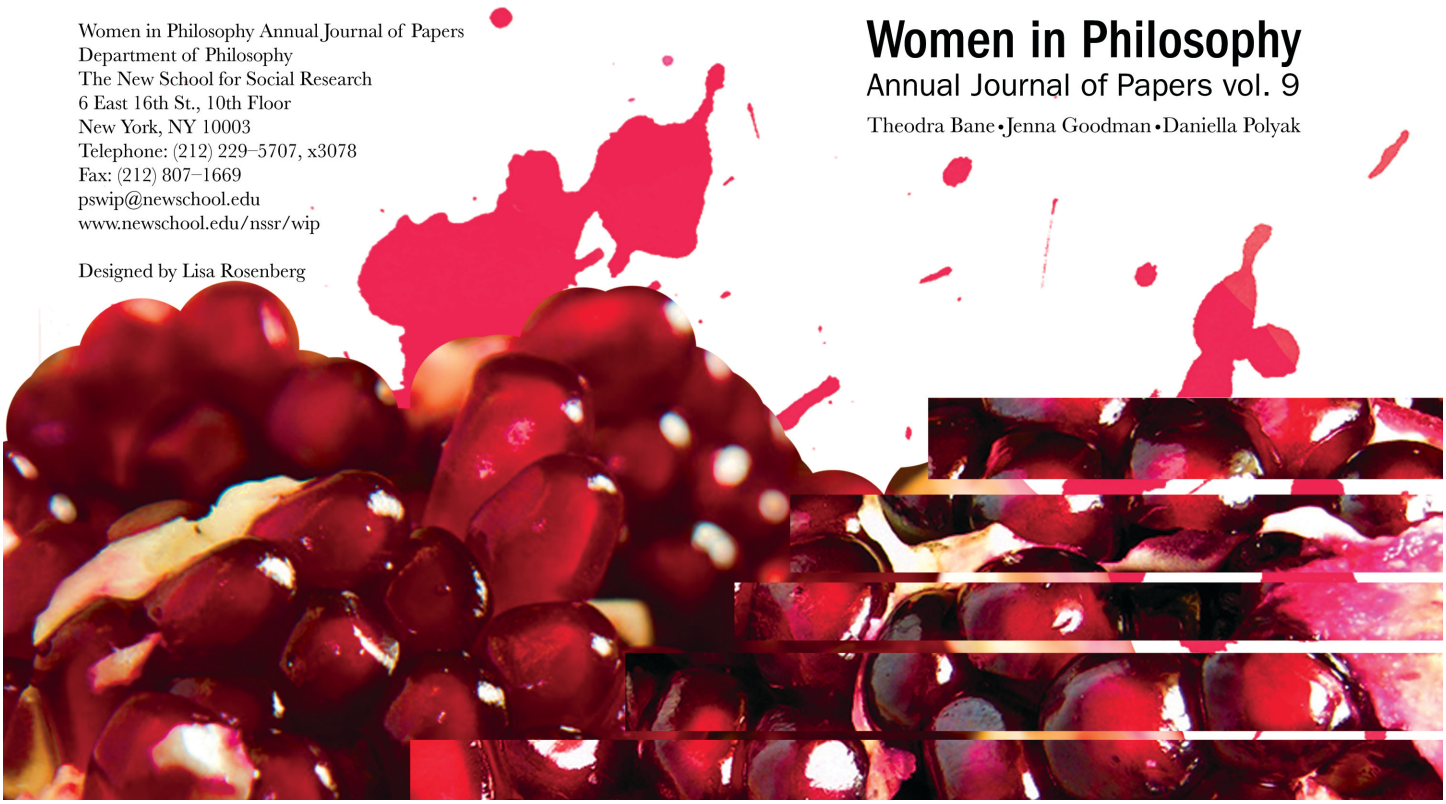
PSWIP

Women in Philosophy

Annual Journal of Papers vol. 9

Theodra Bane • Jenna Goodman • Daniella Polyak



"Power, Pedagogy, and Philosophy's 'Woman Problem'"

The following reflects last-minute changes to the symposium program:

Friday May 9

State of the Union
Kathryn Gines' remarks should be titled: "Collegium of Black Women Philosophers: The Intersectional State of the Union."

Abstract: My remarks will focus on my experiences founding the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers and organizing the annual conference. I will address the intersectional state of Black women philosophers today—not only our intersectional identities and oppressions, but also intersecting areas of specialization in philosophy, and the positive impact that CBWP has had on the discipline of philosophy.

Fight or Flight: Women Who Leave Philosophy
Lindsay Beyerstein (independent journalist) is unable to join us.

Power and Feminism
Sarah Hoagland (Northeastern Illinois) is unable to join us.

Saturday, May 10

NYSWIP Workshop: "Publish and/or Perish"
Sibyl Schwarzenbach (CUNY) will speak in place of Barbara Montero (CUNY).

Speaker Bio: Sibyl Schwarzenbach is professor of philosophy and women's studies at The CUNY Graduate Center as well as at Baruch College, the City University of New York. She is author of numerous articles in social and political philosophy, as well as in ethics and feminist theory, and has lectured widely in the United States, Europe, and Iran. She is the editor (with Patricia Smith) of Women and the United States Constitution: History, Interpretation and Practice *(Columbia University Press, 2003). Her main work* On Civic Friendship: Including Women in the State *appeared in November of 2009 (also with Columbia University Press).*

Keynote Address
Kathryn Gines will be replacing Sara Heinämäa as our keynote speaker on Saturday night. Her presentation will be titled:

"1965. Black Women Philosophers: Gender Difference at Varying Intersections."

Abstract: I will be exploring the intellectual and existential challenges of being a Black woman philosopher—including theorizing and existing from that subjective position. With this in mind, I will examine the works of Black Women philosophers, somewhat narrowly defined as Black women holding a Ph.D. in philosophy. Thus the 1965 in the title is intended. That is the year that the first Black American woman earned a Ph.D. in Philosophy in the U.S.
Linda Martín Alcoff will moderate.

The updated conference program can be found on our conference website:

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Corrections:

On page 46, the sentence beginning "If signification is how I generate meaning…" should read:
"If signification is how I generate meaning, then for Levinas the basis of signification is the-one-for-the-other."

On page 48, Jessica Benjamin should be referenced in the endnotes as follows:
Jessica Benjamin, Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination *(New York: Random House, 1988).*

On pages 63-64, endnote 21 should include the following bibliographical information for the work of Daniel Stern:
The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology *(New York: Perseus Books, 1985).*
"The Early Development of Schema of Self, of Other, and of Various Experiences of 'Self with Other'", in Reflections on Self Psychology, *eds. J. Lichtenberg and S. Kaplan (Hillsdale, N.J.: The Analytic Press, 1983), 49-84.*

The online edition of the journal reflects these corrections and can be accessed at: www.newschool.edu/nssr/wip

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Theodra Bane is a second year M.A. student at The New School for Social Research, where she is currently the Treasurer of PSWIP, the leader of the Intersectional Feminist Reading Group, and Teaching Assistant for the French Reading Group. She has successfully defended her Master's thesis entitled, *An Alternative Genealogy of Western Feminism: François Poullain de la Barre and Simone de Beauvoir*. Theodra graduated with a B.A. in French and Philosophy from the University of Dayton, and will be pursuing her Ph.D. in Philosophy at Villanova in the fall. Her research interests include—but are not limited to—post-colonial theory, intersectional feminism, Foucault and the application of his political and genealogical methodology, and an understanding of the history of philosophy.

Jenna Goodman is a masters' student in the philosophy program at the New School for Social Research. Her research interests include Kant, Spinoza, Descartes, Nietzsche, Feminism, and Metaphysics. She is the current coordinator for PSWIP, and plans to continue her work in bridging the gaps between early modern ideas of subjectivity with contemporary feminist debates.

Daniella Polyak is a graduate student in the Philosophy department at the New School for Social Research. Her work is rooted in psychoanalysis, feminist philosophy, and queer theory. Currently, her research revolves around the question: what is a family? The patriarchal formation of the family has been particularly oppressive to women; however, the family as such is not a necessarily oppressive structure. Her aim is to argue for the possibility of queering motherhood as part of re-imagining the family. Her academic engagements inform and support her work as a facilitator and organizer.

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

As we look back on the last year in academic philosophy, perhaps the scandalous moments seem the most memorable. But academic philosophy's culture of marginalization and exclusion of minorities has been the subject of philosophical critique for some time. What current events have made clear is that demographic reports on unequal representation do not express the experience or practice of academic philosophy as alienating. If this is the case, how can we rescue our discipline?

Our symposium, "Power, Pedagogy, and Philosophy's 'Woman Problem'" was inspired by just this project. How has philosophy become the special case among humanities departments? As feminist philosophers, how do we approach this as a structural problem, inherent to philosophy as an academic practice? We have chosen to think of this provocatively as philosophy's "woman problem". But why is it a "woman problem"? How does this formulation of the marginalization of women in philosophy mystify the very structures of oppression at play, occluding other minority oppressions and introducing an over–determined political narrative?

We propose with our symposium, an immanent critique of philosophy as a discipline. Our goal is to address what is truly the problem of *philosophy*. Can philosophy's problem be localized within the academy? Or, to put it another way, we turn again to questions of theory and practice. What structures of power persist in philosophy, and how can we disrupt them? What in the pedagogical practice of philosophy is othering to women and minorities, and what feminist pedagogical techniques are available to us to make philosophy classes, conferences, and communities less hostile and more supportive?

People in Support of Women in Philosophy (PSWIP) is one of many independent organizations that have emerged as a response to philosophy and as a resource for philosophers. We are a New School for Social Research-specific group, dedicated to the academic and professional development of women philosophers. We meet weekly throughout the academic year to workshop members' papers in

preparation for publication or presentation. We also hold seminars on relevant professional topics like pedagogy or grant writing.

Our group has persevered for over a decade because of a continual need for the support we provide for students at the New School. Our approach is a micro-version of New York Society of Women in Philosophy's SWIPshop series, held throughout the year. NYSWIP itself is a resource for women in philosophy in the greater New York area. The current climate in academic philosophy calls for interventions on both of these levels. This symposium is a collaborative effort between these two groups, and aims to bring together many local feminist resources.

This year's Journal of Papers highlights the work of three of our members, and represents the diversity of philosophical interests within our group. Brought together by a shared commitment to the advancement of women in philosophy, we have workshopped a breadth of philosophical themes and approaches which are exemplary in this year's papers on Nietzsche, Spinoza, and feminism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis. We are proud to also include conference proceedings as part of this year's journal, and thank our participants for their contributions and support.

This year's, and previous year's, Women in Philosophy Annual Journal of Papers can be found online at www.newschool.edu/nssr/women-in-philosophy. For more information, contact pswip@newschool.edu. Our group would like to thank the Department of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research for their continued support.

Juniper Alcorn, Theodra Bane, Sarah Clairmont, Jenna Goodman, Anna Katsman, Paula Libfeld, Eric MacPhail, Daniella Polyak, and Amie Zimmer
Editors

The New School for Social Research, New York City, May 2014

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GIFT GIVING
Only For The Worthy

Theodra Bane

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. –Matthew 7:6

Introduction

Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None allures readers with its mesmerizing aphorisms and stunning imagery, at times masking the uncomfortable teachings of the prophet Zarathustra. How are we to untangle the intertwining philosophical concepts as they evolve? With such a dense and intricate work, the best method of disentanglement is to pull at one thread and subsequently trace its manifestations and alterations throughout. In describing Zarathustra's struggles, Nietzsche presents the reader with a challenge: how can a multitude of themes—such as self-overcoming, commanding vs. obeying, pity, and creation—interlace with each other within the concept of gift-giving. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* follows the development of the prophet Zarathustra into a figure worthy of his own message, demonstrating the momentous challenge of embodying and practicing the highest virtue—that of gift-giving—even for the one who is meant to extol this virtue as a living example. The theme of gift-giving as the highest virtue is a unifying thread that can be traced throughout the text. As a prophet, Zarathustra stands out as an exemplary figure of self-overcoming who attempts to practice what he preaches.

Zarathustra's practices and teachings can only take the form of a virtue. Self-overcoming is a necessary step to reach the state of virtue. While values are posited within a society through tradition or history, virtues are living actions of a new articulation of valuations. To put it another way, a value is an 'is' within the status quo, whereas a virtue is an 'ought'—something that must be strived for through embodied

experience. Here, 'embodiment' refers to the manifestations of the interiorized desire for this virtue in the actions of the individual.

Zarathustra's highest virtue is gift-giving. If we consider virtue as the 'ought' and as activity, then what sort of gift can be held as the highest virtue? The gift that merits the place of highest virtue is immaterial, invaluable, radiating from the bearer. Zarathustra has gone under, come down from the highest peaks, in order to bestow through his teachings the gift of creation. What Zarathustra has to give are the skills and aptitude necessary for true, original creation that flies in the face of all older values.

Zarathustra is a prophet, not the creator himself. What he offers as his gift is the condition for the possibility of true creation. He preaches what is necessary to be a true creator, and bears within himself the inspiration and guidance to create new values. Creation demands overcoming: "Let your spirit and virtue serve the sense of the earth, my brothers; let the value of everything be determined again by you! For that shall you be fighters! For that shall you be creators!"[1] It falls to each generation to create their own values: to claim for themselves a new system of virtues that no one could impose upon them but themselves. [2]

True gift-giving is uncommon: Zarathustra himself is not prepared to fully give his gift until the conclusion of the text. It takes a great deal of will, strength, and patience to become a true giver of the gift of creation, for it also entails waiting for the proper recipient. The search for an individual who could become a creator with the guidance of the prophet's gift is a difficult task that never gets resolved within the text. For Zarathustra, not all men are equals, the virtue of the warrior is exalted above all others. The warrior is one who learns to abandon the values of what he has inherited, and takes up instead new virtue systems to command his own valuations. The ability to fully command the self so is made possible by the will to power. This principle puts primacy on the ability to overcome and command one's own destiny. It is the only way for the continuation of life itself: the ability to adapt and improve is the motivating force of all action.

The will to power may lead to the destruction of the very subject who wills it because it demands constant betterment. Coming to terms with embodied reality—in all its hardships, ambiguities, and

complications—is necessary to bring forth true creation. Zarathustra, harnessing his own will to power, must become a warrior on his own terms, such that he can become the condition of possibility that he knows is necessary. He must become a warrior so that he can undergo the difficult journey of seeking a worthy recipient of his gift.

The gift that Zarathustra brings to mankind is the foundation for true creation manifest in the ability for the individual to create and embody new virtues. From his first interaction with the hermit, through his two extended ventures amongst mankind, all the way into his solitude and his final temptation, Zarathustra cannot come to terms with what is demanded of him as the giver of such a great gift. Finally, at the conclusion of Part Four the prophet becomes worthy of giving the gift of creation that he has for humanity.

Zarathustra's message for humanity develops through the text, as he confronts his own weaknesses and practices the difficult task of self-overcoming. His reflective journey evolves around what it means to give the gift that he has. The prophet of creation must come to terms with forms of failures that he confronts in his development into a worthy gift-giver. The failure to identify the proper recipient, the personal battle involved in bearing the burden, the weakness of pity fueled by compassion, and the difficulty of practicing the virtue that he desires to embody, are the four movements of self-overcoming that Zarathustra must undergo before becoming worthy of gift-giving.

Pearls Before Swine: Unworthy Recipients

From the very commencement of the text, Zarathustra emerges from his cave with an overabundance of life and wisdom, and a desire to bring a gift to humankind out of his love for them. He attempts to bequeath this gift by becoming a prophet, interacting with the general populace and gaining a following of disciples. Zarathustra attempts to embody the gift-giving virtue as a prophet. His abundance pours forth almost involuntarily, as he turns first to the outside world unconditionally in search of one who is able to receive the gift of creation.

The newly inspired prophet has a daunting task before him. The society he confronts when he comes down from the mountain is one of comfort. It adheres to old values that have outlasted their use and true

meaning, a society wherein the reality of the Last Man is not far off.[3] They cling to stale values: the comfort of herd mentality, a despising of the body, and the reverence of pity as the highest virtue. Even Zarathustra's most fervent disciples cannot escape the old values, and attempt to merely incorporate Zarathustra's teachings into the existing fabric of their lives. What is necessary and demanded for creation is the strength of the will to power to create and adhere to a radically new set of values.

Creation is only made possible through Zarathustra's gift and the encouragement and motivation he provides: "Willing liberates: for willing is creating: thus I teach. And you should learn *solely* in order to create!"[4] This prophet seeks to teach the harnessing of one's own will to power and the indispensable demand for new virtues befitting of the times. Humanity needs new virtues, and strong voices to will them into creation. Thus, Zarathustra preaches the gospel of self-overcoming—the will to power—if not to an enraptured audience of an ever-dwindling number of disciples, then to himself. The highest virtue that Zarathustra wills into being his own is the gift-giving virtue.

It is only through the determination and effort of an individual will that a true virtue can be chosen and, more importantly, fully lived: "When you will with *one* will, and you call this cessation of all need necessity: there is the origin of your virtue."[5] A true virtue is not handed down from past generations and half-heartedly followed because it is the norm. A virtue is carefully selected and lived to its fullest by the warrior: the individual strong enough to begin the process of self-overcoming and choose his own values. Great strength is a prerequisite for truly willing anything. To this end, it is important to distinguish the priority of Zarathustra's message (creation) and the virtue that he has chosen to embody (gift-giving). Zarathustra recognizes that he is not a creator, and therefore wills his value to be one that he can embody.

The gift of creation can only be given through the very act of living the highest virtue—in this sense, the prophet must teach rather than merely give. This kind of embodiment takes on a special form for Zarathustra: "The highest virtue is uncommon and useless, it is shining and soft in luster: a gift-giving virtue is the highest virtue."[6] The characteristics of gift-giving that Zarathustra parallels with gold in the

final speech to his disciples in part one are: uncommon, useless, shining, and eternally giving of itself.[7] Zarathustra's disciples, knowing of his eventual return to his cave in the mountains, present him with a golden staff embellished at its top with a serpent wrapped around the sun. Upon the reception of this gift, Zarathustra first introduces how to attain the highest virtue and details what it means to give a gift. "Useless" is a strange term to prescribe to the highest value, but it is vital to the understanding of Zarathustra's experience of gift-giving. Zarathustra grapples with shortcomings, failures, and moments of despair on his journey as a prophet.

The highest virtue is useless in the sense that its true function and action cannot become a reality for the bearer of the gift. The gift can only be utilized by the gift-receiver: a warrior whose will is strong enough to create beyond the bounds of preconceived values and inherited virtues. The gift-giving virtue is indeed useless, mired in futility and inaction, until the gift itself is ready to be taken up by a creator.

Throughout the text, Zarathustra acknowledges the possibility that many who hear his message may deny their own self-overcoming. Many disciples and listeners merely replace their own inner lives with the prophet's teachings without understanding their call to action or drive for creation. In his speech on the gift-giving virtue, just as he is about to leave his first batch of disciples, Zarathustra makes a great show of emphasizing the importance of embodying his teachings:

> You have not yet sought yourselves: then you found me. Thus of all believers; therefore all belief comes to so little. Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you.[8]

Unfortunately, this clear message of self-overcoming and the building of a strong will falls on deaf ears. Zarathustra returns to mankind at the beginning of Part Two: his teachings abused and altered beyond recognition. The first time he shares his gift with a large population—any who would listen—is a failure. Out of his abundance and the desire to give of himself, he shares his message with weak souls whom he knew could not fully understand the gift that he has given them. His love and outpouring for those unworthy is wasted. He does not yet understand the

full consequences of the gift-giving virtue and what that means for his own interaction with all of humankind. The gift-giving virtue is both a great abundance and a heavy burden to carry alone. Zarathustra describes the highest virtue as "shining and soft in luster". Like the sun, it is a radiating force. It gives completely of itself, purely out of abundance, pouring forth from the bearer. It necessitates a healthy selfishness, a desire to hoard all good things within the self so as to share in the abundance with others. "You compel all things to come to you and into you, that they may flow back again from your fountain as the gifts of your love."[9] Thus a true gift can only be given out of an overflowing of energy, value, and life. No one can truly give out of lack or impotence, demanding a return or exchange for his or her generosity: "whatever has its price has little value."[10] Giving is not a commodity exchange in a cheap attempt at comfort or an easier path. There should be no price for giving a gift, no expectation of return on the part of the giver.

One must have an abundance, the willingness to carry a treasure that one cannot use, and the fortitude and strength to do it alone. This calls for sacrifice on the part of the giver, experienced through the strain on the will and the relinquishing of reciprocation. The gift-giving virtue can only be successfully performed when the gift is bestowed upon and accepted by a worthy recipient. The gift-giver expects nothing in return: "This is the nature of noble souls: they do not want something *for* nothing, least of all, life. He who is of the mob wants to live for nothing; but we others, to whom life has given itself—we are always considering *what* we can best give *in return*!"[11] To only take from life leads to stagnation, and the recapitulation of values that have lost their poignancy and value repeatedly. One must also will for life's continuation, contributing to its vitality. Taking is easy, and if enough people thoughtlessly took without giving new vitalities in return, the same recycled valuations would continue forever out of their historical contexts. For Zarathustra, beggars—those who live purely off of the stale values of others—are merely participants in the unquestioned mentality of the masses. They are unable to truly give of themselves. The strong-willed, who experience contempt and longing that motivate them to self-overcoming, are the true harbingers of power.

Gift-giving remains the highest virtue because there is not yet one strong enough to be a creator. The giver of creation is a prophet, not the creator, holding the keys to the self-discipline and the self-overcoming that the creator will need in order to fulfill her task. Thus, Zarathustra seeks an individual strong enough to fully understand and embody the virtues that he has to bestow. He gives of himself continually in this pursuit, but his words fall on deaf ears. His message is misunderstood, misinterpreted, and diluted by those who carry nothing but resentment for their current situation within a society of stale values. Zarathustra must give the gift of himself to inspire a new creative force within the world, not create a breeding ground for malice or an arena for comedy. The figure of the Voluntary Beggar serves as an example of how difficult it is to practice the gift-giving virtue. Zarathustra follows a mysterious cry of desperation and is led to the Voluntary Beggar who is preaching to cows. In the text, the Voluntary Beggar is considered one of the Higher Men because he does his best to overcome and to share his gift with humanity, even though he fails. This failure does not make him ripe for destruction (lion food), for Zarathustra himself continually fails to reach humanity. [12] The Voluntary Beggar is unable to overcome these failures: he chooses to waste his gift and retreat from humanity, escaping its cruel jibes and mocking laughter to live amongst the cows.

This moment illuminates the power and necessity of the highest virtue. In the dialogue between Zarathustra and the beggar, Zarathustra pities the beggar's situation because he understands "how much harder it is to give properly than to take properly, and that gift-giving well is an *art*—the last, subtlest master-art of kindness."[13] The practice of gift-giving, which includes waiting for the right recipient, comes at a high cost and great sacrifice for the true practitioner of the highest virtue. As we shall see, the embodiment of the highest virtue takes time and effort, requiring that the bearer practice patience longer than he anticipates, and that he temper his over-abundance with solitude.

A Heavy Burden: Combatting the Readiness to Give

Zarathustra begins his first journey amongst the people at the young age of thirty, with a love for life above all else: life is his mistress. She

summons him forth to share the message of the will to power with his fellow human beings, and to dance, leap, laugh, and reach great heights. Yet as he fails a first and second time to reach out to humankind and bequeath his gift of inspiration for creation, his message goes unheard or misinterpreted: life begins to lose her luster. The second mistress reveals the truth of his failings in the Stillest Hour. In order for him to overcome and live out his highest virtue, he must go into exile. Zarathustra moves from a love of Life to a love of Eternity, recognizing that over-abundance and a willingness to give are not enough. A true giver must recognize that gifts can only be given to those worthy of their reception. Two aphorisms from Part Two of the text—The Night Song and The Stillest Hour—articulate this crucial turning point within Zarathustra's journey as a prophet. Power in life must coexist with an understanding of eternity, or all paths towards new creation will fail.

It is important to see how Zarathustra's confrontations with his weaknesses are foreshadowed from the beginning of the text. The very first page of the Prologue articulates this future difficulty for the fledgling prophet: "Behold, I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that has gathered too much honey. I need hands outstretched to take it."[14] The burden of the gift and the weight of his teachings are heavy before his journey has even begun. It takes Zarathustra two forays into human society to discover what we have learned from the Prologue: in the relation between giver and receiver, the receiver plays the active role, since the highest value is 'useless' to the one who bears it. Zarathustra spreads his message far and wide on his journeys, and refines his teachings in his solitude. But the only way his burden will be relieved is when the one who is worthy of the gift reaches out to take the gift for himself.

Only the individual worthy of the gift can actively relieve the giver of his burden. In his speech on the Gift-Giving Virtue, Zarathustra recognizes his disciples' longing and desire to embody the highest virtue themselves: "You thirst to become sacrifices and gifts yourselves: and therefore you thirst to heap up all riches in your soul."[15] Yet it is a rare individual who can command and retain such riches for himself. Zarathustra comes to see that the internal gathering of riches and the thirst to become a sacrifice demands a unprecedented force of strength.

The burden and the longing manifest themselves only after the prophet has failed to reach out to humankind. The most tragic moments of the text are those when Zarathustra fails to embody his own highest virtue, and must repeatedly go under in order to overcome his own weakness. Even the prophet of the highest virtue does not fully understand his undertaking. He fails to realize the great miseries of the act of going under.

Zarathustra struggles with this failure in the Night Song. The Night Song serves as the central point of the prophet's investigation into re-evaluating his own self-development as he strives to successfully give his gift. A song has greater force than mere speech because the accompaniment of melody allows for the projection of deeper, more nuanced emotive qualities. It is only fitting, therefore, that the first expression of the failure and loneliness of gift-giving be expressed in song. He is halfway through his second venture amongst his fellow humans, and has begun to acknowledge the failings of his pedagogic attempts: "They take from me: but do I yet touch their souls? There is a gap between giving and receiving; and the smallest gap must finally be bridged."[16] Here he begins to realize that his gift is only truly meant for a worthy recipient. But his failure to reach out to his fellows—especially to those faithful disciples who try so hard to embody the wisdom that he has to impart—makes his journey and his efforts that much more difficult: "Oh the loneliness of all givers! Oh silence of all who bring light!"[17] To tread the path of greatness and be a warrior of the will demands loneliness. Zarathustra, bringer of light, cannot bask in his own radiance, and must carry out his mission perpetually shrouded in darkness. As the gushing fountain of life, he can enjoy neither his own abundance nor the melody of his outpouring. His existence as the gift-giver is solely for others. Through his failures to find an equal to relieve him of his burden of the gift, Zarathustra reaches a point of understanding the great difficulties of gift-giving. Yet this recognition does not provide the catalyst for his change from love of Life to a love of Eternity. Zarathustra has not yet realized the extent of his own failings as a prophet.

The moment of true transition is in the final aphorism of Part Two. Here Zarathustra comes face to face with his own shortcomings and is confronted by the need for further self-overcoming. The aphorism begins

with the prophet being called upon by a new mistress—not Life, but Eternity speaks to him now. Eternity offers no comfort as she reveals to him his own greatest weakness:

> …it spoke to me: 'What does their mockery matter! You have unlearned to obey: now you will command! Do you not know who is most needed by all? He who commands great things… This is the most unforgivable thing in you: you have the power and you will not rule.'[18]

The prophet of creation—the messenger of the will to power and the eternal return—has unlearned the obedience of stale virtues, but he has not yet learned to command his own virtue. The willing of a new virtue is only the first step toward gift-giving. Through his attachment to Life, Zarathustra has failed to recognize the importance of commanding these gifts, of guarding them only for those who are worthy of them. It is not in over-abundance, but in a guarded, patient watchfulness that the virtue of gift-giving manifests itself. Eternity recognizes this and reproaches Zarathustra: "And for the last time it spoke to [him]: 'O Zarathustra, your fruits are ripe, but you are not ripe for your fruits!'"[19] Zarathustra's love for humanity has thus far prevented him from becoming strong enough to live out his highest virtue to its greatest potential. Now, he must come to realize that he can only offer up his gifts to the worthy. Eternity demands patient warriors with great will to carry such a heavy burden.

Only the one who wills the destruction of the old and takes responsibility for the creation of the new can utilize the prophet's gift. In Part Three, Zarathustra takes the words of his Stillest Hour to heart and secludes himself in his cave. Here he focuses on refining his teachings and practicing the art of becoming ripe for the fruits that he has to bear: "Now I await *my* redemption—that I may go to them for the last time. For I want to go to men once more: I want to go under *among* them, in dying I will give them my richest gift!"[20] Zarathustra aches to be amongst the humanity that he loves, but he recognizes that he is not yet ready to be amongst them. His will demands that he first prepare to bear the burden of a gift: "That I may one day be ready and ripe in the great noon: ready and ripe like glowing ore, like a cloud heavy with lightning

and swollen milk-udders."[21] He must wait for the time when he is ready to command his own will and his love for humanity will no longer cloud his judgment. He must reject the impulse to pity those who had great potential, but failed.

Zarathustra now discovers fully for himself the great sacrifice demanded of the gift-giver. There is great suffering evident in bearing the burden of the highest virtue, patiently laying in wait for one who is worthy to come and pluck the ripe fruits. This realization is articulated in in the aphorism On the Great Longing. He trains his soul to say no as well as yes, nurturing both his soul's freedom to will and a healthy contempt for the worshipers of stale values. Most importantly, he gives his soul the seat of command. He takes on the burden and responsibility for his highest virtue:

> O my soul, now you stand exuberant and heavy, a vine with swelling udders and full clusters of golden brown grapes:—crowded and weighed down by your happiness, waiting from superabundance and yet bashful in your expectancy.[22]

Zarathustra recognizes that a lack of patience presents a challenge for the true giving of his gifts. The abundance that once poured forth freely now weighs heavily within him. Zarathustra realizes that the perceived relation between the giver of the gift and the gift's recipient is a false one.

The relation of thankfulness between the recipient and the giver is inverted in the practicing of the highest virtue. The gift-giver becomes the grateful party at the gift's bestowment upon the worthy recipient, relieving a weary giver of his heavy burden. Zarathustra realizes this by interacting with his own soul. His soul bears the anxieties of the great gift of creation. Zarathustra is free to concentrate on preparing for the next foray amongst men, to prophesize further and to search for a worthy recipient of the gift. For this, the prophet experiences unexpected gratitude:

> O my soul, I have given you everything and my hands have been made empty by you—and now! Now you say to me smiling and full of melancholy: 'Which of use owes thanks?—does the giver not owe thanks to the receiver for receiving? Is

> giving not a necessity? Is receiving not—mercy?' O my soul, I understand the smile of your melancholy: your over-abundance itself now stretches out longing hands![23]

To give a gift is a painful undertaking that depends on the actions of others to be realized. Zarathustra comes to understand that the gift-giver may "pour forth in gushing tears all [his] grief at your fullness and at the craving of the vine for the vintner and his knife!"[24] When he empathizes with the pains of his soul, he understands the full weight of the sacrifice. More importantly, he realizes at last that it is only good to give to a person great enough to be truly thanked for such a saving action: "O my soul, now I have given you everything and even the last that I have, and all my hands have been made empty by you…*which* of us now owes thanks?—But better still: sing to me, sing, O my soul! And let me thank you!"[25] The one who will step forward and receive the gift will be greater than Zarathustra himself.

Zarathustra first comes to recognize this in his Stillest Hour. After Eternity confronts him about his weaknesses that need to be overcome, the prophet returns to his waiting disciples to bid them farewell before returning to his cave. In his final moments with them he has nothing to share: "Ah, my friends! I should have something more to say to you, I should have something more to give you! Why do I not give it? Am I so stingy?"[26] Zarathustra has not yet realized the necessity and power of stinginess. While an overflowing abundance is crucial for fulfilling the highest virtue, under the watchful gaze of Eternity, it can and should only be given to the one who is worthy of it.

Learning to Command the Self: The Overcoming of Pity

In spite of his turn toward a love of Eternity and the improved control of his will, Zarathustra's weakness for humanity's foibles continually manifests. Despite teaching vehemently against it, Zarathustra still attempts to give his gift and share his abundance out of pity for humankind. What he loves in humankind the most—their longing and their contempt—weakens him.

The pessimistic hermit Zarathustra that meets on his journey down the mountain predicts his weakness and failure. Upon their meeting, the

hermit reprimands the prophet for loving humanity. When Zarathustra defends himself by saying that he brings humankind a gift, the hermit (or saintly loner) warns him against it: "'Give them nothing,' said the saint. 'Take rather part of their load, and carry it along with them—that will be most agreeable to them: if only it agrees with you! And if you want to give to them, give them no more than alms, and let them beg for that!'"[27] The hermit in the woods predicted this greatest and final weakness to be overcome by the prophet before any gift could be properly given: pity for those who must be destroyed.

In Zarathustra's final temptation, the weakness that the prophet of creation harbors—his pity for humankind—meets its most pressing moment of overcoming. In Part Four, we witness a protagonist grown grey, one who has spent many decades in solitude since his last stint spent amongst fellow human beings. Despite his isolation, the knowledge of Zarathustra's message has spread far and wide. After being warned that his last temptation is coming, a great cry of distress echoes up to the entrance of the prophet's cave. He then embarks on a search for the one who uttered the cry, ready and able to assist the suffering individual.

This quest of compassion leads him to come across the Higher Men—individuals who strove for a virtue they had chosen to be the highest, but failed to embody fully and as a result ceased to strive for further overcoming. Here, we must make an important distinction between the Higher Men and Zarathustra. Zarathustra also failed multiple times to embody his highest virtue, yet he recognized and embraced his failings and strove continually to overcome his point of weakness. It is this effort, patience, strength of will, and sacrifice that distinguish the prophet.

Let us take the Voluntary Beggar as a case study to illustrate this important distinction. His highest virtue is the same as Zarathustra's: he has a gift to give to humankind, but finds no one amongst them ready to receive it. The main difference between the two—what makes one a prophet and the other a Higher Man who must be destroyed—is that Zarathustra wills to continue in spite of rejection and the Higher Man does not. The Voluntary Beggar fails at giving, and his will is not strong enough to handle the rejection: "they received me not … So I went at last to the animals and to these cows."[28] This Higher Man is happy to

waste his gifts on the cows, sheltered from his failures and lacking the motivation to deliver his message to humans once again. The Voluntary Beggar neither loves humankind as Zarathustra does, nor recognizes the values of the earth that manifest in continued creation and necessary overcoming. He is a preacher of stale virtues; his message speaks of an afterworld and a promise beyond this life, when the focus should be solely on this life.

Zarathustra takes pity on the Voluntary Beggar because of his failings, and because he recognizes the eerie parallels between them, as with all the other Higher Men. Zarathustra invites him to partake in a meal in his cave. This generosity demonstrates how easy it is to fall into pity, especially when we understand the plight of those like ourselves. Pitying excuses a lack of overcoming, and entraps the individual within a false relation of inequality. The one that the prophet takes pity on cannot be one worthy of the gift of creation. Thus, Zarathustra is not yet strong enough to venture again into the world of his fellow humans and their society. Giving out of pity is too easy a task. It is not until the Last Men defile Zarathustra's home by blatant dismissal of his values, that he realizes they must be destroyed in order for the creation of new values to be possible.

Unfortunately, Zarathustra mistakes the Higher Men for greater individuals than they actually are precisely because they have reached a stage ripe for destruction (which he proclaims to admire throughout the text). They have surpassed any possibility of betterment, refusing to continue self-overcoming, and must be destroyed. In his final temptation, he wishes to impart his gift upon them: "But I am a gift-giver: I like to give, as friend to friends. But strangers and the poor may pluck for themselves the fruit from my tree: that causes less shame."[29] The Higher Men misinterpret and abuse the gift that Zarathustra has given them. They seek his wisdom, but offer nothing in return. The prophet has no equal, and therefore no true friend. The heaviness of his burden and his eagerness to relieve himself of it at the slightest provocation fails. He cannot yet give his gift, even here in the final passages of the text. He inevitably shames himself by giving out of pity, knowing full well that these Higher Men are not his equals.[30] The longer that Zarathustra spends time with the Higher Men in his cave, the more he realizes the

necessity of their demise, for they cannot better themselves or society any further. The guests in his cave are not aware of the fact that their time has passed. Each clings desperately to life, searching for comfort and joy instead of striving. They admire and admonish the prophet for the wrong reasons.

The Higher Men cannot better themselves or society any further, thereby unknowingly demanding their own destruction. When the Lion enters the cave and devours them, Zarathustra recognizes his weaknesses and determines to overcome them:

> '*Pity! Pity for the higher men!*' he cried out, and his face changed to brass. 'Well! *That*—has hand its time! My suffering and my pity—what do they matter! Should I strive for my *happiness*? I strive for my *work*! Well! The lion has come, my children are near, Zarathustra has grown ripe, my hour has come:—This is *my* morning, *my* day begins: *arise now, arise, you great noon!*' Thus spoke Zarathustra and left his cave, glowing and strong, like a morning sun that comes out of dark mountains.[31]

The book ends in the triumph of the prophet of creation. Zarathustra is ripe for his own destruction, willing to sacrifice himself for power, for creation, and for his highest virtue. He has mastered the art of self-overcoming at last, and is now ready to go under amongst humans one last time to seek out the one who will take his gift from him.

It is fitting that we never encounter the individual worthy of Zarathustra's gift. This would entail a model for the next creator (for who could predict that circumstance, or what new virtues and values will replace the old ones—that is only for the creator to know). Rather, Zarathustra is a living example of what it means to live out your own chosen virtue, with a strong will and an understanding of self-overcoming. Standing alone and striving for work beyond joy or comfort or happiness is what is demanded of the creator and the giver of that such creation. This took Zarathustra a lifetime to master. We should not be disheartened by the efforts made by the prophet of creation. Instead, we should use Zarathustra as an inspirational template to better ourselves, overcome our weaknesses, choose our own values, and impart our gifts only upon the worthy.

Conclusion: A Virtue Lived

Zarathustra's love for humanity needed to be overcome. The fruition of his great and continual effort is uncertain. Not even the prophet of creation is worthy to give his gift until the book's conclusion. Even though he's now worthy of giving, we never know if he actually does. The gift of creation is a hard one to bear and demands suffering. It is the very rare person who has the strength to carry such a gift, let alone be a worthy recipient.

What Nietzsche has to offer—much like his protagonist Zarathustra—is not easy to stomach or embody. The subtitle to the book—*A Book for All and None*—poignantly expresses this tension. Since even the prophet is unworthy of his own message until the conclusion, it is truly a book for all and none, a message that must be read and grappled with for new virtues to arise. Yet no one, not even the giver, is ready for the gift that will bring forth new creation. As readers, we are left to figure out whether or not Nietzsche's gift is possible. Perhaps *Zarathustra* is merely waiting for the right audience to harvest his wisdom, to contemplate what it means to create, and embody this gift by striving for hard work instead of pure joy, power over happiness, and creation over comfort.

NOTES

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Land of Culture" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Clancy Martin (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005), 68.

[2] The concept of imposition is impossible to separate from normative valuing for Nietzsche. The fact that history imposes upon new people its cultures and values, which are then accepted without further thought, manifests itself in nihilism (when valuation in itself has lost all meaning through its own continuation). Thus, creation becomes vital for any project desiring for the betterment of humankind.

[3] Ibid., 13-14. The Last Man is a state of existence that Zarathustra fears most: a humanity that has failed to strive for power, that ceases striving to overcome itself, a society where happiness and comfort are the highest values.

[4] Ibid., 177.
[5] Ibid., 67.
[6] Ibid., 66.
[7] Ibid., 65-66.
[8] Ibid., 69.
[9] Ibid., 66.
[10] Ibid., 174.
[11] Ibid., 170-171.
[12] Ibid., 281. At the conclusion, all of the Last Men that Zarathustra has invited to his cave are devoured by a lion.
[13] Ibid., 231.
[14] Ibid., 7.
[15] Ibid., 66.
[16] Ibid., 93.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 127.
[19] Ibid., 128.
[20] Ibid., 170.
[21] Ibid., 184.
[22] Ibid., 191.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 192.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., 128.
[27] Ibid., 8.
[28] Ibid., 231.
[29] Ibid., 78.
[30] Ibid., 226-229. In this instance, the involuntary pity that he feels is so overwhelming that he turns away in shame upon realizing his emotions.
[31] Ibid., 281.

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NATURE LOVES TO HIDE
The Role of Desire in Assenting to Spinoza or Kant

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Introduction

The primary aim of this paper is to reconsider the ontological ground of subjectivity in Kant and Spinoza, both of whom depend on opposing notions of the way the 'subject' relates to the infinite. The debate over ontological foundations is motivated by the moral standards each system allows for—namely freedom of choice for the subject versus necessitarianism.[1] While the question is one of how infinity is *conceived*, how the subject is subsequently considered is at stake, as well as what conditions the subject's actions. Can the subject be a self-conditioning thing? Kant attacks metaphysics for claiming knowledge about things it cannot justify. My argument is that Kant not only fails to provide an adequate answer to Spinoza's metaphysical system—or conception of the infinite—but he also fails to establish a system that is itself *knowable.* Albeit at the price of free will and the ability to be a moral *agent,* Spinoza's system remains intact insofar as it presents a logical, knowable, and *ontological* grounding of the particular human, which problematizes the trend of subjectivity throughout the early modern period.

In order to systematically problematize the 'free' subject, I will show how Kant's system mirrors Descartes' radical doubt in that his notion of infinity relies on a *feeling* produced by an annihilating moment, namely, the sublime. I will show how this moment is the linchpin whereby he simultaneously establishes: knowledge of himself as a free subject, the world around him, and infinity. However, Kant critiques Descartes for making such a move, and insofar as this is the case, I will use Kant's own critique against himself. Kant's knowledge of the infinite cannot be systematically grounded given his own conditions for the grounding of knowledge, since it depends on a *feeling* that surpasses all cognitive abilities.[2] Even if the truth—understood as a clear and distinct idea—comes at such a moment, there is still a pre-existent desire conditioning

the way we would judge the experience and the conclusions we would draw from it. Kant's way of dealing with the disconnect between the moment of the sublime and the establishment of the free subject, is to defend transcendental *idealism*: the position that there is a knowable experienced world which is ontologically disconnected from the noumenal realm of substance which establishes it. Kant's critique of Descartes undermines his own position. In order to solve this problem, we can turn to the ontological grounding of Spinoza's metaphysical system.

In order to explore this dynamic between Kant and Spinoza, we will use the following five steps:

1. An exegetical account of Kant's first and third antinomies, his refutation of the ontological argument in which he 'proves' that *transcendental realism* is impossible. If Kant succeeds in destroying metaphysics, Spinoza's entire program becomes an uninteresting thought experiment.
2. An answer from the Spinozist position that defends the *causa-sui*. Following this, we can ask: "What grounds a claim of knowledge about infinity: logical necessity or the experience of a direct relation to it?"
3. Kant's rebuttal comes from the concept of the sublime. However, the sublime is nonetheless a *feeling* which cannot be substantiated through Kant's own system for the conditions of knowledge, *vis-à-vis* Kant's attack on Descartes' *cogito*.
4. A consideration of whether or not Spinoza could ground his notion of the infinite in a similar way. This would reveal Kant's conclusions as driven by a desire to uphold certain moral conditions, rather than deduce the conditions for the infinite from previously established knowledge.
5. A discussion of the type of subject created through each system, and *why* Kant may have been so adamant about trying to create room for freedom in the wake of Spinoza's metaphysics.

Ultimately the ontological grounding of the human (whether it be considered as a subject or not), as proposed by either thinker, presupposes a desire for either freedom or knowledge. Yet the question

remains: is there a notion of truth about the human condition that can be reached without recourse to what one desires?

Part I: Ontology

On the Impossibility of Transcendental Realism

> *Human Reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its knowledge it is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is not able to answer* (CPR, Avii).[3]

Kant begins the *Critique of Pure Reason* by identifying the cornerstone of metaphysics: the *desire* that reason has to satisfy itself. Reason seeks to fulfill itself through clear and distinct truth, or the "universal condition of its judgment" (CPR, B364). Kant identifies this as the logical employment of the principle of sufficient reason, and it is that principle which Kant must defeat in order to destroy metaphysics (ibid.). Kant's project seeks to defend transcendental *idealism*—or the idea that the ontological ground of experienced reality cannot be transcendentally *real*. Any cohesiveness, or ontological rule whereby we order the world of experience, is transcendentally *ideal*. By this, he seeks to distinguish between the order of our ideas, and the order of things we experience.[4] The tools we use to order reality rest on time and space, which are not objectively real in and of themselves. They are things we bring to *objective reality* in order to explain it—they are *products* of our subjectivity. Our subjectivity is transcendentally ideal, in that the way we establish it—through the infinite—cannot be objectively determined in time and space. This means that we are merely bodies with experiences, and the way that we judge these experiences via time and space, and the *values* we place on these experiences, are grounded by the noumenal realm (the transcendentally ideal).

The strongest employment of Kant's argument against metaphysics—or a transcendental reality—comes from the antinomies and the refutation of the ontological argument. Here he challenges the metaphysical deductions made by opposing concepts of infinity, as well as the *actual* existence (in time and space) of a *necessary* being. Of the

antinomies, the first and third are most relevant: the two are linked by the structure and aim of their argument, and they present the strongest connection to the ontological argument. What is at stake in the antinomies is the possibility of possibility itself; Kant needs to show that the world we experience cannot be ontologically grounded through a logical necessity. If it can, we fall into a situation that is causally necessitated, with no room for the possibility of freedom, or a self-determining subject. Kant's alternative to such a situation is a transcendental world with a chasm between the "laws" of nature, and their ontological conditions. If such a chasm does not exist, we could never claim recourse to the feeling that things "ought to have been different." This is what Kant wants to preserve in order to maintain the possibility for normative moral claims. Freedom and morality are linked, because if we cannot make a distinction between what does happen and what ought to, or *could* happen, we lack agency as subjects: we are not the masters of our experience, we cannot choose.

This sense of agency is also fundamental when we consider the desires of the subject. Morality, as such, seeks to dominate and quell human desire, considered simply as the aspect of humanity that motivates us *towards* one thing or another. Politically, Kant seeks to structure and train human desires such that we may call some things good and some things bad, and subsequently order social structure by virtue of these moral claims. This is why I use the term *morality* as apposed to normativity, because morality takes normativity a step further and indicates a *value* placed on a normative claim. Ostensibly, without a moral structure we find ourselves in a hedonistic state of nature defined by a war of all against all.

The first antinomy deals with the two opposing concepts of infinity: a conception in which the world has a beginning in time and space, and a conception in which the world doesn't.[5] If we assume the world has an *actual*, or transcendentally *real* beginning, Kant supposes that we will have to conceive of an empty time and space in which the world did not exist. He then asserts:

> If the sensible world is limited, it must necessarily lie in the infinite void. If that void, and consequently space in general as

> *a priori* condition of the possibility of appearances, be set aside, the entire sensible world vanishes. This world is all that is given us in our problem. The *mundus intelligibilis* is nothing but the general concept of a world in general, in which abstraction is made from all conditions of its intuition, and in reference to which, therefore, no synthetic position, either affirmative or negative, can possibly be asserted (CPR, B461).

If the intelligible world exists in the void, there is no possibility of asserting why something exists as opposed to why something doesn't. That is, there is no *reason why* something would come to be. If nothing *necessarily* exists we can say nothing about the sensible, experienced world. If we want to talk about the world in a meaningful way, we are pressured to say *why* something is the case *vis-à-vis* the principle of sufficient reason (CPR, B364).[6] If we assume this principle, we cannot at the same time presuppose that time and space have an *actual* beginning (i.e. in terms of existence in the world).

Of the second and opposing position of the first antinomy, Kant asserts:

> The concept of totality is in this case simply the representation of the completed synthesis of its parts; for, since we cannot obtain the concept from the intuition of the whole—that being in this case impossible—we can apprehend it only through the synthesis of the parts viewed as carried, at least in idea, to the completion of the infinite (CPR, B457n. a).

Kant then assumes a concept of infinity that functions as an aggregate sum-total of all possible units of time and space, or infinity conceived through a successive synthesis. Put simply, this is impossible because there can never be a completed synthesis, in that one more unit can always be added. Infinity is also inconceivable in this fashion, because we can never apprehend the totality, as there is none available. We can attempt to represent it to ourselves in our imagination, but we could never conceive of it as complete. We can only conceive of the process whereby we would synthesize all the various parts, but this is not the same thing as the aggregate sum-total.

In the third antinomy, Kant approaches freedom via the metaphysical distinction between types of causation. He attempts to show that different metaphysical positions concerning causality in nature are privy to the same analysis as the concept of a real beginning of time and space in relation to the is/ought distinction. The first position assumes there is freedom with respect to the "laws of nature" (CPR, B474). Kant here makes an important distinction:

> Nature does indeed impose upon the understanding the exacting task of always seeking the origin of events ever higher in the series of causes, their causality being always conditioned. *But in compensation it holds out the promise of thoroughgoing unity of experience in accordance with laws*. The illusion of freedom on the other hand, offers a point of rest to the enquiring understanding in the chain of causes, conducting it to an *unconditioned* causality which begins to act of itself. This causality is, however, blind, and abrogates those rules through which alone a completely coherent experience is possible (*Ibid.*, emphasis mine).

Kant's argument against freedom is that the "illusion" of freedom is "blind," insofar as an agent can, at any time, bring about an unconditioned cause that acts by virtue of its own power. If this is possible, there can be no cohesion in our experience of reality. What Kant proves here is the impossibility of freedom, given the assumption of the principle of sufficient reason as a true ordering principle of nature. If we assume a definitive causal chain as given by the fact that some conditioned thing exists, we must suppose that the conditioned thing was completely determined to exist. The combination of the principle of sufficient reason and an unconditioned first cause render freedom impossible. Given that an unconditioned cause has no reason to begin, this combination shows freedom to be in contradiction with a state of nature.

The metaphysical positions of the antinomies assume that their author subscribes to the principle of sufficient reason, as well as the notion of infinity as an aggregate sum-total of parts (more on this below). Accordingly, reason, in seeking the origin of causes, merely reiterates the

principle of sufficient reason, leading it to *one unconditioned* cause. This means the original cause has no condition for acting, but acts nonetheless. This analysis falls prey to what was just discussed in the first antinomy, which is why these two antinomies work together. If there is freedom, a new causal chain—set off by an unconditioned cause—could happen at any moment. In this sense, there could be no transcendentally real law of nature. If the freedom of the subject is established as transcendentally real and not ideal, then our understanding of subjectivity falling within this contradiction.

In the opposing notion of freedom that Kant puts forth, we find a further elaboration of the logical inconsistency of assuming the principle of sufficient reason. If we assume that everything acts in accordance with the laws of nature, then we assume that each thing that happens has a direct preceding cause:

> If therefore, everything takes place solely in accordance with the laws of nature, there will always be a relative, and never a first beginning, and consequently no completeness of the series on the side of the causes that arise the one from the other… But the law of nature is just this, that nothing takes place without a cause *sufficiently* determined *a priori*. The proposition that no causality is possible save in accordance with laws of nature, when taken in unlimited universality, is therefore self-contradictory (CPR, B474).

If there is no first beginning, all causes are simply relative, and there can be no end to the regression of causes. The principle of sufficient reason, when taken in accordance with the laws of nature, becomes self contradictory. There is no absolute cause whereby the rest follow—all cause is relative. No real knowledge is gained by following the chain to their presumed origin (which does not exist). We can further see how the first and third antinomies are related, in that both deal with questions about how to conceive of an "absolute beginning" based on reason's "peculiar fate" to seek an ultimate and absolute ground for its own judgment. In so doing, we have recognized two things: 1) we cannot look to a notion of infinity that acts as the sum-total of aggregate parts because if we do, we find ourselves in an infinitely regressive state; and 2)

we cannot assume a world which has always existed in time and space, because this allows for no real causal relation, thereby giving no coherence to our experienced world.[7]

Kant seems to have exhausted the possibilities presented to us in exacting a metaphysical system to quell reason's desire. His final attempt is to refute the ontological argument, with which the principle of sufficient reason is necessarily employed. If reason does, in fact, lead us toward an ultimate foundational truth, and even if we were able to conceive of it, would this make that necessary being (i.e. god) real? The ontological argument seeks to prove a necessary being based on the order and connection of things within the experienced world simply through the employment of reason. That is, the ontological argument seeks to fuse thought and being by proving logically that existence is intrinsic to the definition of a thing.[8] The danger with this is that one could ostensibly know the nature of the experienced world *a priori*. When we talk about the "first cause" as absolutely necessary, we presuppose its existence, and thus an absolutely necessary being exists by virtue of itself. The ontological argument would prove that a necessary being is transcendentally as well as objectively real. Whatever follows from it, follows necessarily and absolutely. Kant needs to reopen the distinction between thought and being in order to allow room for freedom, or a non-determined transcendental capacity of the subject that can function differently from the order whereby we experience nature. If he can do this, we are capable of determining ourselves, as well as creating *ex nihilo* via our *transcendentally determined* subjectivity.

When Kant argues against the ontological argument, however, he reaffirms his contention with grounding infinity on that which is "unconditioned," or the uncaused cause (CPR, B621). Kant uses the example of a triangle to begin his critique. His line of argumentation is to say that while three sides are indeed intrinsic to the definition of a triangle, this does nothing to prove the actual, or objective, existence of triangles. We can only begin by saying that, *if* a triangle exists objectively, it has these properties (CPR, B622). The property of three-sidedness would analogously function as the transcendental subjectivity of the triangle, while the triangle's existence *in the world* would function as its own objective reality. If we reject the objective existence of the thing,

then we simultaneously reject the necessity of all the properties or consequences that follow from it. Kant thinks we can talk about a necessary being only as a transcendental subject, but *not* as objectively real, since we cannot conceive the totality of such a being in our experienced life. The grounds for Kant's belief that we are incapable of positing a necessary being stem not only from the paradoxes presented through the antinomies, but also from judgments we make about objective reality *vis-à-vis* the principle of sufficient reason (*Ibid*.).

The crux of Kant's argument is as follows:

> We must ask: is the proposition that *this or that thing…exists*, an analytic or synthetic proposition? If it is analytic, the assertion of the existence of the thing adds nothing to the thought of the thing [and is thus a tautology]…For if all positing (no matter what it may be that is posited) is entitled reality, the thing with all its predicates is already posited in the concept of the subject, and is assumed as actual; and in the predicate this is merely repeated. But if, on the other hand, we admit…that all existential propositions are synthetic, how can we profess to maintain that the predicate of existence cannot be rejected without contradiction (CPR, B626).

According to Kant, if the proposal of god's existence as a necessary and perfect being is an analytic statement, it is a mere tautology. If it is synthetic—if it tells us something new about god that is not contained in the concept itself—then god becomes a concept that is not objectively real, but is instead conditioned ontologically by something which transcends it. Here, Kant hopes to demonstrate that existence is a relational property: it posits a relation between the concept itself and my judgment of it. My judgment is based on my empirical reality. My concept however, is based on a purely logical or analytic proposition, which abstracts from reality. In this sense, existence is nothing other than a phenomenological relation between a concept and its instance in the world, a relation that cannot be posited *a priori*.

Analytic judgments can be certain but, according to Kant, they tell us nothing about the world. Empirical judgments *can* tell us about the world, but they cannot be certain. We find ourselves unable to form a

fusion between our experienced world and our conceptual or analytic judgments. God as a necessary being cannot be objectively real because this would imply that thinking about god's non-existence is contradictory to the possibility of existence. We could not think that god does not exist because it would annul existence *tout court*. However, we do ponder the objective non-existence of god, without imagining that existence as such is an illusion.[9] This is because we cannot fully integrate the infinite into our patterns of imagination, seeing that we are finite beings. Since the conception of the infinite is beyond our capacity for knowledge—it is only ever a representation—we create the split whereby we can think existence without thinking the infinite as well. Kant has argued, however successfully, that existence adds something new to a concept, ostensibly severing the link that connects thought and being.

The Spinozist Reply

> *The perplexity into which it thus falls is not due to any fault of its own. It begins with principles which it has no option save to employ in the course of experience, and which this experience at the same time abundantly justifies it in using* (CPR, Aviii).

So far, Kant has argued the following by way of *reductio ad absurdum*: 1) the infinite cannot be an aggregation of the units of time and space; 2) objective reality is ontologically distinct from the subjective capacity to make analytic judgments about the world, paving the way for freedom; 3) the existence of an absolutely necessary being cannot be proven. However, Spinoza finds himself with a metaphysical system that objects to this position via his conception of the infinite. Kant does not speak to Spinoza's contention that infinity can be complete without being an aggregation of synthesized parts. Spinoza escapes Kant's antinomies through a concept of infinity that is complete and exists by virtue of its definition. Spinoza's *Ethics* is a geometrically deduced metaphysical system whereby an acceptance the definitions entails an acceptance of the propositions that follow. I will elaborate upon Spinoza's conception of the infinite using three of his definitions:

> D1: By cause of itself (*causa-sui*) I understand that whose essence involves existence, *or* that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing[.]
> D3: By Substance I understand what is in itself and conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed[.]
> D6: By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence. (E1)[10]

What we find here is an infinity that is the ontological grounding of—not the derivative of—reality. Spinoza's god is the one unique substance whose nature involves necessary existence insofar as it is self-caused. Self-causation then is not an aggregation of parts because it does not come from a void—it simply is or it is not. If we are going to claim existence of ourselves, the world around us, or anything at all as logically deducible, we must claim it comes in the form of Spinoza's *causa-sui*. Differently stated, there is either something or there is nothing. If we are going to posit a knowable existence at all, this existence must be grounded in something. Spinoza contends that his self-caused substance is the only way to account for an infinity that can be the necessary and sufficient logical cause of existence. Spinoza is not subject to the arguments made by Kant's antinomies insofar as the infinite does not come from a void, nor is it an aggregation of synthesized parts.

It is not as if substance is uncaused or unconditioned. Instead, it is the cause of its own existence; it exists logically by virtue of its nature. This dissolves the tension presented in Kant's refutation of the ontological argument between synthetic and analytic propositions by showing that existence happens in virtue of the *causa-sui*, and not the other way around. Spinoza's substance is both ontologically prior and simultaneous to that which exists by virtue of it. To put Spinoza in Kantian terms, existence does not add something new to the concept but comes about in its totality as a product of the conception of the *causa-sui*. The *causa-sui* has objective—or empirical—and transcendental reality. As such, existence is a property that is ontologically supported by the *causa-sui* through a logically necessitated relation of substance to its modes, and not a relation between concept and reality. Substance and modes cannot

be separated: their relation is just the expression of an eternal process between the particulars of substance, its modes.

In proposition 7 of the first part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza explains why this is the case:

> P7: *It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist,*
> Dem: A substance cannot be produced by anything else (by P6C); therefore it will be the cause of itself, that is (by D1), its essence necessarily involves existence, *or* it pertains to its nature to exist *Q.E.D.* (E, IP7).

Spinoza sets this up by asserting that if this were not the case, substance would have to be conceived through something other than its cause (i.e. it would stand in relation to something else). This is absurd given the definitions presented, and furthermore it cannot be the case that two infinite substances exist because one would have to limit the other. Therefore, substance is unitary, unique, and the adequate cause of itself. This also preserves the principle of sufficient reason because the original cause can be conceived of and reached.

I do not want to claim, however, that there was an actual moment in time and space when substance began or caused itself. Instead, I want to posit that it acts infinitely and eternally through its own nature. The original cause demanded by the principle of sufficient reason is reached by considering substance differently—as a simple and unique substance, which exists and has power. The power of substance, again, is one that poses a relational property between its infinite modes (E1, D5). The relational property is one whereby the modes affect each other and express nothing more than the free power and activity of substance. Modes become active or passive in relation to each other. However, they do not relate to substance itself because they are simply particular representations of substance. Simply put, there is no means whereby a particular can stand in relation to the infinite, something we will see that Kant posits as plausible.

Spinoza defends the ontological argument and, given his conceptualization of the *causa-sui,* he is in a position to answer Kant in a meaningful way. Spinoza does, in fact, invoke the principle of sufficient reason in his explanation of the ontological argument, insofar as he

claims that for something to exist there must be a cause. This cause must either come from within the existent thing or from without. If something is produced or conceived through what is outside of itself, it cannot be substance because it cannot be infinite. If something is the adequate cause of itself and can be conceived solely through itself, it must be a substance, and this grounding is one of logical necessity. This has radical implications on the scope of subjectivity because we cannot be the adequate cause of ourselves or anything else. Substance ontologically conditions us, but we do not represent it in its totality. Insofar as this is the case we are completely determined by the nature of substance. If Spinoza were actually arguing with Kant, he would agree with the arguments presented in the antinomies. However, Spinoza seems to have found a way to maintain the principle of sufficient reason and a logically valid ontological grounding notion of substance.

We need some way to prove the *reality* of existence in order to make claims about how existence functions *ontologically*. Descartes' infamous *cogito* attempts to do such a thing, beginning with the existence of the *self as subject*. However, Kant challenges Descartes' argument, "*I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind." [11] This question of subjectivity in relation to existence will inevitably change the conversation; the nature of existence changes the way one is capable of thinking of what it means to be a subject.

Part II: Subjectivity

Grounding the 'Self's' Knowledge of Existence

> *Rising with their aid…to ever higher, ever more remote, conditions, [reason] soon becomes aware that in this way—the questions never ceasing—its work must always remain incomplete; and it therefore finds itself compelled to resort to principles which overstep all possible empirical employment, and which yet seem so unobjectionable that even ordinary consciousness readily accepts them* (CPR, Aviii).

Descartes is arguably the patriarch of subjectivity. But what is this paradigm of 'subject'? How is the subject established, and what is this

subject capable of? In *The Meditations*, Descartes does not set out to put forth a theory of subjectivity. His initial claim is that he, "realized that it was necessary, once in the course of [his] life, to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations if [he] wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that was stable and likely to last" (M, 17). He says this in reference to falsehoods that he accepted as true. But this acceptance of truth does not refer to the faculty through which he accepted said truth. This project of demolition, or radical doubt, goes further as Descartes asserts that he must, "hold back [his] assent from opinions which are not completely certain…just as carefully as [he does] from those which are apparently false" (M, 18). The mechanism of assenting is the beginning of a trend in which Descartes relates the self to a thing that assents or dissents to its opinions. He wants to demolish "opinion" and replace it with "certainty." However, he is identifying the ability of the person to assent as that which leads them to accept something as certain, such that the self becomes the foundation through with certainty is possible. In this case, in order to fully actualize his project of the demolition of all previous opinion, his project necessitates that he doubt even himself.

Yet the first meditation apparently rejects the possibility that the self can be denied. Descartes can deny his body, and the myriad of physical things associated with his self. He can also deny the distinction between being awake and asleep, but he *feels* dazed by this. This *feeling* is the second trend of subjectivity that I want to highlight. It is not only that the subject has a capacity to assent or dissent to a judgment about the world, but the subject also *feels* things that are not judgments. These feelings do not act as judgments or "yes and no saying's," but as a faculty through which we are unable to deny our selves. Descartes introduces the notion that, for the self, feelings have a phenomenologically different affect than judgments do. While both reinforce the same point of "subjectivity," they are also the beginning of a dichotomy between thoughts-as-judgments and feelings-as-immediate, which is important to the genealogy of subjectivity—especially for Kant.

As the text proceeds, Descartes continues to move between what he can know, and what grounds his ability to know *vis-à-vis* God. He is looking for the ontological basis through which the existence of

everything else can be derived. There is a simultaneity here between the ontological grounding of a self and the self's characterization. When Descartes claims that these capacities of the self are incapable of being denied, he then waivers toward a discussion of God and God's effect on these capacities.

> Perhaps there may be some who would prefer to deny the existence of…God rather than believe everything else is uncertain…yet since deception and error *seem* to be imperfections, the less powerful they make the original cause, the more likely it is that I am so imperfect as to be deceived all the time (M, 21; emphasis mine).

Here, Descartes establishes the notion that if we are going to talk about the self in a meaningful way, we must have a reason through which we ground this self. If this capacity to assent/dissent or the capacity to feel things is undeniable, there has to be a cause for this. We cannot be the sole cause for these phenomena because we are subject to a causal interaction and, in Descartes' case, this is manifested as a causal chain that begins with God. He maintains, however, that there is a dualistic ontology through which the self and God are distinct entities that are nonetheless inextricably linked.

After this pit of radical doubt, Descartes reaches the infamous *cogito*. But it is not enough to look at the *cogito* as an isolated assertion of self. It develops and works in the context of its simultaneity with the assertion of God:

> But I have convinced myself that there is absolutely nothing in the world…Does it follow that I too do not exist? *No*: if I convinced myself of something then I certainly existed. But there is a deceiver of supreme power and cunning who is deliberately and constantly deceiving me. In that case I too undoubtedly exist, if he is deceiving me; and let him deceive me as much as he can, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something…I *am*, I *exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind (M, 25, emphasis mine).

At first glance, the assertion, "I am, I exist" is tautological. Descartes has not critically established the theoretical chasm between *being-in-the-world* (I am) and an *ontologically validated existence* (I exist), if in fact there is one. Furthermore, he makes it seem as though the self is now established prior to God in that he is solely using the "I"; my certainty of myself comes prior to my certainty of God. Assenting to my existence is the first step, and is followed by the determination of how my self relates to its ontological ground: God. I would like to invite the notion that God and the self are inextricable from each other and that, for Descartes, the moment of grounding the self is tangential to the establishment of God. God has to come first, because God is "more infinite" than humans. So how can the finite thing ground the more perfect, more infinite thing? This connection between the self and the infinite will ground a discussion about why we can make such strong claims about the nature of self.

As we see in the quote above, Descartes' authoritative "No" is in direct response only to the questioning of the self. It is not a direct logical proof of affirmation, but only the experience of a moment of pure subjectivity. The only thing that posits our existence is our consciousness of it. We cannot *know* if something or nothing exists because we can only *conceive* the infinite. As a result, we are destined to rely on the moment of this experience in order to achieve certainty. Certainty begins with the feeling of existence simultaneously with the cognition of finitude. We cannot make any claim to "certain" knowledge through this paradigm. In that respect, he is saying nothing more than that he cannot attain certainty. However, as long as he has the experience of conceiving of himself, then it follows that he exists: "thought; this alone is inseparable from me, I am, I exist—that is certain, but for how long? For as long as I am thinking. For it could be that were I totally to cease from thinking, I should totally cease to exist…I am then, in the strict sense, only a thing that thinks" (M, 27).

It follows, that if "I" as a finite thing exist then something exists, and thus an infinite—or ontologically grounding—something exists as well. The experience of infinitude, however, is something we cannot conceptualize but only feel and subsequently represent to ourselves. In this way, the two are separate but necessary components of what it means to be a subject. Furthermore, the distinction between thought and

being and the recognition that we cannot establish being without thought are the metaphysical linchpins of subjectivity for Descartes. I will return to these points when I discuss how Spinoza and Kant bring about a deeper analysis of subjectivity and will.

To be clear, Descartes' subject is comprised of the following attributes: 1) a capacity to assent or dissent; 2) a capacity to feel; 3) an ability to suspend judgment. "Yes" and "no" saying, in terms of opinion, range in application. The most important aspect of this capacity is its ability to make a judgment about the nature of existence. When we say yes to our existence we thus simultaneously posit ourselves and an infinite through which we are derived.

The "feeling capacity" is what allows for the moment of assent when we cannot rely on reason—if we accept reason as constituted by logical principles. In the moment of pure radical doubt we have no such artillery and are forced to have a pure *feeling* of assent or dissent from being. The ability to suspend all judgment is what I take to be the freedom of will. The freedom consists not in the employment of judgment, but in the suspension of it. When this happens, we then have nothing outside ourselves through which we are constituting ourselves, and in this sense we are the adequate and free cause of said judgment: "I am."

Using these three attributes as referential starting points for what it means to be a subject, I will now move through Kant's notion of the sublime. I will keep in mind his destruction of metaphysics, in order to show how he critiques Descartes but fails to adequately account for how the subject relates to the infinite. Kant accuses Descartes of being unable to make such a claim to the "I" because if he radically doubts all that is outside him, he cannot be aware of himself (CPR, B276).

> Certainly, the representation 'I am', which expresses the consciousness that can accompany all thought, immediately includes in itself the existence of a subject but it does not so include any *knowledge* of that subject, and therefore also no empirical knowledge, that is, no experience of it…The consciousness of myself in the representation 'I' is not an intuition, but a merely *intellectual* representation of the spontaneity of a thinking subject…the existence of outer things

> is required for the possibility of a determinate consciousness of the self (CPR, B277–8).

Kant is saying that in order to have consciousness of the self, we need to compare it to what is outside of the self. Furthermore, the self as a substantial subject is a condition for the possibility of thought but it cannot be known in and of itself. We are merely representing the substantial self to the objectively real self via an intellectual representation. In that we can only ever represent the substantial self to ourselves, Descartes does not establish even his own existence in the moment of the *cogito*; he only establishes a clear and distinct idea about the representation of the self.

The establishment of the subject cannot carry with it any objective reality, save as a concept by which we determine the world:

> If by the term 'substance' be meant an object which can be given, and if it is to yield knowledge, it must be made to rest on a permanent intuition, as being that through which alone the object of our concept can be given, and as being, therefore, the indispensable condition of the objective reality of the concept. Now in inner intuition there is nothing permanent, for the 'I' is merely the consciousness of my thought. So long, therefore, as we do not go beyond mere thinking, we are without the necessary condition for applying the concept of substance, that is, of a self-subsistent subject, to the self as a thinking being (CPR, B413).

If there is something to be established, it must be the substance whereby we are capable of determining the objective reality of being *vis-à-vis* existence. But "I" can only be established as the consciousness of myself, and not the substantial self, not the self as subject. In talking about substance, or substantial reality, we can never know the totality of the representation. This is why Kant claims that substance is transcendentally ideal. The ideality comes from the fact that we can know things about reality when we experience them, but since we cannot completely experience substance as such, we cannot claim a hard knowledge about it or its existential properties. The subject as a thinking

being is what we experience, and until we establish the "self-subsistence" of the subject, there is nothing permanent whereby we can order our own experienced reality.

Grounding the Infinite

> *But by this procedure human reason precipitates itself into darkness and contradictions; and while it may indeed conjecture that these must be in some way due to concealed errors, it is not in a position to be able to detect them* (CPR, Aviii).

Kant uses the moment of the sublime in order to validate his claim that we cannot know the infinite, and thus cannot have knowledge about the transcendental.[12] For Kant, the sublime is the moment whereby we establish the infinite through a direct experience of it; it is the recognition of our own power through a simultaneous recognition of our finitude:

> The feeling of the sublime is thus a feeling of displeasure from the inadequacy of the imagination in the aesthetic estimation of magnitude for the estimation by means of reason, and a pleasure that is thereby aroused at the same time from the correspondence of this very judgment of the inadequacy of the greatest sensible faculty in comparison with ideas of reason, insofar as striving for them is nevertheless a law for us (CPJ, 5:257).

In the same moment, the sublime makes the law of reason apparent to us, and makes the fact that we strive for ever-greater heights of knowledge a purely affective experience. The lack of ability to cognize the experience by way of magnitude, *vis-à-vis* time and space, allows for us to transcend reason and have a moment in which we have a pure experience of the "absolutely great" (CPJ, 5:258).[13] We represent the absolutely great to ourselves in our mind via the imagination, and in this process we find a way to represent the infinite to ourselves in a way that we cannot but assent to.

Consequently, we find in ourselves a:

> nonsensible standard, which has that very infinity under itself as a unit against which everything in nature is small, and thus found in our own mind a superiority over nature itself even in its immeasurability: likewise the irresistibility of its power certainly makes us, considered as natural beings, recognize our physical powerlessness, but at the same time it reveals a capacity for judging ourselves as independent of it and a superiority over nature on which is grounded a self-preservation of quite another kind than that which can be threatened and endangered by nature outside us, whereby the humanity in our person remains undemeaned even though the human being must submit to that dominion (CPJ, 5:262).

This is in contrast to Spinoza's contention that humans falsely believe themselves to be a kingdom within a kingdom, in that they believe themselves to have absolute power over their actions (E III, preface). The superiority that Kant asserts we feel "over nature" is freedom. Our subjectivity is defined as a self-preservation that allows us to be independent from nature insofar as we can judge ourselves as independent from it. The power of judgment, for Kant, is what enables us to remain powerful in nature even though we must ultimately submit to it. We experience a transcendentally ideal infinite which we can only reach by way of reason, but which is not objectively real because we cannot wholly represent it to ourselves. If it were objectively real, we would fall into the antinomies, and furthermore, we could use reason in order to cognize it. That is, it would be Spinoza's substance because we could talk about it as if it were logically necessitated. As a self that is capable of recognizing this transcendental infinity, but remaining ontologically distinct, we are free from the laws that dictate the cohesiveness of the experienced world; we are above it because we can conceive of the infinite, but are not logically necessitated by it. We can choose how to represent it to ourselves.

This is the moment in which we do not need time and space to represent experience to ourselves, except in the way that we subsequently judge the experience. The moment itself transcends cognitive ability and relies on pure affective experience. Thus, it paves the way for us to

represent it to ourselves in a way that is consistent with our moral predisposition: we can choose how to represent it to ourselves based on what we desire to preserve about our own subjectivity (CPJ, 5:257). It is through this experience that Kant makes room for freedom even if he cannot strongly ground claims of knowledge about it.

Kant elevates this type of experience to one that is not just a mere feeling. It seems as though his critique of Descartes' moment fails to take Descartes seriously, even though Kant attempts to ground freedom and subjectivity in the same way. The experience of the self and what that self entails in both Kant and Descartes uses a moment that is beyond cognition.[14] For Kant, the moment beyond cognition is a simultaneous affirmation of the free transcendentally ideal subject and the magnitude of the infinite aggregation of the empirical world. Kant preserves the capacity to be able to represent the infinite to ourselves after the experience of the sublime, by means of the chasm between a unified self and the magnitude of nature. This maintains a rational cohesion whereby our substantial selves are the masters of our experienced reality. When Kant uses the sublime to ground existence via an inability to comprehend, what he actually posits is a pure experience of substance as such (even though he will not speak to the nature of said substance). The representation we give to ourselves of this substance after the moment of the sublime is alterable, however, by what we want to preserve as subjects. Kant says we cannot gain knowledge about the world through a claim about substance because substance is a necessary condition for the world, although it is not the world, the "I," or anything else which we experience. We only experience the world on a conceptual basis, which is reliant on abstract categories. This separation of the ontological basis for the world *vis-à-vis* substance is Kant's way of making us, as moral agents, a kingdom within a kingdom.

Spinoza however, denies this and says that knowledge of substance simply is knowledge of the world. Reason is capable of finding what it seeks if it can simply get rid of its desire to preserve autonomy. If we get rid of the notion that thoughts are separate from their objective reality (Spinozism), we find that metaphysical claims, or claims about substance as such, are valid, albeit at the price of the possibility for a "free" or self-determined subject. Kant grounds his entire system of subjectivity in the

moment of the subject's incomprehensible relation to the infinite. Because of this, the representation or judgment made about the sublime entails a preexistent motivation for judgment, rather than a logically necessitated one. The tension here presents us with the problem that there is no real logically sound step between the subliminal moment and the judgment required to represent it to ourselves. If Kant is going to attack Descartes' *cogito*, he cannot, at the same time, use the sublime to validate his claims of knowledge about the transcendentally ideal. It is apparent that the way in which we represent the infinite to ourselves depends on a subjective desire to preserve the possibility for freedom.

Insofar as Kant critiques Descartes, he negates his own argument that it is possible for the subject to know his or her freedom. Ironically, it appears as though Descartes could save Kant because, if we recall, Descartes elevated the immediacy of feeling as constitutive of the subjective capacity. Kant, however, undermines this capacity and says it must be mediated by the "I" in order for us to claim knowledge about what we experience. Kant defeats, not only Descartes, but himself as well, in establishing the freedom of the subject.

For Spinoza, freedom is an illusion. Although we have the experience of morally choosing, he would answer that the representation of the experience of the sublime is what is inadequate, not the feeling itself. What would make it adequate for Spinoza is if we did not represent it to ourselves but elevated the feeling of the sublime into a moment whereby we had a clear and distinct understanding of the infinite. Spinoza mirrors Descartes in elevating the immediacy of affective experience above its representation. Kant, however, wants to maintain that the idea we represent to ourselves is in fact adequate and capable of establishing the existence of the subject as free. Kant can say it is substantial because it represents two modes whereby the self is constituted. The idea represented can be adequate because it is an idea, and as such, does not need to be quantified or qualified empirically. However, Kant has constituted the transcendental realm a thing we cannot claim knowledge of, but must accept on faith alone.

Spinoza then could use the same experience to ground his own conception of the infinite *sans* freedom. It could still feel the same as Kant's sublime but the way we subsequently represent it to ourselves in

our mind would differ from Kant's assertion that we have autonomy from the "laws" of nature. For Spinoza, this is merely the product of the human desire to have everything act with a teleology—the desire to have everything work toward a given end:

> if God acts for the sake of an end, he necessarily wants something which he lacks…the Followers of this doctrine…have introduced—to prove this doctrine of theirs—a new way of arguing: by reducing things not to the impossible, but to ignorance. This shows that no other way of defending their doctrine was open to them. For example, if a stone has fallen from a roof onto someone's head and killed him, they will show…that the stone fell in order to kill the man (EI, Appendix).

This is Spinoza's way to preemptively combat the phenomenon of using reason in order to preserve a thought process that maintains a prefigured desire for an end. The Kantian sublime allows for the preservation of an end, and while Spinoza certainly honors desire as constitutive to the human being, he undercuts the possibility whereby we could act for the sake of an end. Has Kant intentionally failed to address Spinoza's substance properly, or has he misunderstood Spinoza's notion of the infinite? Kant's representation of the sublime falls in line with how he views the infinite—as a magnitude. If Spinoza were to experience the sublime, his view would turn out quite differently.

If Spinoza found himself unable to represent an experience to himself via thought and extension, he would indeed follow Kant in elevating this experience to an affirming moment. However, instead of judging it in Kantian fashion he would look at it as an experience of a true idea:

> For to have a true idea means nothing other than knowing a thing perfectly, *or* in the best way. And of course no one can doubt this unless he thinks that an idea is something mute like a picture on a tablet, and not a mode of thinking, namely, the very [act of] understanding. And I ask, who can know that he understands something unless he first understands it? That is, who can know that he is certain about some thing unless he is

> first certain about it? What can there be which is clearer and more certain than a true idea to serve as a standard of truth? As the light makes both itself and the darkness plain, so truth is the standard both of itself and of the false (EII, P42).

Spinoza would claim that in the sublime moment, we find ourselves in a pure moment of understanding. Insofar as we are capable of experiencing the moment, but not cognizing it, we must have been experiencing substance because nothing else is beyond cognition in that way—a point he and Kant agree on. The difference is that Kant thinks we are experiencing substance as such, and Spinoza thinks we are having a pure moment of understanding the substance. The experience of the self and of the infinite in a way that is somehow above our cognitive capacity is indeed a realization of our finitude coinciding with the reality of the infinite, which for Spinoza is not ontologically separated from us, only ontologically prior. However, the experience of infinity is just the 'best way' that we can know it; it is as close to a perfect understanding as we will get. We may not be able to know what it is we understand, but we know that we do understand, and this moment would act as the standard for both itself and for all subsequent moments of inadequate representations or judgments. If we take the feeling of the subject as equally or even more constitutive of the subjective capacity, Spinoza and Descartes can both combat the Kantian critiques. It does not need to manifest as a judgment necessarily in order to constitute subjective capacity. It is thereby valid that if we understand the notion of substance and infinity via the *causa-sui*, we can claim knowledge of it by virtue of our understanding.

The subject for Spinoza would have to be considered differently than a freely willing, self-determining being. A further elaboration on the constitutive elements of our selves is Spinoza's definition of the *conatus*: "The *conatus* with which each thing endeavors to persist in its own being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself" (EIII, P7). This is a term that expresses the natural inclination for a thing to persist in its own being, insofar as it is what it is. This view of the *conatus* suggests that we are whatever we are at a given moment, and our tendency will be to persist as such. To take it a step further, it is to say that inasmuch as we experience a certain desire, our *conatus* consists in the persisting of that

desire. However, there is no real escape from the influence of objects outside us, which possess their own specific *conatus*. Each thing, in that it is what it is, has a *conatus* specific to its own formal being, and as such, the persisting of their being comes into contact and conflict with other beings. If, as Spinoza claims, desire is our essence, then we can never be rid of desire as such, although our desire considered in its own right will change over time. No thing is ever given because as it interacts with other beings, these other beings change the nature of the thing through affective exchange.

The self-preservation aspect to the *conatus* exists only to protect and foster the very basic desires that constitute us. We may not always understand the cause whereby the appetite constituting the desire has been formed, but the underlying motive for attaining the object we desire is the persistence or preservation of our being in any given moment. Our *conatus* becomes stronger the more active we are in relation to the entirety of affects which assail us. In this sense we are usually passive in relation to our desires because there are an infinite variety of causes from whence they may have come, and we are but one component of that infinite variety. We may be unable to generate actions independently but we are still an integral part of the causal nexus, which determines our actions at all times. In this sense, we are capable of becoming stronger, more active agents in relation to the rest of the affects with which we are in contact, even though we can never act as the sole agent in the creation of our own desires:

> So experience itself, no less clearly than reason, teaches that men [*sic*] believe themselves free because they are conscious of their own actions, and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined, that the decisions of the mind are nothing but the appetites themselves, which therefore vary as the disposition of the body varies (EIII, P2, dem.).

The sense of agency intrinsic to Spinoza's system is radically different from what we might think of as our intuitive experience of agency. Our agency is not something that is deeply personal to us, nor is it something

we can have complete control over. In Spinoza there is not even a sense of strict 'subjectivity'. Insofar as we are a part of this causal nexus, we are continually determined as a particular self which acts, but also as a member of a collectivity of causes. Spinoza contends that our belief in our own freedom is because we can only be aware of the affects occurring on our own bodies. This picture is inadequate though, because our bodies are both affected and affective modes, which participate in a continual regeneration of the self. Since we are never given once and for all, we can never act in the same way as a Kantian or Cartesian subject would act—as a unified being standing *in relation to the infinite.* We are a part of the infinite as an objectively real substance, which represents an affective capacity of its modes in relation to each other, but not in relation to it considered as a thing in and of itself.

Conclusion

> *For since the principles of which it is making use transcend the limits of experience, they are no longer subject to any empirical test. The battle-field of these endless controversies is called metaphysics* (CPR, Aviii).

What is at stake is not completely a question of morality, but of desire; morality can only function if we are allowed free will. For Spinoza, "free will" is an illusion put forth by the mind. The ground of knowledge, or what we can know, is thus undermined by desire. The elevation of desire for Kant comes in the sublime moment in which desire determines our cognizable reality. Our freedom is established for Kant when we stand in relation to infinite substance and subsequently judge for ourselves how to represent it in cognizable categories. The tension here is between what philosophy has to offer us: an ability to be a self-determining subject, or an ability to know the ontological grounds which condition us. This leaves us with a further question as to whether or not this is a choice we are capable of making. For Spinoza, the problem arises when we consider ourselves a kingdom within a kingdom: "For they believe that man disturbs, rather than follows, the order of Nature, that he has absolute power over his actions, and that he is determined only by himself" (EIII, Preface). Furthermore, "men are

deceived in that they think themselves free [NS: i.e. they think that of their own free will, they can either do a thing or forebear doing it]" (EII, P35). We believe therefore that we can make a choice as to what our desires are and what we can do in relation to them.

Yet we are determined by our desires and as such we have a predisposition to assent to one opinion over another based on that desire (E, IV, P4). This predisposition has nothing to do with us being autonomous subjects but rather with the causes that have determined who we are. For Spinoza, our subsequent representation is already determined in the moment of the sublime, even if it is a representation of the freedom or superiority of our rational vocation. For Kant, the blatant morality of his move may or may not be a conscious desire to preserve freedom. Either way, he cannot ground knowledge of this moment via logical principles; he is left to defend the feeling as one predetermined by a moral law of the subject. In so doing, he must concede that the representation of the sublime moment establishes nothing that was not already pre-determined by the subject's moral code. This predisposition to morality may also be a means for Spinoza to come out stronger than Kant, as one cannot but assent to a moral law they believe to be true.

The dialogue between Kant and Spinoza cannot be overcome through the employment of reason. The elevated feeling of the sublime moment offers relief for this tension, although it offers no final solution to how we subsequently consider our existence. The impasse between Kant and Spinoza is over what we desire: an ability to *know*, or an ability to be *free*. We are searching for an account of the experience of existence that we cannot but assent to: nature loves to hide. The peculiar fate of reason offers no relief to its own power and longing, save an absolute humility in the face of the infinite.

NOTES

[1] For our purposes, freedom and free-will are synonyms. Freedom as such is conceived of through the subject who wills the "free" act.
[2] How Kant grounds knowledge will be discussed.

[3] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Henceforth referred to as CPR, followed by edition letter and paragraph number as denoted in the margins.
[4] This is in direct opposition to Spinoza who emphatically states that thought and realities are not distinct.
[5] Note that Kant proposes we can have no intelligible intuition devoid of time and space as representative tools. I think one would be hard pressed to argue this issue.
[6] If some conditioned thing is given, then the entire series of conditions leading up to it is also given. The entire causal chain leading to the one unconditioned cause is given, or able to be found.
[7] That is to say, simple tasks such as turning on a faucet does not entail a flow of water; there would be no necessity between things at all.
[8] There are a few varieties of this argument. For the purposes of this paper, we will refer to Spinoza's.
[9] This ties into the sublime and the grounding of the subject/knowledge etc.
[10] Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, in *A Spinoza Reader: The* Ethics *and Other Works*, trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 1–6; henceforth E book number, followed by proposition or definition number.
[11] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy,* in *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies*, trans. & ed. John Cottingham (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 25; henceforth M, followed by paragraph number connoted in margins.
[12] The switch to Kant's third critique marks the change alluded to in the beginning, where Kant moves from a negative program to a positive one. Kant is no longer destroying metaphysics, but rather attempting to construct a normative philosophical system.
[13] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of the Power of Judgment.* trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (New York N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Henceforth referred to as CPJ, followed by margin numbers.
[14] For Descartes, it is the moment whereby the *cogito* emerges from radical doubt.

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MATERNITY/THE MATERNAL ACKNOWLEDGE ALTERITY

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I. Introduction

In *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, Levinas invokes the metaphor of maternity to describe "the-one-for-the-other" or "signification". Although Levinas does not provide a clear and explicit explanation of the-one-for-the-other, the concept, as I've read it, expresses an important aspect of Levinas's ethics of responsibility. The-one-for-the-other articulates the priority of the Other over me. The priority is not defined by self-sacrifice; rather, priority conveys the uneven and asymmetrical relationship between the one, me, and the Other. Levinas writes, "signification is the-one-for-the-other which characterizes an identity that does not coincide with itself."[1] The self comes into being through an affective relationship with the Other; I become myself when I acknowledge that I am always already responsible for and responding to the Other. If signification is how I generate meaning, then for Levinas the basis of signification is the-one-for-the-other. Even though Levinas calls upon the metaphor of maternity to stand for an ethics of responsibility, he neither provides an account of maternity and maternal subjectivity, nor does he explain the metaphor. Levinas's disavowal of maternal subjectivity demands critical attention because in order to base an ethics of responsibility on the maternal figure her subjectivity must be acknowledged.

We have to ask: how does Levinas understand maternity and why does he need it to show us what sensibility, proximity, and passivity are? What does maternity articulate for Levinas? In *Otherwise than Being*, maternity remains an enigmatic figure, standing for the fleshly, embodied, and sensible attributes of the self. The maternal body is our first home; it is the first space in which we eat, secrete, and grow. From this home, we are born into a world of time, systems, structures, and limits. In life we are on a constant quest to find and return to our original

dwelling place because in this home we are cared for and safe from the world.

Does Levinas's image of maternity perpetuate the thought that maternity stands for what cannot be represented and therefore cannot be thought philosophically?[2] For Levinas, the maternal body is sensibility; it is a vulnerable, persecuted, wounded, accused body, and infinitely for the Other. In order to support Levinas's conception of maternity, which articulates the 'pre-ontological' self before its formation as a self, I will read him against and alongside object-relations theory, specifically the work of D.W. Winnicott and Margaret Mahler. I will extract from Mahler and Winnicott a phenomenological account of maternity and incorporate Winnicott's concept of primary maternal preoccupation, and Mahler's concept of symbiosis and theory of separation-individuation into a comprehensive ethics of maternity.

Although Levinas eschews a developmental picture of subjectivity and argues that subject formation is synchronic, without origin, and not related to infancy, I will argue that Levinas's conception of maternity and the maternal cannot adequately articulate the-one-for-the-other without a developmental account of the human subject. A developmental account of the human subject is necessary because it recognizes that a person is born and *becomes* a subject that responds to and is called on by the Other. A developmental account of the human subject also acknowledges that a person is born to and from a mother. Furthermore, a developmental account of subjectivity does not presuppose that the formation of the human subject has an origin and conclusion. Rather, a developmental picture of subject formation acknowledges that becoming a subject is a process. In order for Levinas's invocation of maternity to maintain ethical thrust, a consideration of the maternal relation as the mother-infant relationship is crucial. Winnicott and Mahler provide the developmental picture that Levinas requires because they consider how the infant emerges as a person through her relationship with her mother.[3] I will read Winnicott and Mahler against and alongside Levinas in order to extract the significance of sensibility and passivity in the emerging mother-infant relationship. My aim is to stage a rapprochement between Levinas and object-relations theory, highlighting what each gives to the other.

For Levinas, subjectivity is my exposure to the Other. I am myself because I am wounded and persecuted by you. I am responsible for you because I am a sensible subject affected by you, and in the pain of persecution I acknowledge your alterity. As mentioned above, my concern with Levinas's reliance on maternity as the figure for an ethics of responsibility is the extent to which Levinas's maternity repudiates maternal subjectivity.[4] In *The Gift of the Other: Levinas and the Politics of Reproduction*, Lisa Guenther argues that although Levinas does not directly address the mother as subject, the ambiguity of his concept of maternity permits an elaboration of maternal subjectivity in relation to his concept of subjectivity. I will look to Guenther in order to support my claim that Levinas's text leaves space for an account of maternal subjectivity because, for him, maternity is not the merger and total unity of mother and infant, but the proximity or lack of unity between mother and infant. The ethical significance of the maternal is situated in the mother's acceptance of her infant's alterity. I will consider Mahler's conception of separation-individuation from the mother's perspective in order to argue that the infant's process of separation-individuation is also the mother's struggle with and acknowledgement of her infant's alterity. Furthermore, the child's separation-individuation process and the mother's subjectivity depend on this acknowledgment, which precedes mutual recognition.

In *Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*, Jessica Benjamin's critique of Mahler's separation-individuation theory is that Mahler both overemphasizes the infant's separation from the mother and ignores maternal subjectivity.[5] In order to recover the mother's position as a distinct person in her relation to her infant, Benjamin argues that the mother-infant relationship is intersubjective and is based on a need for recognition that both the mother and infant require. In my final remarks, I will argue that my rehabilitated Levinasian conception of maternity follows Levinas's articulation of intersubjectivity and presents an alternative way to think through Mahler's separation-individuation theory. Levinasian intersubjectivity pivots on the asymmetrical relationship between myself and the Other. In relation to Benjamin's conception of intersubjectivity, Mahler does not discuss the mother-infant relationship as intersubjective; however, I will argue that traces of Levinansian intersubjectivity are within Mahler's

separation-individuation theory. Separation-individuation theory not only describes the infant's emergence as a separate self, it also draws attention to the mother's acknowledgment of her infant's alterity.

II. What is Maternity for Levinas?

In *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas departs from Husserl's language of intentionality because, for Levinas, intentionality circumvents the experience of being.[6] Obligation in the form of 'what ought to be' and 'what is to be done' is the predominant value Levinas subverts and questions. Even though intentionality seeks to describe first person experience, it is inadequate for Levinas because "the structure of intentionality still remains that of thought or comprehension."[7] For Levinas, the gustatory and olfactory sensations are not experienced through a consciousness of taste, indigestion, digestion, and smell, but are experienced through feelings of enjoyment or suffering. I enjoy eating a bowl of yogurt, which is not the same as my knowing that I am eating a bowl of yogurt. I eat the yogurt because I am hungry, but also because I know I like the taste of yogurt from previous experiences of eating it. I understand that I am hungry because I feel emptiness in my gut, as if my stomach is an apple infested with maggots, consuming my insides. This unpleasant feeling of hunger moves me to eat. I taste the yogurt and then I know I am eating it. Although I can enjoy eating regardless of whether or not I am hungry, my enjoyment of eating is magnified when I experience hunger. My human need for nourishment becomes stark when I am hungry and my status as a sentient being is exposed. Hunger reminds me that I need food to live and this basic need confirms that I am vulnerable, that I suffer when hungry. When I eat and taste, I am exposed to the Other; I ingest that which was not inside me before, and in ingestion, as well as before digestion, I take a risk by acknowledging my vulnerability or my lack of autonomy in addition to my need for nourishment. "To be torn from oneself despite oneself" is the sensation of hunger, the immediacy of hunger.[8] Hunger is the experience of being a hostage to oneself, to the body. Levinas writes, "only a subject that eats can be for-the-other, or can signify. Signification, the-one-for-the-other, has meaning only among beings of flesh and blood."[9] I eat to satisfy my hunger, to avoid hunger, to taste, to delight in ingestion. When I eat, I

turn to my flesh and blood. The lack in hunger constitutes the pleasure of eating. When I eat, I know what it feels like to be hungry, to have the bread torn out of my mouth. The experience of hunger and eating generates my responsiveness to the Other, to give the bread from my own mouth to the Other.

By invoking gustatory and olfactory sensations, Levinas elaborates upon the special difference between the immediacy of a lived experience and its representation. The language of intentionality and ontology avoids this difference and understands lived experience through its representation, its thematization, and its consciousness of lived experience. If the sensible is lost and buried in the depths of language, how can sensibility be uncovered and recovered from being understood in terms of consciousness?

If we leave the language of intentionality, we embrace diachrony, which is the interruption of the Other. The Other makes a demand on me, calls on me, and addresses me without my approval and acquiescence. I am called by the Other not because of something she has done to me, but precisely because she is in proximity to me and has done nothing. Proximity is my closeness to the Other, who is both close to me and beyond my grasp. I can reach for and approach the Other, but I can never be merged with her. I remain separate and myself, while bound to the Other. I am not responsible for the Other because of a contractual agreement that I construct with her. I can neither trace my responsibility for the Other to specific acts, nor can I delimit the parameters and expectations of my responsibility.[10] Responsibility is not predicated on a relation of exchange or debt; rather, its foundation is my passive susceptibility to the Other. Passivity is the exposure to the Other in proximity; it is the giving of oneself without taking or holding back. Levinas writes, exposure as passivity is the "non-initiative of the sensibility."[11] My vulnerability in the face of the Other is not constituted by a past, history, or narrative I have with her. As the "one-for-the-other," I neither have refuge nor the certainty of protection; I do not and cannot know that she will be responsible for me. I am responsible for the Other because I am a sensible, sentient being: "I am bound to others before being tied to my body."[12] My needs manifest from the fact that I am a sensible subject of flesh and blood. As a body, I need "nourishment,

clothing, [and] lodging."[13] These needs tie me to the Other, for whom I am responsible because the fulfillment of my needs depends on the presence of an Other. Levinas's substitution, or ethics of responsibility, can be conceptualized by understanding maternity as giving, receptive, and vulnerable. The maternal body emerges as a metaphor to describe subjective experience as the-one-for-the-other:

> The-one-for-the-other has the form of sensibility or vulnerability, pure passivity or susceptibility, passive to the point of becoming an inspiration, that is, alterity in the same, the trope of the body animated by the soul, psyche in the form of a hand that gives even the bread taken from its own mouth. Here the psyche is the maternal body.[14]

What does Levinas mean when he says the-one-for-the-other is "passive to the point of becoming an inspiration?" Inspiration is spontaneous, interrupts time, and is without a cause. A person may desire inspiration or search for inspiration; however, she cannot will it. The diachronic quality of inspiration maintains its passivity. The passivity of inspiration is not opposed to activity. Lisa Guenther writes, "the passivity of the self is…a *questioning* of activity by passivity 'to the point of inspiration.'"[15] How does the maternal body articulate the connection between the-one-for-the-other and the passivity of inspiration?

The maternal body is the pregnant body of the woman, the gestating baby inside and under the skin of the mother, and the care and nurturing given to the infant after birth. The mother's belly passively creates room for the gestating infant. The gestating infant announces itself to the mother and the external world by adding weight and size to the mother's body. The mother holds and bears the infant in her flesh and blood. The baby makes demands on the mother's body that the mother cannot resist, such as the demand for nourishment. The infant feeds off and is fed from the mother's body. The maternal body is the "hand that gives even the bread taken from its own mouth." The mother feeds the baby despite herself and from her own mouth.[16] Any food that the mother ingests is simultaneously for herself and for the baby. The baby takes from the mother what she needs to survive. The gestating infant is the questioning of activity by passivity; the baby actively grows inside the

mother, developing from an embryo to a person with a face. The mother is susceptible to the baby flourishing inside her; she passively receives and gives to the baby. The activity of gestation depends on the passivity of the maternal body. This is not to say that the maternal body, specifically the womb, is merely a receptacle for the fetus; rather, the womb is essential for the infant's development and survival.

Why does Levinas stress the passivity of the maternal body? And what is the ethical significance of the tension between passivity and activity? A pregnant woman can actively prepare for the growing fetus by regulating her diet, abstaining from smoking or substance use, and finding an obstetrician or midwife. However, regardless of how much or how little she prepares for her infant, her body will receive and make space for the baby without her control and approval. The gestating infant depends on the maternal body for its life regardless of whether or not the mother takes certain steps to actively prepare for the infant. For Levinas, the ethical dynamic in maternity and maternal relations is that of two distinct unacquainted entities, mother and infant, responding to one another as strangers who are tied and obligated without consciously choosing to be so. The "pure passivity" of the maternal body is not opposed to activity because for Levinas only a being that acts can be *for* the Other. Levinas's notion of maternal passivity acknowledges that a relation and attachment between the mother and her gestating infant is involuntarily formed.

The maternal body also illustrates the concept of proximity. The gestating baby inside the maternal body remains an Other, or "alterity in the same." The baby, wrapped in the mother's skin and protected by her flesh and organs, is also separate and at a distance from the mother. The baby is a stranger entering the home, or womb, who makes demands. She is an Other that the mother has never met, seen, or heard. The mother feels the baby inside her, which is a feeling both novel and bewildering. Even as the mother expects her baby and prepares for its birth, the baby catches her off guard "to the point of becoming an inspiration." How does the mother acknowledge and respond to the alterity of her baby? How does the mother's responsibility for the baby unfold? What does maternal responsibility mean for ethics? And how

does the baby, emerging from the maternal body, become a subject that substitutes for the Other?

III. Object-Relations Theory Understands Maternity and the Maternal

In order to explain the connection between maternity and responsibility, on the one hand, and strengthen Levinas's account of maternity as sensibility and passivity, on the other, I will turn to object-relations theory, specifically the work of D.W. Winnicott and Margaret Mahler. I will read Winnicott and Mahler's theories of the pre-verbal mother-infant relationship against and alongside Levinas's conception of maternity. Winnicott names the mother's state of "heightened sensitivity" during pregnancy and continuing several weeks after the birth of the baby, primary maternal preoccupation.[17] The mother is in a "fugue" or "dissociative state."[18] Her individuality, identity, and sense of self are substituted for the infant. During pregnancy, the mother experiences psychic transformation and reorganization. Not only does she make room for the baby in her body, but she must also incorporate the baby into her sense of self. Her defenses loosen and her needs, once her own, become the baby's needs. The time of pregnancy is one of both heightened narcissism and disorientation. The mother enjoys preparing for her baby, giving her self to the baby. However, she may also experience a loss of control of her body; the boundaries of her body are unsettled and disrupted by the gestating baby. According to Winnicott, the infant's constitution and development depends on the mother's primary maternal preoccupation. In order to reach this state the mother must actively relinquish herself to passivity. Her entire self becomes for the baby, without the expectation of reciprocity. Winnicott writes, "[the mother] feel[s] herself into her infant's place, and so meet[s] the infant's needs."[19] The infant alters its mother's psychological state, commanding her to respond from a position of helplessness and dependency. The mother is called to respond to her infant without the promise of exchange and mutuality. Here, Levinas would agree with Winnicott, because, for Levinas, the ethical relevance of maternity is that the maternal body must answer to and acknowledge a creature before a face-to-face encounter. Mahler's theory of separation-individuation and concepts of

normal autism and symbiosis—which build on Winnicott's notion of primary maternal preoccupation—also reflect on the role of sensibility and passivity in the asymmetrical relationship between mother and infant.

Mahler's account of the mother-infant relationship is based on psychoanalytically informed observations of mothers and infants. Her primary concern is the intrapsychic process of the infant's emergence as a separate, individuated self and the extent to which the infant's relationship with the mother fosters this process. According to Mahler a baby is physically born and psychologically born. The emergence of separateness is a developmental achievement, signifying the psychological birth of the infant. Separation-individuation describes the infant's process of gaining an awareness of separateness, differentiating between self and other, forming object relationships, and exploring the external world. Separation-individuation consists of four sub-phases: differentiation, practicing, rapprochement, and object constancy. Although each sub-phase is characteristically distinguished, each one overlaps, follows, and builds on its preceding sub-phase. Furthermore, separation-individuation is not a circumscribed event, but a process that "reverberates throughout the life cycle" and "can always become reactivated."[20]

According to Mahler, the newborn baby exists in a "twilight state," drifting in and out of sleep. Originally, Mahler called the infant's state following birth, "normal autism": "the infant seems to be in a state of primitive hallucinatory disorientation in which need satisfaction seems to belong to his own 'unconditional,' omnipotent, *autistic* orbit."[21] In other words, the infant continues to live its intrauterine life in the external world.[22] *In utero*, the infant exists in a timeless state; in the womb there is an absence of delay between the infant's need and its fulfillment. This intrauterine existence continues after birth and the mother attends to her infant through reaching the state of primary maternal preoccupation. The mother's responsiveness without reciprocity gently encourages the infant's adjustment to extrauterine life. As the infant adapts to extrauterine life, the mother recovers from her state of primary maternal preoccupation.

At this stage, the mother-infant pair develops a symbiotic relationship, a state of dual unity. The infant becomes aware of the external world; she responds and reacts to external stimuli, but she neither knows nor understands where it comes from. The boundary of her body and the boundary between self and other remain unknown. She is sensitive to the difference between internal and external stimuli; however, she cannot cognitively perceive this difference. During symbiosis the infant achieves a connection with her mother; the link between mother and infant paves the way for the development of a relationship constituted by reciprocity, mutuality, and attunement. The mother-baby pair establishes their bond through "mutual cueing," "smiling," and "mirroring."[23] The message behind the smile is, 'I see you, over there, and I feel that you see me. I feel close to you.' In the symbiotic phase the infant also discovers and copes with delay, which both fosters a dialogic relationship between mother and infant and initiates a feeling of loss for the infant. As the infant "hatches" from the delusional stage of dual unity with the mother, she mourns the loss of the symbiotic state of oneness between herself and her mother.[24]

Through the hatching process the infant starts to maintain a state of alertness and wakefulness. Hatching initiates the infant's exploration of the external world. When the infant begins to touch she acknowledges that what she feels with her hand is not her own, and this action marks the infant's transition from symbiosis to differentiation. At this phase the baby (7-8 months) explores and understands "what *is* mother": her smell, taste, voice, and body. And by understanding what the mother is the baby is able to check back on her, to find her, to locate her, and be with her.[25] The practicing sub-phase (8-18 months) is characterized by the growing toddler's departure from the mother and exploration of the external world, which culminates in the toddler's "free, upright locomotion."[26] At the height of the practicing period and beginning of rapprochement (19-26 months) the toddler becomes increasingly aware that she is on her own, both separate and alone. As the toddler becomes more independent she concomitantly becomes cognizant of her helplessness. She begins to understand that it will no longer be possible to command attendance to her needs merely from an internal feeling. The feeling will require communication and the call for assistance will require

representation in the external world, through gestures and eventually through language.

The fear of losing the mother's love accompanies the toddler's increased sense of independence. This fear can result in the toddler's preoccupation with her mother, and vigilant attempts to ensure that she and her mother share all experiences together. The toddler's realization that she and her mother are no longer a dual unit, symbiotically related and attached, pushes the toddler to "give up the delusion of [her] own grandeur," which leads to conflicts with her mother. This is what Mahler calls the "rapprochement crisis."[27] The challenge of the rapprochement crisis is "to find the optimal distance from mother."[28] Some of the underlying conflicts include: how to be near, yet separate from mother; how to leave mother, yet keep her in mind; and how to self-regulate in order to ease the fear of losing her mother's love. The toddler's ability to hold on to the image of the 'good mother' and feel secure during separations from her marks the transition from rapprochement to object constancy. Object constancy describes the period when the senior toddler (26-28 months) achieves individuality. The toddler's ability to verbally express her needs and desires bolsters her emergence as a separate self. And the toddler's capacity to maintain a positive inner image of the mother informs her adaptive style and methods of coping with individual difficulties.[29]

IV. Maternity Makes Room for Levinas and Psychoanalysis

Winnicott and Mahler's discrete psychoanalytic description of the mother-infant relationship and the pre-verbal period of development supports Levinas's understanding of maternity as corporeal obligation to the Other. The infant's gestation in the womb, the mother's contractions during birth, and the infant's process of psychological birth require the mother to reach a state of passivity in which she is exiled from herself and completely for her infant. My concern is to what extent Levinas's formulation of maternity disavows the mother's subjectivity. Guenther argues that although Levinas does not develop a theory of maternal subjectivity, it is possible to elaborate an account of maternal subjectivity from Levinas's concept of subjectivity. The mother's entanglement with her infant, which manifests as a substitution for the infant, reinforces her

subjectivity because, for Levinas, being subjugated by the Other constitutes the subject. The infant interrupts and alters the mother's self-relation without supplanting her subjectivity. Rather, the mother's transformation by and for the infant affirms that she is a living, embodied, and sensible subject different from, yet exposed to the Other.

Ostensibly, Levinas's conception of subjectivity is incompatible with psychoanalysis because he deliberately avoids a developmental account of subjectivity in order to describe the formation of the self emerging from sensible experience, which refers to an "irrecuperable pre-ontological past, that of maternity."[30] Winnicott and especially Mahler describe the developmental aspect of subject formation; the infant's birth is the beginning of her lifelong process of becoming a subject. As described above, both Winnicott and Mahler attend to the centrality of sensibility and passivity in the mother-infant relationship. Both mother and infant experience the separation-individuation process. The infant's dependence on and loss of the mother, and the mother's acknowledgement of the infant's separateness are both markers of alterity.

For Levinas, the formation of the self is not concomitant with my ability to represent and describe my self-development. Furthermore, before I am cognizant of the Other, I am impinged by the Other and I have no choice in the Other's impression on me. I become a subject through my ineluctable subjugation by the Other. Why is this "irrecuperable pre-ontological past" maternity itself and how does Winnicott's conception of primary maternal preoccupation deepen Levinas's positioning of an ethics of responsibility in maternity? For Levinas, the pivot of responsibility is the defense of subjectivity as "alterity in the same." Maternity articulates the disruptive and at once persecutory quality of the Other. Before the infant appears to the mother she is already responsible for it because she bears the infant in her skin. The gestating infant supplants the mother's skin and invades her body, making space for itself in a body that has no room for it. As Winnicott explains, during gestation the mother must begin to respond and prepare for the infant, despite its impingement on her. The dissociative, ill, and vulnerable state that the mother must reach in order to provide a good enough holding environment for the infant is "the restlessness of someone

persecuted—Where to be? How to be?"[31] Sensibility is the mother's experience of being uprooted from her self, and called on to respond and prepare for her infant, who tears at her skin and makes the maternal body its dwelling place without announcement.

Guenther describes the mother's experience of birth as the "anarchy of birth."[32] The mother awaits her baby and prepares for her, but she does not know who or what the baby will be, even though the baby is of her flesh. The mother's responsibility for the gestating infant precedes her ability to make contact with her infant through looking, touching, and smelling. She feels the infant in her skin, and through an unwilling, non-reciprocal giving—"a pure undergoing" and "non-act"—she acknowledges the infant's alterity. In pregnancy the mother confronts the anarchy of birth; the baby to be born arrives as an Other, with no past and an unexpected future for which the mother is infinitely responsible. For the mother, the gestating infant is a helpless stranger, who is simultaneously constituted by her, yet unknown to her. The body of the pregnant woman transforms from being exclusively for itself to being for another. The maternal body is without possession; the womb is a home, but it is not the mother's home. The anarchy of birth also signifies the mother's own "irrecuperable pre-ontological past." She can neither recall her own birth, nor can she remember when she became cognizant of the object world. Furthermore, she cannot know her infant's experience of gestation and birth. She can feel herself into the infant's place, which is demanded of her without her consent because of her infinite responsibility for her infant, who is an Other.

For the infant, the anarchy of her existence is the "immemorial time of gestation."[33] The gestating infant has no recoverable past; she emerges from the "hither side."[34] In gestation, the infant is the mother's "wounded entrails"; she is held by and born from the mother's body. The child will never have the capacity to reconstruct her birth; however, she will be constituted by the "immemorial time of gestation."[35] The infant emerges from the mother's suffering body; however, she does not represent the maternal body because her alterity is affirmed by the fact that she arrives in the world as a stranger to her mother. Before the infant appears to the mother, the mother is already responsible for her. The origin of the-one-for-the-other, or responsibility, is irrecuperable,

anarchic, and arrives without an antecedent. It arrives from a person's experience of being persecuted and obsessed by the Other:

> In maternity what signifies is a responsibility for others, to the point of substitution for others and suffering both from the effect of persecution and from the persecuting itself in which the persecutor sinks. Maternity, which is bearing par excellence, bears even responsibility for the persecuting by the persecutor.[36]

Why does Levinas conceptualize ethical responsibility in terms of persecution? Does Levinas's understanding of maternity as "bearing *par excellence*" risk relegating the maternal body to a body that sacrifices itself for the Other? Does Levinas forget or remember the mother? Levinas writes that the *for* in the-one-for-the-other is "total gratuity," a giving without exception.[37] Persecution is the dramatization of the *for* and maternity is the figure that approaches the meaning of persecution. In maternity the infant wounds the mother from inside her flesh. This wounding, or "writhing in the tight dimensions of pain," signifies the mother's vulnerability and exposure to the infant, who affects the mother and holds her as a hostage "to the point of substitution."[38] The mother suffers from the pain of bearing the infant as well as for the infant, who arrives in the world as a helpless, dependent creature, yet one who already enjoys and suffers. Maternal responsibility is the mother's substitution of herself for her persecutor. The mother suffers from the proximity between herself and the infant under her skin. Proximity underlines the separateness and division between the mother and her gestating infant. The mother offers her body as a home for the infant; however, her hospitable gesture causes her both physical pain as well as the pain of being alienated from her own womb. The mother is responsible for this double pain and the responsibility arises in the form of substitution; the mother gives to the infant, her persecutor, despite the fact that the infant hurts, unsettles, and disrupts the mother's relation to her self. Through this impossible bearing, or the anarchy of persecution, the mother becomes for the Other, confronting the Other's alterity before a face-to-face encounter. Maternal bearing expresses the experience of being bombarded and affected by the Other to the point of

substituting for the Other. However, is the acknowledgment of the Other's alterity inclusive in Levinas's conception of the maternal?

V. Conclusion: A Trace of Levinasian Intersubjectivity in Mahler

For Levinas, the possibility of ethics resides in the acknowledgement of the Other's alterity. By way of conclusion, I will consider Mahler's theory of separation-individuation alongside Levinasian intersubjectivity. If we consider separation-individuation as not only the process from which the infant emerges as a separate self, but also as the mother's struggle with and acknowledgment of the infant's alterity, then maternal subjectivity does not completely disappear from Mahler's theory. Jessica Benjamin argues that Mahler's intrapsychic theory of separation-individuation overvalues separateness, eschews an intersubjective account of development, and understates the mother's subjectivity. For Benjamin, intersubjectivity is a need for recognition. This conception of intersubjectivity conflicts with Levinas's understanding of intersubjecitivity because, for him, when intersubjectivity relies on a need for recognition, the other's alterity is lost. For Levinas, the intersubjective aspect of maternity is that the mother gives to the infant without expecting the relationship to be reciprocal. The relation or attachment between mother and infant already exists without a need for mutual recognition because mother and infant are in a relation of proximity and are never a total unity, even in gestation. Furthermore, the mother cannot acknowledge her infant's alterity without appreciating her own subjectivity. And the infant does not need to recognize the mother as a subject in order for her subjectivity to be affirmed.

Although Mahler emphasizes the child's movement through separation-individuation, I would like to suggest that maternal vulnerability and sensibility foster this process. As the infant transitions from the phase of symbiosis to the process of separation-individuation, the mother must follow and answer to the infant. Throughout this process the mother's position is one of "Here I am": I am for you as you begin to explore the external world, and as you leave and return to me; I am responsible for you without expecting you to answer to me; I am for you even though you do not recognize me.[39] Levinas writes, "the knot of

subjectivity consists in going to the other without concerning oneself with his [*sic*] movement toward me…I have always taken one step more toward him [*sic*]—which is possible only if this step is responsibility."[40] Here, Levinas emphasizes that the relation to the Other is not constituted by recognition, but is rather a relation of asymmetrical responsibility. In separation-individuation the mother's relation to her developing infant is not based on a need for recognition but on the mother's desire for contact and connectivity with her infant. Maternal passivity is not a mother's sacrifice of herself for her infant, but rather a manifestation of the mother's compassion for and acknowledgement of her infant's otherness despite the fact that the infant remains wholly dependent on her.

Symbiosis is an articulation of the deep structure of proximity. As discussed above, Mahler describes symbiosis as the dual unity between mother and infant. I would like, however, to suggest that another dimension of symbiosis is the lack of oneness between mother and infant. The mother's heightened sensitivity and responsiveness illustrates her acknowledgement of her infant's alterity; she cannot be for her infant without accepting that her infant is an Other. The connection that is established in symbiosis depends on proximity; mother and infant must make contact, touch, and smile at one another in order to establish a link. The link does not represent the mother's suppression of herself in the Other, rather the link underscores the impossibility of a fusion between mother and infant. The proximity between mother and infant is further exaggerated in the separation-individuation process. The child's emergence of separateness becomes meaningful because it is signified to an Other—the mother. The infant's separation-individuation process becomes an intersubjective experience for the mother because in her encounter with her infant she discovers her own particularity; the infant's gaze affirms that mother and infant are differentiated, yet in proximity with one another.

NOTES

[1] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 70. Following Levinas scholars, when I say the Other throughout this paper, I am referring to the human other, *autrui*.

[2] The metaphorical use of maternity is a common trope in philosophy. Feminist philosophers such as Sarah LaChance Adams and Caroline Lundquist argue that the metaphorical use of maternity in philosophy denigrates women's experience of pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. They claim that Levinas is implicated in this tradition and they reduce Levinas's conception of maternity to "the self-sacrificing mother". See: Sarah La Chance Adams & Caroline Lundquist, eds., *Coming to Life: Philosophies of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 5. This is an uncritical and closed reading of Levinas's articulation of maternity. I argue that the absence of a phenomenological and developmental account of maternity in Levinas warrants feminist philosophical intervention. I propose reading against and alongside Levinas in order to not only defend the philosophical significance of maternity, but also to develop a robust account of maternal ethics.

[3] Although I write about the mother and refer to the mother-infant relationship, I mean the significant adult(s) in the infant's life. Since I am exploring the phenomenology of maternity and pregnancy, the use of mother and female pronouns is appropriate.

[4] If, in *Otherwise than Being*, maternity and the maternal are the figures for an ethics of responsibility, then, in Levinas's earlier work—*Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority*—the maternal lurks in the background and paternity, along with filiality as exclusively the father/son relation, articulates the ethical experience of radical alterity. See: Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijihoff, 1961). When the son is born, the father is displaced from himself by a stranger that he is responsible for. The son also renews the father's relation to the world because the birth of the son marks a beginning, a newness, and glimpse of the future. The father is memorialized in the son. For Levinas, paternal fecundity requires the feminine Other, "voluptuousity," to produce the child—the son (*TI* 265-269). The feminine beloved, in all its voluptuousity, attracts and pulls the lover towards her in order to fuse into a "dual egoism" (*TI* 266). The birth of the son interrupts this private unity, goes beyond it, and constitutes paternal fecundity. In *Totality and Infinity*, the feminine Other is banished from ethics. The ethical

dimension of erotic life depends on fecundity: the father giving birth to a son. The maternal appears to be disavowed from Levinas's articulation of fecundity. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to consider the relationship between the feminine Other in *Totality and Infinity*, and maternity and the maternal in *Otherwise than Being*, I suggest that the ethical significance of maternity in *Otherwise than Being* presents an answer to the removal of the maternal from ethics in *Totality and Infinity*.

[5] See: Jessica Benjamin, *Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Random House, 1988).

[6] For Levinas, Husserl's intentional consciousness fails to adequately express subjective life. For Husserl, the 'I' is constituted by its relation to the object-world. For Levinas the subject is a sentient being; subject formation is pre-conscious and cannot be reduced to a theoretical understanding of subjectivity. See: Simon Critchley, *Ethics-Politics-Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas, & Contemporary French Thought* (New York: Verso, 2009), 63.

[7] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence,* 66.

[8] Ibid., 74.

[9] Ibid., 74.

[10] Judith Butler, *Giving and Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 85-88.

[11] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, 75.

[12] Ibid., 76.

[13] Ibid., 77.

[14] Ibid., 67.

[15] Lisa Guenther, *The Gift of the Other: Levinas and the Politics of Reproduction* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 104.

[16] Guenther, *Gift of the Other*, 105

[17] D.W. Winnicott, "Primary Maternal Preoccupation," in *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis.* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975) (Original work published in 1956), 300.

[18] Ibid., 301.

[19] Ibid., 304.

[20] Margaret S. Mahler, "On Human Symbiosis and the Vicissitudes of Individuation," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 15 (1967): 333.

[21] Margaret S. Mahler, Fred Pine, Anni Bergman, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 42.

[22] Mahler reconsidered her earlier formulation of the autistic phase in light of contemporary infant research, which showed that infants are differentiated from birth and respond to external stimuli. The work of Daniel Stern radically challenged Mahler's conception of the autistic and symbiotic phases of development. See: Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology* (New York: Perseus Books, 1985); also Daniel Stern, "The Early Development of Schema of Self, of Other, and of Various Experiences of 'Self with Other'", in *Reflections on Self Psychology*, eds. J. Lichtenberg and S. Kaplan (Hillsdale, N.J.: The Analytic Press, 1983), 49-84. Stern argued that the neonate is not part of an undifferentiated unity. However, the autistic phase is relevant in the consideration of the mother's experience in the first few months following the infant's birth. Anni Bergman contributed to this view, arguing that although the neonate is differentiated from its mother, the mother may experience her relationship to her infant in terms of unity and oneness. See: Anni Bergman, *Ours, yours, Mine: Mutuality and the Emergence of the Separate Self* (New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1999).
[23] Mahler, et al., *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant*, 48-53.
[24] Ibid., 9.
[25] Ibid., 52-58.
[26] Ibid., 65.
[27] Ibid., 72-78.
[28] Ibid., 101-102.
[29] Ibid., 116-120.
[30] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 78.
[31] Ibid., 75.
[32] Guenther, *Gift of the Other*, 100-102.
[33] Ibid., 101.
[34] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 75.
[35] Ibid, 88.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 96.
[38] Ibid., 96.
[39] Ibid., 126.
[40] Ibid., 84.

POWER, PEDAGOGY, AND PHILOSOPHY'S "WOMAN PROBLEM"

Symposium Proceedings
May 8, 9, 10

The New School for Social Research
New York City

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, May 8

6:00-8:00 PM
PSWIP Alumni Speaker Keynote

Fanny Söderbäck (Siena College)
"Surrogacy Then and Now: Competing Feminist Narratives"
Respondents: Anna Katsman and Eric MacPhail

Reception to follow

Friday, May 9

10:00 AM-12:00 PM
State of the Union

Linda Martín Alcoff (CUNY Graduate Center)
"What is Wrong with Philosophy"
Sally Scholz (Villanova)
Kathryn Gines (Penn State)
"Black Women Philosophers and the Challenge of Intersectionality"
Moderator: Juniper Alcorn

12:15-2:15 PM
Fight or Flight

Emanuela Bianchi (NYU)
"Neither Fighting nor Fleeing but Flourishing"
Jamieson Webster (Eugene Lang)
Lindsay Beyerstein (Investigative Journalist)
Moderator: Daniella Polyak

2:15-3:15 PM Lunch Break

3:15-5:15 PM
Women's Exclusion from the Canon

Jessica Gordon-Roth (Lehman College, CUNY)
"Catharine Trotter Cockburn's Defense of Locke"
Nancy Kendrick (Wheaton)
"Astell's Authority and her Theory of Friendship"
Gina Luria Walker (New School)
"Why Does It Matter?"
Moderator: Amie Zimmer

5:15-7:15 PM
Power and Feminism

Chiara Bottici (New School)
"Rethinking the Biopolitical Turn: From the Thanatopolitical to the Geneapolitical Paradigm"
Johanna Oksala (New School, Helsinki)
"Productive Power and the Feminist Subject"
Respondent: Jenna Goodman

Reception to follow

Saturday, May 10

9:00 AM-12:45 PM
NYSWIP WORKSHOPS

I. Publish and/or Perish

Serene Khader (SUNY Stony Brook)
Barbara Montero (CUNY Graduate Center, College of Staten Island)
Jennifer Uleman (SUNY Purchase College)

II. Surviving and Thriving

Linda Martín Alcoff (CUNY Graduate Center)
Amy Baehr (Hofstra University)

Maria Brincker (UMass Boston)
Megan Craig (SUNY Stony Brook)

12:45-2:00 PM Lunch Break

2:00-5:45 PM
NEW FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS

2:00-3:45 PM
Re-Reading Women Philosophers

Desirae Embree (Texas A&M University)
"A Theory of One's Own: Simone de Beauvoir and a Certain Kind of Writing"
Salla Peltonen (Åbo Akademi University Finland, Duke) and
Sara Nyman (Åbo Akademi)
"Reading Valerie Solanas"
Moderator: Sarah Clairmont

4:00-5:45 PM
Pedagogical Issues

Lauren Freeman (Louisville)
"Creating Safer Spaces: Strategies for Confronting the Negative Effect of Implicit & Explicit Bias & Stereotype Threat on Women in Philosophy Classrooms"
Hilkje Haenel (Humboldt Berlin)
"The Woman Problem in Philosophy: Ameliorative Projects as Political Projects"
Moderator: Theodra Bane

6:00-8:00 PM
Keynote

Sara Heinämaa (Helsinki)
Moderator: Johanna Oksala

Reception to follow

PANEL ABSTRACTS

Thursday May 8th

6:00-8:00 PM
PSWIP Alumni Speaker Keynote

Fanny Söderbäck (Siena College)
"Surrogacy Then and Now: Competing Feminist Narratives"
Abstract: This paper takes issue with the feminist-liberal view that surrogacy is a means of liberation for women, suggesting that the recent exploitation of women in India through transnational surrogacy forces feminists to rethink women's liberation so as to include a critical analysis of class and race. Through a critical reading of Christine Sistare's essay "Reproductive Freedom and Women's Freedom: Surrogacy and Autonomy," I refute three of her central claims, namely that surrogacy is a path to economic independence for women; that anti-surrogacy discourse runs the risk of paternalizing and victimizing women; and that women should have the right to hire surrogates to protect their own reproductive rights.

Friday May 9th

10:00 AM-12:00 PM
State of the Union

Linda Martín Alcoff (CUNY Graduate Center)
"What is Wrong with Philosophy"
Abstract: This paper will give a snapshot of efforts around inclusiveness and diversity in the discipline, and a diagnosis of existing obstacles, both organizational and philosophical. The appalling state of philosophy is not an accident, but overdetermined. I will also argue that form and content cannot be separated—i.e. the topics of philosophical focus (content) are connected to the form our discipline manifests.

Sally Scholz (Villanova)
Abstract: The Mission Statement of the American Philosophical Association specifies that, as a professional organization, the APA "works to foster greater understanding and appreciation of the value of philosophical inquiry." In this paper, I offer a glimpse into the history of the APA Board of Directors focusing on demographics. Given the unique structure of the APA, this look into our past as a professional organization offers some insight into where we are now and what sort of projects the Board and its constituents ought to undertake in the future. I argue that in order to "foster greater understanding and appreciation of the value of philosophical inquiry," the APA must embrace a reflexive praxis. I offer some suggestions for incorporating such engaged insights into the APA Board of Directors' agendas.

Kathryn Gines (Penn State)
"Black Women Philosophers and the Challenge of Intersectionality"
Abstract: I offer some background on the founding of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers and the impact that it has had on the discipline of philosophy. I will also be exploring the intellectual and existential challenges of being a Black women philosopher—including theorizing and existing from that subjective position.

12:15-2:15 PM
Fight or Flight

Emanuela Bianchi (NYU)
"Neither Fighting nor Fleeing but Flourishing"
Abstract: In the wake of the several sexual harassment scandals and "climate for women" issues that have recently come to light in the discipline, it may be untimely to speak of the possibility of thriving as a woman in philosophy. Nonetheless, in this talk I would like to raise just this possibility. Via some rather unscientific and anecdotal meandering, raising the question of philosophy's place in the humanities writ large, I want to suggest that, even in the absence of any expectation (let alone guarantee) of professional stability, there are practices and possibilities of world-making available to women entering (continental) philosophy.

These possibilities might mitigate against the toxic combination of the scarcity economy, the analytic hegemony, and the conservatism and sexism that plague our discipline.

Jamieson Webster (Eugene Lang)

Lindsay Beyerstein (Investigative Journalist)

3:15-5:15 PM
Women's Exclusion from the Canon

Jessica Gordon-Roth (Lehman College, CUNY)
"Catharine Trotter Cockburn's Defense of Locke"
Abstract: Very few write on the philosophical contributions of Catharine Trotter Cockburn (1679–1749), and those who do tend to focus on her contributions to moral philosophy. In this paper I will focus on Trotter's contributions to the metaphysical debates of her time.[1] In particular, I will focus on Trotter's defense of John Locke's metaphysical commitments against his critics. Specifically, I will focus on two (of the many) objections to which Trotter responds on Locke's behalf in *The Defence of Mr. Locke's Essay on Human Understanding* (1702). These are: 1) the objection that Locke has not proved the soul immortal[2]; and 2) the objection that Locke's view leads to the absurd consequence that our souls are in constant flux. I will argue that Trotter offers a compelling response to both of these charges. This is not only because of what Trotter explicitly claims in the *Defence*, but also because the *Defence* invites and encourages the reader to return to Locke's text. I will also argue that once we move past the two objections I just mentioned, and onto the related topic of personal identity, we can see the seed of a now-popular reading of Locke. This is significant because this interpretation is usually traced only as far back as Edmund Law, who published his defense of Locke 67 years after Trotter penned hers. In this short paper I will not be

[1] Though of course there is a close link between these debates, theology and moral philosophy.
[2] What I plan to say about this is very friendly to what Jacqueline Broad (2002) suggests.

able to offer a full explication or evaluation of Trotter's treatment of Locke's metaphysical commitments. I will, however, be able to show that this aspect of Trotter's work warrants careful consideration and further study.

Nancy Kendrick (Wheaton)
"Astell's Authority and her Theory of Friendship"
Abstract: Women are not often viewed as philosophical authorities. This is as much the case for contemporary philosophers as it is for women writers in the history of philosophy. Although there is a growing body of literature on early modern women thinkers, more work needs to be done to solidify their position as authorities whose arguments evidence a traceable philosophical progression and who are system builders. Focusing on the work of Mary Astell, I identify four ways that her philosophical authority continues to be neglected: she is often limited to a secondary role as a critic of male philosophers; her philosophical claims are sometimes misread as (imagined) events in her personal history; the advice-giving and instructive nature of her writings is over-emphasized; little attention is paid to the influence of her views on her male contemporaries. I confront the first three authority-neglecting approaches to Astell by briefly tracing the development of her theory of friendship from her early correspondence with John Norris (1693-4) to her magnum opus, *The Christian Religion, as Professed by a Daughter of the Church of England* (1705). To counteract the last issue, I note the likely influence of her work on several aspects of George Berkeley's philosophy.

Gina Luria Walker (New School)
"Why Does It Matter?"
Abstract: Building on the talks by Nancy Kendrick and Jessica Gordon-Roth, I will consider the subject of "forgotten" female thinkers, attested to in surviving records, who have not been included in traditional accounts of the past. I will describe the engine of feminist historical recovery over the past forty years, and how scholars have "found"—that is, discovered, reclaimed, and restored texts by—some of these figures. Focusing on a few newly remembered thinkers, I will query why this information matters. For example, does knowledge of the existence of

philosophical women modify our sense of the female past? Does it call into question the coherence of traditional histories? Do shards of evidence from Ancient sources encourage us to imagine a continuum of Women's Intellectual History? Can we connect these figures to Early Modern female philosophers, like Cockburn and Astell? Do we "add women into" the canonical narrative of Philosophy, or can we conceive of a more generous dynamic? Why is establishing the epistemological authority of female thinkers so difficult? Why is it so important?

5:15-7:15 PM
Power and Feminism

Chiara Bottici (New School)
"Rethinking the Biopolitical Turn: From The Thanatopolitical to the Geneapolitical Paradigm"
Abstract: It is common to say that philosophy is a preparation for death. Feminists have long emphasized that philosophers tend to look at human beings as beings-towards-death, that is, as "mortals." With a striking ontological inversion, death has been consistently been privileged over birth as the defining moment of our existential condition.

This paper argues that both Foucault's and Agamben's biopolitical models are still entrenched in this tradition and thus provide a limited account of biopolitics, one that is mainly thanatopolitical. However, birth has both an ontological and a political priority in death: ontological, because we can die only because we have been born, and political, because, as Arendt argued, natality is the political moment par excellence—we die alone, but we are always born in company of somebody else. If we look at human beings as primarily beings-after-birth, a completely different perspective emerges, one that I would like to call geneapolitics (from the Greek *genea*, or birth). By putting biopolitical thinkers in close conversation with feminism, this paper tries to elaborate a different model of biopolitics, one that is both affirmative and feminist.

Johanna Oksala (New School, Helsinki)
"Productive Power and the Feminist Subject"
Abstract: The paper discusses the disciplinary production of the feminine subject and analyzes the shift that has taken place in the rationality

underpinning our current techniques of gender. Foucault's radical intervention in feminist theory has been the crucial claim that any analysis of gendered subjects must recognize how power relations are productive of the embodied subjects involved in them. His studies of disciplinary technologies show how individuals are constructed through mundane, everyday habits and practices as certain kinds of subjects. Similarly, feminist appropriations of Foucault's thought have demonstrated how feminine subjects are constructed through patriarchal, disciplinary practices of beauty. My argument is that that there have been significant changes in the last decades in the rationality underpinning these techniques of gender, and that these changes have emerged in tandem with the rise of neoliberalism. I will appropriate Foucault's idea of governmentality, and particularly of neoliberal governmentality, as an alternative framework to discipline for studying the contemporary construction of the feminine subject. I will show that this framework provides us with more comprehensive conceptual tools for understanding the construction of the feminine subject in its current form.

Saturday, May 10th

9:00 AM-12:45 PM
WORKSHOPS HOSTED BY NYSWIP

NYSWIP (the New York Society for Women in Philosophy) is proud to present two praxis-oriented panels aimed at opening discussion on surviving and thriving in the profession. We invite members of the field to join us for two conversations with philosophers at various stages of their careers on challenges, experiences, and strategies for navigating the profession.

The New York Society for Women in Philosophy was founded in 1993. It is a membership organization, collecting dues from its members. NYSWIP has two aims. First, it aims to feature the scholarly work of women philosophers, especially feminist philosophers, in New York City. To this end we present the Sue Weinberg Speaker Series at the City University Graduate Center. Second, NYSWIP aims to nurture the on-

going philosophical work of our members and to cultivate philosophical community. These ends are served by SWIPshop, reading groups, and writing support groups. NYSWIP is run by a set of committees: the coordinating committee overseeing the activities of NYSWIP; the program committee, managing the Sue Weinberg Lecture Series; and the SWIPshop committee, managing SWIPshop. We also have a treasurer who overseas our finances. Members also participate in governance through our regular business meetings.

Our panels will feature short discussions from our individual panelists, followed by a conversation-style Q&A.

I. Publish and/or Perish

PUBLISH OR PERISH centers discussion on the research process. We invite our panelists to discuss their experiences as women researching, writing, editing, refereeing, and publishing within academic philosophy: anything from thoughts on best refereeing practices, writing for specific philosophical audiences, anonymity and the "blind" review, to struggles with tenure-clock writing, post-partum writing, procrastination, and Imposter's Syndrome.

Serene Khader (SUNY Stony Brook)
Barbara Montero (CUNY Graduate Center, College of Staten Island)
Jennifer Uleman (SUNY Purchase College)

II. Survival Strategies

SURVIVING AND THRIVING discusses strategies for surviving and thriving in the face of professional misogyny. We invite our panelists to share their thoughts and stories on issues ranging from sexual harassment, sexist microaggression, teaching as a woman, the tenure clock, to pregnancy, childcare, family-life, and economic precarity.

Linda Martín Alcoff (CUNY Graduate Center)
Amy Baehr (Hofstra University)
Maria Brincker (UMass Boston)
Megan Craig (SUNY Stony Brook)

2:00-5:45 PM
NEW FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS

2:00-3:45 PM
Re-Reading Women Philosophers

Desirae Embree (Texas A&M University)
"A Theory of One's Own: Simone de Beauvoir and a Certain Kind of Writing"
Abstract: This paper considers Simone de Beauvoir's lifelong insistence that she was not a philosopher, despite having made significant theoretical contributions to both existentialism and feminist theory. Drawing from her memoirs, her literary theory, and her later interviews with Margaret Simons, I argue that Beauvoir's denial of her status as philosopher was multifaceted. On the one hand, it was a reaction to philosophy's claim to universality and an acknowledgement of her conscription, as a woman, to the particular. On the other hand, it was also a strategic choice made to afford her greater freedom in her work, allowing her to develop various theories unconstrained by what Kristie Dotson has called: philosophy's "culture of justification". I use Beauvoir's situation to consider both the practicality and desirability of doing certain kinds of philosophical work, especially those called to justify themselves as philosophy, outside of the discipline itself.

Salla Peltonen (Åbo Akademi University Finland, Duke) and Sara Nyman (Åbo Akademi)
"Reading Valerie Solanas"
Abstract: In this presentation we discuss *The S.C.U.M Manifesto* by Valerie Solanas as a feminist and philosophical text. *The S.C.U.M. Manifesto* is rarely approached as philosophical. It is most often read as satire, a political manifesto situated as one of the canonical texts of the radical feminist movement of the 1970s.

In this paper we ask: What happens if we take Solanas seriously, and try to make sense of the manifesto in order to read her as a philosopher? What if we read her as deconstructing received notions of gender in the spirit of Judith Butler's work, or her celebration of "groovy females" as an expression of Rosi Braidotti's affirmative ethics? By reading Solanas'

manifesto as a feminist theoretical and philosophical text, juxtaposing her work with feminist theorists such as Butler and Braidotti, we argue that the manifesto includes several philosophical and conceptual insights that point toward both questions of existentialism and ethics. Solanas' critique of gendered forms of life, of sexual difference, and of phallogocentric logic addresses questions of ethics, language, and meaning. By connecting the themes of intelligibility, sexual difference, gender, and knowledge as philosophical questions in Solanas' work, we argue that a lead motif in the manifesto is ethical. For Solanas, the question of intelligibility is crucial, and she struggles with the question of what it means to morally say that "something makes sense," and that this question is deeply connected to gender and power and the question of "woman" in the discipline of philosophy.

4:00-5:45 PM
Pedagogical Issues

Lauren Freeman (Louisville)
"Creating Safer Spaces: Strategies for Confronting the Negative Effect of Implicit & Explicit Bias & Stereotype Threat on Women in Philosophy Classrooms"
Abstract: One of the central points in Sally Haslanger's influential article, "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not By Reason (Alone)" (2008), is that we must root out biases that work against women and underrepresented minorities *at every stage* of the profession. Yet, with some notable exceptions, most of the work in implicit bias in this area concentrates on issues that plague women and underrepresented minorities at later stages in their education and/or career, or in the profession more generally. In this paper, I take up Haslanger's imperative to consider how we can root out biases at an earlier stage, namely, in the classroom. The guiding idea is that if we can create safer spaces early on in the philosophical educations of these students, then not only will more women enter into philosophy, but they will also continue on in the field thereby diversifying it. My aim in this paper is to delineate strategies for creating safer learning spaces in philosophy classrooms in which women can feel comfortable and confident to be active participants, to remain in the field, and hopefully, to flourish in it as well.

The paper has three sections. First, I discuss what a safer classroom space is. Second, I review some key insights from the literature on implicit bias and stereotype threat that preclude safer spaces from existing. Third, acknowledging that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problem, I delineate five strategies that can help create safer spaces in philosophy classrooms and that can diminish the kinds of psychological oppression that women suffer as a result of the current climate.

Hilkje Haenel (Humboldt Berlin)
"The Woman Problem in Philosophy: Ameliorative Projects as Political Projects"
Abstract: In philosophy, and especially in analytic philosophy, there are certain minorities that are neither represented by the subject nor presented with the same possibilities to advance in the field. "Women" are only one of those minority groups. I want to argue that analytic philosophy employs a specific way of thinking about conceptual analysis which is discriminatory against these groups. This has to do with which analyses we (as philosophers) think are worth conducting and who we think is worth expressing these analyses. Further, I want to show that Sally Haslanger's contributions to the topic—if understood correctly—suggest a way of doing conceptual analysis which is not discriminatory and which can even help to fight discriminatory practices. Very roughly, I want to argue that her ameliorative projects have a political motivation. We are driven by the aim of arriving at some target concept that fulfills some specific (feminist) political purpose and therefore adjust the manifest and/or operative concept. It is this deliberate way of doing ameliorative analysis that can help strengthen minority groups in philosophy.

6:00-8:00 PM
Keynote

Sara Heinämaa (Helsinki)

NOTES ON PARTICIPANTS

Alcoff, Linda Martín (CUNY Graduate Center)
Linda Martín Alcoff is Professor of Philosophy at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center. Martín Alcoff has degrees from Georgia State University and Brown University, and has held positions at Syracuse University, SUNY Stony Brook, and Kalamazoo College, and visiting appointments at Cornell, Brown, Florida Atlantic University, and the University of Aarhus. Her writings have focused on social identity and race, epistemology and politics, sexual violence, Foucault, Dussel, and Latino issues in philosophy. She has written two books: *Visible Identities: Race, Gender and the Self* (Oxford 2006), *Real Knowing: New Versions of the Coherence Theory* (Cornell 1996).

Baehr, Amy (Hofstra)
Amy Baehr is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Hofstra University, and teaches primarily political philosophy and philosophy of law. She has written extensively on liberal feminism, including the Stanford Encyclopedia entry for "Liberal Feminism," and edited the volume, *Varieties of Feminist Liberalism* (2004).

Beyerstein, Lindsay (Investigative Journalist)
Lindsay Beyerstein is originally from Vancouver, Canada. Lindsay traveled to Boston to earn a Master's Degree in Philosophy from Tufts University. She is an award-winning investigative journalist and *In These Times* staff writer who writes the blog Duly Noted. Her stories have appeared in *Newsweek*, *Salon*, *Slate*, *The Nation*, *Ms. Magazine*, and other publications.

Bianchi, Emanuela (NYU)
Emanuela Bianchi is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at New York University. She received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from The New School in 2005, and has taught in the Departments of Philosophy at Haverford College and UNC Charlotte. She works at the intersection of

Ancient Greek philosophy, contemporary continental philosophy, and feminist philosophy. She is the author of *The Feminine Symptom: Aleatory Matter in the Aristotelian Cosmos* (Fordham University Press, forthcoming 2014), and her articles and reviews have appeared in *Hypatia, Continental Philosophy Review, Philosophy Today, Epoché,* and *The Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal.*

Bottici, Chiara (New School)
Chiara Bottici is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York. She is the author of *Imaginal Politics,* forthcoming from Columbia University Press, which explores the link between imagination and biopolitics in our current climate; *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); and *Uomini e stati. Percorsi di un'analogia* (ETS, 2004), which was published in English as *Men and States* (Palgrave, 2009). She is also co-author, with Benôit Challand, of *Imagining Europe: Myth, Memory, Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations* (Routledge, 2010). With Benôit Challand, she also co-edited a collection of essays entitled *The Politics of Imagination* (Routledge, 2011).

Brincker, Maria (UMass Boston)
Maria Brincker received her Ph.D. in Philosophy, with an interdisciplinary concentration in Cognitive Science, from the CUNY Graduate Center in 2010. She is currently Assistant Professor of Philosophy at University of Massachusetts, Boston. Her work is interdisciplinary and collaborative, and she has written on autism, neuroscience, pedagogy, and feminism.

Craig, Megan (SUNY Stony Brook)
Megan Craig is a painter and an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Art at Stony Brook University. She teaches course in aesthetics, ethics, French phenomenology, and American philosophy. She also has strong interests in psychoanalysis. Her first book, *Levinas and James: Toward a Pragmatic Phenomenology*, was published with Indiana University Press in November of 2010. She edited the text *Art? No Thing, Analogies between Science, Art, and Philosophy*, by the Dutch artist and theorist Fré Ilgen.

Recent articles include "Deleuze and the Force of Color," "James and the Ethical Importance of Grace," "The Infinite in Person: Levinas and Emily Dickinson," "Locked-In," "Cora's World," and "Slipping Glancer: Painting Place with Edward Casey." Craig's new research is focused around accounts of memory, sensibility, and the ethical importance of ambiguity – with a particular focus on sensation, synaesthesia, color and color perception. Craig has exhibited her paintings nationally and internationally. Recent solo shows include "Views" at Kunstverein Grafschaft Bentheim in Germany, "Lines of Flight" at Sundaram Tagore Gallery in New York, and "If and How" at Scott and Bowne Fine Art in Connecticut. Craig has been awarded painting residencies and grants from several institutions including the Pollack Krasner Foundation, The Weir Farm Trust, The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Vermont Studio Center, and the New York Arts Foundation.

Embree, Desirae (Texas A&M)
Desirae Embree is a senior at Texas A&M University, where she is a double major in Philosophy and French. Her research interests include existentialism, phenomenology, feminist theory, and Jewish philosophy. She is currently finishing an undergraduate research fellowship at the Glasscock Center for Humanities Research, which resulted in a thesis concerned with phenomenologies of the voice. She intends to continue onto graduate school, where she hopes to focus on the work of Simone de Beauvoir.

Freeman, Lauren (Louisville)
Lauren Freeman is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Louisville. She also teaches in the M.A. program in Bioethics. Her primary areas of research are phenomenology, feminist philosophy and bioethics. Her publications have dealt with themes of recognition, autonomy, selfhood, emotions, and epistemic injustice.

Gines, Kathryn (Penn state)
Professor Gines' primary research and teaching interests lie in Continental philosophy (especially Existentialism and Phenomenology), Africana Philosophy, Black Feminist Philosophy, and Critical Philosophy

of Race. She has also taught in African American Studies/African Diaspora Studies. Some of the major figures she writes about and teaches include Hannah Arendt, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon, Anna Julia Cooper, and Richard Wright. Professor Gines has published articles on race, assimilation, feminism, intersectionality, and sex and sexuality in contemporary hip-hop. She is author of *Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question* (Indiana University Press, 2014) and co-editor of an anthology titled *Convergences: Black Feminism and Continental Philosophy* (SUNY Press, 2010).

Professor Gines is the founding director of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers (CBWP), the director of Cultivating Underrepresented Students in Philosophy (CUSP), and a founding co-editor of the journal *Critical Philosophy of Race* (CPR). She has been an active member of several professional organizations such as the American Philosophical Association, Society for Phenomenology and Existentialist Philosophy, Caribbean Philosophical Association, and Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora.

Married (14 years) with four children (ages 13, 11, 5, and 2), she has a passion for empowering academics and professionals in the areas of work, life, and wellness balance. Gines offers workshops on work/life balance, academic balance, home balance, and wellness and self-care. She is certified yoga instructor (RYT, 2000) and has worked as a certified coach for the National Center for Faculty Diversity & Development (2010-2013).

Gordon-Roth, Jessica (Lehman College, CUNY)

Jessica Gordon-Roth is an Assistant Professor at the City University of New York, Lehman College. Jessica earned her Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2012. Her area of specialization is in the history of Modern philosophy. In the past few years Jessica has given papers at UMass Amherst, Texas A&M, the University of St. Andrews, Dartmouth College, the Central Meeting of the APA, the Montreal Early Modern Round Ta.ble, the CUNY Graduate Center, the NY/NJ Research Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy, Wheaton College and the University of Western Ontario. Jessica's paper "Locke on the Ontology of Persons" is forthcoming in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*.

Haenel, Hilkje (Humboldt Berlin)
Hilkje Haenel, M.A. in Philosophy, Sheffield University, and B.A. in Philosophy and English Literature, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, is a Ph.D. student within the Department of Philosophy at the Humboldt Universität Berlin. Her research is on the concept and definition of *rape*. It is supervised by Dr. Mari Mikkola and is located (mostly) in the area of feminist analytical philosophy. Her work is inspired by Haslanger's ameliorative projects and feminist interpretations of Wittgenstein (e.g. his family resemblance theory and other cluster concepts). Further research interests are particularism in moral theory, social philosophy, theories of vagueness, and critical theory (for more information see also http://swipgermany.wordpress.com/blog/).

Heinämaa, Sarah (Helsinki)
Sarah Heinämaa is currently associated with the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies at the University of Helsinki, as well as the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of Jyväskylä in Finaland. Her research areas include Phenomenology, Selfhood and Personhood, History of Philosophy, Feminist Philosophy, Embodiment, Beauvoir, and Merleau-Ponty among others. Heinämaa is the author of *Towards a Phenomenology of Sexual Difference: Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Beauvoir* (Rowman & Littlefield 2003).

Kendrick, Nancy (Wheaton)
Nancy Kendrick is William and Elsie Prentice Professor of Philosophy at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts. She has published articles on Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Malebranche, and Arnauld. She is currently at work on a book on theories of friendship in the works of early modern women philosophers.

Khader, Serene (SUNY Stony Brook)
Serene Khader is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at SUNY Stony Brook. Her areas of specialization include Global Justice, Normative Ethics, and Feminist Philosophy. She is the author of *Adaptive Preferences*

and Women's Empowerment (Oxford University Press, 2011) and is currently a board member of New York Society for Women in Philosophy.

Montero, Barbara (CUNY Graduate Center, College of Staten Island)
Barbara Gail Montero (B.A. University of California at Berkeley, Ph.D. University of Chicago) is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the City University of New York, at the College of Staten Island and the CUNY Graduate Center, where she is a member of the doctoral faculty of philosophy. She has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Her research focuses on one or the other of two very different notions of body: body as the physical or material basis of everything, and body as the moving, breathing, flesh and blood instrument that we use when we run, walk, or dance. The first line of research has led her to question a standard way of thinking about physicalism as the theory that everything will be, in some sense, accountable for by science. The second line of research has led her to think about proprioception and expert action. She is currently writing a book exploring the role of rationality, bodily awareness and intuition in expert-level actions.

Nyman, Sara (Åbo Akademi)
Sara Nyman is currently finishing her M.A. thesis in philosophy on feminism, philosophy and patriarchal grammar. She received her B.A. in philosophy from Åbo Akademi University in 2009. She has worked as the editor of *Ikaros–Journal on the Sciences and the Human* and as an educator on issues around youth, gender, sexuality and equality. Together with Mari Lindman she is working on a book on Valerie Solanas.

Oksala, Johanna (New School, Helsinki)
Johanna Oksala is Academy of Finland Research Fellow in the Department of Philosophy, History, Culture and Art Studies at University of Helsinki and a Visiting Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research. She is the author of *Foucault on Freedom* (2005); *How to Read Foucault* (2007); *Foucault, Politics, and Violence* (2012); *Political Philosophy: All That Matters* (2013); and numerous

articles on political philosophy, feminist philosophy, phenomenology, and Foucault. She is currently working on a monograph that explores the future challenges for feminist theory and politics.

Peltonen, Salla (Åbo Akademi, University Finland, Duke)
Salla Peltonen, M.Sc. in Women's Studies, B.A. Philosophy, Åbo Akademi University, is a graduate student within the Gender Studies Doctoral Programme in Finland. Her research investigates questions of language, ethics, and politics in feminist theory, especially in the work of Judith Butler and Rosi Braidotti. Her work is inspired by Wittgensteinian language philosophy and ordinary language philosophy more broadly. Her research interests include feminist and queer theory, theories of sexual difference, philosophy of language and moral philosophy.

Scholz, Sally J. (Villanova)
Sally J. Scholz is Professor of Philosophy at Villanova University. Her research is in social and political philosophy and feminist theory. She is the author of *On de Beauvoir* (Wadsworth 2000), *On Rousseau* (Wadsworth 2001), *Political Solidarity* (Penn State Press 2008), and *Feminism: A Beginner's Guide* (One World 2010). Scholz has also published articles on violence against women, oppression, and just war theory among other topics. She is a former editor of the *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* and is currently Editor of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*.

Söderbäck, Fanny (Siena)
Fanny Söderbäck is Assistant Professor in the Philosophy Department at Sienna, having joined the department as a Visiting Assistant Professor in 2010. She received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from the New School for Social Research in 2010, where she wrote a dissertation entitled "Time for Change: On Time and Difference in the Work of Kristeva and Irigaray." Her area of expertise is Feminist Philosophy, especially French Feminism, but she has published work on topics such as Greek tragedy, motherhood, the question of time, and the subversive potential of eating disorders. Her current research includes feminist understandings of the categories of space and time, a project on the relationship between art

and politics, and an interrogation into the ambiguous nature of bodily boundaries.

Walker, Gina L. (New School)
Gina Luria Walker is Associate Professor of Women's Studies, The New School for Public Engagement, and Affiliate, Liberal Studies Program, The New School for Social Research. She is Editor of the Chawton House Library Edition of Mary Hays's *Female Biography* (1803) (Pickering & Chatto, 20113, 2014), and Director of *Project Continua*, a website in development dedicated to the "female biographies" of women thinkers. She has published widely on Hays, late Enlightenment feminisms, Women and Rational Dissent, and, most recently, "The Two Marys: Hays Writes Wollstonecraft," *Called to Civil Existence: Mary Wollstonecraft's The Rights of Woman*, ed. Enit K. Steiner, *Dialogue Series*, Rodophi Press, Amsterdam, 2014.

Webster, Jamieson (Eugene Lang)
Jamieson Webster PhD is a psychoanalyst in private practice. She teaches at Eugene Lang and supervises doctoral students in clinical psychology at CUNY. She is the author of *The Life and Death of Psychoanalysis* (Karnac, 2011) and *Stay, Illusion!* (Random House, 2013).

Uleman, Jennifer (SUNY Purchase College)
Jennifer Uleman is Associate Professor for the Philosophy Board of Study at SUNY Purchase. Her research focuses on Kant and freedom—but in the context of issues such as infanticide and suicide. She is the author of *An Introduction to Kant's Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). She has also written on feminism and Occupy Wall Street.