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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction

Nathan Jun and Shane Wahl

> So, although I refuse to indulge in idle chatter about "hope," I trust that it will not be offensive to the many who are suffering if I conclude by reaffirming that the resources of the human spirit (art, philosophy in the broadest sense, the sciences, and in short all that is to be understood as culture), enhanced as they are now being by the developing new dimension of mind to which I have referred, are still available for those who retain the strength and courage to retain to transcend the new materialism that has supplanted the old and venerable societies to which this book has been dedicated.
>
> —William L. McBride
> *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe*, 1999

> Abandon hope.
>
> —William L. McBride
> After George W. Bush's second election, 2004

William Leon McBride was born on January 19, 1938, in New York City, the only son of successful, highly educated parents. His father, William Joseph McBride, was a pharmacist who completed his education at Columbia University. His mother, Irene Choffin McBride, was a high school English teacher who

graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Hunter College. Bill attended Iona Preparatory in New Rochelle, New York. From there he went to Georgetown University, where he served as editor of the college paper, *The Hoya*, and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1959. Bill studied at the Université de Lille on a Fulbright Scholarship from 1959 to 1960 before enrolling in the graduate program in Philosophy at Yale, where he was Richard Bernstein's first Ph.D. student. He earned his Master of Arts in 1962 and his doctorate in 1964 with a dissertation on "The Concept of Fundamental Change in Law and Society."

  Bill met Angela Barron at Yale while he was completing his Ph.D. and she was completing her master's degree in Psychiatric Nursing. Both were asked to stay on and teach at Yale; after their first year of doing so, they were married on June 12, 1965. Bill was hired as Assistant Professor at Yale in 1966; his and Angela's first daughter, Catherine (Cammie) Alexandra McBride, was born the following year. Cammie is currently Professor of Developmental Psychology and Associate Dean at Chinese University of Hong Kong. She has a son, Leeren (17), and a daughter, Claire (14). In 1970 Bill was promoted to Associate Professor at Yale and his and Angela's second daughter, Kara Angela McBride, was born. She is currently Assistant Professor and Director of the Master's Program in Spanish at Saint Louis University. Bill's first book, *Fundamental Change in Law and Society: Hart and Sartre on Revolution* (based on his Ph.D. dissertation) was published in the same year by Mouton and Company.

  In 1972 Bill's bid for tenure, which had been unanimously approved by the Yale philosophy department, was overruled by the Executive Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.[1] In response, a group of undergraduate and graduate students circulated a petition protesting the decision,[2] but it was ultimately upheld several months later by the Senior Appointments Committee.[3] The unexpected and seemingly arbitrary nature of the decision—coupled with the fact that two other Marxist philosophy professors, Kenley Dove and Kenneth Mills, were also denied promotion and forced to leave Yale around the same time—led some to suspect McBride was being purged on account of his radical politics, a notion his superiors firmly rejected.[4]

  Bill himself, however, while not denying that his Marxist beliefs played a role in his dismissal, attributed it instead to resentment on the part of certain senior faculty. According to the *Yale Daily News*, "On one occasion in late 1969 he supported a very lenient decision of the Executive Committee concerning a group of students who had occupied the business office in Wright Hall in order to protest the firing of a dining hall employee. Several members of the faculty sharply criticized the committee for its leniency."[5] On another occasion Bill penned a sharp rebuttal of "dean of American political scientists" Robert Dahl's *After the Revolution* (1970) which Yale University Press inexplicably refused to publish and which, apparently, alienated certain members of the Yale University Press committee; these same individuals subsequently served on the appointments committee which evaluated Bill's tenure case.[6] Bill summarized the situa-

tion as follows: "At Yale a scholar is expected to maintain an attitude of detachment towards the outside world. This is impossible for a person like me… [The case] illustrates a trend toward pulling in the wagons, cutting down on courses that are innovative or controversial, a trend toward insisting on a certain kind of orthodoxy."[7]

Although Bill was by no means a Noam Chomsky or Howard Zinn, he was apparently regarded as enough of a threat by COINTELPRO to have his phone tapped around the time of the New Haven Black Panther Trials in 1970. According to Angela McBride, this may have had something to do with Leonard Bernstein's famous Black Panther fundraising party, which she and Bill attended—"largely because I wanted to see what Leonard Bernstein's house looked like… [not] because we were great supporters of the Black Panthers."[8]

In 1973 Bill was hired by Purdue University, where he has remained ever since, and was promoted to full professor three years later. In 1977 he published his second book, *The Philosophy of Marx* (St. Martin's Press) and was elected Executive Co-Secretary of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, a position he held for the next three years. In 1980 he published his third book, *Social Theory at a Crossroads* (Duquesne University Press) and, in 1983, co-edited the volume *Phenomenology in a Pluralistic Context* (SUNY Press) with Calvin Schrag. Two years later, in 1985, he co-founded the Sartre Society of North America with the late Phyllis Sutton Morris (1931-1997).

Bill's fourth book, *Sartre's Political Theory* (Indiana University Press) was published in 1991. The following year he joined the Board of Directors of the American Philosophical Association, serving until 1995. In 1994 he published *Social and Political Philosophy* (Paragon Press) and was elected President of the *Société Américaine de Philosophie de Langue Française*, serving until 1996. In 1997 he traveled to Bulgaria as a Fulbright Fellow; the magisterial 8-volume collection *Sartre and Existentialism* (Garland) was published in the same year.

In 1999 Bill published his sixth book, *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe* and his seventh, *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*, two years later (both Rowman & Littlefield). In 2002 he co-edited *Calvin O. Schrag and the Task of Philosophy After Postmodernity* (Northwestern University Press) with Martin Beck Matuštík. The following year he edited *The Idea of Values* (Philosophy Documentation Center); he was also elected Secretary General of the *Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie*. Five years later, in 2008, he was elected president of FISP. He is the first American to have held both these positions.

In addition to authoring or editing a dozen books, lecturing around the world, and serving on countless university committees and national and international professional societies—often in leadership capacities—Bill has published more than sixty book chapters, seventy peer-reviewed articles, and ninety reviews. To say that he is prolific would be a gross understatement. Over the course of his career, he has achieved global acclaim as a scholar of Sartre and Marx, his writ-

ings in this area having attained the status of classics. As Joseph Catalano notes in his contribution to this volume, Bill is held in enormous esteem throughout Central and Eastern Europe as well as parts of Asia, where he has faithfully served as an intellectual diplomat and advocate for global philosophy for the past several decades. He has served as a friend and mentor to innumerable students, many of whom have gone on to prestigious careers of their own. He is a man of towering intellect and distinguished accomplishments—a paragon of academic, professional, and philosophical excellence.

Writing the introduction to a *festschrift* volume in honor of such a man—our mentor and former teacher, a man who, as the foregoing makes clear, very much deserves to be honored—is an extremely daunting task, especially since, compared to the pantheon of illustrious colleagues who have gathered to pay him homage in these pages, we are truly *hommes sans importance*. But as Rilke once wrote, "we must hold to what is difficult; everything alive holds to it, everything in Nature grows and defends itself in its own way and is characteristically and spontaneously itself, seeks at all costs to be so and against all opposition." Those of us who have had the honor, privilege, and pleasure to know Bill McBride—whether as friends, students, or colleagues—know he easily could have penned those lines. Throughout his life he has taken the difficult path, perhaps—as the opening epigraphs suggest—because he is such a difficult (deep, complicated, even *contradictory*…) person. So, taking our cue from Rilke and McBride, we will hold fast to the challenging task at hand.

Bill is complex, yes, and so difficult to understand, but he is also preternaturally honest, self-aware, and, for this reason, very easy to listen to, learn from, befriend, and love. Sartre once described an intellectual as a person who recognizes the contradictions that constitute his or her life.[9] Bill epitomizes this sort of intellectual; he is a man who is honest with and about himself, others, and the world. And although he is legendary for his sarcasm and dry, sardonic wit, he is neither a cynic nor a pessimist. Bill is a realist—an open-eyed, unsentimental, unflinching observer of the actual—but he is also an idealist, a dweller in possibilities. "I firmly believe," he once wrote, "that no one can claim to possess a serious philosophical worldview without trying to take account, in an integrated way, of the enormous disparities between rich and poor nations and individuals and of the global institutions that reinforce them."[10] The "integration" of which Bill speaks is precisely the integration his work and worldview achieve; not content to describe the world in various ways, however rigorously, he *prescribes* how the world must be changed. And all of this presupposes the hope that change is possible, even if, for the time being at least, it is also improbable.

To be steadfastly honest with and about oneself, others, and the world, even when honesty leads to sobering conclusions—and yet, at the same time, to remain always committed on a deep, existential level to the possibility of change: this is the nature of Bill's hope. It is not "idle chatter *about* hope," but hope it-

self, *revolutionary hope*. This is one of the greatest gifts which Bill has brought and continues to bring to the world, and one of the greatest achievements for which we honor him in this volume.

Those of us who studied under Bill in the dark times of the Bush years benefited enormously from his example and counsel. Here was a man, in his mid-sixties, who had lived through the Second World War, the Kennedy assassination, civil rights, Vietnam, Reagan, the fall of the Soviet Union… who had witnessed countless victories and defeats and yet, for all that, remained "resolutely a radical" (as he told one of us in 2005). One would not know this upon first talking to Bill since, as previously mentioned, he has a famously macabre sense of humor. Then again, he also has a famous love for fine wine which has a tendency to soften his mood and reveal to all the meaning behind the happy twinkle in his eyes. (At a Halloween party in 2004, Bill, dressed as Sartre—of course—regaled all present with a stirring rendition of the *Internationale* in his lovely, if slightly off-key Irish baritone.) What impressed us wasn't so much that Bill seemed to know everything, or that he seemed to have done everything, or that he seemed to have travelled to every country on the globe, but that he had experienced so much of life and yet not abandoned hope. ("I remain resolutely a radical.") That is what makes Bill revolutionary; it is what made him such a fantastic teacher and friend during otherwise terrible times.

Speaking of hope in the face of adversity, although we recognize that this humble volume cannot begin to adequately honor a person as larger-than-life as William Leon McBride, we nonetheless hope that it will bring some joy to him on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday. The contributors represented herein are but a microscopic sample of friends, colleagues, and students around the world who love and respect him. In their collective name, we wish Professor McBride many more years of health, happiness, and—most importantly—*hope*.

Notes

1. *Yale Daily News*, No. 115, April 13, 1972, p. 1.
2. *Yale Daily News*, No. 116, April 14, 1972, p. 1.
3. *Yale Daily News*, No. 69, December 13, 1972, p. 1
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Yale Daily News*, No. 78, January 26, 1973, p. 1.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 6.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
8. Angela McBride, personal correspondence with the authors, April 2012.
9. See Jean-Paul Sartre, "A Plea to Intellectuals," in *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, trans. J. Matthews (London: Verson, 2008), pp. 228-85.
10. William L. McBride, *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), p. 234.

William L. McBride and the Enduring Commitment to Intellectual Freedom

Matthew Abraham

During my days as a graduate student at Purdue in the English/Philosophy Ph.D. Program from 1998 to 2003, I had the good fortune to work with Professor Bill McBride. Bill always supported my scholarly inquiries, even when those inquiries took a controversial turn. In this chapter of the Festschrift, I will discuss Bill's support of academic freedom in the politically charged context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. I will specifically examine Bill's support of my dissertation project, "The Rhetoric of Resistance and the Resistance to Theory: Controversial Academic Scholarship and the American Public Sphere," as well as his recognition of the importance of helping dissident scholars such as Norman Finkelstein within an academic environment that does not always support dissenting positions with respect to U.S. foreign policy on the Middle East. As part of my analysis, I will go into specific detail about how Bill supported controversial aspects of my work when other faculty members did not want to. This especially proved to be the case as I explored about the instrumental role U.S. intellectuals play in suppressing the truth about the plight of the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation.

While Bill McBride is obviously internationally known for his path-breaking scholarship on Sartre and Marx—as well as his unstinting support for progressive scholars, ethnic minorities, and women in the discipline of philosophy—a perhaps less recognized but equally important aspect of McBride's commitment to his discipline and profession manifests itself in his strong and principled defense of academic freedom.[1] While academic freedom has been defined in all sorts of fancy ways since September 11th, 2001, often in attempts

to deprive scholars writing on controversial topics of basic employment protections, I define academic freedom as the freedom to pursue the academic profession within the bounds of one's discipline. Unfortunately, the existence of this freedom in the post-9/11 university cannot be taken for granted.

While I was a graduate student in the English and Philosophy Program at Purdue from 1998 through 2003, Bill provided me with invaluable support and guidance during some very difficult and tense political moments within the Purdue University community, as well as within the Modern Language Association, as I wrote my dissertation on controversial academic scholarship in the American public sphere and took public stands in support of Palestinian human rights. Indeed, there were direct attempts to limit my academic freedom as I pursued upsetting lines of inquiry around the Israel-Palestine conflict. Bill's support at that time in my career proved to be instrumental, as I quickly learned that not all academics are committed to an open discussion about the facts surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict; indeed, some academics are actively committed to suppressing the facts through coercive tactics and deceit.

Academic Intellectuals and the Corporatization of the University

Very early on in my graduate school career, I received an important education about how intellectual complicity works and the institution's role in silencing critical and dissenting voices in the academy, particularly when those voices are questioning key tenets of U.S. foreign policy. Unfortunately, the corporatization of the university has created the conditions of possibility within which university administrations have been given a relatively free hand to rule certain lines of scholarly inquiry out of bounds, undermining the academic freedom of scholars who write critically about the historical and diplomatic record surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict (as just one example). The reason for this is not simply the result of the Israel-Palestine conflict being controversial, which it obviously is, but because of the intense monitoring of the academic scene by parties external to the university, parties which are invested in preserving a certain image of the Israel-Palestine conflict for the American public. Protecting this image has gone hand in hand with the corporatization of the university.[2]

As part of this trend toward greater corporatization, universities have had to increasingly worry about their public's perception, realizing that if they are to appeal to potential donors who can contribute to their endowments, they have to ensure that faculty scholarship stays within relatively narrow bounds. As the Ward Churchill case at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2005 demonstrated, universities will quickly seek to distance themselves from scholars doing

controversial scholarship that questions the wisdom of U.S. foreign policy, particularly if that scholarship gains the attention of special interest groups seeking to target outspoken faculty who are questioning troubling and deeply entrenched hegemonies. In other words, the academy is being driven into increasing irrelevance with progressive faculty being marginalized for addressing issues of contemporary importance. This trend began shortly after the events of September 11th, 2001, as the national security state made critical thinking and dissent in relation to U.S. foreign policy nearly impossible.

I came to the discipline of philosophy out of a genuine desire to combat injustice, as well as a keen interest in learning about how intellectuals have often been complicit in perpetuating injustice across historical periods, especially in the context of colonial oppression. During my graduate school years, I frequently drew upon Julian Benda's *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, Edward Said's *Representations of the Intellectual*, and Michael Walzer's *Company of Critics* to examine how intellectuals often succumb to the centripetal pull of concentrated power as they serve the nation-state while it is suppressing a population's resistance against colonial rule. All of these texts examine how intellectuals have responded to the rise of nationalistic passions within the context of historical crisis, with an emphasis on how the intellectual mission becomes compromised when intellectuals align with the powers that be, even when doing so places them in opposition to justice. In other words, history has proven that intellectuals have not always been alert to how they, as a class, have been susceptible to the trappings of power, often willingly serving it for professional gain or in defense of an ideological program.

A second reason I came to the study of philosophy was out of a desire to understand how oppressed populations have responded to their socio-historical conditions through appeals to justice. In the course of studying in the English and Philosophy Program at Purdue, I came to learn how aspects of continental philosophy—particularly Sartre's conception of "bad faith"—could be applied to better understand the plight of the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, as well as the ways U.S. intellectuals are often complicit in obfuscating the basic facts around the Question of Palestine. Furthermore, through the work of the late Palestinian critics and activist, Edward Said, I developed a framework and vocabulary for understanding why the Israel-Palestine conflict is subject to a great deal of misrepresentation and misunderstanding within the U.S. public sphere. The significance of these misrepresentations and misunderstandings cannot be underestimated, given the importance of the Israel-Palestine conflict to the stability of the Middle East and its centrality in world politics.

As a critical intellectual who has devoted most of his academic career to examining the politics of the Middle East, Edward Said was a thinker who captured my attention early on in my graduate school career. Through the critical insights Said presents in his *Orientalism*, *Question of Palestine*, and *Covering Islam*, I became critically aware of how supposedly apolitical knowledge sys-

tems contain within them ideological components that purposely demonize the Other, seeking to pass themselves off as objective. These three books represent Said's famous "trilogy," a prescient collection that accurately predicted the crisis of the current historical moment in the Middle East, as the implications of the Question of Palestine for Israel's relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors becomes increasingly evident with each passing day. For example, Israel's push to destroy Iran's nuclear reactor is connected to Ahmadinejad's support for Palestinian self-determination and his criticisms of Israel, as well as Israel's desire to keep the nuclear capability out of the hands of any adversary within, or within the proximity of, the Middle East. These dilemmas of deterrence stand at the heart of the contemporary crisis in the Middle East.[3] Unfortunately, idée rescues about how Ahmadinejad seeks to "wipe Israel off the map" serve as poor substitutes for sober and serious analysis of what is really at issue.

During my time at Purdue, I learned not only about the plight of the Palestinians but the direct role that many American academics play in suppressing the citizenry's knowledge about that plight, perpetuating a form of what Haim Gordon calls "political evil." Political evil enables people to suppress their better instincts in deciding whether to respond to the cry of the Other when she is in need, leading them to rely upon the efficiency and comfort of the bureaucracy and its protocols, which ultimately distance one from being responsible for the Other.

Coming to Consciousness about the Israel-Palestine Conflict

As I discovered through the work of Said and others, the U.S. public has been witness to a wholesale cover-up with respect to Israel's annexation of Palestinian land in contravention of international law.[4] This is a result of the mainstream media's unwillingness to ask crucial questions about how American taxpayer dollars are being spent to support Israel's occupation and its military adventurism throughout the Middle East. The press prefers to stick its head in the sand, relying on tried and true clichés about how Israel seeks peace, but is unable to find a Palestinian peace partner. These clichés avoid the reality: Israel and the United States have successfully blocked the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

While the U.S. public is continually served a good bit of propaganda about how Palestinian terrorism is the real threat to peaceful relations between Israel and the "Arabs," the fact of the matter is that Israeli terrorism, tacitly supported by U.S. tax dollars, has been responsible for the continuation of the conflict. That such a statement is so utterly contrary to received opinion reveals how ef-

fectively the propaganda system shields U.S. citizens from a clear understanding of what is at stake in the Israel-Palestine conflict.[5]

With respect to the difficulties surrounding open discussion of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the academic space is up for sale to the highest bidder as a result of concentrated power's need to protect the U.S.-Israel special relationship. The Israel Lobby, a group of individuals who seek to push American Middle East policy in a direction favorable to Israel, does exert considerable influence upon the American university system in terms of shaping debate and discussion.[6] The Lobby seeks to ensure that American citizens view the Israeli government's military policies in the Middle East, specifically its occupation of the Palestinian population living in the West Bank, as being in the American national interest as part of the War on Terror that was launched after 9/11.

U.S. universities, as part of the power/knowledge/Truth nexus, form a key component in protecting and projecting American power in the Middle East. Scholars seeking to question and problematize the Orientalist assumptions guiding the formulation of U.S. Middle East policy are often subjected to abuse and vilification, as I came to learn by studying the biographies of Edward Said, Noam Chomsky, and Norman G. Finkelstein, three of the most outspoken critics of Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. Indeed, the resistances Said, Chomsky, and Finkelstein faced in reciting the basic facts about the conflict were tremendous, largely the result of American liberalism's love affair with Zionism. Israel's colonization project in Palestine met with favor in elite circles after Israel's lighting victory against the Arabs states during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Israel demonstrated its strategic value to the United States during this war by easily defeating Jordan, Egypt, and Syria, stemming the tide of Nasser's Pan-Arab movement in the Middle East. It was after the 1967 Arab-Israel War that Israel's annexation of Palestinian land in the West Bank rapidly accelerated.

As I learned more and more about the key role U.S. intellectuals play in nurturing this cover-up of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, I decided that there was no way from me to avoid addressing the Israel-Palestine conflict; indeed, to postpone examining the conflict in my own scholarship, out of a hope of one day being in a more secure position, seemed like an act of bad-faith. My decision to pursue the Question of Palestine in my dissertation and later as a topic of concern within my scholarship met a good bit of controversy at Purdue and at my first couple of jobs as an assistant professor, as many roadblocks were thrown in my way to impede my professional progress. While I sought to emulate Edward Said's conception of the critical intellectual, who speaks truth to power the consequences be damned, I could always count on Bill McBride to provide me with the intellectual support to buoy my spirits during some very trying moments.

Despite the obstacles that came with the intellectual territory, I drew inspiration from Said's critical example and Bill McBride's local support.   While Said brought a unique and provocative angle to the act of interpretation, firmly

believing that human beings possess the capacity to exercise their agency within systems of discourse, which are sustained by hegemonic systems, Bill helped me to see how I could write a dissertation on controversial academic scholarship free of Zionist censorship. Said viewed human beings as existing between what he termed "culture and system," in other words between cultural traditions and systemic constraints that have evolved in and through discourses of power such juridical, the medical, and other professional disciplinary discourses. Bill confided to me his disappointment with those colleagues at Purdue who sought to block my inquiries about Israel's human rights records and the history of Zionism. A frequent critic of Foucault's conception of discourse and Derrida's conception of text, both of which seemingly limited the prospect of human agency, Said consistently emphasized the prospect of the individual resisting oppressive social circumstances through tireless effort and creative improvisation. As a scholar of Sartre and Marx, Bill has always recognized how activity and freedom must be emphasized in a society dedicated to seriality and knowledge fetishism. For Said, a new humanism represented "the last resistance against Blake's mind-forged manacles."[7] For Bill McBride, only an unfettered academic space would produce human freedom and truth.

Bill McBride and Supporting Academic Freedom

While writing my dissertation, I became interested in the life and work of the embattled Jewish political scientist and activist, Norman Finkelstein, who was denied tenure at my own institution, DePaul University, in 2007 due to the outside interference of Alan Dershowitz (famed Harvard law professor, defense attorney, civil libertarian, and staunch supporter of Israel), and other interested parties seeking to defend Israel's policy of occupation and dispossession of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. Finkelstein's tenure case became the object of significant media attention in March of 2007, when DePaul's Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences decided to withhold his support for Finkelstein's tenure bid despite the fact that Finkelstein had received strong support at the departmental and College levels. Furthermore, when DePaul released its final decision on the case in June of 2007, serious questions arose about the political pressures driving the tenure and promotion process itself.[8]

While Finkelstein met and seemingly exceeded every formal criterion for tenure and promotion to associate professor, DePaul argued that his scholarship was at odds with the university's institutional mission, which is to respect the God-given dignity of the individual. Those arguing against Finkelstein's tenure bid claimed that his ad hominem attacks against those with whom he disagreed posed a threat to the academic freedom of the academic community, while also

representing a violation of professional ethics. The corporatization of the university, with its resulting emphasis on donor funding, leads to these sorts of interesting results, whereby a dissenting scholar is accused of producing scholarship at odds with his university's institutional mission because that scholarship defends a population under siege by a favored client state.

What began for me in 2000 as a passing interest in the plight of Finkelstein as a dissenting intellectual turned into a full-blown project as I became fascinated with the specific political obstacles that had been thrown in the way of Finkelstein's academic advancement, as far back as his days as a graduate student at Princeton, as there were direct efforts to block the publication of his critiques of Israel and the use of the Holocaust to justify Israel's behavior.[9] I became immersed in the literature about the historiography and politics surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict. At that time, I did not realize how important this choice of a scholarly topic would be to my development as an intellectual.

In a twist of fate, I moved to DePaul in 2006, the year Finkelstein went up for tenure. From the time I began studying Finkelstein's career difficulties during my days at Purdue, through my time as an assistant professor at the University of Tennessee and DePaul, I came to realize how significant a threat Finkelstein represents to received opinion about the Israel-Palestine conflict. This received opinion posits that Israel is in fight for its very survival because it is surrounded by twenty-two Arab states, many of which would prefer to "throw Jews into the sea," an extension of the anti-Semitism and racial/religious hatred that motivated the Nazi project in the Holocaust. In this context, Israel is framed as being the David against the Arab goliath, with the Palestinians and many of the Arab states representing the menacing and terroristic Goliath seeking the destruction of the Jewish state because it is Jewish.

It is taboo within the current intellectual culture to consider whether Israel's behavior in its dispossession of the Palestinian people, and not its Jewish character or anti-Semitism, that motivate Israel's critics. If each and every criticism of Israel's behavior can be dismissed and ignored by simply asserting that those doing the criticizing are anti-Semites seeking to undermine the legitimacy of the Jewish state, a way is opened for an unfortunate type of Zionist chauvinism that manipulates Jewish identify and historical suffering for political gain. It's this abuse of Jewish suffering and historical suffering that Finkelstein has placed at the center of his scholarship.

As I found out during my time at Purdue, even defending the right of scholars to ask critical questions about how Jewish suffering and that historical suffering are being abused in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict places one in the crosshairs of powerful interests groups who seek to control the parameters of debate about the Israel-Palestine conflict. Indeed, scholars seeking to push these questions through scholarship will likely face the prospect of being excluded from the academy entirely.

To this day, Finkelstein does not hold an academic position despite being the author of six significant books on the Israel-Palestine conflict and how the Holocaust has been used in the context of justifying Israel's defiance of international law with respect to its occupation. Over the years, I have become increasingly committed to following debates about the Israel-Palestine conflict, firmly believing that the U.S. public possesses fundamental misconceptions about the origins of the conflict and the reasons for its seemingly endless continuation.

I have come to conclude that a dangerous political correctness about Jewish identify and suffering keeps American understandings about the Israel-Palestine conflict within manageable and safe bounds, bounds that should be challenged by critical intellectuals seeking to upset conventional pieties and misrepresentations about a conflict that has serious implications for not only the stability of the Middle East but also the world.[10] Indeed, the very real prospect of Israel using its nuclear arsenal in the Middle East has been discussed by the U.S.'s own military strategists. As these strategists point out, if the United States withdraws its diplomatic support for Israel's colonization project, Israel would not hesitate to unleash its nuclear arsenal within the Middle East and perhaps even against the United States, deploying a relatively unknown strategic gambit known as the "Sampson Option."[11]

While writing my chapter on Finkelstein in my dissertation, I sought to learn more about the circumstances around Finkelstein's departure from Hunter College in 2000. I contacted a member of Hunter's political science department, who had written a critical review of Finkelstein's teaching, ultimately recommending that Finkelstein not be retained as an instructor for the next year. I emailed this person, seeking more information about his recommendation. This professor wrote back, indicating that he could not discuss the matter without Norman Finkelstein's explicit approval. I secured Finkelstein's approval. At this point, I wrote back to the professor at Hunter, requesting a phone interview with him about his evaluation of Finkelstein's teaching.

After indicating that we would go forward with the interview, this professor encouraged me to contact Hunter College's Office of the General Counsel to "establish my credentials." At that point, the professor apparently became concerned about the consequences that might ensue if I followed through with my inquiry because he wrote to the Dean's Office in the College of Liberal Arts at Purdue about my contact, claiming that someone named "Matthew Abraham" was pretending to be a graduate student in Purdue's English and Philosophy Department. At that point, the Institutional Review Board became involved, insisting that I cease all contact with this professor, since the Board's approval was required before any student or faculty member could conduct an interview as part of a research endeavor. Clearly, the professor at Hunter was concerned that I would press him to explain his negative evaluation of Finkelstein's teaching that resulted in a recommendation to not renew Finkelstein's contract. In-

deed, the negative review may have well been part of an effort to create a very thin pretext for Finkelstein's ouster from Hunter College.

After the Hunter College professor contacted Purdue's Dean's Office, several Purdue faculty members became concerned about the direction of my work. Bill McBride, however, stood firmly behind me, even going so far to meet with the vice president of research to underscore how problematic it was to derail a simple inquiry about the circumstances surrounding a negative teaching review. As Bill noted, my dissertation was precisely about how the institutional structures block the kinds of scholarship that Finkelstein and others do. Needles to say, Purdue's Vice President of Research was not moved to change his mind. If researchers had to clear all such inquiries like mine beforehand with the institutional review board (IRB), research itself would come to a grinding halt. Furthermore, it was not at all clear as to why the Hunter College professor alleged that I was pretending to be a Purdue graduate student to extract information from him. Through a simple Google search, the professor could have learned that I was in fact a graduate student in the English and Philosophy Program at Purdue.

It was clear to me and others at Purdue that this person sought to create a pretext to terminate my inquiries about Finkelstein's forced departure from the Political Science Department at Hunter College, largely because the department sought to push Finkelstein out by so severely cutting his salary that he would have no choice but to leave. This salary cut coincided with Finkelstein's publication of his extremely controversial *The Holocaust Industry: The Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*. As a result of this episode, Purdue's Institutional Review Board required me to undergo a training assessment about the kinds of contacts researchers could legitimately make in the course of interviewing subjects for their research projects. To even ask another researcher across the country about something as trivial about a reference in a footnote would technically necessitate the permission of the IRB.

Bill cautioned me, at that time, not to go to war about this issue as it might jeopardize my progress in completing my Ph.D. Clearly, the professor at Hunter used his authority to derail my inquiry because he feared what might come out about Finkelstein's dismissal from Hunter College. When I inquired of my dissertation director as to why academic freedom protections do not extend to certain lines of inquiry (such as the Israel-Palestine conflict), he just said, "You can invoke it [academic freedom], but it may not matter. Chomsky and Finkelstein might be telling the truth, but the weight of the scholarly apparatus that they are responding to is too immense." In other words, the truth about the Israel-Palestine conflict does not really matter, since there is such an immense industry in place within the U.S. academy supporting Israel's war on Palestinian "terrorism." Furthermore, my dissertation director told me, "I don't serve on dissertation committees that have an interview component," clearly responding to the institutional fallout around the Hunter College professor's inquiries about me at

Purdue. If I persisted in going forward with interviews he told me, "I should resign." My dissertation director also noted that he was made "a little nervous" by my contacting this professor at Hunter College. Indeed, I have heard these sorts of warnings over and over again from people who have supervised my work.

In the spring of 2002, I put together a roundtable entitled "The Courage to Refuse: Resisting Intellectual Silence on the Israel-Palestine Conflict" a response to Israel's Operation Defensive Shield, which demolished Jenin Refugee Camp. As always, Israel described the Operation as being necessary to combat Palestinian terrorism in the West Bank. Along with four other graduate students in the English Department at Purdue, I organized this roundtable to address the seeming silence within the Purdue community for what was happening, as well as the tacit complicity within U.S. academia for Israel's behavior. Upon sending a message out to the English department about the event, where I would be discussing the academic fate of Norman Finkelstein, the director of Jewish Studies, issued the following challenge: "Since I have received this message directly, since I am a member of the English Department, since I am a member of the Jewish community to which this message is addressed, and because I deplore the rise of anti-Semitism here and abroad, I make the following recommendation to my younger colleagues: read the recent article by Phyllis Chessler about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe at your upcoming roundtable."[12] Clearly, the director of Jewish Studies found our roundtable to be unduly provocative, a clear challenge to faculty members at Purdue who reflexively supported Israel. This faculty member disclosed to me that he was particularly bothered by our message to the department because it mentioned Finkelstein, whose *The Holocaust Industry* he found offensive. When I proposed to meet to talk about Finkelstein's *The Holocaust Industry*, this faculty member agreed in principle to doing so, but never followed up. Another faculty member in the English Department, who was a die-hard supporter of Israel, even reprimanded some of his faculty colleagues through email for praising me and my fellow panelists for the event, specifically objecting to the notion that anyone had been threatened or faced professional repercussions.

In late 2002, I put together a special session for the Modern Language Association annual convention on "Controversial Academic Scholarship in the Public Sphere after 9/11," which included a relatively famous academic figure in intellectual history and two others in English Studies. I asked my dissertation director to chair the session. After one of the panelists ultimately decided not to participate, I suggested that Norman Finkelstein be allowed to join us since his whole career has been about controversy and controversial academic scholarship. Interestingly enough, both of the panelists objected to including Finkelstein, arguing that it would be against MLA protocol to add a speaker at the list minute to a panel that had been advertised as only including two speakers and a respondent. I found this response somewhat strange since it is frequently the

case that one speaker will substitute for another when an originally scheduled panelist is unable to appear.

As the explanations for excluding Finkelstein became more insistent, it became apparent to me that the two famous academics in question did not want to appear alongside Finkelstein in a visible venue like the MLA. My dissertation director encouraged me not to push the issue, stating that I should be able to read between the lines and discern what was being communicated to me by these two stars' unwillingness to appear with Finkelstein. The message was clear: we don't want to have our intellectual and political capital diminished by appearing alongside an academic *persona non grata* like Finkelstein. Once again, Bill McBride was there to guide me through the complex politics of this situation, at a time when my dissertation director did not want to deal with the veil of censorship that had seemingly descended upon the profession about Israel's treatment of the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, as well as the U.S.-Israel special relationship. Finkelstein ended up attending the session as an audience member, despite the clear efforts to keep him from participating on the panel. When he tried to ask a question during Q&A session, the panel's chair abruptly declared the session to be over with over fifteen minutes to spare. When I asked for a clarification from the chair as to why he did this, he told me that he wanted to give audience plenty of time to get to the next session. Such are the excuses that are given to deny critics of Israel a public platform to ask straightforward questions.

When I hit the job market in 2003, other complications arose. With my highly interdisciplinary degree in rhetoric, philosophy, and cultural theory, I was an interesting but not easily classifiable job candidate. In addition, my professed political allegiances as these appeared in my scholarship also complicated an already complex profile. When my confidence faltered, and when I despaired over ever being able to find a job, Bill's assurances kept my head in the game. There were points when I in fact thought of giving up on an academic career altogether. Thankfully I stuck things out, largely due to Bill's encouragement.

At the university of Tennessee at Knoxville, the department chair of the English Department told me that if I persisted in studying and writing about the Finkelstein-Dershowitz controversy that I would be denied tenure, even if I wrote a university press book. Not once did I hear this sort of mealy mouth response from Bill McBride, an indication of his integrity and steadfast commitment to intellectual freedom. Indeed, Bill was even behind me when I came up for tenure at DePaul in 2008-09, advising me through what seemed at the time like an interminable process. Luckily, I did receive tenure and promotion to associate professor in May of 2009.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, the attack against scholars writing critically about the Israel-Palestine only continues. As of this writing, Marc Ellis, Professor of Jewish Studies at Baylor, a long-time dissenting Jewish voice against Israel's occupation policies, is the subject of an investigation being led by Baylor's President and former federal prosecutor, Ken Starr, who gained notoriety in 1998 during the investigation of former President Bill Clinton's dalliances with White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, when Clinton was indicted for perjury in relation to an Arkansas sexual harassment case. David Klein, another dissenting Jewish intellectual at the University of California Northridge, has been the object of slanderous attacks for supporting the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement, which seeks to encourage key U.S. companies and universities to cease doing business with institutions in Israel that support the occupation of Palestinian territory in clear violation of international law. These are two of the most recent cases illustrating how hazardous it is to speak out in the U.S. public sphere against Israel's treatment of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories

As I mentioned at the beginning of this essay, I chose to study Philosophy, and to enter Purdue's English and Philosophy Ph.D. Program, out of a desire to learn about how oppressed communities respond to unjust historical circumstances. Luckily, I met Bill McBride, who in numerous exchanges showed me how the intellectual life can be used to make a difference in shaping the social world for the better in the face of desperate political circumstances. Bill has long understood the implications of the Israel-Palestine conflict for the U.S. intellectual community. Once I started developing an interest in the intellectual politics around Israel-Palestine, Bill introduced me to the work of Haim and Rivca Gordon, two Israeli academics who fought valiantly against various attempts to silence dissenting intellectuals speaking out against the evil of Israel's occupation. The Gordons have written extensively on the Israel-Palestine conflict in such books as *Quicksand: Israel, the Intifada, and the Rise of Evil in Political Democracies*, *Sartre: Guidelines for a Struggle*, and *Beyond the Intifada*. By bringing existential philosophy, particularly the work of Sartre to bear on the problem of evil in the Israel-Palestine conflict, the Gordons show us how to use our moral and creative capacities to make the world a more humane and just place within which to work and live.

In March of 2004, I was nominated for the Rachel Corrie Courage in the Teaching of Writing Award, an honor bestowed upon an untenured academic who takes risks in his teaching or scholarship to advance social justice. Once more, Bill was there to support me, writing an impressive letter of recommendation on my behalf for the award. Corrie was the twenty-three year old, American social activist, who was run over by an Israeli bulldozer in April of 2003 in the course of defending a Palestinian's home in Rafah, Gaza against demolition.[13]

Although Corrie's legacy in the United States is tainted by controversy, with some defenders of Israel going so far as to characterize Corrie as a defender of Palestinian terrorism, there can be little doubt as to the significance of her example, sacrificing her life in the name of justice and humanity. Needless to say, I was delighted and unsurprised by the negative online commentary that my winning the award elicited.[14]

All of the events that I have recounted in this chapter demonstrate how important it is to create and sustain strong support for academic freedom within a university community. If difficult and nearly taboo subjects cannot be openly discussed, without fear of censorship or the prospect of professional reprisal, then the academic mission is in danger of intellectual bankruptcy. Bill McBride has long understood how important it is to protect academic freedom within the university for scholars, even when they are graduate students, on topics of vital societal concern. Without this freedom to explore, write, and challenge the most entrenched pieties of our historical moment, academics will merely become company men and women seeking to eternally toe the party line. I will continually look to Bill McBride's inspiring example in the years to come as I explore, write about, and challenge the received wisdom on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Notes

1.   Some have argued that academic freedom belongs to the university, one's discipline, and the academic profession more individually. In the view of these proponents, academic freedom is an individual right only to the degree it emerges as a corporate, professional, and institutional right. See Robert Post and Matthew Finkin's *For the Common Good: Principles of American Academic Freedom* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011) and Robert Post's *Democracy, Expertise, and Academic Freedom: A First Amendment Jurisprudence for the Modern State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012).

2.   See Ellen Schrecker's *The Lost Soul of Higher Education* (New York: New Press, 2010).

3.   See Avner Yaniv's *Dilemmas of Deterrence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

4.   See Michael Adams' and Christopher Mayhew's *Publish It Not: The Middle East Cover-up* (London: Polity, 2001).

5.   See Noam Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*. (Boston: South End Press, 1983).

6.   See Walt and Mearsheimer's *The Israel Lobby: The United States and Middle East Policy*. (London: Farrar, Giroux, and Strauss, 2007).

7. See "An Interview with Edward Said" in *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. Bayami, Moustafa and Andrew Rubin (New York: Vintage, 2000): 414-444, p. 443.

8 . See my "The Subversion of Academic Freedom: DePaul's Denial of Tenure to Norman Finkelstein" in *Arab Studies Quarterly* 33:3-4 (2011), pp. 179-203). Also, see my "The Case for Norman Finkelstein" at http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/jun/14/abattleforacademicfreedom (accessed on December 14th, 2011) and Dershowitz's response http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/jun/14/abattlefor academicfreedom (accessed on December 14th, 2011).

9 . See Noam Chomsky's "The Fate of an Honest Intellectual" in *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*, ed. John Schoeffel and Peter Mitchell (New York: New Press, 2002), p. 244-48.

10 . See Gilad Atzmon's *The Wandering Who? A Study of Jewish Identity Politics* (Winchester, UK and Washington, D.C, USA: Zero Books, 2011).

11 . See Seymour Hersh's *The Sampson Option* (New York: Random House, 1991) and Avner Cohen's *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

12 . See Chessler's "We Are All Israelis" at http://www.phyllis-chesler.com/180/now-we-are-all-israelis (September 1, 2002).

13 . See *Let Me Stand Alone: The Journals of Rachel Corrie* (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 2009).

14 . See "The Corrie Award" at http://hnn.us/blogs/entries/10647.html (accessed on January 18th, 2012).

Intimations of a New Socioecological Imaginary

Matthew C. Ally

...these complimentary attitudes—awareness of radically different and better future human possibilities, severe criticism of the role of existing social structures in the exacerbation of ecological problems—are ones that I endorse.

—William L. McBride

Ecological reality is intimately linked to social reality. This is not news. It has always been so. But it has never been so in the way it is today. At this historical juncture the sociality of the human world and the ecology of planet Earth are two faces of a single reality. Geologists even have name for it. They call it the *Anthropocene*. By this they mean, and in the patient way that only geologists can mean it, that humankind is now the single most potent force of terrestrial change. Ecologically, evolutionarily, geologically, what we do now has a greater impact than all the earthquakes, volcanoes, and avalanches, to say nothing of the still-shifting tectonic plates. Imagine that. And this, our Janus-faced reality of planet and world is at a critical impasse. This is a time of crisis, in both the etymological sense—we are at a turning point—and the medical sense—things may go tragically awry. We face a planetary crisis that is a worldly crisis; an ecological crisis that is a social crisis; a crisis of nature that is a crisis of humanity. At risk is neither the end of life on Earth nor the end of humankind, as some are wont to fantasize. At stake is the quality of life for the community of Earth, the extinction of countless species other than our own, the disintegration of

ecosystems of many and varied pedigree, and the unraveling of civilization, such as it is. Whichever way we turn, we are writing the first pages of a new chapter in the saga of the human world and all the rest of earthly nature. If there is anything new under the sun, this is it. The socioecological crisis is the news of the day.[1]

If we are to meet the challenges we face, it seems fair to say that it will take more than a little imagination. This chapter seeks philosophic resources for imaginative responses to our planetary and worldly situation. It draws together two seemingly disparate strands of thought, Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of imagination and Charles Taylor's theory of the social imaginary. Unlikely bedfellows though they may be, Sartre and Taylor can help us to understand what it means to re-imagine this burgeoning worldly and planetary crisis, to imagine anew the intimate bond between the social and the ecological, and to expose the very real prospect of a future worth wanting, one in which we enjoy not only a habitable planet, but a livable world. Imagine that.

First, the Child

Imagination is a gift and a tool. The child enjoys the gift in abundance, and works well with it for the most part. She can blur the distinction between the real and the imaginary. He can ignore the line between the perceived and the imagined. He or she—it hardly matters—can take up the real and the imaginary at once. Now he, now she, can see the real and the imaginary together, to the point that the acquired taste for holding them apart, so crucial to growing up, loses its grip, at least for moment. And when all goes well, as it so often does, the line between them disappears entirely for a time, the two blend so seamlessly that the real world and the imagined world are one for a spell. We have all been there.

It was a few hundred yards from our doorstep. Through the orchard and across a broad strip of well-maintained grass, under a stand of prodigious hemlocks, not quite far enough from a spooky old abandoned root cellar, there was a moss- and lichen-covered rock. Half buried in the Earth, awash the needle-filtered shade, it was about the size of my big pushy sister's big red vinyl beanbag chair. In the thick of spring little sprigs would sprout in the soft moss on the rock, none of which would grow beyond an inch or two. And I would drop to my knees and stare and like magic, though there was none, the surface of the rock became a vast tree- and scrub-covered land, the wettest parts a spreading swamp or a marsh, the half cupful of rainwater that gathered in a little cranny on top of it a pond or a lake, even a sea, according to the scale of the moment. There on that secret deep green planet, in that secret deep green world, I would walk for miles, trek for days and for years, barely surviving the attack of a giant

black ant, riding to safety on a congenial centipede with a heroic-sounding name like Tor or Thunder, skirting the swamp lest I get sucked in by the quicksand, and finally standing at a precipice to gaze across the impossible distance from me to the far side of it all. And I would build a little hut of twigs and leaves in a glade by the side of the water, and I would live on fishes and berries and roots in the warmth of a fire, dressed in scratchy wool undergarments, wrapped in pelts I'd tanned myself, my boots made of snake skin by a good Indian friend, my best friend a talking bear. A small bit of bark would be my canoe, and I would drift and nap in the center of the still water while my Indian friend shuffled stealthily through the underbrush and my bear friend rested watchfully at the hut and I waited patiently for the fish to bite. And they always did. All my needs met, all my wants satisfied, all my desires fulfilled. And then my grandmother would call me for dinner and I would jump up and run as fast as I could lest I miss the night's episode of Star Trek. Mountain Man by day. Intergalactic explorer by night. Imagine my confusion.

We have all been there, even if only I have been just *there*, by that sea, that lake, that pond, by that particular cupful of water in that particular cranny on that particular mossy rock. I can still conjure it well, and familiar good feelings accompany the conjuring; and a sense of something lost; and a sense of possibility. And now you can conjure a bit of it, too, all your own. Imagine how different your conjuring of that rock top is from mine, how different your accompanying feelings about my imaginary reality. Perhaps our sense of loss and possibility are not so different.

This Unimaginable Reality

We find ourselves in a difficult situation. The catalogue of social ills is long. Institutionalized political corruption. Rampant corporate greed. Entrepreneurial profligacy. Global and systemic economic apartheid. Organized violence at every scale, from the neighborhood to the nation to the transnational. Retrograde education and inadequate healthcare for the many. Knowledge and health for the few. Ubiquitous unrest and turmoil. It is an old story, in its way. And there's more. The catalogue of ecological ills is long, too, and growing fast. Climate change is here. Ocean acidification is here. Sea-level rise is here. Deforestation. Habitat destruction. Biodiversity loss. Soil degradation. Toxification of land, sea, and air. Extreme weather. Droughts. Floods. Landslides. And the two are one. The social ills and ecological ills coalesce. Overpopulation and resource depletion. Floods and droughts and migration. Obesity, malnutrition, and starvation in nearly equal measure, and nearly one in seven of us with no access to clean water. Oil wars, water wars, gem wars in the offing. Manufactured famine and preventable disease. And all the lies, too. The clean coal hoax. The hydro-

fracking hoax. The tar sands hoax. The nuclear hoax. The corporate organic hoax. The geoengineering hoax. The genetically modified food hoax. The bottled water hoax. And all manner of greenwashing. Eco-this. Enviro-that. Sustainable everything. All of it clean, pure, and natural. Obfuscation, dissimulation, all manner of evasion, everywhere. Our situation is precarious. The prognosis is bleak. Ignorance and denial are epidemic.

But is it true? Is it so bad? Yes, it is. This is reality. Imagine that.

A Humanist by Any Other Name

I think Sartre and Taylor can help us to make sense of this, our unimaginable reality, and to imagine a way forward. Admittedly, at first glance, the two seem unlikely confreres for an ecologically inclined philosophical investigation. It does seem fair to wonder how to fit them together for the purposes of a philosophical ecology.

As for Taylor, the consummate Catholic and hermeneutical humanist, it is not so much that he does not fit, or could not fit, into the ecological conversation, as that he has not really said much about it nor been invited into the dialogue in more than a passing way. This is not so surprising. Taylor does here and there nod concernedly at the relevance of "the environment"; and acknowledges more than once the significance of the "ecological movement"; and engages in a number of sustained reflections on the philosophy of nature (in both *Hegel* and *Sources of the Self*, though notably not in *A Secular Age*); and is well-known for his critique of naturalism. Still, he seems to share with his own Hegel a preference for "domains where the work of the spirit is more transparently evident."[2] Like Sartre, Taylor is principally oriented toward *anthropos*, the domain of human personhood and history and sociality. Thus he explores one side of *oikos*, the lived meaning of household that underlies the *worldly* sense of economy, with only a passing glance at its nether side, the *earthly* sense of ecology that is the condition for the possibility of any economy, and so of any personhood, history, or sociality. Still, Taylor has in nowise claimed or implied hostility to nature as such, and his predilection for things human leaves open the possibility of selective use of Taylorian social themes toward ecological ends, as we will see.

As for Sartre, the great infidel and existential humanist, it is a bit more complicated. There are surely good reasons, both biographical and philosophical, to wonder whether and how the smoking, philandering, concrete-loving metropolitanite could ever join the ecological conversation. Not least among the philosophical reasons—I leave the biographical ones to the reader's imagina-

tion—are his staunch anthropocentrism, exceptionalism, and instrumentalism, to say nothing of his generally impoverished and underdeveloped philosophy of nature. Still, and despite the *prima facie* evidence against him, there is more than meets the eye on this score.[3] Nor am I the first to see the possibility. No less an interpreter of Sartre than William McBride suggested it more than two decades ago.

In his standard-setting monograph, *Sartre's Political Theory*, McBride points explicitly to the ecological pertinence of the Sartrean corpus. Though it "would be a gross exaggeration to pretend that Sartre was ecology-minded in the contemporary sense," McBride writes, "there is an important sense in which, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre introduces an ecological consciousness."[4] This suggestion immediately struck me as sound and even a first reading of the *Critique* will confirm it, if only the reader keeps the question close at hand. In "Sartre and Problems in the Philosophy of Ecology," a little-known paper published in a Polish journal in the same year as the monograph, McBride provides the broad contours of a defense of the claim. I concur wholeheartedly with his ascription of "a certain shift in Sartre's attitudes and emphases that took place in the years between the publication of *L'être et le néant* and *Critique de la raison dialectique*, a shift that leads him in the latter to treat ecological factors as absolutely central to an understanding of human society and history"; even if I cannot abide his insistence that "the early Sartre is of little use for the more positive task of constructing a suitable ecological ethic."[5] In keeping with my conviction concerning the broad continuity of the Sartrean corpus[6]—a conviction McBride shares in his own way—the question of Sartre's relevance to ecological philosophy, if not of any incipient ecological sensibilities he may have possessed, can and should be posed much earlier than the period of *Critique*. The unpacking of any answer must reach back at least to *The Imaginary*, a work that in important ways set the stage for the entire Sartrean philosophical corpus.

Despite any interpretive differences we may have, one thing is clear. McBride and I agree completely on Sartre's pertinence to an ecological philosophy. I take great comfort in this agreement with such an uncompromising, profound, and generous interpreter of the Sartrean oeuvre, for it seems no small endorsement of the present chapter and of the larger project of which it is a part. So, what would it mean to draw together the concerns of the younger Sartre of *The Imaginary* and the interests of the elder Taylor of *Modern Social Imaginaries*? Could we, by linking these two seemingly disparate strands of thought, render something of our current reality and future imaginary intelligible? Can they help to shed new light on where we are, how we have come to be here, where we are headed, and what we ought to aim for? It is to these questions that we now turn.

Sartre on Imagination

Sartre outlines the central claims of his theory of imagination in the first chapter of *The Imaginary* (known to many English-language readers as *The Psychology of Imagination*), a scant twenty pages or so that repays multiple readings. For the Sartre , four things stand out: the image is a consciousness, the image is explored in a 'quasi-observational' manner, the imaging consciousness "posits its object as a nothingness," and the image is characterized by its spontaneity. I will add a fifth: the image is embodied.[7]

As for Sartre's first point, imagination is an *imaging consciousness*. Sartre's sense of the constitutive unity of the conscious act requires it. The image is just a particular kind of consciousness; it is an *irrealizing* consciousness. It takes as its intentional object an *irreal* aimed at through the image (e.g., Pierre as absent, to take Sartre's favorite example, or the extinct Dodo, to take an example more fitting to the purposes of this chapter). It does this in a manner both similar to and importantly different from perceptual consciousness. Perceptual consciousness is a *realizing* consciousness that takes as its intentional object a *real* percept (e.g., Pierre as present, or Pierre's hairy cousin, the endangered Mountain Gorilla). And so too the imaging consciousness takes aim at its object. The difference is that while the percept is posited as *existent*, the image is posited as *nonexistent*: "…the image gives its object as a nothingness of being…The characteristic of the intentional object of the imaging consciousness is that the object is not there and is posited as such, or that it does not exist and is posited as nonexistent, or that it is not posited at all."[8] Think again of the Dodo (not there); think of the Gorgon (nonexistent); think of the suffering of plants (not posited). "In perception, knowledge is formed slowly; in the image, knowledge is immediate."[9] Hence, "…the world of images is a world where nothing *happens*…Not a second of surprise: the object that is moving is not alive, it *never precedes the intention*. But neither is it inert, passive, 'worked' from the outside, like a marionette: *the consciousness never precedes the object*, the intention reveals itself at the same time as it realizes itself, in and by its realization."[10] Sartre qualifies this point in a note late in the text: "There are, on the boarders of wakefulness and sleep, certain rather strange cases that could pass for images displaying resistance."[11] We do not, in every instance, have complete control over the image, which serves to highlight the ontological status of the image. This is crucial: both the image and the percept are *real* in Sartre's open-textured ontological sense, in that they are both *actualities*, or more precisely, they are both *reals*—a point more easily accommodated by French syntax: *ils sont l'un et l'autre réeles*, or *ils sont tous les deux réeles*. They are each and equally *real*, albeit in distinct modalities of reality.

What manner of distinction? How distinct? The being of the percept and the being of the image differ fundamentally. The distinction is phenomenological:

> In the world of perception, no "thing" can appear without maintaining an infinity of relations to other things…Hence a kind of *overflowing* in the world of 'things': there is, at every moment, always infinitely more than we can see; to exhaust the richness of my current perception would take an infinite time…But in the image, on the other hand, there is a kind of essential poverty. The different elements of an image maintain no relations with the rest of the world and only two or three relations between themselves: those, for example, that I could note, or those that it is presently important to retain. [12]

If in perception we must take time to discover and explore the percept's infinite facets; in imagination we spontaneously create and augment and supplement the image's intrinsic finitude. Sartre is emphatic on this point too: "I can keep an image in view as long as I want: I will never find anything there but what I put there."[13] The image is, as it were, the *ad hoc* consciousness par excellence.

As for my additional point concerning the embodied nature of the image, it is not something Sartre dwells on, but it is critical to a responsible interpretation of his theory—and of his thought as a whole. Here, I will say simply this: for Sartre consciousness is embodied and the body is conscious. He never believed otherwise, and it is impossible to argue otherwise on a responsible reading of the textual evidence. He could not be more emphatic in *Being and Nothingness*: "Being-for-itself must be wholly body and it must be wholly consciousness; it can not be *united* with a body. Similarly being-for-others is wholly body; there are no 'psychic phenomena' there to be united with the body. There is nothing *behind* the body. But the body is wholly 'psychic.'" [14] And so it is in his earlier theory of imagination. The image is embodied, for the whole body constitutes the image: "…the image is not a simple content of consciousness among others, but is a *psychic form*. As a result, the whole body collaborates in the constitution of the image…produced by the intentional animation of certain physiological phenomena."[15] In an idiom appropriate to the larger task of this chapter, we might say that the body is the real earthly ground of worldly imaginings. But this is to anticipate a later stage in the argument.

If it needs to be said, Sartre was ambivalent about the imaginary.[16] We catch a glimpse of the roots of this ambivalence in his taxonomy of consciousness: "To perceive, to conceive, to imagine: such are indeed the three types of consciousness by which the same object can be given to us."[17] On the one hand, he saw a radical gap between conception and perception: "…we can never perceive a thought nor think a perception. They are radically distinct phenomena: one is knowledge conscious of itself, which places itself at once in the center of the object; the other is a synthetic unity of a multiplicity of appearances, which slowly serves its apprenticeship."[18] His example is a cube. When we perceive a cube, we perceive it one side at a time, one aspect at a time, even as our constitutive perceptual processes hold it together for us in the percept, as this very cube. When we think the concept "cube," when we conceive a cube, it is given all at once. "I am at the centre of my idea," as Sartre puts it, "I apprehend its

entirety in one glance."[19] If perception aims at the concrete (that cube, this Earth, our world), conception aims at the abstract (cube, planet, world) Thus, as Sartre reiterates in *Being and Nothingness*: "We can not…perceive and imagine simultaneously; it must be either one or the other."[20] (And, I should note, a similar radical disjunction holds between the image and the concept: "To say that an object is given as imaged and as conceived at the same time is as absurd as to speak of a body that would be solid and gas at the same time."[21]) Imagination differs from both conception and perception.

On the other hand, it can influence the both. Sartre acknowledged, or at least hinted at a certain capacity of imagination to refine and concentrate and intensify experience—and so by extension, we may infer, to augment our percepts and concepts, though he never says as much.

> It must not, however, be believed that the irreal object, a final term, an effect that is never itself a cause, is a pure and simple epiphenomenon and that the development of consciousness remains exactly the same whether or not this object exists. Certainly, the irreal always receives and never gives. Certainly there is no way of giving it the urgency, the exigency, the difficulty of a real object. However, the following fact cannot be ignored: before producing the roast chicken as imaged, I was hungry and yet I did not salivate…One could not therefore deny that my hunger…underwent a significant modification while passing through the imaging state. [It was] concentrated, made more precise, and [its] intensity increased.[22]

To repeat, and despite the tensions, Sartre unequivocally affirmed a common ground between imagination and perception, "the two great functions of consciousness"[23]: both the perceived object and the imagined object possess a *real being*. When *reals* collide, things happen.

Both the real and the irreal are real, permeated throughout by nothingness. This "quality of nothingness that permeates the whole process"[24] and its concomitant capacity to transform experience are of the utmost importance. For "the imaginary is in every case the concrete 'something' towards which the existent is surpassed…that in relation to which the totality of the real is surpassed in order *to make a world*."[25] This is a point to which we will have to return, and a good place to turn to Taylor's social imaginary.

Taylor on the Social Imaginary

I originally encountered the concept of a "social imaginary" nested deep within Taylor's monumental tome, *A Secular Age*. In his mercifully short earlier monograph, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Taylor devotes a chapter to exploration of

the notion itself, in preparation for his outline of its *modern* inflection. He defines a social imaginary thusly[26]:

> By social imaginary, I mean something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode. I am thinking, rather, of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and image that underlie these expectations… There are important differences between social imaginary and social theory. I adopt the term imaginary (i) because my focus is on the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories and legends. It is also the case that (ii) theory is often the possession of a small minority, whereas what is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society. Which leads to a third difference: (iii) the social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.[27]

This passage is exemplary of the clarity of Taylor's prose, so a brief comment on the import of Taylor's threefold clarification will suffice.

First, a social imaginary is always an *unthematized* image of social existence. It is an image not so much *envisioned* as it is *lived*; and even when we envision it, by definition we *live* the envisioning. We each carry with us some social imaginary—perhaps more than one, perhaps many more of them today than in the past—but a social imaginary is not an image we can easily conjure, and we do not necessarily or even ever *think* about our social imaginary. Rather, we each enact a social imaginary, in and through our social practices, most of them just the ordinary routines and rituals of daily life, most of them pregnant with the larger meaning of *us*, and some of them informing extraordinary transformative interventions aimed at unlikely but possible new futures (about which more below).

The pivotal point is that we are in the realm of practice here. Taylor wants us to keep lived experience and workaday conduct in sight. The social imaginary is neither magical nor mysterious. Above all, it is not theory, it is part and parcel of conduct proper.

> The understanding implicit in practice stands to social theory in the same relation that my ability to get around a familiar environment stands to a (literal) map of this area. I am very well able to orient myself without ever having adopted the standpoint of overview the map offers me. Similarly, for most of human history and for most of social life, we function through the grasp we have on the common repertory, without benefit of theoretical overview. Humans operated with a social imaginary well before they ever got into the business of theorizing about themselves.[28]

Thus Taylor insists, "The social imaginary is not a set of ideas; rather, it is what enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society."[29] However many imaginaries there may be, however many there may have been, it is an old and common business.

This brings us to Taylor's second point of clarification. As ordinary, a social imaginary is not the possession of a select few; it is a 'populist' notion, in the descriptive rather than prescriptive sense of the term. By definition a social imaginary is seated in the "popular imagination." It describes a popular (i.e., broadly shared, even if not universal) sense of how things are with the world. In this way, and far from being a mere figment of the imagination, the social imaginary is very much a part of the *real world*. It is always diffuse, inchoate, inarticulate, yes; and it is always efficacious, too, the shared possession of masses of ordinary people. A social imaginary orients the daily conduct of large swathes of ordinary society—by extension orienting the dynamic stability of society as a whole. For good and for ill and *for all*, a social imaginary is a powerful force, taken up each day in a multitude of ways by myriads of persons making their day-to-day, and building histories, sculpting worlds, and sketching futures along the way.

Third, because a social imaginary (and the more loosely related collections of them that tend to engage 'us' today) has this real influence on the real world, it is by default, a *legitimizing* force in the world. A living social imaginary permits a diversity of individuals, despite the mixed counterthrusts of pathology, idiosyncrasy, and creativity, to share in the construction of a single world, one recognizable to all, or at least to most, as the world in which *we* live. Every social imaginary is, in this sense, a self-fulfilling prophecy: the world is as it is because *this is the way the world is*; and the way the world is is *the way the world is supposed to be*. A social imaginary makes the world seem right and natural and desirable.

A few further points are implicit in Taylor's own clarifications, and directly pertinent to the concerns of this chapter. First, the social imaginary possesses a certain recalcitrance to change—Sartre would call it being or inertia, Taylor might call it integrity, I will emphasize its integrativity—and this resistance to change in the imaginary must not be underestimated, especially by those who would seek to change the real. As a facilitating story of how things are with the world, the social imaginary exerts a gentle but pervasive grip on individuals and groups. It is easy to talk about how the world is and how it ought to be. It is exceedingly difficult to change it. Any concrete change in the world must work out its proposed refashioning of already recalcitrant social, political, and economic structures *against* the steady tide of a living social imaginary, the murky undercurrent of imagined meaning and mattering that contributes so much to the drift of how things are with the real world.

As Taylor also repeatedly emphasizes, the social imaginary is thoroughly wrapped up with identity construction. The depth of the problem of change, real

change, comes in part from the fact that the social imaginary is at least as much about our sense of who we are as it is about what we do and why we do it. It is part of "the very formative horizon of my identity."[30] The social imaginary is an integral part of becoming the kind of persons we are, and equally integral to staying that way, so it is no small thing to challenge it. Of course, this is just a peek into Taylorian can of worms that need not be opened here.[31]

So, what of the two of them? What of Taylor's and Sartre's theories together? What of the imaging consciousness in relation the imagining collective?

Conjuring the Conjurer

Though everything Taylor says is in *Modern Social Imaginaries* is broadly consistent with what Sartre says in *The Imaginary*, their immediate concerns are obviously different. By definition, the domain of the *social* imaginary lies outside that of the image per se, and so beyond the phenomenological descriptions of the constitutive imaging consciousness and the imaginary life of individuals that concerned the early Sartre. Whether one focuses on the formal qualities of Taylor's sense of the imaginary as a social trope—as I primarily do here—or on the substantive history and currency of the *modern* social imaginary with which Taylor is principally concerned, the imaginary in question is a *collective* imaginary, animating the social body, as it were, and spread across the world, as Sartre might put it. Taylor wants above all to show us that we each *and* together forge and sustain an imaginary, even as it is given to us. It is *our* social imaginary, even as some of us may demur—the possibility of which demurral is, not incidentally, fundamental to Taylor's understanding of the *modern* social imaginary. Dependent as it must be on the particularities of any *given we*, a social imaginary is *our take*, a tacit story that is *told by us about us for us*. It is the story we tell ourselves about who we are and what we are like, about how we have come to be this way and how we ought to be. It is an odd sort of story in that it is one we always hear even as we never tell it. Indeed, we may say, following Sartre that we will find in a social imaginary only what we have put there ourselves.

A simple but nontrivial key to the distinction between Sartre and Taylor is evident in their respective orientations: on the one hand, we have the younger Sartre's interest in the individual; on the other, the elder Taylor's interest in the group. To give the distinction a little flesh: if the early Sartre was concerned with the static and genetic phenomenology of the individual image—that is, with the description of the eidetic sense of stable objects and the genesis of those objects in the lived imaginative experience of the individual; the elder Taylor, though far from a self-described phenomenologist, might be said to be more concerned with the generative phenomenology of the collective imaginary—that

is, with the description of how historical and intersubjective structures of iden-
tity come about through the interface of lifeworld and lived meaning-making
and collective experience.[32]

There is, of course, no individuality apart from sociality. And so there is an
immediate (which is not to say, *un*mediated), embodied, and felt meaning of
sociality that permits creatures like us (and, we know to a moral certainty, that
permits many other sorts of creatures, both much like and very unlike us) to *en-
gage* and *experience* the particular ecologies of our local environments—and
permits increasing numbers of us, to wonder at the broader ecologies of our re-
gional and global environments. Sentient-experiential-linguistic beings like us
always work *with and in and from and through* some often inchoate but always
operative sense of placement and engagement, and both *with and amidst* others
and *with and amidst* an encompassing ambience. This is the situation. Whether
we are concerned with the constitutive activity of an individual imaginary à la
Sartre, or the passive relief of any social imaginary à la Taylor, the imaginary is
always an imagining *in medias res*. And this felt sense of situated engagement
that accompanies and is intrinsic to all experienced sociality, whether imaginary
or real, is wholly and crucially ecological. Experience, whole-cloth, is socio-
ecological. Hence the merit of Sartre and Taylor taken together. Together they
elicit the contours of what might be called an emergent-construct, an angle on a
new socioecological imaginary that is at once given and taken. It might be
called—in the spirit of Sartre's remarkable and underappreciated *Search for a
Method*—a "historical and structural" socioecology. For here theory, praxis, and
prospect coalesce.

Yes, someday, if dreams come true, people will wake to realize that they
take the intrinsic linkages between social truth and justice and ecological rela-
tions and processes for granted—much as, following Taylor, many awoke one
day to find that they took the new link between the modern moral order and their
sense of personal identity and social legitimacy for granted. If dreams come true,
someday people will awake to find that their collective imaginary is a *socio-
ecological* tale, one told for so long so compellingly by so many that they hardly
know they are telling it. This is a point Taylor insists on: any collective imagi-
nary is of necessity characterized by its *passive emergence*. In this sense, on the
one hand, the new socioecological imaginary, if and when it completes its limp-
ing and faltering emergence, will have come about seemingly of its own accord.
On the other hand, understood in a manner consistent with the early Sartre's
static/genetic phenomenology of the image *qua* imaging consciousness, the new
socioecological imaginary will, again, of necessity, be a *construction*, a product
of the active and spontaneous character of the imaging consciousness. Yes, the
new socioecological imaginary must *emerge* of its own accord. Sartre would
readily admit this. But it will emerge only insofar as we must *construct* it. As
with all things imaginary, if we are to find it, we must make it, for we can only
find there what we put there. This is a point Sartre would insist upon: any

imaginary, individual or social, will of necessity be characterized by its *active spontaneity*. In this sense, the new socioecological imaginary, if only it keeps limping and faltering along, will have come about intentionally—in both the phenomenological and ethical senses of the term.

And, if it needs to be said, the two demands are not mutually exclusive. Far from it. There is no good argument to be made that only the active or the passive run the imaginary show on theoretical grounds, and there is certainly no good reason to prefer one over the other on practical grounds. Let the chips fall where they may, but we have pick them up in order to drop them, again and again. Indeed, where matters of collective imaginaries are concerned—social, political, economic, *socioecological*—the passive-emergent and active-constructive dimensions are reciprocally implicative and mutually inflective. Each entails the other (the passive moment), as each transforms the other (the active moment). Again, *we will find* in the new socioecological imaginary only what *we* have put there *ourselves*, and this precisely to the extent that we have *put it there*, through the patient work of history and daily conduct. Moreover, as we work imaginatively on the real, imaginaries work on imaginaries too: "the interplay of social imaginaries, new and traditional, [help] determine their respective courses."[33] It is a matter of *give* and *take*. The new socioecological imaginary will be a new 'given' only and exactly to the extent that it is also a new 'taken.' This point cannot, I think, be overemphasized: every given must be taken in some way. This is the dialectical heart of free organic praxis—to invoke the mature Sartre's preferred index for human engagement—of a realizing praxis no less than of an irrealizing praxis.

If, as Sartre insists in the second volume of the *Critique*, "the possible is a structure of the real,"[34] this is only so, I insist, because we must pass through the imaginary on the path to the possible. Nor, I should note, is any of this inconsistent with Taylor's understanding of things imaginary. The imaginary is a structure of the possible, and so it is a structure of the real, even a more fundamental structure than possibility itself, for what can reveal the possible in the real if not imagination? Taylor knows this too: "Like all forms of human imagination, the social imaginary can be full of self-serving fiction and suppression, but it is also an essential constituent of the real. It cannot be reduced to an insubstantial dream."[35] Sartre accepts this, of course; he is just less sanguine than Taylor, I think, for fear we might lose our grip on the real. If the primacy of the imaginary lies in its necessity, its peril lies in the illusion of its sufficiency. On this Sartre was unequivocal: the worst thing we can do is to prefer the imaginary over the real.

Still, his ambivalence notwithstanding, Sartre could not be clearer about the priority of the imaginary. "Thus the imaginary," he tells us late in his study, "represents at every moment the implicit sense of the real."[36] This, too, is a matter of give *and* take: "The imaginary appears 'on the ground of the world', but reciprocally all apprehension of the real as world implies a hidden surpassing

toward the imaginary."[37] *All* consciousness is always, even if not only, an irrealizing consciousness insofar as all consciousness of the world is, by definition, an implicit question posed to the world and thus displays the world as at once imagined, possible, and real. Some imagined possible always underlies the actual, just as some possible imaginary sustains the real. The irreal, itself, is a structure of the real; so the irrealizing power of imagination is a necessary condition for the possible; and so it must be for the realization of any possibility.

Last, but not least, we must not forget that all of these points are made with freedom in the background. For both Sartre and Taylor, there is no imaginary apart from freedom. There is no individual imagination that is not free. As for Sartre, imagination is no mere happenstance; it is the surest index of our freedom: "…imagination is not an empirical power added to consciousness, *but is the whole of consciousness as it realizes its freedom*; every concrete and real situation of consciousness in the world *is pregnant with the imaginary* in so far as it is always presented as a surpassing of the real…The irreal is produced outside the world by a consciousness that *remains in the world* and it is because we are […] free that we can imagine."[38] There is no social imaginary that is not freely lived. As for Taylor, "our social imaginary constitutes a horizon we are *virtually* incapable of thinking beyond."[39] In this instance, at least, everything hangs on the adverb. There comes a time with every living social imaginary when some people can and do manage to think beyond it.

To Cross This Busy Intersection

Now, phenomenological descriptions can discover, for example, that the very structure of transcendental consciousness implies that this consciousness is constitutive of a world. But it is evident that they will not teach us that it must be constitutive of one such world, which is to say precisely the one where we are, with its earth, its animals, its people, and the history of its people.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

We live not simply in a troubled time or a troubled place, but on a troubled planet in a troubled world. We live in the *Anthropocene*, which promises to be a particularly troubled epoch if we are to trust the geologists. And we have nowhere else to go. We may flee this or that difficult circumstance, as many of us have and many more of us will—toward the warming poles, away from the creeping coasts, higher into the melting mountains, off of the shrinking islands, further from the encroaching deserts, nearer to the drying rivers—and all our flight will be, as it must be, from one place to another on this one troubled planet

in this one troubled world. It is difficult to imagine just how it will all turn out in reality. Imagine what you will, and know this: real ostriches never bury their heads in the sand. They just know when to get close to Earth so that they might better keep track of what's going on in the world. Head low. Eyes open. Safe for the moment, though not secure.

Imagination is a gift and a tool, and in every imaginable context. As we develop and mature, the line between the imaginary and the real becomes clearer, firmer, even preferred. And so it should. Cars are real, after all, and to imagine that they are made of marshmallow or that you are made of some diaphanous ether as you cross a busy intersection would surely lead to difficulties—if you believed it. Still, just crossing the street involves a good bit of imagination, carefully winnowed by perception of the real. The child may imagine what she will. I ask her to hold my hand and I tighten my grip and look both ways twice before we cross. I know how easy it is for her to take up the gift of imagination. She *is* Wonder Woman, after all, so Wonder Woman had better hold my hand. I help her across the street, even as she knows it is Wonder Woman who helps me to cross the impossible distance from here to the far side of the world. We arrive safely at the other side and I release her hand and she shakes her invisible golden lasso from my wrist and I check the time and decide whether to walk or take a bus or hail a cab to get to our appointment. And all the while I pretend that it is not my supple, if little appreciated imagination but my hold on reality that has kept us safe on our journey. I imagine against all the evidence that it is my firm grip on the real has allowed me to reach my decision, and that I only need to hang onto it to get us to our destination on time. The child, of course, knows that that's just silly. She runs ahead to fight for truth and justice. Perhaps she knows that we will have neither unless we imagine both. Perhaps she knows, too, that truth and justice are matters of imagining an ecologically habitable planet and a livable world for all of Earth's inhabitants. And perhaps she knows that will have neither habitability nor livability unless we aim for both. Then again, perhaps I only imagine the wisdom of the child.

One thing we do know, and to a moral certainty: where matters of worldly flourishing are concerned, our own earthly flourishing *and* that of the broader community of Earth upon which any world worth wanting depends, it will behoove us to employ all of the richness of our peculiar, perhaps singular variety of experience. And among our peculiar strengths is our capacity to imagine, a power surely shared by many of our earthly cohabitants, but one which we seem to have in spades. If we want to take aim at a habitable planet, to say nothing of a livable world, we had better imagine hitting a single target. For just as surely as the social and the ecological have always been inextricably bound up with each other, so the real fate of this planet and of any possible world are inextricably bound up with the imaginary.

Notes

1.   A draft of the present chapter was presented at the annual conference of the International Association for Environmental Philosophy in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania., October 23-23, 2011. As for my allusion to Ecclesiastes, see John R. McNeil, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000).

2.   Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 361.

3.   For a critical reappraisal of Sartre's philosophy of nature see my "Ecologizing Sartre's Ontology: Nature, Science, and Dialectics," *Environmental Philosophy* 9:2 (2012). See also my *Only a Pond: A Study in Existential Ecology* (forthcoming) for a systematic and constructive appropriation of Sartre's thought for a philosophical ecology. The present chapter is based largely upon Chapter 6 of that study.

4.   William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 131-132.

5.   William L. McBride, "Sartre and Problems in the Philosophy of Ecology," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis – Folia Philosophica* 8 (1991): 69-80, p. 74. I thank Bill for pointing me to this article during a conversation at a reception for the Center for Philosophy & Public Policy at the 2011 meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association. At the time of our conversation, the study from which this chapter is drawn was in its final stages of completion. Note: The epigraph for this chapter appears on page 80 of his article.

6.   See my "Sartre's Integrative Method: Description, Dialectics, and Praxis," *Sartre Studies International* 16:2 (2010), pp. 48-74.

7.   Unless otherwise indicated, all citations in this section are from Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary*, ed. Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, trans. Jonathan Webber (New York: Routledge, 2004).

8.   *The Imaginary*, p. 13.

9.   *Ibid*., p. 9.

10. *Ibid*., p. 11.

11. *Ibid*., note 9, p. 197.

12. *Ibid*., p. 9.

13. *The Imaginary*, p. 9.

14. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 305.

15. *The Imaginary*, p. 137..

16. This discussion expands upon an interpretation developed briefly in my "Reading Catalano's *Reading Sartre*," *Sartre Studies International* 17:2 (2011), pp. 81-88.

17. *The Imaginary*, p. 8.

18. *Ibid*., pp. 8-9.

19. *Ibid*., p. 8.

20. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 258.

21. *The Imaginary*, p. 15.

22. *Ibid*., p. 139.

23. *Ibid*., p. 20.

24. *Ibid*., p. 140.

25. *The ImaginaryIbid*., p. 187.

26. Unless otherwise indicated, throughout this discussion I quote from Taylor's shorter text, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004). Much of that text is reproduced in *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 159-211 and *passim*. Taylor never attributes an origin of term, though he acknowledges the influence of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991); and Bronislaw Baczko, *Les Imaginaire Sociaux* (Payot: Paris, 1984)

27. *Modern Social Imaginaries*, p. 23.

28. *Ibid*., p. 26.

29. *Ibid*., p. 2.

30. *Ibid*., p. 55.

31. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

32. In this regard I have learned much from Anthony J. Steinbock, *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995).

33. *Modern Social Imaginaries*, p. 138.

34. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume Two (unfinished): The Intelligibility of History*, trans. Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1991), p. 41.

35. *Modern Social Imaginaries*, p. 183.

36. *Ibid*., p. 187.

37. *Ibid*., p. 188.

38. *Ibid*., p. 186.

39. *Ibid*., p.185, emphasis added.

William L. McBride: His Life and Works

Joseph Catalano

The title of this collection of essays, *Revolutionary* Hope, is an accurate description of the unfolding life of William Leon McBride. I have known McBride for a little more than thirty years, and so my reflections about his life must be limited to that relatively brief time-span. Still, from casual remarks made by him, I know that he was both socially active and engaged in writing while at Georgetown University. Later, when he was married, he and his wife, Angela, together with their young children, travelled and studied widely. The prophetic last lines of Robert Frost's first poem, "Into My Own," in his first book, *A Boy's Will*, fits, I am sure, McBride's younger self: "They would not find me changed from him they knew—Only more sure of all I thought was true."

Indeed, I cannot imagine Bill not making as much of the world his home as is possible for one who is also committed to teaching and writing about philosophy. The unique characteristic of McBride is that he has gone out of his way to meet many of the philosophers that he writes about; his own life and writing unite into a living philosophical and social web. From *Fundamental Change in Law and Society: Hart and Sartre on Revolution* (1970) to *From Praxis to Global Pathos: Anti-Hegemonic Post-Post-Marxist Essays* (2001), William Leon McBride has remained true to his initial spirit of inventive freedom, one that is rooted in the hopes and dreams of the oppressed peoples of the world.

I first met Bill during a summer NEH seminar at Purdue directed by Calvin Schrag, sometime in the late 1970s. Knowing my interest in Jean-Paul Sartre, and being the generous spirit that he is, Cal introduced me to Bill and we have been in contact ever since. Although that was my first meeting with Bill, I had read his essay on Sartre in George A. Schrader's book, *Existential Philosophers:*

Kierkegaard to Merleau-Ponty.[1] That essay was my first introduction to Sartre's philosophy. I must have read it sometime in the early 1970s, and it put me on the right road to getting the most out of Sartre. I have tried to keep up with Bill's writings ever since—tried but failed. For example, I have the eight volumes he edited on existentialism.[2] I have read his introductions to those volumes, but certainly not all the articles. I recall Bill mentioning that he put the collection together during nights working at the library, because he could not do hard work at night!

Besides his books and major articles, there are his numerous talks at conferences. I was present at one keynote lecture introducing the International Conference on Civil Society in South Eastern Europe held at the American University in Bulgaria[3], and I know that there have been other keynote addresses. Bill interest in Eastern Europe has a long history, not only of giving lectures, talking on the radio, but of teaching for extended periods of time. His experiences and research resulted in a remarkable book, *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe*[4], which I have read, enjoyed, and marked throughout with my lines and checks—one line, important, two, more so, and two lines with a check, must read and read again. According to Sir Google, I reviewed this book; but I do not recall doing so and I do not have an offprint. But, if it was truly me, then I know the review must have been praiseworthy. This book was soon followed by another, *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*, which does, in fact, contain a chapter based on the keynote address given in Bulgaria at which I was present. I know that I did not review this book, because, until now, it remained on my shelves unmarked. How could that have happened?

The special quality of these two books is their remarkable integration of practical experience with political theory. McBride has steeped himself with familiarity with Eastern Europe. Many of the philosophers that he refers to are not only acquaintances, but friends. I was also with McBride in China (thanks to Bill's intervention), visiting and talking with Chinese philosophers, and I know that he is regarded as one of their faculty members. Short of the impossibility of being born in many places, Bill has made himself a citizen of the countries to which he writes about. Further, the political theory that Bill gives us in his books is taken not just from Marx and Sartre, but, as in the beautiful chapter, "The Throne, the Altar, and the Cottage,"[5] from lesser known thinkers such as Richard Oastler. Then too, Bill is also on top of very current thinkers such as John Rawls and Richard Rorty. I believe Bill published the first review of Rawls *Theory of Justice*.[6]

From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos

The rest of this essay will be devoted to *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*, followed by some personal reflections. I have in one way or another considered in my own writings most of Bill's other books. I will simply say that his *Sartre's Political Theory*[7] is the best book in the field. I can affirm that without reservations, because I know Sartre's political theory myself. As for the rest of political theory, I trust McBride. He reads everyone in political theory; I read only McBride. I couldn't have a better guide, because I firmly believe that he does not cheat to make a point. He gives to each thinker the best rendition of his or her political theory, and, only then, does he offer interpretation. Besides, I find that we think alike on all important social and political issues. I am not a political theorist; but I have lived all my life in the United States of America, and I am a philosopher. To allow myself an early personal reflection: Lately, when my younger brother and I talk on the phone and reflect upon our growing up in America, we say, "We had the best years." Our parents went through the Depression and we were poor, but then there was hope and there seemed to be the possibility of real change.

Is there still hope, and is real change possible? In *Yugoslav Praxis*, Bill concludes his book with the observation that "philosophy itself...understood in the very broad sense that I have attempted to explain here, can play a most crucial role in the evolution of a global human culture that would be neither hegemonic and consumerist nor without hope."[8] I want to review briefly the "philosophy" to which he refers.

Chapter One, "The Practical Relevance of Practical Philosophy: Philosophers' Impact on History," introduces us to the philosophy that can nurture revolutionary hope. It is founded in McBride's understanding of Marx and Sartre. On the other hand, to repeat, it also engages just about every other political thinker and activist. Beyond that rich textual tapestry, one can sense again and again Bill's long-time physical presence in Eastern Europe. There are also several references to China and Chinese Philosophy in this book, for example, in the last chapter, "The Globalization of Philosophy," which introduces Bill's summary reflections on the relation between philosophy and hope. But let us return to a slower approach to those reflections, so as to better digest their significance and value.

McBride begins with a critical evaluation of the thesis associated with Marx, namely, "Philosophers have only *interpreted* the world; the point, however, is to change it." I agree with Bill that any one-sentence summary of a philosophical perspective needs to be interpreted in the light of the whole philosophy, and Bill does that for Marx. (It would be interesting to read a similar interpretation of Sartre's claim, "Man is a useless passion.") Marx simply could not have been against speculative philosophy; it is only through such clarification are we aware of what needs to be changed in a society. Moreover, without be-

ing an expert on Marx, I agree with Bill that Marx was more successful as a "critic of existing states of affairs, rather than as either a prophet of the future or even a counselor of what is to be done."[9] Indeed, McBride recommends that we look for the hope that philosophy can provide in a different light, and thus he notes that practical philosophy is an effort to clarify our lives, and, like every effort, it does not guarantee results. Still, a closer look at the union of praxis and philosophy in Yugoslavia may give us a more concrete evaluation of the role of philosophy in everyday life.

The title of the second chapter not only introduces us to the forthcoming material; it also points to Bill's own philosophical life. In "Ideals and Reality Revisited: Praxis and Nationalism in Erstwhile Yugoslavia: A Tribute to Gajo Petrović," Bill begins by writing that perhaps some people might regard his comments as "impolitic," since he is an "outsider."[10] McBride admits the literal truth of this claim; but he rightly calls attention to his long-time involvement with Yugoslavia, both in its original form and then with its break-up.[11] We are then introduced to a profound dialogue between Bill and Petrović, during which it is noted that, if there is to be hope, it must first recognize the counter-revolutionary movement of breaking up countries into small parts, which then are at war with each other.[12] One wonders what would have happened to the United States of America if the South had been allowed to secede from the Union, and if Texas and other states had developed their individual personalities. For better or worse, it would have lessened the power of the United States. But Bill's reflections are here deeper than these commonsense observations, and, to a great extent, they lay the ground for many of his observations about revolution and hope that are to follow. I will here briefly summarize them.

Revolution and Hope

Bill begins by agreeing with Petrović that revolution must not only have a political significance, but that it must also be rooted in our relation to Being.[13] Petrovic' relies on Heidegger's understanding of Being, and Bill admits that his knowledge of Heidegger comes mainly through Sartre. Within this Heideggerian context, Bill writes: "Events, experience, and further reflection have led me not only to believe that he [Petrović] was correct in insisting on thinking of revolution in the profoundly ontological way in which he did but also to become even more confirmed in my skepticism about truly fundamental change."[14] Without claiming that I know more about Heidegger than McBride, I will merely mention that I regarded myself a "Heideggerian" before I saw myself a "Sartrean," and that before I wore either philosophical hat, I wore that of an "Aristotelian." Could it be that this fundamental change has to do with becoming

open to a more poetic relation to reality, which, in turn, will then alter our fundamental technological relation to Being? If so, I also would be skeptical about the possibility of fundamental change. But then, Sartre claims that we have cultivated a condition of scarcity in which it seems "natural" for poverty and oppression to exist, and this also seems difficult if not impossible to alter. Here, however, I would be inclined to refer to Sartre's category of need, of which Bill is very aware.

Regardless of the possibility of fundamental change, we can nevertheless critique the injustices of our times. This is a valid enterprise, even if injustice seems to be the rule governing the relation of powerful nations in respect to poorer and weaker ones. For example, the novel by J. Robert Janes, *Sandman*,[15] is about the exploits of the French detective Jean-Louis St-Cyr and the German Hermann Kohler. Both are intent to find the murderer of school children in Nazi occupied France. They work sometimes with the aid of the Gestapo, who kill at leisure, but who do not give that "right" to others. Still, they seem to affect some small change in the general hellish atmosphere. Of course, *perhaps* this makes the larger injustice more stable.

And, to offer one more personal reflection on the "naturalness" of our tyranny, a few years ago, my wife, Marisa, became an American citizen, with the enviable result that she now has three passports, one Brazilian, one Italian, and now an American. The ceremony—the first such that I witnessed—was interesting in its contradictory emphases. There was a fairly large gathering in the Manhattan court room, with, perhaps, a hundred people taking the oaths for citizenship. On the positive side, when the names of perhaps thirty countries were called, those representing them stood up. I was glancing at "America, the melting-pot of the world." But, I was dismayed at the continual reference to being willing to die for one's country, and for the constant repetition that American is a capitalistic country. Of course, we are living in a capitalistic system, but I never realized that the willingness to live in such a system is part of the oath of being a citizen of the United States of America. Now, the melting-pot is tinged with an implicit warning: "You are lucky to be here in America, because of the goodness of capitalism." McBride, of course, offers us a deeper and more philosophical approach to this dilemma between doing good even if there seems no hope of establishing a fundamental change.

Toward Community

The general movement of what follows in the text is to unveil a normative basis for critiquing the American competitive spirit, a norm that is not itself oppressive in relation to other good-faith efforts. The dialogue now continues with Mihailo Marković. The task is to discover a norm that will allow us to critique

social injustice, and, for Marković this is community. What Bill writes of the latter can be said also of himself: "He did this at once in theory and in practice, with his pen and with his entire style of life, a style that seemed to reflect the spirit of community toward which, as he always argued, the real possibilities exist for our contemporary societies to aspire."[16] Even more important for Bill is Marković's notion of solidarity, which is better than fraternity, "because it lacks the latter's bias both toward the male sex and toward primitive tribal thinking."[17]

The basic argument that follows is that we can find within Marx the basis for identifying the injustices of the capitalistic system without committing ourselves to a supposed general Marxist theory of justice. One can only applaud McBride's condemnation of the domination of the wealthy nations over the poorer ones—domination, however, that arises not merely from one country but from global forces. Bill's analysis becomes specific when he turns to Marx's insight into the evil of surplus value, particularly in its extreme presence, the concentration of capital and commodity fetishism. Despite the provincialism of Marx's own life and many of his beliefs, his views, McBride notes, should not be discounted by the emerging voices of the oppressed nations.

I am in accord with all of McBride's social views, and his writings are refreshing and they deliver hope—at least on a personal level. We have the ability to give each person on earth a decent standard of living, but we continue to let the rich become richer at the expense of the poor. And, beyond that, we aim to make the poor feel responsible for and ashamed of their poverty, despite the fact that there are no jobs. Recently, here in New York, Mayor Bloomberg has continually justified his requirement that the poor who need food stamps be fingerprinted to avoid misuse. It is a crime if a hungry person receives food outside the system's generosity; but it is not a crime if an employer makes excessive profits while paying minimum wages.

Ideals filter down into practices, and with all its ambiguities, I agree with Bill that the ideal of socialism is better by far than the ideal of capitalism, not only on a national level but on a global level. McBride rightly reminds us of the success of the socialist regimes—the lack of poverty, increased education, and better health conditions than were enjoyed in the capitalist countries. Why did these socialist countries fail? To a great extent, they failed through their own pettiness; but also, because the capitalist countries could not allow them to succeed. Still, as Bill reminds us, the social effort was real; and, in a strange but valid sense, their defeat by powers internal and external is the beginning of our hope—for they existed!

Let us recall the title of the book we are considering: "*From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*." Chapter seven introduces us to the "pathos," the apparent collapse of the social and political influence of Marxism. Bill considers four basic trends that would seem to take the place of Marxist theory, namely, postmodernism, nationalism, critical theory, and religion.[18] I have never understood what is meant by postmodernism; but I can, I think, agree that the empha-

sis on decentralization may reflect what is happening to the grand predictions of philosophical views from Hegel to Marx, and of the decentralization of the Soviet Union itself. But is the real emphasis of postmodernism on decentralizing the average person's political life, while allowing the rich to act in unison? Is this what Bill means by his last sentence: "Postmodernism is in the broad sense a living validation of the *theory* of ideology"[19]?

McBride' discussion of nationalism recognizes that *at times*, a national spirit may be judiciously joined to a more widely centered philosophy. Critical theory, in this sense, is the realization that the study of law and legal systems should be given more attention than has been true of general critical theory. The longest section here is the one on religion, and again Bill gives a positive twist to Marxists claim about religion being the opium of the people. Transcendence is part of praxis; it is an aspect of being human, and it is the origin of hope. Religion gives this transcendence a new dimension, which may, in fact, allow us to see clearer the injustice of our capitalistic ideals.

All of these facets can unite to help us forge a new global world view, taking the best of Marx and Sartre, the best of the thinkers already mentioned and of such others as Marx Wartofsky, Carol Gould, and Virginia Held, most of whom stress community. "The optimal outcome, I think, would be gradually to begin to generate, through discussion rather than by the fiat of any single philosopher or philosophical school, an alternative new, open-ended worldview, a new political theory."[20] This worldview is sketched in the following chapter, which gives us a new appraisal of Marx, one in which the overly optimistic "failures" of Marxist theory, still "haunt" us in a positive way. Again, these political failures must not blind us to simple truth that many of the people living within the Soviet bloc were better off—much better off—than they are now under capitalism. But I here leave out the substance of McBride's book, which is replete with specific references. To mention but one, we are given a brief insight into his book, *The Philosophy of Marx*[21], in which he regards that his critique of prediction, the impossibility of such even within a Marxist framework, was, perhaps, his most creative and "prophetic." insight. He also notes that he was approaching Sartre's distinction between totalities and totalizations.

The entire book gradually prepares the way for the last chapter, "The Globalization of Philosophy." Again, the path is forged by an enviable combination of detailed philosophical references and personal experiences. Perhaps, the title of the proceedings of a congress on civil society given in Sofia in 1997, *Resurrecting the Phoenix,* in which McBride gave a keynote address (which is the basis of chapter eleven), hints at the goal of his own book. But, as McBride is well aware, that new bird arising from the ashes, may not be a younger and healthier version of the old, but a different species, Phoenix 2; and it may limp and zigzag even as it does, in fact, fly the globe.

Toward a Global Philosophy

Granting that our philosophy is to be open-ended, where do we draw the line in deciding what to include? We have at least negative guidelines, namely, rejecting pure skepticism about philosophy, such as advocated by Rorty, and also rejecting any philosophy that by its very nature would impose its own view as the one and only true way of looking at human relations. The task is thus to delineate a philosophy that is open to the de facto "one world" in which we live, incorporating, or at least being open to, a multitude of human lifestyles, and which, nevertheless, remains a philosophical view of the world.

This global philosophy, however, will recognize that the death of the phoenix has given birth not only to Phoenix 2, but to a gigantic vulture, American hegemony, with its insatiable fleet of animals, in the air, on land, and in the oceans of the Earth. But is American oppression itself a tool? Perhaps, more powerful than the nation states that thrive on the oppression of the poorer nations, are the fleet international corporations and billionaires that effectively use oppressive nation states as their arms and legs. Given this despairing situation can philosophy and hope still exist?

First, let us note that the ability to raise the question about the justice of the American ideal of an unending consumerism is itself a sign of hope. As Sartre notes in the early part of *Being and Nothingness* the ability to question is at the heart of human existence. But, this ability can be turned to the choice of what toothpaste or hair spray to use in exclusion of questions about individual and social justice. A global philosophy must then continue to critique the injustices brought about, not by the evil of others but by our own indifference. Again, however, I slip into easy reflections, as true as they may be. The *real* task is, in fact, to sketch such a global philosophy. Will this task lead to an imposition of merely another worldview? It should not do so, for we have been warned of the consequence of this attitude, not only by the western apostles of the free market, but by the existence of Soviet Marxism. Thus, the strange but necessary philosophical goal: a genuine effort at sketching a distinctive global philosophy, which is simultaneously open-ended.

I see no contradiction in such an effort. Many writers are guided by the hope that their effort will succeed in producing the "great American novel." This may not happen; but I suspect that the novel will be the better for that hope. We must have some vision of the future, one that both respects individual differences and yet prepares us to live in a world in which our technology has made "one." As Sartre notes at the end of *The Critique of Dialectical Reason,* there is need for a series of distinct efforts, each bringing into focus the expansive use of human freedom with the care for every person in the world. William L. McBride's *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos* sketches such a philosophy, and I recommend it to all, just as I will return to read it again and again.

Reflections

I am in complete agreement with Bill's basic world outlook, particularly as expressed in a sentence in the last chapter: "I firmly believe that no one can claim to possess a serious philosophical worldview without trying to take account, in an integrated way, of the enormous disparities between rich and poor nations and individuals and of the global institutions that reinforce them."[22] Further, granting that the richer nations are, not completely but to a great extent, responsible for this disparity, I still have some lack of clarity about the essential evils of capitalism.

I grant the practical identification of capitalism with all the evils attributed to it by Bill; but I am still not clear about the identity on the level of ideals. Sartre claims that no economic system is, of itself, good or evil; it is men that make it such. Here, as elsewhere with Sartre, I am not inclined to go alone with his claims merely because he made them, but because they seem to fit my own practical outlook on life. This outlook is, I am sure, somewhat influenced by my family's union activities and my own firing, with tenure, from St. John's University in New York, for unionizing college teachers. Ironically, the formation of a union was not our original plan; we were almost pushed into the activity by the administration, which regarded the American Association of University Professors as a communist organization (at which point we thought, "well, in that case, let us give them a real union"). At times, but only at times, advancement is made by the stupidity of those in power. More to the point of my reflections, I want to note that I write without direct knowledge of Marx, and, I am aware that unions can be understood as keeping the capitalistic system moving; for they do, indeed, keep the system going. But, now with the great strides of capitalism toward the superrich, even unions are weak. But my doubts are deeper.

On one level, I have a clear understanding of commodity fetishism, namely, we are daily bombarded by products that we not only do not need but which, in many cases, do us harm. Further, many of these products are really no different from each other. In our daily lives, we live under the injunction, "keep buying." Yes, keep buying even if it gets you in debt so that you cannot afford the real necessities of life, even if you will not thereby have money to send your children to school, even if it destroys the planet. I remember reading that some of the poor in India have cell phones, even though they do not have clean water to drink. All of this is too true. Colonialism, guided by capitalism, has raped the planet, killed millions, and then sent a few to Harvard to announce to the world its glories.

Still, I would like to have some distinction between inventiveness and it unholy uses. Are the automobile, the electric light, and the airplane the result of commodity fetishism? I suspect that a good Marxist would make a distinction between the invention as such and its repetitive uses, which are aimed only at

making profits. But exactly how do we do this? Each invention has a distinct history, a history which, for the most part, requires capital. Thomas Edison had to borrow money to set up his laboratory. This money had to come from private people or from the government. True, once the electric light and the telephone were invented, he and his workers deserved, I believe, reward; but should it be an unending reward, allowing excessive profits. If we grant that the excess comes from capitalism, is the inventiveness itself due to capitalism? Consider also the invention of the automobile. There were several competing models, one in particular, apparently very special; but Ford and other gangsters destroyed the possibility of the better model being produced as it would not produce the same profits as their own models. The destruction of the good model and the further-ing of the poorer ones is the result of practical capitalism; but, again, what about the invention as such?

More generally, do we need a distinction between bourgeois greed and its de facto union with capitalism, on the one hand, and the gigantic overflow of inventions that characterized and continue to characterize our world on the other hand? Where do we place, in theory, the human web of inventiveness—inside or outside capitalism? And where does the "capital" for those inventions come from—private people or the government? I *suspect* Marx might want the profits to go to the government to be used for the common good. Actually, I think in the world in which we now live, big government is less an evil than big business; but that still leaves me with a doubt. Stalinist Russia made the big mistake of deciding *what* was to be produced while allowing workers self-determination as to *how* to produce it. (I am relying on Sartre.) There were in fact great strides made in medicine (stolen by the American pharmaceutical companies), and, in art, specifically the great typographies; but stupidly, Stalin put atom bombs and sputniks as a major goal, leaving the needed equipment for building the infra-structure to the last. Now let us grant that this was an aberration of Marxism; the workers should have been able to decide what the society most needed.

But can "workers" decide what is needed within the complexity of our one world, and do we have a clear notion of "work" and the workplace? (Bill, of course, is aware of this, for, indeed, to repeat, research is work.) Granting that our present capitalistic system delights in making the average worker feel grate-ful to be able earn enough to stay alive, and granting our excessive dependence upon the making of weapons, is this a necessary part of capitalism? Or is our present capitalistic history a reflection of the Stalinist deviation, one socialism for all countries, which is now one democracy for all countries? But, perhaps, I can best illustrate my "doubt" by an ideal example.

Let us imagine a good capitalist who is producing products needed— chairs and tables, for example. (There was a movie along these lines.) This is old-fashioned capitalism that, for the most part, no longer exists, and, as I am to de-scribe it, probably never existed. But to continue with our ideal example, our capitalist gives his workers a salary sufficient to live well, with all benefits and

security. He requires a minimum of a twenty-hour work week, which I think is all that would be practically needed today. Those who wish to work longer will receive more pay; but many workers would rather spend their free time in other pursuits. He, however, loves the business and spends most of his time developing it. He is also well aware that his higher standard of living comes from the value that the workers impart to their products, which, in fact, exceed even their short work week. In fact, he has a formula: he allows himself fifty times what he pays his lowest worker, all the rest goes into increasing the product and making living conditions even better for his employees.

I confess I do not see anything wrong with this picture, except that it does not exist. But it has almost existed, and, to some extent, we were heading toward it. I recall the years before the widespread use of credit cards, when banks had real tellers who knew you and cashed your checks. One of the major banks experimented with giving the employers a three-day work week, during, which, however, they had to work about thirty hours a week. In this way, they employed two shifts of workers, keeping the bank open six days a week, for long hours. I never met happier workers! It was heaven on earth—four free days! It continued until the bank realized that it could force tellers to work six days a week for very little money, because jobs had become scarce—such scarcity due, to a great extent, to their own management of events.

But I think that the fear was and is deeper, namely, too much freedom allows people to think, and in any oppressive society, thinking is a danger. And, philosophy is perhaps seen today to be one of the great dangers to our capitalistic society. There is a humorous incident regarding philosophy in the publication of the very popular Harry Potter books by J. K. Rowling. The British edition of the first book was titled, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, but when the American edition came out a year later the title was changed to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Presumably this was done because American readers would not understand the reference to a "philosopher's stone." But, in fact, would the reference be clearer to the British teenage children to whom the book was directed? Or, was the very reference to philosophy the real dread?

The belief of those in power that thinking is a danger is reflected in our current effort to destroy our educational system, which was on the path to becoming the best in the world. We were succeeding in granting everyone (except of course, the very poor) the chance to get a great education, if they so wished. These Ivy League poor colleges did not last very long, but they did exist. Today, there are grants, but, for the most part, the path to going to a major college or university is blocked to the poor. I am not a pragmatist, but, with Bill, I recognize some of the good influence of William James and John Dewey, even though I am more familiar with the former than the latter.

I come back to my "doubt." Is evil rooted in system or in people? Can any system be good as such; or, are not all systems invented by humans? Of course, there are historical forces that can and do create distinct historical *a prioris*. Let

us grant that capitalism is one and socialism is (and I stress *is*) another. Capitalism has had and continues to have its theoretical advocates, most of whom have a distressing view of life in general with no solution for mass poverty and slavery. Further, as McBride notes, they are guided by a hatred of the poor that resembles sadism. The thought of socialism seems to be dominated by Marx; but as McBride demonstrates in his book, there are a large number of "Praxis" philosophers who have refined Marx's notions, and these frequently have a more noble view of human life than their capitalistic theorists. Still, I return to my doubt about the essential evil of capitalism, and, from my philosophically naïve perspective, I do not see why, in the abstract, it could not become a socialism. Practically, of course, it seems impossible, but this is because of its unholy marriage with evil people who make Al Capone seem a saint, and whose organization makes the Mafia seem like a religious order.

The great sin of our capitalistic society is that we can feed, clothe, and house all the inhabitants of our globe and yet do not do it. We have this technology *at present*. If we can lose billions of dollars in senseless wars during which we try to impose domination, we can afford to drop milk and food wherever it is needed. Here, homogenization may be useful; better for a child to live until six on manufactured chicken nuggets than to die at six months because of starvation. It is the vision of these massive starving peoples of the world that moves me more than the lack of justice within our middle-class lives, although as a former union organizer, I have, in fact, devoted a good deal of my time, outside of my writing, to just that pursuit. Still, I grant that it is my middle-class life that allows me to reflect and write about injustice. I am aware, with McBride, that *they* are aiming to stop our philosophizing. Indirectly, the usefulness of philosophy is indicated by the current trend to end philosophy departments. (I was instrumental in forming a separate department of philosophy and religion when I entered Kean University in about 1970, but it is now divided into general education and political science.)

Finally, I wonder what Bill would say about Egypt. I suspect he has already written something, but I admit to not having kept up with his very recent writings. Then again, Bill keeps up on everything, or almost everything. I remember when I was having problems with my recent book, *Reading Sartre*, my wife said, "Ask Bill to read it." I replied, "I can't; he is too busy." She countered, "Ask him!" I did, and, of course, it was no surprise to me that he agreed to do so; but the comment which he made when I asked him is interesting: "I would read it anyway when it comes out." That is part of William Leon McBride's professionalism, and the other part is his keeping up with friends throughout the world. He has gone out of his way to visit Marisa and myself, not by a few-hour detour, but by long extra travel. That "detour" is, I am sure, vastly extended as he visits even to this day his philosophical friends throughout the world. Indeed, the carving of this global path of philosophy is not at all a series of detours but an integral part of McBride's life.

Notes

1.   "Jean-Paul Sartre: Man, Freedom, and Praxis," in *Existential Philosophers*, ed. G. Schrader (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), pp. 261-329.

2 . *Sartre and Existentialism*, 8 volumes: 1. The Development and Meaning of Twentieth-Century Existentialism; 2. Existentialist Background: Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger; 3. Sartre's Life*, Times*, *and* Vision du Monde; 4. Existentialist Ontology and Human Consciousness; 5. Existentialist Ethics; 6. Existentialist Politics and Political Theory; 7. Existentialist Literature and Aesthetics; 8. Sartre's French Contemporaries and Enduring Influences (Hamden, CT: Garland, 1997).

3.   "Civil Society in South East Europe: Philosophical and Ethical Perspectives," American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad, April 1997.

4.   Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

5.   Chapter 6 of *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe*.

6.   "Political Theory *Sub Specie Aeternitatis*: A New Perspective," review of J. Rawls' A Theory of Justice, *Yale Law Journal* 81:5 (April 1972), pp. 980-1003.

7.   Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

8.   *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*, p. 236.

9.   *Ibid*., p. 9.

10. *Ibid*., p. 19.

11. *Ibid*., pp. 19-20.

12. *Ibid*., pp. 26-28.

13. *Ibid*., p. 25.

14. *Ibid*., p. 26.

15. New York: Soho Crime, 2003.

16. *From Yugoslab Praxis to Global* Pathos, p. 37.

17. *Ibid*., p. 35.

18. *Ibid*., p. 95.

19. *Ibid*., p. 96.

20. *Ibid*., p. 101.

21. London: St. Martin's Press, 1977.

22. *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*, p. 234.

The Humanism of Jean-Paul Sartre

Thomas Flynn

Much ink was spilled in defense of "humanism" against the onslaught of "structuralist" theorists in the late 1950s and '60s who, so it seemed, would rid us of that homunculus once and for all. The structuralist challenge reached its most dramatic articulation in the famous closing line of Foucault's *The Order of Things* (*Les Mots et les choses*) which hypothesized another epistemic break that would wash away the "man" of the "sciences of man" (*les sciences humaines*) "like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea." [1]

But, of course, this structuralist animus did not paint the entire picture by any means. Poststructuralists and post-postpoststructuralists have entered the fray, along with neo-Nietzschean and even Marxian proponents of the new "man," to retain the generic. Turning to the other side of the arena, we must mention those on the nominalist downward slope, who would insist on the integration (and devolution) of "man" in the ever weakening "chain of being" whether in the arenas of animal rights and environmental obligations or simply among the reductionist trend of neuroscience in search of the "posthuman." For the sake of argument, I shall gather all of these anti-humanists under the rubric of "structuralist."

I.

What do the structuralists and, more recently, the post-structuralists find obje-

ctionable in the "standard" humanist position–on the assumption there is one?
Let me cite three areas of contest:

The Structuralist aspect of the "linguistic turn." The work of Saussure, La-
can, Althusser, Lévy-Strauss et al.—underscores a major failing of existentialist
(i.e., Sartrean) thought, namely, an insensitivity or even total blindness to the
nature and efficacy of what Althusser called "structural causality." Such causal-
ity is exemplified in the largely unconscious "kinship" rules that Lévy-Strauss
found operative in so-called "primitive tribes," or in the "codes" that literary
critics, like Roland Barthes revealed to underlie and guide works of imaginative
literature, or most basically, in the rules of formation and transformation uncon-
sciously at work in our linguistic practices. Though somewhat familiar with
Saussurian linguistics, Sartre certainly seemed oblivious to the strength of this
objection–at least in the eyes of his structuralist critics. In fact, Foucault is re-
ported to have warned Eribon not to bother reading Sartre's massive Flaubert
study since it was deeply flawed by its author's ignorance of what had occurred
in structural linguistics and psychoanalysis over the two previous decades. The
significance of this linguistic turn for the humanist issue is that it seems to
eclipse, if not block out entirely, the primacy that existentialists reserve for the
action and responsibility of what Sartre in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*
calls "free organic praxis." Indeed, Foucault confirmed this incompatibility in
The Order of Things when he concluded categorically that "the only thing we
know at the moment, in all certainty, is that in Western culture the being of man
and the being of language have never, at any time, been able to coexist and to
articulate themselves one upon the other. Their incompatibility has been one of
the fundamental features of our thought."[2] As we shall see, the concept of free
organic praxis lies at the heart of what I shall call Sartre's *"dialectical" human-
ism*.

The second area of contestation between structuralists and existentialist hu-
manists is the "philosophy of *consciousness*" that carries with it many liabilities
of its Cartesian <u>dualist</u> heritage. This is one reason why Heidegger refused to use
the word "*Bewustsein*" in *Being and Time*. It seems that nobody wants to be a
Cartesian, except perhaps Noam Chomsky! But even his may be more an inten-
sification of the anti-consciousness rule than the exception that proves it. For if
we are indeed "hard wired" to learn language in a way that trumps empiricist
accounts, correspondingly less room is left for the creative practice of the con-
crete speaker. Sartre, on the contrary, insisted that the foundation of language is
"freedom." But he conceded in retrospect that *Being and Nothingness*[3] offered a
"philosophy of consciousness" which he by then had revised, if not totally aban-
doned when he introduced the concept of *le vécu* (lived experience, *Erlebnis*)
into his discourse.[4]

The appearance of the concept of lived experience (*Erlebniss, le Vécu)* in
Sartre's discourse was as significant as that of praxis. Lived experience was in-
troduced, as Sartre explained, to enrich the situational and the subconscious as-

pects of "consciousness" that it supplanted in his writings: "I suppose it represents for me the equivalent of conscious-unconscious."[5] As he explained subsequently: "*le vécu*–lived experience–is precisely that ensemble of the dialectical process of psychic life, in so far as this process is obscure to itself because it is a constant totalization, thus necessarily a totalization which cannot be conscious of what it is." This major modification of Sartre's psychology, enabled him to appeal to "Freudian" concepts without resorting to the opaque realm of the unconscious. The unblinking eye of Sartrean consciousness is retained and our unqualified responsibility preserved. An "existential" approach to Marxism will embrace the psychological phenomena in more than a superficial, "ideological" sense. If this path is now opened by focusing on "lived experience," it will reveal its promise in the several "biographies" of famous literary artists that Sartre will pen in the second half of his life. It will enable him to claim, for example, "When I show how Flaubert did not know himself and how at the same time he understood himself admirably, I am indicating what I call experience [*le vécu*] —that is to say, life aware of itself, without implying any thetic knowledge or consciousness.[6]

Finally, there is the *individualist* character of existentialist humanism and perhaps its corresponding implicit retention of that "homunculus" that is so offensive to structuralist ears. Sartre's phenomenological ontology in *Being and Nothingness* with its commitment to the epistemic primacy of the *Cogito* ("The sole point of departure is the interiority of the *cogito*[7]") and his famous criticism of Heidegger's "*Mitsein* ," namely, the insistence that "the essence of the relations between consciousnesses is not the *Mitsein*; it is conflict"[8] does seem to imply a kind of Hobbesian nominalism and corresponding voluntarism on collision course with more formalist structuralist thought. As Foucault once told me in an interview: the basic difference between his approach and that of Sartre was that for Sartre, the individual constituted the structures whereas for him, the structures constituted the individual. At first, I thought this was hyperbolic. But then I recalled *Discipline and Punish* regarding the constitution of the individual and Foucault's other remarks about the "birth of the modern self" and understood his point. Still the impression that the individual "constitutes" all meaning, fails to appreciate the gradual enrichment of the concept of "situation" in the "situated freedom" of Sartre's postwar thought.

So much, then, for the "structuralist" attack on humanistic thought in general and Sartrean humanism in particular (because he was immediately in the line of fire at that time).

II.

Let me turn now to an "object lesson" in the most extended and most recent case

of a love/hate relation with Sartre and his "humanism." I have in mind the for-
midable study (over five-hundred pages) of *le Siècle de Sartre* (translated with
only slightly more modesty into English as "*Sartre: The Philosopher of the
Twentieth Century*" by Bernard Henri Lévy or "B.H.L." as he is known to the
media–and he definitely is *un homme médiatique*, as the French say.[9]

Though I shall examine this work in some detail because it constitutes a vir-
tual inventory of the career of humanist and anti-humanist concepts in Sartre's
writings, let me offer at the outset a summary of his thesis. Lévy's claim is that
there are "two" Sartres: the good "anti-humanist" author of his earlier works,
especially *Nausea* (1939) and *Being and Nothingness* (1943); and the bad (per-
haps even monstrous) Sartre of his Marxist and later "Maoist" years. The latter
finds its full expression in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* but is broached in
that dramatic, if inconsistent, lecture *Is Existentialism a Humanism?* as well.
Lévy joins Lyotard and others in ascribing a "totalitarian" bent to the later, "hu-
manist" Sartre. This is the [socialist] "humanist," whom BHL portrays as in-
dulging in various forms of political extremism–the Sartre whom everybody
"loves to hate," as Princeton political theorist George Kateb once remarked.

So let us turn to a closer reading of Lévy's thesis elaborated it in his book. I
shall attend to seven Sartrean works essential to his argument: in chronological
order, the novel, *Nausea*, Sartre's recognized masterwork, *Being and Nothing-
ness*, his lecture, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, the essays published as *What is
Literature?* his social ontology, *The Critique of Dialectical Reason,* his discus-
sion/interviews with two Maoist activists, entitled *On a raison de se révolter*
(still untranslated into English), and what I consider to be the "synthesis" of his
labors, the "novel that is true," as Sartre classified it, *The Family Idiot*. Obvi-
ously, I cannot discuss these in detail. But I want to show what Lévy makes of
them in defending his thesis before returning to reconsider them as I defend my
own.

1.) *Nausea*. Its critical moment, in Lévy's view, is Roquentin's conversation
with the self-taught man in a restaurant. This pitiful fellow is the model of what
I'll call "bourgeois" humanism: he is systematically reading the volumes of the
encyclopedia from A to Z as if wisdom were the ordered amassing of informa-
tion. He carries a little black leather notebook in which he habitually records
quotations that impress him. Though he nurtures his prejudices, he is innocent of
active political, much less, social involvement unless, of course, his personal
interests are concerned. As the autodidact drones on, Roquentin begins to recall
the various other kinds of humanists that he has come to despise. Sartre pro-
duces a virtual litany of such creatures, twelve in all, ranging from the radical
humanist, "the special friend of civil servants" (Sartre's grandfather and stepfa-
ther fit this category) to the Communist humanist "who has loved men ever
since the second Five-year Plan," to the Catholic humanist, "'the late comer,'
who writes long, sad beautiful novels, which frequently win the Prix Femina"

and so forth.[10] Lévy correctly sees the anti-humanist in Sartre, who once allowed that "Roquentin is me," himself presenting this list. But whether that is the end of the story remains to be seen.

Tellingly, we get another view of the anti-humanist in this text that Lévy overlooks. This time it is the capitalist "humanist" described in Roquentin's visit to the local gallery where the portraits of the town's industrial elite are on view: Stopping at no sacrifice to assist the improvement of the best elements in the working class, they created on their own initiative, various centers for technical and professional study which prospered under their lofty protection. They broke the famous shipping strike of 1898 and gave their sons to their country in 1914.[11]

Here we see what I've called elsewhere, an implicit "anti-humanism" to the extent that it is committed to what Sartre calls "class racism."(an expression, by the way, that Foucault employed to the dismay of the Left in his lectures, *"Society Must Be Defended"*)[12] No doubt this idea grows in articulation and logical extension in Sartre's later works, but it is already present in this ironic reference to "the improvement of the *best* elements of the working class."–what Victorians referred to as the "deserving poor." As a former "Nouveau philosophe," (a group, recall, that the "bad" Sartre despised), Lévy overlooks the presence of Sartre's social critique and Leftist leanings in this earlier work. In other words, the "bad" Sartre is already pursuing his attack on bourgeois class racism at this stage. As Sartre once confessed: "I was anti-bourgeois from the moment I met my stepfather." I'm going to suggest that we be sensitive to the *varieties* of humanism that Sartre is criticizing because one may well discover in Lévy's examples the *reverse image* of an "authentic" Sartrean humanism mirrored in these anti-humanist specimens. Such is my thesis.

Before turning to the next work, let me complete this anti-humanist litany with Roquentin's parting thoughts: "Humanism takes possession and melts all human attitudes into one ... I don't want to be integrated, I don't want my good red blood to go and fatten this lymphatic beast: I will not be foolish enough to call myself 'anti-humanist.' I *am not* a humanist that's all there is to it."[13] Scarcely an expression of unqualified allegiance by the "good Sartre" to the anti-humanist camp; he is simply refusing to play the game.

2.) *Being and Nothingness*. The Heideggrian strains of *Being and Nothingness* are "humanistic"in the accommodated sense occasioned by the "mistranslation" of *Dasein* as *la réalité humaine* and the "anthropological" and ethical (read "humanistic") understanding of the interpretation of *Being and Time* that it spawned.[14] Heidegger's text is admittedly anti-humanistic in its avoidance of appeal to consciousness, its critique of the metaphysical, its location of Sartre's concerns among the "anthropological" and its express concern with gaining access to the meaning of being. In other words, *BT* is not an "existentialist" treatise–at least not in the respects just mentioned, though it certainly qualifies in

view of other features, not to mention its central place in the canon of Existentialist literature.[15]

Lévy states this clearly as he attempts to reenlist Sartre at this stage into the ranks of the anti-humanists as well. And again, there are passages that support this claim. For example, the Nietzschean remarks in *BN* about the "humanistic 'Us'" disappearing with the Death of God.[16] This text does not speak of a "humanistic We," but if it did, the term in that volume would designate a "purely psychological *Erlebnis*" without ontological significance. The psychological is as close as Sartre gets to a genuine social ontology in that work.

But if a mark of the humanist ideology, according to Heidegger and Lévy, is its championing of a theory of human nature and, for Lévy at least, its dedication to the possibility of ultimately creating a "new man," then the "humanism" of *BN* is ambiguous. On the one hand, Sartre famously denies a human "nature" in the metaphysical sense whereby "nature" could play a normative function in an ethical theory as it has done since Plato and Aristotle. But, on the other hand, Sartre is equally well known for defending a shared human "condition" by which he means that we are finite existents, subject to the conditions of birth and death, of place and environment, of language and existence among other humans. On this he grounds our ability to comprehend the actions of denizens from even the most foreign of cultures. These are ingredient in our condition and, a such, are available for descriptive phenomenological analysis. Though Sartre in *BN* does mention a possible "conversion" from bad faith to an ethic of authenticity, only in *Search for a Method* more than a decade later will he speak of the possibility of a "new philosophy of freedom" to accompany the "new man" who will emerge with a socialism of abundance, whose very nature we cannot even imagine in our presently alienated state.[17] And by Lévy's criteria, we are now fully immersed in the "bad Sartre," the one who will fellow-travel his way beyond the Communist Party in the mid 1950s to the point of cavorting with its radical Maoist critics in the late 1960s; in other words, to the point of succumbing to what Lévy considers political insanity.

3.) And so we come to what Lévy regards as the threshold between the "good" and the "bad" Sartre with his lecture "Existentialism is a Humanism," the only piece that Sartre openly regretted seeing published. Without undertaking a reconstruction of the "argument" of that text, which is more like a series of *aperçus* than a sorites, we must pay attention to Lévy's paradoxical claim that "Existentialism is an Anti-Humanism" (the title of a chapter in his book), for the contention seems to rely almost exclusively on Sartre's denial of any permanent and timeless human nature.[18] But what makes this lecture such an interesting case in the battle over humanisms is its somewhat stumbling attempt to formulate at least the grounds for the social ethic that Sartre's critics, including Merleau-Ponty, charged was sorely lacking in the ontology of *Being and Nothingness*.

Anyone even vaguely familiar with this lecture recalls Sartre's almost miraculous invocation of the quasi Kantian principle that no one can be free "in a concrete sense" unless everyone is free. He also appeals to the arguably Schellerian thesis that, in making a moral choice, I fashion an "image" of how a moral agent "ought" to act. Elsewhere, I have called these two claims the "universal freedom" principle and the "value image" ideal respectively.[19] But my point is that what Lévy is calling Sartre's "humanism" is simply an extension of his "existentialist" theses and themes of freedom, responsibility and angst from the interpersonal to the social realm–a task he will complete in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* two decades later. There the "individualist" charge is being met, the properly "humanist" value of fostering human flourishing is promoted and no potentially "totalitarian" values are being propounded. None, that is, unless one believes that "socialist" values are necessarily "totalitarian" in nature and scope (which may lie behind some of the misgivings of Lévy and others).

4.) Our fourth text is the set of essays published originally in *Les Temps modernes* and then gathered as a book, entitled *What is Literature?* Lévy devotes a considerable amount of space to its consideration. Best known for its introduction of the concept of "committed literature" into the philosophical vocabulary, this text emphasizes the power of the expressed word and the idea that writing is a form of "acting" for which responsibility must be taken.

Not surprisingly, Lévy discovers <u>two</u> Sartrean theories of commitment at work in these essays. The one denotes "consciousness of the power of words" alright, but it is silent as to the political use of this descriptive force. Lévy insists that the essay be read in the context of debates among the literary illuminati like Blanchot or Bataille at the end of the War. This, then would count as the work of the early Sartre, the "good" Sartre, which unfortunately, in Lévy's view, has been grossly misunderstood by the public, who read it in the "rear-view mirror" of the subsequent political inanities of the "bad" Sartre and his companion, Simone de Beauvoir: for example, their travels in the USSR and Cuba, which Lévy considers the "shipwreck" of a great philosophy and a no less great literature.[20]

The problem with this "interpretation" is that it implies that Sartre himself did not grasp what the expression "committed literature" really meant, for thereafter he stopped writing novels and concentrated on plays which, he seemed to believe, and Lévy agrees, is a distinct genre, one open to political use without self-compromise. Here as elsewhere, Lévy ignores the "performative" character of the texts he is interpreting; he misses their "transformative" power. Like *Existentialism is a Humanism*, *What is Literature?* is ingredient in the "conversion" that Sartre is undergoing or, better, "effecting" as he moves away from the political apathy of his pre-war days to enthusiastic involvement, from indifference to the injustices of his society toward pursuing their eradication.

5.) Turning to the major work of the unqualifiedly "bad" Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason (CDR)*, let us view Lévy's reading of one of its pivotal concepts "the group-in-fusion." Here Lévy's political bias comes into full view (though it had scarcely been concealed from the start). Again, he attempts to offer two Sartrean understandings of the group: that of the early Sartre (approved), which criticizes the anti-Semite, for example, as a "man of the crowds" who dreams of feeling himself "suddenly melting into the group" as contrasted with the member of the "group-in-fusion" in the *Critique* who acts in practical unity as a common subject (disapproved as smelling of totalitarianism). To put it briefly, this is one of Lévy's weakest criticisms. He ignores the context in which Sartre makes that criticism of the anti-Semite, which is an attack on the very thing that the group-in-fusion is trying to overcome, namely, "serial" thinking and the "passive activity" that it engenders. Serial thought is portrayed in the Nazi enthusiasm captured in Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda film "The Triumph of Will" aimed at seducing people into enthusiastic abdication of their individuality by joining the "movement." The group-in-fusion, on the contrary, is an attempt to achieve group action while retaining ontological primacy for the free organic individual. Each group member "mediates" the unity of the other members in their pursuit of a common goal. The risk of this membership is the possibility of betrayal by any member. It turns on the concepts of "active passivity" and "sameness" of practical concern in contrast with an impossible "identity" of being. Far from being a totalitarian work either in intent or in unintended consequence, the social ontology that Sartre constructs in the *Critique* is a defense of the primacy of individual praxis even in collective action. The individual's concrete freedom and responsibility are not reduced but enhanced by group membership.

6.) *On a raison de se révolter*. Lévy speaks of the work's "delirious visions." I shall deal with it briefly and critically but not so dismissingly. This small book consists of a set of interview/discussions between Sartre and two "Maoist" discussants, one of whom, Benny Lévy, eventually became Sartre's personal secretary. It was with him that Sartre composed a so-called "ethics of the we" with the help of a tape recorder because by then he was almost totally blind. I mention this untranslated text because it reveals Sartre *in extremis* as someone whose problematic "humanism" seems to run aground on the shoals of "fraternity-terror": on the one hand, his commitment to collective action ("the individual is [socially] impotent by himself")[21] and, on the other, his admitted inability to reconcile this "fraternity" with the necessary "violence" that he sees infecting a society of material scarcities–a violence about which Sartre is "curiously ambivalent," as Ronald Santoni observes. This, of course, could stand as BHL's "exhibit A" had he not by then concluded that his case was already established with the *Critique*.

I mention the issue of Sartre's "curiously ambivalent" attitude toward vio-

lence because it forms a leitmotif that challenges any image of "pacific utopian humanism" that one might attribute to Sartre at any stage of his career. Whether Sartre (or Marx, for that matter) could ever have been plausibly accused of "utopian" thought is an issue worth considering but not here.

7.) Let me end this tour of Lévy's reading of the major Sartrean texts by considering Sartre's massive Flaubert study, *The Family Idiot*. What makes it unique is its fusion of two discourses, that of the "early" Sartre (*BN*) and that of the "later" Sartre (*CDR*). This is indicative of other overlaps, fusions, and, I would say, synthises: most notably of the phenomenological ontology of *BN* and the social ontology of *CDR*, and, consequently, of existentialist psychoanalysis and dialectical reason, of biography and history, and so forth. Curiously, Lévy gives this massive work short shrift. Flaubert certainly was an anti-humanist but Sartre was clearly anti-Flaubert which, admittedly proves little unless we can show that it was Flaubert's misanthropy that Sartre holds up for ridicule, which in fact it was.[22] Both authors were sharply critical of bourgeois humanism no doubt, but the basis of Sartre's criticism was a positive view of disalienated freedoms whereas Flaubert's critique, in Sartre's mind, issued from an "antihumanism of resentment."[23] I mention this text merely to confound the thesis of a good and a bad Sartre. There was indeed a developing Sartre who occasionally overstated his case, usually in the heat of polemics–and he was often embroiled in political polemics. But this "novel that is true," as Sartre describes his Flaubert study, is "socialist" in its critique of the Second Empire and yet "existentialist" (in Lévy's "good" sense) in its attention to the self-deception, the nihilism and the "choice" of the imaginary on the part of its biographical subject.

In fairness, I must admit that Lévy later speaks of an "overlap" between these two Sartres and allows that "there were in this second Sartre moments of remorse or nostalgia or, in any case, temptations which it is impossible not to read as distress signals from the first Sartre, from Sartre the younger, and who continued to live, on a tiny scale admittedly, but to live all the same, within the totalitarian Sartre."[24] Whether this concession be taken as the exception that proves the rule, as Lévy seems to offer it, or as an invitation to reassess the entire dichotomy, as I am about to argue, at least invites the alternative reading of the documents that I shall undertake.

III.

As the title of this essay suggests, my thesis is that there *are several humanisms* issuing from one and the same Sartre: but the constant in them all is a rejection of "bourgeois" humanism from start to finish. By examining the reason for his rejection of this and other types of humanism, I hope to uncover *like the positive*

from its negative, the various "humanisms" that Sartre developed and supported across his career. I shall trace four types or "phases" in Sartre's humanism as well as five forms of "humanism" that he rejects.

Let me begin with the negatives or what Lévy calls expressions of the "anti-humanist" Sartre. There are five. First in order and most constant in its presence, extending throughout Sartre's philosophical career is what I call his critique of *bourgeois humanism*. Sartre exhibited an almost instinctive dislike of the bourgeoisie. What is it about bourgeois humanism that offends him? Primarily its belief that a person's existence is justified to the extent that he or she is considered necessary. This is the very antithesis of the existentialist view.From *Nausea* onward,[25] Sartre had insisted on our experience of the radical "contingency" of our existence. The bourgeois covers over this disconcerting phenomenon in what will be called "bad faith" in *BN*. Sartre captures this feature impressively in his short story, *The Childhood of a Leader*. Little Lucien believes that he has a "right" to exist and that others have a obligation to acknowledge this fact. As the young heir to the family business, the little boy enjoys the deference of the adult employees of his father's enterprise every time he visits the concern. They are acknowledging the one whose future includes inheriting the right to give the orders. The child is born into privilege and, in Sartre's view of the matter, this included the feature that his existence, unlike that of most others, is necessary and justified. The Sartrean humanist, on the contrary, is permeated with a sense of radical contingency, of "freedom" in the sense that she must "choose," that is to say, "invent" the specific direction of her life. The correlate of this freedom is the Kierkegaardian "anguish" that one feels in the face of the profound responsibility that such "choices" incur. But, I should add, that the obverse of this trio of contingency/freedom/responsibility is what I take to be the mantra of Sartrean "humanism" in its most concrete sense: *a man can always make something out of what is made of him*.[26]

In summary fashion, let me sketch several additional features of bourgeois humanism as Sartre critiques it. These include a certain "class racism" that I shall discuss in a moment, a Promethean confidence in the power of science to ground every greater progress, a confidence in the importance of private property to guarantee human flourishing, a competitive spirit rather than one of co-operative solidarity, a reliance on analytic reason as the sole gateway to knowledge, that is blind to collectives and group identities, a negative understanding of "freedom" that is limited to the absence of restraints, and commitment to social practices such as bourgeois distinction or respectability " that creates vulgarity—just as the law, according to Saint Paul, created sin."[27]

Counterbalancing this image/concept of bourgeois humanism is what can be called *marxist/economist humanism*. It finds expression throughout Sartre's later works but perhaps most famously in the remark from *Search for a Method*: "Valéry is a petit bourgeois intellectual, no doubt about it. But not every petit bourgeois intellectual is Valéry."[28] The result is that such economic determinism

"has entirely lost the meaning of what it is to be a man (*SM* 83) He states his project here and in the *Critique* to which this serves as a quasi Preface, as "to reconquer man within Marxism."[29] Lévy, on the contrary, seems to agree with Raymond Aron in this respect that such a project amounts to the futile attempt to reconcile Kierkegaard and Marx

Despite his gesture toward so-called theistic existentialism in the *Existentialism is a Humanism* lecture and his explicit mention of Gabriel Marcel and Karl Jaspers in that regard, he is frequently critical of what could be called *religious humanism*. In a 1946 interview, Sartre propounded an "atheistic humanism"which will take its place alongside Christian humanism and Communist society."[30] His criticism is scarcely original in this domain. In fact, it is Feuerbachian and Nietzschean in concept and tone, augmented by a Hegelian-Marxist emphasis on "alienation" as the undermining of the "true" prerogatives of "man." As he voices this claim most dramatically, he proposes to confer on man the creative freedom that Descartes reserved for God.[31] This could be termed *disjunctive humanism*: either God or Man. There is no room for two suns in the firmament. But I should add that there is a significantly "theological" objection ingredient in Sartre's opposition to religious humanism, namely, the inevitable problem of physical and moral evil. Apropos the problem of evil in his play *The Devil and the Good Lord*," he remarks: "Any ethics based on God cannot help becoming an anti-humanism."[32] I cannot elaborate on his reasoning here except to note that Sartre's oeuvre as a whole (if I may be allowed that nonFoucualdian expression) is a kind of "theodicy," I believe. A failed theodicy, no doubt, but nonetheless a genuine attempt to "justify the ways of God to man."

The final form of anti-humanism that Sartre critiques–in effect, a major dimension of bourgeois humanism that we noted in *Nausea*, is *racist humanism*. It reveals itself in the ironic observation of Roquentin about the portraits of the local elite. And it recurs throughout Sartre's writings. Consider this example, among many, of "class racism" from the *Critique*:

One important fact of nineteenth-century history is that the workers experienced the absolute intransigence of the employers. They wished (initially) *to reach a mutual understanding as men*; and they gradually realized that this was impossible *because to the employers, they were not men.*[33]

On several occasions in his ad hoc essays in defense of the oppressed and exploited by capitalism or colonialism, Sartre voices the cry of the victims: "we too are men!"

The foregoing are some of the disvalues, the "negatives," of the positive position(s) that Sartre embraces over his lengthy career. If we state his critique in terms of principles enunciated already in *Being and Nothingness* (as well as *Anti-Semite and Jew*, a text not discussed but which Lévy admires), we find the following trio of concepts serving as counter-concepts to the humanism he is advocating:

a) <u>spirit of seriousness</u>: the flight from creative freedom into the security of preestablished principles and laws.

b) <u>bad faith</u>: the self-deception that by means of a kind of selective perception disregards, among other things, the fundamental "humanity" of the "other" in society.

c) exclusive use of <u>analytical rationality</u> :part of our Cartesian heritage that reduces the social complex to atomic simples and is blind to social/collective agency; to social holes. In particular, it fails to recognize socioeconomic class identities. It ignores synthetic/dialectical reasoning and the humanism it fosters.

IV.

Sartre once claimed that anyone who had read the first three volumes of his Flaubert study, could write the fourth volume himself! (The one dealing with arguably the most interesting part of the set, the writing of *Madame Bovary*) Because you have doubtless already held the foregoing negatives to the light and noted the <u>positive views</u> that emerge, I shall treat them is a rather cursory manner.

First, in response to Lévy, let us admit the obvious: there is clearly notable development (enlargement) in Sartre's philosophical thought throughout his life. By his own admission, Sartre was rather indifferent to the politics of the 1930s. He scarcely mentioned the Nazi "revolution" during the eventful year of his sojourn in Berlin (1933-34). But with his confinement in a P.O.W. Stalag after the fall of France to the Nazis, he experienced what he calls his "discovery of society."Almost immediately after his "escape" from the Camp (with the help of a priest who specialized in procuring forged documents, in this case, stating that Sartre's conscription into military service has been an error due to his poor eyesight), Sartre gathered Beauvoir and other friends into a project of "Resistance" among intellectuals–one of several futile attempts at collective action. What the texts that we have cited in chronological order attest is Sartre's gradual "politicization," [what Lévy sees as "deformation"], starting with a sense of "concrete"freedom that rejected the sufficiency of his earlier notion of "ontological" freedom ("freedom as the definition of man) as merely Stoic in nature and woefully inadequate to the freedom of others. It is this understanding of "freedom" that is the vehicle for the different expressions of "humanism" that Sartre advocates. It shifts from the abstract to the increasingly "concrete." This is the "lesson: of *Existentialism is a Humanism*: that the concrete freedom of one depends on the freedom of all.

But as his concept of freedom "thickens" Sartre discovers the relevance of what Max Weber calls "objective possibility" (a concept though not a term em-

ployed by both Marx and subsequently by Sartre). He appeals to it implicitly on several occasions. To mention just two: First in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, when recommending that, since we cannot act directly on another freedom, "we bring it about that freedom decides on other bases, and in terms of other structures."[34] The precise relation between base or structure and ensuing action is not explained, but Sartre's basic category of being-in-situation is being employed to expand Sartre's notion of freedom and responsibility. And on another occasion: "It is history that shows some the exits and makes others cool their heels before closed doors."[35] This is a far cry from what one could call the "noetic" freedom of *BN*. And Sartre himself was not ignorant as to this shift in perspective. As he admitted in an interview:

> The other day I re-read a prefatory note of mine to a collection of these plays– *Les Mouches, Huis Clos,* and others–and was truly scandalized. I had written "Whatever the circumstances, and whatever the site, a man is always free to choose to be a traitor or not...." When I read this, I said to myself: It's incredible, I actually believed that![36]

His appeal to dialectic will help resolve the problem, but it cannot function like a magic wand. Sartre has to construct the social ontology of the *Critique* to address this issue that has plagued him ever since he acknowledged the basic ambiguity of "situation" in *BN*.

Sartre was already critical of the myopic view of "analytical" reason in *Anti-Semite and Jew*. But it is in the *Critique* that its distinction from and contrast with Dialectical Reason comes fully into play. Such thinking is developmental and served retrospectively to incorporate the "pre-dialectical" Husserlian thought of Sartre's earlier writings into the emerging view of his later work. As he observed in the *Critique*: "At a certain level of abstraction, class conflict expresses itself in a conflict of rationalities."[37] I've already mentioned the problem of holistic thought and the inability or analytic reason to acknowledge class identity, much less class conflict. But in order to counter the accusations of the "totalitarian" implications of Sartre's dialectical reasoning, let me underscore his insistence that his is a "dialectical nominalism" (that is, one that accords a primacy, ontological, epistemic and moral, to "free organic praxis" of individuals– no doubt individuals in relation, but individuals just the same. It is this threefold primacy of individual praxis that warrants our speaking of a *dialectical humanism,* one that contrasts dialectic with determinism and understands the "concrete" individual as basically related to other free praxes in group action or as alienated in serial division and separation. Such a humanism is developmental and "concrete" in a quasi-Hegelian sense. It issues in the final kind of humanism that Sartre emphasizes and that totalizes the previous humanisms in a manner that brings them all into synoptic view. Sartre calls it a *humanism of need*. He insists it is "the only one that has all humanity as its object."[38]   Marx once observed that "need is its own justification." That seems to be a premise of Sartre's

humanism of need. A couple of remarks indicate what Sartre means by the term. In *Communists and Peace*, he claims that "it is on the unskilled workers, the masses, that a *humanism of need* is based."[39] But he seems to move beyond the Communist dogmas toward something more "Maoist" and perhaps even "anarchistic" when he remarks during his visit to Castro's Cuba: "You call the Cuban Revolution a humanism. And why shouldn't you? But as far as I'm concerned, there's only one humanism; and it isn't based on labor or culture but above all on need."[40]

V.

Such, then, is the history of Sartre's uses of the term "humanism" throughout his career. There are constants, as I've noted, amidst the obvious changes. The overview reveals not so much a sharp break as a "conversion" that, in the Hegelian manner, incorporates the previous views transformed but not fully rejected in a new and "richer" or better, more "concrete" viewpoint. But this should come as no surprise. From the moment Sartre encountered Husserlian phenomenology illustrated by Raymond Aron just returned from study in Berlin as the means of philosophizing about an apricot cocktail glass, Sartre has been in search of the "concrete." As the proverbial moralist, the concrete assumed the form of an increasingly detailed view of our moral responsibility–our acknowledgment of the unqualified demands of human need.

This union among Sartre's humanism, his ethics and his dialectic was drawn most tightly by none other than Michel Foucault, though in his case the better to reject all three in one gesture. If one sets aside the "archaeological constraints that he had placed on these concepts and practices, Foucault's remark underscores the link the Sartre would maintain among these terms as well. Broadly speaking, one can say that humanism, anthropology and dialectical thought, for Foucault, are intertwined as they are for Sartre. While analytical reason, in his mind, is incompatible with humanism, "dialectic appeals to humanism secondarily" for several reasons:

Because it is a philosophy of history, because it is a philosophy of human practice, because it is a philosophy of alienation and reconciliation. For these reasons and because fundamentally it is always a philosophy of return to the self (*soi-même*), dialectic in a sense promises the human being that he will become an authentic and true man. It promises man to man and to this extent it is inseparable from a humanist ethic (*morale*). In this sense, the parties most responsible for contemporary humanism are evidently Hegel and Marx.[41]

Of course, elsewhere Foucault had confused Sartrean authenticity with being true to oneself where the self was mistakenly seen as a subject with which we achieved identity.[42] On the contrary, Human Reality, for Sartre, is free pre-

cisely because it is *not* a self but a "presence-to-self." Indeed, this is what Lévy admiringly describes as "that humble scrap of autonomy required by the Subject so that it find a place, for instance, within some framework of Law" (Lévy, 151). The promise of Sartre's dialectical humanism is to render concrete that onto-logical freedom through commitment to the liberation of all. Freed from the con-straints of Foucault's epistemic cage, this humanism can encourage freedom and responsibility in the name of an open-ended subject that respects historical agen-cy along with sociohistorical forces without being dragged along in their wake. "You can always make something out of what you've been made into."

Notes

1.   Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House Vintage Books, 1973), p. 387; hereafter *OT*.

2.   *OT*, p. 338.

3 . Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E Barnes (New York: Phi-losophical Library, 1956), hereafter *BN*.

4.   Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Itinerary of a Thought," *Between Marxism and Existen-tialism*, trans. John Mathews (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1976): 33-64, p. 41; hereafter *BEM.*.

5.   "On the Idiot of the Family," in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Life/Situations. Essays Written and Spoken*, trans. Paul Auster and Lydia Davis (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977): 109-32, p. 127; hereafter *L/S.*

6.   *L/S*, pp. 127-128.

7.   *BN*, p. 244

8.   *Ibid*., p. 420.

9.   Bernard Henri Lévy, *Sartre The Philosopher of the Twentieth Century,*" trans. Andrew Brown (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003), hereafter *L*évy.

10. *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Paperback, 1964), p. 83.

11. *Ibid*., pp. 116-117.

12. Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended*," trans David Macy (New York: Picador, 2003), pp. 80-81.

13. *Nausea*, p. 118.

14. See Lévy, p. 150ff and Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi with J. Glenn Gray, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1993): 213-265, p. 232ff.

15. The matter of Heidegger's "anti-humanism" is more complex and disputed. For example, Heidegger remarks that defining "man" as "animal rationale" sells him short and that, if the proper of *Dasein* (the human way of being) is that it alone among entities is "ontological," that is, only for *Dasein* is Being a aproblem, then noone is more "hu-

manistic" that Heidegger. Of course, one can dismiss this as cold irony. And, given the tone of the *Letter* that does appear to be the case at first blush. But when it is supported by the lapidary claim that "ontically speaking [viz in terms of genus and difference] Dasein is ontological and ontologically speaking Dasein is ontic [that is, immersed in the average everyday] the irony dissolves. Not that Heidegger is a humanist *malgré lui*, but that he may well share the same antihumanist convictions as Sartre, allowing for the fluidity of Sartre's attitude in and out of political and ethical commitments. For an illuminating discussion of Heidegger's possible "humanism" in the *Letter*, see Karsten Harries, "The antinomy of Being: Heidegger's critique of humanism," *The Cambridge Companion to Existentialism*, ed. Steven Crowell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 178-198; and Gary Gutting, *Thinking the Impossible. French Philosophy Since 1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 52-55.

16. *BN* , p. 423.

17. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Random House Vintage Books, 1963), p. 34; hereafter *SM*.

18. For a reconstruction of that "argument" with support from other essays published about the same time, see Thomas R. Flynn, *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism: The Test Case of Collective Responsibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 32-47; hereafter *SME*.

19. *SME,* 39-41.

20. Lévy, p. 60.

21. Philippe Gavi, Jean-Paul Sartre and Pierre Victor (a.k.a. Benny Lévy), *On a raison de se révolter* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p.171.

22 . Which, in fact, was the case (see Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot,* trans. Carol Cosman, 5 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981-93), "In the singular case of French society under the [Second] Empire, the misanthropoic artist, by privileging the basest motives, is merely telling the truth: not about what men are but about what they think they are at the time, and consequently about what they make themselves into," vol. 5, p. 297. See especially vol. 5, pp. 270-277; hereafter *FI* with volume and page.

23. *FI*, vol. 5, p. 294.

24. Lévy, p. 349.

25 . If we can trust his memory, Sartre's earliest experience of contingency struck him on leaving the movie theater with its necessary sequence of events wound up in the projector's spool in contrast with the randomness and contingency of the world he encountered outside (see his valedictory interview of 1974, Simone de Beauvoir, *La cérémonie des adieux* suivi de *Entretiens avec Jean-Paul Sartre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), p. 181.

26. *BEM,* p. 35.

27. *FI*, vol. 3, p. 338 and vol. 5, p. 94, the "antihumanism of resentment." For an extended list of the features of bourgeois humanism that Sartre opposes, see *FI*, vol. 5, pp. 206-270.

28. *SM,* p. 56.

29. *Ibid*., p. 83.

30. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre,* vol. 1, *A Bibliographical Life* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 151; hereafter *C/R*.

31. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *"*Cartesian Freedom," in *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, trans. Annette Michelson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 180-197.

32. *C/R*, p. 252.

33. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* trans Alan-Sheridan Smith, 2 vols., Volume One (London: Verso, 2004), p.798; hereafter *CDR* with volume and page.

34. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), p. 148.

35. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Communists and Peace* with *A Reply to Claude Lefort* (New York: George Braziller, 1968), p. 89.

36. *BEM*, pp. 33-34.

37. *CDR*, p. 802.

38. *CP*, p. 200.

39. *C/R,* p. 296.

40. *Ibid*., p. 282. (interview)

41. Michel Foucault, *Dites et écrits,* eds. Daniel Defert et François Ewald, tome.1, 1954-1969 (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 541.

42. Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault,* vol.1, *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997): 253-280, p. 262.

A Philosopher's Journey:
Philosophical Reflections for and on
Uncle Bill

Lewis R. Gordon

> It's very hard for people to understand that equality does not mean that we are all as intelligent; it means that our joy, our pain our need to be relevant are equal.
>
> —Jean-Paul Sartre[1]

So said Sartre. William Leon McBride agrees. He does in terms of how he has lived his life, wrote his thought, and done his proverbial walk. "Uncle Bill," as my daughter Jennifer Gordon, his goddaughter, calls him, worked through Marxism, existentialism, and philosophy of law always with a clear sense of the subject on which mechanisms of power have been directed and from which they emerge—namely, the human world. This understanding enabled him to articulate where violence undergirds rationalizations and processes of legalization, specify always the wider context of thought, and admit points of rupture where a humble position is called for at moments of meta-reflection. Such a constellation of considerations demanded a *sankofic* perspective, where one heads to the future with an eye, ever vigilant, on the past. His work, then, is always of a historical variety with an understanding of history being a dimension of the human condition always in relation to its other manifestations. McBride is, in other words, a *relational* thinker, and this understanding of relationality, where everything is, at the end of the day, always related to something else, enable him to reach out in similar kind to everyone as in some way related to everyone else. It

is how he reached out to his women colleagues as an early participant in the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s well into the present, especially with his life-time partner Angela McBride, how he did the same with regard to working-class movements, and how he joined struggles for racial justice, which include, by extension, how he reached out to me.

   McBride's concern for history is not, however, historicist. By this, I mean he is not concerned with centering the discipline of history, even intellectual history. Nor is he concerned with historicist reductionism. The historical for him is an awareness of the connection of humanity across the ages as a constant struggle to make sense of our condition. It is thus not a suprastructural or over-arching conception of historical reality. It is, in the end, a *social* understanding of our connectedness, what I already pointed out as relationality, and, even further, that that connectedness has normative challenges of truth, not in the form of truth-functionality, but a form of truthness, if we will.[1] I take this aspect of his thought to be connected to his being a devout Catholic, one who regards Catholicism as a humanistic enterprise of integrity, of a call of responsibility for responsibility itself as a liberating call. What is this but a form of valuation of values, where agency and obligation meet in critical rejection of what existentialists know as the spirit of seriousness—the materialization of values as, ultimately, non-relational?

   Integrity demands our never skirting responsibility for value, which means, then, that philosophy must be interrogated with regard to its justificatory practices. Why, in other words, should anyone do philosophy? This meta-philosophical question is one of the considerations that came to mind when I engaged McBride's thought at the Society of Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) meetings in 2000.[2] Like Sartre, McBride took the position that thought must account for itself, and it must do so in terms of purposes that transcend disciplinary and methodological fetishism and instead be attuned to what it means to live in a human world. In my book *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, I referred to such pathologies of thought as *disciplinary decadence*.[3] Reflecting on McBride's thought at that meeting of SPEP, it occurred to me that a form of nihilism was at the heart of such decadence, especially toward notions of purpose.[4] This led to my asking about that for which McBride was searching in his thought. It was clear that intellectual projects that failed to account for themselves in those larger terms were, for him, those that fell short of what thought ultimately was supposed to be doing.[5] Drawing on Kierkegaard, it struck me that what was at the heart of his investigation was no less than a teleological suspension of philosophy, which he later interrogated through the problematics of "practical philosophy."[6]

   More than a decade has passed since that session in his honor, and McBride's thought continues to affirm my assessment, though instead of thinking of McBride as "a Third World philosopher," a better formulation today would be Enrique Dussel's underside of modernity.[7] We could also see him in

terms of the Global South, but as theorists of that geopolitical notion know very well, it is not that of a place but a social political location. McBride's Irish-Catholic understanding is an important element he brings to his thought as he takes on the task of what Frantz Fanon calls *questioning*, and as the Irish have had blackened moments in their history, projects of assimilation are no doubt haunted by that intimate understanding of modern thought's underside, what I have elsewhere characterized as the black side of theory.[8] Placing McBride in such a context, in effect "blackening" his thought, brings to the fore what could be called his potentiated double consciousness.[9]

Double consciousness points back to a variety of thinkers in the nineteenth century, but the one I most have in mind reached into the twentieth century as well: W.E.B. Du Bois. In his studies of blacks at the end of the nineteenth century and the dawn of the twentieth, Du Bois observed many social scientists' tendency of treating black people as problems instead of as people facing social problems. This prejudice had a distorting effect on social scientific research, one that unfortunately continues into the present.[10] Its effect was the construction of problem people.[11] The production of such rationalization led to a failure of proper systemic critique, where the society, much like a god in theodicy, became a sacred site outside of which evil lurks.[12] A problem, however, was that there were groups of people who lived *inside* the society and experienced its contradictions *from inside* while at the same time are treated as people belonging outside of it. Living this contradiction meant exploring aspects of the society denied by its proponents. Addressing contradictions is, however, an expansion of knowledge, for it leads from the mistaken position in the first form of double consciousness—seeing oneself through the eyes of hostile others—to the potentiated stage, which involves seeing what is wrong about a society that makes people into problems. As a movement into a critical consciousness, this potentiated double consciousness meets an important test of practicality advanced by McBride, which, as I take it, pertains to an important aspect of his conception of social thought—namely, making evident elements of a society that have enormous impact while remaining out of sight.[13]

As a form of consciousness, the potentiated form has phenomenological implications. Although primarily a social and political philosopher, McBride's interest in Sartre demanded engagement with at least existential phenomenology. This consideration, coupled with his studies of Marxist philosophy, raised for McBride a similar question of the relationship of existentialism to Marxism. He remains skeptical, however, about the meeting of the two, as do most scholars of Sartre's philosophy, I think ironically because of a similar position on the relationship of existential phenomenology to transcendental phenomenology.[14] Existential thought, after all, focused on openness, paradox, rupture, negation, contingency, freedom, and the many dimensions of human reality that resist completeness. Transcendental thought focuses on the necessary and law-like dimensions, the conditions of possibility, by which meaning could emerge or

become evident. The former appears to be realm of what always can be otherwise; the latter, to that which cannot be otherwise. Yet, as many existential phenomenologists and transcendental phenomenologists know, no phenomenological moment could emerge without parenthesizing, bracketing, or suspending the natural attitude of ontological presumptions and commitments. Such an act makes even essence of a different sort in phenomenological terms than it is in, say, Aristotelian metaphysics, where it refers also to substance or to what a thing *really is*. In phenomenology, it's more about what a thing *means*. Thus, the kind of face-off one has between contingency on one hand and necessity on the other, correlated with existentialism in the former and transcendental phenomenology in the latter, becomes problematic since it, in effect, sneaks in an ontological commitment where such should have been suspended. One could go further and even show that transcendental phenomenology radicalized arrives at existential insight, and that existentialism, also radicalized, eventually arrives at transcendental reflection.[15] If this is correct, then arguments such as Sartre's observation, in the first volume of *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, that even materialism is a form of idealism, brings to the fore, at the methodological level, a radical possibility of dialectical critique and existential encomia. Such a meeting has certainly occurred, in many instances, in Africana philosophy.[16]

In *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy*, I argue that the modern world initiated a form of reflection premised upon at least three problematics: (1) what it means to be human, (2) what it means to be free, and (3) what it means to mean or justify anything at all. I refer to these as philosophical anthropology, discourses of freedom, and meta-critiques of reason. This discussion of McBride's thought offered here pertains primarily to the third, although the first two are the underlying concerns by which the urgency of the third becomes evident. The justificatory practices behind the first and the second, in other words, call for the meditations of the third. My studies of Africana thought on these matters revealed at least two meta-critical responses to the contradictions wrought from potentiated double consciousness. The first could be called the decolonization of method. It emerges from the realization that knowledge could be colonized not only in terms of form and content but also in terms of *practice* or the *how* of thought. To address this problem, however, requires not presupposing the validity of one's methods. Such an act requires suspending one's methodological commitments, which, in effect, means a leap of faith into a method of no presupposed method—in other words, a paradox of critical reflection on methodology. This act of decolonizing method, what Nelson Maldonado-Torres calls "a decolonial reduction," is clearly phenomenological, but it is not so as a presupposition but instead an arrival.[17] Oddly enough, although struggling with his own prejudices and working primarily from an epistemological focus, Edmund Husserl made a similar move in his *Cartesian Meditations*, where he subjected all thought, including phenomenology, to such a critique with a claim of *arriving* at a set of discoveries about the relation of thought to

objects of thought.[18] I am not here going to argue over the details of Husserl's effort.[19] Instead, I should like simply to raise the question of what such an effort must be like when even proof itself is not going to be presupposed in terms of its form. If even that cannot be presupposed, then the various resources of mediation, of bridges to reach the object of inquiry, would crumble away. Facing nothing but the object of inquiry (for then, there will simply be nothing at all, which, paradoxically, is here formulated also as a possibility of reflection), such an effort nevertheless has its form. We find here what could be called an ostensive proof or demonstration: the intention of intentionality. It is this insight that makes intentionality in transcendental phenomenological terms not psychological, as Alfred Schutz pointed out in *The Problem of Social Reality*.[20]

In Africana philosophy, the significance of the radicality of relationality, even where one attempts to evaluate conditions of all relations, points back to a dimension of what it means to be human. One could say that the human being is both that by which thought shines and also hides. I am reminded here of Peter Caws's insightful essay, "Sartrean Structuralism?" in which he outlines Sartre's thought, guided by his humanism, as fundamentally a relational one, which makes his distance from structuralism more a matter of his conflict with Claude Lévi-Strauss's anti-humanism than against the notion of structure per se.[21] For Sartre, structure was very much in relation to a human world with its constellation of meanings. That being so, his affinities to Marx was evident in that both were concerned with how the relations between people could be disguised by alienating norms and institutions, whether as bad faith, serialization, or free market. But the radical, self-reflective critique of the processes of rationalization, of the ways in which disguise and colonization emerge, suggests that a discourse on method should demand a logic beyond the exclusive disjunctions so prominent in Aristotle's and analytical forms of thought to inclusive conjunctions of both-and reflective of the inescapable condition of the human being as thematization and transcendence, as always going beyond in every act of substantiation. If this is correct, there may be a false dilemma in the problematic of existentialism (contingency) and Marxism (structure) meeting since the error may have begun in their separation: as separate, each collapses into a form of completeness and necessity that performatively contradicts its avowed purpose. In other words, both would become decadent.

In many ways, McBride's life's journey in philosophy has been a rejection of such decadence. As the best response to Zeno's paradox of movement is to get up and walk, McBride's response has been to live the tension of existence and structure through playing his part in the building of institutions such as the *Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie* (FISP), The Radical Philosophers Association, The Sartre Society of North America, *Société Américaine de Philosophie de Langue Française*, and The World Congress of Philosophy (among many others). Brought along with his writings, these institutions mark his critique of ephemerality, namely, that even thoughts need homes. He also

addresses these tensions by actually walking. William McBride is one of the great walkers in philosophy. He walks regularly from Lafayette to West Lafayette, and in his travels, he walks from one major city to another and across countries. A legendary example was his walking from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, a forty mile or sixty four kilometers walk, to visit a friend during his undergraduate years at Georgetown, and the miles or kilometers he covered across France before commencing his graduate study at Yale is another instance. He regularly walks across Ireland, and his sojourns include many countries in Eastern Europe and now Asia.[22] Walking for McBride is a passion, and it is never aimless, for in each instance, he walks, as he did in his youth, to meet friends, to meet his fellow human being in shared tasks or simply on life's way. Beyond decadence, whose offspring, as Nietzsche observed, is nihilism, there is purpose for which there is no other responsible but us.

Philosophers of the social world should, in my view, travel. They should meet people, learn about cultural differences, and experience the difficulties of communication in places where one is a guest in good instances and simply a stranger in most. Negotiating such relationships, going through the processes of explaining our thought, is a process of communication that brings back to the philosopher, and to philosophy, the importance of justification. Philosophy is, after all, an activity that is nearly never beautiful at first sight, as perhaps best embodied by Socrates, whose lover Alcibiades reminds us in Plato's *Symposium* that he offers an intoxicating beauty beneath his ugly visage. This effort of movement, of constantly experience the uncovering of relations, offers a form of humility on one hand and profound understanding of what is at stake in the failure of responsibility for thought. Let me illustrate through an observation from Frantz Fanon, another great walker, whose example emerges from a moment of walking.

In the fifth chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon tells a story of a little boy pointing to him and exclaiming, "Look—a *Nègre*!" The word *Nègre* could be translated as "Negro" or "nigger." The experience froze Fanon in a moment's realization of his crumbled *imago* that had protected him from what he called "the epidermal schema," of the overdetermined impositions on how he appeared in the world, of his supposedly being a thing of pure externality, a being without an inside. The meditations occasioned by that experience are among the greatest reflections from Africana philosophy on what it means to be human in a world in which one's humanity is challenged. Along the way, Fanon made the following observation: "The psychoanalysts say that nothing is more traumatizing for the young child than his encounters with what is rational. I would say that for a man whose only weapon is reason there is nothing more neurotic than contact with unreason."[23] So Fanon reached out to reason. The experience was not, however, as he had hoped:

> Reason was confident of victory on every level. I put all the parts back to-
> gether. But I had to change my tune. That victory played cat and mouse; it
> made a fool of me. As the other put it, when I was present, it was not; when it
> was there, I was no longer.[24]

Simply put, Fanon, as the black, found reason taking flight when he walked into the room. Fanon identified, in this passage, and the rest of the chapter, a problem faced by black thinkers throughout the modern world. Since a lot of philosophical reasoning was used for the rationalization of black inferiority, the encounter is in effect one with which reason, as embodied in western modernity, is unreasonable when it comes to race. This understanding of unreasonable reason raises a peculiar problem for the black philosopher, whose only weapon, if we recall, was reason. This paradox of unreasonable reason becomes even more acute when the challenge of what one could do about its flight is considered, since to *force* reason's submission would be violent. The task, then, becomes one of reasoning with unreasonable reason. This realization makes the justificatory practices of reason, which includes philosophy, wrought with irony, melancholia, and the sublime.

Irony is present through those who experience its flight taking on the responsibility of its maintenance. Much of modern thought has been devoted to disciplining reason through an effort to make it rational. Rationality demands consistency, however, which makes contradiction an undesirable development. Yet the hope for reason is that it must also be able to evaluate itself, which jeopardizes the expectation that consistency function as the metarational condition of assessment. In efforts at formal rationality, this was one of the problems raised by problems of incompleteness, where any system sophisticated enough to refer to itself will collapse into paradoxes. In more prosaic language, this amounts to reason being broader than rationality. That reason is not identical to rationality leads, at least for those who hoped to yoke reason to rationality, to crisis. I have shown elsewhere that crisis is, however, another way of saying that decisions have to be made, and where decision attempts to avoid choice, where it conceals itself from the bases by which are responsibly taken on, failure to address the human relations at work here is no less than bad faith.[25] The word "crisis" is, after all, from the Greek κρίνω (*krinein*), which means to decide and to separate, which is also related to κριτής (*krites*)—judge—and, by extension, κριτήριον (*kriterion*), which brings us back to the bases (criteria) of judgment. So, to decide *reasonably* means to use criteria, but it also means to evaluate that criteria, which brings one back to having to decide one's choice.

Melancholia emerges here through the context of bearing such a responsibility in a world that rejects a fundamental condition of facing that choice. Recall our discussion of W.E.B. Du Bois and the theodicean rationalization of black exclusion in the legitimation practices of modern social systems. The black, in other words, faces responsibility for reason in a world that denies blacks internal membership. The black is, in effect, rejected by the only world to which blacks

are indigenous. Blacks are not black outside the modern world. As melancholia is a phenomenon of loss through which subjectivity is born, this odd relationship to reason beyond modern reason is melancholic. It is constitutive of a subjectivity premised upon necessary loss.

And the sublime? I am thinking here of what it means for the human being to be in relation to that which infinitely exceeds our capacities of containment but is nevertheless that for which we are responsible. To be in a world with limited options of control but still experience responsibility for the ethical face of reason is something shared by the enslaved, the scientist, the philosopher, the priest, the mystic, indeed, every human being.

So, I return to my eldest daughter's Uncle Bill. Have I done him injustice by pushing to the forefront those undersides of reason to which his walks may have taken him? Perhaps his own words will suffice as this chapter's end:

> As a social and political philosopher, I must be concerned with social and political realities. I cannot, or at least I believe I *should* not, restrict my theorizing to analyzing "the boundaries of the political domain" from an abstract, metaphysical standpoint. In fact, to go still further, I believe I must be concerned with social and political *actualities*, that is, social and political realities understood in their historical contexts, their places in human time.[26]

Notes

1. From John Gerassi, *Talking with Sartre: Conversations and Debates* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 12.

2. See, e.g., his insightful and prescient short book, *Social Theory at a Crossroads* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1980).

3. "William L. McBride as a Third World Philosopher," Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. Meeting at Penn State, State College, Pennsylvania. October 2000

4. See Lewis R. Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man: An Essay on Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 1995), chapter 5.

5. After all, nihilism, as Nietzsche reminds us, is a symptom of decadence. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968). See also Jacqueline Renee Scott, "Nietzsche and Decadence: The Revaluation of Morality," *Continental philosophy Review* 31 (January 1998), pp. 59–78.

6. This was especially so in *Social Theory at a Crossroads*, the text on which I focused in that lecture.

7. See William L. McBride, *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos: Anti-Hegemonic Post-Post-Marxist Essays* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), see

chapter 1: "The Practical Relevance of Practical Philosophy: Philosophers' Impact on History," pp. 1–18.

8. See Enrique Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. and ed. by Eduardo Mendieta (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1996).

9. Lewis R. Gordon, "Theory in Black: Teleological Suspensions in Philosophy of Culture," *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 18:2 (Spring/Summer 2010), pp. 193–214.

10. This formulation is from Paget Henry's discussion of W.E.B. Du Bois in his article, ''Africana Phenomenology: Its Philosophical Implications," *The C. L. R. James Journal* 11:1 (2005), pp. 79–112.

11. For recent discussion, see Lewis R. Gordon, *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2006); Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the Rat Was White: Historical View of Psychology*, 2nd Edition (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003), Michael Monahan, *The Creolizing Subject: Race, Reason, and the Politics of Purity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011); and Dorothy Roberts. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: The New Press, 2011).

12. See W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 56, pp. 13–27 (originally published in the same journal in 1898); *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903); and Lewis R. Gordon, *Exisentia Africana: Understanding Africana Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000), chapter 4, "What Does It Mean To Be a Problem."

13. For discussion, see, e.g., Lewis R. Gordon, "Philosophical Anthropology, Race, and the Political Economy of Disenfranchisement," *The Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 36:1 (Fall 2004), pp. 145–172.

14. See *Social Theory at a Crossroads.*

15. See his discussions of Sartre in *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*, pp. 9–12; cf. also William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991).

16. See, e.g., *Existentia Africana*, chapter 4.

17. See Lewis R. Gordon, *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); cf. also "Theory in Black."

18. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

19. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Mediations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960).

20. I offer a more detailed discussion in *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man* and "Theory in Black." See also Kenneth Danziger Knies excellent outline of how Husserlian phenomenology relates to the discussion to unfold here, namely, of the post-European sciences: ''The Idea of Post-European Science: An Essay on Phenomenology and Africana Studies," in *Not Only the Master's Tools: African-American Studies in Theory and Practice*, ed. Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), pp. 85–106.

21. See Alfred Schutz, "Some Leading Concepts of Phenomenology," in *Collected Papers*, vol. 1, *The Problem of Social Reality*, ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Mar-

tinus Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 99–117.

22. See, e.g., Peter Caws, "Sartrean Structuralism?" in Christina Howells (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 296.

23. Another great walker was my beloved late colleague John Ladd at Brown University, whom I saw strolling on several occasions in variety of U.S. states and abroad.

24. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lamm Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 118. For a detailed discussion of this text, see Lewis R. Gordon, "Through the Zone of Nonbeing: A Reading of *Black Skin, White Masks* in Celebration of Fanon's Eightieth Birthday," *The C.L.R. James Journal* 11:1 (Summer), pp. 1–43.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

26. See *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, chapter 1.

27. McBride, *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*, p. 191.

Friendship and Liberation: Paradoxes

Leonard Harris

The realization of human nature—or, rather, the realization of the nature that workers producing in self-conscious freedom create for themselves—is itself the realization of universal human liberation. Self-conscious producers create their own natures, and self-conscious production occurs if and only if ownership and control of the product are made possible by objective conditions of production (modes and means of production under authorship and dominion of producers) and the correlative desires of producers. Self-conscious producers do not exist because neither the necessary conditions of production nor the correlative desires exist. Material conditions have not forced the working class to become the agent Marx expected—namely, revolutionary agents who overthrow capitalism and being creating themselves as self conscious producers and thereby realized universal human liberation.

The view that the working class is not the agent of universal human liberation is a view shared, for different reasons, in Arthur Koestler's *The God that Failed*, Albert Camus's *The Rebel* and André Gorz's *Farewell to the Working Class*.[1] One reason warranting their lack of faith in the working class as the agent of human liberation is, as it turns out, the same material structure does not produce the same form of consciousness. Common material conditions and structures are quite compatible with non-translatable cultural norms and fragmented valuations. Existentialists may have a way to see why this is the case. At the very least, it is arguable that the fragmentation of material conditions is a salient feature of capitalist production, making the expectation of a happy conjunction of common material conditions and a common class consciousness superfluous.[2] What ownership of one's product meant in 1844 when Marx penned

notes that became the *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts*, for example, radically differs from what it meant in 2004; the "product" in modern forms of production often does not exist; common conditions and structures create massively differentiated interests; ownership of what they produce is often not a desire of producers.[1] Marx expected local interest to become identical with universal human interest, given the force of common capitalist structures. Abstraction interest would become concrete interest. Abstractions must be, however, real forces and entities unmitigated by fragmentation.

If existentialists are right, one reason incongruous forms of consciousness exist is not because materialism fails to explain, but because the object of explanation, persons, are not the kinds of beings that are simply what they are as a function of what and how they produce. Their being entails invariable incommensurability of values, non-translatability between cultures, and insatiable desire for differentiation. Material conditions include what kind of persons modern persons have become; their malleable nature if not their essential nature is a material condition. Even if material conditions strictly determine what kinds of persons humans are, what kinds of persons exist radically differ from the ones Marx expected.

What if the most compelling, if unintentional, consequence of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* is that Being is confronted with nothing as its teleology?[2] "Being" is going nowhere as a function of its nature; causal forces creating an anthropocentric utopia is not encoded in the structure of production or of consciousness. If "being" is not going someplace, history may arguably be considered diabolical, wasteful—an indifferent series of geographic, material, and social circumstances; we are entrapped in making it go. We can reject the view that we are entrapped in historical stages of development inclined toward a singular rational end—a good life for our species—because contradictions in each stage will resolve themselves in a neat fashion leaving a bright utopia in which existing lives are, or are to be, treated by revolutionary authorities as tropes, props, and tools for use in creating a future determined by existing conditions. In addition, there is no reason to think that human history is a sort of collection of conflicts inclined toward a neat solution to its contradictions. Evolution is filled with dead species just as human history is filled with extinct populations. Given that the teleology of being is nothingness, and that there are reasons to be skeptical that there is a dialectic assuring resolutions of contradictions, community is nonetheless needed to fight for the laudable purposes of negating exploitation, subjugation, authoritarianism and oppression. If friendships and comradeships are crucial for any form of social agency and community, what, then, is friendship?

Jean-Paul Sartre considered Albert Camus's extended essay, *The Rebel*, sufficiently misguided to terminate their friendship. And Camus considered the critical reviews in Sartre's journal *Les Temps Modernes* and Sartre's response to *The Rebel* sufficient to stop caring about maintaining a friendship with Sartre.[3]

Sartre, a supporter of the Communist Party at the time, believed that revolution required sacrifices; Camus criticized the self-righteousness of rebels, contending that rebellion stems from a natural tendency to revolt against normative justice in pursuit of clarifications. This occurs in a meaningless world, thus the situation is absurd. Extreme sacrifices such as suicide bombings, child endangerment, or exceedingly risky guerilla attacks on well-armed colonial soldiers for purposes of achieving impossible goals in an absurd situation are, by implication at least, undue. Sartre, on the other hand, defends the rebel. In his introduction Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Sartre seemed to have in mind Camus's *Neither Victims nor Executioners* when he lambasted supporters of French colonialism. He juxtaposed the vicious behavior of the French colonial rulers to the violence of revolutionaries. "Very well then; if you're not victims when the government which you've voted for, when the army in which your younger brothers are serving without hesitation or remorse have undertaken race murder, you are, without a shadow of doubt, executioners." [4] This either/or opposition—either a rebel imbued with a justifiable cause in a way that absolves the rebel of any moral culpability in unjust acts, or else a moral verity avoiding culpability, when both are in favor of the ending of exploitation and servitude—requires a sort of Aristotelian seamless coherency that assures perfect resolutions. Unlike a seamless coherence, reciprocity always leaves a residue, i.e., irreconcilable differences. I explore Aristotelian seamlessness and McBridean (William L. McBride) reciprocity. McBridean reciprocity and critical temper are explored as an avenue for friendship and a conceptual resource for communities of resistance to oppression.

According to Aristotle, a certain type of character is needed to live a life of rational excellence. One major character virtue and trait nexus for him is friendship. In friendship we act excellently and in practical wisdom. Friends know themselves to be friends. This knowledge helps make certain they are inclined to be excellent. It is in personal relationships that each person's moral character is sustained; the practice of living in constant engagement with the other reinforces good friendships. Practice has a looping effect. A friend, then, is another self. Self- and other-love forms a stable mean, i.e., nothing in excess and nothing lacking. Friendship is based neither on utilitarian nor instrumental grounds because it is motivated by genuine affection. Unlike a creditor/debtor relationship involving power relations, friendship is motivated by authentic self-affection. Love of a friend's nobility, and love of a friend, are synonymous; willing one's own welfare is identical to willing a friend's welfare. Excellence in character, then, will always result in right decisions such that there will never be a discord between one's self and one's friend. A friend's desires, judgments, and volition will accord with one's own. Conversely, one's desires, judgments, and volition will be sacrosanct to one's friend. Their opinions and requests will never be in conflict. One's own opinion of right action, and what one's friend wants one to do, will never conflict. There will be a mutually known right answer for what is

right action and what one should will for his or her friend. This is Aristotelian seamless coherency. Cognitive dissonance is not a feature of a life of rational excellence; neither are uncertainty and conflicts that entail discordant consequences. In Aristotle's model of how one individual should relate to another individual, the is to imagine two individuals as a singular rational agent—community is effectively a singularity—same interest, same practice, same structure, same will. This is a horrible model for conceiving friendship because it is monochromatic.

McBride's interpretation of Sartre's *Cahiers pour une morale* allows us to see that "Sartre never really considered it possible to live authentically."[5] The "authentic" is not substantively describable. The reason Sartre spends a great deal of time on what it is to live inauthentically without giving us a robust account of what it is to live authentically is present in works earlier than *Cahiers pour une morale.* In *Anti-Semite and Jew*, for example, "...the Jew who has become authentic by that very fact eludes description, 'like every authentic man.'(***Anti-Semite and Jew***).** In other words, authentic conduct, because it constitutes a free and creative response to a given human situation, cannot be completely captured and predicatively described in advance."[6] If we cannot capture what it is to be authentic in a robust description we can hardly have a robust description of the reciprocal appreciation needed for authentic persons to be friends. Nor can we reasonably conceive of friendship as a bond that exists as if there were only one person in relationship with herself acting as a community of multiple selves. There can be no single existential being synonymous with multiple beings; authenticity requires individual creativeness within some historical context

There are, and we have every reason to believe that there will always be, multiple existential beings. In a racist society, some individuals refuse to accept the category of race assigned to them. In order for a person who does accept the category of race assigned to them to befriend a person who rejects their social categorization requires the raciated person to not see the araciated person as if they were a mirror of their own will. If a black person refuses to define themselves as black even if America treats and defines everyone as either black, white, or a variation of these two categorical kinds, friendship is possible between the araciated and raciated. Neither person can require the other to see themselves as their mirror image. Neither thinks in the same categories of being as the other. There is no social or conceptual world of "authenticity" to which we can turn. There is no world of real race where biological kinds match social kinds; where phenotypes match social kinds; where social kinds form biological kinds without persons violating the boundaries of prescribed identities; where the boundaries of social kinds are stable; nor where social kinds are assumed an existence past a few generations.

An account of false consciousness of the araciated person presupposes that she not only lacks agency, but that the explanation of her choice is undoubtedly

cogent because it accounts for all the relevant variables and social conditions shaping the choice of the araciated person. The aracial person's naiveté, or willful rejection of the world of race, impacts on her life options as and her choice meshes neatly with racist political agendas that use race blindness to sustain racial divides.[7] This fact does not, however, defeat a person's entitlement to her life choice. We have excellent reasons to see aracial identity as a social formation shaped by conditions that encourage antiblack attitudes, but it is false that we can surmise that every individual aracial person is suffering from false consciousness or existential bad faith.

There is no world where an individual's social duty is to act as if they were representative of a social kind without remainder. A slave has a duty to revolt.[8] That duty does not entail a directive of exactly how they must revolt. Infanticide, killing one's master, working slowly, singing songs for solace may all function as protest axis. There is no defensible perfect objectively scientific causative explanation that provides a derivation manual from its causative explanation to prescribed action. Would it were so. Each friend must show deference to the others' choice.

If I am comfortable being Irish and another rejects the idea that a person of Jewish ancestry is, or should be, Jewish, to be their friend requires that I accept their self-description, even if they are popularly seen and described as Jewish. It is the same for an African of Hutu heritage who rejects the idea that Hutus are a race and befriends a Tutsi who believes Hutus, and themselves, are distinct races. Agency is what matters. Befriending requires deference and reciprocity.[9]

There is nothing unusual about living in ways that violate the social categories popularly assigned. It is the desire for monochromatic beings that helps fuel the condemnation we often have for difference, or behavior that taken as causative, we find objectionable. Without the possibility of friendship across the divide of persons with radically different categories informing their episteme, in some form if not the forms I have used as examples, we are faced with Aristotelian singularity as the basis of friendship.

Neither Sartre nor Camus were moral perfects. Sartre justified Stalinist draconian suppression to advance the cause of the proletariat and remained silent against anti-Semitic purges in Czechoslovakia and the USSR; Camus gives us no way to address unpleasant options without being defined as an oppressor or an absurdist; he failed to call for the ending of French colonial rule of Algeria, despite his Algerian-French heritage. If Camus was wrong to think that persons, by nature, seek clarification of rules and lucidity of social life in an absurd world resulting in an invariable tendency to engage in futile rebellion, it was certainly the case that Sartre's self-righteous justification of politically left revolutionaries of all sorts was due critique. Sartre unfortunately offered Stalinist dictatorial approaches to revolution, leaving the revolutionary justified in vicious murders, incarcerations, mutilations, and robbery in the name of "the people." And contrary to Sartre, the apotheosis of the worker, the oppressed as

holding transcendental status as the concrete this-worldly embodiment of universal interest justifying subjugation and violence toward all that stand in the way of the righteous representatives of the oppressed, was due critique. And if Camus's rejection of the pursuit of perfection and end of history was warranted, it was still the case that revolutionary action had its place. Camus's failure to see how a refusal to call for the absolute destruction of colonial powers functioned to sustain colonialism helps us to see how abstract moral desires for change without facing the gritty facts of discord functions to leave misery in place. There are no revolutions, including ones lead by pacifists, without devastating consequences suffered by the innocent. The absolute pacifists Martin L. King and Gandhi knew full well that they were often leading people into situations where innocent persons would be killed, maimed, jailed, and made destitute. They also participated in calculating the effectiveness of various protest activities using supporters as social tools. Contrary to Camus's desire, there are no safe havens. Absurdity arguably abounds.

In exploring Sartre's *Critique de la raison dialectique* McBride quotes this passage: "a friendship, in the time of Socrates, does not have the same meaning nor the same functions as a contemporary friendship; but by this very differentiation, which rigorously rules out every belief in a 'human nature,' we only illuminate more clearly the synthetic bond of reciprocity... which is a singularized universal and the very basis of human relations."[10] On Sartre's and McBride's account, there is no singular human nature. "Abstract concepts such as 'human nature,' 'friendship,' 'class,' 'nation,' etc. have no univocal transhistorical meanings for Sartre."[11] It is this Sartre, the Sartre of reciprocity, not the Sartre of absolutism and singularity, that McBride upholds. It is this dichotomy—the dichotomy between conceptual abstractions, abstract interest, and concrete reality—that is unbridgeable. The vicissitude of this divide is managed by McBride's critical temper. If Sartre and Camus had rejected singularity, accepted reciprocity and McBride's interpretation of authenticity (given that Sartre did not always consistently apply his own views), it may have been possible for them to remain friends. Each would not require of the other that they be a monochromatic mirror of themselves. Rather, treating friends the way McBride critically treats Sartre makes possible communities of conviviality, well-lived lives, the pursuit of laudable purposes such as ending exploitation, subjugation, authoritarianism , and oppression.

Notes

1. Arthur Koestler, et. al., *The God that Failed*, ed. Richard Crossman (New York: Harper, 1949); Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, trans. Anthony

Bower (New York: Vintage Books, 1956); André Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class: An Essay on Post-industrial Socialism* (Boston: South End Press, 1982).

2. For an account of fragmentation making capitalism's ability to force a common consciousness superfluous, see Robert Paul Wolff, "The Future of Socialism," unpublished manuscript, http://www.law.upenn.edu/academics/.../ilp/...

/ WolffFutureofSocialism.pdf

1. Karl Marx, *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1932).

2. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. H. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956).

3. For a history of the divide, see Ronald Aronson, *Camus and Sartre: The Story of a Friendship and the Quarrel That Ended It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

4. Albert Camus, *Neither Victims nor Executioners* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986); Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

5. William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 49; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Cahiers pour une morale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983).

6. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory*, pp.. 49-50; Jean-Paul Sartre*, Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. G. Becker (New York: Shocken Books, 1968), p. 170 [*Réflexions sur la question juive*, Paris: Gallimard, 1954, p. 137].

7. Jared Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiculturalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

8. Leonard Harris, "Insurrectionist Ethics: Advocacy, Moral Psychology, and Pragmatism," in *Ethical Issues for a New Millennium: The Wayne Leys Memorial Lectures*, ed. John Howie (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), pp. 192-210.

9. See Thomas Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1998).

10. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory*, p. 121; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Vol. I, 1st ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 146.

11. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory*, p. 121.

Spaces of Freedom: Materiality, Mediation and Direct Political Participation in the Work of Arendt and Sartre

Sonia Kruks

> History knows of many periods of dark times in which the public realm has been obscured and the world become so dubious that people have ceased toask any more of politics than that it show due consideration for their vital interests and personal liberty.
>
> —Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*[1]

Hannah Arendt held a profound antipathy towards Jean-Paul Sartre and his work. Certainly, she recognized his talents. She admitted that in *La Nausée*, his "best book" in her opinion, he had captured the quintessence of the modern experience of alienation: of "a world in which everybody who is publicly recognized belongs among the *salauds*, and everything that is exists in an opaque, meaningless thereness, which spreads obfuscation and causes disgust."[2] But she obviously disliked him. "Camus is probably not as talented as Sartre but much more important, because he is much more serious and honest,"[3] she wrote to her friend and mentor Karl Jaspers during a trip to Paris in 1946 and, in another letter to Jaspers: "Sartre . . . is too typically a Frenchman, much too literary, in a way too

talented, too ambitious."[4] Later, when visiting Paris in 1952, she wrote to her Jaspers: "Sartre . . . is too typically a Frenchman, much too literary, in a way too talented, too ambitious."[5] Later, when visiting Paris in 1952, she wrote to her husband: "Sartre et al I will not see; it would be senseless. They are entirely wrapped up in their theories and live in a world Hegelianly organized."[6]

When Arendt did briefly engage with Sartre's work, it was most often to criticize him for a dangerous and escapist romanticization of action. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, she casually linked him in passing with neo-Fascist writers who glorified action.[7] Later, with Sartre evidently in mind, she described existentialism as "primarily an escape from the perplexities of modern philosophy into the unquestioning commitment to action."[8] While in her essay *On Violence* she accused Sartre, along with Frantz Fanon, of an unjustifiable faith not only in action but in the value of violent action.[9] It is indicative of Arendt's poor knowledge of Sartre's later work that when she quotes from Sartre in *On Violence* she does not cite the passages directly from his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* but instead from an abridged presentation of the work.[10]

I am not aware of any comments Sartre made on Arendt or her work, and I have found no evidence that he took the time to read either *The Origins of Totalitarianism* or *The Human Condition*, both of which would have been fine grist for his mill in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, the magnum opus of his later period. Thus, we might reasonably conclude that he did not hold her in higher esteem than she him. Yet certain common preoccupations, orientations, and values shape their works and, I shall argue, make it worth while to read them both with and against each other.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Born only a year apart, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) were two European intellectuals of the same generation, and both drew their theoretical orientations strongly from German phenomenology and Existenz philosophy. As a student in Germany in the 1920s, Arendt attended Husserl's lectures, and studied closely with Heidegger and Jaspers (also having an affair with the former and writing her dissertation under the guidance of the latter). But, as a Jew, Arendt had to leave Germany in 1933. Before moving on to the U.S. in 1941, she was to spend several years in Paris. She had previously met Raymond Aron while he was teaching in Berlin from 1931-33.[11] When she arrived in Paris as a refugee, Aron introduced Arendt into intellectual circles that overlapped with Sartre's. Thus the two certainly knew each other, but they did not become friends; nor were they to develop an interest in each other's work.

That neither Sartre nor Arendt attended seriously to the ideas of the other is to be regretted. For, of all the thinkers within the phenomenological tradition, they are surely the two with the most profound passion for politics; and they are two who

developed the most sustained reflections on the world of politics. They are also both, par excellence, philosophers of *action*. They share an intense preoccupation with investigating the conditions within which free and meaningful action may be possible, and with understanding why it is so elusive in the modern world. Each in her or his own way also sets out to refute the claims of positivist social science that human action is reducible to predictable "behavior" and to argue that, in politics, direct participation is (as Aristotle also believed) a good in-itself, the very enactment of freedom. Importantly, for both, Marx remained a key referent and interlocutor in these investigations although, in spite of his growing pessimism, Sartre held a life-long commitment to socialism and Arendt emphatically did not.

Thus, in spite of their mutual lack of interest, I have chosen in this paper to engage them with each other. My aim is not to search for influences, however, nor to illuminate their shared roots in the thought of Heidegger.[12] Rather, I seek to bring their thought into engagement around a particular set of questions that they both pose: about the value of direct political participation as the enactment of freedom, about the spaces in which it fleetingly becomes possible—and about why it seems always to be evanescent or transitory. In developing such a "conversation" I do not engage Arendt with Sartre's far better known and earlier work, first published in 1943, *Being and Nothingness*.[13] Rather, my focus is on the work he published in 1960, the first volume of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. In the *Critique* Sartre continues to sustain his earlier affirmation of the ontological status of human freedom. However, I argue, the radical individualism that marked his early philosophy and made it difficult for Sartre to theorize history or politics as collective domains is now overcome. For freedom is now revealed not only (as in *Being and Nothingness*) as enacted in individual projects but as always and at the same time instantiated in practices that are profoundly social. Freedom thus is always mediated, altered and constrained by the practices of others. It encounters prior human practices as they have congealed to form a world of "inert" social structures and processes that still have an agency and that continue to act back upon new practices. Contrary to those critics who regard the *Critique* as being still, with *Being and Nothingness,* a work of neo-Cartesian individualism, or else those who propose that a sharp break exists between *Being and Nothingness* and the *Critique*, I argue that a process of creative transformation within an overarching continuity links the two works.[14] Thus the later Sartre still holds fast to questions concerning the enactment of individual freedom that so centrally preoccupy Arendt, but now also addresses her concerns about what limits such free, direct, political action.

Such questions about freedom and direct political action remain germane to Anglophone political theory today. For a growing body of thinkers criticize extant liberal, representative democracy for the apathy and cynicism it engenders among citizens, and for the soullessness of the distant and bureaucratic state systems it has spawned, and many urge greater citizen participation as a remedy. Arguments now abound for strengthening "civil society," sometimes as a neo-Habermasian domain of communicative action, sometimes as the source of the "social capital" allegedly needed to restore virtue to our ailing civic life.[15] Others urge fuller and more

thoughtful citizen participation in deliberative processes as a better means to resolve conflicts. Yet others argue for more direct citizen decision-making, be it via ballot initiatives and referenda or via the devolution of many present state functions back to voluntary or local associations.[16] Although they certainly imply fundamental moral values, such as autonomy, or justice, or greater reciprocity, most often these arguments are developed on more explicitly instrumental grounds, such as increasing government accountability, better protecting rights, enlarging choice, or (in the case of deliberation) facilitating consensus through reasoned debate. However, less instrumental arguments are also made for direct political participation, usually along the lines that it is educative, integral to human moral development or—yet more strongly—that it is constitutive of free and fully human selves. Thus, for example, Carole Pateman describes the main function of participatory democracy as educative,[17] Benjamin Barber claims that "participation is a way of defining the self"[18] so that "without participating in the common life that defines them and in the decision-making that defines and shapes their social habitat, women and men cannot become individuals,"[19] while Carol Gould insists that participatory democracy is integral to freedom as "self-development."[20]

Moreover, direct political participation as a distinctive (and often self-conscious) style of political action has recently enjoyed a significant renaissance, re-emerging since the late twentieth century at many sites around the globe. It erupts in the 1960s in Western Europe and the U.S. with the student, civil rights, women's, and anti-war movements. It becomes integral to effective movements for regime change in Eastern Europe and in apartheid South Africa, and in resistance to authoritarian plutocracies in some Latin-American societies. Currently, it flourishes in Western Europe, the U.S., Latin-America, and elsewhere in new spaces of radical contestation such as environmental and anti-globalization movements;[21] and it has also recently erupted in the Middle East and North Africa in the "Arab Spring" of 2011. It is in the context of this renaissance of practices of direct political participation, as well with regard to the various theoretical literatures that urge more citizen participation as the remedy for the woes of Western liberal representative democracy, that I turn to the work of Arendt and Sartre. For—their disagreements not withstanding—they are two of the thinkers who have most compellingly argued that direct political participation is constitutive of free and fully developed human selves.

In what follows I begin by making some general comparisons between Arendt's account of human activity, the *vita activa* as she calls it in *The Human Condition,* and the later Sartre's account of praxis, in the first volume of *Critique of Dialectical Reason.*[22] I then go on to discuss the more specific question of *political* action. Here, my focus is on Arendt and Sartre's agreement in valuing direct, face-to-face, political action and on their shared concern about the apparent impossibility of sustaining those "spaces of freedom" (as Arendt calls them) that both note often emerge temporarily in radical or revolutionary politics. For, as suggested above, such spaces are still emerging both with growth of new contestational movements

within stable liberal democratic regimes and elsewhere. In exploring this tendency for spaces of freedom to appear and then dissipate again, I will draw mainly on Arendt's work of 1963, *On Revolution*,[23] and on the later sections of the first volume of Sartre's *Critique*.

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Both *The Human Condition* and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* may be read as extended meditations on the relationship of freedom to necessity, and as affirmations of the persistence of human freedom even in what Arendt calls "dark times." Both thinkers insist that freedom continues to erupt even within the confines of the ever-more alienated, technicized and "normalized" conditions[24] that define the modern world. Furthermore, for both thinkers this world is created by human beings (both say "men"[25]) through the multiplicity of their activities and the many kinds of things they make. A human fabrication, our world is never the outcome of inevitable forces. Thus both reject forms of determinism that view the human world as analogous to the law-bound domain of nature. Yet, this having been said, the ethos of the two works, the style and sensibilities of their authors, as well as their divergent orientations to then-current politics, lead them to almost obverse accounts of this world that we create. It is as if they are describing two very different sides of one and the same coin.

For both thinkers, though to varying degrees, it is fundamental that human activities are mediated by a world of material things—a world that we create from the resources of nature through a multitude of practices, through what Marx had called praxis. However, for the later Sartre, such mediations lead generally towards a *loss* of freedom while, for Arendt to the contrary, they may *enable* free action to take place. "Reification," that is the materialization of human activity, of *praxis*, in tangible objects, is an essential characteristic of the human world for both thinkers. However, for Sartre reification represents a fundamental alienation of our activity; while for Arendt it may become its positive expression.[26]

Sartre sets out to demonstrate that there is what he calls a "primitive type of alienation" of praxis. By "primitive," he means that this alienation is analytically prior to the more historically specific forms of alienation that Marx attributed to social relations of class conflict. For the objects we create through praxis always act back against us coercively: "man has to struggle not only against nature, and against the social environment which has produced him, and against other men, but also against his own action as it becomes other. This primitive type of alienation occurs within other forms of alienation, but it is independent of them, and, in fact, is their foundation . . . a permanent anti-*praxis* is a new and necessary moment of *praxis*."[27] What Sartre calls "practico-inert" entities, the products of our praxis, produce their own demands, or "exigencies." They drain our freedom from us, reinscribing in us the inertia and passivity of matter, as they constrain and compel our future activity. Whenever we act, we interiorize the inertness of previously

worked matter as our own. For example, for a house to remain habitable and meet our need for shelter, we are compelled endlessly to meet the demands that it, itself a product of prior human praxis, now imposes upon us. It must be "heated, swept, repainted, etc; otherwise it deteriorates [it's not surprising that Sartre chose to live mainly in hotels!]. This *vampire object* [my emphasis] constantly absorbs human action, lives on blood taken from man and finally lives in symbiosis with him."[28]

In addition, Sartre argues, sets of human relations (which at their most general he calls "social ensembles") are also shaped by this "primitive alienation," an alienation that is exacerbated by the fact that—at least in our history this far—we always act within a field of scarcity. For the later Sartre (unlike the Sartre who wrote *Being and Nothingness*) we are social through and through.[29] Thus, towards the beginning of the *Critique* he writes that his investigation, "will set out from . . . the individual fulfilling himself [sic] in his abstract praxis, so as to rediscover, through deeper and deeper conditionings, the totality of his practical bonds with others."[30] However, the sociality of the human condition constitutes not only its potential but also its very *problem* for Sartre. For within a material field that is shaped by alienation and scarcity, we most often encounter the praxis of others above all as the "alteration" of our own, as draining away of our freedom and as distorting or "deviating" our intentions. Sartre's notion of scarcity is, as I read it, ontological in so far as human beings are always creatures of lack, be it lack of time, or lack of recognition, as well as lack of material things.[31] However, scarcity does also persistently refer for Sartre to an insufficiency of material resources, and it is in this sense that I am using it here.

Sartre gives, as a simple example of social unification through scarcity, the case of deforestation in China.[32] Over centuries, land-hungry peasants individually cleared away forests to increase arable land, with the net collective effect of producing soil-erosion, massive flooding and, finally, a reduction in the total arable land available to them. There was no joint undertaking and yet there was a joint result by which each was adversely effected: "deforestation as the action of Others becomes everyone's action as Other *in matter*; objectification is alienation." Against classical Marxism Sartre argues, however, that this alienation is not (at least in the first instance, though it will become so later) the consequence of exploitation, but is "rather the materialisation of recurrence."[33]

Such alienation may often occur, as it were, behind our backs. However, as conscious, intentional, practical, subjects we may also become aware of it. Thus, Sartre's account of praxis is not only concerned with the objective, or "exterior," mediations through which our praxis returns to us altered, our intentions alienated (in the Chinese example, the humanly-initiated material processes of erosion and flood). For Sartre's account is also phenomenological and dialectical. It is phenomenological because it is concerned with how we *experience* the penetration of our praxis by externalities. It is dialectical because it demonstrates how such experience, far from being a passive reflection or reception of the world, *itself* has agency. Experience is intentional, and involves redefining, engaging with, and

restructuring the world. Thus, Sartre examines what he calls the "interiorisation" of alienation (exploring how it is subjectively experienced), and yet he also insists that this subjective experience is not purely "inner."

As we interiorize the alterations of our praxis which the practico-inert demands, we effect a real alteration of self, since for Sartre (as for Arendt) selves come into being performatively and do not pre-exist their actions; they are not pre-given essences. Furthermore, we effect not only an alteration of ourselves but also of the relational bonds through which we mutually recognize each other as human. Human bonds may then become forms of what Sartre calls "antagonistic reciprocity": as conscious subjects we reciprocally experience each other as threat. For it is through others that we discover ourselves to be no longer fully the subjects of our own praxis. Our praxis—while still being our "own"—is drained of our intentions and agency. Moreover, we recognize that we have become an equivalent threat to the other. We are, in such relationships, a "demonic double" for each other:[34] each becomes through others "Other" to himself.

In what Sartre calls "serial" relations, each actually is—and may recognize himself to be—altered by others and also alters them in an indefinite chain of alienating relationships. Seriality may take many forms, but in all of them it inserts us into passive relationships in which, both practically and phenomenologically, our freedom slips from us.[35] For example, as consumers, we find our "choice" of what to purchase always-already conditioned for us by a market of sellers and consumers of which we ourselves are an active constituent element. Such serial relations are not, however, to be understood as ones of pure atomization since they involve an "interiorisation" of otherness: "the individual, as a member of a series, exhibits behaviour which is *altered (altereé)*, and every part of which is the action of the Other in him."[36] Political ensembles, such as those in which "public opinion" emerges or in which individuals behave in support of a political party, are also in Sartre's view serial. So too are those ensembles of employees each of whom accepts the same bad working conditions for fear that he will lose his job if he protests. Seriality exists when each "though he may be in the same circumstances as all the others, remains alone and defines himself according to his neighbor insofar as his neighbor thinks *like the others.* That is, each is something other than himself and behaves like someone else, who in turn is other than himself."[37] As we shall see later, such serial relations may be temporarily overcome in what Sartre calls a "group," particularly in the high-intensity moment when what he what he calls a "group-in-fusion" forms.[38] However, as we shall also see, this positive form of reciprocity cannot be sustained and seriality always re-enters such a group.

Arendt, contrary to Sartre, emphasizes that (even though it may frequently become distorted) our sociality is the very condition of freedom, that is of "action." "Action," she insists in *The Human Condition*, "is never possible in isolation . . . Action and speech are surrounded by, and in constant contact with, the web of acts and words of other men."[39] Indeed, it is such socially embedded action that is the source of the highest pleasures and most meaningful aspects of human existence. Moreover, in contrast to Sartre, Arendt sees the world of material things that we

create as *fundamentally* benign and as supportive of freedom. Indeed, *it* is what makes a truly human life possible. Offering an image of positive human communion mediated through the world of worked matter, she observes: "To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it."[40] She also talks of "the man-made home erected on earth and made of material which earthly nature delivers into human hands," adding that "without being at home in the midst of things whose durability makes them fit for use and for erecting a world whose very permanence stands in direct contrast to life, this life would never be human."[41]

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I will return later to these key divergences between Sartre and Arendt. For now I want to proceed via some terminological clarifications. However, these will also take me to the heart of some more substantive questions. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt is at pains to distinguish several different kinds of activity which, equally deliberately, Sartre groups together under the single term, *praxis*. For Sartre, praxis consists in all and any *intentional* human activity which, as he puts it, "involves a specific effort in accordance with present givens in the light of [a] future objective."[42] But however altered and alienated it might be, we may still say that praxis is "free," in that it is not simply the determined outcome of exterior forces. Rather, it "creates its own law" as "a mediation between the given, past objectivity and the [new] objectification which is to be produced."[43] But for Arendt, it is important sharply to differentiate the three domains of human activity that she calls, respectively, "labor," "work," and "action"; and it is central to her critique of Marx (and by implication of a thinker such as Sartre) that he elides them. For Arendt, "action" possesses particular qualities, those of "freedom," which, she insists, do not pertain to either "labor" or "work."

Labor, for Arendt, is concerned with the immediate reproduction of human life, the realm of pure necessity, and it produces the things needed for instant consumption in endless cyclicity.[44] By contrast, work, which is both phenomenologically and functionally distinct from labor, involves the skilled fabrication of those *durable* objects that are necessary for the stability and endurance of the human world. One of Arendt's concerns about the modern condition is that work tends increasingly to collapse into labor. This is not simply because production has now become above all commodity production, but also because its *qualities* are changing. Things are produced increasingly for immediate consumption and disposal (the "throw away" society),[45] rather than as contributions to an enduring world; and the growing division of labor makes what was once skilled work increasing repetitive and endless.[46]

Although both labor and work are necessary dimensions of human existence and each may be, in its own way, meaningful to those who perform it, neither is the site of "freedom." Only what Arendt calls *action* is, she believes, a wholly free undertaking; and it is free because it alone, she insists, is *independent* of necessity and materiality. Rather than materiality, it is "*plurality*," the fact that we are equal but also "distinct" from each other[47] and "*natality*," the fact that to be human is to be able to initiate new—and unexpected—beginnings,[48] which enable action freely to take place. "Action" is the voluntary performance of deeds and words before one's peers; moreover, it is through action alone that the self comes into being as it reveals itself before others. Action is a performance which is at once (and necessarily) both a disclosure and a creation of self. "In acting and speaking, men [sic] show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world . . . this revelatory quality of speech and action comes to the fore when people are *with* others and neither for nor against them—that is in *sheer human togethernesss.*"[49]

In a 1945 lecture Sartre summed up his early philosophy in the aphorism "existence precedes essence"[50] and in the *Critique* his earlier claim, that human existence bears no preordained essence, still remains an enduring postulate. Echoing (perhaps unwittingly) Sartre's early aphorism, Arendt writes at one point in *The Human Condition* that "human essence . . . the essence of who somebody is—can come into being only when life departs, leaving behind nothing but a story."[51] But if she shares with Sartre an insistence that a human life creates itself and discloses itself through its actions, she also diverges sharply from him on how to theorize the relation of such actions to the material world.

For Arendt, politics at its best, (as in the direct participatory politics of the citizens in the Greek polis, the early American town meeting, the spontaneously emerging worker's council) is par excellence the domain of freedom. Contrary to Sartre she insists that such a politics is the domain of action that is wholly *unbound* by necessity and materiality. It is the domain in which, among our peers, we may create our selves. For Arendt, the world we erect through labor and (above all) work, a world (to repeat) "whose very permanence stands in direct contrast to this life" and without which "this life would never be human,"[52] is what enables us to engage in action. However, in Arendt's view, this world does not *itself* in any way effect or alter action. Rather, it provides the neutral spaces within and the tools with which action may be performed. For Arendt, unlike the later Sartre, it is not in the nature of action necessarily to be altered by its own products. For her, the practico-inert is not implicated in action, and humanly worked matter effects no alteration upon it. "Action," she writes, "goes on *directly* between men *without the intermediary of things or matter.*"[53]

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Two important issues are raised by Arendt's set of distinctions and their juxtaposition with the Sartrean notion of praxis. First, it is important to note that Arendt's distinction between labor and work knowingly and willfully cuts across the Marxist distinction between the production of use-values and exchange-values. Although labor is more likely to produce use-values for direct consumption, and work also to produce exchange-values—that is, durable commodities to be sold in the lesser "public sphere" of the market—I take the core of Arendt's distinction to be *phenomenological*. For the experiences of time and embodiment, of the qualities of interaction with nature and the material world, and the satisfactions—and there are she claims satisfactions—of each, are different. Marx's reduction of all production processes to abstract labor-power offers an experientially impoverished account of the activities that go to make up the daily lives of so many.[54] Marx, she suggests, fails to grasp the pleasures of labor: that "effort and gratification" follow each other so closely. He misses the cycle of bodily experience in which (except in cases of acute poverty) "painful exhaustion" is followed by a "pleasurable regeneration" of our bodies.[55] One might respond to Arendt that most labor is coerced, and that adequate means for regeneration are rare. But she is also surely right that labor may have its own pleasures. This is perhaps why those of us who do not directly labor to live now often create substitutes, such as gardening, hiking, running, or other activities that offer us the immediate cycle of exhaustion and regeneration.

Work, Arendt suggests, has different qualities and rewards than labor. Its *temporality* is different, involving the definite beginning of a process of fabrication and a clear-cut end when the object is completed. It involves also a different relationship to nature, in which the materials to be worked upon are extracted definitively and even violently. It can thus involve positive experiences of strength and of self-mastery.[56]

For Sartre, the kinds of phenomenological differences that Arendt highlights through her elaboration of the distinction between labor and work are not of primary concern. Sartre's account of praxis seeks rather to show us the ubiquitous qualities of our relations with nature and materiality, and to display the structures of the various kinds of social ensembles which arise from them. Thus his demonstration often irons out or ignores important qualitative differences of the kind which Arendt describes. There certainly are good reasons Sartre gives for starting his investigation by considering praxis at its most abstract. Yet his failure also to consider the different *qualitative* experiences that diverse practices of production and of their products may offer still sits uneasily with his own critique of the reductionism of Orthodox Marxism. In *Search for a Method* he had complained that Orthodox Marxists believe that "to think is to claim to totalize, to replace particularity by a universal,"[57] and he had pointed out that "if one totalizes too quickly . . . then the real is lost."[58] Different kinds of production—for example, agricultural work, factory production, craft work, service work, caring work, artistic production—do indeed, as Sartre says, *all* give rise to forms of the practico-inert

and to serialized social ensembles. Yet, the lived experience of each is, as Arendt suggests, still significantly different.

However (and here I approach my second issue), I believe that Sartre's account of praxis effectively puts into question Arendt's claim that action is radically distinct from both labor and work, because it is wholly free of necessity and of the material world. For Sartre shows us in detail that *all* human praxis takes place somewhere along a continuum of degrees of freedom and of its alienation (or alteration) through its practico-inert mediations and the seriality that arises from them. Thus even what may appear on first sight as unmediated, one-on-one and face-to-face, interactions are never only that. For example, the "same" conversation between the "same" two people will take on a very different meaning (both for them, and sometimes for others) depending on whether it is conducted in a work-place, at a party, or in a bedroom. The social field, and our relations to unknown or absent others beyond the (apparently) immediate couple, always mediate us to ourselves. In doing so they both enable and constrain the meaning of even our most "personal" speech and actions.

Thus Sartre argues that, even at the pole of this continuum where praxis is the most *coerced*, where humanly created "necessity" most fully structures what we do, we still may talk of "freedom" as an aspect of our alienated agency.[59] Conversely, even the most free social action, that of what he calls the "group-in-fusion," is still conditioned by the exigencies of the practico-inert, or "worked matter." In the paradigmatic (and most extended) example Sartre gives of the group-in-fusion, the group that stormed the Bastille during the French Revolution, it becomes clear that the city layout, the construction of the Bastille itself, the threat from the surrounding weapon-wielding soldiers, the need for supplies, and so on, all condition and constrain the possibilities of "free" action. Arendt, it will be recalled, had insisted that "action . . . goes on *directly* between men *without the intermediary of things or matter*."[60] But Sartre's analysis demonstrates that her claim is unsustainable. Thus, I shall argue in the next section, Sartre better enables us to explain why those "spaces of freedom" that have spontaneously emerged and then disappeared again historically in revolutionary situations—and which have emerged again in contemporary movements of contestation—prove to be temporary.

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In *On Revolution*, Arendt reads modern European and American history through the lenses she had developed in *The Human Condition*. She treats at length the American and French revolutions, as well as later episodes in the European "revolutionary tradition." What Arendt celebrates above all is the spontaneous emergence of those "spaces of freedom" where what (in *The Human Condition*) she had called "action" may take place. In the fevered constitution-writing and the intense town meetings of early America, and in the neighborhood organizations and

political clubs of Paris, politics as free action emerged. Arendt contrasts such a politics to the politics of "democratic" party systems. For the best that the latter has achieved "is a certain control of the rulers by those who are ruled." However, she goes on, "it has by no means enabled the citizen to become a 'participator' in public affairs. The most the citizen can hope for is to be 'represented,' whereby it is obvious that the only thing which can be represented and delegated is interest, or the welfare of the constituents, but neither their actions nor their opinions."[61] By contrast, in the town meetings, political clubs, and other spaces, were found forms of politics in which citizens participated directly, face-to-face. Here, they did not abnegate their freedom to the alienating mediation of so-called representatives. Here, not only were decisions of import made, but the very process of participating in their making involved the meaningful self-creation and disclosure of self to others that Arendt calls freedom.

In the final chapter of *On Revolution*, entitled "The Revolutionary Tradition and Its Lost Treasures," Arendt notes and celebrates the fact that similar spaces of freedom have repeatedly continued to erupt across history. What she generically refers to as the "council system" emerged in the Paris Commune of 1871, in self-creating soviets in Russia in 1905 and 1917, in neighborhood councils and student groups in Hungary in 1956—and she anticipates that it may continue to re-emerge. She is, of course, correct. From the May Events in France in 1968, to Solidarity in Poland, the Prague Spring, and the 2011 occupation of Tahrir Square in Egypt, to environmental action groups in Europe and North America, to recent anti-globalization and antiwar activism and the "Occupy" movement of 2011 (to name but a few), "spaces of freedom" have continued to spring up. However, they have also had a tendency either to dissipate or else to metamorphose into more formal and reified institutions.[62]

What Arendt values in the council system is the spontaneous emergence of forms of face-to-face deliberation and decision-making that also go by the name of "direct" or "participatory" democracy. Their greatest value is not instrumental, however. More importantly, Councils are "spaces of appearance":[63] they are spaces for self-creating and self-disclosing action among equals, spaces for the kind of activity that Arendt argues makes us most human. Indeed, they are of existential, even of ontological, significance before anything else. What is most valuable is not deliberation as a means of arriving at consensus, or for forming the best informed or most reasonable decisions as proponents of deliberative democracy such as Gutmann and Thompson argue;[64] rather participation in deliberation is significant above all as a form of free *action*. Deliberation is a shared performance in which selves, in the plurality of their differences and the equality of their condition, at once create and disclose themselves. In such spaces we see the instantiation of what, in *The Human Condition*, Arendt had called "sheer human togetherness."[65]

But in none of the great revolutions did freedom last. Instead, Arendt asserts, "necessity" recolonized the spaces of freedom. Recolonization took place through the misguided use of the political arena to pursue inappropriate "social" ends—to

protect wealth, or to end poverty. In the case of America, this led to the pursuit of *private* happiness, and thence to the emergence of party politics, and corruption. In the cases of France and Russia it led finally, via the privileging of the want of *les misérables*, to Terror. For, paradoxically, as sites of creative action, of freedom, the councils also increasingly threatened the revolutionary movements from which they were spawned. In fact, Arendt argues, the "revolutionary spirit" was twofold—and it was divided against itself. For it both demanded that one always start anew *and* it sought also to be a "foundation," that is, to be the origin of a new, stable, institutional order. These two pursuits, Arendt points out, exist in profound tension. For,

> if foundation was the aim and end of revolution, then the revolutionary spirit was not merely the spirit of beginning something new, but of starting something permanent and enduring; a lasting institution, embodying this spirit and encouraging it to new achievements, would be self defeating. From which it *unfortunately* [my emphasis] seems to follow that nothing threatens the achievements of revolutions more dangerously and more acutely than the spirit which has brought them about.[66]

"Unfortunately," indeed. But it is surely not *merely* a matter of bad fortune, or chance. Arendt offers two kinds of explanation for the impermanence of spaces of freedom, but neither is satisfactory. The first consists in a series of specific *ad hominem* explanations, each of which hinges upon the personal failure of such great revolutionaries as Jefferson, Robespierre, Marx or Lenin. Each failed to think about, or to envision, the appropriate forms of institutions that would enable freedom to persist. Jefferson, she says, simply did not realize the significance of his vision of the decentralized "ward system."[67] Robespierre first praised the political clubs, but once in power shut them down as inimical to the stability of the Revolution. Marx and Lenin both hailed the council system as born of "the revolutionary creativity of the people" when they first saw it emerge (in 1871 and 1905 respectively). Yet each later backed away from it, and dismissed it as incompatible with the necessity for centralized party and state power. Lenin, for example, she says, initially "sincerely" believed in the slogan "all power to the Soviets." However, he ended by crushing them in the name of the revolution because he had not, claims Arendt, "thought" sufficiently creatively about how to incorporate their ideas and style of free action into the process of consolidating the revolution. Between 1905 and 1917 "he had done nothing to reorient his thought and to incorporate the new organs into any of the many party programmes, with the result that the same spontaneous development in 1917 found him and his party no less unprepared than they had been in 1905."[68]

Thus, revolutionary leaders have repeatedly brought about the loss of the greatest "treasures" of the revolutionary tradition, instead of fostering new institutional forms that would perpetuate them. One major error in each case was that they developed a party system as a means of "representing" the people. "Parties," Arendt writes, "cannot be regarded as popular organs . . . they are, on the

contrary, the very efficient instruments through which the power of the people is curtailed and controlled."[69] Arendt argues that any party system, irrespective of the number of parties, is antithetical to what is most valuable about the council system; and—viewing politics at its best as about our capacity to participate in free action in communal spaces—she is surely right. Representative government is indeed intrinsically oligarchical, "in the sense that public happiness and public freedom . . . . become the privilege of the few."[70] Parties and party politics drain away the capacity of the majority of the people to speak and act directly, and thus they have the effect of massifying and rendering passive those who could engage in free action, of robbing them of the capacity for one of the greatest human goods.

Sartre is similarly critical of electoral party politics, claiming that it necessarily reduces citizens to powerlessness. However, because he analyzes the phenomena that Arendt describes as forms of seriality, he shows why they are not to be explained primarily as a result of failures of revolutionary leadership. Electoral systems, Sartre argues, reduce the mass of the voters to abstract, isolated, atomized units in a series, each of whom must think as other than him or her self (as, for example, when we decide not to vote for a third party candidate lest we "waste" our vote). Thus, "these citizens, identical as they are [qua voters] and fabricated by the law, disarmed and separated by mistrust of one another, deceived but aware of their impotence, can never, as long as they remain serialized, form that sovereign group from which, we are told, all power emanates— the People."[71] He adds, paralleling Arendt's views on the oligarchic nature of parties, "no party will ever be able to represent the series of citizens, because every party draws its power from itself, that is, from its communal structure. In any case, the series [of voters] in its powerlessness cannot delegate authority."[72]

In addition to blaming failures of leadership, Arendt offers a second explanation for the destruction of spaces of freedom: the "contamination" of revolutions by the inappropriate intrusion of "the social question," or "necessity." For, in every case, the alleviation of want, the demand to address the material needs of *les misérables*, or the pursuit of material interests, has displaced the pursuit of freedom as the desired good. Perhaps Arendt implicitly acknowledges that this displacement is, after all, inevitable, for she observes that the poor, those in acute want, cannot but be most concerned about material questions. Yet Arendt still presents necessity, or need, as an unfortunate *side-issue*; one that causes revolutions to deviate from their proper purpose when those who most suffer from want seize the center-stage. Holding Marx much to blame for the shift, she observes: "the transformation of the rights of man into the rights of the Sans-Culottes was the turning point not only of the French Revolution but of all the revolutions that were to follow."[73] But, this second line of explanation remains as insufficient as the first. For, as Sartre so clearly demonstrates, need is not a mere side-issue.[74] Furthermore, in a world always brought into being through the material mediations of our actions, it is erroneous to believe free action may ever escape from the exigencies

of the practico-inert. These, in their multiple and complex forms, mediate all and every human activity, ranging from the most mechanical labor to what Arendt calls action. Sartre thus profoundly complicates and puts into question the distinction between freedom and necessity with which Arendt operates.

In his example, in the *Critique*, of the group-in-fusion that storms the Bastille, Sartre too celebrates direct political action as creating spaces of freedom. He does so also in his writings about the May 1968 French student movement and in his essays about anti-colonial resistance movements.[75] Sartre's account of the group-in-fusion differs in significant ways from Arendt's vision of councils as the spaces of freedom. Most importantly, he argues that in the group-in-fusion it is through the unanimity of their goals and not (as for Arendt) in the plurality of their personages that each encounters others as the affirmation of his or her freedom. However, both pose for us the same questions: why are spaces of freedom so fleeting, so evanescent? Why do they not endure? Sartre, however, is able to account more fully than Arendt for this dissipation. For the problem is not primarily a matter of individual failure of vision on the part of leaders. Nor is it necessarily a matter of the "wrong" actors taking over the political stage. Nor is it even a matter of the state overwhelming the small spaces of free citizen action. All of these may, of course, be important explanatory factors. But beyond them, and analytically distinct from them, Sartre demonstrates that there is a dynamic "internal" to the very spaces of freedom themselves that tends toward processes of alteration and reification. Because all human action undergoes the "primitive" alienation of praxis by its practico-inert mediations, and because it also takes place within practico-inert material mediations that are in addition structured by scarcities, Sartre argues that even the most free and spontaneous participatory action will come to be repenetrated by forms of inertia and seriality.

In the group-in-fusion, as in the series, each continues to have his praxis returned to him through the mediation of others. But—initially at least—this return is not an alienation. For via the group each finds his praxis returned to him *un*altered.[76] Indeed, each finds his own praxis returned to him augmented, his freedom affirmed and enlarged (and not negated) by others who participate in this common project. However, the group-in-fusion is only possible within and, in that sense, still is *conditioned* by a particular material field. Thus if it is to endure beyond the initial moment of fusion, if it is to become what Sartre calls a "surviving group" and finally to perpetuate its goals as a stable "institution," the group cannot avoid re-interiorizing the exigencies of worked matter.

In Book II of the *Critique*, Sartre sets out at length the material mediations and the materially mediated social relations through which spontaneous, free collective action becomes transformed into stable "institutions." In this process, the freedom of group members endures—but only in increasingly reified and alienated forms. For, in order to pursue their common goal, each discovers that his or her own action must be subordinated to the demands of the survival of the group. Although praxis remains free, in the sense that each still wills the final goal, it increasingly takes on

the conditioned, process-like qualities of seriality again. Moreover, each becomes a threat to the other, for each must be made to continue to perform his part for the group to survive, and a Hobbesian situation of mutual distrust may only be resolved by the development of coercive power within the group. At its most extreme—as happened in the French Revolution—"fraternity" may endure only through "terror." In the Bastille example, if the group is to endure once it has stormed the Bastille it will discover that it must institute a division of labor, sharing out the task of manning the weapons; it must organize look-outs, arrange supplies of food from outside, and so on. Moreover, in order to endure the group has also to police itself. It must ensure that each performs his assigned task and that none defects. It is with these last requirements that coercion, including the threat of violence, re-enters the group. All enduring institutions, from clubs to the state, act coercively (to one degree or another). They reify the freedom of their members, returning it to them as a counter-exigency.

Similar exigencies, of course, must come to bear in the spaces of freedom which Arendt considers, as well as in more contemporary spaces of direct political participation. For whether the event is storming the Bastille or forming an anti-war demonstration, occupying a factory, forming a worker's committee, calling a town meeting, organizing a boycott, occupying a polluting power-station, or a public square or park, the same question is posed: why cannot the group *endure* as an "uncontaminated" site for free political action? Sartre's analyses of the repenetration of the group by the exigencies of the practico-inert does much to explain why Arendt's vision, of free political action as wholly unmediated by material necessity, is misguided. Contra Arendt, he shows us why it is that action *cannot* take place "without the intermediary of things or matter."[77]

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Sartre and Arendt both take as their paradigmatic examples those "spaces of freedom" that emerge in revolutionary situations, in conditions where state power has collapsed or is still newly emergent. However, their analyses are also relevant to forms of action that may emerge within the conditions of more stable state power, such as are addressed in much of the recent literature on direct political participation. Sartre's reflections on the transitory nature of groups-in-fusion, and his account of the dynamics through which they come to be repenetrated by forms of reifying practical-inertia, also bear on current agendas for "strong" or "associative" democracy, for "deliberative" democracy, or for increasing participation in "civil society." If direct political participation is to be valued because it is integral to freedom as self-development, or because it enables fully developed individuality,[78] then Sartre's work suggests that these are even more ephemeral and elusive ends than such authors acknowledge.

Sartre's analysis is profoundly sobering. Of course, even the most committed advocates of direct democracy and other forms of direct citizen participation realize that there are enormous "external" obstacles to their instantiation: the over-bearing power of the state and of other great practico-inert organs of massification, such as the market economy and the media; apathy and other psychological deficits in citizen motivation; ignorance and inadequate skills in deliberating and organizing. Thus, for example, Jeffrey Isaac ends his thoughtful book on "progressive" politics in America by criticizing, in the light of some of these factors, the optimism of those who believe that "civic participation" will renew democracy. Instead, Isaac invokes Camus's account of the myth of Sisyphus, not as a doctrine of despair but as an acceptance of the always "provisional" nature of solutions to "unmasterable difficulties." He observes that "the kinds of democratic responses that are likely to be effective are bound to be partial, limiting, fractious, and in many ways unsatisfying…And they are likely to frustrate the democratic project of collective self-control and self-governance."[79]

But Sartre tells us that there are yet further "unmasterable difficulties." For there is also a logic "internal" to collective action itself that reintroduces reification and seriality into those groups that survive more than momentarily and that pursue more than transitory goals. Thus, for example, in order effectively to pursue its goals, even a "direct action" organization such as Greenpeace, which uses extra-legal means to contest the legitimacy of certain state policies, still has to stabilize itself as an institution in ways that are inimical to freedom for most of the individuals involved with it. To be employed as a fund-raiser or an information officer for Greenpeace[80] is still to perform what Arendt calls labor, or perhaps work, but certainly not free action.

My point here is not to criticize Greenpeace, or similar organizations that engage in direct action, as hypocritical or inconsistent. I aim only to exemplify anew Sartre's argument about the loss of freedom that action necessarily undergoes as the material exigencies that any group praxis must encounter are interiorized. However strongly they may find their own goals and values expressed in those of the organization, employees such as fund-raisers or information officers still remain serialized and must subordinate themselves to the exigencies and process-like character of contemporary wage work. Likewise, for many organizations that pursue greater social justice, that seek to further human rights, or to alleviate poverty, the effective pursuit of their goals is far from synonymous with the maintenance of spaces for free self-development for their participants. Indeed, the more effective they become as advocates for their causes the higher the levels of institutionalization and reification they are likely to develop. Thus, for example, Maggie Black describes how Oxfam began as the initiative of a small group of citizens, "fanatics, soft-heads and sentimental idealists," who were outraged by the famine precipitated by the Allied blockade of Greece in 1941. But its success in alleviating hunger in such crisis situations meant that by the 1980s Oxfam grew to become a complex, bureaucratized organization, now "in the business of compassion."[81] Similarly, more locally focused "civil society" organizations also

tend (unless they dissipate rapidly) to become penetrated by forms of reification and seriality. For example, a group I was involved with some years ago successfully established a local battered women's shelter, but in doing so it lost its qualities as a space of freedom for feminist activists and became a routinized volunteer-association, an adjunct to local government. Politics as a site for free action and politics as the efficacious pursuit of (important) specific collective goals are not, alas, often mutually reinforcing.

Yet although Sartre demonstrates, contra Arendt, why free political action may never transcend its material mediations, and although he explains why the reintroduction of inertia and seriality back into any but the most momentary group actions are unavoidable, still we do not have to take from his account a wholly pessimistic reading of the possibility of freedom in the world. Indeed, Arendt—briefly and in passing—perhaps suggests why. Near the end of *On Revolution* she suggest that "councils" (that is, the spaces of direct, face-to-face action) may be "the best instruments, for example, for breaking up the modern mass society, with its dangerous tendency toward the formation of pseudo-political mass movements."[82] One may read Arendt here as saying, like Sartre, that we should not hope to "achieve" or to "arrive at" a *condition* of free political action. For freedom cannot be stably institutionalized. Instead, we should acknowledge that direct participation of the kind where freedom may be enacted is by its very nature episodic and unstable: particular instances will either dissolve or undergo reification. However, taken collectively and over time, as they each emerge and dissipate, such instances constitute an ongoing force of contestation and site for freedom. Thus, for example, as Greenpeace has become increasingly institutionalized other more spontaneous environmental movements have emerged, opening up new spaces of free action even as those within Greenpeace have reified.[83] At their best, and indeed precisely *because* they are intrinsically so fleeting, such episodic movements of direct participation enable freedom to persist—even in our own "dark times."

Notes

1.   Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt Brace, [1963] 1983).

2.   *Ibid*., p. viii.

3.   Hannah Arendt, *Hannah Arendt/Karl Jaspers Correspondence: 1926-1969*, ed. Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), p. 56.

4.   *Ibid*., p. 66.

5.   Hannah Arendt, *Hannah Arendt/Karl Jaspers Correspondence*, p. 66.

6.   Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven:

Yale University Press, 1982), p. 281. See also Hannah Arendt, *Between Friends: The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy; 1949-1975*, ed. Carol Brightman (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995), p. 176.

7. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951), p. 324.

8. Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books, [1961] 1977), p. 8.

9. Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1970), pp. 20-1; 89-91. The scholarly work that examines the work of Arendt and Sartre comparatively is, to say the least, scant. What little there is focuses on the question of violence, and on Arendt's attack on Sartre for his alleged celebration of violence. For a brief treatment that suggests that Arendt's critique is justified, see Jeffrey Isaac, *Arendt, Camus, and Modern Rebellion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). For a more extended discussion and a defense of Sartre, arguing that Arendt misreads him, see Rivca Gordon, "A Response to Hannah Arendt's Critique Of Sartre's Views on Violence," *Sartre Studies International* 7:1 (2001), pp. 69-80. Neil Roberts also criticizes Arendt's reading of Sartre in "Fanon, Sartre, Violence, and Freedom," *Sartre Studies International* 10:2 (2004), pp. 139-160. For a far more nuanced treatment of Sartre's complex views on violence than Arendt provides, see Ronald E. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence: Curiously Ambivalent* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

10. She cites from R.D. Laing and D.G. Cooper, *Reason and Violence: A Decade of Sartre's Philosophy* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964).

11. Aron "discovered" phenomenology while studying in Germany, and it was his excited account of it that lead Sartre also to go to Germany to study Husserl and Heidegger. See Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre: A Life*, trans. Anna Cancogni (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), pp. 90-2.

12. However, the shared Heideggerian roots of the two thinkers are important. It is partly because of them that Arendt and Sartre approach questions about free political action and its vicissitudes with a sufficiently similar conceptual orientation and vocabulary to enable a 'conversation' to be possible in spite of their differences. Extensive literatures address the Heideggerian roots of each thinker, but I am not aware of any study that reflects on the significance of Heidegger as a shared intellectual source for them. However for a brief comparison of them as two "existential humanists" see Martin Halliwell and Andy Mousley, *Critical Humanisms: Humanist/Anti-Humanist Dialogues* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), chap. 2.

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956). Original French publication 1943.

14. For my previous elaboration of the argument that there is a process of transformation within a continuity, see Sonia Kruks, *Situation and Human Existence: Freedom, Subjectivity and Society* (London: Unwin Hyman/Routledge, 1990).

15. For neo-Habermasian arguments for strengthening "civil society," see Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); also Iris M. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For "social capital" arguments, see Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); also Carmen Sirianni and Lewis Friedland, *Civic Innovation in America: Community Empowerment, Public Policy, and the Movement for Civic Renewal* (Berkeley, CA: Uni-

versity of California Press, 2001).

16. For arguments that better conflict resolution may be attained through citizen deliberation see James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996); also Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1996); Gutmann and Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004). For advocacy of direct citizen decision-making via ballot and referenda, see Ian Budge, *The New Challenge of Direct Democracy* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1996); Daniel A. Smith and Caroline J. Tolbert, *Educated By Initiative: The Effect of Direct Democracy on Citizens and Political Organizations in the American States* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2004). On the importance of voluntary or local associations, see Paul Hirst, *Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economic and Social Governance* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994); Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, "Secondary Associations and Democratic Governance," in *Associations and Democracy*, ed. Erik Olin Wright (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 7-98; Mark E. Warren, *Democracy and Association* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

17. Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 42.

18. Benjamin R. Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, [1984] 2004), p. 153.

19. *Ibid*., p. xxiii.

20. Carol Gould, *Rethinking Democracy: Freedom and Social Cooperation in Politics, Economics, and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

21. See, for a discussion, William F. Fisher and Thomas Ponniah, *Another World Is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum* (London: Zed Books, 2003); see also Iain Bruce, ed., *The Porto Alegre Alternative: Direct Democracy in Action* (London: Pluto Press, 2004); Carol Gould, *Globalizing Democracy and Civil Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

22. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles*, trans. Alan Sheridan Smith, ed. Jonathan Rée (London: New Left Books, 1976). Original French publication 1960.

23. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, [1963] 1990).

24. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 40.

25. Both Arendt and Sartre consistently use masculinist language, and I have not attempted to alter it in this paper.

26. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 139-140.

27. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles*, pp. 124-125.

28. *Ibid*, p. 169.

29. When Sartre discusses the "social" nature of human existence, he is referring to the multiply co-constitutive character of human selves, and not to "the social" in Arendt's far narrower sense. For Arendt, of course, "the social" is the sphere of wants and interests which has unfortunately insinuated itself between what should properly be private and what should properly be public, encroaching on and tending to destroy both of these valuable spheres (HC, part II).

30. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 1: Theory of Practical En-

sembles, p. 52.

31. See also William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory*; Juliette Simont, "Sartrean Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, ed. Christina Howells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 178-210.

32. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles*, 161-165.

33. *Ibid*., p. 163.

34. *Ibid*., p. 132.

35. Sartre offers a range of extended examples in which serial relations are sometimes more, sometimes less, directly visible to their participants, and in which they are mediated by varying degrees of distance, time and complexity. See esp. *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, pp. 256-318.

36. *Ibid*., p. 275.

37. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Maoists in France," in *Life/Situations: Essays Written and Spoken*, trans. Paul Aster and Lydia Davis (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977): 162-171, p. 166. Original French publication of the essay 1972.

38. The French term, *groupe-en fusion*, is rendered in the English translation as the "fused group." I prefer to keep closer to the French, however, since Sartre's original term suggests less closure than does the term "fused group."

39. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 188.

40. *Ibid*., p. 52.

41. *Ibid*., pp. 134-135.

42. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles*, p. 549.

43. *Ibid*.

44. Today, in Western societies, housework perhaps best exemplifies the repetitive, reproductive cycle that Arendt has in mind in her account of labor. Simone de Beauvoir's comments on housework surely bear out Arendt's characterization of the cyclicity of labor: "Few tasks are more similar to the torment of Sisyphus than those of the housewife; day after day, one must wash the dishes, dust the furniture, mend the clothes that will be dirty, dusty, and torn again," *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier (New York: Alfred Knopf 2010), p. 474. Original French publication 1949. See also Seyla Benhabib: "the one activity that retains the features of labor throughout the centuries is housework," *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 136-7.

45. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 126-127.

46. *Ibid*., p. 125.

47. *Ibid*., pp. 175-176.

48. *Ibid*., pp. 177-178.

49. *Ibid*., pp. 179-180 (emphases added). Arendt frequently refers to ancient Greece as exemplifying the ideals of free citizenly action. Given that citizens in Athens were able to participate in citizenly action only because they were to a significant degree freed from labor and work by the use of slaves, Arendt has frequently (and not unreasonably) been accused of elitism, starting with Margaret Canovan, *The Political Thought of Hannah Arendt* (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1974). Against such charges Mary Dietz has claimed that Arendt does not see society as divided into different social orders which, respectively, perform labor, work and action. Rather, she argues, Arendt is describing "properties of the human condition which are within the range of every human being,"

Mary G. Dietz, "Hannah Arendt and Feminist Politics," in *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory*, ed. Mary L. Shanley and Carole Pateman (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991): 232-52, p. 237. Arendt certainly does not claim that some are laborers "by nature," yet her inattentiveness to the material constraints to freedom that so many encounter does, I think, give her work an elite ethos.

50. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen and Co, 1966), p. 28. Original French publication 1946.

51. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 193.

52. *Ibid*., pp. 134-135.

53. *Ibid*., p. 7 (emphases added).

54. *Ibid*., pp. 108-109.

55. *Ibid*., p. 108.

56. *Ibid*., pp. 139-144.

57. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search For a Method*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 48. Original French publication 1960.

58. *Ibid*., p. 45.

59. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles*, p. 226.

60. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 7 (emphases added).

61. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 268.

62. For an analysis of the "May Events" in France as epitomizing the trajectory of a Sartrean "group-in-fusion," and the argument that recent anti-globalization activism shares similar characteristics, see Elizabeth Bowman and Robert Stone, "1968 As a Precedent For Revolt Against Globalization: A Sartrean Interpretation of the Global Uprising," in *The Problems of Resistance*, ed. Steve Martinot and Joy James (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001), pp. 234-51.

63. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 275.

64. Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*; Gutmann and Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*

65. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 179-180.

66. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 232.

67. *Ibid*., p. 255.

68. *Ibid*., p. 257.

69. *Ibid*., p. 298.

70. *Ibid*., pp. 268-269.

71. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Elections: a Trap for Fools," in *Life/Situations*: 198-210, p. 203.

72. *Ibid*.

73. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 61.

74. Arendt's insistence that "the social question" (material want and need) does not pertain to the arena of politics "proper" has been the topic of considerable debate and critique. In an interview in 1972, Arendt makes it clear that she regards such matters as ones for sensible administration rather than politics. Asked by Richard Bernstein "whether you can dissociate or separate the social and the political consistently now," Arendt replies: "I think that is certain. There are things where the right measures can be figured out. These things can really be administered and are not then subject to public debate…everything which can really be figured out, in the sphere Engels called the admini-

stration of things—these are social things in general. That they should be subject to debate seems to me phony and a plague." Hannah Arendt, "On Hannah Arendt," in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melyvn A. Hill (New York: St Martin's Press, 1979): 301-339, p. 317.

For other critical discussions of Arendt's exclusion of the social question from the "properly" political see Canovan, *Political Thought of Arendt*; Sheldon Wolin, "Democracy and the Political," in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 289-306; Seyla Benhabib, *Reluctant Modernism of Arendt*; Hanna Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); Hauke Brunkhorst, "Equality and Elitism in Arendt," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 178-98.

75. On May 1968, see Phillipe Gavi, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Pierre Victor, *On a raison de se révolter* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974). It should also be noted that Sartre's ideas were highly influential during the May Events, and he was the only established intellectual to be invited into the Sorbonne to speak to the occupying students. Margaret Atack has described May 1968 as "existentialism's revenge over structuralism." Margaret Atack, "Sartre, May 68 and Literature: Some Reflections on the Problematic of Contestation," *Sartre Studies International* 5:1 (1999): 33-48, p. 35. Sartre's main writings on colonialism and anti-colonial resistance are collected in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, trans. Azzedine Haddour, Steve Brewer, and Terry McWilliams (London: Routledge, 2001).

76. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles*, p. 354.

77. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 7.

78. As suggested by Gould in *Rethinking Democracy* or Barber in *Strong Democracy*.

79. Jeffrey Isaac, *The Poverty of Progressivism: The Future of American Democracy in a Time of Liberal Decline* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), p. 147.

80. These are the job openings advertised on the Greenpeace UK web-site as I write this paper. Those interested in fundraising jobs are referred to the web-site of company to whom Greenpeace subcontracts fundraising: "Funjobs4U." The slogan on this company's web-site reads: "Make Money, Make Friends, Make a Difference"—not exactly the stuff of freedom!

81. Maggie Black, *A Cause for Our Times: Oxfam; The First Fifty Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

82. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 279.

83. Christopher Rootes, "The Resurgence of Protest and the Revitalization of Democracy in Britain," in *Social Movements and Democracy*, ed. Pedro Ibaro (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003):137-168, pp. 143-6.

The Consolations of Philosophy After 1989

Martin Beck Matuštík

Bill McBride's book of *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999) which I consider below, was written before the war over Kosovo took place, and yet it in many ways reflects on the philosophical questions surrounding the events in that part of the world. Both McBride and I were among those who opposed NATO's bombing of Serbia just as strenuously as we each opposed ethnic cleansing practiced on Albanian Kosovars. As NATO's bombs dropped on Belgrade, our former Purdue student, Natalija Micunovic, who wrote her doctoral work on "Critique of Nationalism" regularly emailed us from Belgrade messages of fear. She anticipated terror from the skies between writing her thesis and climbing down to her nearby bomb shelter. McBride chaired Natalija's committee and I was one of the readers. McBride and I have shared some other common concerns for Eastern Europe. He cultivated long term association with the Yugoslav Praxis Philosophy and I carried memories of the Soviet invasion 1968 of my native Czechoslovakia. During my late teens, in my first year at Charles University in Prague, I signed "Charta 77"—the manifesto for human rights. This document was crafted in 1977 by Jan Patočka, Václav Havel and Jiří Hájek. Patočka was a beloved Czech philosopher who learned phenomenology with Husserl and Heidegger in Freiburg. In 1935, he invited Husserl to Prague to give one of his lectures on the Crisis of European Sciences. The Nazis cut short at first Husserl's Freiburg university position, then they forced Patočka from his Prague post. Patočka's university path was disrupted once more by the Communist regime. "Charta 77"— inspired as much by phenomenological emphasis on personal freedom as by the human rights struggles in Eastern Europe—became a final punctuation on his life.

Patočka died in March 1977 after a long interrogation by the Czech secret service.

I left Czechoslovakia in August of that year. It took twelve more years before the Iron Curtain would fall apart and I could visit Prague. It took another ten years for the completion of McBride's reflections on these historical cataclysms. I wrote my essay on McBride's untimely meditations with passion for those shared concerns. I penned it with a sense of urgency that supersedes narrow academic concerns of professional journals. I have returned to my thoughts for this book volume at the time of passing of Václav Havel who died in Prague on December 18, 2011.[1]

Marked by philosophical rigor, the clarity of argumentation, and historical detail, McBride's reflections are no less personally engaging than they are incisive deliberations on the present age. He both sheds philosophical light on the post-Cold War changes of 1989 and lets philosophy become affected by living its historical time.[2] Writing from his North American experience, McBride's lenses are uniquely refracted through East-Central European angle of vision that he came to embody almost as his second nature over the years. In both his native and adopted contexts his voice would often run against the disciplinary philosophical mainstream, in the U.S. where positivism and analytic minimalism prevailed for years just as once Joseph McCarthy's ideology or, on the other shore of the Atlantic, the Soviet catechetic Marx-Leninism (diamat and histomat) reined during the Cold War.[3] These seemingly opposite perspectives share one curious platform in common: Positivism and dialectical materialism all but banished existential reflection from actually existing democracy[4] and philosophy.[5] McBride's *Reflections* are thus unique also as a genre of engaged philosophy that must have attracted him to his lifelong engagement with Jean-Paul Sartre's work.

Employing ironic hope, tragic humor, and unpretentious skepticism, McBride highly appraises honest friendship[6], earnest conversation[7], and responsible freedom.[8] His work is remarkable for its receptivity to cultural and experiential differences and for its balancing of critique with forgiveness of generational failures. These wise traits come with maturing understanding of oneself as a finite and mortal seeker and sharp but humble thinker. Kierkegaard's self-characterization—there are many who claim to be Christians, but I am trying to become human—could not sound more true of McBride among secular philosophers as well as leftist friends. To offset the converging dogmatisms of the bygone Soviet era, the waning American century[9], and various religious establishment[10], McBride harkens to the origins of Continental philosophical tradition which begins in wonder. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle accompany all seven chapters of his portraits from Eastern Europe. We recall how St. Augustine and Boethius console their uncertain times and cities with otherworldly justice. McBride consoles us without recourse to a dual metaphysics of the divine and human cities. He invites instead an existential sobriety inspired by a Sartrean

synergy of Marx and Kierkegaard.[11] With these lenses, McBride sharpens his social critique that he aims equally at compromised Marxists and latter day neo-liberals.

I want to focus my remarks on three themes permeating McBride's reflections: post-1989 changes and the tragic case of Yugoslavia (I); political and economic democracy (II); and existential dimensions of social and political critique (III).

After 1989

That McBride fell in love with Yugoslavia and its people in the 1960s while en route to Greece[12], and that all such love encounters are somewhat mysterious and anecdotal, does not diminish his particular old-new world discovery. Three outlets provided a continuous place for philosophical and economic experimentation in the former Yugoslav workers' self-management under Tito. The Korčula island hosted a summer school gathering of progressive thinkers from Yugoslavia and abroad from 1960-1974. Dubrovnik's Inter-University Center became an even more visible focus of year-round seminars from the 1970s until 1991, and after the nationalist civil war, it continues to meet this role again today. And the formation of the so-called Praxis Philosophy group in Yugoslavia played its own sui generis role unique in the Eastern bloc countries.[13] During these years new social forms of life were imagined, theorized and in some measure also realized.

Those of us who lived through those years behind the Iron Curtain and suffered suppression of socialist reform movements (the Soviet crushing of Prague Spring in 1968 in particular) recall how envious we were of the Yugoslav independence. For all its state-imposed and ethnic limitations, Yugoslavia's astonishingly successful evolution of socialism with a human face was ahead of just about anybody in the Soviet bloc, Cuba, and China; indeed, it was ahead of today's dead-ends. McBride aptly describes the Yugoslav Federation as playing a "Trojan horse role"[14] in socialist establishments; it offered an alternative for 68ers whose aspirations have been squelched in the West.

The unpredictable[15] yet intelligible changes of 1989 opened iron borders to physical movement, new ideas, and political and economic experimentation. These changes raised new borders and dogmas. First, a wall was erected by the West to protect its economic and racial interests from the East and South. Note Germany's and France's political asylum debates or study the maps distributed by western car rental companies which still prohibit driving to some of the old Iron Curtain areas. Second, economic and monetary colonization of the East and South by the West was welcome by the naive post-1989 thinking[16] of the newly liberated. Many East German philosophers have been replaced by Wesses

(Western intellectuals occupying positions in the East[17]) – an intellectually justi-fied colonization of the East by West German PhDs (even progressive ones) has been just one curious consequence of Germany's unification.[18] Third, both the Yugoslav and the 1968 experiments in radical political and economic democracy lost out with the changes in 1989. There has emerged a confluence in the reduc-tion of the political domain in orthodox Marxism and in free market capitalism: Václav Klaus, the former Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia and later of the Czech Republic (not their "early president"[19]), followed the neoliberal prescrip-tions of Friedman and Thatcher with the dedication of the commissar. McBride perceptively concludes that the notion of the libertarian-anarchist state is "pure illusion"[20] since in many parallel cases, from Pinochet to Reagan to Klaus to Yeltsin to modern China, political authoritarianism has been underpinning the presumed liberty.

Yugoslavia's experimental intelligence and wealth of experience not only failed to realize self-managed workers' democracy in the unfettered terrain of post-1989 constellations; it became the waking nightmare of Plato's bad democ-racy metastasizing into tyranny. Ex-Yugoslavia after 1989 wins the prize for falling behind everybody in the Communist East and South and democratic West. In this latest dialectic of enlightenment, western civilization's barbarism wins over democratic socialism. For McBride and others who were inspired by the Yugoslav experimental praxis and nourished by many Dubrovnik spring gatherings, Yugoslav wartime barbarism presented a more unpredictable situa-tion than the general changes of 1989. McBride's anguish suffuses his disconso-late reflections, only to be intensified by the measure of his long-lasting friend-ship with and love for concrete persons from ex-Yugoslavia.

Disconsolate Years

Underlying McBride's evaluation of the changes of 1989 is the Marxian dictum of the ruthless critique of every existing injustice.[21] The outcome of applying Marx in this fashion would include, among other things, responsible skepsis about the "profound cynicism"[22], political passivity, dogmatic economic na-ïveté[23], and religious zealotry[24] with which the values of unhindered profit are pursued in post-Communist domains. Evoking Jacques Derrida's writings on Marx, McBride describes the passion for markets and capital as a new real exist-ing religion[25] of today[26], as an illusion of free society.[27] Save for George Soros' own market savvy skepticism about capitalism's virtues, the "economist-kings"[28] from the West leave the post-Communist countries in ruins and with poor prognoses. Yet fewer changes and more continuities[29] motivate the prior and present zealotry of the apparatchiks (Klaus until November 1989 worked in

the Communist Party's elite prognostic institute) or the opportunist nationalists (from Slobodan Milošević of Serbia to Vladimir Mediar of Slovakia). Underlying McBride's reflections on the changes of 1989 is likewise an implied ideal of economic and political democracy. Intensifying sober skepticism about alternatives, he does not give in to the nihilistic side of cynical skepticism.[30] With analytic clarity, he asks how anyone could today, without equivocating, think of capitalism as democratic.[31] He enlists postmodern reserve to ridicule the notion of "true market democracies".[32] He warns that the pro-democratic deployment of civil society prior to 1989 reaps nowadays uncivil profits.[33]

Reflecting on actually existing democracies and on the failures of various Communisms[34], he does not envision the path to political and economic democracy as passing through the main street. McBride's existential reflections correct for badly utopian social theory: formal ideals of economic democracy presuppose a continually transformed social consciousness. McBride gives a qualified support to nation-states who must defend against economic transnationalism and imperiarism.[35] In confronting racism and patriarchy, he affirms critical utopianism[36] which would move beyond the dearth of alternatives.[37] He demotes the profit-valuation of inherently undemocratic capitalism[38] and its ideological requirement for an almost religious pledge of allegiance.[39]

Yet McBride remains more restrained about achieving a more just and liberated future in our time than David Schweickart.[40] McBride shows that any viable future requires existentially transformed social consciousness, and he is quite skeptical about foreseeable transformations of this sort. Schweickart's hope is more pragmatic and economically concrete as it informs its perspective from the accelerated learning curve. Schweickart envisions economic possibilities for worker's democratic self-management precisely because of the major failures of socialist and capitalist models. Where Habermas places uncanny hope in the possibilities of democratic institutions and Schweickart wants us to harness the fruits of successful experiments in economic democracy—such as Mondragon in Spain—McBride's perceptive political irony reminds us about the dangers of human forgetfulness. Perhaps this gadfly of disconsolation—in line of thinkers from Adorno and Horkheimer to Jonas—provides that margin of Socratic reason that our contemporary dialectic of hope and skepticism balances to safeguard any future.[41]

The Unbearable Lightness of Philosophical Consolation

"But then if pigs could fly bacon would be at a premium."[42] The prospect that all the CEOs in the U.S. will give up their yearly income beyond sustaining their

luxurious lives in order to rescue Bulgaria from 80-90 percent poverty level, McBride remains pessimistic, is as high as that of finding a flying pig. The prognosis that someone like Mihailo Markovič might wake up one day horrified by his support for Slobodan Miloševič in light of the persisting ethnic genocide—McBride restrains critiquing his old friend directly and ruthlessly but implies the same between the lines—is as low as that of making pigs fly.[43] How Socratically challenging must have been Plato's political failure in Syracuse; how existentially difficult would be genuine awakening to anyone's own Nazi sympathies and more so for the renowned existential Heidegger! Indeed, it almost seems that no honesty can be honest enough to avoid all blind spots and follies. And this is another reason why McBride cautions us against anything akin to political utopianism (even as realistic as Habermas's hope for a better European Union) or economic utopianism (even as nuanced as Schweickart's hope for democratic socialism).

McBride invites a keen comparison that may be of some benefit for another learning curve needed on all sides of ideological failures: Imagine that Marxist humanist Markovič is in fact a culturally neo-conservative Heidegger-case placed within the left political spectrum.[44] This does not make either one of these two cases easier to accept. But it should catch some attention of the leftist critics of Heidegger who, like Markovič, fell into the trap of advising the tyrant. Both these advisors come from existential phenomenological traditions. Both fall into one kind of nationalistic trap when one's singular self-choice to become responsible is translated into social-political equivalents as a choice of a leader or national identity. For the one time friends, intimates, or students these political conversions of authenticity into political justifications of ethnic cleansing must appear at best bizarre and at worst sinister. What did they miss that allowed them to translate authenticity of living in truth into a decisionist leap in the embrace of large group contagions? To be sure, George Lukacs's uncritical return to the hard line Communist Party—for all his displacement of self-criticism onto presumed Kierkegaard's irrationalism—suffers from similar translation of authenticity into political decisionism. I may not provide a satisfying answer to these troubling questions. But I do want to identify at this juncture that one great virtue of McBride's writing and teaching—his sense of guarded, self-critical thought, passion for human beings in their fallibility, and love of the world in its diverse joys. McBride does not pontificate against his onetime Praxis Philosophy friends any more than he would be writing a righteously indignant expose against this "Heidegger" on the left. Such an attack on a persona of failure, as many books of similar sort, seems to offer no reflective learning curve. McBride's book of reflections is written "through the eyes of, and on behalf of, friends who have been deeply involved in its theme."[45] He counts himself among the progressive friends who have been involved in that historical failure even if not as its agents.

McBride's astonishingly sincere writing echoes Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* more than his *An Essay on Liberation*.[46] Yet *One-Dimensional Man* accompanied unprecedented changes in the social consciousness of the 68ers—from civil rights to gay to anti-racist and anti-patriarchal struggles. Thus, in spite of McBride's appeal that westerners tolerate traditional family values (appearing to us as anti-feminist) along with the complex feminisms of post-Communist societies, we need not conflate love of diversity with uncritical consciousness any more than we do when teaching Introduction to Women's Studies or to Philosophy. It is the heart-breaking honesty of McBride's sober reflections that exudes a strangely beautiful appeal by generating hope against hope. And these, once again, are Walter Benjamin's words cited by Marcuse at the end of his *One-Dimensional Man.* McBride would also know that the words are of biblical origin, Abraham's hope against hope later cited by St. Paul.

This beautifully tragic effect of McBride's presence is achieved by the lived, existential quality of his writing and teaching on social history. One is transported into the velvet-like "pleasure" of 1989 carnivals mixed with the "foreboding and pessimism" of catastrophe.[47] There is an intelligible accounting for "the seemingly nonrational in human affairs."[48] We get a keen sense of the inconsistency (both good and bad faith mixed in one) of human consciousness.[49] We suffer the impermanence (one could call it almost Buddhist even in McBride's fully secular veneer) that undoes all ideologies.[50] And we experience graces of continuity (one could call it almost redemptive even in McBride's disconsolate religiously tone-deaf tonalities) in fundamental human projects even through apparent ruptures and both life giving and sinister conversions.[51]

Then there is that unbearable satirical lightness of philosophical consolation reminding one of Socrates' wager, or perhaps these are *memento mori* pillars on mediaeval squares: "'Capitalism—The Radiant Future of Mankind' has become the implicit new slogan. . . . In the long run, in fact, we will all be dead (some of us, in the intermediate run)."[52]

Does anything matter in the long run? One cannot resist addressing Albert Camus' Sisyphean question to McBride's warm and gentle toughness. McBride, not unlike St. Augustine in 410 AD viewing the sack of Rome and the end of his known civilized world, muses at the 2K Millennium celebrations and panics. McBride remains "unimpressed" by this victory of "one religion" in which "the decimal system"[53] is the only measure left to count down our hope. He reserves the harshest words for organized religious and other ideological orthodoxies, the philosophical dogmatism of Soviet chiliasm and that of the positivistic fixing of truth not excluded. Even a thoroughgoing skepticism and stoicism cannot be maintained. And this is not where McBride leaves us. His Hegelian-Marxist reversals of one-sided "hobbyhorses" are in the end rather personal: "Lived experience is to me the origin of much of what is valuable in philosophy and in thought in general, and concerning those who have not changed it is reasonable to ask how much they have truly lived."[54] Friendship, responsible freedom, and

the honest nature of critical utopianism carry the day against despair[55] and they resist demands for "absolute truth."[56]

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The full life circle takes me from McBride's reflections to my present. During the Yugoslav ethnic wars, Habermas's critical theory circle had to move its Dubrovnik summer seminar. The group moved first to Ischia, Italy, and later in 1992, partly with my assistance, established its new home in Prague. The group is celebrating its twenty-year anniversary in Prague just as Václav Havel passed away. I wrote my dissertation and later first book on Habermas, Kierkegaard and Havel in Frankfurt and Prague during the historical moments of 1989-90. I attended Habermas' seminars as he Berlin Wall came down and I witnessed Havel's inauguration as the first president of new Czechoslovakia. I wrote my philosophical reflection from within the two sides of the falling Iron Curtain. In more than one way, McBride's sense of sincere humanity and ironically inflected reflexivity finds in Havel its Central European affirmation. I have been fortunate that this spirit and kinship brought us together as friends and colleagues at Purdue in 1991. The years that followed brought something more than consolations of philosophy.

Notes

1. Martin Beck Matuštík, "Where Do People Go? Postsecular Meditations on Václav Havel's Leaving" http://broadstreetreview.com/index.php/main/article//the_meaning_of_havels_leaving
2. *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe*, pp. 10, 59, 47-60, chapter 4.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 14f., 127.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 59f., 79.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 6f., 57, 117-20
7. *Ibid.*,.. p. 59f.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 81.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 68-72.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 16, 31, 50f., 86f., 111-116, 131.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 4, 20f., 26-30, 6f., 71f.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
13. See *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 17f., and 23 on the prehistory of the journal of the Praxis Philosophy group).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
15. *Ibid.*

16. *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe*, p. 30.

17. *Ibid*., p. 5.

18. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Citizenship and National Identity: Some Reflections on the Future of Europe," *Praxis International* 12/1 (Apr. 1992) 1-19. / "Staatsbürgerschaft und nationale Identität. Überlegungen zur Europäischen Zukunft," a paper given at the conference on "Identity and Difference in Democratic Europe," (European Commission, Brussels 23-25 May 1991), original published in *Faktizität und Geltung: Beiträge zur Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaats* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1992), pp. 632-660.

19. *Ibid*., p.74.

20. *Ibid*., p. 33.

21. *Ibid*., p. 7.

22. *Ibid*., p. 21.

23. *Ibid*., p. 30.

24. *Ibid*., pp. 50ff., 86 ff.

25. *Ibid*., p. 31, 39f.

26. *Ibid*., pp. 25, 43.

27. *Ibid*., pp. 33, 76. Cf. Timothy Garton Ash, *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe* (Cambridge: Granta Books, 1991). Compare McBride's urgency with that of Jacques Derrida in the paper given at the conference on "The Cultural Identity of Europe," (20 May 1990), published in *L'autre cap* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992), pp. 5f., 61f., and my "Derrida and Habermas On the Aporias of the Politics of Identity and Difference: Towards Radical Democratic Multiculturalism," (presented at the conference organized by Jean Cohen, Seyla Benhabib, and Axel Honneth in Prague, May 1993 and also in Dubrovnik). Cf. my later reflection on this dialogue between Derrida and Habermas, "Between Hope and Terror: Derrida and Habermas Plead for the Im/Possible," reprinted from *Epoche* 9:1 (2004), pp. 1-18, on Lasse A. Thomassen, ed. *The Derrida-Habermas Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 278-296./ Translated into Czech as "Mezi nadějí a terorem. Habermas a Derrida žádají nemožné." Trans. Martin Brabec and Alena Bakesova. In *Spor o Evropu: Postdemokracie, nebo predemokracie?* [Dispute about Europe: Postdemocracy or predemocracy?], ed. Marek Hrubec (Prague: Philosophia, 2006), pp. 247-275.

28. *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe*, p. 131.

29. *Ibid*., pp. 42, 48, 112-116.

30. *Ibid*., pp. 20, 35.

31. *Ibid*., p. 85.

32. *Ibid*., p. 40.

33. *Ibid*., pp. 35-38.

34. *Ibid*., pp. 33ff., 96.

35. *Ibid*., pp. 41f. 106f., 109.

36. *Ibid*., p. 125.

37. *Ibid*., p. 120.

38. *Ibid*., p. 85.

39. *Ibid*., p. 114f.

40. *Ibid*., p. 125. Cf. David Schweickart, *After Capitalism*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011).

41. Cf. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992); Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1987); Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (University Of Chicago Press, 1985).

42. *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes of Eastern Europe*, p. 126.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 23n14, 57f., 62nn 21 and 23, 66.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 62n.24.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 131.

46. Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon, 1964) and *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon, 1969).

47. *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe*, 5.

48. *Ibid*., p. 8.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 48f. 53f.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 47, 53ff.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 6f.

Sartre's Socialist Democracy and Global Feminism

Constance Mui and Julien Murphy

What are the responsibilities of intellectuals in America today? In his essay, "Sartre at the Twilight of Liberal Democracy as We Have Known It," which appeared in the tribute volume of *Sartre Studies International* marking Sartre's centenary,[1] William McBride considers this question by challenging the idea of democracy as Americans have understood it, as exhibited in the "great crusade" the United States imposed on Iraq since 2003, and the Supreme Court decision in *Bush v. Gore* in the aftermath of the 2000 election. We could also add to this list the 2010 Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United*, that effectively allows unlimited financing of political candidates by anonymous benefactors. This case again instantiates Sartre's prophetic message in his 1973 article, "Elections, Trap for Fools", to which McBride referred as a fine example of Sartre's disdain for false democracies.[2]

The tone of McBride's critique of liberal democracy is palpably bitter. He believes that intellectuals have a duty to be "guardians of democracy", an idea he traces back to Sartre, who took up this issue in the essay, "A Plea for Intellectuals." For Sartre, an intellectual has a responsibility to question "the abstract nature of rights in 'bourgeois' democracy not because he wants to repress them but because he wants to fulfill them by means of the concrete rights of socialist democracy, while preserving, in every democracy, the *functional* truth of freedom."[3] McBride echoes Sartre's idea of true democracy as one founded on freedom and socialism, and of the role of the engaged intellectual as one who guards against bourgeois substitutes for democracy.

In McBride's view, Sartre never lost hope in the possibility of building a world that reflects "his democratic, socialist, and libertarian vision." As he observes, "This possibility remains open, and Sartre never attempted to describe it in detail, but it remained the inspiration for all that he wrote in this area."[4] This raises the questions: What would a socialist democracy that is founded on freedom and socialism look like? What should we expect or even demand from such a democracy? How does it promote human good? In this paper, we attempt to sketch some basic requirements of the socialist democracy that Sartre envisioned, and to argue that this ideal democracy serves as a model and inspiration for the struggle to eliminate institutions of gender and religious oppression. Sartre's vision of a true democracy allows us to celebrate multiple expressions of freedom while appealing to a single notion of equality for all. We find in this vision a valuable approach for analyzing global feminism, one that speaks to women who are facing different issues in different parts of the world, including Muslim feminists taking part in democracy movements after the Arab Spring, as well as American feminists fighting to protect reproductive freedom in this country.

In this endeavor, we also draw our inspiration from McBride, a committed intellectual par excellence who takes seriously the role of guardian of democracy. He understands the importance of feminism for true democracy, and has been a steadfast advocate for feminist philosophers. As a scholar who strives to make Sartre's political philosophy relevant to current events in the world, McBride is the first American philosopher to write a book on the social upheaval in Eastern Europe after 1989.[5] In this work, McBride detailed the problems facing the region in the post-Soviet era. He identified the grab for wealth and power, as well as ethnic and gender oppression as obstacles to true democracy. McBride cited, as an example of the latter, the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace.[6] While the recent collapse of dictatorships in the Middle East does not parallel the end of the Soviet Bloc, revolutionary change has come to the Middle East, largely through demands for democracy that have toppled the dictatorships of Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarek in Egypt, and Gadaffi in Libya. These events have ignited a resounding cry for freedom and democracy in the region, a cry not lost on women there, as the uprisings continue to spread to Syria and even to Yemen where hundreds of women have burned veils in anti-Saleh rallies in Sana'a and in Taiz.[7] It is still too soon to discern the sort of government and social practices that will come to define life in these countries, and how it will turn out for women there. And while it is uncertain as to what role Muslim feminists will have in the new governments, it is undeniable that they have a long, impressive history of activism, especially in the latest uprisings in the region. In Cairo, for instance, women have staged public demonstrations that attracted considerable media attention, and, like their male counterparts, they

suffered as much as they protested the brutality of soldiers who assaulted them after the fall of Mubarek. It has also been reported that many of them were subjected to forced "virginity tests" while they were detained by the military.[8] Despite the fact that Egyptian women stood together with men, that they, too, have endured tremendous sacrifice in their country's struggle for democracy, it appears unlikely they will enjoy full or even greater gender equality in the new government. In Egypt's parliamentary elections last month, women suffered a devastating setback, taking only 8 of the 508 seats—under 2%—in the lower house.[9] This lesson is not lost on American feminists who are still pressing for equal gender representation in political life. In Congress, women currently occupy just 17% of the seats in both houses.

Weighing in on the problem of gender oppression in the Middle East, we share McBride's concern as he reflected on his own role as guardian of democracy when it comes to women's issues in other societies. In as much as gender inequality is still prevalent in the United States, McBride pondered, "Who am I, as an American, to preach about this?"[10] This is the perennial question for global feminist theory if it is to be self-critical. To which set of values or principles do we appeal when we judge practices in cultures different from our own? What views of gender and family should global feminists adopt? What notions of freedom and equality should we appeal to?[11] What relationships between politics and religion, custom and the courts, should we seek?

In considering these issues, it is worth noting that, irrespective of their cultural and religious differences, Muslim feminists and American feminists have much in common. Both are struggling for gender equality at a time when attacks on women's rights are on the rise. At the same time, both are working against many odds to end violence against women. While American feminists are raising social consciousness around date rape, Muslim feminists are speaking out against honor killings. American and Muslim feminists are fighting their own uphill battle against oppressive family codes, legislations, and practices that are backed by "traditional family values."[12] When American feminists are fighting to protect women's access to family planning and to defend same-sex unions, Muslim feminists are working tirelessly, and often at great risk to themselves, to overturn repressive laws that enforce gender inequality in marriage, divorce, and child custody. It is by observing these commonalities that feminists can begin to speak cross-culturally about human and women's rights, and the ideal democracy to support such rights.

For starters, a true democracy must promote individual freedom by eliminating gender norms that undermine women's autonomy, including those in many parts of the world that are regulated by family codes supporting women's inequality, while taking into account women's own sense of self-determination within their own networks of social and familial relations. Sartre and Beauvoir are instructive in this enterprise, having established both a philosophy of freedom and a strong record of political activism, in France and elsewhere, based on that philosophy. Beauvoir, who wrote *The Second Sex* in the years following the

liberation of France and during the French reoccupation of Indochina, rejected traditional gender roles and fought tirelessly for women's reproductive freedom. It was during the De Gaulle regime in the late 1950s that she would take a firm stance against France's war to maintain Algeria as a French colony, voicing her support for a young Muslim female member of the National Liberation Front (FLN).[13] Similarly, after the liberation of Paris, Sartre published *Anti-Semite and Jew*, in which he exposed the anti-Semitism of his own country. While working on *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* in the 1950s, Sartre openly lent his support to the FLN. In essays in *Les Temps Modernes,* and in interviews conducted during the last three decades of their lives, Sartre and Beauvoir never failed to condemn deep-seated injustices and oppression commonly found in bourgeois democracies. They understood true democracy as the pursuit and affirmation of freedom for individuals as autonomous subjects living communally within just social systems.

Indeed, struggles against gender inequality typically do not take place in societies reaching for utopias. Rather, they are often waged in the pursuit of democracy amidst heightened racist practices at times of economic downturns. Guardians of democracy understand that gender and racial oppressions stem from the same source and operate under the same mechanisms within existing institutions. In his discussion of economic changes in Eastern Europe, McBride noted the rise in racism, which could be seen in "incidents of gross discrimination and of beatings and even killings of Gypsies and foreigners by so-called Skinheads and others in such diverse places as former East Germany (and) former Czechoslovakia," making the goal of egalitarian relationships between men and women "irredeemably utopian."[14]

McBride's observations are helpful for understanding the challenges to democracy in this country at a time of economic instability and high unemployment. We live in a market economy that accepts and even celebrates inequality as a way of life. The Occupy Movement has made significant strides in raising public consciousness about the injustices that permeate our system, effectively putting "free enterprises on trial[15]. The question over how really free is free enterprise has become part of our public discourse, in as much as government policies concerning property, investment, taxation and the like—shaped largely by politicians and powerful lobbyists—play a significant role in helping private equity firms gain exorbitant returns on their capital. It remains to be seen whether this will evolve into an honest discussion about equality and fairness, the kind to be expected in a participatory democracy.

The same economic downturn that spurred the Occupy Movement also fueled the growing anti-Islamic trend in this country, one that has gained its momentum from the tragedy of 9/11. Examples of this trend range from the Birther Movement that has convinced nearly a fifth of Americans that President Obama is a Muslim, to comments openly expressed at Republican town meetings that

President Obama is unfit to be president because he is an "avowed Muslim",[16] to the public outcry against plans to build a mosque near Ground Zero,[17] and to the abuse of Muslim prisoners in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. The anti-Islamist sentiment behind these flash-points is driven by fear and suspicion. In the public imagination, Islam has become less a religion than a political threat. The word 'Muslim' is often aligned with the term 'terrorist', while the word 'Islamist' is commonly paired with 'radical'. Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich worried out loud that his grandchildren might live "in a secular atheist country, potentially one dominated by radical Islamists and with no understanding of what it once meant to be an American."[18] In other words, Islamists are un-American radical atheists. Tellingly, a recent poll shows that only 56% of Protestants think Muslims are loyal Americans. Many also fear that this country may soon be taken over by Shariah law, a scenario that would destroy not only the "American way of life" but also "the national existence of the United States."[19] Anti-Shariah legislations have been introduced in more than a dozen states, despite the lack of evidence of any such threat.

Similar panic-driven efforts against Muslim communities are also widespread in Europe. For instance, there was the scandal of the Muhammad cartoons published by the Danish paper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005. In France, anti-Islamic sentiments were inscribed on the bodies of Muslim women when France formally prohibited the wearing of the niqab or burqa in public.[20] Supporters of this law defended it as a necessary measure to "preserve French culture." In a piece published in the *New York Times*, Jürgen Habermas warns us of the threats to multiculturalism in Germany by self-professed patriots invoking "Leitkultur."[21] He condemns the widely popular book, *Germany Does Away with Itself,* in which the author, Thilo Sarrazin, portrays Muslims as parasites invading the German state, eroding German culture, and making Germany "naturally more stupid on average." Sarrazin's book raises the Islamophobic, divisive question, "Does Islam belong in Germany"?, an absurd question, but sadly, one that is hardly confined to Germany as we have seen.

To illustrate this point further, Habermas refers to a 2009 law enacted in Switzerland to bar any new construction of minarets on buildings.[22] This law appears as government over-reach since there are only four minarets in Switzerland and no plans in place for their proliferation. As part of a larger anti-Islamist campaign waged by the nationalist Swiss People's Party (SVP) and a powerful anti-immigrant lobby, the referendum passed easily with 57.5% of the vote. It was further upheld in 2011 by the European Court of Human Rights, which dismissed two cases brought by Muslims on grounds that the plaintiffs were not appropriate victims of violation in so far as they did not intend to build a mosque with a minaret.[23] The SVP and its supporters defended this amendment as constitutional, insisting that it does not violate religious freedom because minarets are political rather than religious symbols. The ban, they maintained, should not be construed as racist or intolerant of any religion.[24]

The Swiss minaret controversy also brought out the tension between religious tolerance and gender equality, as support for the ban cut across political and ideological lines, putting some feminists in an uncomfortable alliance with Swiss nationalists. Prominent feminists, such as Julia Onken and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, lent their support to the referendum as an opportunity make a public statement against the sexist treatment of women in Islam, such as "forced marriages, honor killings, stoning of adulterers, genital mutilation, and strict gender segregation in all aspects of social life."[25] Their endorsement of the minaret referendum might have accounted for the results from pre-election polling, which showed greater support for the ban among Swiss women than Swiss men. However, anti-minaret feminists who supported the ban were hardly acting as guardians of democracy. They failed to understand that the Muslim question is fundamentally a question about democracy, the very system that, in its ideal form, gives religious freedom and gender equality their true expressions. As Habermas observes in his *Times* article*,* the growing nationalistic response in Germany to fears of the "Islamization" of Europe goes hand in hand with the erosion of democracy. While Habermas did not mention women specifically, his message is nevertheless poignant. If the goal of socialist democracy is to promote the freedom of all individuals and strengthen the social collective—that is, if it is to be truly liberatory—then we are headed in the wrong direction. Marginalization of any group, be it Muslims or Roma, or women or homosexuals, has no place in a genuine democracy.

Again, we find Sartre's insight instructive here. In the *Critique*, he draws upon the Hegelian dialectic of mastery and slavery to analyze oppression in terms of the serialization of minority groups by the dominant group seeking to assert its own superiority. According to this account, to marginalize a group is to objectify its members by reducing them to the very qualities that mark them as different. Members of the dominant group thus assert their privileged status as free subjects by conferring upon those who are labeled as different the status of a reified thing, an alienated, serialized Other. To be faithful guardians of democracy, we must reject marginalization for being an instrument of oppression, one that operates by means of objectification—i.e., a willful refusal to recognize the subjectivity and freedom of the marginalized—in an effort to disempower and dominate them.

This analysis echoes a familiar Sartrean theme, namely, that the respect for human freedom in an intersubjective world is rooted firmly in the notion of mutual recognition, and that a Sartrean socialist democracy must, above all else, embrace this ideal. For Sartre, mutual recognition entails more than that which is implied in the traditional social contract based upon a common will or agreement among individuals to recognize one another as rights-holders. In a Sartrean democracy reciprocal recognition has a deeper meaning beyond the mutual respect of individual rights and obligations. It involves an authentic relation with

the other whereby individuals not only acknowledge but affirm each other's existence as free beings by working together to build a social system that upholds human freedom as its highest value, a system whose primary goal is to maximize people's fullest potential as free beings. Indeed, masters and slaves have no place in a true democracy. To live up to its name, a true democracy must nurture free beings who recognize each other as such, and through this mutual recognition share the commitment to form a solidarity founded resolutely on the respect for human freedom.

The notion of solidarity is important to Sartre because, after all, the democracy he envisions is unmistakably socialist. Indeed, mutual recognition calls upon us to think and act communally. Because we exist with others in a world with finite resources, material scarcity could only be exacerbated if we operate out of sheer self-interest. In his later works Sartre analyzes the human condition in terms of the dialectical interplay between freedom and materiality: we can enjoy concrete freedom only in so far as our material needs are met. Our freedom to exercise this or that choice rests upon the precondition of freedom from starvation and exposure. A socialist democracy is one that strives to promote material freedom in an equitable way by confronting oppressive structures that perpetuate injustices. Notice that the socialist democracy Sartre envisions is also unmistakably radical. In "The Communists are Afraid of Revolution", Sartre expressed his impatience and ultimate disillusionment with the French Communist Party (PCF) for operating in a reformist mode, most acutely reflected in its failure to side with students in the May 1968 uprising.[26] For Sartre, addressing institutions of oppression is only the first step, the objective is to do away with them. As evident in his ardent support for the student protests, Sartre would insist on the critical role of large-scale grassroots movements in bringing about radical systemic changes. A democracy that lives up to its name must respect the will of the masses.

In speaking out against inequalities in this country and elsewhere, inequalities targeted at marginalized groups on the basis of gender, race, religion, and other categories, we find Sartre's definition of oppression particularly instructive. While Sartre's understanding of this concept has expanded over the course of his intellectual development, it has remained consistent with his early ontology as a bad-faith effort to restrict human freedom. We have already seen that oppression involves objectifying and serializing the other, an injustice that results from a failure to establish intersubjective relationships based on mutual recognition. Ultimately, Sartre understands oppression as an evil that compromises on our existence as free beings. But precisely because we exist as free beings ontologically, we can never be totally stripped of our freedom and left without any choice. Sartre thus understands oppression as a form of coercion that involves the subjection of a person to restrictive choices with costly consequences. As Sartre has said famously, "I could have chosen otherwise, but at what price?"[27] Our choices come with existential costs, some considerably heavier than others, and we choose by weighing the consequences of our op-

tions. To oppress someone is to limit, or to support systemic arrangements that limit, her choices to those that, in one way or another, diminish her being. This allows us to identify the same mechanisms that are at work in all forms of oppression, whether it is directed toward Muslims or women or sweatshop workers. Under this conception of oppression, we can more forcefully argue, for example, that the French law prohibiting Muslim headscarves in public schools is oppressive not because it takes away a young woman's choice, but more specifically, because it forces her to choose between two humiliating options: to suppress her cultural or religious identity, not to mention her personal sense of modesty, by uncovering herself, or to subject herself to punishment and public harassment by continuing to cover herself. Either way she chooses, she loses. Both options carry costly consequences that are degrading to her.

This example demonstrates the coercive nature of religious oppression, as it also underscores the vital place of religious freedom and bodily integrity in a true democracy. These are fundamental freedoms we need in order to live up to our fullest potential as free beings. Religious freedom has the manifest function of allowing individuals to practice any religion of their own choosing, provided that they do so under the prescript of mutual recognition without infringing on anyone's freedom. However, religious freedom also includes freedom from all things religious. An example of the violation of religious freedom of this sort could be seen on the tenth anniversary of 9/11, when the phrase, "In God We Trust", was reaffirmed in Congress as the official motto of the United States, despite the Constitution's guarantee to protect religious freedom for all citizens.[28]

On the other hand, bodily integrity and autonomy include the freedom of comportment, freedom of movement in public space, freedom from harm, violence and coercion, and, of course, reproductive freedom.[29] Put simply, it is a person's right to non-interference in matters concerning one's own body and personhood.   This right is important to every human being, and is what gender equality demands because women's claim to their bodily autonomy in any patriarchal system is invariably much more tenuous. As one group of feminists puts it succinctly, "bodily integrity unifies women and that no woman can say it does not apply to them."[30] And yet laws and customs involving women's bodily integrity rights—and the struggles to resist or promote them—are seen throughout human history. For example, in Saudi Arabia today, women are pushing to repeal laws that ban them from driving and from leaving their home without a chaperone. In Afghanistan, the Taliban forces women to wear the *chadri*, a full-body cloak that severely restricts their movement and their field of vision. It is quite telling that, even in the absence of any mandatory laws, many Muslim women still cover themselves in public places for personal safety. In many parts of the world, including the United States, women have been victims of forced

sterilization and abortion. In fact, forced sterilization laws remained in the books in North Carolina until as recently as 2003.[31]

Many of the struggles for bodily integrity rights are essentially struggles against family codes that are informed by the traditional role of woman as wife and mother. In this country, the movement to push for same-sex unions has won approval in six states as well as the District of Columbia, but it also faces a mounting backlash from many states that passed preemptive bans on gay marriages. Furthermore, American feminists have fought long and hard for reproductive freedom, only to see *Roe v. Wade* being chipped away slowly by anti-abortion forces. Indeed, we have never known a time when reproductive freedom was not under attack. The Hyde Amendment, which is renewed annually since 1976, prohibits federal Medicaid funding for abortion. Many states have similar laws against state funding for abortions for poor women. Women in the military cannot use government insurance for elective abortions. Parental consent—in Nebraska, notarized parental consent—for minors has become a common requirement. Some states outlaw abortion after twenty weeks, and in Texas, it is now mandatory for women to view the sonogram before the procedure. Alarmingly, the Guttmacher Institute reports 91 new abortion laws passed in 2011.[32] In Mississippi, anti-abortionists sought to ascribe personhood to embryos ("protect pre-born baby by love and by law"), which would have outlawed not only abortion but also many forms of birth control, including the "Plan B" morning-after pill prescribed for rape victims. Interestingly, for American feminists, the struggle to defend gay rights and reproductive rights has also been a struggle for religious freedom against conservative religious groups that have gained significant political influence in the last few decades.

In view of the increasing attacks on women's bodily autonomy both in the United States and in Muslim countries, global feminist theorists must find the best approach in dealing with the tensions between conservative religious practices that are oppressive to women, and the commitment to solidarity and equality in an ideal democracy. As Sartrean feminists, we appeal to Sartre's notions of oppression and intersubjective recognition, as well as his vision of a true democracy, to argue that there are certain fundamental freedoms that are simply vital to human flourishing, and that religious freedom and bodily autonomy are among them. But at the same time, feminists cannot condone cultural or religious practices that infringe upon women's bodily integrity, endanger their lives, limit their potential to flourish, or otherwise refuse to recognize them as free beings. To be guardians of democracy, we must guard against any attempt to abuse religious freedom by those who appeal to religion as justification to restrict women's autonomy. Religious freedom has its limits. Beauvoir makes this point aptly when she observes, "we have to respect freedom only when it is intended for freedom. …A freedom which is interested only in denying freedom must be denied."[33]

In this twilight of liberal democracy, the struggle for women's freedom has become ever more pressing as women in many parts of the world are increas-

ingly facing threats and setbacks to their call for gender equality. Recalling Sartre's notion of radical socialist democracy, the goal is to do away with oppression by attacking its root cause. This means that, to put an end to oppressive laws, family codes, and practices, we must work hard to change the cultural and religious attitudes, values, and assumptions behind them. As we press on we are encouraged by the great potential for democracy that women bring. In 2011, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to three women for their leadership in promoting women's rights and democracy in Liberia and Yemen. We close this essay with this pronouncement from the Norwegian Nobel Committee's press release for the award: "We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society."[34]

Notes

1.   William L. McBride, "Sartre at the Twilight of Liberal Democracy as We Have Known It," *Sartre Studies International* 11:1/2 , pp. 311-18.

2.   *Ibid*., p. 313. Ironically, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission,* was a 5 to 4 decision stemming from a political campaign film, "Hillary: The Movie" released in 2008 by a conservative group, Citizens United during the Democratic primaries and designed to discredit Hilary Clinton, the most successful female presidential bid to date.

3.   *Ibid*., p. 312., McBride's translation, see p. 317, note 1.

4.   *Ibid*., p. 317. William McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory,* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1991).

5.   William McBride, *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe*, (Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

6.   *Ibid*., pp. 119-120.

7.   Associated Press, "Yemeni Women set Veils ablaze in Protest at Saleh Crackdown, *Guardian* (October 26, 2011) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/oct/26/yemen-women-veils-ablaze-protest> (14 Jan. 2012).

8.   David D. Kirkpatrick, "Mass March by Cairo Women in Protest over Abuse by Soldiers", *New York Times* (Dec. 20, 2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/21/world/middleeast/violence-enters-5th-day-as-egyptian-general-blames-protesters.html?page wanted=all> (14 Jan. 2012); see also: David D. Kirkpatrick, "Court in Egypt says Rights of Women Were Violated," *New York Times* (Dec. 27, 2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/28/world/africa/egyptian-court-says-virginity-tests-violated-womens-rights.html?ref=middleeast >(27 Dec. 2011).

9.   Lourdes Garcia Nevarro, "In Egypt's New Parliament, Women will be Scarce," National Public Radio (January 19, 2012) <http://www.npr.org/2012/01/19/14548365/in-egypts-new-parliament-women-will-be-scarce> (19 Jan. 2012).

10. McBride, *Philosophical Reflections*, pp. 119-120.

11. We attempted to answer these questions in an earlier article, "Willing the Freedom of Others After 9/11: A Sartrean Approach to Globalization and Children's Rights,"

in *Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil*, ed. Robin Schott, (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2007), pp. 245-257.

12. For an analysis of Beauvoir's philosophy and reproductive freedom, see our article, "Revolutionary Road and *The Second Sex,"* in *Existentialism and Contemporary Cinema: A Beauvoirian Perspective*, eds. Ursula Todd, Jean-Pierre Boulé, (New York, NY: Berghahn Books) forthcoming 2012.

13. Julien S. Murphy, "Beauvoir's Preface to *Djamila Boupacha,"* in *Simone de Beauvoir's Writings in Politics, Journalism, and Philosophy,* vol. 6, ed. Margaret A. Simons (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, forthcoming in 2012); also Murphy, "Simone de Beauvoir and the Algerian War: Toward a Post-Colonial Ethics," in *Rereading the Canon: Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir,* ed. Margaret Simons (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State Press, 1995), pp. 263-297.

14. McBride, *Philosophical Reflections,* p. 120.

15. Ironically, we borrow this phrase from one of Mitt Romney's 2011 presidential campaign ads in which he defends his tax advantage over most middle class Americans, paying under 14 % in 2010 and 15% in 2011. See: Rachel Streitfield, "Romney ad: Rivals' attacks 'embarrassing'" CNN Politics (13 Jan. 2012) <http://politicalticker.blogs. cnn.com/2012/01/13/romney-ad-rivals-attacks-embarrassing/> (13 Jan. 2012).

16. This is from a Pew Research Center poll in 2010. The number is actually up from 11 % in 2009. See: "Growing Number of Americans Say Obama is a Muslim: Religion, Politics and the President," Pew Research Center Publications (19 Aug. 2010) <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1701/poll-obama-muslim-christian-church-out-of-politics-political-leaders-religious> (31 Jan. 2012). For comments concerning President Obama's fitness to serve, see Faiz Shakir, "At Florida Town Hall, Rick Santorum Cowardly Panders to Women who Alleges Obama is 'an Avowed Muslim,'" (23 Jan. 2012) <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2012/01/23/409656/at-florida-town-hall-rick-santorum-cowardly-panders-to-woman-who-alleges-obama-is-an-avowed-muslim/> (31 Jan. 2012). Similar comments were also made at a McCain town meeting during the Campaign of 2008 and at subsequent Tea Party rallies.

17. A sign reading "Don't Glorify Murders of 3,000. No 9/11 Victory Mosque" was pictured in the British coverage of the debate. See Chris McGreal, "Ground Zero Mosque Plans 'Fuelling anti-Muslim Protests across US: Religious Leaders warn of Islamophobia Surge with Hate Speech and Opposition to new Islamic Centres across America," *Guardian* (12 Aug. 2010) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/12/ground-zero-mosque-islamophobia> (7 Jan. 2010).

18. This quote was from Gingrich speaking in March 2010 at the Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas and quoted by Henrik Hertzberg in (Comment) "Alt-Newt", *New Yorker*, 19 & 26 Dec. 2011, p. 38.

19. Eliyahu Stern, "Don't Fear Islamic Law in America", op-ed Contributor, The Opinion Pages, *New York Times*, (2 Nov. 2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/03/opinion/dont-fear-islamic-law-in-america.html> (7 Jan. 2012)

20. Reuters, "France begins Ban on Niqab and Burqa," *Guardian* (11 April 2011) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/11/france-begins-burqa-niqab-ban> (31 Jan. 2012).

21. See Jürgen Habermas, "Leadership and Leitkultur," editorial, *New York Times* 28 October 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/29/opinion/29Habermas.html ?pagewanted=all> (28 Oct. 2010).

22. Nick Cumming-Bruce and Steven Erlanger, "Swiss Ban Building of Minarets on Mosques," *New York Times,* 29 Nov. 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/30/world/europe/30swiss.html> (31 Jan. 2012)

23. Soeren Kern, "Swiss Minaret Ban Survies Legal Challenge," Pundicity, (14 July 2011) <http://kern.pundicity.com/9930/swiss-minaret-ban-legal-challenge> (15 Dec. 2011) See also *La Ligue des Musulmans de Suisse v. ls Suisse* , European Court of Human Rights (28 June 2011) http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?action=html&documentID=887981&portal=hbkm&source=externalbydocnumber&table=F69A27FD8FB86142BF01 C1166DEA398649 (31 Jan. 2012)

24. Ian Traynor , "Swiss Vote to Ban Construction of Minarets on Mosques, *Guardian*, 9 (Nov. 2009), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/ nov/29/switzerland-bans-mosque-minarets> (31 Jan. 2012)

25. Michael Burleigh, "What Lessons does the Swiss Ban on Minarets hold for Britain?" *Mail Online*, (2 Dec. 2009), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/ debate/article-1232221/What-lesson-does-Swiss-ban-minarets-hold-Britain. html> (31 Jan. 2012). See also, Daniel Ammann, "The Real Reasons Why the Swiss Voted to Ban Minarets"*, Huffington Post,* (1 Dec. 2009) <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-ammann/the-real-reasons-why-the_b_ 373947.html> (31 Jan. 2012).

26. Jean-Paul Sartre, L*es communistes ont peur de la revolution* (Paris: Didier, 1969).

27. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenology Ontology,* trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 454.

28. Jennifer Steinhauer, "In God We Trust, With The House's Help, *New York Times,* (2 Nov. 2011), A17. Our motto tends to gain attention when the nation is most threatened. It was first   engraved on coins during the Civil War and on paper currency during the cold war (1955). The Constitution's guarantee to protect religious freedom is found in the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

29. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 41-42. Nussbaum defines bodily integrity as: "Being able to move freely from place to place; being able to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault. . . . ; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction."

30. This quote is taken from the Irish Council for Civil Liberties Working Conference on Women's Rights as Human Rights, March 1997. See: Niamh Reilly, ed., "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Local and Global Perspectives, (Dublin, March 1997) <http://whr1998.tripod.com/documents/icclbodily.htm> (31 Jan. 2012).

31. The involuntary sterilization program in North Carolina, operating from 1933 to 1977, was the most aggressive of thirty-one state eugenics programs the United States. It gave social workers the power to select people for sterilization. See CNN Wire Staff, "North Carolina hearing explores history of forced Sterilization," (22 June 2011) <http://articles.cnn.com/2011-06-22/us/raleigh.eugenics.   hearing_1_sterilization-program-task-force-eugenics-law?_s=PM:US> (6 Feb. 2012).

32. This was reported by Elizabeth Nash, in a staff authored article, "Unintended Issues / Fiscal Conservatism is trumped by the Social Variety," *The Economist* (7 Jan. 2012), p. 25.

33. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1976), pp. 90-91.

34. Norwegian Nobel Committee Press Release, "The Nobel Peace Prize for 2011" Nobelprize.org (7 Oct. 2011) <http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2011/press.html> (6 Feb. 2012).

God, Creation, and Rebellion in Camus: Ambivalent? Inconsistent? Or, Finally, Incoherent

Ronald Santoni

William McBride has been an important figure among American philosophers during the past forty years, and a major figure both in interconnecting American philosophy with Continental European philosophy and internationalizing the world of philosophy. His engagement with and encouragement of philosophers and philosophy in developing countries has been exemplary. His current presidency of *Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie* (FISP) is testimony to the respect he has gained in international philosophy circles. Sartre scholars the world over can be grateful for his indefatigable work. As co-founder and past president of the North American Sartre Society, and author of numerous and important works on Sartre—especially on Sartre's political theory—he has contributed significantly to the advancement and liveliness of Sartre scholarship in America and abroad. And similar remarks may also be made regarding his work on Marx.

I have known Bill McBride for thirty-five years or more as a fellow Sartre scholar, as a tireless organizer of a participant in Sartre meetings, as a friend, and as a nurturer of the work of others—especially of the young, marginalized or previously unacknowledged. His concern for human equality, justice, and the rights of others has been one of his trademarks. On the occasion of his 75th birthday, I am happy to join fellow scholars (some of whom were Bill's students) and philosophical colleagues in paying tribute to Bill's prodigious work and contributions. Although my following article parts from our shared primary scholarship and signature concerns with Sartre's philosophy, I trust that it will

honor the breadth of Bill's interests. I also hope that it will recall for Bill the numerous occasions, in the USA and elsewhere, on which we have enjoyed philosophical exchanges, concerns, and events—occasions often followed by, sometimes even accompanied by, fine foods and wines, of which Bill is a connoisseur. May Bill McBride continue to flourish in his praise worthy philosophical scholarship, extraordinary organizational contributions, and committed activities for many years to come. The world of philosophy has gained and continues to gain from his presence and wisdom.

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For over half a century, hundreds of writers and interpreters have engaged with Camus's philosophical and deeply existential works, *The Myth of Sisyphus (Le mythe de Sisyphe)* and *The Rebel* (*l'Homme révolté*), as well as with his similarly engaging and beautifully written literary works such as *The Stranger* (*l'Étranger*) or *The Plague* (*La peste*). My experience has been that many interpreters and most general readers have too often left Camus's books believing that he was an atheist who promulgated disbelief in God and concluded that, given a godless, "absurd,"[1] meaningless, and unjust world in which everyone is condemned to death, living authentically demands continuing revolt against either an absent and unjust God or God's creation itself. But, in my judgment, interpreters[2] have exhibited both disagreement and ambiguity concerning the being against which Camus directs anger, righteous indignation, protest, rebellion, or revolt. And the responsibility for much of this, I believe, rests on Camus's own lack of clarity, ambivalence, and failure of philosophical self-criticism in regard to the central questions he enunciates in *The Myth of Sisyphus*—namely, In view of the "absurd," does life have any meaning? Is life worth living? If life is meaningless, should we commit suicide? If not, what ought we do? After reading and teaching Camus for a number of decades, I am hardly surprised to note that while some interpreters view Camus as describing or advocating rebellion against the traditional Christian God, others see him as disowning and rebelling against the *idea* of God (given a world of suffering and injustice), while yet others view Camus as rebelling against a silent or absent God, and still others see him as prescribing revolt against creation itself, or—expressed sometimes in a somewhat divergent way—against the human condition (*la condition humaine*).

The Basic Concern

The concern that underlies this paper relates to how Camus finally perceives the relationship, if any, between "God" and "creation," granted his pervasive concept of "the absurd" and his contentions regarding metaphysical rebellion. Despite the variations I have pointed to above, the majority of scholars, citing appropriate and generally persuasive passages from Camus, have simply assumed that rebelling against the revolting conditions of creation takes for granted, explicitly or implicitly, rebellion against God as creator of that imperfect world. But a number of important questions have *not* been raised sufficiently by scholars and interpreters of Camus, questions that very much need to be asked or re-asked in this regard: *one*, Is Camus, at bottom, unambiguously an atheist?; *two*, does his determination of the "absurd" move him necessarily to a rejection of God; *three*--and most importantly for my present paper—if Camus does not believe in God, how are we to understand his case for being angry with and rebelling against the terrible injustices of creation? What sense does it make to rebel against and have anger towards a creation that, allegedly, does not have a "creator" who, to borrow an expression from Sartre, is most often regarded as the free, conscious, "incontestable author"[3] of it, and thus responsible for it? I have found no secondary source, with the possible exception of Arnaud Corbic's *Camus et l'Homme sans Dieu*,[4] that has given attention to this cluster of questions, or, for that matter, even raised the issue in any substantive way. If anything, interpreters have, at best, only skirted it. Because the issue is, in my judgment, a core one—and one that has perplexed me for years—I wish now to elucidate the problem and argue that the focus of Camus's rebellion is confused, ambivalent, and logically problematic.

Is Camus an Atheist?

To begin, let me put some readers at ease by acknowledging that there is considerable textual and biographical evidence that confirms the claim that Camus did *not* believe in the Judeo-Christian god. For instance, in one of the "Three Interviews" published in translation in his *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, Camus says explicitly that "Sartre and I do not believe in God."[5] And although in his lecture to the Dominicans at the Dominican Monastery at Latour-Maubourg in 1948 he generously disclaims any supposition that the "Christian truth is illusory," he plainly states that he "could not accept it."[6] Moreover, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, while maintaining that the absurd is "the metaphysical state of the conscious [or lucid] mind," he contends that "the absurd" as evidence "does not lead to God," and any non-rational leap beyond the absurd as evidence—as made, for example, by Leo Chestov and Soren Kierkegaard—constitutes "philosophical sui-

cide" and amounts to "subterfuge" or escape. "God is maintained," he contends, "only through the negation of human reason."[7] What must be noted here is that the evidence to which Camus demands faithfulness is precisely—to repeat his characterization of the "absurd"—the confrontation and divorce between the inquiring mind that longs for rational explanation of the universe and the world which "disappoints," that is to say, fails to respond. [8] So to offer a transcendent God as a response is, for Camus, to go beyond available evidence and to bury the absurd, which integrity demands we keep alive.[9] In short, from the perspective of *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus would view belief in God as instantiating "bad faith" in one of Sartre's senses of that phenomenon. In particular, I am referring to what I call "epistemological bad faith," in which a person, assuming that all belief is less than perfect and falls short of complete belief, invokes a criterion of "half-persuasion," by which she or he accepts to believe what she or he does not *fully* believe.[10] For Camus in *The Myth,* belief in God is subterfuge and "Man's business is to turn away from subterfuge,"[11] "Being able to remain on the dizzying crest… is integrity:"[12] integrity entails fidelity to the evidence incarnated in the absurd. Lucidity refuses supernatural appeal or consolation. Camus's "absurd hero" in *The Myth* even shows scorn for the gods.

The Rebel,[13] though less explicit than *The Myth* with regard to God, continues the trajectory of the absurd as a "starting point,"[14] or what he now calls "a point of departure,"[15] Rebellion, or revolt, is born of the "unjust and incomprehensible condition"[16] with which one is confronted when one's longing for clarity and explanation of the meaning of human existence is met with stone-cold silence. If I am right in inferring that Camus here empathizes considerably with Ivan in Dostoevski's *Brothers Karamazov*, then it follows, I think, that although Camus does not deny absolutely that God exists, he rejects God on grounds of justice, namely, the injustice in the human condition[17] (e.g., our universal condemnation to death, the suffering of children, the existence of evil). Like Ivan, the "metaphysical rebel," Camus hates the death penalty because it is the image of the human condition.[18] And, like Ivan, Camus, the rebel, taking stock of what he regards as lack of evidence, "rejects divinity in order to share in the struggles and destiny of all men."[19] This is consistent with Camus's contention in his "Remarque sur la Révolte": "A philosophy of revolt [or "rebellion"] does not accommodate Christian thought. Christianity is above all a philosophy of injustice. (… *une philosophie de la révolte ne s'accommode pas de la pensée chrétienne. Le Christianisme est d'abord une philosophie de l'injustice.*" [translation, mine]).[20] Accordingly, he also rejects eternity: it is not worth the tears of a suffering child.

In passing we must take note of Camus's observation about Ivan: "Ivan, finally, does not distinguish the creator from the creation."[21] Yet, rather bafflingly, he adds: "It is not God whom I reject,…it is creation." If we are to assume Camus's partial identification with Ivan, we must acknowledge the latter

statement as both a possible counterpoint to what I've been showing above *and* as evidence *for* the central issue I'm raising in this paper: Against whom or what is Camus rebelling or advocating rebellion, and what sense would it make—on his own grounds—for Camus to rebel or revolt against "creation," if God does not exist or, at least, is assumed *not* to exist? I shall say considerably more about this later.

For now, let me give two illustrations from his literary works that appear to substantiate the view that Camus does *not* believe in God's existence. Viewing Camus's works as a progression of his attempts to confront the absurd and develop a way or "rule" of life consistent with the absurd, I turn, very briefly, to *The Stranger* and *The Plague*. When in *The Stranger*, Meursault, facing the Magistrate after killing the Arab, is asked if he believes in God, he offers an indignant "No!"[22] Then, after he is found guilty and decapitation is ordered, and he is subsequently interrogated by the chaplain about his belief in God and afterlife, he abruptly explains that he has "very little time left," and he doesn't want to "waste it on God."[23] Moreover, if in *The Plague,[24]* which is probably the most anti-Christian of Camus's works, we are to view Father Paneloux as representing for Camus the standard Christian theist position, and Rieux's and Tarrou's responses as incorporating Camus's position, we can infer that Camus holds no stock for either of Paneloux's two sermons—more specifically, neither for his proclamation that the plague constitutes God's punishment for the way in which the people of Oran had been living, nor for his "revised' position that "we must believe everything or deny everything,"[25] and the love of God requires "complete self-surrender." (The latter, of course, is a move that Camus later rejects as a "leap of faith" and, thus, "philosophical suicide."). "No, Father," Dr. Rieux, echoing Ivan in Brothers K, responds, "I've a very different idea of love. And until my dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to torture."[26] In fact, Rieux even identifies himself as the "enemy of God" because he is fighting against such pestilences.[27] And Tarrou, who wants to be "a saint without God" and concludes that we "all have plague," resolves "to have no truck with anything which, directly or indirectly, for good reasons or for bad, brings death to anyone or justifies others' putting him to death."[28] Living, to use Rieux's words, "the bleak sterility of life without illusions" [i.e., without transcendental consolation], Tarrou, who has never known "hope's solace," and is <u>without </u>the comfort of belief in God, still longs for purity, and vows never to "join forces" with Earth's pestilences [e.g., death and disease]: he, rather, resolves always to take the victims' side against them.[29] Although these preceding literary examples do not provide conclusive evidence of Camus's disbelief, they serve as supportive indirect evidence for it, for each of these major characters, on my reading, represents a dimension of Camus's thought and struggle with the issue.

Ambivalence Regarding God's Existence

Yet, despite the dominant evidence for Camus's disbelief in God, I should be less than fair were I not to acknowledge that some of Camus's additional statements in other interviews disclose ambivalence in Camus's position. For instance, as early as in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), he says: "Let me assert again: it is not the affirmation of God that is questioned here, but rather the logic leading to that affirmation" (p. 42). And, when, in 1956, just four years before his death, some theater goers were surprised by the religious tone of Camus's theatrical adaptation of Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*, Camus responded: "It's true that I don't believe in God, but *that doesn't mean I'm an atheist*, and I would agree with Benjamin Constant, who thought a lack of religion was vulgar and even hackneyed."[30] Moreover, in his *Carnets*, III, 1952-59, Camus sounds the same theme: "I often read that I am an atheist, and hear talk of my atheism. However, those words say nothing to me, they have no meaning for me. I do not believe in God, *and* I am *not* an atheist."[31] And, assuming that Camus qualifies, in some definite ways, as a "metaphysical rebel" who respects limits, we must also note his words in *The Rebel:* "The metaphysical rebel is not definitely an atheist,… but he is inevitably a blasphemer." [32] And he goes on to remind us that the history of rebellion must not be confounded with that of atheism, and that "the rebel defies more than he denies."[33] These statements are in keeping with, perhaps even rooted in, the sentiment Camus expresses in an interview with Jean-Claude Brisville: "*Oui, j'ai le sens du sacré et je ne crois pas à la vie future, voilà tout.*" ("Yes, I have a sense of the sacred and I don't believe in a future life, that's all.")[34] But clearly, in some of these statements, Camus seems to be "fudging" or, to put it differently, seems to want to have it both ways, either for the sake of integrity or, in the manner of Sartre, to baffle the inquiring interrogator. And the case for ambivalence in Camus's attitude towards God is intensified by what Sartre says about Camus's belief in the historically important but mutually self-demeaning 1952 "exchange" between these two towering figures regarding some of Camus's contentions in his 1951 publication of *The Rebel*.[35] In Sartre's acerbic response ("Réponse à Albert Camus") to Camus's offended and annoyed reply ("Lettre au Directeur des *Temps Modernes*") to Francis Jeanson's Sartre-prompted and incendiary review of Camus's *The Rebel*, Sartre speaks of Camus's "struggle against heaven" (*lutte contre le ciel*), and, while giving him credit for fighting earlier against man's "revolting destiny,"[36] impugns him for his "hatred," especially his hating God more than oppression: "…There is a hatred of God that appears in your books, and one could say that you were an 'anti-theist' even more than an atheist."[37] "A child was dying," Sartre says, [and] "you blamed the absurdity of the world and this deaf and blind God that you had created to enable you to spit in his face."[38] Right or wrong, Sartre's rather bitter statements give indirect support to the minority position

that Camus, influenced by Augustine and Plotinus, never came to closure on the question of God's existence. Or perhaps Robert Solomon, following Sartre's language, states it more accurately, by calling Camus an "incomplete" and "traumatized" atheist.[39]

Yet my attempt to be judicious and to indicate evidence of the ambivalence suggested in some of Camus's statements must not detract from my own view that, despite his being haunted by the possibility of God's existence, or what Nietzsche called "the shadow of God," the overall trajectory and dominant content of Camus's writing points strongly to his disbelief in God's existence. (Sartre, too, may be said to be "haunted" in this manner when he affirms that the "ideal synthesis" of "being-in-itself-for-itself," which people call "God," is "always *indicated* [but] always impossible.")[40] Although I believe that Camus did not believe in God, I remain open to the view that Camus might be better viewed as an *agnostic* who strongly rejected the *idea* of a Christian God—in particular, an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God—rather than a strict atheist. Camus, as the French Franciscan scholar Arnauld Corbic suggests, would acknowledge that the existence of God can never be negated with certainty.[41] Yet Camus denounced, with the full force of his passionate being, the Christian God hypothesis (as he interpreted it) which allows the compatibility of God with death, plagues, the suffering of children, etc.—in short, with an unjust, "absurd" human condition. In this regard—and I believe Camus's critique and his supporting rebellion were aimed primarily at the Christian conception of God—Camus may be viewed as an "anti-theist," not just an agnostic, which, on his terms, intellectual honesty demanded of him. Another French scholar, Joseph Hermet, also argues the case for Camus's "anti-theism."[42] Corbic may have it right when he contends that Camus's unbelief may be *anti-theistic* in the face of the world's suffering and other evils, but *atheistic* in the face of the absurd,[43] for—I add—neither the world, for Camus, nor an idealized Christian God, answers the human being's impassioned existential quest for the meaning of existence. In one way or another, Camus seems to protest the notion of a god who, for him, is absent in and/or indifferent to the human situation. But I must move on.

God/Creator, Creation, and Rebellion

I said at the outset that the issue of my paper relates to the God-creation or, let us now say, creator-creation relationship. Although I have acknowledged ambivalences in Camus's position regarding the question of God's existence, and suggested that there is not conclusive evidence for attributing a settled or complete atheism to Camus, I have endorsed the view that Camus qualifies—with some reservation—as an anti-theist, and I have stated my own belief that the

preponderance of textual evidence in Camus's writings supports the thesis that Camus did not believe in the existence of God—the Christian God, in particular. This returns me to what I announced as the main problem to which the present paper is intended to point and elucidate—namely, if, as Camus seems to believe, a creator-God, does *not* exist, how can Camus, like Dostoyevski's Ivan, be so alienated from and rebellious toward a god in whom he does not believe (and the very *idea* of which he rejects), and also advocate rebellion against the "unjust and incomprehensible condition" of "the whole of creation (his words)?"[44] Within the framework of Camus's project and argument, it hardly seems to make sense to unlink creation from a creator. In fact, one might argue that the very notion of "creation" logically entails a creator (I shall not consider here, the issue of whether, in some acceptable fashion, evolution might serve to count as a "creator.").

To repeat what I said earlier, I believe that the majority of interpreters of Camus simply assume that Camus's revolt against death, suffering, the "absurd," and other injustices in the world represents, *for Camus*, a powerful moral indictment of any alleged omnibenevolent God of Christianity, as well as persuasive evidence against the existence of such a god. Camus appears to put himself in a bind: Either presuppose the existence of the Christian god, hold this god morally responsible for the imperfections or evils in the world He has created, and rebel against His injustice, *or*, because of these injustices, coupled with the "absurd," refuse to believe in the existence of such a god and rebel against creation with its revolting human indignities and inhumanities—the universal "death penalty," above all. With regard to the latter, another French scholar, Jean-Marie Domenach, makes a related point when he contends that Camus "rejects God, but it is to plunge us later into the tragedy of a world deprived of God."[45] But this, too, only returns us to the question of what sense, if any, it makes to resent, protest, rebel, and struggle against a "creation" that is assumed *not* to have a creator in any traditional theistic sense? And this question leads inevitably to corollary questions: Does Camus's angry protest and revolt—expressed so strongly in *The Rebel*, for instance—turn out essentially to be rebellion against human finitude? And if so, then is creation itself to be held accountable, directly or indirectly, for what Camus assumes to be the undeserved sufferings, evils, defects, and unjust conditions that human beings suffer through and, for the most part, endure? Does either of these alternatives make philosophical sense, or have philosophical coherence? If so, would some of Camus's literary works, such as *The Stranger, Caligula, The Plague, The Misunderstanding*, to name prominent examples, retain the existential power normally attributed to them?

For instance, would Caligula's bitter and mad protest have the same force—even given his stark realization of the absurd brought on by Drusilla's death—apart from the background of an arbitrary, seemingly indifferent, and unjust god whom Caligula mimics, mocks, and defies? And would the extended "debate"

between Father Paneloux and Dr. Rieux in *The Plague* carry the same power if "pestilences" were not somehow relatable or attributable to a creator, but only, let us say, to an accidental scheme of things, or to a naturally selected and self-adapting evolved "creation?" If "accountability" includes an element of "moral responsibility," which Rieux surely invokes in his repudiation of Paneloux's Christian God (given suffering and death in the world), it surely would not be acceptable, either by any standard ordinary language usage or any defensible philosophical sense of the word, to hold "creation" itself [I place this idiosyncratic use of "creation" in quotation marks] or the universe *morally accountable* for the natural, moral, and metaphysical evils that are unarguably part of the human being's finitude. For morality or, more specifically, moral accountability and responsibility, can belong only to either a free, self-determining, god—assuming His or Her existence—or to self-conscious, free, human agents, but never to nature, things, or non-self-conscious beings. Sartre—a self-proclaimed atheist—would, for one, disclaim the former: his Orestes, in "The Flies," exclaims, "Justice is a matter between men, and I need no god to teach me it."[46] In *Being and Nothingness*, published the same year (1943), Sartre offers, on the ground of his own idiosyncratic ontological framework and terms, an alleged refutation of God's existence.[47] But Camus, unlike Sartre, never contends, as does Sartre, that God is ontologically impossible. Nonetheless, if I am essentially right in connecting Camus's view with Ivan's statement, "It is not God whom I reject,… it is *creation*" (italics mine), then the traditional theodicial problem, or "problem of evil," loses most of its force, and, further, the issue of creation's blameworthiness and consequent cause for rebellion becomes severely problematic. It is one thing to be dissatisfied with the human condition and in some sense to "refuse" it, but quite another to hold it morally accountable and rebel against its injustices and defects on that account. (I remind the reader that Camus defines metaphysical rebellion as "the movement by which man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation.")[48]

To follow a line of reasoning that Robert Solomon has suggested in a somewhat different context,[49] Camus, in the name of the rebel, appears to expect from, and then apply to, an indifferent, suffering, defective, "incomplete," and "wasteful" world[50] (= "creation") what he had previously wanted and expected from God. That god turned out to be silent, unjust, and "murderous," and, therefore, neither acceptable nor worthy of belief. Hence, Camus seems to be protesting both the idea of a benevolent God, in whom he cannot believe because of human misery and universal death, *and* also, in light of the "absurd," a world without god. But to rebel and fight against the latter—in short, against a *godless* and unjust "creation"— begs for logical explication and rational justification. This is especially so, given Camus's own importantly related statements in *The Rebel* that (1) "The only thing that gives meaning to human protest is the idea of a personal god who has created, and is therefore responsible for [note!] everything," and (2) that "Only a personal god can be asked by the rebel for a personal accounting."[51] If God does not exist—or if it is assumed that the belief in

God is evidentially unwarranted—it should come as no surprise to Camus or to any other inquirer that the human being's longing for rational clarity and meaning is met with silence and remains unanswered by the universe, i.e., by what Camus also calls "creation." What form could a viable answer from the universe or "creation" or even "nature" conceivably take? Again, does it make sense to rebel against the absence of an answer to the question of meaning, or against a suffering "creation," if it is assumed that there is no creator?

I have found one place in *The Rebel* where Camus seems to exhibit an awareness of the basic problem I am attributing to him in this paper, but from which he seems to keep a distance. In his early account of "metaphysical rebellion" in the chapter titled "The Sons of Cain," he points out that although the "ancients" believed in destiny, they believed primarily in a "nature" in which they were active participants. So "to rebel against nature" or "creation" involved rebelling against oneself, thus "butting one's head against a wall." But "metaphysical rebellion," "in the real sense of the term," which, on Camus's account, had no coherent expression in the history of ideas until the late 1700s, takes for granted a "simplified view of creation" that would have been inconceivable to the Greeks. Not a sharp dichotomy and opposition between gods and man but stages mounting from man to the gods characterize their thought. And death for thinkers like Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Epicurus, has no meaning because death is incapable of definition and feeling. But the history of rebellion in the Western world is inseparable from the history of Christianity, so rebellion is hardly imaginable apart from "opposition to someone."[52] (This supports my earlier point, expressed even earlier by Arnaud Corbic.) Christ, on Camus's interpretation, came to resolve problems of death and evil—precisely the issues that generate human rebellion. But the divine "man-god" also had to experience the deep agony of suffering and death and the pleading cry of "Lama sabactani." So long as Christ suffered, the pain and the suffering of innocents were no longer "unjust." In this way, the ground is prepared for the "great offensive against a hostile heaven."[53] But, as discussed, if the cry to heaven for meaning and justice is met with silence, and if, accordingly, belief in god is denied, then what is the point of rebelling and launching an offensive against heaven? And if, having renounced belief in God, but still dissatisfied with the brute facticity of undeserved suffering and universal condemnation to death, one redirects one's anger and rebellion to "creation," or the universe, or "nature" (from which one now feels alienated and "homeless"), what, in fact, is one doing? Is one mainly venting one's frustration and dissatisfaction with the world as one finds it? Does one expect an impersonal, godless, "creation" to respond to and redress one's grievances? Or is one simply "butting one's head against a wall?"

Yet, we must be quick to suspect that Camus is not just uttering gibberish, and that his analysis of rebellion (both metaphysical and historical) and its roots, though seriously problematic, is powerful and existentially challenging to the

majority of his readers. (Certainly, decades of scholars and students have found it so.) Given a "shattered" world in which evil and death challenge life's meaningfulness, it is understandable that a probing mind might obstinately "oppose the principle of justice that he finds in himself to the principle of injustice"[54] that seems to be exhibited in the world (or in "creation" or in "nature"). Putting aside the question of whether the principle of justice one finds in oneself is—in contrast to Sartre—part of human nature,[55] or, alternatively, is a product of one's cultural and social condition, one can at least acknowledge that the suffering of innocents, natural pestilences, and death frequently seem unfair and worthy of upset, annoyance, frustration, and the pounding of feet by "hordes of people" facing their human situation. But Camus puts the case so much more strongly. "In order to exist," he contends, "[the human being] *must* rebel" (always, of course, within the limits that rebellion "discovers in itself"): she understandably objects to the condition in which she finds herself. Yet this acknowledgment, far from bringing resolution to the issue of my paper only returns us to it. If there is no creator, and the universe or creation cannot answer our human inquiry, what is the point of *rebelling* against it? Or, to follow another tact, does the human solidarity on which (Camus contends) rebellion is founded, and which subsequently justifies it, become the basis for correcting or ameliorating "creation?" Camus repeatedly maintains, "I rebel—therefore we exist" (e.g., pp. 22, 104, 250), and maintains that the rebellion "attests to" and "founds" a universal value "beyond the individual."[56] But that still does not give us a rationale for rebelling against a creation that is assumed to be creatorless and deaf to humanity's anguished cries for rational clarification, justification, and unity.

A Satisfactory Way Out of the Problem?

Some readers will object that I have failed to recognize the force of Camus's case for rebelling against the human condition in which we find ourselves, against "the absurd," or even (as some of Camus's formative essays imply) against a world without God. And many may, understandably, want to remind me that "the absurd" itself as it is presented in a somewhat revised formulation in *The Rebel* is contradictory (e.g., "in wanting to uphold life, it excludes all value judgments, when to live is in itself a value judgment" [p.8]), and, further, that genuine rebellion is *creative*, moving always in history from individual refusal to solidarity with others, thus giving birth to the promise of a (new) value.[57] In this manner, the critic may justifiably contend that, for Camus, rebellion advances us beyond the individual indifference and consequent nihilism to which the absurdist reasoning as expounded in *The Myth of Sisyphus* originally seems to lead, namely, to a creative solidarity among all human beings. To use again Camus's words, "In absurdist experience, suffering is individual. But from

the moment when a movement of rebellion begins, suffering is seen as a collective experience."[58] If the pestilence or pandemic in Camus's *The Plague* can be viewed, as it has by many interpreters, as an expression and manifestation of "the absurd," and the individual responses to it by Rambert, Joseph Grand, Tarrou, Paneloux, and Rieux move toward a more humane, communal, collective, and creative struggle against our common "absurd" predicament—that is, against our "mass plague"[59]—then not only does the preceding statement seem accurate, but the related movement distinctly commendable for Camus. *The Plague* clearly marks a progress from uttering "No" to the seemingly arbitrary and senseless death and suffering to the complementary "Yes" of working (rebelling) creatively against it and, thus, developing the value of solidarity—later to become "community" and the hope for a "new creation."[60] As Ronald Aronson, in his recent book, *Camus and Sartre*, puts it: "revolt, for Camus, is positive no less than negative, generating one and the same time human values, dignity and solidarity."[61]

But this still does not adequately answer the question of what sense it makes to rebel against a creation that is assumed *not* to have a creator, or, to put it another way, how metaphysical rebellion makes sense without a creator? Of course, for a human being to affirm passionately her dignity and to refuse "to be treated as an object,"[62] thing, commodity, or mere historical being, is readily understandable. Humiliation must be rejected. But this is a kind of existential, interpersonal, rebellion, and in these cases, human beings can know the perpetrators and oppressors, and directly object to and rebel against them. But that is not the case with Camus's metaphysical rebel: The metaphysical rebel rebels against an absurd and unjust (he believes) creation, the alleged creator of which is refused by Camus for lack of positive evidence and response to rational pleading, and is, thus, unknowable to human beings. The problem is only exacerbated by Camus's claim in *The Rebel* that, although often turning "against its rebel origins,"[63] historical rebellion is rooted in and can be traced to metaphysical rebellion.[64] This is a point with which, assuming Camus's terms, I have sympathy, but is a topic for another paper.

What is important to note with regard to my present inquiry and argument is Camus's early contentions, both in *The Myth* and *The Rebel,* that "the absurd… is the metaphysical state of the conscious [=lucid] man;"[65] that "with rebellion, awareness [lucidity] is born;" "that awareness, no matter how confused it may be, develops from every act of rebellion;"[66] and that "to say that life is absurd, consciousness needs to be alive."[67] This complicates even further the question of the rationale, focus, and content of rebellion. Camus seems to be making conflicting claims. On the one hand, in both *The Myth* and *The Rebel*, he emphasizes that a "lucid" [or "conscious"] mind—i.e., lucidity or "awareness"—is a necessary component of "the absurd." Rebellion, viewed in this light, is born of this "awareness," or lucid state of mind. But, on the other hand, as I have just

cited, Camus also speaks of this lucidity or "awareness" as emerging from "every act of rebellion." This seems questionable, to say the least. Although rebellion might nurture additional lucidity in regard to the absurdity of the human condition, rebellion, for Camus, surely presupposes a lucid recognition of the absurd, (i.e, consciousness "must be alive"), and is unquestionably a consequence of, and a commendable response, to it. Moreover, in *The Myth* he assures us that revolt, as one of the only coherent philosophical positions, "gives life its value"[68] in the face of "the absurd," just as in *The Rebel* he tells us that "to fight against death amounts to claiming that life has a meaning [and value]."[69] Thus, there is a Yes and No in rebellion, just as there is a Yes and a No in the absurd. "Living," he tells us in *The Myth*, "is keeping the absurd alive," by constantly "contemplating" it. To keep it alive, suicide must be refused; "the absurd cannot be settled."[70] In the same way, rebellion, in order to protest and struggle against the absurdity of the human condition, must keep the absurd reflectively in mind. So human life, the value arrived at in *The Myth*, is required to combat the absurd and, in turn, generate human solidarity. But, to invoke again *The Myth*'s terminology, revolt is one of the "consequences" of the absurd.[71] So we have here another of Camus's paradoxes or tensions. Rebellion for Camus is the appropriate existential response (No!) to the absurd, but the absurd must be preserved (Yes!) — and never ended, settled, or "solved" by suicide, for example—if we are to fight it and retain life as a value or "the only necessary [or "highest"] good." It is precisely human life that makes the absurd encounter possible, and "without life, the absurdist wager would have no basis." [72] As Donald Lazere points out, on this interpretation maintaining lucid consciousness of the absurd is a "precondition for revolting against it."[73] But whether or not this precondition is a "moral necessity" or a necessary condition for authenticity—an important issue with which Lazere is engaged—is also outside the bounds of my present paper.

My immediately preceding and somewhat diversionary account of some of the ambivalences and complexities in Camus's thinking about rebellion makes it even clearer that, one way or another, rebellion, for Camus, cannot be dissociated from "the absurd," and that in the face of the absurd or an absurd creation which a lucid mind confronts, rebellion gives life its value and meaning. In fact, as I mentioned above, for Camus "every act of rebellion" tacitly invokes a value or "standard of values." [74] Yet I am *not* persuaded that Camus's contentions adequately answer the fundamental query that prompted my writing this paper: What sense does it make, and what meaning can we give to rebelling against a creation that is assumed to be creatorless and thus deaf to the cries of a suffering and pleading humanity. To which I now add a corollary question: Is lucid recognition of the vicissitudes and indignities of human life, combined with working creatively and in solidarity against them, to be viewed as "rebellion" (or "revolt")? To elucidate my query, let me resort to a concrete illustration. Take the example of a 38-year-old man who is suddenly diagnosed with an inoperable brain cancer. Shocked and upset by this existentially unsettling news,

he resolves to face it lucidly: he obtains the best available physician and treatment he can find, but at the same time maintains as much as possible his normal manner of living. He carries out his professional responsibilities as much as he is able; nurtures lovingly his rather young and happy marriage; continues to compose and play the music to which he is passionately devoted; cultivates his many friendships and social get-togethers (these immediately become the core of his support system)—in short, he affirms himself creatively in spite of his death-dealing disease and suffering. What are we to say about this courageous human being? Would we be inclined to say, and would it make sense to say, that his post-diagnosis attitude, actions, and way of being constitute "rebellion"? I think not, although in some unusual circumstances it might take a defiant form. Nor would we likely call his stoical response "rebellious." Further, if he conscientiously heeds his oncologist's medical advice, undertakes the harsh prescribed treatments, and, in so doing, contends with or combats the disease creatively, would we want to say that he is "rebelling" or "revolting" against his seemingly unjust affliction. We would hardly dare to say that he is in "bad faith" or was committing "philosophical suicide."

I do not preclude the known possibility that another person, in a similar predicament, *outraged* (a term that Camus employs) by what she perceives as terribly unjust, anti-human, and unreasonable, might lash out against the talk of an all-loving Creator or God, and/or "goddamn" (in verb form!) a seemingly "unfair," "absurd" and suffering world. This would seem to be more a case of an angry outburst than rebellion. And it would be hard to view the latter response—though perhaps "lucid"—as a value-or life-creating one, or one that necessarily affirms human dignity or generates human dialogue, attributes which Camus strongly commends. [75] Moreover, even at the individual level, one might justifiably ask whether there is any point in protesting and rebelling against a perceived personal injustice in this manner if one assumes that there is no personal creator or agent of that injustice (again, injustice or immorality is attributable only to conscious and self-aware agents), nor any court of appeal to adjudicate the alleged offense. To whom (or to what?) would one be protesting or rebelling against one's condition? Camus does not answer my question directly. Rather, as I have shown, he tells us that although suffering is individual, from the moment rebellion begins suffering is viewed as a *collective* experience: "the malady experienced by a single man becomes a mass plague;" and because "I rebel…, we exist." *The Plague* gives literary testimony to this view. Solidarity, for Camus, ties together the absurd and revolt. Rebellion, he claims, "lures the individual from his solitude."[76] It replaces the absurd as starting point, with its implied meaninglessness and nihilism (as initially suggested in *The Myth*), with protest against man's absurd and dehumanizing condition—a starting point that, he believes, engenders meaning and values through communal struggle, as is exemplified in *The Plague* and *Rebel*, for instance.

Conclusion

But, in concluding, my point remains the same. Against and to whom is the rebel rebelling? And if the universe remains "absurd," if "creation" cannot be reversed, if death is inevitable, what is the point of revolt or rebelling, given Camus's refusal of a "personal" creator god? Are Camus's reasons acceptable or even coherent? Even if "every act of rebellion tacitly invokes a value," is it necessary, or does it even make sense, assuming (as Camus seems to claim) a godless, and ultimately incorrigible finitude, or naturally evolved universe, to rebel against the ills of a finite human condition? How about the response of the courageous cancer-stricken person I have illustrated above? Do not his stoical attitude and creative response—granted, of course, his lucid recognition of his seemingly unreasonable plight—represent a more understandable, laudable, and more logical response to this instantiation of the absurd? I would be loath to call his response "rebellion," whether it is focused on his own suffering or, more broadly, on universal suffering and the fact that all human beings are "condemned to death."

   Camus tells us all that struggle is part of lucid living and that "even without a master" the universe "is neither sterile nor futile." At the conclusion of his rendition of the actual "Myth of Sisyphus," he states that Sisyphus' struggle "toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart."[77] But Sisyphus has scorned and rebelled against the gods. So, if there is no god, as Camus is strongly inclined to believe, what, again, is the point of rebelling? An agentless fate or godless "creation" does not hear the impassioned cries of a suffering humanity. A human *community* of sufferers and caregivers can emerge through sympathy, empathy, and creative collective action *without* the defiant rebelliousness which Camus describes and seems to commend in both *The Myth* and much of *The Rebel*. In fact, Rieux and Tarrou and—at a later stage—even Paneloux and Rambert—move in that direction as *The Plague* (considered both as a novel and pestilence) works its death-dealing path. Are we to say that their individual and communal struggle against the common and natural pestilence constitutes "rebellion" in Camus's own sense of "metaphysical rebellion"? To fight against a disease is one thing; to rebel or revolt against it quite another.

   Finally, in spite of some of Camus's qualifications and apparent ambivalences, a significant part of his *oeuvre* seems – to paraphrase Sartre – to represent a struggle against god and heaven. But, to repeat one last time (I plead for your indulgence!), if an alleged creator-god of the universe is assumed not to exist, it hardly seems logical to hold god accountable, and rebel against that god. Nor does it seem reasonable to rebel against a creatorless and unanswering

"creation." The concepts of moral accountability and moral justice are not applicable or attributable to non-personal categories. Camus may be right in contending that "when confronted with death, man from the very depths of his soul, cries out for justice."[78] But the question remains: To whom, on his terms, is he crying out"? And to what effect? What can be done to undo the facticity of our finite, death-bound destiny, our human mortality?

In spite of Camus's soul-searching existential probing and his admirably elegant writing, there is reason to question the clarity and soundness of some of his pivotal contentions and, in particular, the coherence of his position regarding the relation among God, creation, and rebellion.

Notes

1.   I fully recognize that, technically speaking, the "absurd" for Camus requires a confrontation between the human being passionately asking the question of the meaning of existence, and a silent universe that does not respond and seems totally indifferent to her pleading.

2.   In addition to well-known interpreters like Germaine Brée, Thomas Hanna, and (more recently) David Sprintzen, Tom Foley and Robert Solomon, among others, see also French authors such as Arnaud Corbic, *Camus et l'Homme Sans Dieu* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2007); Joseph Hermet, *Albert Camus et le Christianisme,* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1976); Jean Onimus, *Albert Camus and Christianity*, trs. Emmett Parker (University: University of Alabama Press, 1970); translated from the original, Jean Onimus*, Camus* (Paris: Desclée de Bruwer, 1965).

3.   Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 53.

4.   Corbic*, Camus et L'homme sans Dieu,* e.g., p. 81.

5.   Albert Camus, *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, ed. Philip Thody, trans. Ellen Conroy Kennedy (New York: Vintage Press, 1970), p. 345. Abbreviated in subsequent references as LCE.

6.   Albert Camus, "The Unbeliever and Christians" in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, trans. with intro, Justin O'Brien (New York, Modern Library, 1960) p. 52.

7.   Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), pp. 28, 30, 31, 37 for quotes in this preceding sentence. In subsequent notes, I shall use *The Myth* as an abbreviation for this work.

8.   Camus, *The Myth*, pp. 16, 21, 37. To use one example of the way Camus depicts the absurd: "The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need [for clarity] and the unreasonable silence of the universe. " (p.23). In *The Rebel*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1956), he describes it simply as an "encounter between human inquiry and the silence of the universe" (p.6). Translated from the French, *L'Homme revolté* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard , 1951).

9.   Camus, *The Myth*, e.g., pp. 37, 40. I shall discuss this further later.

10. See Sartre's Chapter 2 on "Bad Faith" in *Being and Nothingness*. In this regard, see, in particular, section 3 on "The 'Faith' of Bad Faith," pp. 67-70. I give a detailed analysis of this obscure pattern in Chapter 2 of my *Bad Faith, Good Faith and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), pp. 28-46, especially. I refer the reader to it.

11. Camus, *The Myth*, p. 102.

12. *Ibid*., p. 37.

13. Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1956). In subsequent references, I shall use the abbreviation, *Rebel*.

14. For example, Camus, "Preface" to *The Myth*, LCE, p. 201; The Rebel, p. 8. He says this as early as in his 1937 essay, "Summer" (*Noces*.)

15. Camus, *Rebel*, p. 8

16. *Ibid*., p. 18.

17. *Ibid*., p. 55

18. *Ibid*., p. 61

19. *Ibid.,* p. 306.

20. Albert Camus, "Remarque Sur La Révolte," in *Essais*, intro and annotated R. Quilliot and L. Faucon (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1965).

21. *Rebel*, p. 59.

22. Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage Books, 1946), p. 85. Originally published as *l' Étranger* (Paris: Librarie Gallimard, 1942). I use here the Folio edition by Gallimard, published in 1957, p. 108.

23. The Stranger, p. 150. *l'Étranger*, p. 184 (*je ne voulais pas le perdre avec Dieu*).

24. Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York, Vintage International, 1991.) Originally published in French as *La Peste* (Paris: Librairie avec Gallimard).

25. Camus, *The Plague*, p. 224. Shortly after, Paneloux, puts the "dilemma" this way: "We must accept the dilemma and choose either to hate God or to love God. And who would dare to choose to hate him?" (p. 228).

26. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

27. Albert Camus, *Notebooks*, 1942-1951, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Harvest Book, 1978), p. 99.

28. *The Plague*, pp. 252-53.

29. *Ibid*., p. 292, 253-54.

30. Quoted in and recounted by Oliver Todd, *Camus: A Life*, (trans. Benjamin Ivry, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), p. 356. Italics, mine. Originally published, in a different form, as *Albert Camus: Une Vie,* by Éditions Gallimard in Paris, 1956, p. 662. Taken partially from *Carnets III*, p. 73. (*Il y a dans l'irréligion quelque chose de grossier et d'usé qui me répugne*.)

31. Albert Camus, *Carnets* III, November 1, 1954, p. 128; translation and italics mine. (« *Je lis souvent que je suis athée, j'entends parler de mon athéisme. Or ces mots ne me disent rien, ils n'ont pas de sense pour moi. Je ne crois pas à Dieu et je ne suis pas athée*. »)

32. Camus, *The Rebel*, p. 24.

33. *Ibid*., p. 25

34. Albert Camus, *Essais*, p. 1923; translation mine. Also in Camus, *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, p. 364.

35. The "exchange," or, more properly, public "quarrel" between Camus and Sartre took place in the pages of *Les temps modernes*, No. 78, pp. 2070-90; No. 82, pp. 317-383, all in 1952. I deal in detail with this quarrel in Ronald E. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence: Curiously Ambivalent* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2003), esp. pp. 91-138.

36. Sartre, "Réponse à Albert Camus," *Les temps modernes*, 82, 1952, p. 348. See preceding footnote. The credit Sartre gives is to Camus's admirable work in the Resistance Movement in France.

37. Sartre, "Réponse," p. 350. « *…il y a une haine de Dieu qui parait dans vos livres et l'on pu dire que vous étiez 'anti-théiste' plus encore qu'athée.*" » Translation is mine.

38. Sartre, "Réponse," p. 349. « *Un enfant mourait, vous accusiez l'absurdité du monde et le Dieu sourd et aveugle que vous aviez créé pour lui cracher à la face.* » Translation mine.

39. Robert C. Solomon, *Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 56. The chapter in which this expression appears (Chapter 2) is a revised version of Chapter 2 of his earlier published and well-known book, *The Passions* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1976.) I believe that *Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts* was Bob Solomon's last published book before his unexpected and untimely death in early 2007. I wish to pay tribute to his prolific scholarship in philosophy and to his passion for, and writing on, issues of abiding existential concern for living an authentic life. I am among many who have mourned his passing. I offer my continuing condolences to his wife, his partner, and companion in scholarship, Kathleen Higgins.

40. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 623; italics mine. See, also, e.g., Solomon, *Dark Feelings*, p. 41.

41. Corbic, *Camus et l'homme sans Dieu*, pp. 81-82, see also p. 27. This is consistent with the basic epistemological statement Camus made in his interview, in 1951, with Gabriel d'Aubarède: "I still do not claim to be in possession of any truth." Reprinted in *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, p. 356.

42. Joseph Hermet, *Albert Camus et le Christianisme* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1976), pp. 68-74, e.g.

43. Corbic, *Camus et l'homme sans Dieu*, pp. 30.

44. Camus, *Rebel*, pp. 10, 23.

45. J. Domenach, in "Preface" to J. Hermet's *Albert Camus et le Christianisme*, p. 6. (« *Il rejette Dieu, mais c'est pour nous plonger ensuite dans la tragédie d 'un monde privé de Dieu.* »); Translation is mine. I acknowledge the influence of Domenach on my point.

46. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Flies," in *No Exit and Three Other Plays*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 105. Initially published as *Les Mouches* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1943).

47. Sartre*, Being and Nothingness*, see again, p. 623. For my reflections on Sartre's dismissal of God, see Ronald E. Santoni, "Sartre's Adolescent Rejection of God," *Philosophy Today* 37:1 (1993), pp. 62-69.

48. *Rebel*, p. 23.

49. Solomon, *Dark Feelings…*, p. 56.

50. *Rebel*, p. 54, especially.

51. *Ibid*., pp. 28, 31-32.

52. *Ibid.,* pp. 26-29, for all preceding quotes and references in this paragraph since the last citation.

53. *Ibid*., pp. 32; 34-35.

54. *RebelIbid*., pp. 23-24.

55. *Ibid*.*Rebel,* p. 16. Note that it is Camus's analysis of "rebellion" that leads him, in contrast to Sartre, to the postulate that "a human nature does exist." See also p. 250.

56. *Ibid.,* p. 22 for references since preceding citation; italics mine.

57. *Ibid*., pp. 8-9; 250-52. See also p. 106.

58. *Ibid.,* p. 22.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid*., p. 11.

61. Ronald Aronson, *Camus and Sartre* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 118.

62. *Rebel,* p. 250.

63. *Ibid*., pp. 247-249, e.g.

64. *Ibid.,* see, e.g., pp. 100-110 ("Nihilism and History.")

65. *The Myth,* p. 30.

66. *Rebel,* pp. 14-15.

67. See *L'Homme révolté,* pg. 17. « *Pour dire que la vie est absurde, la conscience a besoin d'être vivante* ». I part from the standard translation here which is: "To say that life is absurd, *conscience* must be alive" (*The Rebel,* pg. 6). Italics mine.

68. *The Myth*, p. 40.

69. *Rebel,* p. 101.

70. *The Myth,* p. 40.

71. *Ibid*., pp. 46-48.

72. *Rebel*, p. 6. But it must be noted that Camus later says that the rebel's placing "the part of himself that he wanted to be respected" above everything else, even to life itself, through "obstinate resistance," becomes for him the "supreme good." Is this one of Camus's philosophical inconsistencies? One may note also that on p. 14, Camus refers to rebellion as "the first value," playing the "same role" as the "cogito" in the realm of thought.

73. Donald Lazere, "*The Myth* and *The Rebel:* Diversity and Unity," in Harold Bloom, ed., *Albert Camus* (New York and Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, pp. 61-78; especially p. 65. Lazere considers alternate interpretations of this issues on pp. 64-67. I recommend this chapter, which was originally published in *The Unique Creation of Albert Camus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.)

74. *Rebel*, p. 14.

75. In regard to Camus's emphasis on "dialogue" and "community," I strongly recommend David Sprintzen's probing, comprehensive and very perceptive book, *Camus: A Critical Examination* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1988). I have learned much about Camus from my good friend and Camus expert David Sprintzen, but errors I might have made, here or elsewhere, in interpreting Camus are my own, not his.

76. *Rebel*, p. 22, for this and other quotations since the preceding citation.

77. Camus, *The Myth*, 91.

78. *The Rebel*, p. 303.

'Globalization' as Anti-Feminist Ideology: An Essay in Honor of William L. McBride

Sally J. Scholz

One of the truly classic essays of feminist theory is Alison Jaggar and William McBride's "'Reproduction' as Male Ideology." In it, they argue that "The traditional concept of reproduction is part of an ideology of male dominance." In homage to that important work, and in recognition of the tremendous insight McBride displays as a critic of globalization, this essay explores the concept of globalization as part of an ideology to keep feminism and other critical voices out of the mainstream and out of public debate. What McBride calls the "hegemonic consumerist 'Coca-Cola culture'," that "the tawdry present of profit-driven 'globalization'"[1], functions more or less systematically to keep peripheral voices on the periphery and silence the creative feminist, anti-racist, and anti-colonialist exhortations for a different "One World," a different global unity. McBride points to such a project in his examination of ecological violence, suggesting that in response to the problems of globalization, social philosophy must "develop a new ethic of caring" that "must be on the level of caring for the Earth itself"[2] but he also notes the folly of facile utopian thinking. In this paper, I mine McBride's writings on globalization and feminism in an effort to unearth the chief components of his global feminist social philosophy for the 21st century.

I begin with a brief discussion of "'Reproduction' as Male Ideology." That article offers a careful discussion of what constitutes 'reproduction' and how it functions as an ideology that maintains male dominance. Then, after defining

"ideology," I show how economic globalization functions as an ideology that maintains the hegemony of America and capitalism. McBride's insights about the mechanisms of globalization as well as his careful analysis of globalization's effect in actually existing societies permeate his social philosophy. The subsequent argument that globalization is anti-feminist may be obvious given the systems of dominance critiqued, but it is worth thinking through how globalization can be an anti-feminist ideology. I divide my study into elements that are anti-woman and elements that are anti-feminist. I conclude the essay by presenting a snapshot of McBride's global philosophy with emphasis on the way it is inextricably feminist. He wrote about global injustice long before it was vogue in philosophy and his unique critique, as well as his vision for globalizing philosophy merits greater attention.

"'Reproduction' as Male Ideology"

"'Reproduction' as Male Ideology" offers a phenomenological description of reproduction, understood broadly, as well as a critique of the exclusion of reproductive activities from "the domain of politics." Jaggar and McBride begin with a description of how "so-called reproduction is experienced as an everyday phenomenon in our lives apart from elaborate theoretical frameworks."[3] At its most basic level, reproduction means pregnancy and childbirth, but, as Jaggar and McBride convincingly argue, the array of tasks affiliated with childbirth and childrearing are truly staggering. Not only must parents care for their child's physical needs, they must also prepare them socially, emotionally, intellectually, and psychologically. Moreover, other tasks are also associated with or assumed as "reproductive" activities, such as caring for disabled and elderly family members, tending to the emotional and quotidian needs of other adult members of a family, and providing nurturing social services in a variety of contexts. Clearly, reproduction is not confined to activity in the home either; Jaggar and McBride note great variety of locations where reproductive activities occur: hospitals, schools, day-cares, and government bureaucracies as well as private and group homes.

Drawing from their expansive description of reproduction, Jaggar and McBride articulate three features of reproduction: "first of all, the majority of them, both in domestic and public settings, are performed in fact by women; secondly, these activities are often unpaid and, even when they do receive monetary compensation, this is usually very low; thirdly, both popular literature and official job classification lists rate this work as being of low value by comparison with most other categories of activities."[4] These features figure prominently in their subsequent discussion of Marx and Engels on one hand, and Beauvoir on the other.

In their analyses of these theorists who might actually be expected to present an alternative, context-based account of reproduction, Jaggar and McBride demonstrate that instead they conceptualize reproduction as natural or merely assume it is nonpolitical. This failure to think through alternatives or even to see the socially influenced modes of dividing activities that are essential to life means that reproduction functions as an ideology that serves the interests of males. Indeed, the very separation of reproduction from production "is an invidious and male biased distinction."[5]

Ultimately, of course, the article presents a compelling argument that all the practices of reproduction are shaped by social forces that serve the society's male bias. Different societies have different sex and gender standards but in all societies the work of reproduction—at least at the time of the writing of the article and arguable continuing through today—is primarily performed by women for no or low wages. Moreover, given the importance of this work for maintaining society, it tends to be grossly undervalued. The work of Beauvoir and Marx and Engels demonstrates this by assuming in theory the social conception of reproductive activities as biologically determined, menial, and uncreative. In short, 'reproduction' is an ideology. Which leads me to my next question.

What is Ideology?

McBride, a highly respected scholar of Marx, often notes the importance of Marx's critique of ideology: "One of the most important and original contributions of the Marxian tradition to philosophical thinking was the identification and critique of ideology, that is, the bias inherent in most or all theories that is rooted in the social structures of a given time and place and that expresses itself in theorists' justifying and defending those structures in which they have a private interest."[6] A number of salient features appear in this concise and astute account of ideology. Ideology is a bias in theory. Indeed, that is what the article on reproduction demonstrated so clearly. Even the most hard-cutting social criticism failed to question the structure of reproduction in relation to production. Further, this bias is "rooted in social structures of a given time and place." The theory, in other words, maintains a current social structure. In the case of reproduction, McBride and Jaggar demonstrated how Marx and Engels questioned so many elements of the social structure but failed to scrutinize this most basic one. In being rooted in social structures, however, it is important to acknowledge the historical embeddedness. Ideology is dependent on place and time. That is, ruling classes and ruling ideas change; the particular historical moment and location are determining features of ideology. A third element of ideology is it appears in theoretical justifications that maintain or sustain the social structures in which ideology is rooted. In a sense, of course, this sounds like merely a joining of the previous two elements; however, there is something added with

this third point: justification. Ideologies often appear or become evident in the very attempts to articulate justice. What is considered right or wrong, how society is ruled, and the values inherent in social practices, among other things, contribute in some way to justifying social structures thereby obscuring the ideology at their base. Although cautioning against a too facile interpretation, McBride would add that this is just another way of stating Marx's point that society's superstructure (consisting of such ideologies as law, morality, and religion) are the effect of social and economic conditions. Finally, ideology promotes the private interest of the theorist doing the justification. The ruling class, the powerful group, the dominant subject, shape social structures—however unconsciously—to serve and maintain their interests. Their ideas "turn out to be the ruling ideas."[7] An ideology justifies of legitimizes "existing sociopolitical orders as the best possible."[8]

As a result of these features of ideology, it is so seductive, especially in its negative employments, that it discourages critique, scrutiny, or questioning of any sort. Ideology appears as a sort of natural explanation for a social phenomenon. Ideology is "mass mystification" through which the ideas of the ruling class are dominant.[9] McBride also explains that ideology functions to coerce people to hold beliefs contrary to "their own best interests."[10]

Is Globalization an Ideology?

Globalization has many guises but it is a particular form of globalization that is the subject of critique in McBride's work and in this paper. Here, we are concerned with economic globalization, or more specifically, the globalization of corporate capitalism. At least some of McBride's recent work focuses instead on the 'globalization of philosophy' by which he means a dialogue among philosophies from all over the world.[11] In a way, globalization of philosophy is both a counter to and a remedy for economic globalization.

To some it might seem rather self-evident that globalization of this sort is an ideology, and anyone who has read any of McBride's insightful social criticism and witty cultural observations knows that he views economic globalization as ideology. In fact, he says it is both a practice and an ideology: "the global unleashing of unbridled capitalism, both as a set of unabashedly exploitative practices and as an ideology justifying them…"[12] But to others, globalization is merely a natural progression of business. It was certainly presented as a natural progression in the early 1990s.[13] International policy makers offered free trade agreements to the public as if they were an inevitable outcome of the conditions of the world. Globalization appeared as inevitable, the more or less intentional direction of business in changing world. Anti-globalization activists, however, challenge this interpretation on a number of different fronts. They argue, for

instance, that the new agreements regarding the production and processing of food associated with globalization privilege corporations based in the United States and, although perhaps providing some low wage jobs, tend to harm the traditional organization of food production in local areas. While I want to avoid romanticizing traditional social arrangements and relationships with the land, the use of the word "natural" in relation to the expansion of major Western agri-business corporations does stretch the bounds of plausibility. Thinking about globalization as an ideology rather than a natural and inevitable process allows for the possibility of scrutiny and critique.

McBride's interest in Eastern Europe, and his extensive writings on the changes since 1989, provides a relatively clear conception of globalization focused on the expansion of capitalism. Three prominent features of the spread of the capitalist economic system are (1) the seemingly pervasive dominance of the value of "efficiency for profit," and (2) the cultural hegemony of the United States, or in other words, the materialist, consumerist culture of major corporations based in the U.S., and (3) the so-called progressive depiction of the forces of market capitalism. Globalization, at least as it is portrayed in the media and sold to the public, appears as a rather exclusive activity: it is the activity of transnational corporations, global financial institutions, and international organizations. Moreover, the activity of globalization is conceptualized in a rather one-dimensional manner flowing from the United States and Western Europe to the rest of the world.[14] Like the features of reproduction presented above, the features of globalization create a veneer of inevitability and naturalness that obscures alternative possibilities for global relations.

Just as so-called reproduction functions in everyday life to shape how we experience daily activities and justify the distribution of resources and energy in the performance of those activities, we ought to examine how globalization is experienced in our everyday lives. McBride's essays are replete with colorful examples of globalization. One vivid image is that of a picture he took in September 1995 in Saint Petersburg. "A small crowd was milling around near the entrance [of the Winter Palace], directly in front of which, towering two stories in height, was an enormous inflated Coca-Cola bottle; a smaller, one-story bottle was visible a few feet to the left."[15] While Coca-Cola is merely one of many corporations pursuing the seemingly "natural" path of globalization—and by no means among the worst offenders—the image of the bottle so prominently displayed does speak to the pervasiveness of globalization in daily lives. One might also notice the availability of fresh fruit in most of the grocery stores in the United States even during the middle of winter; the relatively inexpensive electronic devices that surround us and shape our social interactions in such profound ways; or the seemingly ubiquitous advertising that wall-papers streets and highways, buses (now possibly even school buses), all forms of entertainment (including product placement in movies and television), and even some people's bodies.[16]

Some might suggest that neoliberalism is the ideology and globalization is the practice. This is certainly a plausible approach and it might even be worth pursuing in more depth. After all, the justificatory system of globalization is neoliberalism with its defense of market rights. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that neoliberalism is merely a small part of the ideology of globalization itself. Neoliberalism covers the economic policy that favors private industry and free trade. Globalization extends also to cultural and social ideas as well as communication and transportation. In the present context, then, I want to treat the two as overlapping—neoliberal globalization—as others.[17] In other words, globalization is not just a descriptive term acknowledging the extent of business relations. It is a way of thinking about the world and explaining current socio-economic conditions.

In order to demonstrate that globalization—neoliberal globalization—is an ideology, it is helpful to look again at the four parts of the description of ideology mentioned earlier. First, ideology is a bias in theory. Globalization, as mentioned previously, is sometimes seen as a practice or even a natural progression, rather than a theory. In order to show that globalization is a theory, it is helpful to think about what a theory is and does. Theories are systems of ideas that help to explain some phenomenon. Generally, theories have some basis in general principles. In this context, the neoliberalism might actually be the source of those policies. The private right of corporations to trade freely appears, in other words, as a basic principle. From that, a system of related ideas emerges. This system is what we have called globalization.

If we accept globalization as a theory, the second part of the description of ideology is self-evident, that is, that the bias in theory is "rooted in social structures of a given time and place." Developments in travel and technology, historic international agreements, and, as McBride so eloquently shows, the changes in global relations after 1989[18], the fall of the Berlin Wall, give rise to a particular global social structure or situation informing a theory of globalization.

The third element of ideology, that appears in theoretical justifications that maintain or sustain the social structures in which ideology is rooted. Here we can look both at justice conceived under capitalism and justice conceived within liberal political theory, both at work in globalization. As McBride explains, "Conceptions of justice in a capitalist society…emphasize the legal equality of both parties to contracts, including labor contracts. But they also sanction gross disparities in the parties' respective socioeconomic positions."[19] Similarly, "The formal conceptions of interpersonal, primarily distributive, justice…are ill equipped to allow for the global, even cosmic, perspective on injustices."[20] In other words, by focusing on some particular element of justice—contracts or distribution—capitalism and liberalism fail to see a wider picture. That has the corollary effect of maintaining the status of the ruling classes which is, of course, the fourth element of ideology: ideology promotes the private interest of the theorist doing the justification. To say that justice is an ideology is to say

that any given conception of justice reflects the status quo of dominance and subordination within society.[21] McBride summarizes the efforts at justification and their almost religious status saying, "Yet another (comparative) novelty, in addition to the collapse of previously existing socialism, which confronts us as we survey this global scene, is the ever more strenuous effort by governments and the global media to consolidate, ratify, and consecrate this state of affairs; a part of this effort has consisted of sloganizing it by giving it the simple, unimaginative, but significant, name of the New World Order."[22] Of course, in this passage it is governments and the global media at work, whereas major western corporations have been our primary focus for globalization's mystification. One might ask if there really is much of a difference between the three or if they have become more or less reluctant bedfellows in the New World Order.

Recall, too, that ideology causes "large groups of people…to hold political beliefs that can clearly be seen to have militated against their own best interests."[23] Economic globalization is a prime example of this phenomenon at work. In the U.S., trade agreements have "outsourced" jobs to where corporations can hire employees at a fraction of the cost of a worker in the U.S. Low tax rates for corporations, which some argue creates jobs—although where those jobs occur is rarely discussed—have negatively impacted the available resources for social services and infrastructure development. So while some social conservatives tout the virtues of free trade and low taxes, major corporations profit while the vast majority of the people in the country—especially the poor and unemployed—suffer the effects.

The "ruling class" consists of the wealthy within which we may count the major corporations, though, of course, their status as "rights holders" is part of the ideology of globalization as we shall see. McBride applies his superior skills as a social critic to analyze "Coca-Cola Culture." Although Coca-Cola culture is a *cultural* hegemony, it is indicative of two facets of socio-economic hegemony: American hegemony and the hegemony of Capitalism. I will discuss these separately though they clearly overlap. Coca-Cola culture brings the two together in an interesting way by acknowledging the important role of the consumer in maintaining the dominance of both: "What is central to contemporary consumerist culture, by comparison with the culture of Marx's day, is the global corporate effort to entice the whole world's population into lusting after goods of the sort that Marx and other writers in his time would have consigned to the 'luxury' category and into buying them to the extent of their resources and beyond, that is, to the extent of their credit card limits."[24] While most of the world probably does not think of soda as a luxury item—even the poorest of the poor may be seen drinking Coca-Cola from plastic bags sold on the street—nevertheless, soda most certainly is. Moreover, as McBride argues, the point is not to single out the Coca-Cola company for attention and blame but rather to appreciate the symbolic power it wields[25] for the dominance of American capitalism.

Hegemony of America. Running throughout McBride's writings on Eastern Europe and global social criticism is a thoroughgoing critique of American hegemony. In fact, the dominance of the 'American way' is a cultural dominance that has political implications—sometimes quite concrete and devastating consequences as when certain former presidents invaded other countries in the name of "spreading democracy." By and large, however, the hegemony of American culture means a celebrated consumerism. McBride laments the reduction of American intellectual life and American philosophy with the consumer-based "American way of life," a reduction often seen in "contemporary transnational, media-driven, English language-dominated culture."[26] Yet, in the same paragraph where he makes these observations, he notes the paradox that "at the very time when several philosophers both here and in Europe are emphasizing the importance of *difference*, many signs that cultural hegemony—essentially 'our' (in quotes) hegemony...—is increasing throughout the world even in the midst of political disintegration."[27] The dominance of the "American way of life" is part of the "ruling ideas" justified though liberal notions of justice and the free market:

> Lying behind and reinforcing the obvious contemporary hegemony of U.S. 'culture' worldwide, including large parts of Central and Eastern Europe, is, it seems to me, a somewhat vague but serious conviction that the 'American way' is 'right' or correct and even, in light of the collapse of the *anciens régimes* and the rise to ascendancy of truth over error that these developments supposedly represent, demonstrably so. This 'rightness' … must be based in certain principles that constitute an American ideology; might 'political liberalism' be a suitable name for it?[28]

Ultimately, of course, McBride argues that American culture is more or less equivalent to globalization. That is, capitalism and consumerism undergird both and the transnational spread of the American way of life seems to go hand in hand with globalization. This is not to say that globalization is a particularly American phenomenon but rather to bemoan the reduction of the American way of life to consumerism and capitalism. As McBride states, "the popular image of American culture throughout the world is now almost inextricably connected with individualist consumerism and transnational, 'New World Order' capitalist enterprise."[29]

Hegemony of Capitalism. The hegemony of America or the so-called "American way of life" is accompanied by the hegemony of a particular economic system. Capitalism—and in particular an individualist, free-market based capitalism—stands as the second dominant force in globalization. Readers of McBride's work cannot help but relish his metaphorical discussion of capitalism as a fairy

tale.[30] The "tall stories about the magic of the market" contribute to the fairy tale or grand narrative of capitalism.[31]

Understanding the hegemony of capitalism is vitally important to understanding globalization as an ideology. Capitalism subverts human values with capital values. Products, efficiency, and profit become more important than the person, who is, after all, relegated to the role of consumer. As McBride argues, "Goods, often identified by brand names—Coca-Cola is the prototypical example today, though a comparatively benign one—come to be perceived as more important in every respect than the human beings who produce and use them, and the systems within which they are produced is seen as most important and most sacrosanct of all."[32] The ideology of globalization cements the status of the dominant class. Capitalism, as a central part of globalization, makes "goods" part of that dominant class and "economic efficiency for capitalist profit[33] the dominant value.

Capitalist hegemony appears in the choices given to countries in transition or developing countries. The economic assistance needed to rebuild often comes with expectations of cooperation and participation in market capitalism. That also means accepting the values of consumerism, individualism, and ownership that are so central to market capitalism.[34] While some countries go willingly into these relations and globalization is embraced by many political leaders and everyday citizens throughout the world, McBride expresses the worry of many others: wealthy transnational corporations often exert an undue influence on politics within the countries in which they operate.[35] These corporations sap public attention and concern away from the needs of the people or the condition of the country itself.[36]

Economic dominance allows some countries to control policies and seek not only to maintain their own dominance but also to curtail the efforts of economically subordinate nations to throw off their subordinate status. McBride defends his position that such "global imbalance" is both unjust and violent by appeal to the experiences of the global marginalized: "They feel that the huge discrepancies in wealth have no basis in merit and that the past historical events that helped to create the present state of affairs were themselves often morally unjustifiable acts of great violence."[37]

Globalization as an ideology seeks to promote a number of interests, while some interests are more or less intentionally marginalized or silenced. The voices of the poor and politically powerless, people from so-called lesser developed countries, and countless others subject to the cultural hegemony—and concomitant socio-political hegemony—of the United States, face a fairly consistent (perhaps even systematic) effort that seeks to shape and control their fates in the global marketplace. Women and children are often cited as the most adversely affected by globalization.

There are ideological elements to all of the various faces of globalization, but here we have been concerned with globalization as an ideology itself. Moreover, while numerous feminists have argued and demonstrated globaliza-

tion as gendered (think, for instance, of the feminization of poverty or the global care-chain), the notion that globalization is an anti-feminist ideology is relatively infrequently addressed.[38] McBride's work provides the necessary tools for this analysis. In "Private Property and Communism," as McBride notes, Marx indicates "that the status of women in a given society is a good index of the level of community to which it has attained."[39] What does the status of women throughout the world tell us about the global level of community in light of globalization? Globalization has wrought a number of new forms of sexist oppression or recast old forms in new, market-based ways. Examining these new faces of oppression is crucial to feminist struggle, but it is also essential to scrutinize the way anti-feminist views not only enter in and sustain the ideology of globalization but are inherent to it. In the next section, I explore some of the ways globalization may be thought of as an anti-feminist ideology.

What Does it Mean to be Anti-Feminist?

Although feminism is itself extremely diverse, we can still speak meaningfully about an ideology being *anti*-feminist. In this section, I consider two broad categories: being anti-woman and being anti-feminist. I argue that globalization is both anti-woman and anti-feminist, and indeed, one might say that being anti-woman is a form of being anti-feminist though the opposite is not necessarily the case. I provide some examples as well as support from McBride's work to sustain the argument, but it is also worth looking at some concrete examples from economic globalization itself. Although I could have argued that globalization was male ideology, that the bias serves the interests of males, I elected instead to argue that globalization is anti-feminist, it serves the interest of anti-feminists (and probably other counter-progressive movements as well) regardless of whether those anti-feminists are male or female. The desire to get at certain elements of economic globalization's reach motivated this decision. Of course, saying something is "anti-woman," as I also argue, might be implying that it is male. That, however, is not a conclusion that I want to defend. By arguing that globalization is anti-woman, I mean to highlight its effects on socially constructed gender roles, which often, though not exclusively, affects females more than males.[40]

Globalization as Anti-woman. Economic globalization has certainly brought opportunities to some women. But as anti-globalization activists are quick to point out, it has also brought new harms and exacerbated old harms that many women suffer throughout the world. Anti-globalization activist Vandana Shiva, for instance, argues that corporations engaged in agribusiness adversely affect women and nature by robbing women of their seed knowledge, criminalizing

heritage seeds, and devaluing women's horticultural knowledge.[41] Other anti-globalization theorists focus on the physical harms such as the increase in human trafficking, the growth in sexual tourism markets, and exploitative labor markets (sweatshops). In short, globalization discriminates against women and is reliant on gender inequality.

Globalization discriminates against women in at least three basic ways. First, the focus of globalization is on institutions traditionally run by and associated with men. The article that inspired this paper acknowledges the lower status of certain life-sustaining activities. Although Jaggar and McBride use hunting, war, and ritual performance to exemplify activities accorded a higher status[42], finance, corporate mergers, and agribusiness with its associated legal rites/rights could just as readily serve as examples for the globalized society. Women have certainly made in-roads into these fields but they continue to be dominated by men and by the social prescriptions of masculinity, namely competition, aggression, and a certain sort of professionalism.

Second, the values of neoliberalism privilege a particular kind of individual, namely the unencumbered male of market capitalism. That certain sort of professionalism is the all-consuming dedication to work that Sara Ruddick so famously criticized.[43] It valorizes the worker capable of leaving the pulls of family life in order to concentrate on work. It also devalues the work that occurs in the home and the ties of the family. Globalized companies demand a workforce willing and able to traverse the globe. This workforce creates and maintains the transnational business relationships, fosters new opportunities, and looks for competitive advantage. In addition to the sexist assumptions that might affect some hiring decisions, namely that women are the primary caregivers in the home, other factors unique to the demands of transnational business relations may affect women's positions in the globalized corporate culture. Given that some cultures display a clear bias for men in professional positions rather than women, employers may be reluctant to put women into positions of power where they would have to negotiate cross-culturally.

Third, globalization acts as an external force altering the view of women and women's contributions to society in a manner comparable to how production generates changes in reproduction as an "external" force.[44] Just as colonialism imported sexist gender norms into areas of the world that previously lacked them, globalization encourages the spread of certain capitalist-based sex and gender norms and practices throughout the world thereby contributing to the cultural hegemony of the U.S. Those transnational workers also bring with them the values of consumerist culture and economic efficiency for capitalist profit. In other words, the worker of the global marketplace, like the corporation, is also a vehicle of hegemonic culture.[45]

In addition to the forms of discrimination discussed above, globalization relies on gender inequality, among other forms of inequality. Noting the expansion of the gap between the wealthy and the poor globally, McBride notes the more or less conscious efforts to promote this inequality as natural to capitalism.

He takes it a step further, however, to describe the gross inequality that results from globalized economic conditions not just as injustice but as violence and coercion.[46] This unique accounting of inequality as violence implies that there is at least some conscious awareness on the part of those who create and maintain the systems that perpetuate inequality and perhaps even some intentionality. Certainly there is violence in the history of colonialism that is a source of at least some of the global inequality currently felt. McBride directs attention at the people of "peripheral" nations who feel the violence and suffer from lack of resources. He also, and importantly, suggests that the global imbalance is a key problem for social philosophers seeking a global perspective.

The ideology of globalization includes at least three features that manifest more specifically as gender inequality. The first might be thought of simply as a large unpaid workforce. Much like during the era of colonialism, local arrangements are often replaced by the gendered expectations of major western corporations. Shiva discusses, for instance, how women were pushed out of the production and processing of locally produced food because agribusiness corporations assumed men were the appropriate people for business.[47] Women are left worse off by this arrangement. Another facet to this shift in the gender division of labor in local communities is that women may take on home-based work. Home-based work, both service and manufacturing, means that the employer does not have to pay for basic infrastructure needs. For instance, a woman employed to assemble a product would be provided the various parts or pieces to assemble in her home. The employer does not have to pay for the building and all related costs. Moreover, various health-related costs are avoided because she works from home. This allows the employer more profit while the employee is left relatively unprotected and isolated from other workers. The isolation also effectively functions to keep workers from joining into collective bargaining organizations although that is beginning to change.[48]

In addition to the significant unpaid workforce and the home-based workforce, globalization relies heavily on an underpaid workforce. Indeed, many privileged Westerners' first realization of the effects of globalization comes when they confront the reality that their clothing is produced in sweatshops or with child labor.[49] This underpaid workforce allows some, the global few, to purchase products inexpensively while the rhetoric of globalization presents the exploited workforce as grateful to receive jobs at all. Numerous human rights and feminist organizations claim that women make up the majority of the workers in sweatshops—citing figures up to 90% of workers.[50] When women's work does not simply disappear from "productive" work altogether, it all too commonly is performed in deplorable conditions and becomes devalued or undervalued.

This, of course, is connected to the third facet of gender inequality evident in globalization as ideology. The significant and growing gap between the global affluent and the global poor mentioned earlier. Wealthy women consumers

from the United States and Europe reply on inexpensive products, the prices for which remain low because of the international trade agreements and exploitatively low wages paid to workers in non-Western countries. But, wealthy women from the so-called developing nations also travel to do their consuming in Europe and the United States, thereby buying into, so to speak, the cultural hegemony of the west. Playing on this consumerism, major manufacturers continually ask the question "what do women want." Along with the inequality, then, comes a rather troubling glossing of difference. Indeed, McBride answers the question with the appropriate chastisement that women are diverse.[51] In a similar vein, Mary Hawkesworth's salient account of the various "narratives of globalization"—such as the centralization of international financial institutions, labor migration, marketization, and cultural homogenization—highlights the fact that feminism and even the mention of women appears missing.[52] She further argues that this absence leads to three misconceptions: (1) that globalization affects men and women similarly, (2) that "gendered power relations are not at play in the complex processes of globalization"; and (3) that globalization is not a women's issue.[53]

Globalization as anti-feminist. The arguments that globalization is anti-woman might be included under the umbrella of anti-feminism, but being anti-feminism is more than just being anti-woman. This second main argument, that the ideology of globalization is anti-feminist, means that globalization or the privileged actors in transnational capitalism oppose or are threatened by a vibrant and important political movement. Sometimes the opposition is more intentional than others, and sometimes the very structure of the system is simply endangered by feminism. In the rest of this section, I look at four different ways that the ideology of globalization is contrary to, contradicts, or actively opposes feminism.

To begin, McBride argues that the ideology of globalization, as we have seen, values competition over caring, and the market over humans. A huge literature within feminism explores the importance of caring to moral relations. Much of that literature also notes care's opposition to competition, a value made central by Enlightenment political thinkers defending property rights. By emphasizing competition at the expense of care, the ideology of globalization obscures the relationships, and responsibilities people and corporations have to those connected through the production/consumption system. McBride makes this point explicitly:

> What needs to be remembered is that the free market capitalist ideal, even if it should come to be espoused by vast majorities of the world's populations, intrinsically entails a very limited vision of human possibilities, based on a deliberately jaundiced, cynical, and fixed conception of the human condition. It assumes universal egoism; it places an almost magical faith in the mechanism of a blind, non-human, vectorial force, the market, over direct human control of

> economic life; and it valorizes aggressively competitive behavior over behavior of caring and sharing.[54]

By valuing the market over humans, the ideology of globalization effectively strips human connections of meaning and responsibility. The market works seemingly independently (though, as we have seen, those whose interests are served with the supposed "free" market also have the greatest interest in justifying it) and thereby appears as a natural, mystical, magical force. One cannot help but have faith in such a fairy tale! Shiva too highlights the opposition between the market and the human, competition and care when she shows that agribusiness takes capital out of local control and declares cultures that emphasize community, cooperation, and respect for nature "primitive." Further, these major corporations impose Western concepts of individualism, ownership, and the marketplace as "progress."[55]

In contrast to the message emerging from the ideology of globalization, Young argues that our very social connections inform a revised notion of responsibility for the global scene.[56] McBride would likely shape the argument differently but nonetheless agree. Consider, for instance, his discussion of "The 'rights' of rapacious multinational corporations"[57], some of which I quote at length simply because one has to appreciate the beauty of McBride's language as he issues his stinging indictment:

> An enormous stretch of the imagination is required, I think, to connect the present world of nearly global domination by the major capitalist powers and multinational industrial and service corporations, in which the loudly asserted 'rights' of the latter—Renault, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and so on—and of major banks are constantly being accorded priority over the timidly proposed 'rights' of entire peoples, with a projected future world in which there would be a coalescence of rights and duties between global corporations and world citizens. Just *trying* to imagine this is an exercise that should, I believe, lead to extreme cynicism concerning the present-day multinationals' rights claims as we and they look to the future.[58]

The "coalescence of rights and duties between global corporations and world citizens" stretches the imagination in part because those who hold dominance (major corporations) are not likely to acknowledge any caring responsibilities which might curtail or infringe on those so-called rights. Yet the environmental crisis, the violence of inequality, and the tenacity of war around the globe[59] require a much more detailed and nuanced account of responsibility across borders—an account that likely does not include maintaining as sacrosanct the rights of "rapacious multinational corporations." A focus on rights also has the effect of foreclosing other perspectives and accounts of justice. McBride is quick to note, for instance, that we have the resources significantly to alleviate the lack of adequate nutrition for everyone[60] but that will not be recognized by

justice systems focused only on rights. We have to start from the position of those who suffer, from accounts of social justice that start from the perspective of those in need, an approach suggested by many branches of feminism.

The rhetoric of 'rights' has also been used to cover over injustice, which leads me to my second point about globalization's anti-feminist bent. A necessary element of globalization, as we have seen, is inequality. Capitalism relies on inequality generally and gender inequality specifically. Proponents and defenders of globalization, then, position themselves against political movements that argue for equality, and feminism is one such movement.

Feminism argues for social justice, but neoliberalism translates that into a claim for special interests.[61] The irony here should not escape us. Neoliberal capitalism relies on inequality, but publicly proclaims a commitment to equality as counter to anyone who actually seeks to claim equality in an unequal world. Like many hegemonic ideologies, economic globalization sometimes employs the rhetoric of feminism to serve imperialist ambitions.

In this way, the so-called equality that neoliberal globalization champions whitewashes differences and different needs. As such, it is contrary to political movements that values diversity. It is also contrary to people's democracy, and as we have seen, compassion or care and women. In many ways, as McBride argues, this is counterintuitive. Liberalism is supposed to allow each individual to pursue his or her own vision of the good life. But when situations of scarcity are ignored and the needs of groups or entire peoples shunned as requests for "special treatment," then there is at least a leveling in possibilities within the various pursuits of the good life. Moreover, McBride argues that the "consumerist culture reinforces pressures toward standardization and uniformity."[62] Hegemonic capitalism seeps in to shape desires and offer a rather singular vision of the good life. He says, "On a global scale, it seems to me, a good case can be made *against* the claim that consumerist culture generally realizes the liberal dream of permitting diverse conceptions of the good to be enjoyed to the maximum extent."[63] Diversity, on the contrary, is not a friend of a market that seeks to efficiently maximize profit. A people's democracy that might regulate the market would therefore also be an enemy of the forces of neoliberal globalization. In contrast, McBride calls for "a broadly genuinely democratic regime—democratic in the economic sphere, not merely in terms of the political procedures on which liberal theorists focus—tolerant and even supportive of diversity and differences in all spheres, including in particular that of culture, and global in scope, come into being, and I am willing to argue for it and to do whatever else is feasible to bring it about."[64]

At least some feminists also would point to the way globalization is so single-mindedly focused on profit as evidence of an anti-feminist bias. Some might also suggest that globalization, in both its imperialism and its consumerism, is paternalistic. McBride makes just these arguments against global capitalism in *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe.* Although they need not be classed as feminist arguments, they do encourage and even

incorporate the sort of critical analysis that characterizes feminism and that ought to characterize all social philosophy. As he presents it, capitalists control certain resources which they are quick to claim as their own in order to reap the profit "and to dictate the terms of their use—impeccable capitalist logic."[65] The single-mindedness is dedicate to profit which then orders the social and political conditions "particularly in the needier countries such as those of Eastern Europe."[66] Think, for instance, of the World Trade Organization or the World Bank, both dominated by corporate interests based in the United States:

> The 'discipline of the market' (a favorite expression) is to be imposed, workers are to be kept in line, governments are to be treated in carrot-and-stick fashion, and layoffs are to be pursued however great the pain because this is what is 're-quired' (whatever that is supposed to mean). Of course those who speak and write this way contend, unrepentant paternalists that they are, that all of these prescriptions are acceptable because they are purely aimed at the ultimate, long-term good of the peoples on whom they are being forced.[67]

No one uses language as effectively at Bill McBride! In two quick sentences he has presented the imperialism of the capitalist global ambitions, the irony of their contradictory logic, and the sexist hegemony over peoples who differ in values. What more can be said to prove that "globalization" is anti-feminist ideology?!

McBride's Global Feminist Social Philosophy

At the end of "'Reproduction' as Male Ideology" Jaggar and McBride explore the prospects of reconceptualizing childbirth and the associated activities as "production" thereby moving it into the political sphere. In a parallel way, we might suggest reconceptualizing globalization as violence along with McBride, rather than the progress it is presented to be by the transnational or multinational corporations, politicians, and most of the popular media. Throughout his work, as we have seen, McBride offers a well developed and scathing critique of globalization. As an ideology that brings together the hegemony of American consumerist culture and the hegemony of capitalism, neoliberal globalization represents some of the worst of the American way of life and, what is worse, some of the most dismal prospects for a true global philosophy. In his provocative book *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos*, McBride offers four proposals to address some of the key problems of globalization. In short, he proposes a global redistribution of wealth, challenging the values of the market, reasserting civil society (democracy) even against capitalist "free market," and rethinking the connection between civil society and the state.[68]

McBride also offers a global vision that is explicitly feminist and non-Western. He implores philosophers to pay attention to the conceptions of community found especially in nations that have been subordinated and marginalized in the global economy. "The key notion, schematically put, is to combine a sense of reciprocal caring with a respect for differences of gender, of race, of ethnic, religious, and other historical traditions."[69] I mentioned at the outset that his project of "globalizing philosophy" relies on dialogue: "Cooperation with respect for differences, not hegemony, is what we are committed to advancing; but the challenge is to find ways of doing so without adopting a stance of either self-abasement (that is, totally denigrating our own real culture, such as it is), at the one extreme, or cultural chauvinism and paternalism, at the other."[70] Globalizing philosophy, he explains, means embracing the critical tools of philosophy.[71] It also means accepting the elements of culture that may not be praiseworthy and working from them in a cooperative endeavor to address the global imbalance of resources and needs. Perhaps then we can talk of globalization not as an ideology but as a moral imperative.

Notes

1. *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 131, 125.

2. *Social and Political Philosophy* (New York: Paragon House, 1994), pp. 144-45.

3 . "'Reproduction' as Male Ideology," *Women's Studies International Forum* 8:3 (1985):185-196, p. 186.

4. *Ibid*., p. 187.

5. *Ibid*., p. 185.

6. *From Yugoslav Praxis to Global Pathos: Anti-Hegemonic Post-Post-Marxist Essays* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), p. 93; see also McBride, 1994, pp. 80-81, 113.

7. *Social Theory at a Crossroads* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1980), p.11.

8. McBride, 1994, p. 3.

9. McBride, 1980, p. 11.

10. *Ibid*.

11. McBride, 2001, chapter 16. See also "Philosophy as Global Dialogue and the Rejection of Gratuitous Military Violence," in *Philosophy after Hiroshima*, ed. Edward Demenchonok, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 419-430.

12. McBride, 2001, p. 122.

13. Shiva makes this argument in most of her writings on globalization. See *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005).

14. Although I won't say much about imperialism—except of course for the forthcoming discussions of hegemony—it is worth noting that globalization according to this

conceptualization has distinctly imperialistic resonances, much like colonialism did a few hundred years ago.

15. McBride, 2001, p. 163; 1999, p. 93.

16. Regarding school buses see http://schoolbusadvertising.com/, Accessed February 5, 2012; as well as a host of news articles and editorials from around the world touting the benefits and drawbacks from such advertising. For advertisement on people's bodies, see *New York Times*, "The Body as Billboard: Your Ad Here" By Andrew Adam Newman, Published: February 17, 2009. Available http://nytimes.com/2009/02/18/business/media/18adco.html, Accessed February 5, 2012.

17. To name just a few: McBride 2001; Allison Jaggar, "Challenging Women's Global Inequalities: Some Priorities for Western Philosophers," *Philosophical Topics,* 30:2 (2002), pp. 229-53; Ofelia Schutte, "Feminist Ethics and Transnational Injustice: Two Methodological Suggestions," *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy,* 5:1 (2005), pp. 18-20.

18. McBride 1999 & 2001.

19. McBride, 1994, p. 113.

20. *Ibid*., p. 144.

21. *Ibid*., p. 113.

22. McBride, 2001, p. 66.

23. McBride, 1980, p. 11.

24. McBride, 2001, pp. 180-181.

25. *Ibid*., p. 164.

26. *Ibid*., p. 101.

27. *Ibid.* See also p. 156.

28. McBride, 1999, p. 69.

29. McBride, 2001, p. 156.

30. McBride, 1999, p. 126.

31. *Ibid*.

32. McBride, 2001, pp. 48-49.

33. *Ibid*., p. 203.

34. *Ibid*., p. 157; see also Jeffrey Paris, "McBride, William," in *Encyclopedia of Global Justice,* ed. by Deen Chatterjee (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011): 688-89, p. 689.

35. *Ibid*., p. 158.

36. *Ibid*., p. 182.

37. McBride, 1994, p. 145.

38. Shiva may be an exception here. See her notion of masculinzation of agriculture (2005).

39. McBride, 2001, p. 82.

40. Although the limitations of space prevent me from taking the argument in this direction, one might further extend this argument to look at globalization's impact on transgender and transsexual individuals and communities.

41. Shiva, 2005. See also "Women and the Gendered Politics of Food," *Philosophical Topics* 37:2 (2009), pp. 17-32.

42. Jaggar and McBride, 1985, p.194.

43. Sara Ruddick and Pamela Daniels, eds., Working it out: 23 Women Writers, Artists, Scientists, and Scholars Talk about Their Lives and Work (New York: Pantheon

Books, 1977); Sara Ruddick, Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

44. Jaggar and McBride, 1985, p. 189.

45. To be fair, business schools are making an effort to train students for the "global environment." Many schools now require their MBA students to spend at least a few weeks abroad in order to learn some of the business techniques and cultural codes of another country.

46. McBride, 1994, p. 145.

47. Shiva, 2009.

48. Sarah Swider, "Working Women of the World Unite? Labor Organizing and Transnational Gender Solidarity Among Domestic Workers in Hong Kong," in *Global Feminism*, eds. Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 110-140.

49. Iris Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

50. A small sampling: The Feminist Majority Foundation (http://feminist.org/other/ sweatshops/index.html); MADRE (http://madre.org/index/press-room-4/news/economic-justice-and-womens-human-rights-46.html); Global Exchange (http://www.globalexchan-globallexchange.org/fairtrade/sweatfree/faq);   United   Nations (http://www.un.org/WCAR/statements/ violence_womenE.htm)

51 .McBride, 1999, pp. 118-119.

52 .Mary Hawkesworth, *Globalization and Feminist Activism* (Lanham, MD: Row-man and Littlefield, 2006), p. 3.

53. *Ibid.*

54. McBride, 2001, p. 63.

55. Shiva, 2005.

56. Young, 2011.

57. McBride, 2001, p. 143.

58. *Ibid*., (2001, 133)

59. McBride 1994, chapter 8.

60. *Ibid*., p. 148.

61. See also Hawkesworth, 2006, p. 22.

62. McBride, 2001, p. 181.

63. *Ibid*.

64. *Ibid*., p. 184.

65. McBride, 1999, p. 75.

66. *Ibid*.; see also p. 82.

67. *Ibid*., p. 84.

68. McBride, 2001, pp. 160-161.

69. McBride, 1994, p. 148.

70. McBride, 2001, p. 101.

71. McBride, 1994, p. 147.

Toward a Transvaluation of the Doctrine of Human Rights

Calvin O. Schrag

The question as to what counts as a human right has held widespread existential interest throughout the ages and at times has occasioned explicit doctrinal formulations. From the ancients to the medievals to the moderns and to the postmoderns, the meaning of a human right has been understood in different ways. As a doctrine it played a critical role in American history. It provided a fundamental principle in the formulation of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Defending the French Revolution against its attackers, Thomas Paine published his treatise, *The Rights of Man*, in which he enunciated a doctrine of "natural rights" that sanctioned the use of revolutionary force should the individual rights of the citizenry be infringed upon by an existing government. In more recent times the doctrine has been indelibly inscribed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

There are multiple factors that are entangled in the doctrine, and the doctrine itself has been examined and assessed in a variety of disciplines—especially in political science, jurisprudence, philosophy, and theology. Plainly enough there are multiple issues at stake in the assorted appeals to the implementation of the doctrine. Some of these issues go back to the developments of Roman jurisprudence in which human rights were co-extensive with natural rights firmly grounded in a theory of natural law. During the medieval period claims were made for a more primordial grounding of natural law in divine law. In efforts to achieve some clarity of definition, there appeared to be some agreement on the need for a distinction between natural rights and human rights. Whereas natural rights were deemed to be securely anchored in natural law, so

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human rights were considered to be confirmed by positive law. Herein resides the distinction between a juridical definition of human rights and an ethico-moral definition. In the events following an increasing skepticism of the very grammar of natural law, it was considered that one can do quite well in sticking with a distinction between civil rights and human rights. This distinction became normative after the Treaty of Westphalia, which led to the creation of separate nation-states as compromising the constitutive framework for international affairs. One possesses civil rights by virtue of being a citizen of a particular nation-state. One possesses human rights by virtue of being a member of the human race. It is this distinction that carries much of the weight in current discussions on the meaning and status of rights as having both legal and moral dimensions.

What I propose to do in my brief contribution to the *Festschrift* for Professor William McBride, who is a distinguished scholar in the field of social and political philosophy, is to focus on what I consider to be two unresolved problems that have traveled with the quite immense literature on social, political, and legal philosophy during its long and serpentine development. Clearly, a genuine *Festschrift* should address matters of content in the production of the work by the individual being honored, even if somewhat obliquely. Hence, I have chosen to experiment with an essay in the general field of social and political philosophy.

It so happens that there is another reason for the choice of my specific topic. This has to do with matters more personal, involving a relationship that McBride and I share with a former mentor and colleague, John Daniel Wild. John Wild was my principle mentor and the director of my doctoral dissertation at Harvard, and shortly thereafter McBride became a colleague of Wild during Wild's tenure on the faculty at Yale. From the very beginning of this triadic relationship it became evident that the three of us possessed many similar philosophical interests. Such was the case during our professional careers and one of these philosophical interests came to the fore in an essay that Wild was working on at the time of his death.

A carefully selected portion of Wild's previously unpublished writings have now been made accessible to the general public in a volume edited by Richard I. Sugarman and Roger B. Duncan: *The Promise of Phenomenology: Posthumous Papers of John Wild*. A critical section of the selected papers bears the title: "New Directions, A Philosopher at Work: Toward a Phenomenology of the Other." In this section Wild approaches some basic issues in social and political philosophy, and particularly in the short piece titled, "The Rights of the Other as Other."[1] Wild raises some provocative questions in this short essay concerning matters of human rights and principles of human justice. In my current effort I will attempt to carry on a continuing discussion against the backdrop of issues that Wild has so forcefully brought to the fore. What is to be said about the status of human rights and the measures of social justice?

In the political discourse in the current media of the day, including books, pamphlets, newspapers, television, and radio, the issue of rights is repeatedly brought into the discussion. One quickly learns that what is at center stage in these assorted media are rights alleged to be grounded on the foundation of an unimpeachable freedom as an anchor for the rights of freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and the redress of grievances of one sort or another. It is principally against the backdrop of the concept of freedom in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution that these rights are referenced. It is assumed that these are the inviolable human rights sanctioned by the civil authority under which the citizenship of a given state is defined.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 basically enshrines these rights of citizenship as found in existing nation-states and then extends them to become functional on the international scene. These include the right to become a member of the existing international body and a protection of these rights against encroachment by legislation in any given member of the United Nations. The right to live peacefully amongst other nation-states was the general human right emphasized in the newly created Charter. Also included in the new document was an extension and broadening of human rights including additional features having to do with resources for education and the right of exchange of information among the members of the newly established multinational body. Certain measures for the giving and receiving of medical care were also addressed.

Although the scope of human rights has been broadened and the listings of the specific rights has been expanded as one moves from the inherent rights in any given nation-state to their consolidation into the human rights of the United Nations Charter, there remains a continuing problem not only with the exercise and effective implementation of the rights on the international scene, but also a continuing pesky and persisting issue as to the source and measure of a right qualifying as a genuine *human* right. Interlaced in the profession of any human right we find an entanglement of the meaning "human" with the meaning of "right." There are various answers that have been given, going back to the disputations on the role of natural law as the basis for human rights. The proponents of the natural law theory sought to ground human rights solidly on a stable metaphysical foundation. Such was particularly the case in the jurisprudence of the Stoics. Given such conditions the task then becomes that of discerning human rights as anchored in natural rights rather than defining such rights as inventions of an existing administrative and juridical entity, be it that of a particular nation-state or indeed the United Nations as a multi-national constellation, ensuring that any talk of governmentally sanctioned rights be based on natural rights, rather than the other way around. The governmental entities, whatever their size and juridical range, need to answer to a transcending right that possesses some form of universal status. Rights as understood by the Stoics took on a robust sanction derived from their metaphysical grounding in a Universal Lo-

gos. Some such grounding may well have been in the minds of the authors who drew up the United Nations Charter.

The development of the United Nations has significantly broadened and in certain special cases reformulated the scope of human rights, yet the fact remains that the rights at issue were defined against the backdrop of an international agency that is a merger of separate sovereign nation-states, each with claims upon its own national sovereignty. The task then becomes that of juggling the rights of sovereign nation-states so that some semblance of compromise might be achieved, auguring toward the view that the declared rights are indeed universal. However, given the existing conflict of interpretations among the varieties of meaning and use in the vocabulary of human rights, either in its classical pre-modern understanding before the rise of the nation-state paradigm of international relations or in the modern application in the designs of the United Nations envisagement as some sort of community of nations peacefully existing among themselves, it may serve us well to explore further the vocabulary of rights to settle on an agreement on what indeed constitutes the very meaning of a right as a genuinely "*human* right."

What is a right qua right? What is its source or origin? To whom do rights belong? Who is the genuine possessor of rights, whether of the natural, juridical, or ethical sort? What does it mean to *possess* a right? Do the rights in question simply exclude claims for animal rights? What is it that is distinctive in the definition of rights as human rights? What discipline or area of research is uniquely designed to deal with the foregoing questions? We have already indicated that there are multiple disciplines that have become involved with the meaning and applicability of rights, professing to have solidified the vocabulary of rights discourse into a "doctrine," be it legal, political, philosophical, theological, or in some cases an amalgamation of all four.

There are, we have already noted, multiple avenues of interpretation involved in addressing the issue. Nonetheless there appear to be some common prejudices that are at work in several approaches, the main one being that a human right is something that a human being in some manner or other *has*, *possesses*, or *enjoys*. The use of metaphors of "having" and "possessing" can be particularly troublesome. One would assume that the having of a right is of a quite different sort than is the having of an automobile, a house, or a tract of land. It is assumed that having rights presuppose a human being as the proper *subject* of a particular right. Or one might be inclined to speak of the holder of rights as an individuated *substance*, to which there attach human rights understood as *properties or attributes* that the subject endowed with the right in question uniquely possesses because of a shared humanity in a public world.

That the grammar of substance and attribute and that of subject and property has played an important role in the history of both classical and modern philosophy is of course clearly the case. However, it is also known to all that the use of this grammar has not been universally appropriated, and when appropri-

ated it has not been done without notable reservations and revisions. At time it has been met with outright rejection, culminating in moves to an overcoming of the classical metaphysical category of substance and the modern epistemological concept of the subject, from which the doctrine of rights with the vocabulary of substance/attribute and subject/property in its varied expressions has drawn it resources. This overcoming of metaphysics and epistemology in the varied appeals to a strategy of deconstruction of the history of philosophy has offered numerous challenges to the assorted claims of knowledge and searches for metaphysical foundations. It is not the case, however, that sufficient consideration has been given to how the deconstructive imperative might affect the understanding of human rights as a species of a moral imperative within the wider ruminations in the fields of social and legal philosophy.

Proceeding either from the classical doctrine of the human soul with its defining moral attributes or from the modern doctrine of the ego-cogito as the foundation of self-defining properties, it ought to come as no surprise that any ethical prompting would issue from a self-examination of the nature of the human soul as a metaphysical entity or some version of a centered and stable Cartesian ego-cogito. Against the backdrop of premodern metaphysical and modern epistemological frameworks, rights delineated as ethical and legal principles of human life take on an egocentric status. Rights are viewed as moral claims made by the individual to satisfy a personal need of some sort. I have a right to own a piece of property across the way. I have the right to speak my mind both in public discourse and in the press. I have the right to practice a certain religion. I have the right to assemble chosen colleagues to advance a specific plan. Here one quickly notices that rights take on an individual soul-rooted or egocentric status. A right in its entwined moral and legal status has to do with claims by an individual for fulfilling a particular need or achieving a desired satisfaction in some particular case. Rights find their origin in situations of self-interest emerging from an egocentric state of affairs.

It is this juncture that we propose what might be called a paradigm shift or a deconstructive turn in our pursuit of the origin and meaning of a human right. This is a deconstructive turn that entails a move away from a metaphysically and epistemologically anchored egocentric interpretation to a pragmatic and dialogical approach. This approach opens the space to an explicit recognition of the role of the robust alterity of otherness in the derivation of human rights. And it is precisely in this direction that John Wild urges us to turn in his provoking question that he poses in his unfinished posthumous essay, *The Rights of the Other as Other:* "Have we forgotten the right of the other to be other, and confused it with my right to be myself?"[2] This provocative question opens up a quite radically new perspective on the matter at hand. Anyone familiar with Wild's writings will straightway notice that the formulation of the question reveals his indebtedness to a major twentieth century philosopher, namely Emmanuel Levinas. This ought come as no surprise given that it was John Wild who was one of

the first American philosophers to have discovered the works of Levinas and who was asked to write the Introduction to the English translation of his *Totality and Infinity*.[3] The influence of Levinas upon Wild's later works, and particularly in the legacy of his posthumous works, provides future scholars with important tasks yet to be taken up.

In following the paths opened by our shift from an egocentric to an other-centered approach concerning matters of human rights, it is necessary to recall certain consequences of the shift from epistemology to hermeneutics. One of the principal results of the overcoming of epistemology was the decentering of the epistemological subject in such a way that it no longer functioned as an epistemic zero-point origin, equipped with specific rules of method that lead the ego-cogito to itself as thinking substance, to external objects as extended substance, and to God as infinite substance. The path to knowledge as it was set forth in the epistemological turn was that of laying out criteria of what counts as knowledge in advance, namely clear and distinct ideas, and then justifying any claims for knowledge of self and world against the predetermined criteria.

The egocentric approach to knowledge of self and world was the lynchpin of modern philosophy, first most explicitly framed by Descartes and then continued in the thoughts of his successors. And it is of some importance to note that Descartes' most adamant critics, the British Empiricists, kept the ego-centered approach intact. It matters not whether one's epistemological vocabulary moves out from a Cartesian ego-cogito, a Humean fleeting sensing subject as a bundle of perceptions, or a Kantian transcendental ego, we remain within the confines of an ego-centered approach.

Even Edmund Husserl's valiant attempt to overcome this subjectivity in his celebrated *Cartesian Meditations* ended in failure. But there is much that can be learned from his mistakes. In this very important work, Husserl seeks to solidify his project of phenomenological idealism by tracking its interior movement from an objective constitution to a subjective constitution, and then in his famous Meditation V attempts to demonstrate how the objective and subjective constitutions culminate in an *intersubjective* constitution. The objective constitution yields the proper object of knowledge as a *cogitatum*, phenomenologically rendered as the workings of an intentional consciousness that apprehends "the object as meant." The subjective constitution tracks the dynamics of consciousness in the workings of a Cartesian *ego-cogito* that is reframed as the transcendental source of meaning. The Fifth Mediation assumes the most formidable challenge of all, namely that of sketching our knowledge of other selves as other egos within the travails of an intersubjective constitution.[4]

It is the transcendental and phenomenological explication of the developing moments in the intersubjective constitution that provides us with an analytic that is at once profound but in the end comes up short of the envisioned goal. Working with the established premise of myself as reflective and animated body *(Leib)* and my perception of a physical body *(Korper)* that is not my own, I need

to account for the animation of the other body as not simply corporeal, that is to say not just a *Korper* but also as a lived or animated body like myself. The moments in Husserl's intricate progressive analysis of the intersubjective constitution, aiming to deliver knowledge of the other ego as indeed other than myself, follow the route of demonstrating a transfer of sense from myself as lived body to the other as an embodied psyche via the working of empathy associated with descriptions of behavioral significations.

What this intentionalist analysis and explication produces, however, is at most a concept of an *alter ego* that yields at best an abstracted *cogitatum*, issuing from the *ego*-cogito as source and measure of all intentional consciousness. What is disclosed is the other "as meant," but not the otherness of the other in her/his gaze, smile, frown, effervescence, despondency in a face-to-face relationship. The alter ego is not a genuine other, encountered in the web of concrete social interaction. It is more like an extended profile of oneself. The other as alter ego remains within the intentional field of transcendental consciousness. The other as encountered other in her/his lived concreteness is an existentially engaged other that appears on the scene as a voice, visage, and embodied comportment that calls upon me to respond.

The Husserl himself was unsatisfied with his analysis of the intersubjective constitution in Meditation V is well known, as it is also well known that the abstracted alter ego of his *Cartesian Mediation*s undergoes a descent into the concrete lifeworld *(Lebenswelt).* It is the return to the lifeworld (*Rűckgang auf die Lebenswelt*) that defines Husserl's project in his last work, *The Crisis of the European Sciences.*[5] However, the topic of the encountered other as genuinely other first became a centralizing feature in the writings of Emmanuel Levinas. For Levinas the other is granted a primacy, and this primacy is understood not only for the overcoming of the modern egocentric primacy of epistemic consciousness, but also and more specifically for the primacy of the other as she/he comes to presence in the concrete face-to-face ethical situation. Unmistakably, this would require a new perspective on the origin and meaning of human rights. As my individual and personal consciousness appears on the scene primarily in an encounter of and response to a social world, prior to any epistemological constructs, so is the primacy and priority of the other also in play in the derivation and conferral of human rights.

The Levinasian approach to a more robust understanding of the otherness of the other can be seen as having a quite direct influence on John Wilds' posthumous essay on "The Rights of the Other as Other" where he poses the question to which we have already referred: "Have we forgotten the right of the other to be other, and confused it with my right to be myself?" This question opens a path of inquiry away from what Wild has named "the egocentric interpretation of individual rights" and augers in the direction of an "other-directed interpretation." This other-directed approach, Wild informs us, "starts from the person or community, which actively recognizes and bestows the rights on others. It

stresses obligation and responsibilities rather than rights already possessed, in accordance with those usages, which speak of the giving, granting, bestowing of rights, and even of the creating and working out of new rights."[6]

Such an approach, as suggested by Wild in his "other-directed" interpretation of human rights as contrasted with the traditional "egocentric" interpretation, invites an investigation of the problems in traditional value theory, and especially in the field of ethical theory. Indeed, what is now called for is a veritable transvaluation of the ego-based values in the variety of axiological theories proposed throughout the history of ethics—teleological, deontological, utilitarian, libertarian, and the various combinations of all of the above. When we scratch the underbelly of these traditional approaches we find a theory of value which issues from either an explicit or implicit egocentric standpoint. Teleological ethics finds its foundation in a metaphysically buttressed moral agent with its initial question, "What is my proper end?" The deontologist works out with another theory of the moral subject, one that is shouldered with the task of asking and answering its basic ethical question: "What is my moral duty?" Utilitarianism presupposes another theory of moral agency, one that defines the moral subject as being geared to the realization of a maximal satisfying outcome of its interests and plans of action. The pivotal question then becomes "How can I best achieve a common good for the greatest number of individuals?" All of these theories move out from a value-bearing subject, and the role of human rights, should the issue come to the fore, would remain within an ego-centered perspective.

In moving to what Wild has called the "other-directed perspective," matters fall out quite differently. The initial question about the meaning and source of human rights always predates my self-examination and self-knowledge. Human rights have their origin in the presence and call from the other as genuinely other. Clearly enough, teleological questions about proper ends, deontological inquiries into the source and meaning of duties, and utilitarian options for the maximization of that which is good for the individual and society in general will all come into play. However, they will do so only against the backdrop of a recognition of the priority of the otherness of the other and the requirement to respond to the comportment of the other within the corridors of communicative praxis. This is the lynchpin of the other-directed approach to the question about human rights.

Within this other-directed approach the initial questions are: What is my responsibility in responding to the discourse and action that is already extant in the world of other selves? How do I respond in a fitting manner to that which is going on? This is the predicament in which an ethic of the fitting response needs to carry on the conversation. The guidelines to what is right emerge from the give and take that follows the call of the other. Such is a genuine marker of an ethic of responsibility, as it gives heed to John Wild's question: "Have we for-

gotten the rights of the other to be other, and confused it with my rights to myself?"

Now it need be emphasized that the derivation of an ethic proceeding from an other-directed approach, setting as the initial question of how to respond to the discourse and action of the other, does not neglect the contributions of teleological, deontological, and utilitarian reflections. The inquiries into the role of a human telos, duties and obligations, and personal and social goods are not scuttled in our transvalued perspective. They are indeed recognized as important issues. The problem arises, however, when these traditional ethical theories elevate one of the components (such as ends, duties, and common goods) to a status of primacy, around which a doctrine becomes solidified, and claims for the universality of the doctrine are made. Certainly questions about ends, duties, rights, obligations, and common goods come to the fore in the deliberations that arise out of the responses to the discourses and communicative practices of the other, but one needs to resist the lure and temptation to make one of the multiple moral requirements ultimately normative in the interests of ethical theory construction. The continuing focus should be not on constructing a new ethical theory but rather on the concrete existing struggles in our midst, such as occurrences of discrimination in regard to race and gender, issues involving gay rights, affirmative action policies, abortion, stem-cell research, education vouchers, and the quite evident discrimination in the hiring and firing practices in our various institutions across the land. In this shift away from theory to concrete practices in the struggles of everyday life, harkening to multiple voices and multiple forms of behavior, one soon discovers that one's recognition of the integral otherness of the other prohibits any claims for universality of belief solidified into a doctrinal requirement.

It is precisely the claims for the universality in the varied theoretical constructs of ethical theory informing the doctrine of human rights that has occasioned one of the more pesky distractions in the continuing history of doctrinal constructionism. Any search for a universal foundation amongst the different ethical approaches would appear to be destined for epistemological, metaphysical, and axiological disappointment. The varied communicative practices that are found in the multiple world cultures cannot be constrained by the positing of universally binding norms. The colorful ethnic display of sundry beliefs and practices around the globe resists claims for a universal normativity, not only across cultures but also within the lifeworld of any particular culture. Even within existing relatively stable cultural configurations, and specifically within the culture of an established nation-state, there are competing rights issued from the commercial, political, legal, and religious sectors of society. Within this context significant implications for a doctrine of rights issue from the life of its particular members. Highly successful entrepreneurs and the economically disadvantaged, the highly gifted and the physically and mentally disabled, submit differing claims on the issue of human rights. It is this plurality of voices that calls for

a more historico-specific definition of the task at hand, requiring specific attention be paid to the role of the difference, multiplicity, and heterogeneity in assessing the entwined issues of human rights and principles of justice.

In this call for a more practico-historical approach, soothing the itch for universal foundations of our beliefs and practices on the issue of rights and principles of justice, and moving beyond what Wild names the egocentric approach, we offer a hermeneutical-linguistic shift of grammar from "the universal" to "the transversal," allowing us to speak of "transversal rights" against the backdrop of a wider and encompassing "transversal justice." It is well known that the problem of universals has perplexed the various disciplines from the time of the ancients to that of the postmoderns. It is thus not surprising that the issue of universality should come to the fore in our struggle to cope with the meaning of human rights and principles of justice against the backdrop of the various traditional doctrines of rights and justice that make claims for universal norms and principles. The situation is such that human rights, by their virtue of being "human," should simply apply to all, as it is also assumed that for justice to be of a genuine sort it needs to inform all of its particular expressions in the life both of the self and of society.

Let us suppose, however, that the grammar of universals, whatever utility it may have, is misplaced when dealing with matters of rights and justice. Let us suppose that the longstanding tradition with is doctrines of universal rights and universal justice has congealed into a pseudo-problem rather than a genuine one, destined to remain a dead end for dealing with the specific cases of infringement of rights and injustices along life's way. Might the existential issues at stake be addressed more productively with a hermeneutical-linguistic shift away from the language of universals that has remained in the service of metaphysical construction, to an experiment in which language allows us to speak of concepts and metaphors made possible by an analysis of universality into transversality?

Our thought experiment of analyzing universality into transversality clearly requires a clarification of the meaning and use of transversality. Our interest in the possible use of this concept/metaphor for transvaluing the traditional doctrines of human rights resides in its successful employment across the varied disciplines of learning. It is a staple concept in topology as the generalization of orthogonality, demonstrating a convergence of figures and shapes without coincidence. It has made its way into the language of nuclear physics with its grammar of transverse mass so as to distinguish it from longitudinal mass. It is used in physiology as a function of the networking of fibers. Anatomy uses the term to illustrate the lateral movement of the vertebrae. Jean-Paul Sartre, in his critique of Husserl's appeal to a stabilized and unitary transcendental ego, finds the concept to be particularly effective for a phenomenological account of the unity of consciousness as a "play of transversal intentionalities."[7] Gilles Deleuze appeals to a transversal matrix for explaining the working of reminiscence in Proust's *"Remembrance of Things Past"* as he emphasizes what he calls the

"importance of a transversal dimension in Proust's works." To be sure there is that which gives the book a unity and coherence, but this unity needs to be understood as "a congruence of viewpoints without concordance."[8] Another example of the use of transversality can be found in Félix Guattari's description of the workings of a "transversality in the group" in the process of decision-making in the day to day functioning of a psychiatric institution.

It surely ought be of some importance that the meaning of transversality extends across the curricula of human learning and institutional formation. What we find to be particularly helpful on our way to a hermeneutic of transversal rights and transversal justice is Guattari's concept of "transversality in the group." His particular example is the constellation and dynamic processes that make up a successful psychiatric hospital. Here we are dealing with an institution that is made up of several interacting groups and sub-groups—including a board of trustees, administrators of the facility, the doctors, the nurses, the assistants to the doctor and nurses, the patients with their assorted maladies, the families and friends of the patients, and the clerical staff. Each of these groups and sub-groups has specific roles and perform specific functions, involving various kinds of knowledge and expertise, and evince different kinds and levels of concern and emotional involvement.

Now to achieve the desired goal of institutional psychiatric healing there needs to be an integration and unity of the several groups and sub-groups working toward a common purpose. Within the organization the constellations of power and strategies of decision-making require a networking of the various components with their distinctive contributions and roles to play. To achieve the envisioned goals of the institution the structure and functions need to activate a dynamics within a "transversality in the group." An organization of constitutive parts cannot properly function along the lines of a vertical ordering in terms of delegation of power and decision-making in a simple hierarchical manner, ordering the components involved along the model of subordinating the lower to the higher. Nor can each of the groups be given a total independence in carrying out their specific functions. Such would lead to an anarchic freedom of functions and proliferation of duties. What the situation calls for is a transversal ordering that indeed recognizes the integrity of each of the groups as it strives for a unifying effect without consolidating its particular functions into a hegemonic mandate. The otherness of each of the components with their peculiar voices and practices needs to be acknowledged in the process of working in concert. According to Guattari, it is precisely such an arrangement that illustrates the workings of the dynamics of transversality, and he concludes with providing us with a helpful summation of what is meant by transversality in institutional organization. "Transversality is a dimension that tries to overcome both the impasse of pure verticality and that of mere horizonality; it tends to be achieved when there is a maximum of communication among the different levels and, above all, in different meanings.[9]

It is against the backdrop of the concept of transversality, and especially as used by Guattari with his notion of "transversality in the group," that we analyze the concept of the universal into that of the transveral in speaking of human rights and principles of justice. The difference in the multiple usages of the meaning of freedom, equality, and fairness as components of the notions of rights and justice is simply too complex to be subsumed under a universal category. The varied senses of these terms simply do not apply to all situations and all societies. Even using freedom as an ultimate universal principle for human rights and justice, as is commonly done, does not get us very far. We need always to ask about freedom from what and freedom to and for what, and in responding we inevitably appeal to various sedimented meanings in our personal situatedness and social heritage. So also would this be the case with related senses of equality, fairness, and the like.

It is not to be understood that the varied usages in different situations has no relevance to the meaning of rights and justice, however they all play themselves out in such a wise as to avoid what Guattari refers to as "the impasse of mere horizonality." They constitute a conceptual networking that illustrates a relatedness of one to each other, but without any scaffolding which augers toward a transcending universal principle. It recognizes and responds to the claims for integrity by each. Rights and justice remain open-texture notions that draw from their particular expressions. And they do so whilst avoiding "the impasse of pure verticality."

One of the trouble spots in the received concept of human rights as well as in the more general concept of justice has to do with the linking of both to the requirement of an equality of capabilities, idealized as the condition in which all human beings are understood as equals. Any infringement of the equality of capabilities is then simply understood as a breach of both. It is precisely at this juncture that a peck of problems come to the fore. It is abundantly clear that not all persons have equal capabilities, nor do those with alleged similar capabilities have equal opportunities for their actualization.

Capabilities are not equally distributed given the diversity of both intellectual and physical resources among the citizens of the world. Thus an appeal to capabilities as an indicator of human rights appears at most to be an unrealizable goal. Granted the use of capability as an ideal may have some utility in the development of economic theory by providing some projected goals and means for their realization in circumscribed situations for stimulating a free market economy with its balancing structure for the distribution and exchange of wealth. But even within this special sector of our wider society economic theorists are wary about universals in the assorted social choice theories. To speak of human rights and justice on the culturally diversified global scene of world economics becomes increasingly problematic.

There thus appear to be two issues directly connected with a search for a definition of human rights and its relation to the more expansive problems of

rights and justice. The one issue has to do with what Wild referred to as the social egocentric predicament; the other involves the requirement to replace the metaphysically buttressed grammar of universality with an analytic of the dynamics of transversality. What is required, in short, is an alternative notion of rationality, one that moves beyond the criteriological model that continued to drive the modern Enlightenment view of reason.

If we converse and deliberate about the meaning of human rights against the backdrop of the multiple values that have been delivered in the tradition we need to recognize that we are dealing with the reality of otherness with its multiplicity and diversity of rights and claims for justice. Our predicament is such that views of what is right and what is just make an impact on the global scene of independent nation-states. Concepts of what is right what is just are already inscribed in the traditions of the various nation-states. It is thus that from the very beginning the issue becomes an international or transnational problem. Hence we need to attend to the rights of the other as they play within a wider multicultural horizon. To address the meaning of human rights on a transnational scene, we will again need to follow Wild's requirement for attending to the rights of others. But these rights of the other as other become issues primarily in local narratives rather than in abstract metanarratives that lay claims for universality. Here we are dealing with the voices in the local narratives of racial exclusion, gender discrimination, seizure of properties, ethnic conflict, religion and state conflicts, and what Levinas lists even more concretely as the voice and face of the orphan, the widow, the impoverished, and the homeless in our midst. Here we find ourselves in the midst of voices and faces that address us from numerous perspectives and require a working out from the concrete contents in what is being voiced as we persevere in our quest for the meaning and responsibilities associated with human rights. This working out, however, is not driven by a Quixotic quest for universal rights and universal justice, but rather calls for an energizing of our critical resources for coping with the practical circumstances in our unavoidable situatedness.

We began our inquiry with a question as to the meaning of human rights, giving heed to John Wild's recommendation that in dealing with human rights we should not forget the rights of the other to be other in our attempt to come up with an acceptable response to his charge. Along the way we encountered multiple uses of the language of human rights from ages past to the present, where human rights assume a critical role in the development of social and political theory. The concept of rights played an important role, for example, in the framing of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. On the international scene the meaning of human rights was extended and became a prominent point of political doctrine in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Along the way we noted the kinship of the grammar of rights with that of the concept of justice and discovered a common problem that they have shared

in their search for standards of universality. The foundation for such rights was alleged to rest on a shared freedom as their ultimate source. This foundational freedom we noted is able to take on multiple expressions and subsets of expressions—such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom for public assembly. A lot of freedoms appear to come the fore, which are then sorted out and made more specific providing the basis for human rights for collective bargaining, public education, woman's choice for an abortion—and the list goes on and on. And it should be well noted that in the expanding list of alleged human rights there are those who argue that some of these rights need to be restricted or simply ruled out as being genuine rights at all. It thus appears that grammar of freedom, rights, and principles of justice does not entail a universal grounding that can serve as an absolute and inalienable measure. Neither my freedom nor the freedom of the other as other is universal and absolute. We are always limited by a facticity of external conditions. We do not have the freedom to choose the time and place of our birth, the freedom to choose the bodies that we have, the environment into which we are born, the existence of other selves who we encounter on the fringes of our embodied spatiality. The facticity of otherness always travels with our freedom as finite, which is indeed real and genuine but only so within the limiting condition of otherness.

Saddled with the endemic problems that travel with claims for universality and metaphysical foundations for human rights and principles of justice, claims which appear to be beyond the ken of the finest theoretical reason possessed by mortal man and woman, we experimented with a transvaluation of claims for genuine freedom, rights, and justice by analyzing them into the grammar of *transversal* rights and *transversal* justice. Such a move provides us with a way of dealing with the problems of universals that have perplexed philosophers throughout the ages in their search for universal and unimpeachable foundations. Deconstructing the metaphysical doctrine of universals, we were able to shift our analysis of rights and justice away from a search for metaphysical foundations and move to a practico-pragmatic coping with the multiple meanings of rights and justice through the help of the concept of transversality. Transversality is a habit of thought that acknowledges the multiplicity and diversity of otherness in our discourse and action, avoiding both a hegemonic structuring that rests on an abstract foundationalism on the one hand, and a chaotic state of atomistic multiplicity on the other hand. The requirement of the times in coping with matters of human rights and human justice is the struggle to achieve a convergence without coincidence, a unity without identity, difference without sameness, and cooperation without consensus. Such is the task of transversal rationality and transversal communication in search for the rights of the other as other.

Notes

1.   Richard I. Sugarman and Roger B. Duncan, *The Promise of Phenomenology*: *Posthumous Papers of John Wild* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), pp. 159-68.

2.   Sugarman and Duncan, *The Promise of Phenomenology*, pp. 165-66.

3.   Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), *Introduction*, pp. 11-20.

4.   Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), "*Fifth Meditation: Uncovering of the Sphere of Transcendental Being as Being Methodological Intersubjectivity,*" pp. 89-151.

5.   Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

6.   Sugarman and Duncan, *The Promise of Phenomenology*, p. 167.

7.   Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*, trans. Forest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: The Noonday Press, 1957), p. 39.

8.   Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: George Braziller, 1972), pp. 149-50.

9.   Felix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 22.

Sartre and McBride:
Overcoming the Spirit of Serious through Revolutionary Hope

Shane Wahl

It has been just a bit over ten years since my undergraduate philosophy professor gave me some direct and life-changing advice. Since I wanted to study both existentialism and Sartre's political philosophy, there was no greater philosopher to work with than Bill McBride. "He's the guy," were Kit Christensen's words, and he should have known, as he was also a student of Bill's in the early 1980s. This was before I had gotten fully immersed in the world of thorough philosophical research. I soon purchased a copy of McBride's *Sartre's Political Theory*[1] and quickly realized both that Kit's recommendation was correct on the one hand, and I had a lot of work left to do if I wanted to be able to elucidate and critique a philosopher's work like McBride had done with Sartre's political philosophy, on the other hand.

Much of my work as a graduate student in McBride's classes centered around Sartre and the "spirit of seriousness" as opposed to the notion of "play" in terms of valuation in general and political theory and practice in particular. During this time, I got to know Bill McBride the person and found that few could pair up the sobriety of political theory in radically unjust times with the joy of the lived experience of the existential individual. One need only read a bit of McBride's work across a wide variety of topics discussing the absurdity and terror of the contemporary world and then look at Bill and read the years of laughter carved into the man's face to get a clear picture of this interesting

duality. So, on this occasion to contribute to a tribute to Bill McBride, I here merge a review of *Sartre's Political Theory* with both the attempt at conquest over the spirit of seriousness and the embrace of the existential joy of living in an absurd world, so central to the existentiality of living in these times as a social and political philosopher fully aware of the power of lived experience in shaping thought. It is in the spirit of revolution and hope that I am writing about Sartre and McBride while hopeful revolutionaries stare at the immense difficulties confronting them in this perplexing, demeaning, and demoralizing world.

The Underappreciated Sartre

While there has been a massive resurgence of secondary literature on Nietzsche in the past several decades and a solid return to Kierkegaard in the last two decades, Sartre is often overlooked in the "postmodern" literature and is almost completely ignored in contemporary analytic philosophy. Maybe each great thinker requires a substantial amount of time after death to "be returned to" in the philosophical afterlife, but given the importance of Sartre's philosophy while he was alive, something seems amiss about the current situation. While the criticism that Sartre is too "Cartesian" is certainly not on a par with "Nietzsche the Nazi" or even "Kierkegaard the conservative Christian," there definitely appears to be a similar misunderstanding of Sartre's clear relevance for philosophy going forward in this century, and in particular for political philosophy in our contemporary context of the war on terror, democracy in shambles, and capitalism faltering in a myriad of ways. It was not until Nik Farrell Fox's excellent study of Sartre in relation to postmodernism in *The New Sartre*[2] that a full treatment (and indictment) of this problem was developed in a way that should find support amongst postmodern theorists.

I would argue that Sartre's philosophy is, in many ways, postmodern before there was postmodern philosophy[3], though a development of that argument is not going to be given here. In any event, a return to Sartre *after* the development of thought ushered in by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean Baudrillard (just to stick with French post-structualism) seems warranted, especially with reference to practical question in political philosophy of "what should be done?"

Bill McBride is a thinker who acknowledges the contribution of postmodern philosophy, but he also clearly believes that Sartre is still more than relevant after that contribution. Existentialism still has a lot to offer, and should not be regarded as a kind of strange solipsistic escapism from the world and toward one's "inner states." Instead, it must and does inform our thinking and practice in a world of radical inequality, poverty, war, and terror. Sartre makes responsi-

bility for the choices in such a world all the more important, even while allowing for an openness of multiplicity of identity of self as a dynamic creation that is both conditioned by (though not in a fully passive sense), and conditions the shared world of meaning, cultures, and institutions. The world, in short, is our shared responsibility.

Much of the misunderstanding of Sartre's philosophy relies on the intense focus on the "early" Sartre of *Being and Nothingness*[4] without consideration of the later works where the language of "freedom" and "consciousness" is much more restrained and qualified. Furthermore, it is evident that the "heroic individualism" in cardboard cut-out characterizations of existentialist thought is nowhere to be found in any adept understanding of existentialism. Instead there is a radical social awareness underpinning such existential philosophy, even if not initially established. As McBride remarks:

> The story of Sartre's evolution as a social and political theorist is one of an increasing awareness, over the years, of the immense difficulties, often bordering on near impossibility, faced by individuals and then by groups in attempting to exercise freedom.[5]

This awareness came about through Sartre's lived experience and through the lived experience of other existing individuals. McBride notes that the impact of Sartre's political philosophy only became apparent to him as he was studying in France.[6] Given the continued (or re-emergent) success of libertarian thinking (at least in the U.S.) with regard to freedom, it is all the more important to see this progress in Sartre away from the standard interpretation (correct or incorrect) of Sartre's views on freedom in his early work and toward a richer notion of what may be called "conditioned freedom" in the later Sartre. For the most part, this is what McBride focuses on in *Sartre's Political Theory*.

Sartre the Political Thinker

Sartre's Political Theory is a decisive engagement with the *development* of the social and political philosophy of Sartre in such a way that it becomes clear how Sartre the political person and Sartre the philosopher started to merge by the time of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.[7] The text tells a story of Sartre's political growth as much as it gives an account of the details of Sartre's political thinking. It is the *Critique* that perhaps confounds readers of Sartre the most, though I personally was confounded in a delightful way first as an undergraduate and later as a student in a graduate seminar. This is where the exposition in the *SPT* is at its best with its full engagement with such a dense, but rewarding work of philosophy.

There is no hyper-individualism in Sartre's theory, mainly because there is no such thing as the solitary existing individual in the world. Human individuals are almost always engaged in a world with other humans, no matter if this takes the form of friendship, conflict, or indifference. The world is fundamentally social and the *Critique* is Sartre's theory of social ensembles, weaving an account of how human beings comprise aggregates or groups, and how eventually organizations and institutions come to threaten or kill the human freedom (and by that this is meant as *praxis*) initially needed to form groups in the first place. To be clear, this is a book that seeks to confront Marxism as the philosophy of the age and to "existentialize" that Marxism with an account—sometimes phenomenological—of how human freedom works and how groups come to be (and become static). "Stalinism" is the outgrowth of the dialectic in "*deviant*" form[8], and not the natural outcome of the dialectic. The dialectic makes the intelligibility of the world possible. "If we have nothing else, perhaps not even a great deal of *hope* after the repeated and shattering disappointments of the twentieth century, he is saying, we can at least comprehend it all."[9] The terms of the dialectic for Sartre are *praxis* (free human activity) and the *practico-inert* (past praxis conditioning/constraining human freedom).

Here, McBride's definitions are key to understanding this dialectic:

> The individual is an organism, hence an entity with needs, and the essentially inert, non-agential material objects that are able to satisfy those needs are scarce. The individual is also *praxis*: an agent, necessitated to make free choices about the means to need-satisfaction and hence, to survival.[10]

Human beings find themselves in a world worked, shaped, established already before they are aware of what that world is in the first place. They then must make choices in that world to survive, creating new projects for themselves which end up being a re-established as "the conditioned" and it starts over with human *praxis* as (hopefully) the dynamic process of always taking the world as not merely given but as an opportunity for human freedom/responsibility to make the world anew, but to never "rest on one's laurels."

This, it would seem, is ultimately not very much different from the view of "freedom" as found (if it is to be found) in post-structuralist accounts of the human condition. Again, a detailed working out of those similarities is beyond my scope here, but the point is that Sartre does not have a wild libertarian view of human freedom. Rather, it is a very nuanced view that takes into account how thoroughly human freedom is conditioned.

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In a conversation with Bill during my first year as a graduate student I expressed deep-felt frustrations with the "grand injustices" of the world and the utter absurdity of the tragic struggles so many human beings face on the planet while capitalists and their government partners trample the poor with such *audacity*. It is truly a time without much *hope* for a better tomorrow, Bill expressed to me in many more words. "It is just . . . the world . . ." Bill will say, shaking his head with clear despair and yet a kind of Nietzschean "free spirit" laugh also accompanies the statement at one and the same time. This is the condition of human freedom—it results, perhaps more often than not—in a total mess of things, but what is there to do—at least some of the time, and especially when discussing such matters as philosophers—but laugh at it all?

Overcoming the "Spirit of Seriousness"

Understanding the character of human freedom and how human freedom creates character is another way of thinking about the hope/despair dichotomy. This is Sartre's political awareness and it is a truly existential way of understanding what it means to be a person engaged politically in the world. Human freedom is such that it evokes flight from that very freedom so central to human life. This appears in the very mode of valuation:

> It is the ambiguous, double-edged character of values that Sartre wishes especially to stress. Whereas requirements appear to me as not belonging to me, values, however easily an observer might be able to demonstrate the fact of their having been imposed by virtue of existing social structures, are seen as my own. They are ultimately, after all, the free creations of human *praxis*, however mystified.[11]

Values become a part of the practico-inert field. This is the spirit of seriousness—that very alien view that values are not actually created by human freedom but given "out there" in the world as conditioning human freedom. This makes for a very static approach to human valuation and underpins the social structures that are to govern, or perhaps more accurately, oppress human beings. The spirit of seriousness ignores the primary act of human creation bringing out moral values and subject to human endeavor and makes those values out to be objectively existing in some pre-established way, no matter what they are. As Simone de Beauvoir noted:

> The serious man gets rid of his freedom by claiming to subordinate it to

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values which would be unconditioned. He imagines that the accession to these values likewise permanently confers value upon himself. Shielded with "rights," he fulfills himself as a *being* who is escaping from the stress of existence . . . he is no longer a man, but a father, a boss, a member of the Christian Church or the Communist Party . . . productions becoming human idols to which one will not hesitate to sacrifice man himself.[12]

For George W. Bush and the neo-conservatives who dominated his foreign policy, "democracy" and "freedom" were those values taken to be more important than anything else, even more than the actual creation through human action of democracy and freedom concretely realized. This led to trying to force democracy and freedom through war, invasion and "shock and awe."

But there are other less obvious examples of the spirit of seriousness. One is the anti-war protester filled with the notion that "peace" is a value objectively given, yet he or she does nothing more to bring that peace about than yell joylessly in the street about how evil George W. Bush is. More recently, "hope" and "change" were taken to be the values of the anti-Bush, though those words mean nothing post-Bush as President Obama has embarked on an often more shocking foreign policy initiative in the Middle East and Central Asia. There is no such thing as abstract hope and change. Hope and change (and democracy and freedom) are developed concretely through human action and participation in the very act of the creation of values. This is the ongoing condition of human valuation at all times central to *praxis*. Values become *inert* when they are embodied in institutions and when they are taken for granted. This kind of co-option is readily apparent in the hippie dresses one can purchase at Wal-Mart.

The spirit of seriousness is clearly an uncritical attitude and as such is not very serious in the sober sense at all. At the same time is undergirds many of the problems in our moral thinking in so far as this attitude bleeds into political thinking and the formation of rigid ideologies putting forth such notions as "hard work" and "personal responsibility" as values without any understanding of the concrete realities underlying the assumptions present in such evocations.

What would it mean to overcome the spirit of seriousness? It would seem to entail understanding that values demand participation in life; to create values means to live them. It also means that there is an inherent joyful frivolity needed even in the face of injustice. What I mean is that the creation of values is much like the creation of rules for baseball or any other game. There are rules to be followed, but those rules can always change when people—"on the ground"—realize the need to amend the rules or get rid of the rules altogether. Nothing is set in stone as there will always need to be alterations made to enhance and improve upon the "rules of the game." Sartre is clear:

To be sure, it must be noted first that play as contrasted with the spirit

of seriousness appears to be the least possessive attitude; it strips the real of its reality. The serious attitude involves starting from the world and attributing more reality to the world than to oneself . . . Play, like Kierkegaard's irony, releases subjectivity. What is play indeed if not an activity of which man is the origin, for which man himself sets the rules.[13]

One is still left with the question of the application of "play" in a political philosophy. I contend that the principle applies to the both the "group-in-fusion" and the "pledged group" that Sartre discusses as he progresses into Book II of the *Critique*.

Groups: Dynamic and Static

As McBride correctly remarks, Book II, section one is the "heart of Sartre's political theory."[14] Here there is the move from the individual in the collective through to the institution and the counter-finality (the return of past *praxis* now co-opted and made stagnant as the conditioned) of group formation is developed. I am not going to delve into the full movement of this in detail here, but rather I will focus on what I take to be the height of the "good" (and by good I mean resistant to co-option and stagnation) kind of group formation, according to Sartre, which, I maintain is really the group-in-fusion. That said, while the form of the pledged group is deeply problematic for individual freedom, I claim that the content of the pledge could be as such to prevent such encroachment, especially the encroachment that would lead back to the spirit of seriousness.

It is at this juncture that I take Sartre's anarchism to come from, at least in some respects. The pledged group is where the real threat ("terror", though the term is clearly in danger of total overuse now) to individual freedom and *praxis* arises, but I maintain that if "play" is the operating principle and regulative idea of such groups, no threat of internal oppression can overtake the group's members. What this means is that groups as voluntary associations without rigid, and often bureaucratic, divisions of labor (as seen later in the Critique in the "organization") do not threaten individual freedom and *praxis*. This is because there is concreteness in such groups being formed, but what is important is that such groups never reach full form as in a mold that hardens. It is in struggle, more often than not, that values are achieved and goals are met. Once the struggle becomes settled and organizations are formed, the original *praxis* is lost, returning in the practio-inert field demanding common *praxis* (often struggle) that no longer will come about in such groups.[15]

With regard to the fused group, Sartre provides an insightful description of the storming of the Bastille in which individuals gathered in common *praxis* to achieve some goal. This was not a leader commanding everyone to do anything,

but rather the realization, whether actually uttered or not by any individual, that everyone shared a goal and could achieve it by forming a group. Such a group forms around some kind of injustice or issue requiring attention. This is a concrete matter, as the group forms "on the ground" rather spontaneously in order to meet a common threat, achieve a common goal, etc. The notion of the "third" party is crucial here and is must be noted that this is a kind of objective awareness brought about by some (any) individual signifying that each individual is partaking in the common *praxis*. This group-in-fusion is then confronted with the possibility of the dissolution of the group as quickly as the immediate threat is overcome or goal is reached. This is when the social ensemble moves into the more formal structure of the "pledged group." This is where individual freedom starts to crumble as the group *qua* group makes a threat against its members in order to maintain group status.

The pledged group that makes play the integral principle guiding its actions in the world resists the "fraternity-terror" that overwhelms individual freedom and begins the movement towards the counter-finality of the organization and the institution. That is, play resists abstraction and it resists succumbing to set-in-stone structures and forms of hierarchy found in organizations relying on the division of labor. Organizations usher in the stagnant politics of bureaucracy and even lobbying of elected officials. Organizations mean playing to political parties, the great thwarters of democracy. Institutions are the embodiment of the static nature of struggle terminated.

To "pledge play" in a revolutionary context (as that is what is really at stake here, in these times) means several things. First, it entails the lack of punishment on members of the group if individual members do not want to engage in the common praxis of the group. This is a rather common thing in the direct actions of groups formed around anarchy as a guiding principle—those who freely consent partake in the direct action and those who do not simply do not partake, but this does not have an effect on the status of those individuals' group involvement. Second, no revolutionary group pledging play devolves into playing the game of the oppressors, whether that be in the form of sexism, racism, homophobia, or various harmful uses of propaganda, non-critical thought, and manipulation. Third, the goals of the group never trample on the freedom of the individuals involved in the group in any form of coercion. Values, again, are not "out there" but are created through the human imagination. Pledging play, thus, means avoiding doctrine; it means that the "rules" are constructed and can be altered or thrown away entirely. This is the unstated status of the group-in-fusion as it is engaged in common *praxis*. What is vital is that the pledged group keeps this kind of approach to that common *praxis* while also maintaining the common *praxis* over time.

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It is here that revolutionary hope is to be found. There is no hope in using the machinations of political parties and the electoral process. Sartre has the tools in his political philosophy to be powerfully influential for radicals seeking real change and the flourishing of democratic citizenship (which is truly a matter or existential concern). There are few who more loudly proclaim this positive future and relevance for Sartre's philosophy than William Leon McBride. The double meaning of this book's title is integral to an understanding of McBride's status in social and political philosophy, whether it be in his examination of the changes in Eastern Europe, the status of philosophy around the world, or his analyses of the profoundly disturbing American-lead "war on terror." There is hope for revolution and that is found in the power of the lived experience of individuals facing deeply unjust systems of power, manipulation, and economic and environmental degradation. This is the hope in human imagination and the creation of new values and new understandings of values. On the other hand, such hope in the human imagination is revolutionary itself, in the understanding that not all is lost since human activity itself is the driving force needed to overturn and destroy such injustices in order to create that other word that is possible.

Notes

1.   William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

2.   Nik Farrell Fox, *The New Sartre: Explorations in Postmodernism* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

3.   I am very much indebted here to conversations with Brian Kanouse about the similarities in approaching identity shared by Samuel Beckett and Jean-Paul Sartre, especially in the understanding of the difference between the status of the ego in pre-reflective and reflective consciousness.

4.   Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956).

5.   William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory*, p. 8.

6.   *Ibid*., pp. 12-15.

7.   Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Volume 1 (New York: Verso, 1976).

8.   William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory*, p. 116.

9.   *Ibid*., p. 117.

10. *Ibid*., p. 128.

11. *Ibid*., p. 136.

12. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (New York: Carol Publishing, 1996).

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 740-741.

14. William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory*, p. 141.

15. There are many examples of this problem. Some labor unions (those which serve to placate workers instead of working to drastically improve the plight workers), Students for a Democratic Society, other 60s "radicals," progressives working for the 2008 Obama campaign, etc.

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Matthew Ally is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Borough of Manhattan Community College – City University of New York. A specialist in twentieth-century German and French philosophy, he has devoted more than two decades of intensive research to the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980). With Sartre's thought always in the background, Ally's current interdisciplinary re

search focuses on three fields that are, in his view, deeply interconnected: the still-nascent field of Consciousness Studies, which blends philosophical and scientific methods in the study of consciousness; the burgeoning field of Environmental Philosophy, which draws resources from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences in the philosophical interpretation and ethical evaluation of human relations with the more-than-human natural world; and the ethics of globalization, which is concerned with the moral dimensions and ethical implications of rapidly increasing global interconnectedness. His broadest interest is in the relationship between emergent forms of socio-ecological awareness and activism and the very real prospects for a sustainable future here on Earth.

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