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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

People in Support of Women in Philosophy (formerly Women in Philosophy) is a publication support group comprised of both women and men within the graduate program of the Philosophy Department at The New School for Social Research. Our overall goal is the advancement and professional development of women and minorities in philosophy. The group meets weekly to discuss a member's paper with the aim of preparing the work for either conference presentation or publication. As a group, we are committed to the maintenance of a forum within which women's voices are privileged and rigorous discussion of women's philosophical work can take place.

Although Women in Philosophy has its origins in the study of explicitly feminist philosophy, the contemporary focus has shifted to include a larger breadth of topics as women philosophers address them. We see this forum as an important alternative to the consistent minority that women occupy within philosophy departments, philosophy classrooms, and other philosophical forums. Women in Philosophy is by no means a replacement for such forums, but rather a critical space reserved for women to develop their philosophical potential outside the standard academic environment.

The aim of the Women in Philosophy Annual Journal of Papers is to showcase the work of our members through the publication of essays that have been workshopped and presented at our meetings. Our Journal can also be found online at www.newschool.edu/nssr/wip. We would like to thank the Department of Philosophy at The New School for their continuing support of our group.

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CREATING A *PATHOS OF DISTANCE* BETWEEN THE EUDAIMONIC PHILOSOPHER AND THE WRETCHED TYRANT

A *Polemos* Against Sophistry in Plato's *Republic*

Caroline Cusano

> *I must answer those who for years have been traducing me as a 'physical philosopher' and a 'sophist.'*[1]
>
> *The real tyrant is, even if he doesn't seem so to someone, in truth a real slave.*[2]

According to Nietzsche there exists an abyss between slave morality and the positive valuations of nobility, which is a *felt* or experiential difference—a *pathos* that creates an order of rank amongst various centers of force or manifestations of will to power. However, such an abyss is blanketed by the reactive morality of the slave's resentful gaze (*ressentiment*):[3] by reactively valuing nobility as "evil" and the slave as "good," a transvaluation occurs that blurs the natural order, or order so-constituted, in a master/slave dialectic.

Despite Nietzsche's ambivalence towards Plato, particularly Plato's presentation of Socrates in his dialogues,[4] Nietzsche's idea of a *felt* difference is nevertheless at work in the *Republic*, especially in consideration of the *mise en scène* of pleasure in Book IX where it is concluded that the city in speech does not exist *as such*. With the introduction of pleasure comes the true measure of the difference between the philosopher king and the slavish tyrant, both of whom are compelled to rule in the polis. Yet it is only after the invocation of pleasure that the former becomes apolitical, no longer forced to rule a concrete polis, for thereafter, the polis that had been in construction from Book II onwards is no longer said to exist.

In this regard, we could say that the *Republic* is a polemic aimed at creating a discontinuity between the just philosopher and unjust tyrant, proving the former's happiness and the latter's wretchedness in their respective pathos of pleasure. Yet the line of argumentation that unfolds

from Book I—to prove that the just man is happier *vis-à-vis* the wretched tyrant—is also tied to the need for articulating the difference between the sophist and the philosopher. Such necessity follows by observing the role that Thrasymachus, the sophist, plays at the onset of the dialogue. I take it that Thrasymachus serves as the mimetic image of the tyrant, for he is described as a "demonic man" (544d), while the tyrant, for his part, is continually linked to the demonic through *erôs*: "love has from old been called a tyrant" (573b).

Socrates is subsequently compelled to differentiate the true philosopher, who is king of himself, not only from the tyrant, but the sophist as well: slave to desire and bound by a love of money. I maintain that this difference is concurrently made manifest with the *pathos of distance* that is established between the philosopher and tyrant in regard to pleasure in Book IX. However, given that it becomes established that the polis does not exist as such, the so-called "philosopher king" becomes essentially apolitical in the sense that he retains no utilitarian function in the polis, no public role to occupy, thus rendering him useless.[5] This manifestation of a *pathos of distance* in Book IX then leads us back to Adeimantus' worry expressed in Book VI—namely, the philosopher's uselessness in the polis. Yet, by the end of Book IX, this worry is resolved by transforming it into a distinctly *positive* aspect of the philosophic life; that is to say, minding one's own business (the definition of "justice" in Book IV at 433a) and not that of the polis, thus further separating the philosopher from the tyrant and, implicitly, the sophist.

Given these structural remarks, I want to contend, over the course of three argumentative movements, that the *Republic* is an implicit polemic against sophistry by way of a more explicit attack on tyranny. This is to say that that we ought to read Plato's rejection of tyranny as harboring a more philosophically interesting polemic against sophistry. To that end, I will first demonstrate the need for better differentiating between the philosopher and the sophist following from and as a consequence of Thrasymachus' *mise en scène* at the very beginning of the dialogue. In doing so, I will follow Sarah Kofman's incisive account of the resemblance between the philosopher and sophist in her reading of Plato's *Sophist* in *Comment s'en sortir?* Second, I will provide an explanation as to how such a need to create a distance is fulfilled in Book IX by the

entrance of a positive notion of pleasure (*hêdonê*) as well as by the impossibility of the political existence of the city in speech. Finally, I will argue that such a *pathos of distance* responds not only to the mistaken, or at least oft-overlooked conflation of the philosopher and the sophist, but also to the worry of the useless, anti-utilitarian—indeed, *apolitical*—status of the philosopher in the polis as expressed in Book VI, which, as I argue in the conclusion, is the very condition of possibility for philosophy's legitimacy and authenticity.

1. The Need to Create Distance

No one resembles the sophist as much as the philosopher.[6]

1.1 Thrasymachus: The Tyrannic Sophist

I first want to better elucidate the resemblance between the sophist and philosopher inasmuch as the former serves as a mimetic image of the tyrant through the figure of Thrasymachus. Before I draw out the kinship between the philosopher and sophist, however, I particularly want to draw attention to what initiates the implicit attack on sophistry at the beginning of the dialogue. Insofar as the primary discussion in the *Republic* is that of justice as it pertains to the happiness and wretchedness of the philosopher king and tyrant respectively, elucidating this implicit critique from the outset seems especially necessary.

What drives the need for the difference between the philosopher and *sophist* is already present at the beginning of the dialogue as soon as Thrasymachus violently bursts into the scene, where he thereafter famously argues that "the just is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger" (338c). Yet it would seem that being "stronger" problematically entails power over the "weaker" insofar as asserting such power would likely entail committing injustices. This effectively renders justice and its corresponding happiness, or *eudaimonia*, arbitrary, insofar as it is merely based on whoever is said to be "strong" in this sense. In *Comment s'en sortir?*, Kofman describes this as the sophistical trick *par excellence*, writing that, "the sophist reserves a double language in each question, equalizes two contrary rationalizations, turns such opinion into its opposite,

transforms the weakest argument into the strongest, and turns the argument back against the adversary that he provoked."[7] With this turn, Thrasymachus transforms the unjust man into the just man, flipping the sought meaning of justice on its head, and thereby throwing Socrates into a state of perplexity, or *aporia*. At the end of Book I, Socrates, in a phrase indicative of the dismay at this "trick," says that "as a result of the discussion, I know nothing" (354b).

Here, we can link Thrasymachus to the tyrant in two senses: First, based on his argument, the tyrant—the one who exercises power over others because he has no power over himself—is the just, happy man, which is precisely what drives Socrates' dialectic to prove the opposite (i.e. "the just man is happy and the unjust the most wretched" [354a]). That is, in order to escape the *aporia* resulting from Thrasymachus' argument, and despite Socrates' claim that he and Thrasymachus have settled their differences at the end of Book I, the dialectic must overcome and transcend this impasse.[8] Secondly, the entrance of Thrasymachus ties his figure to *epithumia*—desire—as tyrannic *erôs*. That is to say, he is linked to the daimonic (the erotic) by virtue of his violent, "beastly" outburst (336b). Throughout the dialogue, *erôs* is explicitly linked to the tyrant. In Book IX, for instance, *epithumia* (as it is conflated with *erôs* throughout the dialogue) is represented in a mythical account of the soul as a many-headed beast (588c).

Nevertheless, in explicating the difference between the tyrant (the wretched, unjust man) and the philosopher (the happy, just one), we can see that this difference implicitly contains an attack on sophistry. Indeed, the abyss between the tyrant/sophist and the philosopher must be made even more explicit. In order to further explain what I mean by the need to create a *pathos of distance*, I will proceed to exhibit the continual tension between the philosopher and sophist as it relates to the need to distinguish the philosopher ruler from the tyrant. This will inevitably bring me towards Book IX, the point at which pleasure enters the scene, and the point where, as I contend, another certain *pathos* dwells, one that emphasizes the difference between money-loving and wisdom-loving persons.

1.2 Philosopher and Sophist: "Enemy Brothers"

I now want to consider the resemblance between the philosopher and the sophist while continuing to maintain that the latter is an image of the tyrant, again, given Thrasymachus' role in the dialogue. In her work, Kofman contends that there is a slippery, aporetic path (*poros*)[9] that both the philosopher and sophist both *seem* to navigate. As such, the philosopher must differentiate his rigorous *epistêmê,* that is to say, the dialectic, from the sophist's cunning ruse employed for monetary profit. Otherwise put, the philosopher's "craft"[10] must be differentiated from the moneymaking *technê* of the sophist insofar as there is what might be called a "family resemblance" between the two.

Kofman points to the continuity between the two figures, likening them to each other in terms of *aporia* ("perplexity") and *mimesis* ("imitation"). Both operate within economies of *aporia*, meaning that both employ *aporetic* arguments in order to mold images of knowledge—or at least the semblance of knowledge, in the case of the sophist. The philosopher, on the other hand, leads a person to a state of *aporia*, forcing him to recognize that he did not know what he thought he knew, thereby making him aware of his own ignorance. Such an *aporetic* economy is "open" in that it allows for one to forge a dialectical path through speech that transcends the perplexities interlocutors are met with as they proceed. In the case of the philosopher, *aporia* is used for the benefit of the other and not as a tactic to intentionally confuse him for some other gain. The sophist, on the other hand, leads one to *aporia* in order to stupefy him and thereby defeat him in a cunning game of rhetoric, in the end passing off a semblance of knowledge that comes with a corresponding, monetary price. In the case of the sophist, the economy in which *aporia* circulates is essentially "closed" because there is no real escape from the perplexing falsehoods that the sophist generates in order to build a counterfeit image of wisdom. Kofman explains that since they both utilize *aporia*, the philosopher and the sophist resemble each other like "two enemy brothers."[11] This is to say that, although the two remain vastly different in their employment of *aporia*, they are easily confounded due to their "family resemblance."

The apparent continuity between philosophical and sophistic *aporia* is demonstrated by Adeimantus' concern in the beginning of Book VI when Socrates explains the education of the philosophers who are to rule the city:

> Socrates, here no one can contradict you in this. But here is how those who hear what you now say are affected on each occasion. They believe that because of inexperience at questioning and answering, they are at each question misled a little by the argument; and when the littles are collected at the end of the arguments, the slip turns out to be great and contrary to the first assertions. And just as those who aren't clever at playing draughts are finally checked by those who are and don't know how to move, so they too are finally checked by this other kind of draughts, played not with counters but speeches, and don't know what to say (487b-c).

What Adeimantus describes in this passage is what I called, following Kofman, the sophistical trick *par excellence*, and she further describes this trick in terms of *aporia*, writing that "the sophist exhibits the *aporias* of discourse as true miracles,"[12] yet in such a way that traps one in inescapable perplexity. Again, the sophist's *aporetic* economy is *closed*; it is the circulation of *aporia* without providing for the possibility of facing and overcoming it. In this example, however, Adeimantus himself is unwittingly thrown into such an *aporia* in that he is unable to comprehend Socrates' argument that, after isolated years of dwelling within an educational *ethos*, the philosopher is able to rule the polis from which he has been separated. That is to say, we here find Adeimantus at a disorienting impasse along the path of Socrates' dialectic such that he does not know how to proceed in Socrates' seeming game of draughts. Nevertheless, the fact that Socrates throws Adeimantus into *aporia* points to the continuity I want to elucidate between the philosopher and sophist, particularly that between Socrates and Thrasymachus, since both at least *seem* to operate within a closed economy of *aporia*, exploiting it in order to impose a double language on what is just, where justice is the minding of one's own business. Here, the just man, already said to be

the one who minds his own business in Book IV, is now the one who is condemned to mind the business of the polis and its *hoi polloi*.

So we can see how, in leading Adeimantus to *aporia*, Socrates' method seemingly resembles that of the sophist, whose "method is a technique of disorientation … making the *logos* return to a state of chaos … where all directions are confounded."[13] Although this *aporia* is nevertheless to be overcome in an open economy where the philosopher forges a path (again, *poros*) that leads one from the confusion and pains of *aporia* to pure pleasure. At this juncture, however, this difference is not yet evident given the paradoxical political stance of the philosopher concerning justice and its accompanying happiness (*eudaimonia*).

The philosopher further resembles the sophist insofar as both are imitators. In the *Sophist*, both figures are linked to the art of *mimesis*, or that of "image-making" (264c). But, such a mimetic *technê* is divided into two subsets, those of "likeness-making" and "semblance-making" (264c). Although the two subsets of the *technê* will ultimately serve to differentiate the philosopher from the sophist, in the *Sophist*, Theaetetus remains perplexed as to where to place the sophist, for, as it is said earlier in the dialogue, insofar as the sophist takes on the role of educator, he shares a noble lineage with the philosopher. That is, the sophist's *technê* of *mimesis* involves mimicking the mimetic *technê* of the philosopher, who, in making-likenesses, molds images from what *is* (i.e. the forms) rather than producing *semblances* of truth and wisdom as the sophist does. Because the philosopher "sees and contemplates things that are set in regular arrangement and are always in the same condition … he imitates them, and as much as possible, makes himself like them" (500c). Yet the sophist can only produce imitations of imitations, which, according to the critique of poetry in Book X of the *Republic*, are furthest from the truth—from what *is* (598b).

Due to these similarities, we can see Socrates already attempting to distance himself from the sophist in the *Republic*. As we are told, the philosopher is "in no way a lover of money" (485e), which explicitly separates him from the tyrant as well as the sophist, who are ruled by the "money-loving part" of the soul (581a). The philosopher is the one who does not have a want of measure that values activity on an external, homogenous monetary scale, but a want *to* measure, to *actively* value those

things that come from an *internal* nurturing of the soul through a principal concern with what *is* (486d). The philosopher's evaluative measure is not directed *outwards*, but is rather an *inward* movement. But, at this point, we should not forget that the philosopher still remains political; that is, he is given a utilitarian role in the polis as ruler and educator, and this possibility links the philosopher to the tyrant and sophist insofar as the philosopher is given such a function. The philosopher will have to be compelled to be educated to rule the polis in Book VII (519d), just as the tyrant is compelled to rule by some misfortune as articulated in Book IX (579c). Hence, the simple fact of *being political* blurs the line between the two figures insofar as both are forced into their respective political roles. In effect, given political appearances, the philosopher and sophist uncannily remain brothers, and Socrates even expresses this worry when he says that, "I don't say 'of the heaven' so as to not seem to you to be playing the sophist with the name" (509d).

Returning to her earlier claim that no one resembles the sophist more than the philosopher, Kofman can now add that "that's why, to save reason from madness, to control in spite of the uncontrollable *mimesis*, Plato employs an extreme saving division between the good and bad *mimesis*, between the noble and the vile sophist, between the dog and wolf."[14] In other words, while the philosopher and the sophist *seemingly* resemble each other, they remain vastly different in their respective mimetic crafts, driving Plato to make explicit the difference between the two figures in both the *Republic* and the *Sophist*. Hence, in the next section, I will explore how such a division operates within the *Republic* through the introduction of eudaimonic pleasure. But with the introduction of pleasure comes the need for a further differentiation between the sophist/tyrant and philosopher, as they are seen as loving, or erotic. In effect, the philosopher is the one who controls the erotic through *nous*, while the tyrant/sophist cannot but succumb to *epithumia* ("desire") while remaining part of the polis.

2. Splitting Path(o)s

> *When all the soul follows the philosophic and is not factious, the result is that each part may, so far as other things are concerned, mind its own business and be*

> *just and, in particular, enjoy its own pleasures, the best pleasures, and, to the greatest possible extent, the truest pleasures.*[15]

Upon encountering the *mise en scène* of pleasure in Book IX, I want to demonstrate that a certain *pathos* is introduced which differentiates the philosopher from the (negatively) erotic tyrant, who again, is an image of the sophist insofar as both are money-loving. Now, this is not to say that the philosopher is not erotic, for he certainly appears so in other dialogues, namely the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*. Whereas the *Phaedrus* emphasizes *erôs* as a divine madness (244a), the *Symposium* stresses the philosophic nature of the *daimon Erôs* (204b). It must be noted that although *erôs* is equated with the tyrant in the *Republic*, despite its consequent denigration, it is nevertheless viewed as positive insofar as it is not simply tied to *epithumia*, but rather to *nous* ("intellect"). That is, the philosopher, described as the *lover* of wisdom, ultimately domesticates *erôs* through intellect, quelling the tyrannic desire for bodily pleasure and monetary gain.

Thus, with the inauguration of a positive notion of pleasure in Book IX, the "shared path" of the philosopher and sophist becomes split according to their respective *pathos* of *hêdonê*. In this section, I will therefore discuss this *pathos of distance*, which is the felt difference between the philosopher and tyrant/sophist. This differentiation of pathos leads to the city in speech not existing as such by the end of Book IX, which severs the tie that unites the philosopher with the polis, and hence with the tyrant and sophist. That is, the appearance of a positive notion of pleasure ultimately leads to the impossibility of the city in speech existing as such. This will ultimately provide an answer to Adeimantus' worry concerning the uselessness of the philosopher, and moreover, becomes the condition of possibility for the praxis of philosophy in an apolitical, anti-utilitarian register. That is, it is the philosopher's freedom from political bonds that allows for the true possibility of practicing care for the soul.

2.1 The Inauguration of Pure Pleasure

Given the integral role of pleasure, its appearance in Book IX is perplexing due to its poor treatment as it is linked to both *epithumia* and

erôs throughout the dialogue. Before and even in Book IX, *erôs* is equated with the tyrant, described as a "winged drone" (573a) that when affected by certain desires, becomes the leader of the soul who "takes madness for its armed guard and is stung to frenzy" (573b). Yet this negative valuation of *erôs*, as intertwined with *epithumia*, becomes problematic in the same part of the dialogue once *hêdonê* comes to assume a different role, that is, as soon as it is tied to each portion of the soul. At the beginning of Book IX, Socrates informs Adeimantus that they "haven't adequately distinguished the kinds and number of the desires. And with this lacking, the investigation we are making will be less clear" (571a). In other words, without a discussion on desire and pleasure as it relates to the various portions of the soul (as they currently correspond to the typology of cities), the difference between the just, eudaimonic philosopher and the unjust, wretched tyrant and hence, the sophist, will not be lucid.

Socrates remarks that there are numerous desires, some noxious while others are good insofar as they are "checked by the laws" (571b). Law, as *nomos*, which also means song, can be linked to the dialectic. In Book VII, this is called a *nomos*, a song, which is the journey (the forging of a *poros*) of the philosopher (532a-b). It is the tune he sings as his soul becomes harmonic, following the law of the dialectic, effectively silencing the noise of the more noxious, cacophonous desires in the soul. Yet when not checked by the laws, when not made harmonious, "unnecessary pleasures and desires" overtake the soul (571b). Socrates exhibits this by way of the slumbering man who is not overtaken by the desires that are deemed dangerous. The man with a healthy and moderate soul

> goes to sleep only after he does the following: first, he awakens his calculating part and feasts it on fair arguments and considerations, coming to an understanding with himself; second, he feeds the desiring part in such a way that it is neither in want nor surfeited—in order that it will rest and not disturb the best part by its joy or its pain, but rather leave that best part alone pure and by itself, to consider and too long for the perception of something that doesn't know, either something that has been, or is, or is going to be; and, third, he soothes the spirited part in the

> same way and does not fall asleep with his spirit aroused because there are some he got angry at (571e-572a).

This proto-Freudian view of libidinal desires that seek their aim, especially in dreams, as well as a desiring ego that must hold such urges in check, admits of the various portions of the soul being bound with their own desires and pleasures. That is, not just the desirous part desires, but the calculating part (*nous*) itself must give into desire—one akin to its pleasurable aim, that is to say, intellection.

From here, the wretchedness of the unjust, tyrannic soul can quickly be established, for he "never has a taste of freedom and true friendship" inasmuch as he is enslaved to his negatively erotic throne (576a). As the dialogue shifts from Adeimantus to Glaucon, through the city/soul analogy, it becomes "plain to everyone that there is no city more wretched than the one under tyranny and none happier than the one under kingship" (576e). However, this statement, which is apparently to be taken as self-evident, should in fact be taken as questionable given the non-existence of the city in speech at the end of Book IX. Although there is a greater schism being articulated between the philosopher and the tyrant/sophist through the inauguration of differing desires and pleasures, the break cannot be complete until the tie between city and soul dissolves. Only then can the philosopher be truly just and happy, minding his own business in the private praxis of mimetically making his own soul through speech. On the other hand, the tyrant is unjust, meaning he is the one who does not mind his own business, and is instead compelled to rule by "some misfortune" (578c). As the "most wretched, the tyrannic man … does not live out his life as a private man but is compelled by some chance to be a tyrant, and while not having control over himself attempts to rule others" (579c). Although it is perhaps not apparent to him, the tyrant is effectively the "real slave" (579d). This is also to say that the tyrant is the one who does not mind his own business, thus rendering him a slave to the polis.

After establishing that the tyrant is the most wretched man, Glaucon and Socrates continue the thread of the argument in order to solidify that the "most just man is happiest, and he is that man who is kingliest and is king of himself" (580b). Here, the dissolution of the

city/soul analogy is already in view, foreshadowing the impossibility for the city in speech; the man who is kingliest is *king of himself*, and not the polis as it is presumed to be external to the man himself. Reiterating the line of argumentation discussed with Adeimantus, Socrates admits to Glaucon—who is, coincidentally, the erotic brother of the dialogue—that each portion of the soul is tied to its respective pleasures and desires, explaining, "It looks to me as though there were also a threefold division of pleasures corresponding to these three [portions of the soul], a single pleasure peculiar to each one; and similarly a threefold division of desires and kinds of rule" (580d). That is, each portion is ruled by its various desires which aim toward particular pleasures. In saying this, Socrates is admitting that each is erotic or loving: *nous* is described as being "wisdom-*loving*," while the spirited is "victory-loving," and the desiring "money-loving" (581a-b, my emphasis). This is to say that even *nous* is ruled by desire and *erôs*, previously deemed tyrannic. However, this new conception of love is congruent with the conception of *erôs* as divine madness seen in the *Phaedrus*. This is to suggest that the philosopher must too give himself over, however partially, to a divine madness, rather than a base madness. So, with the tyrant being the one who is linked to madness that stings one into a frenzy, he can be said to do so on an entirely vile level, taking the noxious element of *epithumia* as his companion in contrast to the philosopher's positively valuated erotic *daimon*.

From here, it becomes established that "there's a great difference … between the lover of wisdom and the lover of gain in their experience of both the pleasures" (582b). It is from this point that a more extensive discussion on pleasure as such can begin to unfurl. Since the "most pleasant would belong to that part of the soul with which we learn" (583a), that is to say *nous*, pleasure *itself* must be considered in order to make definitive the connection between the happiness of the just man and the well balanced, just soul. Pleasure *as such*, however, is first introduced by way of its opposite, pain, for "don't we say pain is the opposite of pleasure?" (583c). Moreover, in between the two opposites, there is a middle ground which, at times, can be considered pleasure insofar as it is a relief of pain, yet it is also pain insofar it is a diminution of pleasure. Such an intermediate degree is essentially a repose, and as

such cannot account for pure pleasure, or pure pain for that matter. On the other hand, although true pleasure is pure in the sense of not coming from the relief of pain—"let's not be persuaded, that relief from pain is pure pleasure" (584c)—there is an initial, indeed *aporetic* pain that drives the philosopher to overcome it, to be rid of it through the dialectic. That is, at least initially, pure pleasure will be the overcoming of a certain type of pain. As Drew Hyland well writes, "*philosophy* will involve a certain suffering … the suffering of *aporia*, of recognizing that we do not know what we need to know, and of striving for knowledge."[16]

As the lover of gain, however, the tyrant/sophist can only experience a false pleasure that is used to "inspire" an equally counterfeit or illegitimate pleasure in others that, in a metaphorical sense, "kills" its brother, the lover of wisdom and his respective pleasures. As Kofman writes, "the sophist is the one who exploits for profit this parricidal *jouissance*, erecting a system that places one in *aporia*."[17] Here, the sophist throws one into *aporia* and seemingly overcomes it through the sophistical trick *par excellence*, yet nevertheless remains confined to a closed economy out of which there is no escape nor possibility of experiencing the greatest pleasures and happiness. The philosopher, on the other hand, is the one who operates within an open economy of *aporia* in order to overcome it and experience such eudaimonic pleasure thereby.

2.2 The Political Impossibility of the City in Speech

Following this discussion of pleasure, the argument arrives at the important conclusion that the polis in speech *does not exist* as such. That is to say, it only exists in speech, perhaps as a pattern laid up in heaven from which the philosopher mimetically molds his soul. So, with the city being within—that is to say the soul—the external political line that ties the philosopher to the tyrant, and more silently, to the sophist, becomes cut. As I see it, this is a result of the *pathos* of pleasure antecedently described *vis-à-vis* the sophist's delinquent *epithumia* that aims towards bodily pleasures "fulfilled by means of money" (581a). That is, the pleasure of the tyrant/sophist is ultimately measured on an external quantitative scale, rather than an internal valuation qualified by the praxis of philosophy that brings about the highest pleasures.

So with pleasures being differentiated according to the typology of souls, the paths that the sophist and philosopher traverse here diverge. With the philosopher free from the polis, from the analogy that links physically existing cities to the typology of souls, he is now free to mold his soul as a mimetic image from a pattern in speech. With the admittance of the city being nowhere on earth, if we return to the discussion of the philosopher king, it becomes clear that he indeed is not involved with the polis, especially one that cannot exist. As such, he is truly just and happy inasmuch as he minds his own business, which in effect renders him useless inasmuch as he has no political function—in not minding the business of the polis as both the tyrant and sophist do. Indeed, this movement has led us in the direction of a resolution to Adeimantus' worry in Book VI: "the ones who seem perfectly decent, do nevertheless suffer at least one consequence of the practice you are praising—they become useless to the cities" (587d). Yet the philosopher must be useless to the polis in order for him to practice the philosophic care for the soul; he must mind the business of his analogical "political" soul, rather than that of the polis that does exist: the one of decadence.

3. The Apolitical, Anti-Utilitarian Nature of the Philosophic

The most decent of those in philosophy are useless to the many.[18]

As I have shown, the city in speech does not exist as such, therefore the political string that tied the philosopher to the tyrant and sophist is severed, creating further discontinuity between the figures. It allows for the following question to be answered affirmatively: "Have you … any other life that despises political offices other than true philosophy?" (521b). Although it is said that "philosophers must rule," and it is "by nature fitting for them to both engage in philosophy and to lead the city, and for the rest not to engage in philosophy and follow the leader" (474b-c), read in light of the concluding remarks of Book IX, this passage can retrospectively be taken to refer to the city within, that is to say, the just soul. As such, the philosopher would be the ruler of himself through the praxis of philosophy, while the others—*hoi polloi*—follow an external leader, namely the tyrant, or in the case of the "educator," the sophist,

with all his false claims to knowledge. This would mean that the true philosopher is king of himself in a way that does not involve political dealings, which is specifically stated in Book IX: "he won't be willing to mind political things" (592a).

This sentiment is further echoed in the *Apology* in which Socrates, in his defense against charges of corruption, stresses that he is not concerned with the public dealings of the polis. Instead, he claims to be concerned with the private and divine: "it may seem curious that I should go around giving advice like this and busying myself in people's private affairs, and yet never venture publicly to address you as a whole and advise on matters of state" (31c). Although Socrates minds the private business of others, he does so in a manner void of any political agenda. Indeed, he later says that, "the true companion of justice, if he intends to survive for a short time, must necessarily confine himself to private life and leave politics alone" (31e), which is to say that the just, happy man will not mind the business of the polis at large; he will instead dwell with the divine in private, receiving messages from his *daimon*. Socrates describes his *daimon* directly afterwards, stating that he never publicly gives his advice: "I am subject to a divine or supernatural experience …. It began in my early childhood—a sort of voice comes to me, and when it comes it always dissuades me from what I am proposing to do, and never urges me on. It is this that debars me from entering public life" (31d).

Unwilling to mind the business of the polis, the philosopher thereby does not mind the business *exclusively* of the desirous portion of the soul; *epithumia* is, for the philosopher, sublimated through *nous*, cut from that which ties the person to the polis in his mere bodily existence. That is, he is freed from the political impulse to gain an external measure of wealth. His soul, in effect, is in no way political, and is instead driven towards wisdom through the love of learning. To call upon the metaphor from the *Phaedrus*, his soul "grows wings" and transcends the bodily, and hence the earthly polis, even though he must first begin with the earthly in order to transcend it. Still, this is simply to say that such transcendence creates a vertical gulf between those who are wretched, slaves to money, and those "happy few." As such, the philosopher can have no position in the polis in a political, utilitarian sense. He is, in that regard, *useless*, for

his love cannot be incorporated in the polis in a fashion that will render it "useful." With philosophy being useless in such a sense, Adeimantus' worry in Book VI can now be said to be definitively answered and, with the creation of a *pathos of distance* through the differentiation of pleasures as they are tied to the differing portions of the soul, a gulf between the philosopher and the sophist is established. As such, the use of *aporia* and *mimesis* by both figures is differentiated. Although Socrates throws Adeimantus into *aporia* concerning the uselessness of the philosopher who would rather dwell in an educational, private home, the end of Book IX resolves this seeming perplexity.

So instead of seeking wealth external through the practice of his art, the philosopher gains internal wealth as he experiences the truest pleasures, and, it is precisely because of his uselessness that he is able to do so. In effect, this anti-utilitarian nature of the philosopher is the condition of possibility for the praxis of his philosophic art. That is, if he were to mind the business of the polis, giving him a political function, he would not have the time to tend to the care of the soul. Since the sophist politically exists in a way in which he can exploit his *technê* for profit, he has no private time to devote to the true *praxis* of philosophy. To him, "time is money," to borrow the cliché, which has become a sort of mantra in our everyday, political (in terms of being part of *hoi polloi*) existence.[19] This sentiment is echoed in *Hippias Major*, in which the title interlocutor expresses his lack of time due to his constant wandering amongst cities. As Hyland explains in *Plato and the Question of Beauty*, Hippias, who is a "prototypical sophist," is described as a "busy man with 'no leisure'."[20] That is to say that the sophist lacks the time and commitment to privately practice the philosophic care for the soul that is an internal production of the otherwise virtuous, just soul: well-balanced and eudaimonic. The sophist, as a man concerned only with external gain, cannot experience the pleasure internal to philosophy. His pleasure is limited to that of gain, in being busy with political involvement—he has no ability to *undergo* the pathos of true pleasure.

In effect, the differences between the philosopher and the sophist springs forth from these vertiginous distances between the two—it is an abysmal difference, not a dialectical one. And this is because, returning to Nietzsche, the viewpoint of utility is entirely foreign to those who

experience a noble pathos, who are of the higher ruling kind: "The point of view of utility could not be more alien and inappropriate to such high-temperature outpouring of the highest value-judgments."[21] Bringing Nietzsche's words to bear on Plato's *Republic*, the philosopher "king" is truly the noble dialectician who rules with justice a city within (i.e. the soul), which produces the greatest of pleasures which are absolutely irreducible to utility.

NOTES

[1] Plato, "Apology," in *Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1989), 17b. All further references will appear in the text.
[2] Plato, *Republic*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 279d-e. All further references will appear in the text.
[3] The sophist can be seen as a man of *ressentiment* in the *Apology* who reactively values *Socrates* as a corrupter of the youth.
[4] See Freidrich Nietzsche, "The Problem of Socrates," in *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1971), 29-34.
[5] Although the philosopher is rendered apolitical in a utilitarian sense, whether he is truly and purely apolitical remains to be questioned. In this paper, I will take up the stance that the philosopher is apolitical insofar as he cannot be reduced to utility, however, perhaps his avoidance of a political role itself can be seen as a deeply political position.
[6] Sarah Kofman, *Comment s'en sortir?* (Paris: Éditions Galilée,1983), 39.
[7] Kofman, *Comment s'en sortir?*, 34.
[8] Socrates is quite literally trapped in Cephalus' house (*oikoe*), seized to partake in a discussion on justice. He becomes further trapped there by way of Thrasymachus' argument, which he must overcome to fulfill the discussion at hand, and ascend back up from the Piraeus. Here, Socrates is also linked to the philosopher king who is compelled to leave his lofty contemplation and descend to the earthly business of the polis—to manage its public household.
[9] *Poros* is not to be confused with *odos*. The former denotes a waterway or a path forged in a body of water versus any form of a path (Kofman, *Comment s'en sortir?*, 18). The etymological tie between poros and *aporia* is important here, for the dialectic forges a specific path (poros)—a waterway—that "clears" *aporia* as

it is compared to the disorienting pathos of being lost at sea. Kofman points to the sematic familial tie in *Comment s'en sortir?* (p.17) while also referencing the various nautical metaphors Socrates employs while trying to work through *aporia*. For instance, in reaching a state of perplexity concerning the education of women in the *Republic*, Socrates remarks: "Then we too must swim and try to save ourselves from the argument, hoping that some dolphin might take us on his back or for some other unusual rescue (453e), .

[10] It should be noted that Socrates refers to philosophy solely as an erotic techne—*erôtikê technê* (*Plato's Erotic Dialogues: The Phaedrus*, trans. William S. Cobb. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 257a.)—differentiating the praxis of the dialectic as *epistêmê* from other crafts.

[11] Kofman, *Comment s'en sortir?*, 39.

[12] Kofman, *Comment s'en sortir?*, 29.

[13] Kofman, *Comment s'en sortir?*, 33.

[14] Kofman, *Comment s'en sortir?*, 39.

[15] Plato, *Republic,* 586e-587a.

[16] Drew Hyland, *Plato and the Question of Beauty*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 117.

[17] Kofman, *Comment s'en sortir?*, 33.

[18] Plato, *Republic,* 489b.

[19] Our quest to make the most of our time in terms of monetary gain is doomed to failure once we become slaves to metaphysical, clock time with which we equate profit that can be measured quantitatively based on a homogenous scale determined by the equation of time to money. In Heideggerian terms, the inauthentic time of the clock is not the measure of time in any original/primordial sense. To be sure, in being preoccupied by measuring time, we 'lose' time and in effect ourselves (insofar we take Dasein to be time): "Dasein is there with the clock … Dasein reckons with and asks after the 'how much' of time, and is therefore never alongside time in its authenticity. Asking in this way about the 'when' and 'how much', Dasein loses its time," (Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, trans. William McNeill, (Blackwell: Malden, 1992), 15). And, in losing its time, Dasein loses itself for "time is Dasein ... Dasein is time, time is temporal. Dasein is not time, but temporality" (Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, 20). From these observations, we take ourselves to be determined by a counterfeit measure of time and money, which is what bleeds us from any authentic experience of ourselves and the pleasure of having time as one's own.

[20] Hyland, *Plato and the Question of Beauty*, 9.

[21] Freidrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, (New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1996), 13.

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THE WALKING DEAD
The Roman Legal Personality in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*

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> *… The tremendous power of the negative; it is the energy of thought, of the pure 'I'. Death, if that is what we want to call this non-actuality, is of all things the most dreadful, and to hold fast what is dead requires the greatest strength … But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself.*
>
> *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, §32

Embarking upon his phenomenological investigations, Hegel commits himself to accompany *natural* consciousness along the road he characterizes as "the pathway of doubt, or more precisely, as the way of despair" (§78).[1] His is not solely a tale of defunct worlds and continually abandoned hopes, as lugubrious as a book of failures might sound. Rather, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* harbors the uncanny energy of consciousness, a force that will not die even when it comes up against the very limits of existence and utter meaninglessness. In a certain light, human negativity seems an eerie and relentless drive, powering human life towards a more total account of the world and a deeper understanding of itself. Any historical account must be at some level retrospective, but Hegel seeks above all to make this story also of live action, so the process—the troubled life—of consciousness is just as integral as its final shape in this phenomenology; he wants his philosophy to be "an actual existence" and not "a lifeless universal," a "corpse which has left the guiding tendency behind it" (§3). Fundamental to this narrative of different forms of human thought and life is the (qualified) reality of death, the presence of which seeps of out Hegel's language and thinking even from the very beginning of the "Preface." As mentioned in the epigraph, death might and must creep into life so that life will not end at death.

In the *Phenomenology*, it is the work of Spirit and then of the individual to translate the "non-actuality" of death into some bearable reality in human life, and it is this work that gives rise to the respective shapes of Spirit and the individual. Death first enters the scene in the Master-Slave dialectic following the first glimpse of another human being, and even though at this point there is only a prototypical version of a shared world that ultimately will be Spirit, it is apparent that a robust notion of death is only possible within the register of recognition. Life and death compose the sole axis of negativity and human relations in the as yet worldless plateau of the Master-Slave dialectic—the passing of natural and perceptive consciousness to self-consciousness. Because the limitations of self-consciousness will not allow us to see a wider and particular world, it is in Greece and Rome that we find the more mature and properly *spiritual* treatments of death. In this paper, I will pursue the relationship between death and Hegel's figure of the Roman legal personality specifically, as this investigation might prove to be relevant to understanding our own practices and values concerning death today.

First, Spirit itself should be sketched. It is with a sense of relief as well as pride that Hegel declares at the beginning of the section of Spirit, "Reason is Spirit when its certainty of being all reality has been raised to truth, and it is conscious of itself as its own world, and of the world as itself" (§438). Spirit is a thicker realization of the hypothetical model of "'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'" (§177). The *Notion* of Spirit is found as the consequence of the philosopher's theoretical approach to the problem of satisfaction and yet endurance of self-consciousness as Desire. Spirit is moreover a full—and actual—achievement of the improbably executed antecedent of mutual recognition in §184, in which each consciousness is "aware that it at once is, and is not, another consciousness, and equally that this other is *for itself* only when it supersedes itself as being for itself, and is for itself only in the being-for-self of the other." To touch on the power of Spirit alluded to in the epigraph, it is only within this network of recognition, of self-consciousness *and* collectivity, that we can deal with the limits of life and even of Spirit itself. Spirit emerges as the only medium in which the inevitability of death, "*if that is what we want to call this non-actuality*," can be incorporated while its devastating reality is diffused. Spirit constitutes for

the first time in the *Phenomenology* a real world, which is necessarily concerned with the devolution of its practices; it is the mediation of universality and particularity, but it must be so in terms that do not shy away from the concrete, given nature of human life. The task of Spirit, according to Hegel, is to triumph in the realm of meaning in a way that reaffirms the shared world in question as the most fundamental reality, even in the gaping face of non-being.

To visit the Greek ethical orders immediately preceding Rome in the *Phenomenology*, death is first a natural event that must be claimed by human meaning through the Family, but it can also be the means by which Human Law seeks to break the natural bonds of the Family—when the political order demands the life of a citizen. The Greek world stages the conflicting claims of the politically oriented universal self that are primarily shaped by culture's negation of natural bonds and of one's naturally informed, but still universalized, identity.

To read these ethical orders with an eye to what values constitute the forms of devolution, or the modes of transferring the existent world to the incoming generation, it is evident that there are two claims at work in the Hellenic world. On the one hand, culture can be passed down all the more cleanly among male citizens, while on the other, the Family takes care of the messy natural facts of death, of birth, child-rearing, and the other dark necessities of life "underground" as it were, or in the home. The home and the grave are in fact not so different, for family burial places might as well be considered extensions of the family home, as women would make regular visits to the grave with libations and cakes. Each citizen of the Greek polis (who was recognized as such, one's familial status, as native and of a certain class, being certainly pertinent) has two faces. With the political persona posturing on the one side as utterly non-natural, the familial one always looks toward and actually crystallizes upon death, when it becomes a universalized individuality. Culture in the form of non-natural, political customs and laws is bequeathed to citizens, while the natural business of home, station, wealth, and name—and in fact, the very work of proving that humans are more than mere natural beings—follows natural and even once matrilineal lines. If individuality and the inheritance of the form of life along contradictory gender lines were the issues that Greek ethical life

could not sufficiently reign in, then we must read the next specimen—the Roman legal status—as informed by, and indeed the attempted reconciliation of, these pressing issues.

In Greek life, "the hidden divine law" is concerned with claiming the natural animal that a human being *is* as an individual and self-consciousness, but in the Roman, "soul-less" constellation of the world, the latent individuality

> emerge[s] from its inward state into actuality; in the former state the individual was actual, and counted as such, merely as a blood-relation of the family. As *this* particular individual, he was the departed spirit devoid of a self; now, however, he has emerged from his unreal existence (§477).

Hegel traces the genealogy of legal personhood from the Greek universal individuality and its obverse, the corpse, burial having been the ultimate act of recognizing one's family member as being more than just a natural being. The issue of death and its attendant abstraction are now determining poles of orientation within the community, for they reach all levels of Rome's cultural institutions.

It is the dead and abstract individual that rises to orient the institutions of Rome; the contentious spirit of the dead is reborn as the Roman Legal personality so that death itself is no longer as monstrous and powerful. Death, the most terrible apotheosis of our natural being, becomes that which the Roman consciousness can countenance; this is not unlike the earlier transition from natural to self-consciousness. That is to say, the Roman ideal of individuality is not dependent on death for its accomplishment. In Rome, property and legal rights are the primary means to deal with life and death, and this degree of abstraction and mediation in effect denatures the conflicting and divisive meanings of death within the acknowledged order of values. In following the different functions of death and the varying degrees of avowedness of its centrality in these later passages on Spirit in the *Phenomenology*, it becomes clear that it is not possible to satisfactorily overwrite the natural limit of human life within a spiritual register. Moreover, along with this diminishing value of death comes a complication of the meaning of life as natural beings in a more enriched sense. Spirit, the inheritable matrix of social relations and

practices that constitute a world, is still able to survive such misevaluations, but the trajectory for the modern complications of death's meaning (for instance, in the Terror and our contemporary legal institutions) is already set in the Roman legal personality.

In Rome, spiritual commonality is governed by the principle of abstract individuality following the realization that the individual's centrality ultimately breaks up the beautiful whole of the Greek world. Notably, substance is "itself unconscious" because individuals now possess "a separate being-for-self," and it is no coincidence that this construal of subjectivity is couched in terms of *possession* (§477). Hegel reads this degree of abstraction to essentially spell itself out as emptiness, just like that of the Stoic. Personhood thus becomes an aggregation of rights, namely that of property, and all claims of meaning (for both the individual *and* the collective that unites under the principle of this individuality) are conflated with property, the mere owning of things. Those insubstantive material goods that are now supposed to stand in for an ideal of the person are masked by the proclaimed highest value of the individual as individual, which is—importantly and obviously—too abstract and idealized a claim to have any grip. This negative significance of property will be complemented, as we will see, with the positive advent of "mineness," a category that relies on the recognitive participation of all those within a community.

On the surface, the natural and given fact of sex holds too much sway over Greek life, so while its influence and importance still obtains, it is nonetheless sublated into an abstracted and further spiritually determined form in Roman life. This speaks to a progressive realization of the degree to which Spirit determines its own social reality. In addition, regarding the reformulation of the power of nature in determining Spirit, the fact of death—a most important facet of our natural being—should not drop out of view. In fact, the Roman personality can be seen as a form of Spirit that seeks to incorporate the fact of death into its institutions *via* controlling the inheritance of the world according to a new form of Spirit. As Hegel writes rather opaquely: "We saw the powers and shapes of the ethical world swallowed up in the simple necessity of a blank Destiny" (§477). "Blank Destiny" refers to exigencies of war and the contingencies of the given natures of

the individual warriors that determine who lives and who dies when at war, upon which ultimately is staked the victory and endurance or defeat and death of the community itself.[2] The contingency and instability of this world was certainly not lost on the Roman people, especially during the days of Empire. As Hegel writes, "This power of the ethical world is the substance reflected into its simple unitary nature; but that being which is reflected back into itself, that very necessity of blank Destiny, is nothing else but the 'I' of self-consciousness" (§477). In Greece, Family and Human Law have an exclusive claim on what the individual human being is, and these confront each other most dramatically and explicitly in the instance of someone's death. The natural fact of death and our self-consciousness, that other gloss of "blank Destiny" being the fate of all to quit this world, is that which served as a terminus of the Greek ethical order, which Rome could not claim to mediate totally, given natural necessity.

Against the backdrop of this unavoidable passing of every individual, there emerges a concept of the individual that is essentially unattached to the matter of life: it is the empty "I". This "I" of self-consciousness is what is separated from the content of life, and through this separation it is related to the lived world in a more mediated fashion. This is the very same structure of the Stoic, which develops out of the Master-Slave dialectic. Hegel draws out the compositional similarity himself:

> …[the Stoic] is absolutely for *itself*, in that it does not attach its being to anything that exists, but claims to give up everything that exists and places its essence solely in the unity of pure thought. In the same way, the right of a person is not tied to a richer or more powerful existence of the individual as such, nor again to a universal living Spirit, but rather to the pure One of its abstract actuality, or to that One *qua* self-consciousness in general (§479).

The beautiful world of Greek ethical life has broken and it is no longer possible for individuals to be filled with an unquestionable substance. The world of meaningful lives is no longer safe, so the givenness of a particular life must be accounted for by the particular beings themselves

(while being, again, unconscious of this substance). This is how the Stoic is fashioned out of both the slave, who realizes that she has the capacity to form and think and so uses these tools to devalue the lived world of bondage, and the master, who witnesses this faculty of form and further sublates her notion of freedom to one of thought, thereby attaining a power and pleasure that is divorced from the world of experience. In fact, the world's shaken meaningfulness is the very spiritual condition that enables the phenomenon of Stoicism itself to arise: "Stoicism could only appear on the scene in a time of *universal fear* and bondage" (§199, my italics). Hegel specifies in the language of self-consciousness that

> *to think* does not mean to be an *abstract* 'I', but an 'I' which has at the same time the significance of *intrinsic* being, of having itself for object, or of relating itself to objective being in such a way that its significance is the *being-for-self* of the consciousness for which it is [an object] (§197).

So, too, must the shared ideal of the empty "I" in Roman Spirit be pitted against itself as objective being, because only thereby might it prop itself up into a posture of sovereignty over the world.

The positive aspect of personality consists in this projection of the self into the world. The legal person "finds before it a manifold existence in the form of existence in the form of 'possession' and, as Skepticism did, stamps it with the same abstract universality, whereby it is called 'property'' (§480). The person *identifies* with certain bits of the objective world, but this identification still must be qualified; the ideal of the individual in thought, or its legal paradigm, must be the primary and more explicitly valuable version so that the person is not immediately reducible to his stuff. In the spiritual order of Rome, this abstract universality is a common orientation within the shared world, so it becomes the mediating lens through which legal persons recognize the world and one another. The objective world, that manifold existence, becomes that which is to be owned by persons whose rights are guaranteed (and contrived) by the law. Now that we are well on our way within the world of Spirit, the actual world of institutions that facilitate recognition is available to us.

Like the Stoic and Skeptic, the legal person has an ideal of mastery that affords self-congratulatory pleasure specifically in the economy of qualified freedom it constitutes. The legal person, however, is split in practice: he is a bunch of stuff over which the idea of mastery reigns, and he is the empty locus of institutional rights that is free to do what he wants to with his own material possessions. The idea of the free and entitled individual then seems to have escaped the natural world and all its given problems, because though empty of the deep meaning of ethical life, what personality amounts to is power. But just as Stoicism and Skepticism are attempts to flee the problems that arose in the lived world of the master and slave, once again, we must see the problems that undo the beautiful Greek order as essentially informing the next spiritual community that takes its place. While above it is clear that the necessity for mechanisms of worldly transmission is complicated by the claims of individuality, the centrality of the given limits of human life, natality and death, makes these the terms to be targeted and overcome. The construction of this "sheer empty unit of the person" for whom "*reality* [is] a contingent experience, and essentially a process and an action that comes to no lasting result," for whom life might be boring or meaningless, is itself the result of frustration with these facts of nature, in terms of their underlying significance and the related practices surrounding them (§480).

Spirit has progressed in understanding its essentiality in forming its reality to the degree that Nature is no longer a limit of the same stature. Through the institution of law, Spirit has found ways to mitigate and veil the sometimes terrifying indifference of natural givenness. The institution of property is a spiritual means by which living individuals can bypass the contingency of birth and the natural fact of their inevitable disappearance; or, at least they can claim to overrule these natural events and try to preempt them through the power to decree themselves what is to become of the stuff of their lives. The legal person has an artificial system in place by which each individual can determine how and to whom his world will be transmitted. The natural facts of birth and death are, in a sense, overcome because now there is a spiritual avenue to avoid the finality and power of givenness. The ubiquity of adoption in Roman life is testament to this: there is the totally unstigmatized practice of

adoption, which involved the exchange of a son for a substantial sum of money, as well as the convention whereby a dying father can "give" his children to another family and thus effect guardianship under the *pater familias* of his choosing. These manners of determining human relations rely on legal precedents and rights, as well as the will of the particular Roman person. They exist to ameliorate unfavorable natural situations—like today—and are common and essential for Roman politicking. From beyond the grave, one's desires over one's own property can still be in effect. While still alive, one can determine one's own heirs or give away one's property in a way that is not dependent on the actual occurrence of one's death, whereas in Greek life, the transmission of the world and the advent of the individual itself relied on the actual death of the person, on the presence of a corpse. Given this tack, Rome stands as the attempt to deal with the fact of death by organizing the inheritance of the world effectively while everyone is still alive—which would mean everyone, according to the law, is recognized as already as good as dead. Would natural death then be merely redundant of the kind of death one can bring about through the legal and institutional mode of recognition? There is no *necessarily* natural aspect to the bequeathal of the world, as it is rather already relegated to and thus accomplished by the legal apparatus. According to the institutional values of Rome, upon a person's death, only the right to be recognized as an empty atom and the associated material goods might be passed along—but as specified by one's will, the appropriately titled legal document. Any other means of mourning the loss of a loved one beyond the glorification of his power and even the means to recognize those who do not have the status of a person do not have a place in the Roman spiritual understanding of itself.

To further touch on the phenomenon of property, one's things can be left to one's family, but they can also be sold beforehand, destroyed beforehand—all of which is the prerogative and *right* of the individual whose rights and freedom are facilitated and authorized by the law. The fact remains, therefore, that whatever power the legal person might have over his property, such a relationship is necessarily alienated. Hegel writes, "to describe an individual as a 'person' is an expression of contempt," because although this form of Spirit has neutralized much of

Nature, the Self that it is left with is still an abstract universal on the one hand and a bunch of stuff on the other (§480). As the domicile of the Roman personality has been engulfed by the values of the public world and perhaps vice versa, the Greek Family and its bedrock of spiritual meaning have been significantly altered. The Roman home is now the seat of ownership, and its resemblance to the Roman state is uncanny (and again, vice versa). The version of absolute power that results from the amalgamation of legal rights constituting the individual occurs in both the governing order and the family, and its reliance on the authority of personal ancestors and the history of their own city is quite different from the unquestionable Divine Law of Antigone, the ethical ground for the entire community. In Rome, even the gods become more personal and alienated, as patron gods are divvied up among atomized families, the genius of the *pater familias* is worshipped in each household, and emperors themselves become deified.[3] The escalating primacy of isolated power over Substance and the Greek concern with human meaning is evident in these shifts, as the recognition of the individual informs the increasingly alienated yet inescapably shared culture. Yet the singularity that was unleashed by Antigone's deed is found nowhere in the dominant articulation of the Roman Self; rather, one must be born into this legal system of recognition, qualify to be granted the status of personhood, and still one's power remains an empty universal. Again, a rich notion of the individual is made impossible by the abstraction that subjugates and obscures the content of life. By individuality becoming the mere empty idea of an individual, the pure individual is "alienated from itself" (§483); one is a blank idea of a self (a self that might as well be dead) and a mere token of patrimony.

The manner in which Hegel concludes the section of Legal Status seems as if it must be provisional, to say the least, because although it ends in flames (sparked by the emperor's megalomania), it is obvious that the institution of property rights has survived and even dominates today. The model of sovereignty that arose as an exponential amplification of the empty personality and its rights is the direct reflection of the empty atomic model. Occurring on both the level of the family and of the state, the absolute person, be it the *pater familias* or the *pater patriae* (if the emperor chooses to adopt that titular function), is not bound by any

substance that would affirm the connectedness of the collectivity and the ethical interdependence that safeguards human meaning. Hence, the relationship becomes one of explicit power— potentially even over life and death. Hegel's account of the demise of Rome is basically concerned with the utter destructive behavior and dissolution of the governmental form that follows from absolute power, with no grounded meaning but utter legitimacy. Without limits coextensive with the acknowledgment that one shares the world with other valuable self-consciousnesses, the lord and master of the world remains bent on wild destruction because either other persons become alien and purely hostile threats to his power, or his most capricious desires are freed by his absolute power. The trend of alienation exhibited in the emperor comes to be true for Rome generally: because there is no meaningful content within the legal person and its epitome, the absolute person, the only mutual recognition possible is an alienated one. Power, the social translation of one's legal persona, is empty of intrinsic meaning and yet the means by which persons recognize others, and the legal personality ends by learning that it lacks substance, because "the alien content makes itself authoritative in it" (§482).

In this paper, we have seen the transformations of the poles of meaning from the Greek Family and the order of Human Law and the State, which, although doomed to clash, did manage to hold down a meaningful world for a time. As the issue of the actual death of individuals—the natural fact of mortality, or our mortal nature—proved to be uncontainable, Roman Spirit is the attempt to reign in the necessity and power of death's disturbing reality by creating the artificial, shared system of law. Such a spiritual matrix allows the distribution of the world to rely not necessarily on natural facts of blood or the actual natural event of death but rather on the universal rights that one qualifies for. The legal personality is thus a further alienation (read: mediation) of the human's spiritual identity from the related statuses of natural and a more than natural being, which jeopardizes the possibility for real meaning in the actual events of birth and death. The guillotine for the redundant slaughter of many in the Terror is already being sharpened on the degree of abstraction present in such a formulation of the individual. This version of the self, the ideal and the intangible mass of rights that willfully

omits mention of the body, overcomes the limits of the body through the powers "naturalized" by the legal apparatus. The facts of embodied life and actual death must be further acknowledged so that natural mortality, givenness, and birth are not to become so obscured as to cease to matter. For as Hegel says of self-consciousness,

> It is this power, not as something positive, which closes its eyes to the negative, as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then, having done with it, turn away and pass into something else; on the contrary, Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being. This power is identical with what we earlier called the Subject, which by giving determinateness an existence in its own element supersedes abstract immediacy, i.e. the immediacy which barely is, and thus is authentic substance: that being or immediacy whose mediation is not outside of it but which is this mediation itself (§32).

Our status as natural beings must still be acknowledged and sublated—thus retained—within our world. The given facts of our natural being are just that which must be tarried with, faced, and spiritually recognized in the ongoing attempts to ground a meaningful death and a meaningful life.

NOTES

[1] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). All subsequent references to this work will appear in the text.

[2] Beyond even the fact that conquered peoples witnessed the destruction of their own respective worlds at the hands of the Romans, the Roman subjects themselves had enough time during the decline of Rome to undergo the sufficiently traumatic collective experience of their world crumbling, which in turn served to make the Christian prospect of liberation from this life and

ascension to heavenly home appealing enough for the empire to convert. The Unhappy Consciousness, however, has yet to arrive.

[3] It is perhaps now appropriate to mention Hegel's later discussion of Rome within the register—and therefore language—of religion, in §750-54. The power of a divine pantheon is irreconcilable with the authority of the new seat of highest value, abstract individuality. The world becomes mundane –the gods now reside in the city like average citizens, as anything like the sacred and terrible Mount Olympus is spiritually impossible– and the mythical gods are replaced by "*disembodied*" ideals and relative banalities (or earth-bound lunatics, as will be seen in the progression of the Legal Person). Following the realization that Spirit is lost, or that "God is dead," the unfulfilled permutation of Spirit is forced to assume a posture of unhappy longing, which in Rome takes the form of a very particular attitude towards the past and the ensuing creation of their spiritual genealogy. The knowledge of this absolute loss is expressed as the seemingly religious worship of the past, or more specifically, of a now defunct ethical life in which spiritual meaning was still alive. As Hegel writes, "The statues are now only stones from which the living soul has flown…" (§753). Roman culture becomes a sort of memorialization of this dead world; this could explain the compulsion to repeat the Greek forms of beauty in sculpture and architecture, perhaps even the reappropriation of the Greek pantheon itself. Moreover, in mythologizing their own genesis as the direct extension of the Greek epic, Roman culture is fundamentally, though at the level of picture-thinking, let's say, declaring that its essence lies within Greek ethical life, which was a great world of meaning but is no more. Structurally akin to the Unhappy Consciousness, its essence that promises satisfaction is elsewhere. This construal of Rome is especially biting in its applicability to the modern world, and especially his friend Hölderlin, whose nostalgia characterizes the Romantics.

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FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY AND THE WORK OF DEATH

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Luce Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* provides a critique of Freud's understanding of woman and femininity by undermining stereotypes that render women frozen in the role of reproduction. By critiquing Freud's major works, Irigaray reveals how the "fact of castration"[1] is a myth that serves the primacy of the phallus and the dominance of a culture in which the only available subjectivity is masculine subjectivity. In Irigaray's interpretation of Freud, woman can never choose the object of her own sexual desire because she is always already the object of man's sexual desire. Woman must either submit to objectification and passive femininity, or she must perform the masculine role, that is, she can reproduce and reinforce only masculine desires.

According to Irigaray, one way in which woman reproduces masculine desire is through the work of death. In her interpretation of Freud, Irigaray points out that only man is able to "work out" the death drive.[2] Because of her constitution, woman is relegated to merely "servicing" the work of the death drive. In normal human mental functioning, the death drive and life drive simultaneously work on an individual's pysche to maintain a healthy balance. While the death drive aims towards an earlier state of organic stability in which tension levels are reduced, the life drive produces instability by increasing mental tension. The motive of the life drive is to bind sexual energy so that it may be sublimated or directed onto an object of desire. This binding process enables the integration of the psyche into the external world and the production of subjectivity. Freud derives the production of both male and female subjectivity from masculine experience, and thus, Irigaray claims that this understanding of subjectivity prohibits woman from forming her own object of desire. Instead, femininity, so construed by Freud, based upon the singularity of masculine desire, places woman in the service of masculine subjectivity. His formulation of the psychological

development of woman uses femininity as a prop for a theory of subjectivity based on the singularity of masculine desire.

I intend to argue in favor of Irigaray's charge against Freud, and moreover, I want to insist that without the representation of the female-reproductive-maternal, masculine subjectivity falls apart. A theory of subjectivity based on the singularity of masculine desire does tremendous violence to woman's identity and any re-formulation must do better than simply "include" woman within the economy of male desire. What is needed is a theory of subjectivity that respects the plurality of sexual desire and difference.

Irigaray's re-reading of the death instinct reveals how Freud's theory of human sexual development is flawed because it only accounts for one subjectivity based on masculinity. She argues that this flaw is represented in the current socio-cultural divisions between women and men at the time of her writing. Despite nominal achievements such as gaining social privileges, earning higher wages, and working most of the same jobs as men, women are usually still expected to perform these "new" roles in a masculine way. Beyond this, woman's only remaining options often require that she uphold a certain ideal of femininity. In order to better supplement and substantiate Irigaray's argument, I will first demonstrate how this feminine ideal is not representative of female autonomy; instead, it reflects the interests and desires of a society shaped by masculinity. I intend to argue that in both the feminine and masculine roles, woman's performance provides a mirror for man's masculinity. Finally, I will argue that, rather than having a feminine voice of her own, woman reinforces the singular masculine values within a culture that is regarded as providing the opportunity for the freedom of autonomous identity.

Repetition as the Work of Death

For Irigaray, repetition is the method by which woman services male subjectivity and performs the work of death. It is a negative behavior that supports the primacy and singularity of one subject. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud considers the nature of repetitive behavior and how it appears in neuroses. Repetition of traumatic events characterizes certain

neuroses and contradicts what Freud had previously argued was the main principle of mental functioning, the pleasure principle.

The pleasure principle, one of the most primitive instincts, manifests itself in the libido, either by increasing pleasure or decreasing "unpleasure"[3] in order to protect the mind from unpleasant stimulation. According to Freud, the instincts stimulate the mind and provide it with the impetus for discharging tension.[4] One of Freud's best examples of this is found in the postulate that all dreams are wish-fulfillments. An unpleasant experience in waking-life can take on the most delightful results within dreams. [5] Yet the compulsion to repeat—exemplified by neurotic patients who endlessly repeat traumatic events in their dreams—is more powerful. For such patients, the pleasure principle is disabled or at least displaced, since the dreams of traumatized individuals appear as horrific renditions of the original trauma, not as wish-fulfillments.

Guided by the pleasure principle, the mind seeks to "bind" the stimulus which causes it displeasure.[6] A healthily functioning individual may be able to control the instinct through dreaming, fantasy or sublimation. If the instinct remains unbound, the individual is in danger of a traumatic mental disturbance, yet once the instinct is bound or mastered, normal mental life can recommence. Thus, according to Freud, the work of mastery is necessary in order that the pleasure principle may proceed without interruption.[7]

Freud presents the case of Ernst's *fort-da* game in order to examine the relationship between repetition, trauma, and mastery. In this famous case, Freud observes a young child mimicking his mother's departure through a game in which the boy throws a ball attached to a string out of his crib and reels it back in with the accompanying cries of "*fort*!" and "*da*!" At first glance, it appears as though little Ernst is simply repeating a situation that can be traumatic for young children. Yet Freud sees nothing in this example that suggests a principle more primitive than or contrary to the pleasure principle. By turning his love-object into a part of his game, the child can bring his mother back whenever he wants. According to Freud, the child uses repetition to transform a passive situation—the traumatic experience of losing his mother—into an

experience of mastery through which he reduces his feeling of "unpleasure."

From early childhood, repetition in waking life is the work through which one achieves mastery. Furthermore, Freud points out that within dreams, repetition serves a similar purpose. He says, "These dreams are endeavoring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis."[8] Repetition is meant to prepare the dreamer for the surprise of the trauma in the relived experience. While in accordance with the primacy of the pleasure principle Freud had previously argued that all dreams are wish-fulfillments, his later findings on repetition indicate that mastery appears to take precedence over the pleasure principle. The compulsion to repeat must therefore be primary to the pleasure principle since, within dreams, repetition is the vehicle through which the subject can begin to master trauma "retrospectively."

Freud also observes the primacy of the compulsion to repeat between patient and analyst. In the analytic situation, a patient will shift onto the analyst desires, feelings, and behaviors formerly connected to her past. This "transference"[9] facilitates the revealing of the patient's unconscious, the space in which repressed memories are stored. Freud reveals that

> these reproductions, which emerge with such unwished-for exactitude, always have as their subject some portion of infantile sexual life—of the Oedipus complex, that is, and its derivatives; and they are invariably acted out in the sphere of the transference, of the patient's relation to the physician.[10]

Through repetition, transference revives a failed narcissistic experience from the past. This indicates that repetition is used retrospectively to master the situation at hand.

For Freud, repetition indicates the desire to master an unpleasant experience or situation. The retrospective nature of repetitions, illustrated both in the "*fort-da*" case and the transference situation, indicate that repetitions are performed unconsciously, which is to say compulsively. Additionally, evidence of repetition in dreaming indicates unconscious retrospection. The strength of this unconscious behavior

seems to override the pleasure principle in guiding mental life. The result of Freud's speculation leads him to redefine instincts, the guiding principles of the mind. He writes,

> It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life.[11]

According to this redefinition, the instincts express something essential about organic beings, namely, the desire to restore life to its most ancient and primitive state. The desire to restore an earlier state of inertia—expressed through the instinctual repetition—is an expression of the death drive.

Freud therefore posits the death instinct as most primary; its task of repetition takes place prior to mastery. The instinct characterized by repetition "[operates] against the purpose of the other instincts, which leads, by reason of their function, to death; and this fact indicates that there is an opposition between them and the other instincts…."[12] This new definition of instinct counteracts the pleasure principle to which Freud had formerly associated the sexual instincts. According to Freud, the ultimate aim of the sexual instincts for woman and man is reproduction.[13] Since reproduction is a futile result to an instinct striving towards death, he posits that the sexual instincts are in the service of the life instincts.

We now have before us two sets of instincts. The death instinct is characterized by repetition. Mastery through repetition is necessary in order for the life instinct to function, which is to say, so that the sexual instinct (the libido) may be appropriately discharged. Freud writes,

> In (multicellular) organisms the libido meets the instinct of death, or destruction … [it] has the task of making the destroying instinct innocuous, and it fulfills the task by diverting that instinct to a great extent outwards … towards objects in the external world. The instinct is then called the

> destructive instinct, the instinct for mastery, or the will to power.[14]

Repetition enables the mastery of the death drive and ensures the evanescence of the libido. In the cases of repetition cited by Freud, the compulsion to repeat takes the form of a repressed trauma or failed narcissistic experience from childhood. The revived experiences are repressed experiences. The inability to overcome the repressed memory through repetition is the inability to overcome the death instinct. If mastery is not possible, an individual will continually repeat what the psyche perceives as a failed experience.

Through the work of repetition, an individual either overcomes her self-directed anger for a narcissistic failure in order to direct the energy outwards, or the aggression remains directed at her self. Sadism is the ability to choose a sexual object of the individual's own desire upon whom to divert libidinal energy: it enables one to overcome the self-destructive death drive. The inability to master the self-destructive tendencies of the death instinct is marked by masochism, or the directing of aggression onto the self. But "primary masochism" precedes the period in which an individual is able to choose an external object upon whom to direct aggression. Because the object to which masochism directs aggression is the self, it corresponds to an earlier period in childhood development when the ego is narcissistic and object choice is auto-erotic.[15] "Secondary masochism" is then the result of a sadistic tendency turned back onto the self.[16] This return to the narcissistic self is primary masochism revisited: the destructive tendencies are directed against the self due to an inability to master the instincts.

According to Irigaray's analysis, the feminine character that Freud assigns to woman (based on her castration anxiety) prevents her from being able to perform the important task of choosing a sexual object necessary for the task of mastery. Only man can overcome the destructive tendencies of death: "the death drives can be worked out only by man, never, under any circumstances, by woman. She merely 'services' the work of the death instincts. Of man."[17] Irigaray argues that Freud's feminine character is condemned to repetition. Therefore, woman cannot overcome her own destructive tendencies, and by her

repetition she performs the work necessary for the masculine mastery of the death instinct. This implies that some advantage is conferred on an individual who can "work out" the death drive and, moreover, that man has a natural advantage over woman within a Freudian context.

How Woman "Services" the Work of the Death Instincts

Much of Irigaray's critique of Freud pivots on the supposed "fact" of castration and the problematic anxieties that surround it. Throughout his writing, Freud repeats the notion that woman is biologically castrated, and, as Irigaray points out, the recognition and acknowledgement of this "fact" has severe psychological consequences. Freud begins his theorization of sexual development with little boys, and notices the attention given to the phallus. In order that he may have a complementary theory of female sexual development, he claims that little girls also believe that they possess a phallus. Because she has not yet learned otherwise, the little girl believes her clitoris is a "little penis." Already at this stage the girl is defined as a lesser version of her male counterpart.

According to Freud, this obsession with the phallus symbolizes the ubiquity of primary ego-identification with the father. For the boy, castration anxiety develops out of feelings of rivalry with the father. This rivalry enables him to move into the Oedipal phase of development. The result of successfully overcoming his narcissistic anxiety is that he can maintain his primary ego-identification with the father, developing a positive form of subjectivity.[18] The girl, however, will eventually realize that she does not possess a penis. The resultant anxiety she experiences, her "penis-envy," sparks the belief that she has been castrated.[19] Acceptance of this fact enables a little girl to move into the Oedipal phase of development, but in the process, she incurs a wound to her narcissism. The result of this wound is that she always afterwards understands herself as a "lack," as the negative of masculinity. In this way femininity does not simply oppose masculinity, but rather, it frames masculinity as the sole positive form of subjectivity.

This explanation of childhood development demonstrates how it is that Freud construes masculinity as the single form of subjectivity.

His formulation of female anatomy defines woman as a "lack" by creating a castrated/non-castrated dichotomy between woman and man based on "irrefutable, because natural, proof." The psychic and social meanings of the female body are thus founded upon this notion. Freud derives his explanation of femininity from an imaginary fantasy of bodily completion (possessing a phallus) and from a signifier that makes present an absence (castration). The resulting account of femininity does not describe what is truly feminine but instead reinforces the primacy of the phallus.

Furthermore, with the "discovery" of her castration (which, according to Freud, characterizes femaleness) a little girl's psyche can follow one of three paths: to develop frigidity, hysteria, or some form of neurosis; to take on the masculine role; or to assume her destined feminine role.[20] Each of these roles, as described from the male point of view, is founded upon the notion of her "lack" and consequent envy springing from a desire to have what she can never possess. Woman's supposed castration is her narcissistic failure; due to her inability to choose a sexual object of her own, this failure is continually repeated throughout her life. The repetition of woman's lack of a phallus reinforces man's possession and desire for one. Through woman's repetition, man overcomes his primary narcissistic anxiety.

Additionally, Freud undervalues the importance of woman's complex sexual anatomy and consequent sexuality. Because the little girl's own fascination with clitoral stimulation is linked with the belief that she possesses a penis, she relinquishes this pleasure when she accepts her castration. Simultaneously, she exchanges her identification with the father for the desire to have his baby. Through this exchange, a girl's sexual desire is no longer auto-erotic. She becomes the object of masculine sexual desire, the aim of which is reproduction. For woman, sexual pleasure can no longer be associated with the clitoris: it must be replaced by the vagina. Moreover, because the vagina, for Freud, serves the singular purpose of reproduction, he cannot acknowledge its erotic potential. Rather than recognize woman as a sexed being with a complex anatomy, Freud reduces her multiple possible desires to the single desire to reproduce.

According to Irigaray, the desire for reproduction symbolizes the repetition of masculine desire. In her view, subjectivity is constituted by auto-erotic object-choice. Based on Irigaray's model of subjectivity, within Freudian theory, woman cannot produce autonomous desires. Instead, female subjectivity is characterized by repetition of masculine desire. Just as the clitoris serves as the inadequate placeholder for the "missing" phallus, femininity merely mimics masculinity as its similar but lesser counterpart. She writes,

> For the "penis-envy" alleged against woman is—let us repeat—a remedy for man's fear of losing one. If she envies it, then he must have it. If she envies what he has, then it must be valuable. The only thing valuable enough to be envied? The very standard of all value. Woman's fetishization of the male organ must indeed be an indispensable support of its price on the sexual market.[21]

Irigaray believes that with the feminine role construed as a lack, a castration *and* as the negative version of masculinity, the phallus can retain its role as the primary organ of desire and sexual activity. Female desire remains a fantasy or fetishization in which woman only mimics or reproduces masculine desires. Although woman does not possess a phallus, she can reproduce the fantasy of having one; although she cannot identify with the father, she can harbor the fantasy to reproduce with him. Moreover, by way of repetition, woman's "fetishization of the male organ" services the strength of the male subject and reinforces man's narcissism.

Irigaray argues that this connotation of the woman's sexual desire, which envies the male organ and is aimed at reproduction, preserves the "evanescence" of the (masculine) libido.[22] The sexual development of woman, constructed as "lack" and as the negative of masculinity, places reproduction at the center of her desire, and the child, the product of this reproduction, is understood to belong more to its father than to its mother. Thus the object of her desire belongs to the father, while her desire is simply to provide the vessel for her father's reproduction. The role of femininity is therefore to be of service to masculine reproduction.

The evidence of woman's "service" to man, according to Irigaray, can be seen in the many roles she must perform. She invokes the polysemy of the term "services" to demonstrate woman's multiple roles: fulfilling a duty or a punishment; maintaining an operation or machine; meeting the needs of someone or something; paying interest on a debt; copulating. Within marriage, "she will be assigned to maintain coital homeostasis." As mother, "she will also be the place referred to as 'maternal' where the automatism of repetition, the re-establishment of an earlier economy, the infinite regression of pleasure, can occur."[23] As wife and mother, woman is the figure of stability and maintenance within a familial structure. She is the place to which man can return to revive and fulfill his earlier childhood desires for his own mother. Through copulation, she reaffirms man's possession of a phallus and reinforces her own "lack."

By accepting her castration, she turns away from her auto-eroticism. Through the repetition of masculine desires, woman relinquishes her own subjectivity in order to be subservient to another. According to Freud, masochism is inherently feminine in nature and its "sufferings carry with them the condition that they shall emanate from the loved person and shall be endured at his command."[24] Masochistic fantasies include the desire to be copulated with, to be castrated, or to give birth to the father's phallus; they are derivatives of the desire to reproduce, to have the father's child. Irigaray points out that nothing in these fantasies is "inherently" feminine; rather, the definition of femininity, as written from a male's point of view, reduces woman to these characteristics.

Maintenance, preservation, and reproduction are the tasks achieved through woman's repetition. The work of repetition, as performed by woman, symbolizes the sacrifice of her own, autonomously created feminine subjectivity. The sacrificial act of repetition enables the masculine libido to remain evanescent. In this way, man overcomes death, through the service of woman.

Simultaneously, through the perpetual sacrifice of her own auto-erotic desires, woman repeats her own death. Woman's primary narcissism, the "wound" of her castration, is the self-destructive "fact" she must accept, and secondary masochism reinstates the memory of her

"lack."[25] The expectations of a society which attempts to define distinct masculine and feminine roles requires women to choose between mimicking masculinity and accepting the fact of castration. In an effort to retain some semblance of femininity, women *do* accept castration, denying their own subjectivity and performing the feminine role prescribed for them. Due to the nature of Freud's theory, however, women must submit to symbolic death, whether or not they choose to accept their castration. In no situation are women capable of producing their own subjectivity because they always mimic an already prescribed role.

Conclusion

Irigaray argues that in order for the (masculine) libido to maintain its evanescence as the source of sexual desire, the death instinct must take "a detour through the revitalizing female-maternal."[26] The "automatism of repetition,"[27] or, the compulsion to repeat her castration (the failed narcissistic experience), is the work of feminine subjectivity and the work of death. This work is necessary to facilitate the discharge of the masculine libido through the life instinct. Therefore, woman's repetition of masculine desire also serves sexual reproduction, the preservation of the species. In other words, woman, characterized by an inadequate repetition of masculine desires, only performs the work of death. She is confined to the work of death, just as she is confined to repeat her desire for the phallus.

By performing the work of death, woman supports the primacy of masculine desire. She sacrifices her own feminine subjectivity, functioning instead as the place for the inscription of repressions. Because she "lacks" a penis, she lacks the ability to signify her own, autonomous desire. The "fact" of woman's castration refers not to her own genitalia, but rather, to man's fear of being castrated. Woman's role, within Freudian theory, on Irigaray's account, is, as the support for a masculine subjectivity, based on the singularity of masculine desire. Without her repetition of his desire, the "rhythmic oscillation" between the life and death instincts necessary for the construction of the psyche could not be maintained.

NOTES

[1] Sigmund Freud, "Some Psychological Consequences," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIV*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1915), 135.
[2] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 53.
[3] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVII*, 7.
[4] In Freud's words, an instinct is a concept "on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body," (Freud, "Instincts and their Vicissitudes," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIV*, 112).
[5] Even suspiciously unsettling "punishment dreams" satisfy this theory: the punishment simply fulfills the wish of the sense of guilt felt in reaction to a repudiated impulse (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 37.
[6] See Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 30.
[7] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 41.
[8] Anxiety is a defense mechanism used to prepare an individual for the surprise of fright (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 37).
[9] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 17.
[10] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 19.
[11] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 35.
[12] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 48.
[13] Because of the different ways in which girls and boys pass through the Oedipal phase, this ultimate sexual aim is fulfilled differently for each sex as well. For woman, her aim is linked with her desire to give birth, to be copulated with, as opposed to man, who chooses the object of his "penetration." See Freud, "Infantile Genital Organization (An Interpolation into the Theory of Sexuality)," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIX*, 139-146.
[14] Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIX*, 164.
[15] "Similarly, the transformation of sadism into masochism implies a return to the narcissistic object. And in both these cases [i.e. in passive scopophilia and masochism] the narcissistic subject is, through identification, replaced by

another, extraneous ego. If we take into account our constructed preliminary narcissistic stage of sadism, we shall be approaching a more general realization—namely, that the instinctual vicissitudes which consist in the instinct's being turned round upon the subject's own ego and undergoing reversal from activity to passivity are dependent on the narcissistic organization of the ego and bear the stamp of that phase," (Freud, "Instincts and their Vicissitudes," 132).

[16] "We shall not be surprised to hear that in certain circumstances the sadism, or instinct of destruction, which has been directed outwards, projected, can be once more introjected, turned inwards, and in this way regress to its earlier situation. If this happens, a secondary masochism is produced, which is added to the original masochism," (Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," 164).

[17] Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 53 (original emphasis).

[18] He also gets to keep his penis. The little girl however, who never had one in the first place, remains castrated. See Freud, "Infantile Genital Organization (An Interpolation into the Theory of Sexuality)," 144-146.

[19] Furthermore, the little girl blames her mother for her castration. Irigaray's charge against Freud throughout her essay is that he provides biological-anatomical evidence for his arguments. She argues however, that scientific discourse is guilty of theorizing from a masculine point of view and cannot defend its "neutral" objectivity. See Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 53-54.

[20] In "Female Sexuality," Freud writes that, "At some time or other the little girl makes the discovery of her organic inferiority—earlier and more easily, of course, if there are brothers or other boys about. We have already taken note of the three paths which diverge from this point: (a) the one which leads to a cessation of her whole sexual life, (b) the one which leads to a defiant over-emphasis of her masculinity, and (c) the first steps towards definitive femininity," (Freud, "Female Sexuality," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXI*, 231).

[21] Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 53.

[22] Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 53.

[23] Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 53.

[24] This statement follows Freud's discussion of the two other forms of masochism, erotogenic and feminine masochism (see Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," 165).

[25] For Irigaray, the hysteric symbolizes she who refuses to mirror the notion that she has been castrated.

[26] Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 54.
[27] Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 54.

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PERFORMING DIGNITY
The Restorative Value of Bodily Resentments

Grace Hunt

Jean Améry, an essayist and survivor of Auschwitz, claims that dignity hinges on the external affirmation or deprivation by others.[1] In *At the Mind's Limits,* Améry analyzes the degradation performed against the Jews as a way to arrive at a conferred definition of dignity. He writes that, "if I was correct that the deprivation of dignity was nothing other than the potential deprivation of life, then dignity would have to be the right to live."[2] Dignity, in other words, would thus require the consent of society insofar as social recognition, and not necessarily political right, inform Améry's crucial claim that

> It is certainly true that dignity can be bestowed only by society, whether it be the dignity of some office, a professional or, very generally speaking, civil dignity; and the merely individual, subjective claim ('I am a human being and as such I have my dignity, no matter what you may do or say!') is an empty academic game, or madness.[3]

Speaking from his own experience of torture in Auschwitz, Améry concludes that one's worth (dignity) can actually be granted or negated by others. It therefore makes no sense to claim it on one's own behalf. Axel Honneth's concept of dignity echoes this sentiment, which is to say that dignity is a value a person possesses only insofar as it is conferred by others. Honneth tells us that, "inherent in our everyday use of language is the knowledge—that we take for granted—that we owe our integrity, in a subliminal way, to the receipt of approval or recognition from other persons."[4] If dignity hinges on external affirmation, then self-worth cannot be intrinsic or performative.

Yet against his earlier claim about conferred dignity, Améry adds another, one that is not immediately assimilable to this recognitive or conferred framework of dignity. Referring to the possibility of resistance available to a person undone by violence, Améry says that "the degraded

person, threatened with death, is able … to convince society of his dignity by taking his fate upon himself and at the same time rising in revolt against it."[5] This is to suggest that, faced with the actual threat of death, the final annihilation of dignity, there remains an ineradicable appeal to a desperate capacity for self-preservation *via* a kind of performative resentment.

My work attempts to augment this claim into "bodily resentments" which emerge in cases of extreme violence[6] so as to reconcile Améry's two claims—dignity as conferred and dignity as self-affirmed—by bringing Améry's account of fighting back into the conversation through Susan Brison's account of resistance in *Aftermath*.[7] After surviving a nearly fatal sexual assault, the American philosopher struggled to recuperate dignity *for herself*. Her account reveals the performative character of dignity for survivors. Thus, by employing both Améry's and Brison's understandings of the meaning of the body as it fights back, I will attempt to develop an account of the fundamental relationship between resentment and dignity. To this end, I will first elaborate upon the ethical meaning that the body acquires as it resists through an analysis of Améry and Brison's narrations of their varying attempts to resist their attackers. I will then suggest that within Brison's recovery narrative, the implicit role of resentment emerges from her attempts, by means of her self-defense class, to regain her dignity. To illustrate the restorative power of bodily resentment, I explore the relationship between Brison's inability to resent and her subsequent inability to regain a sense of self-worth. Ultimately, however, I argue that Brison's account indicates an ersatz for dignity—self-respect performed via resentment—that exists in limit cases of extreme violence.

The Language of Resentment

Resentment articulates a claim about an injury or insult as a *denial* of some recognition (i.e. I resent that my personal space, my rights, or my social status have been denied or hindered). But implicit within the claim of resentment is an *affirmation* about one's sense of self-worth. Jeffrie Murphy develops this thought when he says,

> Resentment functions primarily in defense, not of *all* moral values and norms, but rather of certain *values of the self*… I am, in short, suggesting that the primary value defended by the passion of resentment is *self-respect*, that proper self-respect is essentially tied to the passion of resentment, and that a person who does not resent moral injuries done to him [sic] is almost necessarily a person lacking in self-respect.[8]

Understood in this way, resentment acknowledges that something owed or expected has been denied, but it also expresses a desire to have been treated better. In resenting, I acknowledge the denial of *and* desire for some form of acknowledgement. I define *bodily resentments* as self-defensive reactions to denigrations and violations of the body.[9] They can occur during harm (as self-defense) or after harm (as performative resentment). Both, I argue, carry claims of self-respect. Bodily resentments are reactions not required in everyday circumstances. These resentments, I argue, are reserved for transgressions against what Améry calls the "bodily boundary." He says:

> The boundaries of my body are also the boundaries of my self. My skin surface shields me against the external world. If I am to have trust, I must feel on it only what I *want* to feel.[10]

In the case of torture, security and dignity—normally granted at the level of rights—are denied on the surface of one's body. It is in this way that Améry brings the body into his articulation of dignity. Now, if we understand self-worth as exclusively conferred by others, then the defending self-worth *via* the defense of one's body loses force. That is, if dignity can only be conferred by others, then the claims of bodily resentment have no traction in such limit cases. But we find a very different articulation of the value of resentments in the accounts of Améry and Brison; in each account, bodily resentments are used as a desperate attempt to fight back against an attacker and thereby articulate a right to life. Their bodily resentments, I argue, actually become a condition of the recuperation of conferred dignity.

Fighting Back

Although Améry maintains that dignity must be granted by society, he nonetheless articulates how, in the most desperate cases, the denial of dignity can be resisted. The first step he says is the unqualified acknowledgement of the denial. Having read the Nuremburg Laws in 1935, he realized that they applied to him and that they expressed, in "legal-textual form," the verdict "death to Jews."[11] He admits that he could have taken "intellectual flight" and denied the new reality of German society, and maintained for himself a fantasy of intrinsic self-worth. He was tempted at times to say, "I am what I am for myself and in myself, and nothing else."[12] Against this temptation, Améry understood he had to accept this verdict and act-out in spite of it. Which is to say that, even though Améry knew his dignity was actively being denied legally and socially, he nonetheless tried to "initiate proceedings to regain [his] dignity."[13] This unauthorized repossession required Améry to remember what he had forgotten in the camps and what he claims turned out to be "more crucial than the moral power to resist: to hit back."[14] The claim of Améry's bodily resentment is most clearly illustrated in an encounter with a former prisoner foreman.

Améry recounts an instance wherein he recognized a prison foreman who had once struck him in the face. Empowered by vengeful resentment, Améry lunged forward and struck the foreman in the face, returning the original assault. He tells us,

> My human dignity lay in this punch to his jaw… I was my body and nothing else: in hunger in the blow that I suffered, in the blow that I dealt. My body, debilitated and crusted with filth, was my calamity. My body, when it tensed to strike, was my physical and metaphysical dignity. In situations like mine, physical violence is the sole means for restoring a disjointed personality. In the punch, I was myself—for myself and for my opponent."[15]

Améry's striking back reveals a kind of performative resentment that "gives concrete social form to [his] dignity by punching a human face."[16] With the possibility of dignity located (however precariously) in his fist,

Améry's story suggests that a fragmentary experience of self-respect can be operative even when a more robust or conferred dignity is lost. This subversive undertaking exemplifies what I call *bodily resentment* insofar as it is a desperate attempt to express self-worth at the level of the body after its having been denied during the attack. Améry's account of striking back upholds the necessity of revolt rather than any metaphysical or moral articulation of the body's surface.

In limit cases where one is faced with death, physical resistances may not entail one's right to life, but they nonetheless counter the denial of dignity with an actual performance of life. One might thus say: "you may not be permitting my existence, but I'm performing it nonetheless." For Améry, this resistance took shape as a resentful counterattack against a guard who had once beat him. He was of course beaten after his retaliation, but was satisfied with himself nonetheless—and not for reasons of courage or honor. Rather, he acted "because I had grasped well that there are situations in life in which our body is our entire self and our entire fate."[17] Thus, his bodily resentments can be understood as having performed an alternative, self-fashioned demand for dignity.

Brison's retelling of her encounter with her attacker is a complicated narration of her attempt to resist totalizing harm *during* and *after* the attack. Even though she had been, as many women are, "primed, since childhood, for the experience of rape,"[18] she admits the sheer incomprehensibility of the experience of brutal violence. Her narrative account of the attack with its varying responses to harm reveals several different stages or types of resistance, including what I will call rational, practical, and ethical resistances, the last of which most closely resembles bodily resentment. Analyzing her narrative in its approximate chronology, I will develop the meaning of these three different attempts to resist harm.[19]

Having been unexpectedly grabbed from behind and dragged into the bushes, Brison initially believed that she would have a chance to get away relatively unscathed so long as she could find something to say.[20] In her first attempt to resist, Brison spoke to her attacker and tried to *reason* with him. She addressed him directly, calling him "sir," in an attempt to "appeal to his humanity."[21] In speaking to her attacker, Brison attempted to articulate her right to self-preservation (a right that

she knew he would have to preserve for her). This first address was a language-based response; it expressed her rational self-interest. These interests are supported by ideals of justice, equality, intrinsic worth of persons, etc. It was her attempt to get her attacker to realize she was a person who did not want to be harmed, and that he—also a person—should not harm her. At this initial moment of the attack, Brison's social standing in the world was being denied and she attempted through reasoning and language to re-engage a recognitive contract; she needed him to see her as a person deserving of mercy.

Brison recounts that when her appeal to his humanity had failed, she "addressed herself to his self-interest."[22] Realizing that she would be unable to reason with him, Brison's resistance changed. This shift in resistance marks a realization about survival; her social standing would not be spared, and her life was now under threat. If she were going to survive, she would have to suppress her will and submit to his. This "practical" self-interest was an attempt to deny her own rational self-interest (not to be attacked) in order to protect her physical self from death. She recounts that she told herself to "just follow his orders. Give him what he wants and he'll leave me alone."[23] The suppression of one's rational self-preservation enabled Brison, for the time being, to give up control over her self in order to preserve a more fundamental level of life. She relinquished her desire to maintain her standing as a person deserving of mercy, in order to protect the possibility of survival.

This practical forfeiture and subsequent submission was, however, short-lived. Brison recounts, "although I'd said I'd do whatever he wanted, as the sexual assault began, I instinctively fought back."[24] She articulates her physical resistance as a strategy that was her "body's idea."[25] Against her rational and practical self-interest that guided the earlier two attempts to resist harm, this third type of resistance inspired her to "fight like prey pursued by a stronger predator … using animal instincts, not reason."[26] This bodily "decision" ultimately so enraged her attacker that he strangled her until she was unconscious. Her instincts were, it seems, desperately attempting to protect something other than mere life. Her bodily resentments, incited by the sexual side of the attack rather than the attack on her life ("after all, there are two criminal acts to explain here"[27]), attempted to protect what was being attacked *via* sexual

violence: a fundamental sense of self-worth. Brison's body mobilized a kind of self-interest of ethical action, whereby her "*body had categorized and responded* to [her] attacker when there was no hope for communication."[28] This desperate and self-defensive revolt against the sexual attack marks a decidedly bodily *and* ethical refusal. Bodies threatened by rape and torture, illustrated by the testimonies of Brison and Améry, retain the capacity to react to harm; this capacity is an expression of ethical self-interest designated to protect a fundamental bodily dignity.[29] It is a spirit, Améry contends, that still stirs when death confronts him and tries in vain to exemplify its dignity.[30]

In addition to this recognitive refusal of dignity, however, there remained within Brison the possibility of a physical and nonetheless ethical enactment of dignity. This fact does not override the recognitive structure of the encounter, but supplements it with an additional source of dignity found in the expression of bodily resentments. Brison's account, like Améry's, illustrates a possible challenge to the recognitive view that dignity can only be conferred.

Loss of Trust in the World

I am not suggesting that striking back restores or prevents what would otherwise be lost.[31] But I do want to highlight the way in which self-defensive action is tied to dignity in both Améry's and Brison's accounts. Améry describes his long-awaited counter-attack as an administering of justice. He believes his fist attempts to reinstate a normative boundary, which in this limit case, is a body-boundary. Brison's articulation of her varied attempts to resist offers a more complicated account of the different ways she experienced the denial of dignity. For Brison, however, resistances during the attack did not actuate an experience of restored dignity. In fact, it was not until long after her attack that she could even direct feelings of anger toward her attacker. The sexual assault destroyed Brison's capacity to resent. Before turning to my analysis of how Brison's restored resentments enabled *her* return to life, I want to say more about the specific problem of rape as a form of denigration of dignity that results in the loss of the capacity to resent.

In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Axel Honneth's concept of conferred dignity develops out of D.W. Winnicott's object relations theory of emotional development. Winnicott posited that human beings develop—*via* the body—basic feelings of security that support all future relationships. These constitutive feelings of trust or security result from an infant's symbiotic relationship (or "undifferentiated intersubjectivity"[32]) with its primary caregiver. The trust developed first through omnipotence (wherein the infant hallucinates that all care is derived from itself) is constitutive for Honneth in the sense that it underwrites a capacity to develop a sense of self-confidence, or a trust in self.[33] In addition to this constitutive trust, dignity further develops from affective and bodily fulfillment best understood in terms of Winnicott's description of the "holding stage."[34] Referring to Winnicott's theory, Honneth writes that, "it is only in the protective space of 'being held' that infants can learn to coordinate their sensory and motor experiences around a single center and thereby develop a body-scheme."[35] The development of the sense that one is loved enables children and finally adults to have interpersonal proximity and at the same time a capacity for being alone.[36] Which is to say, if the primary caregiver is able to give "good-enough" care, an infant will develop out of its precarious dependence on the caregiver and learn to differentiate itself by articulating its own needs. Having those needs met develops into what Honneth understands as one type of conferred dignity: love. If a subject's "body-scheme"[37] (her integrated sensory and motor capacities) is constituted through love that, for infants, is only experienced through the body by the tending to of needs, then we can begin to see how violence targeting the body disrupts a developmentally fundamental body-scheme and its associated feelings of safety and trust.

Brison's near-fatal sexual assault brought about a fundamental loss of trust in the world, a term Améry uses to explain his experience of the world after having been tortured. This loss of trust entails the eradication of security, but also, and crucially, the eradication of the expectation of help. Rape, like torture, reduces emotional relatedness (relations that are intimately known through the body's surface and feelings) to a humiliating one-way relation; a "perverted togetherness" whereby one person's will extinguishes another's. In this relation,

neediness and dependence characteristic of Winnicott's "holding stage" are brought to their limits and basic emotional and psychological expectations are destroyed. A person who is denied of those psychosomatic supports becomes a physical body lacking organized structures of relatedness. The loss of the expected reciprocal structure indicates a fundamental loss of trust in the world. Brison acknowledges that, "when the trauma is of human origin and is intentionally inflicted … it not only shatters one's fundamental assumptions about the world and one's safety in it, but it also severs the sustaining connection between the self and the rest of humanity."[38] Brison turns to Améry's account of the way traumatic physical harm can undo one's capacity to make sense of the world, where making sense of the world is the ability to feel "at home" or secure in the world. Brison takes this to mean that, "one's ability to feel at home in the world is as much a physical as an epistemological accomplishment."[39]

The Restorative Power of Resentments

Brison speaks of the seemingly insurmountable difficulty she had in directing anger towards her attacker in the months after the attack. Brison had to re-learn her resentment by becoming reconnected with its motivating ingredients: feelings of anger and the concepts of blame and justice. She learned from other rape survivors that the inability to resent one's attacker is a common experience, and it is ultimately a problem in the capacity to blame. She recounts that while her husband wanted to kill her attacker, she struggled to attribute blame accordingly. Brison's frustrated and misdirected "anger" (she blamed herself—a common tactic for victims of sexual violence—in order to regain a sense of control) represents her initial and frustrated attempts to resent. This self-blame is *both* a sign of diminished self-worth *and* a practical defense against utter helplessness. Re-engaging anger and resentment became for Brison a matter of re-learning how to defend her body. Physical self-defense courses had everything to do with Brison's ability to resent:

> One might think it would be easier, and it certainly would be more appropriate, for victims of violence to blame their

> assailants…. I was stunned to discover that the other women in my rape survivor's support group were, like me, unable to feel anger toward their assailants, and I was surprised to learn later that this was not unusual. It was not until after I had taken a self-defense course that I was able to get angry with the man who had almost killed me.[40]

In order to feel anger towards her attacker, she would "have to imagine herself in proximity to him, a prospect too frightening for a victim in the early stages of recovery to conjure up."[41] Instead, Brison blamed herself and in doing so, recovered a false (and perhaps temporary) sense of control over her fate. Self-blame can, in this sense, be seen as an adaptive survival strategy, especially if "the victim has no other way of regaining a sense of control."[42] Brison defends her strategy of self-blame against those who misunderstand it as "*merely* a self-destructive response to rape, arising out of low self-esteem, feelings of shame."[43] Self-blame, she contends, is not equivalent to diminished dignity. Brison insightfully describes self-blame as a desperate need for control in response to the unmet expectation of help and the subsequent feelings of helplessness. While I agree that self-blame is a common adaptive response to the loss of control, I also think self-blame is intimately tied to a diminished dignity. Which is to say that self-blame is a result of an inability to externalize or perform her anger—a capacity that she lost when her dignity was denied.

Anger and externalized blame return for Brison once she recovers some minimal sense of safety through consistent love and support from her family and friends, in addition to adequate distance from the original threat. Prior to taking self-defense classes, Brison's anger was directed at "safer targets": first herself, and later, her friends and family. These initial exercises in resentment are reminiscent of the Winnicottian scene of an infant who unconsciously tests its mother with aggressive attacks. If Brison's family can survive these attacks and offer consistent emotional encouragement, she will become aware, for the *second* time, that she is part of a world that she can trust.

In addition to the support of her family, the physical enactment of bodily resentments was required in order for Brison to come back to life.[44] The only way to break the double bind of self-blame and

powerlessness was to enact a kind of self-empowered bodily existence. "We had to learn to feel entitled to occupy space, to defend ourselves," Brison recounts in reference to her self-defense training, adding that, "the hardest thing for most of the women in my class to do was simply to yell 'No!'"[45] Through the verbal and physical delineation of one's body boundary—a kind of self-representation taken for granted when one feels a basic trust in the world—a body-related sense of security re-emerges and re-develops. Claim-making in the most basic sense described by Brison (the ability to deny another's claim upon one's body by yelling "No!") must, in the most desperate cases, be re-learned through talk therapy and "supplemented by action, for example, self-defense training—a kind of embodied narrative itself…."[46] It is no wonder then, that the word "no" is taught alongside kicks and punches. Language bolsters and further articulates the claim that her defensive body performs; together language and action affirm Brison's desire and right to protect her body from harm, and to have it protected. Brison's account of her re-emergence through self-defense is an instantiation of the capacity to re-learn oneself *via* the performance of one's body boundaries. Brison's experience of attaching aggressive and defensive movement to language illustrates how the ability to restore a fundamental trust in the world is linked to one's freedom of movement and the freedom to resist. Both of these freedoms are articulated and performed through Brison's bodily resentments.

Basic trust can be recovered I argue, by remembering and re-enacting that earlier feeling of security. I take this to be the implicit claim of Brison's work; namely, that enacted physical security underpins recovery from trauma by enabling one to make sense of the world again, to reorganize a body scheme that had been disorganized by violence. If bodily resentments can signal and resist diminished dignity, as well as facilitate a person's reintegration into a social community, then even when resistance fails in the moment of the sexual attack, a deeper kind of dignity (in the form of the memory of trust and safety) lingers such that the possibility of recuperation remains. I argue that while loving recognition is necessary for the recuperation of dignity, it is not sufficient. One's self-respect must be remembered and re-enacted via bodily

resentments. The re-emergence of the self *via* performative resentment in Brison illustrates this point.

Conclusion

As I read it, Brison's recovery narrative depicts how she re-learned self-respect through her bodily resentments. In this way, Brison's narrative elucidates an intimate relationship between the expression of bodily resentment and the recuperation of self-respect. This enactment reinstates the capacity to use language as the primary source of deliberate claim-making. Of course, this is something that in everyday life is taken for granted since in everyday life we can communicate our needs and expectations through language—we do not always need to physically express them. Within limit cases of violence, however, when the expectation of respect is lost, we find an embodied challenge to the standard recognitive view of dignity. In these most desperate cases, we find that Améry and Brison both feigned conferred dignity, what I call a self-fashioned ersatz for dignity, before the former could be properly restored. By presenting oneself as a deliberate and self-respecting person, one names oneself and projects the demand for respect out on the world. In this way, my reading of Brison's recovery complicates the structure of conferred dignity.

My account honors the developmental story offered by Honneth, but adds to it an account of how, in those most desperate cases, one can actually reconstitute oneself for a second time. We can therefore take seriously the possibility that a body that has lost dignity in the *recognitive* or *conferred sense* can re-enact self-respect through bodily resentments. Granting this, there exists in a truly embodied sense a self-fashioned dignity—*self-respect*—that enacts itself prior to the substantial recuperation of social recognition.

NOTES

[1] Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities,* trans. Stanley Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 89.
[2] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, 88-89.
[3] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, 89.
[4] Axel Honneth, "Integrity and Disrespect," in *Political Theory* (20:2, 1992), 188. This article also exists in similar form in Honneth's *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, trans. Joel Anderson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 131. I refer to the earlier article version because it states more explicitly the *receipt* of approval and that the recognition is a mechanism that is taken for granted. All other references to Honneth will be from *The Struggle for Recognition.*
[5] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits,* 89.
[6] Extreme violence or limit cases of violence are herein defined as cases of physical abuse that are traumatic in the sense that they induce within the victim an overwhelming threat to security and/or life at the hands of another person. For the purposes of this paper, torture and violent sexual assault are considered paradigmatic of the type of harm that such violence commits. As Améry and Brison both make clear, torture and rape are able to destroy not only the feeling of safety, but the expectation of it.
[7] Susan Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
[8] Jeffrie Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 16.
[9] Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 131-144.
[10] To be sure, Améry is here suggesting a controversial understanding of a defensive body; by describing his skin as a kind of fortified boundary Améry seems to side step the fact of his skin's inherent fragility. It was after all on that very surface that he was tortured and rendered totally defenseless. See Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, 28.
[11] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits,* 89.
[12] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits,* 90.
[13] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits,* 90.
[14] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits,* 90.
[15] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits,* 90.
[16] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits,* 91.

[17] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, 90-91.
[18] Brison, *Aftermath*, 88. I too remember participating in a requisite self-defense class at my primary school. I was in the sixth grade, and the female instructor had us enact attack situations, demonstrating physical moves we were expected to make, as eleven- and twelve-year olds against presumably adult attackers. I remember realizing at one point that we were learning how to defend ourselves from being *sexually* attacked, not, as I had originally assumed, from being robbed or bullied.
[19] My analysis might be seen to loosely correspond to Honneth's three levels of denigration, although I do not think any strict correspondence exists. Brison's particular experience cannot be reduced to a conceptual model, and moreover, the book itself book admits a kind of refusal to over-intellectualize trauma.
[20] Brison, *Aftermath*, 88.
[21] Surprisingly, as Brison faded in and out of consciousness, her struggle to resist her death using language repeated itself: "even later," she says, "when I thought he was going to kill me to prevent me from talking about the rape, I managed to think of things to say, such as the story that I'd been hit by a car…" (Brison, *Aftermath*, 88). She knew reasoning would ultimately fail. When she realized, after repeatedly being choked, that he in fact wanted her dead, she stopped trying to reason with him and insteaded pleaded, attempting once again to engage his humanity or sense of mercy.
[22] Brison, *Aftermath*, 2.
[23] Brison, *Aftermath*, 88.
[24] Brison, *Aftermath*, 88.
[25] Brison, *Aftermath*, 88.
[26] Brison, *Aftermath*, 89.
[27] Brison, *Aftermath*, 3.
[28] Brison, *Aftermath*, 89.
[29] Of course, victims of extreme violence can lose the capacity to react. Améry describes the "Mussulman," a type of camp inmate that is "a staggering corpse, a bundle of physical functions in its last convulsions" (Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, 9).
[30] Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, 16.
[31] Primo Levi, an Italian Jewish writer and Améry's barracks-mate in Auschwitz, calls Améry's entire victim morality one of "returning the blow." While Levi claims he admires Améry's decision to fight back, he admits he does not regret never having known how to. In fact, while it is possible that people who fight back and return the blows achieve dignity, they pay a very high price

to it, since "they are sure to be defeated," (see Arne Johan Vetlesen, "A Case for Resentment: Jean Améry versus Primo Levi," in *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2006, 35. Also, see Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, New York: Random House, 1988).

[32] Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 98.

[33] Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 132-133. Honneth's analysis refers to Winnicott's *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (London: Hogarth Press and the Insititute for Psychoanalysis, 1965) and *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971).

[34] Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 99.

[35] Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 99.

[36] Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*,104.

[37] "Body-schema" is a phenomenological term, a concept that denotes an integrated set of skills that can anticipate and incorporate a world. I take this definition from Taylor Carman's "The Body in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty" in *Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1999.

[38] Brison, *Aftermath*, 40.

[39] Brison, *Aftermath*, 46.

[40] Brison, *Aftermath*, 74.

[41] Brison, *Aftermath*, 13.

[42] Brison, *Aftermath*, 74.

[43] Brison, *Aftermath*, 74.

[44] Brison, *Aftermath*, 13.

[45] Brison, *Aftermath*, 14. Similarly, Améry admitted to the difficulty in relearning "the ordinary language of freedom" (Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, 20). Moreover, Améry says that even having 'relearned' this language 20 years after losing it, he never fully regained "real trust in its validity" (Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, 20).

[46] Brison, *Aftermath*, 68.