DEMYSTIFICATION: AN IDENTITY FOCUSED REVISION TO LOGIC-BASED

THERAPY

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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August 2017

Major Subject: Philosophy

ABSTRACT

This project aims to contribute to Logic-Based Therapy, the only fully formed methodology in the area of philosophical counseling. It proposes an identity-focused approach to this model of talk-therapy based on the philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir, which is equipped to address gender specific issues. The various approaches to philosophical counseling aim to facilitate the recipient in gaining a deeper understanding of his or her own existence, and in taking responsibility for him or herself. The value of this style is that rather than treating the source of 'depression,' or 'mental disturbance' as a psychological abnormality or disease, entirely out of the control of the individual, it helps identify the ways in which we cause our own unhappiness through our patterns of thinking. Although implying causality in this way may appear as a strong claim, it provides the individual with a greater sense of agency. To the degree that one can redirect one's thoughts, he or she can begin to work her way out of self-destruction.

Developed by Dr. Eliot D. Cohen in the mid-1980's, Logic-Based Therapy aims to help the recipient identify one or more of eleven fallacies, or irrational thought patterns operating in his or her reasoning, formulate them into practical syllogisms and then refute them by offering philosophical antidotes. The structure of this approach is comprehensive, however Beauvoir's account of existential freedom and responsibility in terms of identity-formation, particularly her discussion of bad faith or the failure to assume freedom, reveal a lack. When we fail to properly assume responsibility for our freedom, we become vulnerable to the will of others, or susceptible to imposing our will

on others. As psychanalyst Jessica Benjamin's critical appropriation of Beauvoir's work nicely demonstrates, this failure has a gendered element. While this distinction is not absolute, women tend towards the former and men tend towards the latter. Beauvoir concludes in her *Second Sex* that woman, the historical other to man, must assert herself if she desires to overcome her position as the inessential. Benjamin explores the psychology behind this claim and suggests that generally speaking, women tend not to assert themselves while men tend toward the refusal to give adequate recognition. This project concludes that the development of a framework for adequately addressing these phenomena associated with bad faith would improve the effectiveness of Logic-Based Therapy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this dissertation is to offer a novel contribution to the philosophical

counseling therapeutic model known as Logic-Based Therapy (LBT) that I have

identified from out of a practical understanding of the works of philosopher, Simone de

Beauvoir. Her investigations are principally concerned with analyzing what it means for

human beings to have a proper, authentic, or what I would suggest, healthy, orientation

to or command of our existential freedom and thus responsibility, our 'means.' She

acknowledges however, that many if not most individuals are prone to inauthenticity, or

bad faith, the attitude we switch into when we desire not to be free or responsible. If the

attitude of authenticity promotes health and wellbeing, which I argue it necessarily does,

then that of bad faith must lead us in the other direction. This dissertation argues that

LBT is a powerful approach to aid individuals in developing their reasoning abilities, or

command over their freedom, that can be strengthened by full consideration of the ways

in which bad faith frustrates such a goal. The argument that this dissertation seeks to

demonstrate is as follows:

Fundamentally, Simone de Beauvoir is concerned with human dignity, or the

special status that freedom endows human beings[1]. She aligns herself squarely with the

phenomenological critique of Western epistemology since antiquity, in its approach to

(or claims to) knowledge. The 20th century philosopher Edmund Husserl, 'father of

phenomenology, criticizes psychology or psychologism on the grounds that it is concerned not with how thought is but in "how it ought to proceed in its thinking[2]." Beauvoir would agree since she explicitly opposes such normativity. To remain faithful to her approach to philosophy in general would not be to adapt her philosophy to a psychological model. Rather it would be to take her fundamental insights and develop a philosophical approach to help individuals recognize, understand, assume and assert their existential freedom and responsibility in this world.

Later in her life, Beauvoir critiqued her major philosophical work, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, on the grounds that it remained too abstract. As far as Existential Phenomenology goes, her own writing is arguably clearer and more connected to concrete reality than many of her contemporaries but I think she could have gone further to communicate her position in a more widely accessible way. She eventually abandons philosophy to write works of literature, which embodies her vision of the authentic existential attitude of the artist-writer who wills her own freedom by willing the freedom of all others in making the appeal to freedom. This demonstrates her commitment to spreading a conscious awareness of the significance of freedom to the masses. Approaching such a task through publishing works of fiction for a popular audience given that she had that platform is one potentially fruitful way for the philosopher to engage in the project of freedom. Another possibility that Beauvoir would likely be in favor of however, would be to work directly with individuals toward the same end in a therapeutic context.

It is time, as every generation seems to believe, for us to make some major

changes in this world. If 20th century German philosopher Martin Heidegger is correct

that we are at the edge of the end of Western philosophy[3], a dramatic transformation in

approach seems appropriate. Historically speaking, the philosophers have levelled the

same general criticism at the masses: they are uncritical, unthinking, fickle, inauthentic,

or as 19th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant poignantly suggests, simply held

in a self-imposed state of immaturity[4]. As 19th century political philosopher Karl Marx,

20th century existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, and others have argued, a feature

of modernity has caused us to become fundamentally alienated from ourselves. Within

the stock of wisdom we have collected throughout the history of Western philosophy can

be found powerful, practical methods by which individuals may attempt to overcome

such self-alienation. The problem is however, we are keeping philosophy locked up in

the "Ivory Tower," and it no longer seems justifiable.

The idea that modern human beings suffer from self-alienation is grounded

primarily in Marx's theory that the stratification of society into social classes estranges

us from certain features of what he calls our species essence[5]. On his account, alienation

from the self and ultimately estrangement from humanity is the result of being a

mechanistic piece of a social class. Heidegger incorporates this insight into his critique

of what he refers to as 'Western Metaphysics[6],' a critique that Beauvoir implicitly

assumes in her philosophical position. He refers to any approach for knowledge

acquisition that is directed at beings, or that which can be grasped by the senses, that

seeks to develop a stock of fully determinate 'facts,' such as physics, biology, chemistry,

linguistics, psychology, history, sociology, or any other such academic branch of inquiry, as 'Western Metaphysics.' He argues that western metaphysics' emphasis purely on beings has resulted in a forgetfulness of Being itself. On Heidegger's account, Being itself can be understood as the condition for the possibility of meaning in the first place, which resides in the invisible 'inverted world[7]'as Hegel refers to it, inaccessible to the senses. To borrow from the language of Heidegger's mentor, phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, the attitude which conditions the overall approach of western metaphysics has, throughout the past few centuries, permeated its way deeply into our 'natural attitude[8],' or the taken for granted assumptions we hold about ourselves and the world that guide our interactions in and with it. In this way, Heidegger thinks that humanity has become cutoff from our ability to engage with the mystery of the universe as a result of the prevailing attitude that what matters is what can be grasped by the senses.

For Heidegger then, this forgetfulness of Being that the prevailing 'technological-rational' attitude enforced by our predominant modes of inquiry leads to, prevents us from properly relating to ourselves and thus necessarily to others and the world. This idea of properly relating ourselves to our-Selves, an appropriation of the Kierkegaardian understanding of authenticity[9], is also a matter of authenticity for Heidegger. On his account, to be authentic is to posit or assert oneself as the ground of one's own being[10], which is ultimately to acquire the Husserlian ability to self-verify what is grasped by consciousness[11]. For Husserl, this becoming the ground of one's own being is enabled in the first place through phenomenology, his idea of first philosophy,

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or a rigorous examination of the contents of one's own consciousness. Conversely, for Heidegger this is achieved by allowing oneself to become fully attuned to the mood of anxiety, which somehow lifts one from out of the 'natural attitude' for a fleeting moment and allows one to resolutely choose to be the meaning maker for ones-Self. Beauvoir's own position clearly has both of these notions built into her view of what it means to genuinely or properly assume one's own freedom. However, she does not spell out her own suggestion as to how we may come to inhabit the attitude of authenticity beyond a shift in consciousness' intentional activities. In other words, for Beauvoir, the difference between projecting ourselves into the world authentically, or conversely, in bad faith, is the difference between where we direct our desire. The authentic, or I will argue healthy, attitude turns out to be that wherein what I desire is 'to disclose being[12]' or in other words, to have meaning revealed so that I may discern it. Its opposite, bad faith, is the inauthentic attitude wherein what I desire is to have a pre-determined, fixed identity, which is absolutely impossible due to the fact that human being is thoroughly ambiguous. Existential freedom is the responsibility we have to ourselves to define both ourselves and our situations. Therefore, we assume such responsibility properly, when we remain open to discerning different possible meanings through which we can gain deeper insight into ourselves and our situations, and out of which we can order our commitments and thus actions. And we assume it inauthentically or unhealthily when we allow our situations or others to determine what we are to mean, or when we attempt to impose meaning on ourselves, our situations or others that is contrived.

Beauvoir demonstrates her position, with this central distinction between the authentic or healthy attitude, and that of bad faith which is self-defeating and thus unhealthy, more concretely in its application to the lived experience of women in her *Second Sex*. This important work details her understanding of woman as other, or as the subject of oppression in a unique way. In her *Ethics of Ambiguity*, Beauvoir defines oppression in terms of being cut off from one's means[13]. Very obviously, to be cut off from one's means has material implications in that we consider people who are enslaved, impoverished, hungry, homeless, victims of abuse, imprisoned, or even people who are deeply indoctrinated, or suffering from addiction to be oppressed in a robust way. Individuals who fall into these categories are severely limited in the ways they are able to live into their possibilities. In this dissertation however, I want to argue that to be cut off from one's means has a much deeper significance, related to the idea of alienation from the self. For the purposes of adapting Beauvoir's philosophical view into a therapeutic model, I think it is even more important to consider the implications of being cut off from one's means in terms of command over our conscious abilities. In this way, I want to grasp self-alienation as a matter of an improper or immature understanding, and therefore way, of inhabiting one's conscious abilities, which is oppressive in that it doesn't allow us to assume our existential freedom and responsibility to self-identify in a robust or satisfying way. And, for Beauvoir, we can determine when this is the case through the frustration of our desire in whichever way we direct it.

Importantly, in the *Second Sex,* through a critical appropriation of Hegel's famous 'Master-Slave Dialectic,' Beauvoir details identity formation, generally

speaking, as a process that occurs inter-subjectively, or through relations with others. In this way, it involves the process of recognition whereby I am always simultaneously giving and receiving feedback to and from others, which is to greater and lesser degrees mutual or unequal. According to late 18th century German philosopher Johann Fichte, and then Hegel's appropriation of the idea, human freedom is contingent in that if I am to understand myself as free, I must be recognized as such by an other who I also recognize as equally free[14]. Oppression results from unequal recognition, or in other words, when one side of the relation asserts itself as independent or beyond the contingency of freedom, by refusing to acknowledge the equal amount of freedom inherent to the other side. This dynamic between two intrinsically free subjects who have engaged in the struggle for freedom[15] but have essentially failed, is what Hegel refers to as the 'Master-Slave Dialectic.' For him, it is a necessary stage in the development of consciousness toward 'Absolute Knowing,' which I understand to be a mature or well developed way of inhabiting one's own conscious abilities.

The sense in which the 'Master-Slave Dialectic' represents failure is that it ultimately boils down to a misunderstanding of existential, human freedom on the part of the 'Master,' and this has serious consequences for both sides. The 'Master,' ego-driven, selfishly, like a child, asserts himself as the only one who matters, or in other words, as the only one whose meaning-making abilities or freedom ought to count. In this way, the Master acquires a sense of power or superiority over the Slave, and, as Machiavelli forcefully demonstrates in *The Prince*, anyone who claims power over others must necessarily, actively maintain it; the Master's entire identity thus becomes

wrapped up in perpetuating the 'truth' of his superiority. The Slave, on the other hand,

internalizes her newly acquired identity as object, as inessential, as undeserving of

assuming her freedom to discern meaning and define herself accordingly, and works in

support of the Master's fantasy of himself.

In this dissertation, I suggest that we grasp this feature of the Master-Slave

Dialectic in terms of what Kierkegaard refers to as 'Narrative Consummation,'

embodied by the figure of the Seducer[16], whereby immature, selfish consciousness seeks

to performatively enact its fantasies in concrete reality through the dishonest

manipulation of others and objects it encounters in experience. What this suggests is

that in order for the Master to be able to successfully engage in this Narrative

Consummation, he is entirely dependent on the role that the Slave assumes when, in

internalizing the status he imposes on her, she engage in Narrative Consummation

herself. This is why Beauvoir rightly makes the controversial claim that to occupy the

position of the inessential, the other, is evil. Internalizing the definitions imposed on us

externally is a choice, albeit coerced, but nevertheless only one of at least two different

options, which keeps both parties in a perpetual state of immaturity and allows the

Master's sense of power to grow. Further, in so enacting her inferior role, the Slave

necessarily loses sight of her intrinsic human dignity.

The use of the female pronoun in describing the Slave here is intentional. In *The

Second Sex*, Beauvoir is particularly concerned with woman's historical role as other. It

is ironic, thus all the more appropriate that she would use this optic of Hegel's to run her

analysis of the situation of women, due to the fact that he literally only had men in mind

in his description of consciousness' development; he briefly mentions how mother and wife factor in at the stage of the 'Ethical[17],' but he doesn't seem to consider women to be subject to this same process at all. It seems however, as Beauvoir and psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin argue, that women are most subject to it. The fact that woman is other to man is a direct result of the fact that he refuses to recognize her. The irony resides in the fact that Hegel perfectly establishes this point.

Beauvoir demonstrates just how deep the implications of unequal recognition are for women, who in her opinion, are othered in a unique way compared to groups who can trace their oppression back to a particular historical moment. As a matter of historical fact, men and women have what she refers to as an 'original mitsein[18],' or being-with in that as far as all of our records indicate, the male and female members of our species have never existed in isolation from one another. Jews can identify the origins of their oppression thousands of years ago in Egypt. Apart from isolated pockets of matriarchal societies that have existed and ultimately have been destroyed throughout time, the notion that women are inferior to men has been taken as a fact of nature for as far back as has been recorded. In this important way, women have long been mystified as to their freedom, if not simply cut off from properly assuming it by engaging in projects that express it.

For Beauvoir, it is evil and paradigmatically oppressive to treat adults who have surpassed the moment of moral choice like children. The conscious abilities of children are necessarily underdeveloped, and therefore it is advantageous for their very survival that adults set *certain* limitations on them until they develop to the point where they can

adequately assume control over their capacities to discern meaning, and then define themselves and act in the world accordingly; their freedom. When we treat adults in this same way, we both fail to respect their freedom and demonstrate a selfish misunderstanding of what freedom amounts to, indicating immaturity. Simultaneously, when we, as adults, allow ourselves to be controlled or manipulated by others, when we internalize and assume the definitions and restrictions imposed on us externally from society and others, we also demonstrate a misunderstanding of freedom, thus immaturity in the way we inhabit our conscious abilities. This last point makes a strong claim on purpose, which is as strong as the claim I view Beauvoir to be making, precisely because I think it's crucial to be able to locate our agency, particularly in those instances when we freely relinquish it by succumbing to the other. Individuals who are so severely oppressed as to be mystified, individuals who have absolutely no sense of what freedom is and therefore no way of grasping that it is a feature of their being, are clearly not responsible. Everyone else *is* responsible. For Beauvoir, every individual must be provided with an adequate standard of living, and every individual with an inkling of their own freedom is responsible to assert themselves; if we don't stand up to the Master, then we set ourselves up as willing accomplices.

Kierkegaard has us understand that we are relational beings, or in other words, I am a self that relates itself to itself, and increasingly in modernity, Karl Marx rightly points out that human beings have become alienated from them-selves[19]. Among his many important insights, Kant suggests that humankind as a whole, is stuck in a state of self-imposed immaturity due to endemic refusal to engage in the public use of reason, a

likely explanation for what self-alienation involves[20]. Hegel powerfully suggests that

consciousness does not arrive in us fully intact, but instead *can* be developed into

maturity, or Absolute Knowing. Kierkegaard appropriates this account and replaces

Absolute Knowing with faith in repetition[21]. Following Hegel, the phenomenologists,

offer their own accounts of how we might go about developing consciousness as such.

Husserl makes us aware of the fact that under normal, everyday circumstances, we

organize ourselves and our affairs through the lens of the natural standpoint, or attitude,

which is comprised of our pre-reflective, preconceived notions about ourselves and the

world and that developing consciousness to maturity requires a rigorous examination of

its contents, that which underlies the natural attitude[22]. Agreeing with the need for such

rigorous self-examination or first philosophy, Heidegger argues that the attitude or optic

of Western Metaphysics has become so deeply ingrained into our natural standpoint that

it has led to the forgetfulness of Being, or our ability to discern meaning for ourselves

from out of the mystery of the universe[23]. In accord with all of these insights,

Beauvoir's major contribution is her powerful demonstration that the ideals of patriarchy

have become, arguably, even more deeply ingrained in humankind's natural attitude.

In other words, not only are modern human beings inherently biased towards

technological mastery of the Earth and concern to investigate only what the senses can

grasp, but we are also pre-reflectively biased towards societal norms regarding gender

identity. Women are weaker; women should only aspire to be wives and mothers;

women are meant for the sexual titillation and gratification of men; women are inferior

to men; it's the woman's job to cook and clean the home and take care of the children;

women need men to take care of them; it's a woman's job to please her man; she must obey him; women should dress modestly in public so as to not arouse the men she comes in contact with; women shouldn't have the right to have abortions; women who have sex outside of marriage are slutty; women are overly emotional; women are vindictive and manipulative; women must keep their men satisfied; and on and on. Men on the other hand, are strong; men must provide for their families; men are more intelligent than women; men are in charge; it's not the man's job to cook and clean; men aren't essential in the raising of their children; real men don't cry; or display any sign of emotion; it's the man's job to earn the money; it's ok for men to cheat; men should earn more money because they're more reliable since they can't get pregnant; men are superior in everything; real men fight; men are rational; need I go on.

Historically speaking, man has set himself up as Master, as the essential, standard or ideal human type, and in so doing, he has posited woman as that which is other than man. Woman has been relegated to the inferior role of Slave, inessential and not fully human. Beauvoir's deep insight is that this immature relationship which has been perpetuated since the beginning of time as we understand it, has been enabled by the role that narrative plays for us. Over time, stories about what makes a proper man and a proper woman have evolved and solidified. They have been enforced to such a degree that they became self-perpetuating. And, rather than fully assume our own meaning discerning abilities in order to define ourselves, we as a society have tended to engage in narrative consummation, or to identify ourselves according to these predetermined standards, and consummate those identities in action, in relationship to others. We are

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all accountable for this state of affairs however, not solely men. Women enforce and perpetuate the narratives in their own way. The degree to which this accounts for our own experience indicates that we remain in that early, immature shape of consciousness characterized by the Master-Slave Dialectic, which demonstrates a clear misunderstanding of freedom, and is to be fully conditioned by the attitude of bad faith. What does Beauvoir suggest we do? Women must assert themselves, which as the resolution of the Dialectic suggests, will force men to acknowledge and recognize them as equally free, and conversely, men and women alike need to engage in projects that promote freedom for everyone.

The problems of sexism, racism, classism, ableism, imperialism, and all the other isms have been identified. To simply suggest that woman must assert herself does not clearly elucidate what that means as a practical solution to the problem. Woman must assert herself, and assume the authentic attitude of the desire to disclose being. It seems we need to figure out exactly what that means before we can ever hope to overcome the problem. If the problem is that our natural attitude is full of these biases that are lodged deeply into pre-reflective consciousness, perhaps rigorous investigation into our own 'prejudices,' into the narratives according to which we are more or less unconsciously defining and then performatively enacting ourselves, is necessary. Only then can we take full ownership over ourselves, only then can we posit ourselves as the ground of our own being. If we wish to inhabit and command our conscious abilities in a mature and healthy way, responsibly, we need to work at it.

I propose that Logic-Based Therapy (LBT), the only fully formed methodology available to philosophical counselors, which aims ultimately at helping individuals evaluate their own patterns of thought and develop their own reasoning abilities, is a highly valuable resource for undertaking such rigorous self-examination leading to self-responsibility. Philosopher Eliot Cohen, founder of LBT, models this therapeutic paradigm after that of Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), the first major form of cognitive-behavior therapy, formulated by his mentor, psychologist Albert Ellis. According to Ellis, the major hypothesis underlying REBT, which Cohen assumes in his formulation of LBT, is that human beings are

> born and reared to easily upset (ourselves) but that (we) are also …
> constructivist(s) who (have) the ability to think, feel, and act more functionally to
> stop upsetting (ourselves) and to lead a happier life … REBT stresses that (we)
> are unusual thinking animal(s) who develop several basic philosophies – that also
> have strong emotional and behavioral elements – that make (us) and keep (us)
> dysfunctional. Moreover, we are often unaware of (our) core philosophies, and
> when (we) become aware of them, (we) dogmatically believe that they are true or
> factual. As the Buddhists said some 2,500 years ago, they are actually illusions.
> REBT therefore shows (us) how to look for and uncover (our) leading
> philosophies; to dispute them forcefully, emotionally and actively; and to change
> them to effective new philosophies, or rational coping philosophies.[24]

Ellis shares that the inspiration for his development of REBT was his personal devotion to philosophy and recognition of how it powerfully enabled him to overcome his own emotive and practical problems[25].

REBT identifies a number of what Ellis refers to as false leading philosophies, or idiocies which lead human beings down destructive paths, such as 'demanding perfection,' 'damnation of self and others,' 'awfulizing,' and what Cohen reformulates as 'cant'stipation[26].' In his purely philosophical adaptation of this approach to therapy,

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Cohen appeals to the language of logic and reason, and proposes that we understand such idiocies as fallacious patterns of thought which lead us to deduce harmful emotional and behavioral conclusions. Because reasoning can have such a direct effect on our wellbeing, he argues that both our personal and interpersonal happiness depends significantly on the premises underlying our emotions and behavior. Cohen is critical of the psychological paradigms available due to their tendency to view mental health issues as a matter of cause and effect, where such states as depression or anxiety are taken to be caused by some external or biological factor like chemical imbalances in the brain or genetics. Assuming these common human ailments are caused by factors outside of our control however, prevents us from recognizing *that* we often cause ourselves to suffer and therefore, *that* it is within our own power to set ourselves on the path to greater wellbeing[27].

In developing this philosophical paradigm for talk therapy, which has been met with little to no criticism, Cohen shifts the emphasis from locating the causes to self-destructive emotions and behaviors to seeking out harmful premises, or fallacies in one's reasoning. Generally speaking, philosophers are concerned with reasoning from premises to conclusions and evaluating the premises to determine if the reasoning is sound. Ordinary people, however, do not necessarily explicitly evaluate their thought processes rigorously. Cohen suggests that whenever we fail to state whatever is necessary to validate our reasoning, we assume premises, which easily end up being faulty or fallacious. For the purposes of LBT, Cohen characterizes a fallacy, or irrational pattern of thought, as a way of reasoning or thinking that has proven to frustrate personal

and/or interpersonal happiness. He points out that the real issue with fallacies is that they ultimately hide reasonable alternate possibilities behind a haze of false or unrealistic absolutes. In addition to the four fallacies mentioned above that Cohen appropriates from REBT, which in LBT fall into the category of behavioral and emotional rules, he includes four additional fallacies into this same group, and three more in a new group he refers to as fallacies of reporting, for a total of eleven 'cardinal fallacies.' He argues that these fallacies are insidious, in that we can very easily be assuming them in our reasoning, never have it occur to us to question them, inadvertently cause ourselves to be miserable as a consequence, and have no idea that this is occurring.

The basic approach to LBT is that the practitioner first seeks to help the recipient identify which cardinal fallacies are operative in their reasoning patterns. Following the identification of one or more fallacies, the next step in the process is to have the recipient refute the fallacious premises by having him or her question what grounds he or she has for believing them to be true. Here, Cohen suggests that if the particular premise in question is unreasonable, which fallacious premises by definition always are, then if any minimally reasonable individual reflects on it carefully enough, he or she is very likely to recognize its flaw. This demonstration to oneself of the flawed nature of the premise, which is to disprove its validity, or refute it, is itself the demonstration of the grounds or good reason to dismiss it. Following the identification and refutation of the fallacy operative in the recipient's reasoning patterns, comes a twofold corrective step in the LBT process. Working within the recipient's worldview, the practitioner selects or

devises one or more 'philosophical antidote(s)' from out of the collected wisdom that has been accrued since antiquity, that supports the refutation. He or she is then assigned a 'transcendent virtue' to cultivate that corresponds to the specific type of fallacy in question, which, the better developed it becomes, the more it helps the recipient lift him or herself from out of the self-destructive, irrational thought pattern that has been leading him or her to suffer unnecessarily.

LBT has great potential to help average, everyday people acquire a more mature, more refined, or better developed command over their conscious abilities. This is due to its emphasis on the evaluation of the pre-reflective, largely unconscious assumptions or premises we reason with. With the aid of the practitioner at first, LBT can serve as a tool to condition us to become more actively attuned to the effects that our biases, or premises as Cohen calls them, have on our personal and interpersonal experiences as well as our wellbeing, and enable us to evaluate and take control of our reasoning patterns for ourselves. Further, the eleven transcendent virtues that correspond to each of the cardinal fallacies identified by Cohen, which the recipient is encouraged to actively develop, amount to habits that promote conscious health and wellbeing, and ultimately empowerment. I believe this paradigm to be a genuinely useful model for aiding individuals in taking ownership of and thus responsibility for themselves and for this reason, the aim in this dissertation is not to critique LBT, but instead to widen its scope.

Cohen makes an important distinction in characterizing how fallacious rules in practical reasoning *normally* appear, in that he suggests they are ordinarily suppressed

rather than repressed. He defines a repressed thought as one that I would be inclined to reject if it were to be brought to my conscious awareness, as a thought which I am supposed to be trying to hide from myself thus would not want to admit at a conscious level. By contrast, a suppressed thought is one that an individual is not necessarily consciously aware of at the moment, but were it to be called to his or her attention, he or she would tend to insist on its validity as though it were a self-evident fact of reality. Therefore, the suppressed rule, or premise is to be understood to be implicit in what an individual says or thinks, indicating that it is accepted as the obvious even though it is not explicitly stated. LBT, as it formulated by Cohen thus far, concerns itself primarily with fallacious rules in practical reasoning understood to be suppressed rather than repressed, but I want to argue that it is important to be able to address the repressed fallacious rules as well. Beauvoir's poignant diagnosis of the inauthentic attitude of bad faith that pervades and wreaks havoc on humanity, the attitude we adopt when we desire to escape from the demands of human freedom and responsibility, is something that needs adequate consideration in such a model of therapy that seeks to aid individuals in assuming responsibility over their reasoning abilities. But, since bad faith, by definition, as an attitude I adopt for the express purpose of hiding the fact that I am free from my conscious awareness, is a repressed fallacious rule, I don't believe that this widespread phenomenon is adequately addressed yet in LBT.

In order to meaningfully identify what the healthy, authentic attitude towards freedom amounts to in concrete experience, Beauvoir devotes much attention to its opposite, bad faith, or the attitude we assume when we seek to deny to ourselves that we

are in fact free. Again, existential freedom is fundamentally about the responsibility we have to ourselves to interpret and assign meaning, both to ourselves and our situation, in a way that adequately accounts for the ambiguity of human being, or the fact that we can never possess a fixed identity in the way a stone does. To be in bad faith then, is to choose to be in denial about the fact that my conscious abilities operate in this way, which has the effect of alienating me from my own means, or authentic or healthy command over those abilities. And, on the mild end of the spectrum, bad faith, the attitude that conditions me to desire to have the fixed identity of an object rather than the multi-faceted, ambiguous, ever evolving identity of a human being, leads to dissatisfaction. Because bad faith is characterized as wanting to be identified like an object, to have precise and unchanging meaning, being mired in this irrational attitude can lead to disastrous, extremely self-defeating and destructive emotions and behaviors, and leaves us vulnerable to the master. Beauvoir suggests that bad faith shows up in a variety of different shapes. She explains the phenomenon of Nazis Germany as a largescale manifestation of the extreme nihilistic impulse towards destruction, one of the forms she argues bad faith to take. If she is correct in her diagnosis, this alone demonstrates the importance of investigating its implications in a therapeutic context.

On a practical level then, the degree to which I am attuned to the attitude of bad faith leaves me primed to consummate or performatively enact particular determinate narrative accounts of myself, the world and others. For example, as a graduate student, feeling utterly lost and unsure of what to make of myself and the world, I take a class with a charismatic professor who appears completely self-assured and certain of the truth

of what she is teaching. A number of the claims she makes run completely counter to some of the core values I have always held dear, and I often find myself deeply conflicted after class is over, but everyone else always seems to be completely on board with her. Despite the fact that some of the views she proclaims are troubling to me, I am nevertheless drawn to her charisma and sense of power, and part of me desires to belong to her group of student followers; again, I am lost and lonely. By then end of the semester, gaining validation from the professor and fitting in with her students becomes more important to me than arguing against what my conscience tells me are deeply problematic and even dangerous core principles of her ideology, which I must agree with in order to belong. So, I ignore my conscience and change my beliefs to accord with the groups, which directly impacts how I feel and behave the more I engage in performatively enacting or imposing those beliefs on the world.

According to the ideology that is now my truth, certain groups of people are fundamentally bad or evil, people who shop at Walmart or who drive vehicles fueled by gasoline for example, which leads me to view and treat such individuals I encounter in my everyday experience, who I ordinarily would have no negative feelings toward, as bad or evil in themselves. I increasingly find myself engaging in such outwardly destructive behaviors as standing outside of Walmart and berating shoppers for supporting such a corrupt establishment, flipping people off in their trucks, and passive aggressively insulting my colleagues who disagree with the groups beliefs. I also find that I am becoming increasingly unhappy with myself, alienated from people I would ordinarily be friendly with, agitated, and I begin engaging in self-harm to alleviate how I

am feeling. If I decide to go to a LBT practitioner to help me figure out why I have

recently become so miserable, if the connection were to be made between my

internalization of my professor's ideology and the negative consequences in my

experience, I would be told that I am reasoning according to the fallacy of "jumping on

the bandwagon," which states that if others are acting in a certain way, or if others

believe or say something, then the fact that they are acting, believing or saying

something is reason enough for me to do the same[28]. This fallacious rule dictates to us

that instead of acknowledging evidence that would lead us to act or believe differently,

we should go along with the others in blind conformity for the sake of going along with

the others.

This fallacy of LBT is very similar to the fallacy I'm proposing to contribute, but

I argue that there is a subtle yet important distinction between the two. Cohen's

formulation of jumping on the bandwagon doesn't adequately account for the repressed

belief that makes such blind conformity so desirable to us in the first place. He asserts,

"convinced that we are the masters of our own fate, we are none the wiser as we

exchange individuality for an automated, standardized archetype of the good life. So, it

is not surprising that so many of us find ourselves losing our very selves and feeling so

damned unfulfilled and unhappy in the process[29]."   If one were to fall into this trap so

convinced, then clearly this indicates that he or she directly misunderstands what it

means to be the master of his or her own fate. To believe that one is free to jump on the

bandwagon is to fundamentally misunderstand what freedom is, which suggests that he

or she never adequately assumed ownership or responsibility for him or herself in the

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first place. And, to the degree to which this is the case, the individual in question is conditioned by the attitude of bad faith.

As Beauvoir explains, bad faith is the choice not to choose; it is a means of actively avoiding acknowledging and owning up to the innate sense of freedom we all feel to greater and lesser degrees, and thus is a desire not to be free. But who would desire not to be free? I would suggest, those whose misunderstanding of what freedom entails has lead them to experience it as such a massive burden that the stability or comfort of not having to futilely continue to try and figure it out on their own becomes more appealing. Returning to the above example, drawing the connection that I proposed would be necessary to identify the fallacy as jumping on the bandwagon, that between my internalization of my professor's ideology and its negative impact on my experience, I imagine that it might take a while for that to be meaningfully brought to the surface, because to the degree that I've internalized the narrative, I would assert that it's *my* belief and that the opinions of others have no bearing on that fact. I am in bad faith; I have alienated myself from my own means, my command over my own meaning discerning and assigning abilities, but *this* is the very fact that I'm trying to conceal from myself. Therefore, in our conversations I would likely be directing the practitioner away from any indication that my dissonance results from my performatively enacting someone else's problematic beliefs, because in bad faith, that's precisely what I must conceal from myself. To be able to hide our freedom from ourselves, we must *pretend* that we are free, and this very pretending leads us to assume fallacious rules, which lead us to deduce destructive and self-defeating emotions and behaviors. In this sense, it can

be argued that bad faith shows up in varying degrees alongside all of the fallacies

identified by LBT, and for this reason, I argue that it is important to investigate means

by which it can be detected and addressed in the context of LBT, and therapy in general.

In order to demonstrate my argument, this dissertation is presented in four

chapters. The First chapter outlines Beauvoir's philosophical position from her *Ethics of*

Ambiguity, with emphasis on her understanding of authenticity, or the proper, healthy

and mature way for human beings to inhabit our conscious abilities. I view the goal of

philosophical counseling, specifically Logic-Based Therapy, to be aiding individuals in

their pursuit of the type of personal responsibility entailed by Beauvoir's account.

Therefore, I use this chapter as the basis for my practical appropriation of her position

for the therapeutic context. In her *Second Sex*, Beauvoir applies her philosophical

position to the lived experience of women, and practically demonstrates how our

identities are constructed dialectically, that is, always within relations to others.

Further, she recognizes here that in bad faith, we have the tendency to identify

according to socially constructed narratives that have become deeply ingrained in our

pre-reflective consciousness, and that we enforce and impose both on ourselves and

others which alienates us from our own freedom. Chapter two explores this feature of

identity formation in Beauvoir's account as well as how Jessica Benjamin's more recent

work offers greater insight into what motivates individuals to choose to be in bad faith.

In chapter three, having established Beauvoir's account of authenticity and the obstacles

that ourselves and others present in its pursuit, I present a detailed explanation of Logic-

Based Therapy according to its founder, Eliot D. Cohen. This type of talk therapy, an

alternative to the different models available in the psychological paradigm, offers a

practical approach for individuals to take responsibility over their conscious abilities and

thus assume their existential freedom in the way I believe Beauvoir to have envisioned.

In the final chapter, I offer my practical appropriation of Beauvoir's philosophical

position, and I draw a connection between LBT and the 'philosophical conversion[30],' or

as Husserl refers to the idea, the transcendental reduction whereby the philosopher

develops the ability to self-verify the objects of his or her own consciousness. This is

the type of responsibility for oneself that I understand LBT to offer individuals to

acquire, and I propose here that the attitude of bad faith is a strong indicator for the need

to take on such a learning experience. But, LBT does not adequately account for this

powerfully destructive attitude, so in this chapter, I explore the implications of bad faith

from out of my own experiences with it, and propose how LBT might incorporate

'narrative consummation, the fallacy of bad faith,' into its model.

CHAPTER II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

Ambiguity

In her *Ethics of Ambiguity*, Simone de Beauvoir asserts, "It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our life that we must draw our strength to live and our reason for acting" (9). Her main concern is what it means for human beings to live authentically, which she thinks must begin with an honest, clear understanding of the fact that human existence is thoroughly ambiguous. Drawing from Montaigne's insight that the work of life is to build death, she points to the first paradoxical or ambiguous feature of human experience, which is the fact that as 'rational animals,' or 'thinking reeds,' we alone are able to reflect on our own death whereas animals and plants merely undergo this process (7). While animals and plants are said to exist as pure immanence, or sheer materiality, we exist simultaneously as both immanence and transcendence; in other words, we exist both as concrete, physical presence in the world and a situation, at the same time as we have the capacity to reflectively transcend our situation and contemplate it. A further element of the ambiguity of the human condition for Beauvoir relates to the way we experience ourselves temporally. She asserts that at every moment, we can be aware of the non-temporal truth of our existence, however as perpetually coming from a past that is no more, towards a future that is not yet, we find

that this present moment within which we now exist is insignificant or 'nothing' (7).

This leads to what is ostensibly the third and final component of ambiguity, the notion

that each individual "asserts himself as a pure internality against which no external

power can take hold, and he also experiences himself as a thing crushed by the dark

weight of other things" (7). And, this 'privilege' of being a sovereign and unique subject

among a world full of objects, which I alone enjoy, is precisely that which I share with

all other human beings (7). Although I am a unique and sovereign subject, I am at the

same time merely an object for others, and thus I am reduced to an individual within the

larger group on which I am ultimately dependent.

Beauvoir's main critique of the history of western philosophy is that it has

actively sought to hide from itself the fact of this ambiguity. She believes that all people

across all time have had a sense of it, however the philosophers "have striven to reduce

mind to matter, or to reabsorb matter into mind, or to merge them within a single

substance" (7). Those who accept the mind-body dualism on the other side, subordinate

one to the other and have taken to denying the importance of whichever comes out

inferior. Further, these philosophers of whom Beauvoir is critical have denied either life

or death depending on which is more integral to their view, and she believes the ethics

that have been developed out of these accounts have all served the same project of

eliminating ambiguity. While the aim of such ethics may have been a sort of

consolation, Beauvoir suggests that they have actually heightened the sense of disorder

we feel emanating from the paradoxical nature of the human condition. "The more

widespread their mastery of the world, the more they find themselves crushed by

uncontrollable forces. Though they are masters of the atomic bomb, yet it is created only to destroy them. Each one has the incomparable taste in his mouth of his own life, and yet each feels himself more insignificant than an insect within the immense collectivity whose limits are one with the earth's" (9). Despite all the attempts to forget, the truth can be felt everywhere. Therefore, Beauvoir's big contribution is the notion that since we can never successfully evade the ambiguity of our condition, the foundation and starting point for ethics should be to assume our 'fundamental ambiguity;' it is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our life that we must draw the strength to live and our reasons for acting" (9).

To briefly recap, for Beauvoir ambiguity conditions human existence. However, this fact that we intuit makes us uncomfortable. Therefore, the thinkers who she is critical of set up their philosophies and specifically their ethics in such a way that attempts to deny this truth. Beauvoir's system of ethics then, is grounded in and takes as its starting place the actual states of affairs of the world and the human condition, as what ought to determine how we conduct our lives and the choices we make. Accordingly, she draws a distinction between two alternate modes of being in the world referred to as the 'desire to be' and the 'desire to disclose being.' The former expresses the inauthentic mode and the latter corresponds to the authentic.

The desire to be amounts to the desire to be a concrete and fixed essence, which is inauthentic precisely because this does not accord with how we actually experience ourselves. The desire to disclose being however, which is part of the 'existentialist conversion' described as similar to the Husserlian reduction, is characterized by

Beauvoir as follows: "Existence asserts itself as an absolute which must seek its justification within itself and not suppress itself, even though it may be lost by preserving itself. To attain his truth, man must not attempt to dispel the ambiguity of his being but, on the contrary, accept the task of realizing it. He rejoins himself only to the extent that he agrees to remain at a distance from himself" (13). In other words, authentic or genuine existence entails not that I deny this impulsive, spontaneous movement of my transcendence but rather that I do not permit myself to become lost in it. Similar to the transcendental reduction, authentic being for Beauvoir requires that I bracket my 'desire to be' and in so doing allow myself to disclose my true being, or become brought to consciousness regarding my true condition (14). Whereas the reduction serves to inhibit errors of dogmatism by suspending all assertions concerning the reality of the external world without contesting it, this existentialist conversion marked by the desire to disclose being does not overturn my instincts and passions but instead simply averts any possible failure by refusing to set up "as absolutes the ends towards which my transcendence thrusts itself, and by considering them in their connection with the freedom which projects them" (14).

Recognizing the futility of pursuing the guarantee for his or her existence externally, the authentic person will cease to pursue inhuman objectivity, and thus refuse to buy into unconditioned values that ultimately undermine his or her freedom (14). Beauvoir asserts that human existence creates values, and the fact of their original appearance is purely contingent. As the Sartrean saying goes, 'existence precedes essence' in that unlike a paper knife that is constructed according to a pre-determined

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purpose, I exist before I can define myself (Existentialism is a Humanism 21). Humans

exist, and for us it ultimately becomes a matter of choosing whether we want to and

under what conditions; we are ultimately free to define for ourselves the conditions of a

life that we ourselves deem valid (15). While removing external justifications and

authority such as God over how we live would appear to remove any sense of ethics, for

Beauvoir this has the opposite effect. She explains, "because man is abandoned on the

earth, because his acts are definitive, absolute engagements … he bears the

responsibility for a world which is not the work of a strange power, but of himself,

where his defeats are inscribed and his victories as well. A God can pardon … but if

God does not exist, man's faults are expiable" (16). In actuality, the world is not a

foreign given, but instead is willed by humankind, by the plurality of concrete individual

people as they set up projects themselves toward their ends on the basis of irreducible,

radically particular situations.

Freedom

Fundamental to any existentialist ethic is the notion of freedom. Beauvoir

believes that in focusing on this freedom it is possible to discover a universal principle of

action. She suggests that all ethical systems view life as a game that can be won or lost,

and that each establishes particular means of winning. As a brief reminder, she posits

that the human condition is ambiguous, and ethical failure resides in the notion of desire.

As human beings, we tend towards the desire to be or the desire to have a fixed identity.

To the degree that we act in a way that attempts to fulfill this futile desire, we are failing

ethically. We also desire to be a disclosure of being. In acting in accordance with this

wish, we win because the world becomes present by our presence in it (Beauvoir 23).

The disclosure however, indicates an ongoing tension to keep being at a certain distance;

to rip oneself from the world and assert oneself as a freedom. "To wish for the

disclosure of the world and to assert oneself as freedom are one and the same movement.

Freedom is the source from which all significations and all values spring. It is the

original condition of all justification of existence. The man who seeks to justify his life

must want freedom itself absolutely and above everything else" (Beauvoir 24). Freedom

thus requires the realization of concrete ends and itself universally.

According to Beauvoir, to desire oneself free is to "effect the transition from

nature to morality by establishing a genuine freedom on the original upsurge of our

existence" (25). It is true, as Sartre claims, that every human being is intrinsically free.

For Sartre, life without a God signifies that there is no prior justification for our

existence. Human beings are condemned to discover their own meaning. This original

freedom amounts to the notion that man spontaneously casts himself into the world,

which is purely contingent if it is not justified by the freedom that projects it. Beauvoir

acknowledges that human spontaneity is always projecting itself toward things, but "in

order for this meaning to justify the transcendence which discloses it, it must itself be

founded, which it will never be if I do not choose to found it myself" (25). It remains

possible that I can avoid this choice, not that I can will myself not free, but instead that I

am able to not will myself free. This evasion shows up in laziness, impatience and

cowardice, among other states, where I contest the meaning of the project as soon as I

define it, and my movement toward the object is a fleeing and thus an absence (25-6).

Here, Beauvoir suggests that in order to transform my flight into will, I must positively

assume my project. She states,

> It is not a matter of retiring into the completely inner, and moreover, abstract movement of a given spontaneity, but of adhering to the concrete and particular movement by which this spontaneity defines itself by thrusting itself toward an end. It is through this end that it sets up that my spontaneity confirms itself by reflecting upon itself. Then, by a single movement, my will, establishing the content of the act, is legitimized by it … I realize my escape toward the other as a freedom when, assuming the presence of the object, I thereby assume myself before it as a presence. But this justification requires a constant tension. My project is never founded; it founds itself," which renders it a permanent choice that I may evade (Beauvoir 26).

In questioning whether one can 'will oneself free' in any matter whatsoever, Beauvoir

offers a cursory characterization of the human will. She suggests, as something that is

developed throughout the course of time, where the objective is worked toward and

freedom confirms itself, the will is realized as a unity in the unfolding of time (26).

Given that as an existence I must found myself, I could never do so if there were no

continuity between the moments and I dissolved into nothingness as each passed. For

this reason, the child or any similar existence does not attain moral agency until he or

she begins to recognize him or herself in the past or envision him or herself in the future:

"It is only when the moments of his life begin to be organized into behavior that he can

decide and choose. The value of the chosen end is confirmed and, reciprocally, the

genuineness of the choice is manifested concretely through patience, courage, and

fidelity" (Beauvoir 27). Beauvoir further asserts that to will is to 'engage myself to

persevere in my will,' a notion that is tied to the movement of my transcendence, which

I must perpetuate ceaselessly for authentic existence (27). She explains, if I have accomplished a goal, instead of allowing it to collapse into the past as a mere thing, I must continue to justify it in the unity of the project that I am involved in. Further, I cannot desire an end right now without desiring it throughout my whole existence, "insofar as it is the future of this present moment and insofar as it is the surpassed past of the days to come" (Beauvoir 27). 'To will' then, signifies that the value of the end desired is confirmed forever, through a living confirmation that is contemplative, verbal and fulfilled in an act. The end toward which I surpass myself must always appear as the point of departure for a new act of surpassing, which in turn leads to the development of a creative freedom whereby my project discloses being at the end of a further disclosure, "without ever congealing into an unjustified facticity" (Beauvoir 27-8).

Man does not create the world however, and according to Beauvoir, it is only through the resistance with which it opposes him that he successfully discloses it. She argues, "the will is defined only by raising obstacles, and by the contingency of facticity certain obstacles let themselves be conquered, and others do not" (Beauvoir 28). As Descartes points out, our freedom is infinite while our power is limited. In grappling with how to reconcile this paradoxical situation, Beauvoir returns to the notion of failure and considers it in the sense that it seems to doom everything in ourselves involved in the work. Rejecting the Stoic solution of indifference on the basis that it requires us to give up the particularity of our projects in asserting freedom against all limitation, Beauvoir suggests her own. She says, "the truth is that in order for my freedom not to risk coming to grief against the obstacle which its very engagement has raised, in order

that it might still pursue its movement in the face of the failure, it must, by giving itself a particular content, aim by means of it at an end which is nothing else but precisely the free movement of existence" (Beauvoir 29). We must assume the failure and pass beyond it 'in heartbreak and joy' toward new possibilities. This brings us back to what is for Beauvoir, the authentic mode of human existence: my freedom must not aim to capture being but instead to disclose it, and again, this disclosure is the 'transition from being to existence' (30). "The goal which my freedom aims at is conquering existence across the always inadequate density of being" (Beauvoir 30). Of course, this is only possible if my situation opens up more possibilities for a return to the positive, or for my freedom to fulfill itself by giving itself content through action, despite failure.

On the one hand, Beauvoir asserts that freedom can always preserve itself since it is grasped as a revelation of existence even through its failures, and it can always confirm itself by a freely chosen death. On the other hand, she argues that the situations that are revealed in its projection of itself toward itself are not all equal. "It regards as privileged situations those which permit it to realize itself by indefinite movement; that is, it wishes to pass beyond everything which limits its power; and yet, this power is always limited (Beauvoir 32). Therefore, Beauvoir explains that insofar as we can identify life with the desire to live, the movement of freedom is always that of liberation. Importantly then, it is only by extending itself through the freedom of others that freedom is able to overcome death itself and to realize itself as an 'indefinite unity (Beauvoir 32).' Thus, if we desire to preserve our existence, as only we ourselves can do, Beauvoir argues that the original spontaneity according to which we project

ourselves must transition to the level of moral freedom. This can only happen when freedom itself is realized as an end through the discovery of a particular content (Beauvoir 32).

The Ethical Game

According to Beauvoir, intrinsic to the human condition is the possibility of not fully realizing it. She asserts, "Nothing is decided in advance, and it is because man has something to lose and because he can lose that he can also win" (Beauvoir 34). In order that we may fulfill our own existence then, Beauvoir asserts that we must properly relate ourselves to our own beings. We must assume ourselves as beings who make ourselves a lack of being so that there might be being (Beauvoir 34). This opaque formulation that Beauvoir borrows from Sartre suggests that to win ethically, we must be willing to actively let go of fixed ideas we hold of ourselves so that we might discern new meaning. This general characterization of the ethical win is precisely the embodiment of the authentic attitude for Beauvoir. It's opposite, ethical failure or the attitude of bad faith, manifests in a variety of different shapes that she will analyze, all characterized by dishonesty and driven by the distress that we human beings feel in the face of our freedom. This distress that renders human beings prone to the different shapes of bad faith stems from the fact of having once been children. Echoing Descartes, Beauvoir asserts that this is precisely the source of the unhappiness of mankind: children do not experience their freedom as a burden because its demands are masked from them.

Sometime during adolescence however, we all arrive at the moment of moral choice in which we are forced to assume responsibility for ourselves.

For the purposes of tracing out the instant that human existence is confronted by the moment of moral choice, Beauvoir thus begins with the child's situation. According to her, "the child's situation is characterized by his finding himself cast into a universe which he has not helped to establish, which has been fashioned without him, and which appears to him as an absolute to which he can only submit" (Beauvoir 35). For this reason, the child takes institutions, customs and values as ready-made facts of reality, one in which he is permitted to play freely at being. He grasps himself as 'happily irresponsible,' in that he himself deems the range open to his subjectivity trivial; he can set ends for himself and fulfill them but he is aware of their childishness. The real world in which he is only permitted to submit and respect, belongs to the adults who have fully determinate being for him. Beauvoir argues, in this world full of definite and substantial things, where the child finds himself among these adults with absolute being, he too begins to believe that he has being in this same way. While he awaits the future when he too will become a 'big imposing statue,' he plays at being a policeman or a gladiator. Although the child's condition can be unhappy in other respects, Beauvoir argues that it is 'metaphysically privileged' due to the fact that "even when the joy of existing is strongest, when the child abandons himself to it, he feels himself protected against the risk of existence by the ceiling which human generations have built over his head" (36). The child, generally speaking, evades the despair of freedom, for he can do whatever he fancies knowing that he lacks real agency.

Before transitioning into her discussion of adolescence and the moral choice, Beauvoir briefly relates the child's condition to those of the American slaves and women. The situation of these two exemplary groups differ, but many particular members may constitute for her "beings whose life slips by in an infantile world because, having been kept in a state of servitude and ignorance, they have no means of breaking the ceiling which is stretched over their heads" (Beauvoir 37). Like the child, beings who qualify as such only ever exercise their freedom from within the reality that has already been established for them. Examples that Beauvoir offers for grasping these adults that never leave the infantile situation include slaves who never raise themselves to the consciousness of their slavery and women in 'many civilizations' who "can only submit to the laws, the gods, the customs, and the truths created by the males" (37).

Referring particularly to women in western countries, Beauvoir asserts that there remain many among those who have not had an 'apprenticeship of freedom' in their work who take refuge in the shadow of men by uncritically adopting their values and views for example. She argues that such women, based on a feeling of irresponsibility, often develop childish qualities that are otherwise not acceptable in adults. Beauvoir's concern here is this development implies a 'deep complicity' with the world of men, and for her, this reveals the real difference between the situation of western women and that of the child. That is, the child has his situation imposed on him, whereas, even if she doesn't choose it, Western woman at least consents to hers. Conversely, slaves of the American South, or the Mohammedan woman walled up in a harem have no recourse to means with which to fight against their oppressors, whether it be by thought or anger.

Beauvoir argues that their behavior is determined by and can only be judged in terms of their circumstances. She thinks, "it is possible that in this situation, limited like every human situation, they realize a perfect assertion of their freedom. But once there appears a possibility of liberation, it is resignation of freedom not to exploit the possibility, a resignation which implies dishonesty and which is a positive fault" (Beauvoir 38).

Apart from the extreme cases in the above, Beauvoir suggests that it is rare for one to maintain oneself in the infantile world beyond adolescence. As the child grows, he gradually begins to question the order of things, and in so doing he discovers his subjectivity and that of others. "And when he arrives at the age of adolescence he begins to vacillate because he notices the contradictions among adults as well as their hesitations and weakness" (Beauvoir 39). They stop appearing as gods to the child, and in turn he begins to recognize the human element of the reality about him in that he realizes values, ethics, language and customs have been created by these flawed beings and eventually he too will have to engage them. In other words, the child here realizes that he will have to choose and decide, and that his actions will impact the world as well. In adolescence then, the individual must at finally take command over his or her own subjectivity. According to Beauvoir, this disintegration of the serious world is a sort of liberation for the adolescent, however "it is not without great confusion that (he) finds himself cast into a world which is no longer ready-made, which has to be made; he is abandoned, unjustified, the prey of a freedom that is no longer chained up by anything" (39). She coins this the moment of moral choice, where the adolescent turned individual

has his freedom revealed to him and he must choose what his attitude will be in the face of it. For Beauvoir, this initial moment is critical in that whatever attitude is chosen will likely remain for the rest of his life. She admits that his attitude can always be reconsidered, however she asserts that "conversions are difficult because the world reflects back upon us a choice which is confirmed through this world which it has fashioned. Thus a more and more rigorous circle is formed from which one is more and more unlikely to escape" (Beauvoir 40).

The moment of moral choice leads Beauvoir to characterize what she sees as the two-fold misfortune of the human being related to his or her having once been a child. In the first place, during childhood the child's freedom is obscured from him or her. From this instant that he or she is confronted by the stark reality of his or her freedom, the adult the child has become will always be longing for the times when he or she was not aware of the demands of his or her freedom. The second aspect of this misfortune is related to the fact that even before he is aware of his freedom, the child is still exercising it and building a character for himself, and the experiences he has and 'irresponsible' choices he makes during this time leave "ineffaceable imprints about him" (Beauvoir 40). Beauvoir suggests that although the man he will become is not determined by the child he has been, it is always on the basis of what we have been that we decide what we want to be. Little by little, the child has set up his character and its attendant universe, and this becomes the source from which he motivates his moral attitude. "The drama of original choice is that it goes on moment by moment for an entire lifetime, that it occurs without reason, before any reason, that freedom is there as if it were present only in the

form of contingency" (Beauvoir 40-1). Beauvoir here draws an interesting comparison

to the notion of predestination present in Calvinistic doctrine, in terms of the grace

arbitrarily distributed by God. In this existentialist account of subject formation, she

suggests that a sense of predestination is also present, but rather than issuing forth from

an external force, it is from the operation of the subject itself. Crucial for looking at this

account as a model for therapy, she refreshingly asserts, "Only, we think that man has

always a possible recourse to himself. There is no choice so unfortunate that he cannot

be saved" (Beauvoir 41).

Whenever Beauvoir employs the language of justification, as in the notion that

as human beings we must justify our existence, this moment of moral choice, which is

renewed every moment throughout one's entire adult life, is exactly what she is referring

to. It is the moment of justification, in which one's attitude is lifted onto a moral plane.

To explain, Beauvoir asserts,

> every man casts himself into the world by making himself a lack of being; he
> thereby contributes to reinvesting it with human signification. He discloses it.
> And in this movement even the most outcast sometimes feel the joy of existing.
> They then manifest existence as a happiness and the world as a source of joy.
> But it is up to each one to make himself a lack of more or less various, profound,
> and rich aspects of being. What is called vitality, sensitivity, and intelligence are
> not ready-made qualities, but a way of casting oneself into the world and of
> disclosing being" (Beauvoir 41).

Beauvoir acknowledges that everyone casts him or herself into the world based on

embodied possibilities, however, along with Merleau-ponty, she asserts that the body is

not a brute fact but is instead an expression of our relationship to the world. It is for this

reason that the body can be an object of sympathy or repulsion, while at the same time it

does not determine any behavior beforehand. "There is vitality only by means of free

generosity. Intelligence supposes good will, and, inversely, a man is never stupid if he adapts his language and his behavior to his capacities, and sensitivity is nothing else but the presence which is attentive to the world and to itself" (Beauvoir 41-2). Beauvoir suggests that these spontaneous qualities of the body reward us in that they permit meaning and goals to show up in the world. Further, they allow us to discover reasons for existing and they confirm us in our humanity.

Attitudes in the Face of Freedom

In accordance with her account of ethics, as mentioned previously, Beauvoir characterizes a number of different potential attitudes we might assume in response to the experience of freedom. These attitudes, which she describes with the use of fictional figures, exist on a continuum between bad faith and authenticity. She refers to the attitude ranked the lowest as that of the 'sub-men,' and includes those who actively seek to restrain the original movement of casting themselves into the world into this category. Sub-men are characterized by antipathy. Engulfed in a fundamental fear of existence, they are without love or desire, and reject the passion, or the drive toward being that is their human condition. Their acts are only flights, never positive choices, and while they would like to forget themselves, Beauvoir claims that the nothingness central to man is also the consciousness he has of himself, which manifests for the sub-man as anguish and desire, but he ultimately evades the genuine return to the positive. Further, as he is afraid to engage himself in a project, the sub-man takes shelter in the ready-made values

of the serious world, and realizes himself as a blind and unrestrained force that anybody can take charge of. For this reason, the sub-man is dangerous. As he moves along through life, the sub-man realizes that he is neither able to keep himself from existing, nor to eradicate the proof of his freedom. Therefore, in order to get rid of his freedom, he ends up engaging it positively in the content of the serious world and his attitude thus transitions to that of the serious.

The characteristic feature of the serious man for Beauvoir is that he loses himself in the object to annihilate his subjectivity (45). "The serious man gets rid of his freedom by claiming to subordinate it to 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" (Beauvoir 46). Further, Beauvoir asserts that the particular ends pursued by individuals are irrelevant to defining the serious; she says that both 'a frivolous lady of fashion' and an engineer can have the attitude of seriousness (46). What defines the serious is that the individual subordinates his freedom to the advantage of the ends pursued, whatever they may be. Of all the non-genuine attitudes, Beauvoir argues that this attitude of seriousness is the most common due to childhood. And, it is an infantile state that the serious man chooses to live in, but he is stained by dishonesty in that he must perpetually recommence the denial of his freedom. Values are truly given to the child, but "the serious man must mask the movement by which he gives them to himself, like the mythomaniac who while reading a love-letter pretends to forget that she has sent it to herself" (Beauvoir 47).

As has been alluded to briefly in the above, there are those who do occupy the world of the serious in all honesty, including the enslaved, the mystified and those who lack instrumentation for escape. From the socio-economic point of view, it is also the case that the fewer means an individual has to act on the world, the more the world appears to him as given. Beauvoir asserts,

> this is the case of women who inherit a long tradition of submission and of those who are called "the humble." There is often laziness and timidity in their resignation; their honesty is not quite complete; but to the extent that it exists, their freedom remains available, it is not denied. They can, in their situation of ignorant and powerless individuals, know the truth of existence and raise themselves to a properly moral life. It even happens that they turn the freedom which they have thus won against the very object of their respect … On the contrary, the man who has the necessary instruments to escape this lie and who does not want to use them consumes his freedom in denying them. He makes himself serious (48).

The serious world, which again, is the world in which the child exists prior to the moment of moral choice, is one of unconditioned values, where its narrative structure is taken to be absolute and thus unalterable. The serious world is that in which the oppressed, or those adults who are treated like children, exist. Those who have no sense for their freedom whatsoever, nor any means to assert themselves and gain recognition as free subjects, do not exist in the serious world in bad faith. However, those who have even a limited grasp of the fact that they are free, while they might be situated farther away from being able to fully assume it, are still responsible for asserting themselves and thus 'the humble' women who are complicit in their oppression do so in bad faith, albeit not without coercion. Finally, those who are not oppressed, who freely resign themselves to the world of the serious, do so fully and inexcusably in bad faith.

For the individual with the genuine or authentic attitude, every end is equally a point of departure and "human freedom is the ultimate, the unique end to which man should destine himself" (Beauvoir 49). But in denying the subjective tension of freedom, as does the serious individual, he is refusing himself to universally will freedom in an 'indefinite movement' (Beauvoir 48). Further, due to the fact that he will not acknowledge to himself that he is freely determining the value of the ends he establishes, the serious man enslaves himself to those ends and questions nothing. For this reason, Beauvoir finds him dangerous and naturally inclined toward tyranny. She states, "dishonestly ignoring the subjectivity of his choice, he pretends that the unconditioned value of the object is being asserted through him; and by the same token he also ignores the value of the subjectivity and the freedom of others, to such an extent that, sacrificing them to the thing, he persuades himself that what he sacrifices is nothing" (49). In this way, the attitude of seriousness easily leads to the kind of fanaticism that propels leaders of lynch mobs for example, and according to Beauvoir, the serious man hides the unintelligibility of his choices by fleeing and thus reverts back into the sub-man whenever the cause or 'thing' is not concerned. If he should happen to find himself cut off from whatever his particular ends are altogether, unless there is a conversion within himself or he commits suicide, the serious man becomes the sub-man again.

Alternatively, Beauvoir suggests that the failure of the serious can sometimes effect a radical disorder in the individual referred to here as the nihilistic attitude. As a futile attempt to achieve the synthesis of the for-itself and the in-itself, to be a god, the

serious man wants to eradicate his subjectivity but ultimately knows he can't. "Transcending all goals, reflection wonders, "What's the use?" There then blazes forth the absurdity of a life which has sought outside of itself the justifications which it alone could give itself. Detached from the freedom which might have genuinely grounded them, all the ends that have been pursued appear arbitrary and useless" (Beauvoir 52). Fully aware of the fact that he cannot *be* anything, the nihilist then chooses to be nothing, which is still a form of being.

Beauvoir explains that the attitude of nihilism can be taken on at the moment of moral choice as the individual sees his childhood universe melt away, or as a result of failed attempts at fulfillment, however what is characteristic of this attitude is that the way the individual strains to rid himself of the anxiety of his freedom is to deny himself and the world. Beauvoir distinguishes this attitude from that of the sub-man on the basis of original movement: the sub-man flees at first, whereas the nihilist has cast himself into the world originally. She characterizes the nihilist as occupying himself with either despising the world or actively working to annihilate it. "But this will to negation is forever belying itself, for it manifests itself as a presence at the very moment that it displays itself. It therefore implies a constant tension … for if it is true that man is not, it is also true that he exists, and in order to realize his negativity positively he will have to contradict constantly the movement of existence" (Beauvoir 54). In order for this attitude to maintain itself then, it must reveal itself as a positivity at its very core (Beauvoir 55).

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To explain this distinguishing feature of the attitude of nihilism, Beauvoir suggests that because it is owed to the presence of this world that the other reveals that the individual finds himself as a presence in the world, if he wills himself to be nothing, then all humankind must be destroyed as well. In other words, this allusion to the process of recognition indicates that if the nihilist desires himself to *be* nothing, he must destroy the world, or context of meaningful relations that will otherwise inevitably reflect back onto him the truth he wishes to conceal from himself; that he *is*. Beauvoir argues here that this will for annihilation turns into a will for power instantly. "The taste of nothingness joins the original taste of being whereby every man is first defined; he realizes himself as being by making himself that by which nothingness comes into the world. Thus, Nazism was both a will to power and a will for suicide at the same time" (Beauvoir 56). Beauvoir notes that the nihilist attitude does grasp a certain truth in that he is accurate in believing the world holds no justification and that he himself is nothing. What he misses is that it is ultimately his task to justify the world and give himself a valid existence.

According to Beauvoir, the essential flaw in the nihilist is that in his contesting of all given values, he doesn't encounter the significance of "that universal, absolute end which freedom itself is" (58). She finds it plausible however, that even in this failure an individual might hold onto his taste for an existence he originally grasped as joy. Here Beauvoir introduces the attitude of the adventurer, who has no hopes for justification yet still takes pleasure in living.

What is distinct about the adventurer is that he is not attached to the end at which he aims, but instead, engaging a freedom that is indifferent to its content, delights in action for its own sake. Of the adventurer, Beauvoir asserts, "The union of an original, abundant vitality and a reflective skepticism will particularly lead to this choice," one which is very near that of the genuinely moral attitude (59). This is so because he intentionally projects himself onto the world, or makes himself a lack of being, while he is at the same time detached from the goal, which is the source of the disconnect. Beauvoir conjectures that if existentialism were solipsistic, then the adventurer would be the ideal man, however it is not. The concern regarding this type of attitude is that the adventurer asserts his existence in relation to other existences, and while he may be able to become conscious of the genuine requirements of his freedom and convert into the authentic attitude, the adventurer qua adventurer remains indifferent to the human meaning of action. In other words, he asserts his own existence without concern for that of others, eager to sacrifice them for his own thirst for power.

In this way however, the adventurer appears as enemy in the eyes of others and becomes forced to serve whatever regime will permit him to exercise his tyranny. He requires wealth, leisure and the support of troops or the police and laws, and he takes these goods to be supreme ends in order to be prepared to remain free in regard to any end. "Thus, confusing a quite external availability with real freedom, he falls, with a pretext of independence, into the servitude of the object … He must submit to masters unless he makes himself the supreme master. Favorable circumstances are enough to transform the adventurer into a dictator" (Beauvoir 62). Therefore, the adventurer acts

in such a way that resembles a sort of moral behavior because he commands his subjectivity positively. But if he deceitfully refuses to acknowledge that his own freedom is dependent upon that of others, he will find himself in a false independence which will indeed be servitude. Ultimately for Beauvoir, the fault of this figure is believing that one can do something for oneself without others and even against them, seemingly mired in the same self-deception as the master in Hegel's "Master-Slave Dialectic."

There remains one more attitude to describe before getting to the genuine moral attitude. This would be the passionate attitude, which Beauvoir describes as the antithesis of that of the adventurer. Whereas in the case of the adventurer it is the content which is not genuinely fulfilled, with the passionate man, it is subjectivity that fails to fulfill itself genuinely (Beauvoir 64). Beauvoir asserts that what distinguishes the passionate man is that he sets the object up as an absolute and as a thing revealed by his subjectivity. Further, she states that the passionate man strives to possess and in this way seeks being. Of the passionate man, Beauvoir suggests,

> nothing exists outside of his stubborn project; therefore nothing can induce him to modify his choices. And having involved his whole life with an external object which can continually escape him, he tragically feels his dependence. Even if it does not definitely disappear, the object never gives itself. The passionate man makes himself a lack of being not that there might *be* being, but in order to be. And he remains at a distance; he is never fulfilled" (Beauvoir 65).

The passionate man thus experiences his freedom only as a separation, is impossible to be in a relationship with, and as with the adventurer, he is also approaching tyranny. Beauvoir suggests however that a conversion can begin from this attitude. This is so because the source of his despair is his distance from the object, and

all he needs to do is accept this rather than try to eliminate it so that the object may be

disclosed, thus allowing him to find his joy. In other words, instead of trying possess the

object of his desire, or trying to be as one with it; trying to make it *be*, he must embrace

the distance so that self-disclosure and disclosure of the object in relation to the self may

occur. "Passion is converted to genuine freedom only if one destines his existence to

other existences through the being – whether thing or man – at which he aims, without

hoping to entrap it in the destiny of the in-itself" (Beauvoir 67).

Here we see the key to genuine human fulfillment for Beauvoir, which is

manifested in the other. No human existence can be authentically fulfilled in isolation,

as we are in a relation of dependence to other existents. And although we are able to

detach from this world through contemplation, there is no way apart from suicide to fully

escape it. It is rather in this world that man must realize himself morally. Again, after

describing the pitfalls we are subject to, Beauvoir reiterates that for authentic human

fulfillment, "freedom must project itself toward its own reality through a content whose

value it establishes. An end is valid only by a return to the freedom which established it

and which willed itself through this end. But this will implies that freedom is not to be

engulfed in any goal; neither is it to dissipate itself vainly without aiming at a goal" (70).

Returning once again to that distinction between the desire to be and the desire to

disclose being, Beauvoir reminds us that the subject ought not seek to *be*, but instead

only that there be *being,* and this willing that there be being is exactly what it means to

will oneself free. Beauvoir emphasizes that they are one and the same choice, and notes

that neither can it be said that the free man wants freedom so that he can desire being,

nor that he desires the disclosure of being through freedom. Both of these aspects are

contained in a single reality, as well as imply the bond of each individual to all others.

In order to explain this connection between my freedom and its dependence upon

others, Beauvoir refers to Hegel for help. Through his thought, she elucidates the

egoism of a young freedom, to whom others appear only as enemies and who desires to

be All (Beauvoir 70). In every other individual, particularly those who assert their

existence most vividly, this freedom only perceives a criticism of himself being reflected

back onto himself. When confronted by the other, the initial movement of this particular

youth is to hate him since others are always at every instant taking the whole world away

from me. This desire however, 'immediately struggles against itself' for if I were truly

everything, there would be nothing in the world; there would be no meaning to possess

and I myself would be nothing, which the situation of the nihilist demonstrated as false

and impossible. Instead, Beauvoir suggests that if this youth were reasonable, he would

recognize that in snatching the world from me, others are also giving it to me since it is

only by this movement that a thing can be given. "To will that there be being is also to

will that there be men by and for whom the world is endowed with human significations.

One can reveal the world only on a basis revealed by other men. No project can be

defined except by its interference with other projects. To make being "be" is to

communicate with others by means of being" (Beauvoir 71).

Beauvoir expands on this account of freedom and being from another angle when

she asserts that freedom can only will itself by projecting towards an open future. She

explains poignantly that "the ends which (freedom) gives itself must be unable to be

transcended by any reflection, but only the freedom of other men can extend them

beyond our life … Every man needs the freedom of other men and, in a sense, always

wants it, even though he may be a tyrant; the only thing he fails to do is to assume

honestly the consequences of such a wish. Only the freedom of others keeps each one of

us from hardening in the absurdity of facticity" (Beauvoir 71). Therefore, to will oneself

free is always to will others free, as a logical necessity. As Fichte's insight

demonstrates, in order to grasp myself as a free subject, I must be recognized as such by

an other who I also recognize as equally free. Therefore, given this contingency on my

freedom, to wish myself free entails the wish that all others be equally free. However, as

others are distinct and even opposed at times, Beauvoir acknowledges that there are

indeed concrete and difficult problems that arise within man's relations with others.

　　　　We see then, that for Beauvoir, every individual is wrapped up with others. The

world in which we engage ourselves is a human world thoroughly penetrated with

human meanings. "It is a speaking world from which solicitations and appeals rise up.

This means that, through this world, each individual can give his freedom a concrete

content. He must disclose the world with the purpose of further disclosure and by the

same movement try to free men, by means of whom the world takes on meaning"

(Beauvoir 74). Further, Beauvoir asserts that the present is not to be understood as a

potential past but instead as the moment of choice and action (76).   As human beings,

she points out that we are simply unable to avoid living this moment through a project

and that there cannot be any project that is solely contemplative because whenever we

project ourselves, it is always towards some end. We cannot think ourselves out of this fundamental feature of our humanity. "Man never contemplates, he does" (76).

Freedom and Liberation

In developing her exposition of the positive aspect of freedom, Beauvoir begins by defending an objection often directed towards existentialism, which is that the dictum 'to will freedom' is hollow and offers no application for action. In defending against such a claim, she reminds us that "freedom realizes itself only by engaging itself in the world: to such an extent that man's project toward freedom is embodied for him in definite acts of behavior … To will freedom and to will to disclose being are one and the same choice; hence, freedom takes a positive and constructive step which causes being to pass to existence in a movement which is constantly surpassed" (Beauvoir 78-9). Beauvoir explains this notion concretely through the disciplines of philosophy, technics, art and science in that, theoretically they are 'indefinite conquests of existence over being' and in assuming themselves as such, they acquire their genuine feature. This assumption, she argues, endows the word progress with its veridical meaning as, rather than taking their work to be approaching a fixed limit such as absolute knowledge, in authentically engaging these disciplines it becomes a matter of pursuing the amplification of man's existence and of reclaiming this very effort as the absolute; a matter of fulfilling the movement of life (Beauvoir 79-80). Therefore, according to Beauvoir, the productive activities of man take on a valid meaning only when they are

assumed as a movement toward freedom, and we can see that a movement such as this is concrete. "Discoveries, inventions, industries, culture, paintings, and books people the world concretely and open concrete possibilities to men" (Beauvoir 80-1). Her three-fold utopian dream for the future then, would be that men eventually know no other application of their freedom than this free expansion of itself, that such productive activity be available to all, and that each individual be able to aim positively through his projects toward his own future (Beauvoir 81).

Once again however, Beauvoir laments over the situation of individuals who are only able to justify their existence negatively due to oppression. As has already been discussed, every individual transcends him or herself in contemplation, however that transcendence is doomed to fall uselessly back on itself if cutoff from the means to pursue its goals. This constitutes Beauvoir's definition of oppression, and she asserts, because humans are never oppressed by things, such situations are unnatural. Only man can be enemy for man in that he alone possesses the ability to deprive him of the meaning of his actions and life, because it is also he alone who confirms it in its existence, or recognizes it in fact as a freedom (Beauvoir 82). According to Beauvoir,

> It is this interdependence which explains why oppression is possible and why it is hateful. As we have seen, my freedom, in order to fulfill itself, requires that it emerge into an open future: it is other men who open the future to me, it is they who, setting up the world of tomorrow, define my future; but if instead of allowing me to participate in this constructive movement, they oblige me to consume my transcendence in vain, if they keep me below the level which they have conquered and on the basis of which new conquests will be achieved, then they are cutting me off from the future, they are changing me into a thing (82).

This is so due to Beauvoir's notion that all human life occupies itself both in maintaining and surpassing itself, but if a human existence is only engaged in maintaining itself than all it is really doing is not dying. This renders it indistinguishable from an 'absurd vegetation.'

According to Beauvoir, oppression thus characterized splits the world into those who enlighten humankind by propelling it ahead of itself, and those who are doomed to 'mark time hopelessly' while they support the collectivity (83). She argues that the latter, the oppressed, have only one solution available to them which is "to deny the harmony of that mankind from which an attempt is made to exclude him, to prove that he is a man and that he is free by revolting against the tyrants" (Beauvoir 83). Such a rejection, she thinks, cuts off the will of the oppressor from the future he wished to thrust himself toward, and replaces it with the alternate future which is revolt. The struggle here is real and concrete, and if the latter future triumphs than it becomes the oppressed who is realized as a positive and open freedom and the oppressor who becomes a thing (Beauvoir 84). Here, Beauvoir locates two different ways of surpassing the given, which amounts to either its acceptance or rejection. She takes the latter option to be a radical break from Hegel's notion of dialectic. She argues that he has confused these two movements with the idea of sublimation, "and the whole structure of an optimism which denies failure and death rests on this ambiguity; that is what allows one to regard the future of the world as a continuous and harmonious development; this confusion is the source and also the consequence; it is a perfect epitome of that idealistic and verbose flabbiness with which Marx charged Hegel and to which he opposed a realistic

toughness" (Beauvoir 84). Against Hegel's view, Beauvoir argues that insurrection is not assimilated into the 'harmonious development of the world, but instead seeks to radically break its continuousness with it. Rather than integration into the whole, revolt seeks to eliminate the situation altogether.

Aligning herself with Marx on this issue, Beauvoir agrees that it is in the interest of all men, both oppressor and oppressed, that the oppressive situation be eradicated since each individual needs all men to be free. An important issue arises in teasing this out however, in the form of the slave who is mystified as to his servitude and must be intervened upon from the outside. The fact that he submits to his master is not sufficient to justify the tyranny imposed upon him, for in cases of mystification, submission is derived from the fact that the slave grasps his servitude as given by nature rather than imposed by men. He doesn't freely resign himself to his condition because he could never imagine any other, and this yields a difficulty for some in the sense that "there is no need to awaken the sleeper, for that would be to awaken him to unhappiness" (Beauvoir 85). It is easy to conceive that for those who have known only enslavement, sudden liberation and the freedom that comes with it can be overwhelming and disorienting, but Beauvoir's response to this is that the 'ignorant slave' must be furnished with the means of transcending his situation through revolt to overcome his ignorance (86). While this proposal may seem itself like an imposition, Beauvoir turns to the nature of freedom to alleviate any such concern. She proclaims that the cause of freedom is universally human. "If I want the slave to become conscious of his servitude, it is both in order not to be a tyrant myself – for any abstention is complicity, and

complicity is tyranny – and in order that new possibilities might be opened to the liberated slave and through him to all men. To want existence, to want to disclose the world, and to want men to be free are one and the same will" (Beauvoir 86-7). What Beauvoir demands is simply that the oppressed be placed in the presence of their freedom so that they may freely and positively decide.

The oppressed can only satisfy his or her human freedom through means of revolt, given what Beauvoir considers the essential characteristic of the situation he or she would be rebelling against: its barring him or her from any positive development (87). She asserts as a matter of logical necessity, a freedom that is only concerned with denying freedom must itself be denied because it is not in fact acting freely (Beauvoir 91). The recognition of the freedom of others in no way limits my own freedom, but instead the inverse is true. Recognition of the freedom of others is the condition for the possibility of understanding myself as a freedom in the first place. For Beauvoir then, "to be free is not to have the power to do anything you like; it is to be able to surpass the given toward an open future; the existence of others as a freedom defines my situation and is even the condition of my own freedom. I am oppressed if I am thrown into prison, but not if I am kept from throwing my neighbor into prison" (91).

Even here, Beauvoir acknowledges where the ambiguity seeps in. She recognizes that the oppressor may rightfully demonstrate that respect for freedom is never without complications, and he or she might even make the case that it is impossible to respect all freedoms at the same time. All this indicates for Beauvoir however is that we need to accept the tension of the struggle for freedom, "that (our)

liberation must actively seek to perpetuate itself, without aiming at an impossible state of

equilibrium and rest; this does not mean that (we) ought to prefer the sleep of slavery to

this incessant conquest" (Beauvoir 96). Ultimately, Beauvoir demands that regardless of

the difficulties doing so might raise for us, human beings must always actively reject

oppression, no matter the cost. This is indeed a strong claim, but it really boils down to

the fact that freedom exactly that which human beings are responsible for.

The Paradox of Action

As has been explained in the above, if the oppressor was aware of the demands

of his freedom, he should have to denounce oppression, but according to Beauvoir, he is

dishonest and unwilling to relinquish his privileges. She argues, "in order for a

liberating action to be a thoroughly moral action, it would have to be achieved through a

conversion of the oppressors: there would then be a reconciliation of all freedoms"

(Beauvoir 96-7). While she holds this sentiment as true, Beauvoir acknowledges that it

is a utopian dream. Further, she suggests that a collective conversion is an unreliable

goal. So, what is the solution? She reasons her way through the question beginning at

the obvious option of violent revolt and its justification. Here we see clearly that the

oppressors refuse to unite in the affirmation of freedom and therefore embody the

'absurdity of facticity' to men of good-will (Beauvoir 97). Since ethics is aimed at the

achievement of freedom over facticity, it would require the suppression of the

oppressors. But, because we cannot control the subjectivity of others, we can only act

on their objective presence; we would have to treat them with violence like mere things. "Thus, here is the oppressor oppressed in turn; and the men who do violence to him in their turn become masters, tyrants, and executioners: in revolting, the oppressed are metamorphosed into a blind force, a brutal fatality; the evil which divides the world is carried out in their own hearts" (Beauvoir 97). Ultimately, Beauvoir finds that in this situation, one finds himself compelled to treat certain men like objects in order to achieve freedom for all. The outrageousness of a freedom occupied in denying freedom almost cancels out the outrageousness of the violence taken against it, and hatred and exasperation overpower any sense of conscience.

From here, Beauvoir raises the fact that were it not for the aid from all of his collaborators among the oppressed, the oppressor would never have become so powerful. She again refers to the form of oppression called mystification, and argues that such imposed ignorance is a situation in which man may be locked up as tightly as if in prison. While each individual may be able to practice his freedom inside his world, "not everyone has the means of rejecting, even by doubt, the values, taboos, and prescriptions by which he is surrounded; doubtless, respectful minds take the object of their respect for their own; in this sense they are *responsible* for it, as they are responsible for their presence in the world: but they are not *guilty* if their adhesion is not a resignation of their freedom" (Beauvoir 98). Beauvoir does not blame the brainwashed Nazi youth, but their masters. She suggests that the favorable option in this case would be to expose them to their mystification and freedom, and thus re-educate them. The critical nature of the situation however will not permit such a time-consuming task;

urgency demands that all those serving in support of the oppressor be eliminated regardless of individual circumstances. This idea resonates interestingly with the situation of the subjugation of women, but I would argue only insofar as they are mystified. It is different for those who are not existing in the serious world in all honesty. While it is perhaps scarier and more difficult for those women who are complicit in their own oppression to assert their freedom, this particular example of brainwashed Nazi youth seems more aligned with Beauvoir's earlier example of the Mohammedan women shut up inside a harem rather than emblematic of the situation of women in general. The idea of re-education however, is a powerful one that I think is necessary all around and that I argue in this dissertation for Logic-Based Therapy to be viewed as a useful mechanism for such a task.

Continuing to build toward an ultimate paradox Beauvoir sees regarding violent action against oppression, she exposes a further layer which concerns the complexity of the situation of the world. It is such that it is impossible to fight for all causes at the same time and everywhere. "In order to win an urgent victory, one has to give up the idea, at least temporarily, of serving certain valid causes; one may even be brought to the point of fighting against them" (Beauvoir 98). Beauvoir suggests that for this reason, it happens often that one finds himself forced to oppress and kill others whose goals are valid in his eyes. Beyond having to kill those who are in our way, violent revolt further compels us to sacrifice those who are fighting alongside us, and even ourselves. Due to the fact, as has been discussed in the above, that we prevail over our enemies by acting on their facticity, we reduce them to things. By this same movement however, we

simultaneously reduce ourselves into things as well. The result is a struggle in which

wills oppose one another through bodies, where all bodies are equally exposed to the

same 'brutal hazards' of being wounded, starvation and death, regardless of what side

they fight for (Beauvoir 99). According to Beauvoir, "every war, every revolution,

demands the sacrifice of a generation, of a collectivity, by those who undertake it. And

even outside of periods of crisis when blood flows, the permanent possibility of violence

can constitute between nations and classes a state of veiled warfare in which individuals

are sacrificed in a permanent way" (Beauvoir 99).

The paradox that Beauvoir finds as the result of such analysis is that "no action

can be generated for man without its being immediately generated against men" (99).

She thinks this is an obvious truth that is universally intuited in the same way that the

contingency of human freedom is, and she asserts, it is for this reason that any doctrine

of action normally takes as a primary concern the imperative to mask this inescapable

element of failure tied to any undertaking. Oppressive regimes go about this through a

flat-out denial of the value of what they sacrifice such that they find what they sacrifice

to be nothing. According to Beauvoir, "they set up both the unconditioned value of their

end and the insignificance of the men whom they are using as instruments … In order to

deny the outrage it is enough to deny the importance of the individual, even though it be

at the cost of this collectivity: *it* is everything, *he* is only a zero" (100). Beyond simply

holding this view of the oppressed for themselves in order to justify their violence,

oppressive regimes go further to cast the oppressed into abjection, to degrade them in

such a way that they internalize the disgust projected onto them, and this serves to stifle

revolt and strengthen the regime. The tyrant seeks to close man up in the immanence of

his facticity and forget that he is a movement toward the future, while at the same time

he asserts himself as a transcendence, thus permitting him to treat those abject beings

like livestock.

According to Beauvoir, "the tyrant himself does not openly set up this contempt

as a universal principle: it is the Jew, the negro, or the native whom he encloses in his

immanence; with his subordinates and his soldiers he uses different language" (103).

She explains that if the individual across the board is a 'pure zero,' than the sum total of

the collective is also zero and no effort, whether in defeat or victory, has any

significance. Therefore, in order to incite commitment in the troops the tyrant or regime

appeals to the Hegelian notion that the individual's value is only affirmed in its

surpassing.

> A doctrine which aims at the liberation of man evidently can not rest on a
> contempt for the individual; but it can propose to him no other salvation than his
> subordination to the collectivity. The finite is nothing if it is not its transition to
> the infinite; the death of an individual is not a failure if it is integrated into a
> project which surpasses the limits of life, the substance of this life being outside
> of the individual himself, in the class, in the socialist State; if the individual is
> taught to consent to his sacrifice, the latter is abolished as such, and the soldier
> who has renounced himself in favor of his cause will die joyfully" (Beauvoir
> 103).

Beauvoir finds this to be an all too convenient solution, and turns to a critique of Hegel's

doctrine of absolute spirit to demonstrate where it breaks down.

Beauvoir recalls that for Hegel, the individual is nothing more than an abstract

moment in the history of absolute spirit, and "this is explained by the first intuition of the

system which, identifying the real and the rational, empties the human world of its

sensible thickness; if the truth of the here and now is only Space and Time, if the truth of

one's cause is its passage into the other, then the attachment to the individual substance

of life is evidently an error, an inadequate attitude" (Beauvoir 104). She pinpoints as the

essential moment in Hegelian ethics, the moment when two consciousnesses recognize

one another as identical, which indicates that it is only the universal truth of myself in

myself that is recognized. Thus, individuality is denied and moral redemption rests in

my surpassing myself toward that equal other, who in turn surpasses himself toward

another.

Hegel himself admits that this passage cannot continue indefinitely as an endless

sacrifice of one generation to the next, because all action would be destruction and

human life would be reduced to a useless flight. Instead, "we must admit that there will

be a recovery of the real and that all sacrifices will find their positive form within the

absolute Mind" (Beauvoir 105). Beauvoir contests this notion on the basis of

subjectivity. She inquires, the mind is a subject but *who* is a subject (Beauvoir 105)?

Given Descartes account of subjectivity, she asserts that we cannot ignore the fact that it

radically indicates individuation. "And if it is admitted, at the cost of a contradiction,

that *the* subject will be *the* men of the future reconciled, it must be clearly recognized

that the men of today who turn out to have been the *substance* of the real, and not

subjects, remain excluded forever from this reconciliation" (Beauvoir 105). Further,

Beauvoir points out that Hegel himself precludes a static future, since restlessness is the

nature of the mind and therefore the dialectic can never end. The future it sets up is not

an eternal peace, but instead an indefinite state of war, and "it declares that this war will

no longer appear as a temporary evil in which each individual makes a gift of himself to the State; but it is precisely at this point that there is a bit of sleight-of-hand: for *why* would he agree to this gift since the state cannot be the achieving of the real, Totality recovering itself" (Beauvoir 105). Beauvoir concludes that the entire system set up by Hegel is an apparent mystification because all of its particular moments are made secondary to an end period whose arrival it doesn't set up; the individual surrenders himself to a reality which will never come, and thus will never be affirmed. For her, this demonstrates the sophism embedded in this system that posits the individual as nothing. If the individual has no substance, than neither does the state; if the individual has nothing to sacrifice to, than there is equally nothing to sacrifice to. "Hegelian fullness immediately passes into the nothingness of absence … only the subject can justify his own existence; no external subject, no object, can bring him salvation from the outside. He cannot be regarded as a nothing, since the consciousness of all things is within him" (Beauvoir 106).

Beauvoir's refutation of Hegel's system in this context reveals to her that nihilistic pessimism and rationalistic optimism miscarry in their attempts to overcome the harsh truth of sacrifice, and also does away with any logical reasons for desiring it. Contrary to what these attitudes suppose, it is only in affirming the 'concrete and particular' thickness of this world and the value in the individual reality of our projects and ourselves that it (the world) has any significance and our undertaking becomes worthy of sacrifice (Beauvoir 106). But, Beauvoir argues that in being set up as a distinct and irreducible value, the notion of sacrifice recovers its meaning for the

individual in that the loss of possibility it implies no longer seems trivial. For this reason, even if he consents to dying in order to justify his life as the hero would, she suggests that it is neither natural nor easy, since again, freedom demands both that it recover itself as an absolute and that it extend its movement open-endedly (Beauvoir 107-8). Further, for those particular individuals who are attached to the hero who sacrifices himself, his death is consented to as an individual and irreducible misfortune.

Whereas a collectivist conception of humanity denies the validity of feelings such as love and friendship, and comradery is established solely on the basis of the universality of the effort in which individuals are engaged, if individuals recognize themselves in their differences, relations between individuals are established and each becomes irreplaceable for a few others (Beauvoir 108). Within the individualist conception then, violence both provokes the anguish of the sacrifice to which one has consented, and is carried out in revolt and refusal grasped by the one who practices it as a tragedy and a crime. Here, Beauvoir finds it important to call back to mind that the highest goal at which human beings must aim is freedom, which is able in itself to determine the value of every end. Therefore, happiness and all other relative goods which human projects define, "will be subordinated to this absolute condition of realization" (Beauvoir 113). The freedom of a single individual must count more than a tobacco or coffee bean harvest, which is generally accepted in theory but not respected in fact. What makes the problem so difficult for Beauvoir however, is that it is a matter of choosing between the negation of one freedom or another: every war supposes a discipline, every revolution a dictatorship, every political move a certain amount of

lying; action implies all forms of enslaving, from murder to mystification. Is it therefore

absurd in every case? Or, in spite of everything, are we unable to find, within the very

outrage that it implies, reasons for wanting one thing rather than another?" (113).

In the final section of her *Ethics*, Beauvoir first reminds us that the notion of

ambiguity must not be confused with that of absurdity, for if our existence were absurd,

it would be meaningless whereas to assert that it is ambiguous simply signifies that its

meaning is never fixed (129). "Absurdity challenges every ethics; but also the finished

rationalization of the real would leave no room for ethics; it is because man's condition

is ambiguous that he seeks, through failure and outrageousness, to save his existence.

Thus, to say that action has to be lived in its truth, that is in the consciousness of the

antimonies which it involves, does not mean that one has to renounce it" (Beauvoir 129).

According to Beauvoir however, the problem remains that all of what has until now been

said in her account remains relatively abstract. In considering what must be done

practically, she admits that as with the arts and sciences, in ethics there are no hard and

fast recipes to follow. Instead, all that can be done is to propose methods, and it is here

that Beauvoir does this.

The first guideline that Beauvoir outlines is the notion that the "the good of an

individual or a group of individuals requires that it be taken as an absolute end of our

action; but we are not authorized to decide upon this end *a priori*" (142). In other words,

we must treat the other as a freedom so that his or her end can be freedom. Given that

no action is ever authorized in the first place, and that existentialist ethics is the rejection

of all principles of authority, Beauvoir cautions, unlike applying normative ethical rules,

following this first precept is always to risk inventing an original solution. In order to elucidate this point more clearly, she considers two different scenarios, both involving suicidal individuals. In the first case, a love-sick young woman overdoses on pills out of disappointment, and her friends find her and save her life. She goes on to become a happy mother, and Beauvoir claims that her friends were right in determining her suicide to be a hasty choice and getting her into a position to either freely reject or return to it. Conversely, if we consider an anguished patient in a psychiatric hospital with twenty suicide attempts under his belt, the doctor who pats him on the back with a smile on his face, while cutting him off from his ends, is his tyrant and torturer (Beauvoir 143). Bringing this distinction into sharper relief, Beauvoir examines the case of a drug-addicted friend who asks for money to get a fix. If I respond by encouraging him to get treatment, taking him to the doctor, and trying to help him live, I am right in refusing him the money to the degree that my help can be successful. On the other hand, if there is nothing within my power to alter my friend's situation, then I do him no favors by refusing him the money because he will find a way to get what the drugs, even if that means resorting to extreme measures.

Beauvoir complicates the matter of what it means to treat the other as a freedom when she points out that "the freedom of one man almost always concerns that of other individuals … The Other is multiple, and on the basis of this new questions arise" (143-4). In situations where children are involved, for example, and the freedom of the parents to live according to their preferences is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children, it is clear that they are the ones who must be taken into account first.

Speaking more broadly however, she poses the question "for whom are we seeking freedom and happiness," a problem she acknowledges as abstract which will lead to an arbitrary answer, and thus outrage (Beauvoir 144). She suggests, "generosity seems to us to be better grounded and therefore more valid the less distinction there is between the other and ourself and the more we fulfill ourself in taking the other as an end. That is what happens if I am engaged in relation to others" (Beauvoir 144). Therefore, according to Beauvoir, it makes sense that alliances and solidarities form with expectations for help; it is predictable that the Jew would fight for the Jew and the Proletarian for the proletarian. Nevertheless, she maintains that "the assertion of these particular solidarities must not contradict the will for universal solidarity and each finite undertaking must also be open to the totality of men" (Beauvoir 144). But again, the cause of freedom can only prevail through particular sacrifices, and the question of how to choose among freedoms becomes the subject of Beauvoir's second ethical-methodological suggestion.

In approaching the issue of how to decide between competing freedoms, Beauvoir lists as the first step that we consider what genuine human interest fills the abstract form proposed as the end of the action. Referring to politics, she explains that it always advances ideas such as Nation or Empire, which only have value insofar as concrete individuals are involved. Therefore, if an empire can only proudly assert itself to the disadvantage of its members it must be rejected. "Thus, we challenge every condemnation as well as every a priori justification of the violence practiced with a view to a valid end. They must be legitimized concretely. A calm, mathematical calculation

is here impossible. One must attempt to judge the chances of success that are involved

in a certain sacrifice; but at the beginning this judgment will always be doubtful; besides,

in the face of the immediate reality of the sacrifice, the notion of chance is difficult to

think about" (Beauvoir 148). "It is apparent that the method we are proposing,

analogous in this respect to scientific or aesthetic methods, consists, in each case, of

confronting the values realized with the values aimed at, and the meaning of the act with

its content" (Beauvoir 152).

CHAPTER III

BAD FAITH IN THE CONTEXT OF GENDER RELATIONS

Beauvoir's powerful treatise on the situation of women, *The Second Sex,* can be

understood as an application of her philosophical position as outlined in her *Ethics,* to

lived experience. In her *Ethics,* she offers in-depth analysis of authenticity, or what it

means for human beings to properly or healthily assume command over our conscious

abilities which can lead us on the path to what Aristotle's *Ethics* refers to as flourishing.

Unlike Aristotle's account however, she also considers in great detail ethical failure or

bad faith. Bad faith, or the refusal to acknowledge existential freedom, leads human

beings down the path of self-destruction. Situations of oppression reflect the attitude of

bad faith both in the oppressor and the oppressed. Beauvoir accounts for the dynamic

between both sides of the oppressive relationship with G.W.F Hegel's notion of the

master-slave dialectic, the essential feature of which is that the master fails to give

adequate recognition to the slave and the slave fails to assert herself. In her *Second Sex*,

Beauvoir explores the implications of this dynamic for the concrete situation of women.

She concludes that for women to finally elevate themselves to the status of subjects, they

must take full responsibility for themselves, or assert themselves. For this to be possible

however, she implies that men must relinquish their position as the essential. In other

words, they must grant women adequate recognition of their status as equally free

subjects. Psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin takes Beauvoir's powerful insights as a

starting point, and offers a compelling account of why it is the case that women tend to

fail to assert themselves and men tend to refuse others, particularly women, proper recognition. In this chapter, I explore the relationship between these two accounts for the purpose of demonstrating the importance of incorporating this fundamental insight into Logic-Based Therapy.

Woman as Man's Other

Beauvoir begins her account by expressing her utter irritation at the fact that in 1949 France, the subject of woman, is still being discussed. She says, "It is not new. Enough ink has flowed over the quarrel about feminism; it is now almost over: let's not talk about it anymore. Yet it is still being talked about. And the volumes of idiocies churned out over this past century do not seem to have clarified the problem" (Beauvoir 3). The very first line of this text describes her reluctance to engage in the conversation, however she was apparently driven to the point where she just had to set the record straight over the course of nearly eight hundred pages. What is particularly striking from the outset, is that this remarkable, subversive text is directed toward the feminists as much as it is at men, if not more. Although it is today rightly categorized as feminist philosophy, Beauvoir herself would not have agreed in 1949. It wasn't until twenty years after the publication of *The Second Sex,* when she recognized that women's liberation wasn't progressing quickly enough, that she first identified herself as a feminist.

Beauvoir opens up her account by analyzing whether there truly is a problem. In other words, she questions, "are there even women? … It is hard to know any longer if women still exist, if they will always exist, if there should be women at all, what place they hold in this world, what place they should hold" (Beauvoir 3). In coming to terms with how exactly to address this issue, Beauvoir begins by inquiring into what woman actually is. She discovers that many define woman by her biology; in other words, she is a female or more specifically, 'she is a womb.' While we can readily grant that females exist and comprise half of the human population, Beauvoir here makes the crucial distinction that it is not necessarily the case that every female human is a woman. One is a woman to the degree that she somehow takes part in this vague reality we call 'femininity,' which was historically taken for granted as a certain and definable essence. What femininity refers to in 1949 and certainly today, is problematic due to the fact that "biological and social sciences no longer believe that there are immutably determined entities that define given characteristics like those of the woman, the Jew, or the black; science considers characteristics as secondary reactions to a *situation*" (Beauvoir 4). According to Beauvoir, there is not now nor has there ever been in actual reality, such thing as 'femininity.'

Given that femininity is not in actuality a definite essence that can be used to characterize individuals, Beauvoir questions whether the word woman retains any content. In response to this, Enlightenment thinkers would argue that among human beings, women are simply those who are arbitrarily labeled by the word woman. Further, she attributes to nominalists the view that every individual is a human being so

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that there are neither men nor women, and finally to mid-twentieth century American

feminists the notion that 'women as such' do not exist. Here, Beauvoir rejects these

claims which simply attempt to think the concept out of existence, for their failure to

take into account the fact that every concrete individual is uniquely situated. She asserts

that to deny our notions of the 'eternal feminine,' 'black soul' or 'Jewish character' does

not have the liberating effect that it is supposed to, but instead amounts to an

'inauthentic flight[31].' "Clearly no woman can claim without bad faith to be situated

beyond her sex" (Beauvoir 4). As it was in 1949, and as it remains today, it is strikingly

obvious to anyone who steps out in public that humanity is divided into at least two

categories with different bodies, clothes, mannerisms and interests. Beauvoir grants that

these distinctions may very well be superficial and might one day disappear, however it

is certain that here and now they exist manifestly.

At this point in Beauvoir's account, women do in fact exist, however their

biological function is not sufficient to define them, and the explanation of the eternal

feminine has been thrown out. In posing the question, "What is a woman?" a second

time, she is immediately struck by a plausible answer relating to the fact that she asks it

at all. She asserts that it would never occur to a man to write a book on the male

situation. If a woman wants to define herself, she must begin with the fact that she is a

woman, however a man never has to make this distinction. For Beauvoir, it is obvious to

a man that he is a man and this reveals to her something important about the relation

between the sexes. Rather than grasping it in terms of polar opposites, she instead

suggests instead man denotes both the positive and the neuter, and that woman is only

the negative, "to such a point that any determination is imputed to her as a limitation, without reciprocity" (Beauvoir 5). In reference to ancient wisdom, Beauvoir recalls that woman is thought to be trapped in her subjectivity by such conditions as her uterus and ovaries. "Man vainly forgets that his anatomy also includes hormones and testicles. He grasps his body as a direct and normal link with the world that he believes he apprehends in all objectivity, whereas he considers woman's body an obstacle, a prison, burdened by everything that particularizes it" (Beauvoir 5). Further, according to such thinkers as Aristotle and Aquinas, woman is characterized by a lack of qualities and is thus defective; and as an incomplete man and is thus incidental, respectively. Ultimately, for Beauvoir, it is the case that "humanity is male, and man defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself; she is not considered an autonomous being" (5). Therefore, the male body has meaning by itself, irrespective of the female body, while the woman's body appears to have no intelligibility without reference to the male. "And she is nothing other than what man decides; she is thus called "the sex," meaning that the male sees her essentially as a sexed being; for him she is sex, so she is it in the absolute. She is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other" (Beauvoir 6).

According to Beauvoir, 'alterity,' or opposition, is the fundamental category of human thought. She argues that duality between the self and other is as original as consciousness itself, although historically, this division has not always landed in the category of the division between the sexes. Beauvoir cites as evidence for this latter

claim, ancient mythological pairs of oppositions such as God and Lucifer, Good and Evil, and Day and Night, where no trace of the feminine is present yet. Generally speaking however, she makes the intuitive claim that no group of human beings ever sets itself up as 'One,' without straightaway positing the Other opposed to itself. In order to grasp this idea in a simple way, it is useful to consider the kind of example Beauvoir offers to illustrate her point. She suggests that it only takes three strangers randomly brought together while travelling in the same train car in order for the rest of the passengers to become 'vaguely hostile "others[32]"' (Beauvoir 6). Once a group forms in anyway, be it arbitrary or not, any non-member necessarily becomes other to it. "Village people view anyone not belonging to the village as suspicious "others." For the native of a country, inhabitants of other countries are viewed as "foreigners"; Jews are the "others" for anti-Semites, blacks for racist Americans, indigenous people for colonists, proletarians for the propertied classes." (Beauvoir 6). Citing Levi-Strauss, Beauvoir suggests that the transition from the state of nature to that of culture is made possible by our capacity to think biological relations as systems of oppositions, which he thinks are fundamental givens of social reality (7).

According to Beauvoir, such systems of oppositions that Levi-Strauss posits as the conditions for the possibility of culture, 'duality, alternation, opposition, and symmetry,' could not be grasped if we were to take human reality solely as a 'being with' based on friendship and solidarity' (Beauvoir 7). Instead, she has us follow Hegel in his view that within consciousness itself lies a fundamental hostility to any other consciousness. In the struggle for recognition, "the subject posits itself only in

opposition; it asserts itself as the essential and sets up the other as inessential, as the object" (Beauvoir 7). It is the case however, that this 'other consciousness' has an equal and opposing claim. To illustrate her point, Beauvoir places us in the position of a local who, while travelling, is taken aback upon the realization that the locals of neighboring countries view him or her as an outsider. This juxtaposition reveals to her that there can be no absolute meaning in the idea of the Other; it is merely a relative term. Therefore, "whether one likes it or not, individuals and groups have no choice but to recognize the reciprocity of their relation" (Beauvoir 7). Assuming this position, Beauvoir's big question becomes, "How is it, then, that between the sexes this reciprocity has not been put forward, that one of the terms has been asserted as the only essential one, denying any relativity in regard to its correlative, defining the latter as pure alterity" (7)? In other words, how is it that the male sex has come to be able to appear and posit itself as sovereign, and why don't women challenge it? Beauvoir reasons, "no subject posits itself spontaneously and at once as the inessential from the outset; it is not the Other who, defining itself as Other, defines the One; the Other is posited as Other by the One positing itself as One. But in order for the Other not to turn into the One, the Other has to submit to this foreign point of view. Where does this submission in woman come from" (Beauvoir 7)?

Aiming to account for the submissiveness of women to their status as Other, Beauvoir considers historical cases where one group has managed to absolutely dominate another. In these instances, she reasons that it is typically explainable by numerical inequality in terms of a majority imposing its laws on or persecuting a

minority. This explanation is inadequate for the situation of women however, since they in no way constitute a minority the way American blacks or Jews do. Instead, they comprise approximately half of the world's population at any given time in history. Continuing further with this line of inquiry, Beauvoir proposes that for the hypothetical opposing groups in question, it is generally true that they were at onetime independent of each other, either in the sense that they had no previous awareness of one another, or that each had accepted the autonomy of the other, until some event subordinated the weaker to the stronger. In the concrete examples of the Jewish Diaspora and slavery in America, for the oppressed in these situations, there was a "*before:* they share a past, a tradition, sometimes a religion, or a culture" (Beauvoir 8). The same however, cannot be said for women; there is no before for them in any similar sense.

Citing late 19th century German socialist politician August Bebel, Beauvoir considers a parallel which comes closer to the situation of women than do the historical cases of domination and subordination previously mentioned: that between women and the proletariat. Explaining his claim, she shares, "proletarians are not a numerical minority either, and yet they have never formed a separate group. However, not *one* event but a whole historical development explains their existence as a class and accounts for the distribution of *these* individuals in this class" (Beauvoir 8). While Bebel might be right to this extent, this parallel too, falls short of adequately accounting for the situation of women. The fact remains that there have not always existed proletarians but "there have always been women; they are women by their physiological structure; as far back as history can be traced, they have always been subordinate to men; their

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dependence is not the consequence of an event or a becoming, it did not *happen"* (Beauvoir 8). Since this is the case, that we cannot locate an event where women became subordinate to men, the otherness has the appearance of absoluteness, partly because it falls outside the 'accidental nature of historical fact.' This is problematic precisely because, whereas a situation that has developed at a certain time can be reversed at another time, a condition with the character of 'natural' appears to be impervious to change. But, Beauvoir argues that 'nature' is no more absolute than historical reality.

The real issue for Beauvoir is the fact that women generally do not posit themselves as subjects. She says, "If woman discovers herself as the inessential and never turns into the essential, it is because she does not bring about this transformation herself. Proletarians say "we." So do blacks. Positing themselves as subjects, they thus transform the bourgeois or whites into "others"" (Beauvoir 8). Women, on the other hand, never claim themselves authentically as subjects. Failing to adequately assume the duality between themselves and men as distinct groups in opposition, they identify with their male counterparts rather than with each other. As a result, they internalize the identities that men have imposed on them instead of defining themselves. What seems significant about this point, aside from the idea that there is strength in numbers, is that to understand myself as a member of a particular social category requires that I both give and receive recognition from other members of that category. Only ever receiving unequal recognition from men will certainly make it difficult for me to fully understand myself and define myself as woman.

Further, Beauvoir asserts that women have not taken anything, but instead have only received what men have been willing to allow them. She thinks this is all due to the fact that as a whole, women do not possess the concrete means to unite into a group that could assert itself in opposition. Lacking any shared features such as a history or religion, they exist spread amongst and in solidarity with men. Further and more poignantly, whereas the proletariat could imagine and carry out the destruction of the entire ruling class, it is impossible for a woman to even consider ridding the world of men. In this, we see that the link which binds women to their oppressors is unique. Rather than having become divided at a particular historical moment, the separation between the sexes is a biological given. For Beauvoir, "their opposition took shape within an original *Mitsein*, and she has not broken it. The couple is a fundamental unit with the two halves riveted to each other: cleavage of society by sex is not possible. This is the fundamental characteristic of woman: she is the Other at the heart of a whole whose two components are necessary to each other" (Beauvoir 9).

Beauvoir suggests that we might think this reciprocity between the sexes would have assisted woman in her liberation, however the biological need that has rendered men dependent on the female has not in fact had this effect. Woman is still heavily handicapped; even as her legal rights are acknowledged abstractly, deeply ingrained habit prevents them from being concretely manifested. Men are in possession of real power, and carry with them an esteem that is reinforced throughout the child's whole education (Beauvoir 10). Further, even as women are beginning to share in world-making, it remains the case that this world still belongs to men and both sexes know it.

Importantly, Beauvoir points out that "refusing to be the Other, refusing complicity with man, would mean renouncing all the advantages an alliance with the superior caste confers on them. Lord-man will materially protect liege-woman and will be in charge of justifying her existence: along with the economic risk, she eludes the metaphysical risk of a freedom that must invent its goals without help" (Beauvoir 10). Indeed, as we have already seen laid down in her general philosophical position, Beauvoir here too asserts, alongside every individual's prerogative to assert him or herself as a subject is the lure of bad faith, to flee freedom and make oneself into an object; prey to a foreign will. While this is the evil, inauthentic path, it is the easy one. Therefore, while woman makes no claim for herself as a subject due to a lack of means and because she detects the necessary tie that binds her to man, it is also a result of the fact that she often experiences her role of Other as fulfilling somehow. "The man who sets the woman up as an *Other* will thus find in her a deep complicity" (Beauvoir 10).

Questions still remain however, for Beauvoir. How did it occur in the first place that men 'won' in establishing themselves as the superior sex; Why has this world always belonged to men; Is the fact that this situation is beginning to change a good thing; Will it result in equality between men and women? Although Beauvoir acknowledges that these old questions are already provided with many answers, she asserts that the very fact that woman is Other defies any explanation that men have thus far presented, which have clearly served no other purpose than their own self-interest. In fact, "lawmakers, priests, philosophers, writers, and scholars have gone to great lengths to prove that women's subordinate condition was willed in heaven and profitable on

earth" (Beauvoir 11). Since antiquity, they have depicted women hostilely as weak and imbecilic, but although Beauvoir concedes that at times this may have been warranted while often gratuitous, she argues that the real purpose it serves is to conceal a "more or less skillfully camouflaged will to self-justification" (11).

Beauvoir draws an important connection here regarding this process of justification that she recognizes as operating in the establishment and perpetuation of men's superiority. She cites a consequence of the Industrial Revolution; that it caused women to join the labor force, in order to make her point plain. She explains, at this moment the demands of women find economic rather than purely theoretical grounds, which lead their opponents to become more antagonistic. As the emancipation of women becomes a more salient threat, men argue all the more aggressively that women belong in the home. This is especially the case within the working class, as the fact that women work for lower wages makes them serious competition for working class men. As before, antifeminists draw on theology, philosophy and religion to demonstrate women's inferiority, while now adding rationalizations from science as well. Beauvoir asserts, "at most they were willing to grant "separate but equal status" to the *other* sex," which she points out is "exactly that formula the Jim Crow laws put into practice with regard to black Americans; this so-called egalitarian segregation served only to introduce the most extreme forms of discrimination" (12). She argues that the similarities here are not by coincidence and that whether it is class, race or sex made into an inferior condition, the 'justification process' by which this is carried out is exactly the same (Beauvoir 12).

Beauvoir recognizes deep parallels between the situations of women and blacks. She points out,

> both are liberated today from the same paternalism, and the former master caste wants to keep them "in their place," that is, the place chosen for them; in both cases, they praise, more or less sincerely, the virtues of the "good black," the carefree, childlike, merry soul of the resigned black, and the woman who is a "true woman"—frivolous, infantile, irresponsible, the woman subjugated to man. In both cases, the ruling caste bases its argument on the state of affairs it created itself … The White American relegates the black to the rank of shoe-shine boy, and then concludes that blacks are only good for shining shoes. The same vicious circle can be found in all analogous circumstances: when an individual or a group of individuals is kept in a situation of inferiority, the fact is that he or they *are* inferior. But the scope of the verb *to be* must be understood; bad faith means giving it a substantive value, when in fact it has the sense of the Hegelian dynamic: *to be* is to have become, to have been made as one manifests oneself. Yes, women in general *are* today inferior to men; that is, their situation provides them with fewer possibilities: the question is whether this state of affairs must be perpetuated (Beauvoir 12-13).

According to Beauvoir's assessment, many men would prefer for the situation to remain the same, and continue to feel threatened on different fronts by women's liberation. Aside from the obvious economic advantage that the status quo affords men, another benefit that oppression allows for the oppressor is that the lowest among them is able to feel himself superior. Whereas a poor white southerner can take pride in that at least he is not a "dirty nigger," the most unexceptional man can feel himself to be a God next to a woman (Beauvoir 13). For Beauvoir, there are a number of even subtler ways in which men profit from women's otherness, and therefore she acknowledges that we can not really blame them for not readily wanting to give up the benefits they derive from the myth of the eternal feminine. "It takes great abnegation to refuse to posit oneself as unique and absolute Subject. Besides, the vast majority of men do not explicitly make this position their own. They do not *posit* woman as inferior: they are too imbued today

with the democratic ideal not to recognize all human beings as equals" (Beauvoir 14).

Further, Beauvoir claims that within the context of the family, man can convince himself

that there no longer remains a hierarchy between the sexes. She supports this claim by

suggesting that first, the male child who becomes the young man perceives woman as

having the equivalent social dignity as the adult man. Next, in desire and love, he

undergoes the experience of the opposition and independence of the woman he desires

and loves. Once married, he respects the spouse and mother in his wife, and in the

concrete experience of marriage, she positively asserts herself opposite him as a

freedom. In this way, he can thus convince himself that woman in general is his equal.

When a situation arises, as it inevitably will, where he recognizes some areas of

inferiority, he simply blames it on nature. "When he has an attitude of benevolence and

partnership toward a woman, he applies the principle of abstract equality; and he does

not *posit* the concrete inequality he recognizes. But as soon as he clashes with her, the

situation is reversed. He will apply the concrete inequality theme and will even allow

himself to disavow abstract equality. This is how many men affirm, with quasi good

faith, that women *are* equal to men and have no demands to make, and *at the same time*

that women will never be equal to men and that their demands are in vain" (Beauvoir

14).

The enormous degree of social discrimination that women must bear often

appears insignificant from the outside, and Beauvoir argues that the intellectual and

moral effects are so deeply ingrained that they have the appearance, once again, of

arising from an original nature (14). Therefore, she asserts that for men, it is nearly

impossible to grasp the actual extent of this discrimination and its ramifications, and even the most sympathetic among them can never fully know women's situation. While this remains true of men for Beauvoir, as we have seen from the outset of *The Second Sex*, she warns us to be equally mistrustful of feminist's arguments insofar as their tendency towards polemicizing devalues them. When people quarrel, reason tends to disappear. According to Beauvoir, "what people have endlessly sought to prove is that woman is superior, inferior, or equal to man … (but) every argument has its opposite, and both are often misleading. To see clearly, one needs to get out of these ruts; these vague notions of superiority, inferiority, and equality that have distorted all discussions must be discarded in order to start anew" (Beauvoir 15).

So then, how do we ask, and who is qualified to ask? As we have already considered, Beauvoir thinks that both men and women are 'judge and party,' and further, that both the 'angel' and the hermaphrodite would be wholly unqualified to speak on this matter (15). Instead, she argues that *certain* women are best qualified or suited to expound the situation of women because, "it is not a mysterious essence that dictates good or bad faith to men and women; it is their situation that disposes them to seek the truth to a greater or lesser extent" (Beauvoir 15-6). Importantly, Beauvoir acknowledges the impossibility of complete impartiality in approaching any human issue insofar as "even the way of asking the questions, of adopting perspectives, presupposes hierarchies of interests; all characteristics comprise values; every so-called objective description is set against an ethical background" (16). Adopting this very contemporary view of objectivity, or rather its impossibility, she asserts that in dealing with such human

problems we are much better off being clear and explicit regarding the normally implicit

principles guiding any sociological inquiry. In this way, we would be clear and

consistent throughout regarding the meaning given to such catchphrases as 'progress,'

'superior,' and similar such terms.

"If we examine some of the books on women, we see that one of the most

frequently held points of view is that of public good or general interest: in reality, this is

taken to mean the interest of society as each one wishes to maintain or establish it. "In

our opinion, there is no public good other than one that assures the citizen's private

good; we judge institutions from the point of view of the concrete opportunities they

give to individuals. But neither do we confuse the idea of private interest with

happiness" (Beauvoir 16). According to Beauvoir, it is not possible for us to know what

happiness actually means, nor what authentic values it comprises; "there is no way to

measure the happiness of others, and it is always easy to call a situation that one would

like to impose on others happy: in particular, we declare happy those condemned to

stagnation, under the pretext that happiness is immobility" (Beauvoir 16). Here,

Beauvoir returns us to the project of her *Ethics* when she declares that instead of seeking

some elusive 'happiness,' we must instead concern ourselves with existentialist morality.

Each subject identifies him or herself as transcendence concretely through his or her

projects (Beauvoir 16). Further, freedom is only realized through the perpetual

surpassing of him or herself toward other freedoms (Beauvoir 16). For Beauvoir, the

only justification for our present existence is its development toward an indeterminately

open future, characterized by the authentic attitude of the desire to disclose being. She

asserts, "every time transcendence lapses into immanence, there is degradation of existence into "in-itself," of freedom into facticity; this fall is a moral fault if the subject consent to it; if this fall is inflicted on the subject, it takes the form of frustration and oppression; in both cases it is an absolute evil" (Beauvoir 16).

The unique difficulty for women, according to Beauvoir, is that while each individual who is interested in justifying his or her existence experiences it as an indefinite need to transcend him or herself, woman discovers and chooses herself in a world where men tend to force her to assume her role as Other (16). Man, who experiences himself as an essential and sovereign consciousness attempts to 'freeze her as an object and doom her to immanence,' since her transcendence or self-reflection is always transcended or determined by man's own transcendence (Beauvoir 16-7). According to Beauvoir, "women's drama lies in this conflict between the fundamental claim of every human subject, which always posits itself as essential, and the demands of a situation that constitutes her as inessential," or ultimately, as undeserving of asserting such a fundamental claim (Beauvoir 16-7). In response to this difficulty, she poses the key question: How can a human being in the feminine condition realize the project of herself? The task at hand for Beauvoir is to ultimately identify how woman can attain independence from out of her situation of dependence.

Very generally, Beauvoir argues that woman, like all subjects, must adequately assume her freedom and thus assert herself, however this requires that she be afforded the opportunity to reflect on her possibilities to be apart from her role as man's other. I argue that her work can make a valuable contribution to Logic-Based Therapy towards

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this end. The project of women's liberation, and really any project that seeks to overturn

oppression, is complicated in its ambiguity. Adequately assuming one's freedom is the

same as taking responsibility for oneself. This means that Beauvoir is gently demanding

that the victim take responsibility for a situation that she did not initially consent to. As

she points out in her *Ethics* however, there is a sense in which all human beings are

victims in this way on the basis that we were all initially children. Beauvoir argues that

the moment of moral choice is unpleasant for all human beings. The burden of assuming

our freedom leaves us prone to bad faith, and this is precisely the stumbling block to

women's liberation that I am interested in addressing in the context of therapy. We

choose to be in bad faith to avoid confronting the unpleasant and frustrating aspects of

our existence, but anyone who wishes to be free must honestly acknowledge their own

role or complicity in their oppressive situation. Beauvoir asserts, "in focusing on the

individual's possibilities, we will define these possibilities not in terms of happiness but

in terms of freedom" (Beauvoir 17). Here, we can turn to Jessica Benjamin's work for

help.

Psychology of Domination

In her 1988 book *Bonds of Love,* Benjamin explores the interplay between love

and domination, where domination is conceived as a bilateral process involving the

participation of both those who exercise as well as those who submit to power. This

feminist analysis of the problem of domination takes as a starting point Beauvoir's

insight from *The Second Sex* that woman serves as man's principal other; object to his subject etc., and seeks to address the question of why such dualities as this continue to shape the relationship between the sexes despite the apparent commitment to equality that society purports to espouse. In considering what accounts for their psychological doggedness, Benjamin turns to a critical analysis of psychoanalytic theory in the hopes that it can aid in shedding light on the formation of the psychic structure according to which one individual takes on the role of subject and the other must serve as object.

Benjamin begins her account with an attempt to illustrate how domination originates in the modification of the relationship between the self and other. She posits that self-assertion and mutual recognition comprise opposite ends of an important balance that is central to what she refers to as 'differentiation,' or the individual's development as a self that is cognizant of its being separate from others. It is the case however, that this balance is precarious and requires a tension between the two poles in order for the self and other to meet as autonomous individuals. The disintegration of the balance is in fact what causes domination and submission, and what makes it so difficult to maintain is the paradox that Benjamin argues emanates from the need for recognition. She defines recognition as the response from the other that renders the actions, intentions and feelings of the self meaningful, and that permits the self to apprehend its agency in a concrete way. But, as is implied by Hegel, such recognition can only be conferred successfully upon me by an other that I recognize as a person in his or her own right, and what thus becomes the struggle for recognition in order to self-confirm forms the central element in relationships of domination (Benjamin 12).

In order to grasp why this relationship of mutual recognition breaks down so easily, Benjamin analyses it first from the perspective of the relationship between mother and newborn child. She asserts that most new mothers are able to endure a strong connection with their newborn children, and acknowledging that support and guidance from other adults is helpful and comforting, what "sustains her from moment to moment is the relationship she is forming with her infant, the gratification she feels when baby, with all that raw intensity, responds to her. In this early interaction, the mother can already identify the first signs of mutual recognition: "I recognize you as my baby who recognizes me"" (Benjamin 15). In this paradigmatic relation, Benjamin states that in order to experience robust recognition, the paradox that 'you' who belong to 'me,' are also now distinct and outside of 'me,' is required. Thus, more generally we see that the process of recognition always contains this mix of togetherness and otherness; for the mother, it must be the case that the happiness I take in your presence comprises both our connection and your independence.

In the 1980's, psychoanalyst and infant researcher Daniel Stern presented a radical challenge to the contemporary American psychoanalytic paradigm of infancy and to Sigmund Freud when he suggested that the infant is never in a fully symbiotic relationship with, or entirely undifferentiated from the mother, but instead is inclined from birth to be self-interested and to differentiate itself from the world of others (Benjamin 18). Once this notion is accepted, the idea is that a shift occurs where the issue becomes how we connect to and recognize the other, rather than how we free ourselves from him or her. In addition to this insight regarding the infant, research on

adult psychoanalytic patients who felt dead and empty inside, unable to meaningfully connect with themselves or others; 'the self who suffers the lack of recognition,' lead to the development of what Benjamin coins the 'intersubjective view' (19). This view proposes that the individual develops in and through its relation to other subjects, and that the other who is met by the self is also a self or a subject in its own right. Further, this view assumes both that we are able to and must recognize the other as distinct while also alike, as an other that is able to partake in a similar psychic experience. Therefore, this notion of intersubjectivity redirects the conception of the psychic world from the subject's relations to its object, toward a subject meeting another subject (Benjamin 20). This view then, which is distinguished from the intrapsychic view, pertains to what occurs within the frame of reference of the self and other. While the intrapsychic view apprehends the individual as a discrete unit with a complex internal structure where the focus of study is the unconscious, the intersubjective view explores the capacities that arise during the interaction between the self and others, with the representation of self and other as distinct yet interrelated, the central focus.

Whereas these two theoretical frameworks are generally taken to be incompatible, Benjamin suggests that they ought to be grasped as complimentary means for exploring the psyche. Further, she argues that the element according to which the intersubjective theories of self-development merge is the need for recognition. She posits that a person comes to feel validated in themselves and their abilities by being in the company of another person who recognizes his or her acts, intentions, abilities, feelings and independence etc. "Recognition is the essential response, the constant

companion of assertion. The subject declares, "I am, I do," and then waits for the

response, "you are, you have done." Recognition is, thus, reflexive; it includes not only

the other's confirming response, but also how we find ourselves in that response. We

recognize ourselves in the other, and we even recognize ourselves in inanimate things"

(Benjamin 21). For the baby, Benjamin cites Stern in his findings that its ability to

recognize something he or she has seen before is both self and world-affirming, and

serves to bolster his or her sense of effective agency. Here, the sense of recognition that

is being invoked by Benjamin seems ultimately to amount to validation or verification

that aids in determining or sedimenting the subject's identity and self-understanding.

According to Benjamin, as human beings develop, what she is referring to as

assertion and recognition become the central dialogic interchanges between the self and

the other. As Hegel seems to, she views recognition as an ever-present element

permeating all stages of our maturation. Here, she draws a helpful comparison for

getting at what she believes is the developmental function of recognition, between it and

sunlight in the process of photosynthesis. Whereas the sun provides the necessary

energy for the plant's constant transformation of substance, recognition is also, as

suggested by Hegel, perhaps the catalyst of all transformation within the self. Referring

back to the relationship between newborn and mother, Benjamin details that recognition

encompasses all of the different reactions and responses from the mother to the child's

needs and preferences, which at first is seen as background and is encapsulated in the

mother's 'knowing her baby.' Within the first few months however, the child latches

onto this 'background' recognition from its mother and it takes center stage; it "becomes

the foreground, the raison d'etre, the meaning and goal of being with others" (Benjamin 23). Going forward from this stage in development, recognition becomes increasingly an end in itself that first brings a sense of harmony, but then opens into a space of conflict between self and other. The innovation that the intersubjective view and Benjamin contribute to the study of the self is the notion that this apparent need for recognition by human beings is not merely one-sided, but instead mutual. What is implied here is that we both need to recognize and be recognized by an other, which entails that we have a need to recognize the other as both similar yet separate from myself. Therefore, the child has a need to see the mother as an independent subject and not merely as the external world or an extension of his or her own ego.

Benjamin astutely points out that the mother has only recently begun to be grasped as a subject in her own right, and thus she has rarely been regarded as having a purpose apart from her existence for her child. Importantly however, in order for her to be able to offer her child the recognition that he or she needs, her status as subject and her independence from the child must be established. As the child develops and increasingly founds his or her own independence, the mother's recognition is only significant and successful to the degree that it reflects her own 'equally separate subjectivity' (Benjamin 24). Therefore, Benjamin states that recognition needs to allow for the assertion of each self, and emphasizes that mutual recognition of this sort is as important of a developmental goal as separation. Unlike the majority of developmental theories that stress the aim of autonomy instead of the relation to others, Benjamin,

again, advances the position that ideally, differentiation entails the reciprocity of self and other, and the balance between recognition and assertion.

The sense of harmony that Benjamin describes recognition as allowing for in the early relation between mother and baby is related to the notion of attunement. This has to do with what Benjamin refers to as 'mutual influence,' or the subtle adaptation of each individual's facial and gestural response to the other, which brings about a sense of working in unison (27). Attending such attunement between a pair in relation with one another is a heightened sense of gratification, and according to Benjamin, in addition to attributing this to instinctual satisfaction, it ought also to be framed in terms of cooperation and recognition. This important concept for intersubjective theory, attunement or lack thereof, reintroduces for her the idea of pleasure: the pleasure of being with others, which had been dropped by ego psychology. In addition to the awareness of separate minds, which the child first begins to develop at around 7-9 months, the desire for attunement provides for Benjamin a new type of conflict that will ultimately lead to the breakdown of mutual recognition. This occurs when the child becomes torn between his or her desire to fulfill his or her own interests and the desire to stay compliant to the will of the parent. "Given such inevitable conflict, the desire to remain attuned can be converted into submission to the other's will. At each phase of development, the core conflict between assertion and recognition is recast in terms of the new level at which the child experiences his own agency and the distinctness of the other" (Benjamin 31).

Within Benjamin's description of the conflict she proposes, there is clear resonance to the clash between two selves characterized by Hegel's dialectic of "Lordship and Bondage," and accordingly, she refers to it to further elaborate her point. She reminds us that for Hegel's account, it is the struggle between the independence and dependence of self-consciousness that culminates in the master-slave relation, which illustrates that the self's desire for absolute independence clashes with its need for recognition. Further, the movement by the two selves in this relation is that of recognition, where each only exists for the other or in other words, only exists in being recognized. "But for Hegel, it is simply a given that this mutuality, the tension between asserting the self and recognizing the other, must break down; it is fated to produce an insoluble conflict. The breakdown of this tension is what leads to domination" (Benjamin 32). Mutual recognition is characterized by the two selves recognizing themselves as mutually recognizing each other, an abstract reciprocity which Hegel doesn't find to accord with the actual experiences of subjects. Instead, in line with the way she has already described this process in her own view, Benjamin asserts that in the first place, the subject experiences him or herself as an absolute and then seeks out confirmation of self from the other. For the subject, the mutuality entailed by the concept of recognition is problematic as he or she is only interested in attaining self-certainty. This illusory sense of being absolute, independent and autonomous then, for Benjamin's reading of Hegel, constitutes the foundation for domination. This very place where the fundamental tension between assertion of self and recognition of the other

breaks down is the point of entry for Benjamin's fascinating and compelling analysis of the psychology of domination.

According to Benjamin's account, my very being, my entire identity, which can be grasped as a process rather than something fixed or fully determinate, is wholly dependent on recognition or, essentially, confirmation from the other. I am intelligible only ever to the degree that I am recognized in my intelligibility by the other. This means that in order to exist for myself, I must also exist for an other. Benjamin suggests, as do Hegel and Beauvoir, that there is apparently no escape from this dependency. She reasons, "If I destroy the other, there is no one to recognize me, for if I allow him no independent consciousness, I become enmeshed with a dead, not-conscious being. If the other denies me recognition, my acts have no meaning; if he is so far above me that nothing I do can alter his attitude towards me, I can only submit. My desire and agency can find no outlet, except in the form of obedience" (Benjamin 53). Benjamin refers to this type of relation as a 'dialectic of control,' which suggests that domination is the result of refusing to sustain the essential tension between the contradictory impulses of self-assertion and recognizing the other.

For Benjamin, in relations of reciprocal recognition, there is acceptance of the premise that others are separate but are still able to share in similar feelings and intentions. In exchange for the loss of control and sovereignty, the subjects are rewarded with the pleasure that we derive from sharing with other subjects. As Hegel and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud both suggest however, the breakdown of the essential tension between self-assertion and recognition is inevitable because human beings do not

want to accept that we are dependent on others outside our control. Benjamin asserts that the solution to this breakdown is to enslave the other by forcing him or her to give recognition without recognizing him or her in return. The consequence of this inability to resolve the tension between dependence and independence is that the need for the other is transformed into domination over him or her. As was the concern of Beauvoir, here Benjamin too is interested in understanding why it is that the oppressed submit to their domination. To gain insight into this issue, Benjamin considers an account written from the subject position of an individual who submits in Pauline Reage's, penname of 20th century journalist and novelist Anne Desclos, *Story of O*.

Story of O is one of sadomasochistic fantasy, which Benjamin believes closely parallels the themes of the master-slave relationship, where domination manifests in the violation of the physical boundaries of the other's body. She suggests that this form of violation is representative of the Hegelian struggle to the death that leads up to the master-slave relationship. According to Benjamin, "Reage's tale is a web in which the issues of dependency and domination are inextricably intertwined, in which the conflict between the desire for autonomy and the desire for recognition can only be resolved by total renunciation of self. It illustrates powerfully the principle that the root of domination lies in the breakdown of tension between self and other" (55). In the story, protagonist O is depicted as a voluntary masochist, or an individual who derives sexual gratification from his or her own pain and humiliation, which Benjamin reads as an allegory for the desire for recognition. Against the most common critique leveled at this text by feminists, that it is a story of a victimized woman who had no means to resist her

degradation, she wants to understand what motivates the 'unpleasant fact' that people truly do consent to relationships of domination. According to Benjamin, the above critique precludes an understanding of what type of satisfaction is looked for and encountered in submission.

Benjamin chooses to analyze *Story of O* because of how she thinks it deeply challenges the reader with the notion that individuals frequently submit to oppression, humiliation and subservience in "complicity with their own deepest desires" (55). She explains that the narrator of the story, O, induces the reader to take her desire for submission seriously, as an authentic choice. "But the narrator also makes it clear that the desire for submission represents a peculiar transposition of the desire for recognition. O's physical humiliation and abuse represent a search for an elusive spiritual or psychological satisfaction. Her masochism is a search for recognition through an other who is powerful enough to bestow this recognition" (Benjamin 56). This other she submits to in the sadomasochistic relationship possesses the power that the self desperately yearns for. Benjamin theorizes that through his recognition, O vicariously gains that power. In chapter 5, I return to Benjamin's analysis of Story of O and offer a more detailed exposition of its significance. Here, I offer Benjamin's explanation of why women tend to be submissive while men tend toward dominance.

Story of O maps onto our commonsense association of dominance and gender, in that it depicts man as dominating and woman as dominated. Aligned with Beauvoir's project, Benjamin seeks to understand how women's subjugation becomes ingrained in the psyche and molds the pattern of domination (74). She points out that it is becoming

ever more apparent that the roles of masters and slaves are not inherently or entirely

male and female, which leads her to question how sadism and masochism have become

associated with masculinity and femininity (Benjamin 74). In other words, she seeks to

uncover why the "deep structure of gender complementarity has persisted despite the

increased flexibility of contemporary sex roles" (Benjamin 74-5). She again returns to

the early differentiation process to find her answer.

According to Benjamin, due to the fact that women have typically been the

primary caretakers of small children, the young of both sexes have differentiated in

relation to the mother who is clearly a woman (75). She suggests that boys are met with

a unique difficulty in that, while all children identify themselves with their first loved

one, boys must eventually break away from this understanding of themselves and define

themselves as the different sex (Benjamin 75). Benjamin explains, "initially, all infants

feel themselves to be like their mothers. But boys discover that they cannot grow up to

become her; they can only *have* her. This discovery leads to a break in identification for

boys which girls are spared. Male children achieve their masculinity by denying their

original identification or oneness with their mothers" (75). Citing the work of

contemporary psychoanalytic sex-identity theorist Robert Stoller, Benjamin suggests that

contrary to Freud's assumption that boys and girls both begin as "little men," in order to

become masculine, the boy must separate himself from his already formed primary

identification with femininity (75). This means that boys must develop both their gender

and identity through the assertion of difference from the human being they are most

attached to (Benjamin 75-6). Benjamin refers to this process as disidentification, which

she claims accounts for the rejection of the mother that grounds conventional masculine identity formation (76).

Here, Benjamin suggests that we consider the propensity for erotic love to become domination as a consequence of this uniquely male process of establishing separation from the mother (76). The need he has to cut himself off from his identification with her so that he can confirm himself both as a separate and male human being, a distinction that Benjamin asserts is difficult in itself for the boy to grasp, frequently has the effect of preventing him from being able to properly recognize his mother. Rather than viewing her as another subject, the boy instead grasps his mother as an object, a tool, nature, or simply as subhuman (Benjamin 76). According to Benjamin, " the premise of his independence is to say, "I am nothing like she who cares for me." An objectifying attitude comes to replace the earlier interactions of infancy in which mutual recognition and proud assertion could still coexist" (76).

Citing feminist sociologist and psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow's work, Benjamin suggests that masculine identity tends to stresses only one side of the tension of differentiation between the desire for recognition and the need to assert oneself (Benjamin 76). That is, it favors self-sufficiency over dependency; difference over sharing; boundaries over communication; and separation over connection (Benjamin 76). Ultimately, Benjamin's concern here is that in severing his identification with and dependency on his mother, the boy risks becoming alienated altogether from his capacity for mutual recognition (76). She argues,

> emotional attunement and bodily harmony that characterized his infantile
> exchange with mother now threaten his identity. He is, of course, able

cognitively to accept the principle that the other is separate, but without the experience of empathy and shared feeling that can unite separate subjectivities. Instead, the other, especially the female other, is related to as object. When this relationship with the other as object is generalized, rationality substitutes for affective exchange with the other. This rationality bypasses real recognition of the other's subjectivity. The process might be called "false differentiation" (Benjamin 76).

Benjamin argues that violation is a manifestation of this false differentiation where the master asserts absolute difference from its object, or the slave, which is here theorized as a representation of the mother (76). Ultimately, she concludes that the inclination toward the objectification of women later in life is founded in the vulnerability of a masculinity that must separate itself from its initial identification with femininity, which very rarely happens successfully (Benjamin 77). The mother then, embodies the paradigm of the undifferentiated object, who serves as men's other, or the side of themselves they repress (Benjamin 77).

For Benjamin, "the image of the other that predominates in Western thought is not that of a vitally real presence but a cognitively perceived object. In this sense, "false" differentiation has been a constant component of the Western version of individuation. Recognizing the other has been the exceptional moment, a moment of rare innocence, the recovery of a lost paradise" (78). False differentiation, which as a refusal to properly assume one's freedom or proper command over one's conscious abilities, is a manifestation of the attitude of bad faith, has a feminine complement. That is women's acceptance of their lack of subjectivity, which manifests in the willingness to give recognition without expecting to receive it back (Benjamin 78). Whereas the male's miscarriage of differentiation lies in his denial of the other, for the female, it

manifests in the denial of the self. According to Benjamin, the feature in female

development that leads to masochism is that the girl does not require a rupture in

identification away from her mother (78). While this may make her identity formation

less problematic, it places her at a unique disadvantage insofar as she has no intuitive

means of disidentifying from her mother. Therefore, Benjamin argues that the tendency

for females is to minimize rather than emphasize independence (78). Referring once

more to Chodorow, she suggests that mothers will tend to identify with their daughters to

a greater degree, thus making the separation process harder (Benjamin 78). From this

idea, Benjamin determines that "it is more likely that girls would fear separateness and

tend to sustain the tie to mother through compliane and self-denial. If not acute, this

tendency would be unremarkable. But the girl's relationship to the mother, emphasizing

merging and continuity at the expense of individuality and independence, provides

fertile ground for submission" (78-9).

Taking this insight further, Benjamin suggests that masochism or submission is a

reflection of the failure to express one's own agency and desire, prompted by the fear of

abandonment (79). "In submission, even the fulfillment of desire is made to appear as

the expression of the other's will. The masochist abrogates her will because the exercise

of independence is experienced as dangerous. To the extent that the mother has

sacrificed her own independence, the girl's attempt at independence would represent an

assertion of power for which she has no basis in identification" (Benjamin 79). This is

so due to the fact that the girl's sense of self is formed around the understanding that the

basis of her mother's power is her self-sacrifice, thus differentiating herself is an

agonizing prospect because in so doing she will internally destroy her (Benjamin 79).

Therefore, in obedience the girl protects the her maternal object, becoming incapable of

distinguishing her own desires from those of her mother (Benjamin 79). In this way,

separation anxiety is transformed into submission.

According to Benjamin, in assuming the submissive role in the sadomasochistic

relationship, the masochist's deepest fear, that of separation from the mother, is replaced

by the lesser fear of the master's power (79). The anxiety induced by the former fear is

managed through the discipline required in serving the master. Further, Benjamin

explains that the submissive guards the master from harm by assuming the blame and

consequences onto herself, while she is simultaneously able to derive a sense of pleasure

from his violation of her (79). She vicariously enjoys her master's assertion of his

subjectivity and difference, which in turn permits her to vicariously experience the

pleasure of the self-sacrificing mother she identifies herself with (Benjamin 79). Thus,

according to Benjamin, "submission for women allows a reenactment of their early

identificatory relationship to the mother; it is a replication of the maternal attitude itself"

(79). This demonstrates clearly for Benjamin that women are in fact participants in their

own subjugation. She asserts, "women, like men, are by "nature" social, and it is the

repression of their sociability and social agency – the repression of the social,

intersubjective side of the self – that is at issue" (Benjamin 80).

Like Beauvoir, Benjamin is critical of certain feminist perspectives, particularly

those of novelist Susan Griffin and psychologist Paula Caplan. Griffin argues that the

suppression of women is the equivalence of the suppression of nature or biology,

suggesting that women are the embodiment of nature (Benjamin 80). Benjamin counters

her claim by asserting that to accept the equation, "woman = motherhood = nature," is to

hold a contradiction whereby woman's "maternal" nature is emphasized to the denial of

her "masochistic" nature (80). Alternately, Caplan attacks the psychoanalytic view that

women are inherently masochistic, claiming instead that the social learning of a cultural

myth suffices to explain the presence of masochistic fantasies in women (Benjamin 80).

To this, Benjamin acknowledges that the association of femininity with masochism

pervades the culture, but counters that its cultural presence cannot be adequately

explained by social learning (80-1). She suggests that a proper alternative to a biological

explanation must instead be found, similar to Beauvoir's approach, not in culture itself,

but instead in the interaction of culture and psychological processes (Benjamin 81).

According to Benjamin, "cultural myths and labels, while undoubtedly destructive, still

do not explain how the "essence of trained femininity" gets into women's heads and is

there converted into pleasurable fantasies of erotic submission. To begin to explain it,

we must start with the way in which the mother's lack of subjectivity, perceived by both

male and female children, creates an internal propensity toward feminine masochism and

male sadism. Labeling is a result, not a cause, of that propensity" (81).

CHAPTER IV

AN OUTLINE OF LOGIC-BASED THERAPY

The aim of this chapter is to offer a detailed explanation of the only fully formed

methodology available to philosophical counselors or practitioners, Logic-Based

Therapy. This model is largely based on an Aristotelean framework. The overall aim of

this dissertation is to demonstrate the contribution I believe Simone de Beauvoir's

philosophy with the aid of Jessica Benjamin's deepening of her insights can make to this

paradigm of therapy, therefore this chapter is intended to set up my larger goal.

Introduction to Logic-Based Therapy

According to Eliot D. Cohn founder of Logic-Based Therapy,

Depression can envelop your life in darkness, swallowing up your hope, crushing
your spirit, thwarting talents and creativity, and leaving you in a state of
destitution as seemingly real as a forest wilted and depleted by some alien
canker. Guilt can gnaw at your psyche, hovering over you like a dark cloud,
belittling your dignity, and drowning out sound judgment amidst a moralistic,
inner voice. Anxiety can drape your present in ruminations about your future,
turning your existence into a dark tunnel in which you perceive ominous danger
lurking at every life juncture. Anger can swell up and consume your spirit like a
tornado sweeping aimless through a peaceful city, leaving a devastation in its
path, lamented after the storm subsides, only to blow up again when the
conditions seem right.
Saying you can't – when you really just won't – can cant'stipate your creative
potential. Perceiving through stereotypes can stifle your ability to resonate with
others. Blind conformity to social injunctions having neither rhyme nor reason
can gobble up your individuality until you no longer recognize yourself. Patriot

fervor fired up by demagoguery and deception can defeat your resolute devotion to freedom and democracy. Resorting to threats and deceit to get what you want can deliver much less than what you've bargained for. Seeing things only from your perspective can leave you shipwrecked in your own subjective universe. Perceiving a duty to woefully ruminate, overrating or underrating the probabilities, wishfully thinking, fatalistically giving in and up – these common tendencies can leave you feeling flat and dead (Cohen 1).

The preceding passage provides a small snapshot of the different kinds of human ills that we may seek help to overcome. The overwhelming majority of approaches to treatment currently available to the public come out of the discipline of psychology. These approaches explicitly aim to help us deal meaningfully with our behavioral and emotional problems. Dr. Eliot D. Cohen, founder of Logic-Based Therapy, argues that while psychological methods do bring to bear valuable means in the promotion of emotional adjustment and growth, they each begin from a place of being embedded in a narrow philosophical perspective (TNRT 2). For example, "some perceive human beings as essentially biological machines so that medication becomes the preferred treatment, and some perceive human beings as essentially subjective entities so that "talk" therapy becomes the treatment of choice" (Cohen 2). The approaches to psychological treatment however do have their roots, historically, in a much larger philosophical tradition. Cohen reminds us that before psychology became established as a separate branch of inquiry, investigations into the mind were pursued by the philosophers. He acknowledges that due to its grounding in empirical science, the discipline of psychology has managed to accumulate a valuable body of practical scientific knowledge leading to the development of helpful techniques for aiding individuals in overcoming emotional and behavioral problems. Be that as it may, Cohen

believes that "when the study of the human mind took to the laboratories and clinics, it also left behind the lion's share of its rich philosophical heritage" (TNRT 2).

At issue for Cohen is his view that a large proportion of the issues we encounter in our everyday lives that cause stress and anxiety are inherently philosophical in nature. That is, they derive from a lack in understanding of a wide variety of abstract topics that are usually taken up by philosophers. Some of these include but are not limited to questions related to morality; human dignity, freedom and autonomy; the nature of reality; the existence and meaning of God; and the nature of knowledge, to name just a few. Due to his view that much of what causes our mental suffering is rooted in the big questions of philosophy, Cohen advocates for a movement among a small group of philosophers that has been slowly growing since the mid 1980's that seeks to explore and develop the ways that philosophers can use philosophy to help everyday people address their behavioral and emotional problems, and generally lead more productive, happier lives. This movement or development, which has also gained some support from psychologists, is referred to variously as philosophical counseling and philosophical practice.

Philosophical counseling remains a wide-open field where very few approaches have been systematized. Inspired by his mentor, psychologist Albert Ellis, founder of the psychological school of Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy, and a desire to 'reunite psychology with its philosophical roots,' Cohen developed his own philosophical approach called Logic-Based Therapy. Logic-Based Therapy explicitly aims to help the recipient "attain a deep and enduring happiness through the use of philosophy, its

methods and theories, in overcoming the destructive force of the most irrational, *un*philosophical ideas endemic to human kind" (TNRT 4). It is to date the only fully formed methodology available in the realm of philosophical counseling or practice. I believe that it is an incredibly coherent and useful model. This is what has motivated me to write about and contribute to it. At base, Cohen's approach is motivated by his belief that our most destructive emotions have the tendency to be sustained by 'faulty reasoning.' Referring to the 'snapshot' of different kinds of human ills presented at the beginning, Eliot explains that "the bleak shroud of depression is typically sustained by thinking that unrealistically conceives the world in all-or-nothing, black-or-white terms; that globally damns the *entire* universe on the basis of singular events; and that exaggerates an unfortunate turn of events, elevating it to gloom and doom. Debilitating guilt often berates the self, classifying it as *totally* worthless for a perceived (but not necessarily real) moral transgression. Self-stultifying anxiety tends to magnify risks, proceeding down a mental slippery slope that dead-ends in catastrophic predictions not backed by empirical evidence. Anger catapulted to the level of rage commonly sustains by demanding perfection of fallible human beings in an imperfect universe.

From interpersonal relations sullied by bullying and deceit to the waging of unjust wars by nations, faulty reasoning has managed to promote a tidal wave of destruction and regrettable patterns of behavior. The history of humankind attests to abundant pain, anguish, and bloodshed directly traceable to bad logic" (Cohen TNRT 4).

Cohen traces the discovery of the connection between faulty reasoning, or 'fallacies,' and harmful emotions back to Aristotle, who pointed out that some of our

'passions' such as anger and sexual appetite alter the condition of our body. Further, he quotes Aristotle as saying, "it turns out that a man behaves incontinently [has such outbursts of emotion] under the influence (in a sense) of a rule and an opinion" (Cohen 5). This quote indicates to Cohen Aristotle's use of what he refers to as a 'practical syllogism,' which is known as a type of reasoning that includes two premises and one conclusion. Of the premises, one is a 'rule' and the other an 'opinion,' where the rule "includes (or implies) an "ought," "should," or "must" and accordingly tells a person what to do or how to feel, whereas the opinion is a statement of particular fact, a *report* that is filed under the rule" (Cohen 5). Because the 'rule' corresponds to either an action or emotion, a terminological distinction is made between the 'emotional rule' and the 'behavioral rule.' On Cohen's read, what is of special significance about this type of syllogism is that rather than leading to another statement, its conclusion is actually an action or emotional outburst (5).

In order to clarify how Cohen understands this type of practical syllogism in its operation, an example will be helpful. Take the following two premises:

Emotional Rule: If I don't get a tenured job at an Ivy league university immediately upon graduation, then I am a totally worthless person.
Report: I don't get any of the jobs I applied for in the first round.

In this case, if I were to accept these two premises, I would likely "deduce" frustration if not despair as the practical conclusion of my own reasoning, and Cohen argues that such a conclusion comes not only with the accompanying thoughts such as "I am a worthless person," but also physiological changes associated with sadness such as tiredness, loss of interest in things I normally care about or appetite change. In addition to the cognitive

and bodily changes, he suggests that behavioral changes occur as well given that "rules piggyback on other rules, and some of these rules also prescribe actions" (Cohen 5). Consider the following two action-producing premises that flow out from the previous example:

> Behavioral Rule: If someone is totally worthless, then she should suffer.
> Report: I am totally worthless.

According to Cohen, the particular ways that one goes about causing oneself to 'suffer' differ according to other behavioral rules one accepts, so these further rules could prescribe punishing myself by seeking out unhealthy relationships, overeating, cutting or simply giving up pursuing the dream of an academic job that I have been working so hard for.

The practical syllogism outlined by Cohen that demonstrates how our reasoning can lead to harmful behavioral and emotional conclusions, reveals to him the notion that both our personal and interpersonal happiness is significantly dependent on the premises underlying our behavior and emotions. This itself is the big insight that he believes philosophy can bring to psychological practice: philosophers are concerned with reasoning from premises to conclusions, and evaluate premises to determine if the reasoning is sound. By contrast, Cohen finds that traditional psychology has the tendency to view things in terms of cause and effect. Returning to the example syllogisms, he thinks a therapist might tell me that what caused me to despair was an event, "not getting the job I wanted," along with whatever I thought about it. According to Cohen, "just as, under certain conditions, striking a match can cause a flame, many psychologists also think we can discover the scientific laws that cause people to lose

their tempers and act in certain destructive ways. Instead of looking for causal laws, a

philosophical approach attempts to identify and catalog the various types of fallacious

premises in destructive patterns of reasoning" (Cohen 6). Cohen argues that this new

approach, which he aptly coins 'Logic-Based Therapy,' or LBT 'changes the mission of

psychology' in that it shifts the emphasis from seeking the causes to our self-destructive

behavior and emotions to seeking out harmful premises in our reasoning (6).

In order to motivate the practical significance of the term 'fallacy' in the sense

that is important for LBT, Cohen defines it as a "way of thinking or reasoning that has a

proven track record of frustrating personal and interpersonal happiness" (7). During the

span of about twenty years' worth of studies and clinical observations, he has identified

eleven of what he deems to be the strongest and most common "cardinal fallacies" that

threaten both our personal and interpersonal happiness (Cohen 6). These fallacies are

grouped into different types, where we have the first set comprised of those of

'behavioral and emotional rules' and the second comprised of those of 'reporting.' Later

in this chapter, I will explicate each of these fallacies individually, but here I will name

them and explain the difference between the two sets.

Fallacies one through eight of LBT are those of behavioral and emotional rules

and fallacies nine through eleven are those of reporting. All of them are characterized

by Cohen as follows: (reprinted from

1. Demanding perfection: Perfect-a-holic addiction to what you can't have in an imperfect universe.
2. Awfulizing: Reasoning from bad to worst.
3. Damnation: Shit-ification of self, others, and the universe.

4. Jumping on the bandwagon: Blind, inauthentic, antidemocratic and parrot-like conformity.
5. Can'tstipation: Obstructing your creative potential by holding in and refusing to excrete an emotional, behavioral, or volitional can't.
6. Thou shalt upset yourself: Dutifully and obsessively disturbing yourself and significant others.
7. Manipulation: Bullying, bullshitting, or well-poisoning to get what you want.
8. The world-revolves-around-me thinking: Setting yourself up as the reality guru.
9. Oversimplifying reality: Pigeonholing reality or prejudging and stereotyping individuals.
10. Distorting probabilities: Making generalizations and predictions about the future that are not probable relative to the evidence at hand.
11. Blind conjecture: Advancing explanations, causal judgments and contrary-to-fact claims about the world based on fear, guilt, superstition, magical thinking, fanaticism, or other anti-scientific grounds (6-7).

According to Cohen, the fallacies of behavioral and emotional rules normally appear as rules in the premises of emotional reasoning, and prescribe harmful behavior and emotions (6). For example, if my reasoning is being conditioned by the 'thou shalt upset yourself' fallacy, then I take myself to have a duty to deliberate incessantly about some issue in my life and make myself miserable over it until I can find some perfectly or near-perfectly satisfying solution. Influenced by this unrealistic mandate I place on myself, I can deduce severe emotional stress. The second set of fallacies differs from the first in that as fallacies of reporting, they tend to lead us to deduce false and confusing accounts of reality that can lead to 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Cohen 7). An example of what this can look like is when I project past failures onto future events, which can lead me to "simply give up on trying and remain in the same negative situation" (Cohen 7). Despite these basic differences however, the fallacies all share a few features in common. Cohen argues, regardless of the philosophical theory of happiness that one

ascribes to, all these fallacies can be shown to stand in the way of pursuing such a goal.

One of the major reasons for this is that they all involve extreme thinking, but as

Aristotle emphasizes, "rational solutions to life problems typically lie somewhere in the

middle between such extremes" (Cohen 8). Ultimately, Cohen asserts "fallacies hide

rational alternates to problems behind a cloud of false or unrealistic absolutes … once

you clear the air of these fallacies—identify and refute them – at your disposal is an

abundant, diversified stock of philosophical wisdom for helping you define and attain

your own profound sense of human happiness" (8).

Identifying the fallacies operating in a recipient's reasoning is the first step in

LBT, so Cohen offers insight as to where to look. He notes that for ordinary people, we

do not usually plainly articulate the rules we apply in practical decision making. Instead,

Cohen argues that we assume premises whenever we fail to state whatever is needed to

validate our reasoning. To make this point a bit clearer, he offers an example of a

common incomplete line of reasoning that goes something like the following:

> Report: I did bad on my exam today
> Conclusion: I'm a bad person

Implied but not articulated, Cohen believes, is the rule of damnation that roughly states,

'If I do bad at something, I myself am bad.' If the rule of damnation was not present in

this example, I would not have deduced the conclusion that I did. He uses this example

to make an important distinction between suppression and repression. In this example,

the operative rule is to be grasped as a suppressed premise rather than something like a

repressed belief, and by extension Cohen argues that "the fallacious rules in practical

reasoning are ordinarily suppressed, not repressed" (9).

According to Cohen, "the often-cited mark of a *repressed* thought is that you would be inclined to reject it, if called to your attention, and may even feel uncomfortable at its suggestion. Since a repressed thought is one you are supposed to be trying to hide from yourself – tucking it away in your unconscious – you would be unwilling to admit it on a conscious level. In contrast, people tend to *stubbornly insist* on their *suppressed* rules when they are called to their attention. Indeed, people generally respond as though these rules were "self-evident," sensing no need whatsoever to prove them" (Cohen 9). Accordingly, Cohen argues that the suppressed rule is implicit in what one says or thinks, which means that it is accepted as 'the obvious' even though not explicitly articulated. And, for this very reason, Cohen points out that this is "what can be so insidious about these cardinal fallacies. You can be assuming them in your reasoning, not think to question them, make yourself miserable as a result, and not even have a clue as to what's wrong" (Cohen 9).

Once the operative fallacy or fallacies are identified in the recipient's reasoning, the next step in the LBT process is to refute them. This part first involves having the recipient questioning the fallacious premises that have been identified in terms of what grounds he or she has in believing them to be true. Cohen suggests that in questioning a premise that is in fact unreasonable, if one thinks it through carefully enough, it is more than likely that one will be able to discover its flaw. This is argued to be the case for the eleven of LBT's cardinal fallacies, which can all be refuted. And, to be clear, to refute the fallacy amounts to demonstrating the grounds for dismissing it. A simple example that Cohen uses to illustrate how this is supposed to work is a refutation of the

demanding perfection fallacy. Upon identifying that a recipient is demanding perfection of herself or the world, an adequate refutation would be as follows: "There's simply no evidence to show that the world is a perfect place but abundant evidence to show how imperfect it truly is. Have you ever met the perfect – or even the almost perfect – person? Only in your dreams" (Cohen 10).

Following the refutation portion of LBT that demonstrates to the recipient that there is something wrong with her premise, comes the corrective step which involves finding a 'philosophical antidote' that can help strengthen the refutation and offer behavioral tips to promote constructive changes. Here, we can revisit the damnation fallacy from above which led me to conclude that I am a bad person because I did bad on my exam today. At the most basic level, the rule of damnation dictates that if I do something bad, then I am myself a bad person. The refutation stage allows for creativity on the part of the practitioner of LBT, but one of the possible ways to refute this is grounded in its universal condemnation of all people to be 'worthless screw-ups,' since it is a true statement that every one of us makes mistakes (Cohen 10). Then, "since the rule in question has the absurd consequence of rendering all of us worthless, it should be rejected" (Cohen 10). It is indeed the case that by our very nature human beings are flawed, therefore we all make errors but we are also able to learn from them. Therefore, Cohen proposes as an adequate antidote to the damnation rule such instruction as: "You should accept responsibility for your mistake, learn from it, construct a new plan of action, and try to achieve it" (10).

Accordingly, we see that this antidote, or new rule provides a new rational 'ought' to argue against the irrational one. "On the one hand, self-damnation prescribes self-contempt. On the other hand, its antidote counters self-contempt with constructive, forward-moving action" (Cohen 10-11). To better clarify how Cohen conceives of this, it is useful once more to spell out the practical syllogisms of both the fallacious reasoning and that of the antidotal reasoning to demonstrate the significance of the different conclusions that are deduced by each.

Fallacious Reasoning
Self-Damnation: If I screw up, then I am a screw-up.
Report: I screwed up today – I did poorly on my exam.

Antidotal Reasoning
Antidote to Self-Damnation: You should accept responsibility for your mistake, Learn from it, construct a new plan of action, and try to achieve it.
Report: I screwed up today – I did poorly on my exam (Cohen 11).

Pretty clearly, the conclusion I will deduce differs greatly depending on where I file my report. If it is under the fallacious rule, I will deduce self-dislike but if it is under the antidotal rule, Cohen suggests that even if I still experience disappointment in my behavior, I will avoid such negative emotion directed toward myself. From the standpoint of human happiness, this distinction seems to have major consequences. "Since totally worthless persons cannot have prosperous futures, the first tends toward depression and self-destructive stagnation. On the other hand, since you can change your behavior, the latter gives you the opportunity to make constructive changes and to do better in the future" (Cohen 11).

Underlying the example antidote that Cohen offers is a deeper philosophical meaning, and examining that with the recipient can significantly strengthen its impact. This particular antidote is grounded in the existentialist conception of human freedom and responsibility. Cohen draws specifically from Jean-Paul Sartre's strong view that we are "condemned to be free," and therefore are never without choice. If Sartre is to be taken seriously then, it follows that in giving up on my future, I have freely chosen my own destiny by not taking responsibility for it. Further, in labeling myself as worthless, I have consciously decided not to take a lesson from my past mistakes and not to better myself. On this view, dodging my free choice is to behave like a coward, whereas to take responsibility for myself amounts to accepting my freedom. This is a quick treatment of the practical implications of Sartre's account, however its value is apparent in that for Cohen, "it provides antidotal insight into a self-destructive rule" (11). The practitioners of LBT have the 'wisdom of the ages' at their disposal to aid in devising such philosophical antidotes to help recipients overcome the cardinal fallacies, and Cohen has identified a wide variety already, drawing from the history of Western thought.

Another important element of the LBT process that Cohen identifies is the cultivation of willpower on the part of the recipient, which, in agreement with Aristotle, he argues comes as a result of practice and effort. He believes that this is particularly useful in 'rationally resolving' cognitive dissonance, or "the state of tension that exists between a fallacious rule and an antidote" (Cohen 12). Here, Cohen is applying a theory of social psychology introduced by Leon Festinger. First developed by the American

social psychologist, in 1957, the theory of cognitive dissonance suggests that we experience psychological discomfort or anxiety when we find ourselves holding contradictory values, beliefs or ideas. In his analysis, Festinger emphasizes that human beings tend to strive for internal consistency. When we are confronted by new information that contradicts our currently held beliefs and values, for example, this triggers dissonance, a feeling we wish to alleviate immediately. Festinger thinks this alleviation can be accomplished in two ways: either by changing our beliefs, or by ignoring new information. In either case, we then actively avoid information and situations that would increase the dissonance. Grasping the phenomenon in this way, Cohen asserts that it is actually an "important sign of progress because it means that you are beginning to resist a fallacious premise with an antidote. But *overcoming* such a premise often takes special effort. Knowing an antidote doesn't mean that you will act on it" (Cohen 12).

Preventing one from acting on an antidote once one understands and accepts it, according to Cohen, is a remaining physical desire to act irrationally. Just as with a nicotine addicted individual who comes to fully understand and accept as true how detrimental to her health smoking is, but still wants to smoke, not smoking or ceasing to act in any irrational way can take considerable willpower. Borrowing from Aristotle once again, Cohen suggests that due to a weakness of will, an individual like the smoker may be led to counter her cognitive dissonance while being influenced by a strong bodily desire through acting in accordance with an irrational rule rather than a rational one, thereby deducing self-destructive emotions and behavior (12). The 'self-restrained'

person, on the other hand, is better able to endure the conflicting physical desire and to act in accordance with the rational rule. This is where the cultivation of willpower enters the equation.

Cohen likens willpower to a muscle that needs to be developed incrementally with training and practice before it can be expected to resolve cognitive dissonance rationally. Briefly, he understands willpower in the sense of self-control, or the ability to resist temptations or impulses in order to achieve long-term goals. For example, an individual who is easily distressed by the smallest inconvenience will not likely be able to bear greater ones without first learning to deal with the smaller ones. "From this practical perspective, human freedom is the human's ability to harness this internal muscle to overcome irrational premises backed by bodily inclinations. (We) can perceive this freedom as an internal feeling of power that arises when (we) make decisions, especially when (we) are in a state of cognitive dissonance" (Cohen 12-13). And, according to Cohen, different philosophical antidotes will present differing degrees of challenge and require different amounts of willpower, therefore the practitioner is able to help 'train' the recipient's willpower by suggesting prescribing lighter antidotes first, and then incrementally increase the difficulty as the recipient is ready.

An important step to developing willpower as Cohen spells it out is to apply the philosophical antidote to one's lived experience. He asserts that one must "put your willpower muscle to work to overcome your fallacious premises, put your actions where your philosophy is, and treat yourself to a greater, more profound happiness" (Cohen 13). In this step, the LBT practitioner aids the recipient by suggesting different

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behavioral modifications that will support the application of the philosophical antidote in the recipient's life. Regarding the antidotes themselves, Cohen has carefully constructed a comprehensive and systematic list of specific antidotes for specific fallacies, developed from out of a consistent therapeutic framework. However, the list he provides for the practitioners is not intended to be exhaustive of all the philosophical literature available. This means that the practitioner is free to be creative in creating his or her own antidotes, with the only qualifier being the requirement that it be relevant. Cohen explains, "to be relevant, each (antidote) must at least repair the "hole" in the thinking it was intended to fix, but just *how far* a certain antidote takes (one) in "overcoming" a fallacy is a matter of degree. This is because an antidote can be more or less potent" (Cohen 13-14).

Cohen gauges the potency of a philosophical antidote in terms of its potential to aid the recipient constructively in her pursuit of happiness. "For example, instead of simply helping (one) to cope, an antidote that helped (one) perceive an unfortunate situation as an opportunity for growth and advancement would be more potent" (Cohen 14). He cautions however, that it is important not to equate potency in this sense with positivity. To qualify this statement, he calls to attention the emphasis some psychologists place on the power of positive thinking as though it were the same thing as constructive thinking. If we grasp positive thinking in terms of optimism, Cohen points out thinking over-optimistically can easily lead to self-destructive emotions and behavior as well. For example, if an antidote instructed me to sing a happy song instead of keeping my hands out of the tiger cage, that would be counterproductive to my pursuit of

a more fulfilling life. Instead, realism regarding a potentially negative outcome will sometimes be more productive than a self-defeating over-optimism.

This leads to the final element of the LBT framework important to outline in this chapter, which is its aspirational element of the antidotes that Cohen refers to as 'transcendent virtues.' This notion harkens back to the type of morality espoused by Plato and Aristotle that is characterized by striving for excellence, and he makes his point clear by distinguishing it from the morality of duty, which makes minimum, often negative demands on people such as 'do not kill.' So, rather than an emphasis on meeting certain minimal standards, the philosophical antidotes of LBT have the potential to help recipients identify and reach some of their higher human goals. Cohen claims that "philosophy, by its nature, can lead (one) up the ladder of achievement. It is visionary and creative and encourages striving. It is this idealism that gives it great potency when harnessed as antidotes" (14-15).

In this way, Cohen understands the philosophical antidotes to be 'recipes for virtue' in that they are designed, not only to aid recipients in ridding themselves of irrational thought patterns, but also to 'transcend' them toward living up to their higher potentials. Therefore, he has devised a list of eleven of these transcendent virtues, or 'higher human potentials,' that directly correspond to the eleven cardinal fallacies. The first eight of the virtues, corresponding to the fallacies of behavioral and emotional rules, are accordingly referred to as behavioral and emotional virtues. These include: metaphysical security, courage, respect, authenticity, temperance, moral creativity, empowerment and empathy. In the other set, corresponding to the fallacies of reporting

and referred to as cognitive virtues, are good judgment, foresightedness and scientificity. Cohen compares this second set of virtues, which aid the recipient in identifying and transcending cognitive errors made in reporting on reality, to Aristotle's notion of prudence or practical wisdom (15). I will explain how Cohen characterizes each of these virtues and how they correspond to the fallacies in the next section of this chapter.

Taken all together, Cohen asserts that these virtues capture in a robust way what LBT understands by human happiness. He explains, "according to theory of LBT, the royal route to such happiness is philosophy. It is what ultimately makes it *profound.* Philosophy nourishes your rational soul. It gives you insight. However, which specific philosophical antidotes you take help define and personalize the profundity of your happiness and give your personal happiness its own unique character. According to LBT, attainment of the eleven transcendent virtues is essential for human happiness or flourishing, but the philosophical antidotes (the rules of happiness) you take largely define these virtues" (Cohen 15). In other words, Cohen's point here is that my understanding of what is meant by 'self-respect,' for example, will be different depending on which philosophical perspective my antidote assumes, whether it be that of Beauvoir or St. Thomas Aquinas. The fact remains however, that regardless of what my definition of self-respect entails, my own happiness is dependent on having it.

Fallacies of Behavioral and Emotional Rules

In order to best be able to argue in the next and final chapter of this study, that I have identified a possible twelfth fallacy, in this section I will describe in detail, one by one, each of the eleven fallacies that Cohen's LBT is currently working with, which will also include the refutation of each, the corresponding transcendent virtue to each, as well as one example of a philosophical antidote for each. Cohen distinguishes the eleven fallacies into two categories, therefore the first eight I explain belong to what he refers to as behavioral and emotional rues, and the final three are labeled fallacies of reporting.

Demanding Perfection

'Demanding perfection' is the first fallacy belonging to the category of behavioral and emotional rules, which Cohen believes is one of the most common and harmful based on his clinical experience. He describes it in terms of a psychological addiction or misguided 'need for the absolute,' and formulates it as follows: "If the world fails to conform to some state of ideality, perfection, or near perfection, then the world is not the way it absolutely, unconditionally *must* be, and you cannot and must not ever have it any other way" (Cohen 27). What Cohen finds most distinctive about this rule is the use of the word 'must,' which designates a demand rather than simply a hope for the world to obey some ideal that one imposes on it. This demanding feature of the rule inevitably leads those who operate according to it to deduce frustration in the form

of depression to rage and anything in between when the ideal is not met. Put differently, Cohen suggests we grasp this fallacy in terms of a 'perfect-a-holism' that will always lead to "the painful emotional and behavioral withdrawals of demanding what (one) can't rationally require in an imperfect universe – perfection" (27).

This fallacy occurs frequently in the form of negative imperatives such as when we demand that certain events must never happen to us. Some examples include when it can never occur: that I lose something valuable to me; that I fail to get someone's approval; that I don't get my way; that something inconvenient happens to me; that I don't meet some standard of beauty; or that I am not in control of something. As we realize that these imperatives can never be guaranteed in this world that we live in, the refutation prescribed to this fallacy by Cohen states: "The assumption that ideality, perfection, or even near perfection is humanly possible in this earthly universe is false to fact" (28). In directly contradicting the fallacy of demanding perfection, its refutation helps identify for the recipient, the need to confront the instability of an imperfect universe.

In order for a recipient move past the harmful effects of the demanding perfection fallacy, she will need to learn how to accept the imperfections of reality. Accordingly, the transcendent virtue, or habit to put into practice corresponding to this fallacy is referred to by Cohen as 'metaphysical security.' He explains, "The metaphysically secure person accepts (her) human fallibility and limitations as well as those of others and does not expect the world to be perfect. (She) remains hopeful about realistic possibilities, is humble in the face of the uncertainty of the universe, and has a

strong desire for knowledge but is not frustrated by his inability to know all" (Cohen 17). Ultimately, the hallmark of someone who is metaphysically secure is that she stays focused on what is within her control and accepts whatever is outside of it. The philosophical antidote appropriate to the demanding perfection fallacy then, will be one that aids the recipient in actually coming to feel metaphysically secure.

Again, there are many different philosophical perspectives that could be applied here, and Cohen himself offers eight different antidotes to the demanding perfection fallacy, however I will present just one to demonstrate how this is intended to work. Using the philosophy of William James, he formulates this particular antidote as follows: "Drop the practically absurd demand for a perfect universe and accept instead the possibility of a better one" (Cohen 40). For the recipient to be able to apply this antidote to her reasoning, the practitioner must then explain the practical significance of James' claim. Cohen does so in the following way. James is concerned with our ability to control external reality principally in terms of practicality. Rather than aiming to prove the existence of free will, he asks instead what difference it makes whether or not we believe we have it, because this is what actually matters. If we believe that we do have free will then this means that at least improvement is possible, however if determinism is true then our understanding of possibility is merely a matter of human ignorance and discussion of what 'ought' to be is pointless. Further, for James, a deterministic world is perfect or in other words, one where there are no regrettable events and so freedom in this context would merely amount to the freedom to do worse, which amounts to a practical absurdity. So, he thinks we must "give up the pragmatically absurd concept of

a perfect universe. Hold out instead the rational possibility of things being better or of doing better in the future should the world fall short of your dreams, hopes, goals, or expectations" Cohen 41). In such a universe where things are not perfect, there is room for growth and change; we can learn from our mistakes and decide to do things differently in the future. This Jamesian antidote will work better for some recipients than others, depending on such factors as what worldview they hold or the particular circumstances in which the demanding perfection fallacy is manifesting. Recognizing this factor, Cohen has also devised antidotes based on the thought of Epicurus, David Hume, Baruch Spinoza, Epictetus, St Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and Socrates, but we can imagine that there are many other perspectives that would also be appropriate and useful such as Martin Heidegger and his notion of human finitude; Emmanuel Levinas' understanding that our responsibility to the other limits the ways in which we can engage our freedom; and Simone de Beauvoir's insight that we are fundamentally conditioned by ambiguity which makes it the case that nothing can ever be guaranteed, just to name a mere few additional approaches.

Awfulizing

The second fallacy that Cohen places in the category of emotional and behavioral rules is 'awfulizing.' He sets his explanation of this fallacy up by describing the conditions in which it tends to be present for individuals. Employing colorful language as he often does, he begins with: "Let's face it. In this imperfect world of ours, shit does

happen. Untimely death and wanton cruelty are facts of life. The holocaust happened.

Unjust wars have been fought. Slavery existed and still does in some parts of the world.

Rape, murder, and natural disasters are realities. On a shittines scale, all this would

ordinarily be ranked high, at least by most people" (Cohen 49). For Cohen, these

extreme events usually get rated at the extreme end of the spectrum as horrific, dreadful

and well, awful. But, we recognize from our own experience that there are other events

that we might be inclined to rate with this same extreme language such as when our

partner leaves us; when we lose our job; when we get into a car wreck; when we

experience social rejection; when we lose a valuable possession; or when a loved one

dies unexpectedly, to name a mere few examples. To be sure, these events do negatively

impact our lives in many ways, however Cohen here asks, how bad does something

really need to be for it to reasonably qualify as 'awful?'

Asking the preceding question indicates for Cohen that what must happen first is

to determine what threshold of badness an event needs to cross for it to meet the

requirements of the extreme valuation of awful, which he thinks depends on the

individual doing the rating. For example, "some people would not ordinarily consider it

awful if someone whom you asked out laughed at you, whereas most would contend that

the sexual molestation and murder of a child crosses well into the territory of the awful"

(Cohen 49-50). On the one-hand, many people invoke the language of terrible, awful

and horrible when rating something that is merely undesirable or disappointing such as

the sentiment that 'it would be horrible if it rained during the Mardi Gras parade.'

Cohen finds that when the language of awful is used in this sense, it is relatively

harmless in that people don't often "seriously disturb" themselves (50). On the other-hand however, there is a sense in which the awfulness of child molestation is both nonrelative and nonnegotiable, or in other words, 'absolutely bad' as in the worst thing that possibly occur (Cohen 50). The awfulizing fallacy then, amounts to a matter of conflation between the two different senses in which we rate something as awful. According to Cohen's appropriation of this fallacy from the rational psychologists, the irrational rule in question instructs one in the following way: "If something shitty happens or might happen to you or to a significant other, then it's *totally* terrible, horrible, and awful – by far the worst and shittiest thing that could possibly ever happen" (Cohen 50). In being misguided by this rule, one can find oneself awash in self-destructive emotions leading to self-destructive behaviors. "In following this rule, when something perceivably shitty happens or might happen, you overreact to just *how* shitty it really is. In your mind, it is catapulted to the absolute worst thing in the universe. Accordingly, you deduce intense anxiety about the mere possibility of getting fired, depression about your wife having divorced you, and anger, even rage, about having been lied to" (Cohen 50).

Once again, we see here that the irrationality of this rule comes from the inference one makes from the relatively bad to the absolutely bad, and therefore, Cohen formulates its refutation as: "There are increasing degrees of badness in the universe, and they can increase ad nauseum, but the idea of the *absolutely worst* is a fiction for which there is no evidence" (50). What this refutation indicates then, is how we do not need to deny the negative impact of something like divorce, to see that inferring from its

relative badness that it's the worst thing ever is fallacious. For example, instead of just

divorcing me, my husband could have murdered me. Cohen pushes this reasoning to its

ultimate and asserts that strictly speaking, there are no circumstances in which it can be

justified to infer from a bad situation that it is the absolute worst, most awful ever. In

support of this claim, he suggests that for every bad situation we can conceive of, we are

able to imagine something even worse. The example he uses is that yes, it would be

quite bad to be run over by a tractor trailer, however it would be worse if that happened

to one hundred people, or one thousand. So, "in a relative sense, seriously bad things can

cross over the badness threshold into the range of things that qualify as terrible, horrible,

and awful. Tragic things do happen, but these things still have a relative negative worth,

not an absolute one" (Cohen 51).

Drawing from Plato, Plotinus and Augustine, Cohen points out that everything on

this earth is imperfect, therefore the notion that there could exist anything that is

perfectly evil is an absurd fiction. For this reason, that there is no empirical or

philosophical ground to believe that whatever happens to us is the absolute most awful,

we ought not to drive ourselves crazy thinking that it is. In order to aid the recipient in

moving past reasoning according to the awfulizing fallacy and keep him or her from this

'abyss of insanity,' Cohen determines that courage is the appropriate transcendent virtue

to have him or her begin to cultivate (52). Quoting Aristotle, he suggests that the person

who is courageous will emote and behave in a way that properly corresponds to the

given situation, which at the very least means not to make things out to be the absolute

worst. He notes further, "even in the face of serious evils – things that are terrible in a

relative sense – the courageous person, says Aristotle, will still face them "as he ought

and as the rule directs"" (Cohen 52). Given these insights, Cohen defines the relevant

sense of courage as opposing adversity without either over or underestimating the

element of danger, and with a reasonable amount of fear. Ultimately, the courageous

person "tends to learn from and derive positive value from his misfortunes and is willing

to take reasonable risks in order to live well (Cohen 17). Here, Cohen again turns to the

wisdom of the ages to construct philosophical antidotes that might aid in the cultivation

of this type of courage needed for transcending the irrational thought pattern awfulizing.

Cohen presents five philosophical antidotes to awfulizing based on the work of

Friedrich Nietzsche, Epicurus, Aristotle, Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Francis Bacon,

Jean-Paul Sartre, George Santayana, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Arthur Schopenhauer,

Epictetus, and Hume. For the sake of brevity and consistency, here I will only describe

one out of these different options. Adapted from the Stoic perspective of Epictetus,

Cohen's fourth antidote to the awfulizing fallacy states: "Compare what seems awful to

you to much worse things and content yourself with how much worse things could truly

have been" (60). Whereas Socrates makes a case for why death should not be feared on

the basis that it undermines our pursuit of the good life, Epictetus encourages us to have

a slightly different attitude towards death. Cohen quotes him as advising, "Keep before

your eyes day by day death and exile, and everything that seems terrible but most of all

death; and then you will never have any abject thought, nor will you yearn for anything

beyond measure" (61). The idea is that while we can maintain the notion that death is

not awful in the absolute sense, comparing the things we might be inclined to call

horrible such as divorce to death or other disasters can help us put them into proper perspective and aid in cultivating courage in the sense that Aristotle invokes. For a stark example, I can deem the loss of my job a bad event but if I compare that to the suffering of the prisoners in Auschwitz or the victims of the Rwandan genocide, I then must recognize that the hardships I face in losing my job as an educated and able-bodied American citizen are relatively minor.

This notion of relativity central to the awfulizing fallacy points Cohen to a further important and useful lesson of Epictetus' thought related to judgment. In the first place, he notes that our value judgments about what is terrible cannot be verified in the same way that I can confirm the yellowness of a school bus by looking at it. In other words, there is no similar experiment to determine whether my job loss is terrible as such, and this leads to the major point that it is never factual in an empirical sense that something is terrible, awful or horrible. "This is because calling something terrible, horrible, or awful implies that you should be terrified, horrified, or awed by it. And this means that you are dictating to yourself to be terrified, horrified, or awed. There is no unshakable fact about the universe, no special property of awfulness, that automatically attaches to some things and not others. It is *you* who are the judge of this. You call the shots about what you ought to fear" (Cohen 61). In this way, Cohen demonstrates how Epictetus powerfully draws our attention to our ability to determine our experiences and situations as what we believe them to be; as something utterly bad that I will never be able to overcome, or as a mere obstacle that may direct me down a better path. And here we see how our judgments about things, our attitudes, strongly impact whether I will be

anxious or angry about losing my job, the worst thing that could have happened, or

perhaps open to if not excited about future opportunities that I am now free to encounter.

Damnation

Continuing along with the set of emotional and behavioral fallacies, 'damnation'

is the third of this kind. Following suit, Cohen orients this irrational rule by accounting

for the types of situations in which it might arise. At base, just like awfulizing,

damnation can be understood as an irrational response to a 'shitty' situation (Cohen 65).

In this case, Cohen finds it important to differentiate between three ways that the

damned set of circumstances may be brought about. First, some bad things such as

earthquakes or miscarriages happen by no fault of our own or others. The second

significant type of catalyst that brings about unpleasant situations, such as when I cheat

and cause my husband to leave me, or when I run a red light and cause a five-car

collision, is something that is of my own doing.   Finally, when someone robs me of the

last twenty dollars I had to buy food, or burns a cigarette hole into my sofa, the resulting

bad situation is brought about by the actions of other people. The idea here for Cohen is

that, "In the midst of something shitty, it's easy enough to become contemptuous and

bitter, easy enough to damn yourself, another, or the universe, easy enough to explode in

heated rage at that "no good piece of shit," to bleakly withdraw from "the sucky

universe," or to wallow in dark depression over your worthless existence" (65). In other

words, sometimes when bad things happen we might project extreme and destructive emotions onto the perceived cause.

Accordingly, the damnation fallacy is distinguished into three different variations relative to the object that is being damned. The first type of damnation corresponding to the no-fault bad situations is referred to as 'global damnation' where one says, "damn the universe!" The rule of global damnation then, is formulated in the following way: "If something shitty happens, then the world itself is shitty" (Cohen 65). Second, corresponding to the bad situations that I bring about myself is 'damnation of self' or "damn me!" Cohen formulates this rule as stating, "If I screw up or do something shitty, then I am myself a worthless screw-up or shit" (65). Lastly, 'damnation of others, or "damn you! corresponds to the types of undesirable situations that are brought into existence as a result of the actions of others and states, "If someone else screws up or does something shitty, then he or she is a worthless screw-up or shit" (Cohen 65).

Refuting the three forms of the damnation fallacy requires two different approaches depending upon which one is operative. Cohen asserts that the rules of damnation of self and damnation of others can both easily be demonstrated to lead to logical absurdity with the refutation that says, "Doing something worthless doesn't equate to *being* (totally) worthless. Otherwise, everyone would be worthless" (66). He backs this refutation up with the notion that, while the many thinkers we can consider have varying accounts of the nature of selfhood, such as Renee Descartes' view that a self is a 'thinking thing' or an non-material substance that wills, doubts, affirms, imagines or feels, in contrast with Hume's view that a self is merely a bundle of

perceptions held together by one's memories, for a quick example, none of them conclude that doing something one can deem worthless makes it the case that the entire self is then completely worthless. For Descartes, Cohen points out, if I were to make a mistake that resulted in a bad situation, my soul or thinking substance, which constitutes me as a self, would not be altered. In other words, it would simply continue doing what it does, which is to think. Similarly, on Hume's account, the bundle of perceptions bound together by my memories, or my-self, would simply come to include some additional ideas. In this sense, there doesn't seem to be anything that I or anyone else can do that would absolutely negate the worthiness of the self, therefore the damnation of self and others is irrational.

Global damnation requires for Cohen a slightly different approach in refutation. In order to justify how this world, replete with horrific injustices such as the Ebola virus and child molestation, is not just a horrific world in itself, he refutes this form of the damnation fallacy by asserting "What's true of the part is not necessarily true of the whole. Otherwise, a machine with simple parts would itself be simple, a dish prepared with bitter ingredients (like pepper) would itself be bitter, water would be no wetter than the elements that compose it … and so on. The world does indeed have some bitter ingredients, but it can still be sweet" (Cohen 66). In other words, the message in this refutation is the popular idea that the 'whole is greater than the sum total of its parts,' and therefore, just because some of the world's 'parts' are 'shitty,' doesn't mean that we can correctly conclude that the whole world is itself 'shitty,' as difficult as it can be to believe sometimes.

Underlying this triad of variants of the damnation fallacy, according to Cohen, is ultimately the notion that the transgressions of human beings, natural disasters and other perceived tragic events pose real challenges to our ability to foster an enduring happiness. He argues however, that we can overcome the tendency toward falling into the thought patterns of damnation of self and others as well as global damnation by cultivating the transcendent virtue of respect in different forms. Specifically, those include "self-esteem, a profound respect for others, and a deep-seated global reverence that transcends bitterness, contempt, and alienation," respectively (Cohen 67). The cultivation of this virtue of respect then, allows the recipient to overcome the tendency to rate reality as completely worthless and "instead looks for goodness and dignity. Global respect avoids rating the whole according to the part and looks favorably on the larger cosmic picture. Self-respect involves unconditional self-acceptance based on a deep philosophical understanding of human worth and dignity. Respect for others consistently extends this profound respect for unconditional human worth and dignity to other human beings" (Cohen 17). Cohen has devised a number of philosophical antidotes to each of the three forms of damnation aimed at aiding in the development of the virtue of respect, but in the interest of brevity, I will only present one of the five that correspond to global damnation, which again, aims at helping the recipient develop a robust global reverence.

Cohen's fourth antidote to global damnation is adapted from the philosophical work of Martin Buber and advises, "Say "Thou" to the universe instead of "It." Say "Thou" even to the "weeds" of the universe seamlessly bound up with it" (71). This

imperative is wrapped up with Buber's conception of how we can best resonate with the universe, as well as his distinction between 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' relationships. Cohen explains that the difference between these two types of relating boils down to my attitude towards what is external to me. In other words, if I view something like a tree I encounter at the park as its own separate existence that has a particular function such as providing me shade, then I am in the 'I-It' mode of relating. Conversely, if I am walking through the forest and have the experience of feeling myself as at one with nature, as a simple part enmeshed in a unified whole along with the sun and the trees and the birds, where "I brought with me no agenda, no lawn mowers, no cutting tools. Nature ceased then to be It and reverently became Thou" (Cohen 71). While attuned in this I-Thou mode, fleeting as it may be, I am only able to feel a sense of respect for this whole that I experience myself to be a part of. Conversely, it is only when I objectify the external world by relating to it in the I-It mode that I am able to say 'damn it.' I can never damn a Thou. Cohen relates that for Buber, we aren't able to sustain the I-Thou mode of relating as we must attend to practical reality, however having an I-Thou encounter with nature from time to time can be a "healthy reminder that the universe is one coherent, royal whole, seamlessly bound up with all else, including *you*. You are in that world and that world is in you. Even the weeds of the world – and these are many and sundry in the mainstream of living – are seamlessly annexed to that same world and can still be called Thou" (Cohen 71-2).

Jumping on the Bandwagon

The fourth fallacy of behavioral and emotional rules identified by Cohen relates to issues of social conformity and the ways in which it prevents us, to differing degrees, from becoming our own persons. In setting up the problem that the 'jumping on the bandwagon' fallacy expresses, he argues that there is a good chance we are all conformists to a greater degree than we are consciously aware of. According to Cohen, this is due to having been raised in a society with "surrounding cultures and subcultures and socialized into accepting certain moral standards, etiquette, laws, taboos, gender roles, prejudices, religious doctrines, standards of physical attractiveness and unattractiveness, concepts of cool and nerdy, economic ideologies, material values, party politics, traditions, and many other commands, demands, prescriptions, and proscriptions that flesh out the landscape of a rigorous and thoroughgoing socialization" (Cohen 93). It is in the context of this 'social indoctrination' then, that we each carve out a personal identity for ourselves, therefore Cohen insists that it ought to be clear how independent thinking is required for becoming one's own person. More importantly, he argues that a sense of individuality is a key element of human happiness, and blind conformity to group standards gets in the way of its cultivation.

Cohen quotes from John Stuart Mill's treatise on liberty to make this point clearer and more compelling. In the passage presented, Mill argues that such human faculties as judgment, perception and moral preference are only adequately exercised in making choices, which is not what happens when we act according to custom; in so

acting, we cannot be said to be making any choices and therefore we are prevented from actively conditioning our mental and moral powers of discernment and of desiring whatever is best. Likening our mental and moral faculties to muscle, he asserts that the only way for them to develop is through practice and further, that there is a way in which they atrophy if all we ever do is follow the norms. Accordingly, Mill posits, "He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation" (Cohen 94). For Cohen, these sentiments as expressed by Mill point out exactly the fallacy of jumping on the bandwagon, which is formulated as follows: "If others are *acting* a certain way, then the very fact they *are* acting this way is good reason for you also to act this way" (94). Here, he specifies that the 'others' referred to can range anywhere from a small friend-group to an entire nation.

Closely related to the irrational rule of jumping on the bandwagon, yet sufficiently different to warrant its own treatment, is a sub-set Cohen refers to as 'parroting.' Whereas jumping on the bandwagon involves conforming to the way others behave, parroting involves conforming to what others believe. Accordingly, the rule of parroting goes, "If others believe or say something, then the very fact they *do* believe or say it is good enough reason for you to also believe or say the same thing" (Cohen 94). The simple distinction between these two rules is a matter of behavior versus belief, however what holds them together is that they both lead one to follow others blindly, and further, that they often go hand in hand in the sense that false belief generally leads to regrettable action (Cohen 95). Having established these related fallacious rules

concerning conformity in behavior and belief, Cohen refutes them respectively as

follows:

> Bandwagon Refutation: The bandwagon rule tells you to discount evidence and instead to do what the pack is doing just because it's doing it. But this is blind obedience, the kind of stuff that, sooner or later, leaves you wishing you had looked before you leaped (Cohen 94).
> Parroting Refutation: The parroting rule tells you to believe or say something just because others are. But the mere fact that others believe or say something is not itself evidence that the belief in question is true – unless the others in question happen to be experts on the subject of the belief, such as that all are heart surgeons and the belief is about heart surgery. Failing this, you are likely to end up believing or speaking falsely when you make a parrot of yourself (Cohen 95).

Given the contemporary world in which we exist, where we are constantly bombarded in

our daily lives by advertising and the media, Cohen sees nothing surprising in the fact

that so many of us human beings experience ourselves as losing our selves and end up

feeling discontent and unfulfilled as a result.

The way Cohen organizes his treatment of this fourth type of fallacy in the text is

slightly confusing, as it is initially framed as though it is only one thing, namely jumping

on the bandwagon. The distinction that is then introduced between it and parroting

seems to have been snuck in as though it wasn't intended to be its own fallacy at the

outset, and in fact, elsewhere it is simply lumped-in with the bandwagon rule. For the

sake of clarity and consistency, Cohen may do well in the future to re-categorize this as

something like the 'fallacy of blind-conformity,' with a bandwagon variant and a

parroting variant. That being said, the transcendent virtue associated with the two

variations of this fallacy related to conformity is authenticity, or the cultivation of

individuality broadly speaking. More specifically, Cohen defines authenticity as being

one's own person in terms of "autonomously and freely living according to (one's) own creative lights as opposed to losing (oneself) on a bandwagon of social conformity. An authentic person is no cog in a social establishment. She values her individuality, cherishes a democratic lifestyle and its inherent personal freedoms, and does not hide her responsibility for life's choices behind deterministic excuses" (17).

Here, I now turn to outlining one of Cohen's proposed philosophical antidotes for each of these conformity fallacies. Antidote number two out of five that is designed to aid in overcoming the bandwagon fallacy is derived from Sartre's work and is framed as the imperative, "Don't act like a paper cutter: define your own essence" (Cohen 97). This particular antidote is intended to capture the significance of Sartre's famous claim that 'existence precedes essence,' or as Cohen explains, the idea that human beings are not like manufactured objects that come with a pre-established purpose but instead are nothing until we define ourselves as something. So, unlike a paper cutter that has been determined beforehand to be a thing that cuts paper, we do not arrive on this earth with such a preordained purpose. Accordingly, Cohen asserts that if "you want to renounce the institution of marriage and spend your life as a bachelor, if you never want to have children but want to spend your time and money elsewhere, that is your choice. There is no preordained human nature that *demands* one thing or the other. Social institutions are human artifacts, not commandments from on high" (97).

Interestingly, Cohen shares an anecdote about an experience he had working with 'displaced homemakers' in a women's program at a university in order to further elaborate the implications of the bandwagon fallacy. He recalls that these middle-aged

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women were all either recently divorced or widowed with adult children, and further shared in common deep anxiety about the prospects of doing anything other than being a wife or mother. Importantly, each of them also "perceived the natural, God-decreed purpose of a woman to be a wife and mother. This gender role was so deeply embedded in their psyches that, in the course of their lives, they had never even questioned it. For them, it was axiomatic. There was no more need to question it than that two plus two equals four. But this was exactly what these women had to do if they were to take control of their lives" (Cohen 97). According to Cohen, many of them eventually realized that the role they had taken on in their lives was actually a choice made on their behalf by society. Having come to grasp this fact about themselves, he asserts that they had now been confronted by the opportunity to choose for themselves how to redirect their lives. Here, Cohen directly invokes the language of Heidegger by suggesting that "the women now had the opportunity to "bring themselves back from their lostness in the 'they.' The women had to confront their angst head-on. Their mortality stared them in the face. This was a new phase in a process of life that was moving inevitably toward death. This was also their opportunity to make an authentic decision" (98). And, the decision they were suddenly confronted with, Cohen asserts, was about how to redefine their essences. All of this indicates to him then, that we each have the ability to examine and change the rules that we were socialized into accepting.

The antidotes presented to aid the recipient in reaching for authenticity in belief for the purposes of transcending the parroting fallacy, the second variation of the fallacy related to conformity, number in three. Cohen's antidote 1 is appropriated from the

thought of Mill and Santayana, and states: "Learn from history: don't believe things just because they are official" (105). He orients this antidote by appealing to the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which as we understand, grants us citizens the freedom of speech. So long as we are not engaging in speech acts that harm others, we are permitted by law to voice our own opinions. As can easily be demonstrated however, this right comes along with strong social, political and legal pressures to accept certain established views. And for Mill, when we succumb to these pressures to conform, humanity loses something fundamental in terms of its pursuit of the truth. Cohen explains, if a suppressed opinion is true, others are prevented from becoming more enlightened, and if an accepted opinion is false, others are prevented from firming their own beliefs by witnessing it collide with error (105). "Since even true opinions are rarely completely true, they can usually be improved by rational discussion. And, unless we allow the pros and cons of a purported truth to be freely and openly probed, the reasons for accepting it will escape us, and we will end up holding it as a dogma or Sacred Cow instead of a reasoned conviction" (Cohen 105). Beyond simply its implications for knowledge, Cohen points to a real danger of this type of conformity, which Beauvoir demonstrates poignantly in her Ethics with her description of the 'sub-man:' when we uncritically accept the views of the establishment, not only do we increase the likelihood for believing false claims in the future, but we also "fortify an unthinking and rigid habit of conformity that makes (us) liable to the deceitful manipulation by the powers that be" (Cohen 105). We needn't look beyond the ordinary people of Nazi Germany to see the prescience of this claim.

Can'tstipation

Can'tstipation is the cleverly titled fifth fallacy of emotional and behavioral rules. Along with the clever label comes an equally clever description of how it becomes manifest in experience. Cohen suggests, "frequent use of the words "I can't" or other words implying them can be a sign that you are *can't*stipated and unwilling to take a laxative (antidote) to regulate yourself (attain self-control)" (111). In other words, to be can'tstipated is to prevent ourselves from being happy by asserting to ourselves that we can't: "You hold in the "can't" and refuse to poop it out" (Cohen 111). According to Cohen, there are three different ways that we do this which are emotionally, behaviorally and volitionally.

Cohen formulates the fallacy of emotional can'tstipation in the following way: "If you feel upset, someone or something else *caused* you to feel this way, and, therefore, you cannot and should not even try to control the way you feel" (111). Rather than accepting personal responsibility for our own emotions, by reasoning according to this rule, we are led to deduce blame for our negative emotions on external people, objects and events. Some examples of emotional can'tstipation in ordinary language usage include 'she makes me feel stupid;' 'I have a negative attitude because people suck;' 'you make me so angry;' and 'that stupid dog drives me crazy,' and these claims along with many others that can be conceived of imply that something external caused me to feel a certain way and therefore it's not my fault. In assuming that I am unable to

exercise any control over how I feel, I excuse myself from even having to try and

therefore leave it up to the other person or external objects to do the changing. In this

way, Cohen asserts that we "turn (our) personal feelings into the passive playthings of

others and accordingly reduce (ourselves) to a kind of object manipulated" (112).

The preceding is what it means to be emotionally can'tstipated, and for Cohen,

this has some deeper implications. He argues, if human beings were fully determined by

external factors, there would be no sense in suggesting to people that they shouldn't feel

guilty or anxious about things because as Kant recognized, "ought" implies "can"

(Cohen 112). Similarly, if it were true that we are completely unable to control how we

feel in the first place, then it would also be illogical to hold people legally or morally

accountable for such emotional responses as result in what we refer to by 'crimes of

passion,' or giving a child a verbal lashing because one had a bad day at work for

example. But, we realize this is not the case, as Cohen points out that "certainly we do

sensibly hold people legally and morally responsible for their emotional responses, and

we do sensibly advise people about how they should or shouldn't feel, all of which

would be meaningless if the emotional *can't*stipation rule were really valid" (112).

Here, he takes a moment to emphasize that this last point is fundamental to the approach

of LBT and asserts once again that one of its major guiding assumptions is the notion

that under normal circumstances, devoid of major mental illness, us human beings are

largely responsible for our own emotions given that we deduce them from the premises

in our reasoning. In this way, our emotions are to be grasped not as effects of causes,

but instead as human choices (Cohen 112). Cohen is careful to make clear that this is not

to claim that all destructive human emotions can always be overcome all of the time as with cases where individuals require drugs to help restore balance, however he believes that a great many of us act as our own worst enemy by accepting and applying these types of irrational rules.

So, according to Cohen, in can'tstipating our feelings by refusing to let go of the "I can't," we are missing out on exercising a significant amount of control over our emotional wellbeing. In order to demonstrate this to the recipient so that he or she may overcome such emotional can'tstipation, he proposes a lengthy refutation which is stated as follows:

> If you couldn't exert any control over your own emotions, then you would be a biological machine that responds to external stimuli automatically. There would be no point in telling people how they should feel since "ought" implies "can," and it would not make sense to hold people legally or morally responsible for criminal acts that stem from irrational emotions. It would *always* be a waste of time to even try to overcome your irrational emotions by finding antidotes to them and exerting your willpower because your emotions would always be beyond your control anyway. But, as the logic-based approach has repeatedly, empirically shown, this is plainly false to fact because many people do, indeed, succeed in overcoming their irrational emotions by applying rational antidotes. This means that people *can* follow advice about how to feel and can therefore be accountable for their emotional responses (Cohen 113).

Before moving on to can'tstipation's guiding virtue and philosophical antidotes, we first must briefly consider the second and third forms of this fallacy.

Behavioral cant'stipation is the second form that Cohen outlines, and as we can imagine, it manifests when we tell ourselves that we can't control our own behavior. We do this by strongly believing we are unable to act otherwise than we do, which results in the repetition of the same self-harming behavior. Some examples of how this appears in

ordinary language include such statements as, 'I can't ever find happiness;' 'I can't do anything right;' 'I can't find any friends;' and 'I can't be a better partner.' According to Cohen, the 'can't' in this behavioral context prevents us from making rational choices regarding meaningful change, thus he formulates the rule to say: "If you have a behavioral problem, you can't really do anything about it anyway, and so you shouldn't even try" (114). As this is very similar to the emotional variation of this fallacy, the refutation is similar as well. It states the following:

> If you couldn't exert any control over your own behavior, you would be a biological machine that responds to external stimuli automatically. Directives about what you should – and shouldn't – do would be pointless, and it would not make sense to hold anyone legally or morally responsible for their behavior any more than it would make sense to put a programmed computer in prison for committing a felony. But this is false to fact since many people succeed in changing their behavior, and, as the logic-based approach has repeatedly shown, people can change their irrational behavior by applying rational antidotes. Consequently, people, unlike programmed computers, can reasonably be held accountable for their behavior (Cohen 114).

This now leads us to the final form of the fallacy of can'tstipation, which is the volitional.

Volitional can'tstipation is characterized by Cohen as a can'tstipation of the will related to our ability to tolerate frustration. In other words, it is an exaggeration of our inability to tolerate it by asserting to ourselves that we can't stand a situation when it becomes trying. Some examples of how this gets expressed in everyday language include: 'I can't tolerate incompetent people;' 'I can't stand not knowing how to bake;' 'I wouldn't be able to handle it if she left me;' and 'I couldn't survive if I ever got a flat tire.' Accordingly, Cohen expresses the rule of volitional can'tstipation to say "if you

find something difficult or challenging to cope with, then it must be beyond your capacity to tolerate, and you cannot and must not ever hope to succeed at it" (115). And, the refutation goes as follows: "If people never tried to overcome difficult or challenging things and instead retreated from them by telling themselves that they couldn't stand them, then there would be few human accomplishments worthy of pride since all or most human accomplishments worthy of pride are made in the face of adversity" (Cohen 115-6).

Now that the three related iterations of the can'tstipation fallacy have been outlined, along with their respective refutations, here I will present the transcendent virtue corresponding with this rule and one philosophical antidote in support of it. For the purposes of enabling the recipient to lift him or herself out from this irrational thought pattern, whose characteristic feature is to mask from us our ability to control certain elements of our emotions, behaviors and tolerance to frustration, the guiding virtue to cultivate is temperance, or rational self-control. According to Cohen, "in becoming temperate, you can take control of your life (body, mind, and spirit) by cognitively and behaviorally overcoming such self-stultifying can'ts" that defeat any prospects for happiness (17). Out of the sixteen antidotes presented to aid in the development of temperance in these three different areas, I will describe antidote three from the group directed at the volitional.

Antidote three, as devised by Cohen, is appropriated from the thought of Nietzsche, and advises that the recipient "reframe challenging situations as opportunities to strengthen your willpower muscle" (130). In order to explain the practical relevance

of this antidote, Cohen asserts that exercising willpower is a conscious effort that can be used in applying all of the philosophical antidotes he provides to overcome irrational thinking. In the particular case of rising above the can'tstipation fallacy, he points out that within any practical setting where one uses a 'can't' to can'tstipate his or her will, the direct opportunity is there to consciously challenge his or her perceived lack of power. Borrowing from Nietzsche's notion of the will to power, grasped as a will to live, Cohen suggests that situations where we experience adversity under pressure can prove to be the greatest opportunities for us to demonstrate to ourselves our willpower and to grow stronger. Put in practical terms, I might absolutely dread doing the laundry and tell myself, "I can't bear wasting my day off at the laundry mat." Here, I am directly presented with the opportunity to work out my 'flabby will' instead of spending the day watching reality television (Cohen 131).

Thou Shalt Upset Yourself

In the category of behavioral and emotional fallacies, the 'thou shalt upset yourself' fallacy, elsewhere described as 'dutiful worrying,' is number six on the list. According to Cohen, this fallacy manifests as a perceived moral obligation to upset oneself and others when some mishap occurs that he or she finds significant. For example, if I find out that my friend is cheating on her husband, if I come to believe that the criminal justice system is corrupt, or if I realize that my neighbor doesn't recycle, I brood obsessively over the issue and attempt to impose this sense of duty on others

around me. Cohen argues that the telltale sign that this fallacy is operative is this

imperative that others be upset as well, and "dutifully lower their heads and furrow their

brows and beat themselves over the head with the problem until it gets resolved or

something "more urgent" takes its place" (Cohen 137). The self-defeating rule at work

here demands that one absolutely must be disturbed, and therefore the thou shalt upset

yourself fallacy says: "If you encounter a problem in your life that you deem important,

then you have a *moral duty* to ruminate over it, never stop thinking about it, make

yourself miserable and upset over it, and demand that others, for whom you also deem it

a problem, do the same until you have certainty – or near certainty – about a solution"

(Cohen 137). Of particular significance to Cohen regarding the dutiful worrying fallacy

is the idea that it recommends a moral must in contrast to the can'tstipation rule which

states that I must, because as a psychological fact, I can't do otherwise. He asserts that

these are distinct fallacies, however they often accompany one another. In other words,

he notes that often times, when an individual perceives a moral obligation to upset

themselves and is entreated to stop, he or she will say "I can't." In this case, there is a

can'tstipation fallacy underlying the thou shall upset yourself rule.

For the purposes of justifying that burdening oneself with an ethical obligation to

worry about the problems of living is irrational, Cohen turns to ethical theory to argue

that there are no thinkers in this area of inquiry, whether from a philosophical or

theological perspective, who would ever advocate a duty to make oneself depressed

when faced with a problem. Whether we look to Kant, Aquinas or Aristotle, none of

these accounts posit worrying as a productive solution. His rather long refutation to

back this claim up reads as follows:

> A moral duty to make yourself and/or others miserable and upset whenever you
> encounter what you perceive to be a significant life problem is morally bankrupt.
> It cannot be derived from the promotion of human happiness, pleasure,
> alleviation of pain and suffering, reason, obedience to God, nature, or any other
> philosophical standard that has been used to justify human duties. In fact, such a
> demand is inconsistent with and contrary to these ethical standards. It is also
> unrealistic to demand perfect certainty in resolving your practical problems
> before you can stop thinking about them. This is true because the reports you file
> in practical reasoning are always tentative and at most only probable (Cohen
> 140).

What Cohen is ultimately interested in here, is the notion that letting go of such an

irrational thought as being morally obliged to become upset over all of life's problems

can free us to embrace a sense of moral creativity, which is the transcendent virtue

corresponding to this fallacy. For him, this means becoming able to act in a constructive

way instead of ruminating about the issue until the point where the opportunity for

action no longer exists. Further, it means having the courage to devise and enact novel

approaches toward living, and recognizing and embracing our inherent freedom to put

rational moral standards in use so as to better the lives of the self and others (Cohen

141).

Of the five philosophical antidotes presented by Cohen to support the recipient's

cultivation of moral creativity, I will here explain antidote three, inspired by the

philosophies of Kierkegaard and Buddha. The advice is to "avoid casting life in terms of

problems in the first place. In particular, avoid thinking of it in terms of unsolvable

dilemmas" (Cohen 143). As Cohen explains, what is on offer here is a way of

reorienting one's perspective on human existence that provides a greater deal of hope

towards finding future happiness. He shares a quote by Kierkegaard expressing the

sentiment that rather than a problem to be solved, life is better understood as an

experience to be lived, which advises us to concentrate more fully on the element of

living. Said differently, if I mandate that nothing bad can happen to me before I allow

myself to be happy, then I will never be happy. To this notion is added a reference to the

first noble truth of Buddhism, which can be interpreted to mean that human beings

cannot avoid pain, however there is a way in which suffering is optional. Cohen

explains, "suffering, on this view, arises because you *demand* of the universe something

you just can't have. You can't stop the aging process, disease, death, and other natural

forms of deterioration. But that doesn't mean you have to ruminate over them and

torment yourself" (144). So, in order to steer clear of such self-inflicted suffering, the

advice here is to avoid as much as possible interpreting situations as dilemmas without

solutions and instead reframe them more optimistically.

Manipulation

The seventh fallacy of emotional and behavioral rules is labeled by Cohen as

"manipulation," which is operative whenever we attempt to get what we want through

deceit, intimidation, threats, or other such manipulative tactics, and causes our

interpersonal relationships to suffer (151). He identifies three of what he deems to be

the most popular variations of manipulation rules as 'bullying:' "If you want something

from someone, then you should try to get it by using or threatening to use force, blackmail, or other manner of coercion;" 'poisoning the well:' "If you don't want others to act or think in certain ways, you should persuade them with strong, negative language or other manner of intimidation;" and 'bullshitting:' "If you want to gain others' respect, approval, trust, or cooperation, you should make up lies, omit facts, exaggerate the truth, or otherwise deceive them" (Cohen 151). The key factor shared by all these variations, according to Cohen, is that they are ultimately self-defeating since they tend to yield resentment and resistance rather than the results originally intended, thereby diminishing rather than increasing interpersonal happiness. For example, if I don't think my daughter's boyfriend is right for her and I try to force her agree to with me by repeatedly asking her 'why are you dating such a loser,' it's likely that she will get defensive and more convinced that she wants to date him rather than take my opinion seriously. And this will likely put a strain on our relationship. Alternately, perhaps I'm tired of the relationship I'm in so instead of talking to my partner and ending it, I cheat on him with his best friend so that he will break up with me. In trying to become single by manipulating him in this way, not only have I hurt him deeply and likely led him to lose all respect for me, but I have potentially helped destroy his friendship as well. Finally, I can imagine another scenario where I am bored and lonely, so I invent a Facebook profile with someone else's pictures and false information to lure people into relationships with me. If I continue to assume this fictional identity and become more and more intimate with these people I am lying to, I might end up on the television show

Catfish and really hurt them when they find out the truth. Further, it's pretty much a

guarantee that I will be all alone in the end.

For Cohen, what's significant here is that whenever we manipulate others, we

fail to respect their personhood by treating them like mere objects. For this reason, he

formulates the refutation for the fallacy of manipulation in all its variations as follows:

> In manipulating others, you insult the humanity of your fellow human beings by
> treating them as though they were objects to be used for your own self-interested
> purposes. Whether you try to threaten people into compliance; intimidate them
> with strong, negative language; or try to gain their trust through deceptive
> speech, you disrespect and degrade them as persons by denying that they are
> rational beings capable of deciding for themselves on rational grounds. Because
> healthy interpersonal relations thrive on mutual respect, you undermine your own
> happiness as well as those whom you attempt to manipulate. In the end, the very
> purposes for which you seek to manipulate others are defeated (Cohen 152).

Overcoming the manipulation fallacy, which negatively impacts our interpersonal

relationships, is enabled for Cohen by developing mutual trust and respect through

helping empower others. For this reason, empowerment is the transcendent virtue

corresponding to this seventh rule, which requires that we respect and treat others as

rational agents capable of self-determination (Cohen 152-3). According to Cohen, such

manipulative behavior as intimidation, deception and making power moves smother the

conditions in which mutual respect and trust can be fostered. However, such

relationships of mutuality among colleagues, relatives, friends and partners are critical

for personal happiness, and this idea extends all the way out to foreign relations. If

human beings are to flourish as a whole, this will not be enabled by manipulative tactics,

as "a world in which world powers use chicanery and force to subdue other sovereign

nations for imperialistic purposes fosters terrorism and other hate-driven threats to world peace and security" (Cohen 153).

Cohen provides philosophical antidotes tailored specifically to each of the three types of manipulation fallacy, aimed at enabling the recipient to pull him or herself out of this type of irrational thought pattern and fostering the empowerment of others, which vary according to the many different ways that we might go about intimidating or coercing others, and deceiving both ourselves and others. I am personally concerned with the deeply destructive potential of self-deception, so I will outline here antidote six of the bullshitting rule, adapted from the work of Bertrand Russel, which addresses just that. It asserts, "believe according to the evidence, not according to what's more comfortable" (Cohen 175). This speaks directly to the instances where we engage in what we can refer to as 'rationalization.' When we rationalize to ourselves, we essentially lie to ourselves about the facts of the matter in order to feel better about the situation, to justify to ourselves in engaging in oppressive behavior toward an other, or to prevent ourselves from accepting some feature of reality. While Cohen argues that a little self-deception is not universally unhealthy, as when I tell myself "I'm too good for him anyway" to ease the pain of being dumped, it gets dangerous when it becomes routine, when it gets in the way of learning valuable life lesson and when I causes harm to ourselves and others.

To demonstrate just how damaging self-deception can be, Cohen considers the all too abundant historical cases of wide-scale oppression and correctly suggests that:

> most oppressors have been able to maintain their oppressive behavior by lying to themselves. For example, slave owners used to tell themselves that black people

weren't really human, domestic abusers that their spouses are fortunate to be in their care, exploiters of the poor that the poor deserve their plight; and so on. Wars have been fought out of conceit, arrogance, and the desire to wield power instead of an honest assessment of the prospects of winning and the real benefits of going to war. Karl Marx is well known for saying that "religion is the opium of the people," meaning that those who get "high" on religion may rationalize and underassess their material needs – food, clothing, and shelter – thereby rendering themselves vulnerable to exploitation by others (176).

Here, we see that the damaging effects of self-deception work both ways. In other words, this demonstrates that both treating others poorly and being treated poorly are more or less equally enabled by deceiving ourselves. If I lie to myself about the true value of others while pursuing selfish goals, it's easy to treat them like objects and conversely, If I lie to myself about my own worth in seeking to please others, it is easy to accept mistreatment.

Circling back around to Russel then, Cohen explains his emphasis on 'veracity' as a means of overcoming any such self-deception. According to Russel, veracity requires that we formulate our beliefs according to evidence and not because a belief is comforting or pleasurable (**cite Russel here**). In this sense, it places the demand on us that we have enough courage to constantly question whether we are being truly honest with ourselves or simply rationalizing, and thus affords us a greater potential for happiness, both personally and interpersonally. This is so, because if we accustom ourselves to honestly looking at the evidence before we decide what we believe about the situations we find ourselves in, we are able to make better-informed and therefore healthier decisions. Here, it is important to note that by evidence, Cohen via Russel means whatever is reasonable to believe instead of what is absolutely certain, which

goes back to the fallacy of demanding perfection in that if we seek undeniable 'proof' we will inevitably remain trapped in our state of self-deception. In guiding our reasoning according to the imperative of veracity however, we are afforded a chance to liberate ourselves and others, as Socrates would surely be on board with **(cite Socrates)**. For example, if I'm enabling my brother's drug addiction by allowing him to live with me, constantly manipulate me into giving him money and lie to me because I believe him when he tells me that he's going to quit or already has, I'm actively ignoring the evidence that strongly suggests otherwise and we are both trapped in an unhealthy cycle. If I continue to enable him because I am seeking certainty that he will never change and because the thought of him having no place to live is scary, we both remain trapped, and further, that proof I want may very likely come in the form of him overdosing and dying. If instead I take a step back and honestly evaluate the evidence however, I am able to recognize both that I am being mistreated and that he will not likely change if I continue to provide him with a comfortable living situation and the means to get high. As emotionally uncomfortable as it might be for me to put my foot down, in kicking him out I can begin to heal myself and force him to be uncomfortable, which has an infinitely greater chance of helping him choose to make a change out of his own self-deception.

The World Revolves Around Me

The eighth and final fallacy of emotional and behavioral rules, 'the world revolves around me' fallacy, concerns how we interpret reality in another way. In order

to orient how this irrational rule operates, Cohen contrasts it with the popular and common sense 'correspondence theory of truth,' which dictates that our beliefs can be said to be true when they correspond to facts of reality. Opposed to this widely accepted definition of truth is another approach that Cohen determines many people to assume in their dealings with others. That is the view that a thing is true, real or factual if it corresponds to what I believe. Whereas my beliefs must agree with reality according to the former account, here, in order for reality to be 'true,' it must accord with what I believe and this is absolutely non-negotiable. In this sense, I am for myself and all others the 'reality guru' in that I impose my opinions on all of humanity because my reality is the only one. For example, if I think that the only true religion is Scientology, or that homosexuality is immoral, that women are naturally inferior, or that Chinese food is disgusting, then these beliefs are absolutely correct; there is no way that anyone with a differing opinion could possibly be right, and whoever disagrees is just plain stupid. The hallmark of this fallacy then, is a refusal to consider information that does not coincide with my preconceived notions about the world. Accordingly, Cohen formulates this rule as stipulating, "If *you* believe (disbelieve) something, then what you believe is true (false) and indeed the one and only true reality. Therefore, everybody else should share your belief" (182).

As is pretty plain, Cohen suggests that it's not difficult to find the error in the world revolves around me fallacy. The idea is that when reasoning according to this rule, it places one falsely in a position of authority when the reality is that none of us can claim such absolute certainty about our beliefs, nor do we have the right to assert our

individual preferences and value judgments as objectively true for everyone. Stated

more formally, Cohen phrases the refutation in the following way:

> Your individual preferences, tastes, and beliefs about external reality – including your worldview and value judgments – cannot be validated just because they are *your* beliefs. For example, what facts prove that your preference for action thrillers is more valid than the other guy's for romantic comedies? And just because you smoke doesn't mean that it is healthy for others to inhale your smoke. This is an empirical matter, not something that depends on what you decree to be true. This also points to a double standard, one for your self and one for others. While you disregard the beliefs of other people, you expect others to accept your own. This is not different in principle from other kinds of irrational bias, such as racial discrimination, in which a distinction without a difference – one's race – is used as a standard for providing selective treatment (182).

For the purposes of aiding the recipient in overcoming this brand of irrational thought-

pattern, the transcendent virtue to cultivate, which supports this refutation is empathy.

The aim in the development of this ideal is to be able to move beyond one's own

egocentric world by spiritually, mentally and emotionally connecting with others. And,

this requires letting go of the self-defeating notion that it is only what I value, prefer,

believe or desire that matters.

Cohen provides ten different philosophical antidotes to aid the recipient in

overturning this type of irrational pattern of thinking, and I have chosen to elaborate

antidote ten, which is adapted from Simone de Beauvoir's work. I have chosen this

antidote of Cohen's specifically to demonstrate how he misreads Beauvoir's philosophy

in general. In addition to explaining his misinterpretation here, I aim to use this to

ground the contribution I believe Beauvoir can make to Logic-Based Therapy.

Antidote ten states, "Say no to gender roles that adopt self-serving/self-

denigrating double standards" (Cohen 197). He sets up this antidote as a matter of

relationships between men and women, and begins by pointing out that while the rigid, world-revolves-around-me thinking is extreme, there is similarly a danger in being too flexible. He likens romantic relationships, or 'being shacked up,' to compromises which he argues are only morally valid if they are based on mutual consent (Cohen 197). According to Cohen, "if you are not prone to world-revolves-around-me thinking, but happen to be shacked up with someone who is, then you may find yourself making increasing accommodations in order to satisfy this individual. But here's the problem. The more you yield, the more you reinforce the inflexible demandingness of your partner" (197).

This type of relationship that Cohen identifies, where one partner reasons according to the rigid world-revolves-around-me pattern and the other who is overly flexible and prone to making concessions, seems to be a situation of unequal recognition such as what we get in the 'Master-Slave Dialectic,' however Cohen does not explain it in this way. This dynamic is the basis according to which Beauvoir develops her account of women's subjugation, and Cohen fails to explicitly address this important issue even as he uses her work to make his point. Logic-Based Therapy would be strengthened by incorporating a framework developed out of a closer reading of the gender specific implications of Beauvoir's account of the process according to which women are othered. The issue is not simply a matter of adhering to particular values. It is much more nuanced. Beauvoir, and psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin's development of her insights both demonstrate that subjugation is a consequence of the master's failure to give adequate recognition and the slave's failure to assert herself. This dynamic is

important to account for in the therapeutic context, which is what I argue in the next chapter.

Back to Cohen's treatment of Beauvoir's view, he paints the relationship that the world-revolves-around-me thinker has with his or her partner as inherently dysfunctional in that both of them become resentful while the former becomes increasingly demanding. In order to demonstrate his point more clearly, he appeals to anecdotal evidence from two individuals he refers to as Sam and Sue, whose ten-year marriage ended in divorce. He identifies the source of their dysfunction as stemming from an adherence to traditional values, in that Sue was raised to understand that the man is in charge and Sam was raised to believe that the wife's role is to be subservient. Early on in the relationship, Sue worked to support Sam's pursuit of both a bachelor's degree and law degree, giving up her desire to be a teacher to do so, and eventually to become a stay at home mom while Sam got to work, socialize and travel. Eventually, Sue caught on that Sam was having an affair, and she ended the relationship. According to Cohen however, "unfortunately, society had supported Sue in her servitude and Sam in his self-absorbed view of women" (198). Drawing from Mill's account, Cohen acknowledges Sue was a 'willing slave,' meaning that she did have agency in her choice to adhere to traditional gender roles, however societal influences certainly had their impact on the situation.

Cohen quotes Beauvoir as saying, "For women, … to love is to relinquish everything for the benefit of a master … a woman is non-existent without a master. Without a master, she is a scattered bouquet" (198). The point here seems to be for him

to assert that such 'archaic' views as this are still alive and well, and that the world-revolves-around-me thinking men still exist to try and impose such gender roles. He argues that the first step to fixing the problem of finding oneself in such an unequal relationship is to recognize it, which he thinks can be difficult because they generally tend to be fueled by rationalization as discussed in the previous section. In this case, Cohen points out that such rationalization comes in the form of self-defeating constructs such as 'women are less rational and more emotional,' or 'cooking and cleaning is women's work,' and he urges, "for the sake of happiness, cast these self-defeating constructs and stereotypes to the flames. It takes two to tango: the exploiter needs someone to exploit, and the exploited need an exploiter. Saying no to such self-serving/self-denigrating relationships brings the curtain down on these colossal wastes of human potential" (Cohen 199).

Fallacies of Reporting

The three fallacies of reporting that Cohen identifies concern 'reports' filed under our rules. The idea behind this second category, as Cohen explains it, is "even if you have a profoundly rational rule, you can still deduce a very irrational conclusion if the report you file under it is itself irrational" (205). For example, the idea that I should eat healthily is fairly rational, but if I hastily conclude that going on a ten-day cleanse where I consume nothing but water with cayenne pepper and maple syrup, based solely on the advice of a co-worker, is a good way begin my healthy diet, I could end up getting

seriously ill. In this case, what is irrational is not the rule of eating healthy, but instead

the conclusion I jump to regarding what that means, based on insufficient evidence. The

main point here is that behavioral and emotional rules dictate that if a certain report is

filed, then I should do or feel certain things. So, without a report, I am not led to do or

feel anything. For instance, if I buy into the rule: 'if my legs are hairy, then I should

shave them,' this line of reasoning doesn't tell me to do anything unless I report: 'my

legs are hairy.' And, whether or not it is good or appropriate to follow whatever rule is

in question depends entirely on how realistic my report is. If the rule is, 'if I am

overweight, I should go on a diet,' and I am legitimately thirty pounds over my

recommended weight, my report 'I am overweight' is sound and based on evidence. If I

have body dysmorphia however, and I report 'I am overweight' based solely on my

warped perception, that report is not only inaccurate but also dangerous.

Here, Cohen refers back to Aristotle to suggest that his notion of prudence or

practical wisdom indicates the ability to "file realistic reports and use them to attain

constructive goals. When these rational reports are filed under rational behavioral and

emotional rules, you can deduce constructive actions and emotions" (206). Therefore,

while the philosophical antidotes corresponding to the first eight fallacies all emphasize

'right' emotional and behavioral rules, or the 'mark' to aim for, the final three

corresponding to the fallacies of reporting will emphasize the 'right' means.

Oversimplifying Reality

        The ninth fallacy that Cohen identifies, which is first in the category of the fallacies of reporting, expresses what he believes to be one of the most destructive and self-defeating of our human tendencies. That is our inclination towards oversimplifying reality, which manifests commonly in two forms of judgment that both neglect to recognize important features of it. These are referred to as pigeonholing and stereotyping, which are supposed to underlie certain character traits such as bigotry, intolerance, narrow-mindedness, lack of creativity and prejudice, that all hinder human wellbeing (206).

        When we evaluate the evidence of our situations according to the pigeonholing approach, Cohen explains that what we are doing is oversimplifying the range of options available to us by either grasping things in terms of 'all-or-nothing,' or as black or white with no in-between. A good way to understand this idea is to consider the distinction between contrary statements and contradictory statements. Contraries are counterparts that permit alternate possibilities. For example, the statement 'I am full' is the contrary to 'I am starving' because it is the case that I can be neither full nor starving as when I've just eaten a snack to hold me over until I go out to dinner later. By contrast, contradictions are disagreements or oppositions that do not allow for any in-between as with 'I am full' and 'I am not full.' In this latter case, only one of the two statements can be true at a time. From this, Cohen points out that "in thinking of contraries as though

they were contradictions, you ignore the options in the middle. For example, you don't

have to be stupid just because you're not smart. You can be of average intellect" (207).

What's at stake here according to Cohen is that pigeonholing in this way restricts

the pool of rational responses to any given situation. For example, when facing such

ethical dilemmas as whether suicide is justified or whether allowing euthanasia would be

beneficial to society, the 'yes' or 'no' answers to these questions must be viewed as

contraries rather than contradictions because there are middle-ground options that

reasonable people might disagree on. Thus, Cohen formulates the refutation to the

fallacy of pigeonholing as follows:

> In pigeonholing reality, you make the logical mistake of thinking of contrary
> statements as though they were contradictions. In so doing, you exclude options
> that could be important in helping you make more realistic decisions. For
> example, in thinking that people are either saints or sinners, you either idealize
> them or demonize them rather than accepting the fact that they are neither but
> instead fallible creatures capable of *both* virtue and vice (208).

Whereas pigeonholing oversimplifies reality by limiting the scope of possibilities to be,

stereotyping does so by categorizing people in a general way that does not take into

account individual difference.

Some obvious examples of stereotyping include, 'all red-heads are soulless,' 'all

rich kids are spoiled,' 'all Jews are stingy,' and 'all lower-class people are ignorant,' and

regardless whether the stereotype itself has a positive or negative connotation, Cohen

argues that they are always degrading insofar as they undervalue individuality. He

identifies a practical motivation for our inclination to oversimplify in this way however,

which is that we think it helps us cope with the overwhelming complexity of the

universe. "An unfamiliar face can appear as a threat to your security. Picking out in

advance some general aspect of the unfamiliar can help you gauge your response. A

stereotype directs you in one direction or another: "He's a Christian, so he must be

trustworthy," for example (Cohen 209). It has been theorized that our tendency to

stereotype in this way might have evolved as a mechanism for self-preservation, but

regardless of this possibility, Cohen argues that in such an attempt to cope, we have

failed to properly respect the intrinsic worth and dignity of individuals. This points us to

the irrationality of stereotyping. It is motivated by insecurity and leads us to make

judgments prior to the adequate consideration of evidence. Accordingly, Cohen

expresses the refutation as

> stereotyping is conceived in fear and sustained by a mind unreceptive to contrary
> evidence. Its own offspring is prejudice – the refusal to judge others equitably on
> their own merit. From racial, gender, sexual, religious, and class discrimination
> to countless other forms of cultural oppression, this manner of trying to attain
> stability in confronting the blooming, buzzing, universe has proven self-
> defeating. Instead of improving human existence, it has provided a breeding
> ground of hatred, disgust, resentment, divisiveness, and sundry other forms of
> destructive strife among humankind (210).

The transcendent virtue to develop as a response to both of these forms of

oversimplifying reality is good judgment, which is defined as the ability to make

unbiased observations in practical matters. "In cases of judging other human beings, it

means equitable and sympathetic judgment in contrast to stereotypical and prejudicial

judgment. A person with good judgment is realistic, perceptive, open-minded, creative,

and constructive" (Cohen 18). In order to aid the recipient of LBT in overcoming the

fallacious thought pattern characterized as stereotyping, I will outline antidote three that is adapted from Max Scheler's work.

Cohen states this philosophical antidote as the imperative to "transcend the limits of your personal experiences by exercising your innate ability to feel for your fellow human beings" (222). He orients the significance of this piece of practical advice with reference to Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the city of New Orleans and left many of its residents destitute. Here, he recalls certain responses from privileged public figures such as Michael Brown (head of FEMA) and Barbara Bush (ex-first lady). During the time that the victims of this tragedy were fighting for their lives, Brown was apparently sending emails looking for a dog-sitter and talking about his fancy clothing. Even worse, in response to thousands of New Orleans residents being relocated to the Houston Astrodome without sufficient bare necessities such as toilet facilities and drinking water, Bush publicly expressed her fear at the prospects of these displaced individuals wanting to stay in Texas and opined that since they were mostly underprivileged anyway, living in the subhuman conditions at the stadium was working well for them. According to Cohen, "detaching herself from the ordeal, Barbara Bush relied on a stereotypical perspective that perceived being poor – and black – as used to living in dirty, crowded quarters without adequate food and water" (222).

Although Bush did not have to experience being displaced and surviving in such substandard living conditions, Cohen asserts that she absolutely had to understand what it is like to go through loss since earlier in her life she lost a daughter to leukemia. Therefore, she ought to have been able to see beyond those stereotypes and empathize

with her fellow human beings. In fact, Scheler argues that every one of us is capable of

transcending our own experiences to show sympathy for others due to what he believes

is an innate human potential referred to as a 'moral unity of mankind.' In other words,

as human beings capable of experiencing the full range of human emotions, we each

possess the capability to grasp human suffering even if we haven't been through such a

tragedy as Hurricane Katrina. Similar to my ability to see color, in that even though I

may not have seen a particular shade before, I am able to prior to it ever entering into my

visual field, as human beings, we are able to grasp emotionally what others are feeling

even if we have never experienced the same events. Such self-transcendence however,

according to Cohen, is stifled when we think in terms of stereotypes because it is

difficult if not impossible to sympathize with such abstract concepts once we allow them

to deny the concrete reality that is the individual. The solution to stereotyping then, is to

identify which stereotypes are operative in our reasoning, refute them and ultimately let

them go. "In accomplishing this, you need to exert your willpower, to turn away from

what you may have unreflectively internalized through your enculturation. "*I* am

human, *you* are human, *we* are human" is the language of unity. "*I* am human and *you*

are dirty, ignorant, and lazy" is the language of *dis*unity. Embrace the former and

disavow the latter" (Cohen 224).

<u>Distorting Probabilities</u>

Fallacy number ten, the second fallacy of reporting, is identified by Cohen as distorting probabilities. We have discussed at length the imperative to base our beliefs on sufficient evidence, and here, the question becomes how to discern what exactly constitutes 'sufficient.' The issue that this fallacy speaks to is the fact that hastily arriving at conclusions based on weak evidence can have devastating consequences for ourselves and others. By hastily arriving at, or jumping to conclusions, Cohen means drawing an inference, or the "mental (cognitive) activity of determining the probability that one statement is true based on the truth of another statement or set of statements" (227). When we engage in the activity of inference, we assume certain rules, and therefore he asserts that it is possible to infer our reports from 'irrational reporting rules' (Cohen 227).

Cohen identifies at least five different types of reporting rules that he categorizes as 'generalization rules,' according to which we generalize about the world; 'predictive rules,' according to which we predict the future; 'explanatory rules,' that we use to explain things; 'causal rules,' that we use to determine the causes of things; and 'contrary-to-fact rules,' according to which we speculate about what could, should or would have happened otherwise (228). He explains that the first two types of rules help us make inferences about things we haven't observed based off what we have, and if we are operating with rational types of these rules, we are able to gain foresight which

ultimately aids us in confronting the unknown. The final three aim at helping us make inferences about why things have occurred, and these will be treated in the next section.

When it comes to generalization rules, which instruct us on how to infer things about many or all group members based on what we've observed about some, we find ourselves in trouble when we make 'hasty generalizations.' Cohen demonstrates this point nicely by appealing to romantic encounters gone awry, where an individual has a particularly bad dating experience and proceeds to categorize all members of the same gender as 'pigs' or 'manipulative' or 'assholes.' Similarly, if I have one unpleasant meal at a Vietnamese restaurant and swear off all Vietnamese food, or if I have one or two bad experiences with professors and determine that all professors are condescending, I am making hasty generalizations. These inferences have in common the fact that they assume an irrational reporting rule that lead me to jump to conclusions about a group based on an inadequate sample size. Accordingly, Cohen formulates the hasty generalization fallacy of reporting as stating "if some members of a group have an undesirable feature, then all (or most of) the other members also have it" (229). He acknowledges that we do this as a result of how we are wired to engage in self-preservation, and that not all generalization is unhealthy, however the key to overturning this fallacy rests on the consideration of a sufficient sample size before drawing our inferences.

In terms of predictive rules, which instruct us on how to infer things about the future based on our past experiences, there are three types of 'fatalistic' rules that many appeal to in making their predictions that end up in self-defeat. This first type is referred

to as 'Murphy's Law,' which states "if something can go wrong, then it will," and therefore instructs one to definitely expect a negative outcome simply for the fact that it is possible (Cohen 230). 'Magnifying Risks,' the second type of fatalistic predictive rule, dictates "if there's any chance of something's going wrong, then it probably will," and the third and final fatalistic rule, 'Insisting on the Past,' asserts that "if anything has gone wrong in the past, then it must, as a matter of lawful necessity, continue to do so in the future and there's nothing whatsoever you can do about it" (Cohen 230). All one must do to realize that none of these rules are grounded in empirical evidence is consider his or her everyday experience. Any adult who is alive and breathing is proof of the falsity of Murphy's Law, in that it is always possible to be fatally struck by lightening yet it's not happened so far. Alternatively, we understand that it is certainly within the realm of possibility that the airplane I am travelling on will fall out of the sky, however statistical data based on sound empirical evidence demonstrates clearly that it is incredible improbable. Finally, while it is true that I have fallen down a flight of stairs in the past, I have enjoyed a few solid years of walking up and down staircases successfully.

Fatalistic predictions about the future are not the only harmful rules. According to Cohen, being overly optimistic can also prevent us from making positive changes in our lives. He refers to this other extreme end of the spectrum as 'Wishful Thinking,' which states, "Even though something has consistently gone wrong in the past, things will be different in the future" (Cohen 231). As we can see, this constitutes the exact opposite of insisting on the past in that it causes us to flat out ignore prior events. The

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logic here amounts to, 'if I act the same as I always have but hope hard enough that the outcome will be different, it will be,' which is essentially the common-sense definition of insanity. While it is fatalistic to assume that the past will definitely repeat itself, if I continue behaving exactly the same way, it is reasonable to expect a similar outcome. Here, we can return to my example of enabling my brother's drug habits for illustration. If he's lied to me, stolen from me or otherwise manipulated me virtually every day since I took him in, believing that he's not going to treat me the same way tomorrow without any changes such as him attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings, is simply wishful thinking.

Cohen formulates the refutation of the different fallacies of distorting probabilities in the following way: "In hastily generalizing, you jump the gun on negatively prejudging members of a group and short-circuit objectivity in relating to them. In making predictions on the basis of Murphy's Law, magnifying risks, insisting on the past, and wishful thinking, you create needless anxiety about the future and sabotage your opportunity to make constructive changes in your life" (232). In order to help the recipient break free from fallaciously reasoning in this way, Cohen prescribes the cultivation of the virtue of 'foresightedness' in evaluating probabilities, which involves the ability to generalize about the material world and make probable predictions about the future based on the evidence. He suggests, "A person who has this virtue is able to use it successfully in making life decisions. Such a person is able to cope effectively in this material universe, where there are degrees of probability, not

certainty" (Cohen 18). In support of the development of foresightedness, Cohen offers

antidote five, adapted from the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer.

Antidote five states, "If you're spinning in a self-destructive, vicious cycle, get

pessimistic about your future. Expose the blind, perverse craving for security that keeps

your life in limbo. Then do what you can to increase the probability of a brighter future"

(Cohen 245). As has been briefly mentioned in the above, fatalism deflates our

prospects for the future by miring us in negativity but wishful thinking does the same

thing by locking us in the delusion that I don't need to actively change anything in order

for the future to improve. In this way, engaging in wishful thinking is to be in denial or

bad faith, and lifting oneself out from such a vicious cycle requires challenging one's

willpower and choosing to live authentically. Cohen asserts that regardless of our

metaphysical commitments, both strong determinists and libertarians alike must

acknowledge our ability to alter self-destructive patterns of behavior by the simple fact

that people do change. And, he suggests that the best course of action to achieve such

change is to demand sufficient evidence for our beliefs by questioning everything that is

not already reasonably certain.

According to Schopenhauer, everything is accounted for by the 'principle of

sufficient reason,' which dictates that all things have a reason for their existence (Cohen

247). If the same reason is operative, the same results can reasonably be expected and

rationalizing about the future will not change this fact. Schopenhauer further asserts that

reality unfolds according to a "blind craving for self-preservation that self-defeatingly

inclines toward death and destruction … (and) the way to overcome this blind chaotic

force is to resist it. Spinning away your life in a self-destructive circle does provide a

certain sort of perverse stability. At least, at some level, you always know where your

heading" (Cohen 247). Cohen suggests that this is why victims of abuse often doubt that

they can break away from their abusers, for as the saying goes, "the devil you know is

better than the devil you don't." The advice from Schopenhauer here then, is "resist this

craving by using your intellect. One way to do this is to contemplate the destructiveness

of your ways – to expose this chaotic perverse craving for security for what it is, namely,

an inherently destructive and "evil" force that is taking you down" (Cohen 247). The

juxtaposition of such a harsh realization to the optimistic rationalization could serve as

the reality check one needs to "wake up and smell the evidence" (Cohen 248).

Blind Conjecture

The final fallacy of LBT, eleventh in total and third of the fallacies of reporting is

referred to as blind conjecture, which addresses groundless speculation about why AIDS

exists and tsunamis occur, for example, which results in unnecessary, self-defeating

depression, guilt, anger and anxiety. For Cohen, this is not to claim that asking 'why?'

is unhealthy, however he does suggest that there are both good and self-defeating ways

to address this question that is the cornerstone of rationality. The way to avoid much of

the stress that comes with blind conjecture is going to be to adopt a scientific approach

to living, which means "basing the answers you give to the whys and wherefores of life

on rules of reporting that show you how to *rationally* arrive at and confirm your

answers" (Cohen 251). As has already been mentioned briefly in the preceding chapter, Cohen identifies the three rules of this category as explanatory rules, causal rules and contrary-to-fact-rules.

According to Cohen, explanatory rules advise us about how to explain facts about which we find ourselves particularly perplexed. Such questions include, 'why didn't I get the job?;' 'why did she look at me like that?;' 'why did she profess her love to me and then cheat?,' and in cases where we ask these types of futile questions, we tend to favor the explanation that accords most closely with our greatest fear whether it be that of rejection, betrayal, loss or not being good enough. Here, Cohen suggests that "this attests to the tendency of human beings to be insecure. Motivated by self-protection, we often overlook the obvious, upset ourselves unnecessarily, and waste valuable time ruminating over unlikely possibilities" (252).

What Logic-Based Therapy Is Missing

As demonstrated by this chapter, Logic-Based Therapy is an impressive and comprehensive model for the philosopher to aid individuals in gaining deeper insights into and taking responsibility for themselves by overcoming self-defeating patterns of thought. It nicely illustrates the relationship between reasoning, emotions and behaviors. As with philosophy in general however, it could greatly benefit from a woman's touch. It is generally agreed upon that historically speaking, women have been subject to the will of men. Much progress has been made, notably in the West, in elevating women to

the status of free and equal subjects *in theory*. In other words, women can vote, be educated, earn wages, and in most places, access birth control and be legally protected from spousal rape. However, words and new laws do not have the power to magically transform how one understands oneself. This is especially true given the fact that contradictions abound in our social practices and norms. These social practices and norms are restricting on men as well, even if to a lesser degree.

As Beauvoir and Sartre argue, human beings are free. We are *condemned* to be free. In other words, the responsibility rests squarely on each of our shoulders to figure out what life means to us. Nobody, man or divine, can offer us an adequate explanation. This insight in itself is incredibly difficult to comprehend even if it is correct that we all have an innate sense of its truth. When we are conditioned from childhood, from all of our sources of information and interpersonal feedback, to believe certain things about our identities and predetermined roles in this world, we are further alienated from grasping the significance of our existential freedom. Logic-Based Therapy as it currently stands does a good job of pointing individuals to their freedom and what it means. However, given that oppression is such an endemic and pervasive issue of human existence, any philosophical model of therapy ought to be equipped to help individuals deal with its manifestation in their own experience. This is especially true given the groundbreaking theoretical work Beauvoir provides us with in explaining the nuances inherent to relations between oppressed and oppressor. I focus specifically on the oppression of women, but I would argue that Logic-Based Therapy would also

benefit from the perspectives of philosophers working on issues of race and other forms of oppression as well.

Both Beauvoir's account and Benjamin's development of its implications provide insights into how oppressed individuals can elevate themselves to the status of free subjects. They force us to acknowledge the fact that women are complicit in their own oppression. In situations where women assume roles that are imposed on them when they can choose otherwise, unpleasant and scary as the unknown alternative might seem, they are abandoning their own will. To performatively enact the will of another, which is to abandon one's own will is self-defeating. Women, who are prone to this, must assert themselves. In order for this to be possible however, they must be able to recognize that they are failing to do so in the first place. Alternately, aside from the fact that it is oppressive, men's failure to adequately recognize others is also self-defeating. In order to control others, one must actively maintain such control, which must be tiresome. Further, it precludes deep and meaningful relationships with others. Cohen lightly touches upon how issues of oppression manifest in reasoning patterns with his "world revolves around me thinking," "manipulation," and "jumping on the bandwagon" fallacies. However, in not being explicitly concerned with how the psychological dynamics of oppression impact our patterns of thought, his treatment of this issue is superficial and oversimplified. Therefore, in the following chapter I propose the need for the development of a gender-specific framework for addressing this issue in the context of Logic-Based Therapy.

CHAPTER V

NARRATIVE CONSUMMATION

Soren Kierkegaard, the self-styled 'poet' in the Christian tradition, has us

understand the self as a 'relation which relates itself to itself.' Within his corpus can be

found a critical appropriation of G.W.F Hegel's dialectical account of the development

of human consciousness that begins with its bursting forth into transcendence and

culminates in the repetition of faith. Kierkegaard's influence on the philosophical

tradition of existentialism is widely acknowledged, however I would argue that due to

his overt religious commitments, the significance of his impact remains

underappreciated. Coming to grips with the healthy and satisfying attitude towards the

self and others that his notion of repetitive faith enables, has brought me to a richer

understanding of the implications of Beauvoir's commitment to human freedom and how

to practically apply her philosophical position to a therapeutic context. The aim of this

chapter is to outline what I believe to be a novel fallacy of human reasoning, which I

refer to as "Narrative Consummation, the Fallacy of Bad Faith." My understanding of

this irrational thought pattern, which leads us to deduce devastatingly self-defeating, if

not deeply unsatisfying emotions and behaviors, has been shaped primarily by

Beauvoir's philosophical position in her *Ethics* and its application in the *Second Sex*.

In this final section of my dissertation, I will begin by offering a subtle critique

of Beauvoir's philosophical account in order to determine the gaps to be closed, which

will turn out to be both Kierkegaard's notion of faith and Camus' notion of conscience, in adapting it to a therapeutic context. Following this critique, I will proceed to outline Kierkegaard's dialectical diagnosis of human consciousness, which offers insight into the relational element of bad faith, and provides me with his account of faith which I will move to secularize. Next, I will propose a practical understanding of the philosophical concepts at play in Beauvoir's synthetic system. Finally, I will adapt those insights into an account of the bad faith fallacy of narrative consummation, following Cohen's useful structure of attuning the reader toward locating the fallacy; explaining the self-defeating effects it has on individuals and interpersonal relationships; establishing the transcendent virtue to be cultivated by the recipient, in this case 'repetitive faith;' and finally, devising a number of philosophical antidotes that aim to aid the recipient in cultivating faith so as to overcome the irrational thought pattern, more aptly characterized as a perspective or persistent feature of what Edmund Husserl would refer to as the 'natural attitude.'

A Critique of Beauvoir's Philosophical Approach

Beauvoir's philosophical work is an ambitious critical synthesis of the entire history of Western philosophy, and her diagnosis of the human condition. I argue however, that her attempt to offer us a way to conceive of properly inhabiting our conscious abilities so as to aim toward wellbeing, both individually and as a whole, falls short. I believe this to be the case for two fundamental reasons. First, as with most of the philosophers in this tradition whether they explicitly acknowledge it or not, her

genuine concern is with that unpopular and amorphous thing called 'authenticity.' As we have seen in previous chapters, Beauvoir identifies two fundamental attitudes that we can find ourselves in, which amount to the perspective we assent to regarding the relationship we have with our own freedom, that we occupy more or less consciously depending on the individual. Again, these fundamental attitudes are called 'bad faith' and 'authenticity.' Bad faith is the attitude that causes us to actively evade the sense we have of our own freedom, characterized by a desire to possess for ourselves a fixed identity, which in turn directs us to define ourselves rigidly according to how we think we should, or how *one* ought. Conversely, authenticity is the attitude that allows us to more or less fully embrace the feeling we have of our own freedom, characterized by a desire to be open to Being, or sheer possibility for meaning, which then enables us to define ourselves according to what *makes sense* given the particular factors of our actual situation.

I think this is absolutely correct in the way I have re-formulated it, as I will explain in what follows, but given my many experiences of discussing this idea with students, and ordinary folks I encounter in the real world, the incredibly abstract way she frames this idea that is at the core of her very philosophical position, leaves it somewhat empty and difficult to connect with in a meaningful and useful way. Later in her life she acknowledges this in that she expresses regret that *Ethics of Ambiguity* was written too abstractly. But, what does it mean for something to be too abstract? One way of thinking about this is that be too abstract is to be too far removed from lived human experience. Beauvoir's practical application of her abstract philosophical position to the

lived situation of woman was in the end, not sufficiently practical. As we have seen, this text is just as critical of feminism as it is of patriarchy but she ultimately wavered from this perspective when, more than twenty years after it was published, she finally came to identify herself *as* a feminist. As a matter of pure speculation, this change of heart indicates to me that Beauvoir didn't properly understand herself *as* woman until this time. Her account is of what it is like to be a woman *for one*, not what it's like to be a woman *for herself*. She criticizes Plato's notion in the *Republic* that women can be rulers so long as they act like men, but appears not to have recognized yet the degree to which she herself embodied that narrative. This failure to recognize the ways that we remain conditioned by that which we criticize is enabled by abstraction, or speaking purely through the voice of 'the they-self'[33] that is encouraged if not demanded if we wish to play the game of academic philosophy[34]. It leaves our-selves out of account, which is not outright 'bad,' or 'evil,' but simply potentially self-defeating. I think Husserl is correct in asserting that we must do first philosophy[35], or rigorously examine the features of our own consciousness, before we can more 'safely[36]' engage with the abstract. Beauvoir herself agrees, as she cites Husserl's 'philosophical conversion' in her Ethics, and asserts in a short essay that Existentialism is "not for the uninitiated,[37]" but again, to read and use words does not necessarily entail understanding.

To make good on Beauvoir's regret then, following the outlining of Kierkegaard's dialectic, I will present my own attempt at practically adapting her abstract philosophical position for the purposes of therapy, in the hopes of demonstrating how anyone may undertake that same goal, and to offer insight into what it's like for one

to ascend from such an extreme and deeply ingrained attitude of bad faith aligned with Beauvoir's character of 'the nihilist,' to a much healthier and actively maintained attitude of what she would have been more correct and helpful to name 'faith.' This leads directly to the second fundamental criticism I have of Beauvoir's philosophical position, which is simply to suggest that it doesn't seem feasible that we will ever be able to develop to the point of authentically relating ourselves to our-selves characterized by the desire to disclose Being without some mechanism such as faith. In other words, how can we adopt an attitude that enables us to be open to discerning what *is*, without actively renewing the belief that the is, *is* at every moment?

Like Camus, who maintained an ambiguous or paradoxical relationship with the religious[38], Beauvoir's refusal to call the opposite of bad faith by its proper name appears ultimately self-defeating, as that which threatens to lead one directly to that frustrated desire that is the ethical failure of bad faith, for, is not the dogmatic belief in atheism one of its fundamental forms? For the philosopher of the absurd,[39] Camus, since it is the case, as Kant rightly points out[40], that reason always strives for the unconditioned but can never be fulfilled in that desire, or in other words, since we can't help but ask about the nature of reality even though we can never reason to an adequate answer, the only real question becomes, "Why should I choose to live[41]?" Any answer to the affirmative, which is the kind of answer Camus himself endorsed, really does seem to require a genuine leap of faith. And, his view does allow for that possibility in a robust way, given a famous assertion he made in "Letter to a German Friend," where, in acknowledging the absurdity of human existence, that there is no 'supernatural

meaning,' he maintains, "But I know that something in the world has meaning – man.[42]"

Some scholars, like Jean-Paul Sartre for example, suggest that this entails a certain kind of leap of faith, one that is directed not at God, but instead at humankind[43]. What could a sort of faith in humanity practically involve?

For Camus, who was explicitly strongly influenced by both St. Augustine and Kierkegaard, the real trouble with the Christian worldview appears to be the sharp insight Nietzsche powerfully diagnoses in his *Genealogy*, that the deeply embedded notion that human beings are inherently sinful or 'guilty' thus evil is a dangerous and destructive *construct* that both amounts to a reaction to the feeling of powerlessness, and prevents us from developing a healthy attitude towards ourselves and thus others[44]. I suggest that Camus endorses this reading given the 'Pagan Primitivism' view he himself adopts, which is the opposite belief that people are inherently innocent and thus implicitly always *potentially* good[45]. Like Heidegger, Camus also demonstrates a belief in such Romantic ideals as valuing the beauty of the mystery of the world, immersion in pure Being, and the glory of the moment for example, and such ideas lead me to wonder whether a secular or even Pagan understanding of faith could be conceived as a faith in humanity's *potential* for good, or to discern what's good for ourselves[46]. At base, to become good, it is necessary in the first place to be able to discern what good is, and this interpretive ability which Sartre would suggest we are condemned to have[47], because that's just what freedom is, is to a large extent, a learned behavior.

As Beauvoir importantly points out, our unhappiness results from the fact that we were once children, and *innocent*, children for the most part are not permitted to follow

their own gut instincts to determine what is best for them. For the most part, they are

forcefully conditioned into adopting certain opinions regarding what is best for them by

their parents, relatives, teachers, babysitters, church officials, the television, the internet,

and older siblings for example, and at the same time, they mimic these 'authority

figures' by engaging in both sides[48] of peer-pressuring each other into adopting certain

views or value judgments. This means that we enter the world in the first place,

innocent, that is with a pure and untarnished potential for discerning what's best for

ourselves. And then, there is a strong sense in which so many of us are incidentally

socialized out of being able to recognize *that* we have this ability at all, which

paradoxically, is partially necessary for the child's own safety in the sense that children

have less learning experience, and therefore require the experience of the adults around

them to help prevent them from such things as taking pills that look like candy, getting

in the car with strangers, touching a hot stove, stealing, lying, or ultimately unleashing

their own selfish desires on others. This last one seems big. Children are understood as

'immature,' which is why we think they need what amounts to foreign absolutes telling

them ultimately, when we are not careful, *what* to think as opposed to *how*[49]. When the

former is the standard according to which children are raised, the logical and perhaps

unintended consequence of this approach is differing degrees of alienation from, a

forgetting or underdeveloped competence and thus trust in, their freedom to discern what

is best for themselves. Nevertheless, in that fateful moment of moral choice, we are all

forced to take responsibility for, or assume command of that ability, which all too many

of us, at no true fault of our own, were overwhelmingly underprepared for. And, the fact

of the matter is that it is cyclical. As Kant deftly calls to our attention, humanity as a

whole, given what can plainly be observed all around us at any given moment, is itself

still immature in a way that always eventually becomes 'self-incurred[50].' This means

that, to a greater and lesser degree, we have immature adults imposing immature values

on children who themselves become immature adults mired in that Heideggerian

'forgetfulness of being,[51]' who ambiguously *choose* that immaturity in not choosing to

continue to develop.

Both Sartre and Beauvoir among others are right to point out that we can't help

but be free, which is at the same time to be responsible, but that assertion, or I would say

fact, is absolutely meaningless in the absence of a working or practical understanding of

what that freedom is exactly responsible for. To the degree that this is the case for each

of us, we are as Beauvoir says, mystified, and to de-mystify people without being able to

provide them the means for properly assuming their freedom, she thinks is wrong. As

we've seen in her *Ethics*, Beauvoir defines oppression as a matter of being cut-off from

one's means, and I would argue that being estranged from the awareness of how to

effectively command our own conscious abilities such that it enables us to pursue what

is best for our-selves, is at the core of a robust understanding of this phenomenon.

Obviously, abject poverty, hunger, imprisonment, and systematic sexual, physical and

emotional abuse are conditions of extreme oppression but the difference for me is the

notion that these conditions are themselves enabled in the first place by such

estrangement or alienation from the resoluteness one is afforded when properly attuned

to a working understanding of his or her own freedom, as well as what it enables us to do.

Frederick Douglass as Exemplar of Authenticity

We need look no further than Frederick Douglass' narrative account of the development to maturity of his own command of his conscious abilities; the story of a literal slave who, seemingly from out of his keen awareness of the methods used by the master[52] to control and objectify himself and his peers, figured out *that* he was actually free and what that meant to him in a practical way. This seems to have been enabled in the first place by the fact that one particular slave-mistress had owned him was new to possessing human chattel and thus didn't have a working knowledge of those extremely well-developed methods of objectification employed by the American South. Mrs. Auld, whose Self had clearly become irreparably corrupted by the performative, embodied enactment of her newly acquired identity as slave-owner, made the cardinal mistake of treating Douglass like a human being, which had the inevitable consequence of providing him the unmistakable and undeniable feedback or recognition of that *Truth*. She did this by teaching him, an individual that did not even know his own age, who was never permitted the basic human comfort if not necessity of being raised by a mother, how to read[53].

During the brief period where Mrs. Auld was giving Douglass reading lessons, he describes her as kind. As soon as her husband, Mr. Auld, became aware that she was

providing this service, arguably the most dangerous service to the institution of slavery, he forbade her from continuing any further and she acquiesced. Instead of obeying her gut inclination that had told her it was a good thing to do, Mrs. Auld instead obeyed her own master, her husband. For this, she is fully culpable, and from the way Douglass describes her extreme shift in demeanor, she certainly payed the price in transforming from his own perception of a kind human being, which as Aristotle might say, is a 'pleasant' or satisfying thing in itself, to what Douglass portrays as a cruel, bitter, deeply disturbed shell of her former *self*. In actively consummating[54] the narrative that attends *be*ing a slave-mistress, that *be*ing the wife of a slaveholder demands, Mrs. Auld cut herself off from what perhaps her own discerning abilities would reveal to her as best and *chose* to allow her newly acquired fixed essence as a human being who is the kind of human being that holds ownership over another human being, define her possibilities. We imagine that she could have chosen otherwise; that she could have continued the lessons in secret; that she could have packed up and left her husband upon realizing the full weight of what it means to be in that kind of master-slave relationship with Douglass; that she ought not to have married someone who was likely very open about his views on slavery in the first place. She didn't however, and while it might be the case that she did not recognize any alternate courses of action as salient, she made herself a willing slave[55] and launched herself deeply into bad faith, a choice for which she must be held fully responsible and that teaches a powerful lesson.

Douglass, on the other hand, having gotten that first real glimpse of freedom that learning to read affords one, was determined to finish learning no matter what, and

enlisted the help of some local street kids to accomplish the task. He read everything he could get his hands on, and reveled in the experience that we perhaps come to take for granted, of engaging with the faculty of imagination which transcendence from out of our immanence first permits. He found himself particularly enthralled with a story that narrates the adventures of a sea captain, enjoyed imagining himself on such adventures and in the process, came to recognize himself as fully human by identifying with the reflections and emotions demonstrated by the narrator. Speaking directly to Beauvoir's insight that de-mystification without means is at the very least unfair, Douglass recalls how it was only a short matter of time before he began to experience the realization of his fundamental freedom as a heavy weight around his neck. While he had come to figure out *that* he is able to have command over his own conscious abilities; that he is as fully human as the sea captain in the story; therefore, that since his natural condition is to be human and not a slave, he was nevertheless still, as a matter of facticity, in reality, a slave. This fact became such a burden that he recounts having had the strong desire to return to a state of ignorance, to have never recognized his freedom in the first place. But, that we can detect the presence of the desire indexed to the attitude of bad faith in its many manifestations in the first place seems to strongly indicate how utterly impossible it is to convince ourselves that we are not free after having come to the stark realization that in fact we are.

Later into his adulthood, Douglass found himself on a rather large plantation where the owner of the sizeable slave population employed a number of overseers to manage the everyday operations. Mr. Covey, as Douglass refers to him, was one such

individual who he describes as particularly cruel and sadistic. At this point in the *Narrative*, Douglass conveys a strong sense of having been objectified, dehumanized, horrifically abused, overworked and generally mistreated to the point where he literally could bear no more. A turning point comes when Mr. Covey severely whips him for a minor 'infraction,' an image that is the stuff of nightmares for those of us who have never had to endure physical violence, but that Douglass was subjected to as part of his everyday experience. Blood gushing from his head, he ran off with the intentions of escaping. Without help or a plan however, that is no easy feat. Shortly after, having had some time to reflect, Douglass returned to the plantation but now, with fierce resolve. Here, he invites the reader to witness what he identifies as the moment that he, who had been made into a slave, *made himself* into a man[56]. This very moment is key to how I want to envision what a secular and thus non-alienating notion of faith to entail.

Resolute; absolutely sure of himself, Douglass seeks to confront Covey with the entirety of his being, who without doubt would have been lying in wait, ready to unleash as severe a punishment as could be conceived. Inevitably, they came to blows, but this time, Douglass would not be defeated. He took ownership of himself; asserted himself in the sense that he demanded to be accorded the dignity proper to a human being, and the desired results were achieved. Clearly not anticipating this turn of events, Covey took his beating and then backed off from Douglass for good. In this experience, which seems to represent a clear instance of the resolution of a Hegelian "Master-Slave Dialectic," Covey seems to have gotten a glimpse into his own true nature, into the fact that in all reality, he is nothing more than a sadistic, deranged, coward whose entire

identity is wrapped up in being a pathetic, impotent, overseer of slaves, a speculation that I think is neatly supported by the fact that he never retaliated when he certainly had recourse to. To me, this indicates that he genuinely recognized the truth of what Douglass asserted in that moment, by no means intended to suggest that he is somehow morally praiseworthy, but which nevertheless validates or performatively verifies that truth for Douglass himself and renders Covey powerless over him. From this moment forward, Douglass demonstrates a resolute commitment to his own freedom, and is able to be open to recognizing his genuine opportunity to fulfill that commitment by escaping from the material conditions of slavery. Following his successful escape to the North, he channels his resolute commitment to freedom into a devotion to projects that actively promote the movement of abolition, even though he was fully aware that to do so was to put himself continuously at risk.

What enabled Douglass to take full ownership or responsibility of himself on that particular day, and then to perpetuate the very real risk of death that standing up for the freedom of oneself and others entails? His own account, which is written in such a way that allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions regarding what the facts of his story mean, is frankly honest in its recounting of what he describes as a relatively mild experience of American slavery, compared to what it's like in the deep South. While he would have been fully justified in harshly condemning the American reading public for allowing the institution of slavery to thrive, or at the very least expressing himself in an angry, hateful or bitter tone, he conveys his message with a very real and genuine sense of hope. One interpretation could be that this hope indicates the presence of something

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that can be explained in terms of faith. While it makes good sense to communicate to a

reading audience in such a way as to avoid alienating them, one who writes simply for

the purpose of lashing out will not likely be concerned with this factor. That this first-

hand account of some of the worst kinds of suffering that a human being can endure is

able to convey such hope at all indicates to me very strongly that it represents an appeal

to something like the goodness in humankind. In other words, what I mean is, rather

than assert some highly justified sweeping condemnation or other, Douglass instead

seems to be appealing to our universally human ability to discern right from wrong, even

though he of all people has plenty of evidence to suggest that its existence is a mere

myth. That he is appealing to this human sense of the good, rather than a nihilistic sense

of hopeless resignation, signals to me a faith, which as such necessarily moves beyond

reason into the absurd. After enduring the life of a slave, Douglass had mountains of

objective evidence pointing to the conclusion that there is no good out there, and little

objective evidence if any at all to suggest that human beings are capable of doing the

right thing. But he makes the appeal, demonstrating his (good) faith.

Defying all odds and despite the precautionary steps that the oppressor takes in

hiding one's sense of freedom from oneself, Douglass first stumbles upon his conscious

abilities when learning to read propels him into imagination. At first, the ability to

transcend into imagination is exciting and fun, but it quickly turns into a source of

torment as it forces him to recognize and acknowledge the cracks that inevitably appear

in the serious world set up by the institution of slavery, as Beauvoir might say[57].

Because he now recognizes that he is able to, he can't help himself from reflecting

deeply on why the world he encounters is as it is, and in so doing becomes an expert on the subject of how to effectively, systematically oppress an entire group of people. This is evinced by the insights he clearly articulates throughout the text regarding such manipulative methods as using Christianity to foster docility, keeping any information hidden such as one's age that would contribute to the formation of a unique identity, and strongly encouraging that the one 'vacation day' of the year, Christmas, be spent binge-drinking and engaging in other such gluttonous behavior so that the hangover will make working in the fields more desirable than this contrived sense of freedom, for example. It can be argued then, that such sustained critical analysis of the institution of slavery and its impact on the self, which can result from the unfortunate situation of awakening to one's own conscious abilities while being imprisoned inside one's own interiority, in the sense of not being able to outwardly express that freedom, is the means according to which Douglass actively develops his command over his own conscious abilities. Inevitably, the more attuned he becomes to his discerning abilities, the more overwhelmingly immoral the institution of slavery reveals itself to be in the sense that Beauvoir suggests by her claim that ethical failure can be identified by the frustration resulting from the inability to discern and pursue what reveals itself to be best[58].

Douglass' fate was much worse than Sisyphus,' in that he had to push the rock up the mountain and then endure severe beatings whenever it slid back down. Not only is it perfectly clear from his account that he successfully resisted the natural temptation to internalize the sense of objecthood that the oppressor actively forces onto the oppressed, which would be to consummate the narrative and set the course for the self-

destruction that bad faith elicits, but it is also obvious that he figured out for himself how to properly inhabit the authentic attitude opposite bad faith. For Camus, that fundamental philosophical question as posed by the image of Sisyphus asks, given the fact that what is special about human existence is our ability to reason, an ability that inclines us towards asking questions for which we can have no certain answers, why should I choose life if I can never satisfy my desire to know. Again, an affirmative answer appears to require a leap of faith, or in other words, a choice made in the absence of objectively sound reasons and is best understood as a matter for conscience[59]. Douglass' account helps brings this idea into sharper focus.

Aristotle identifies various different faculties that operate simultaneously in the soul, another name for consciousness, such as the locomotive corresponding to movement, the appetitive corresponding to appetite and the nutritive corresponding to growth for some examples[60]. He suggests that reason is to be understood as the highest faculty and if one hopes to pursue the life of a Eudaimon, or human wellbeing, then all our other faculties must be subordinated to reason in such a way that reason always has the final say; that we always endorse the conclusions of careful, reasoned deliberation[61]. A thinker of antiquity untarnished by the alienating effects of modernity, which is not to suggest that his times were any better or more conducive to a proper understanding of human nature, Aristotle recognized the informational aspect of our emotions in the sense that being properly attuned to what elicits emotional pleasure and pain in oneself informs us if we let it, regarding whether the way we are living is moving us towards or away from our own good[62]. This insight, similar to Beauvoir's idea that ethical failure, not

living up to what's best for ourselves, can be identified by a sense of frustration, indicates the possibility that our faculty for conscience ought to be viewed as higher than reason since it is what we must default to when logic and reason can't take us any further. And, what besides our 'gut feeling' indicating what appears as the right thing to do in any given situation, which is mine alone, does conscience amount to?

Douglass was forced to find and take ownership of himself from within a world[63] established according to its own deeply irrational, deeply disturbed inner-logic, which he sharply diagnosed as such. If he were only to get as far as the development of his reasoning capacity, it's not clear that he would have made it out of that situation alive since he would have no objectively sound reason to believe that there is any good to be found anywhere else in the world, and that's the kind of view that leads to the self-destructive attitude of nihilism. This leads directly into the realm of the absurd, or of ambiguity, since reason alone couldn't have been what enabled Douglass to risk his life in confronting Mr. Covey on that pivotal day, but instead his conscience as *supported* by reason. As Beauvoir suggests, occupying the position of the inessential is evil, which is a counter-intuitive claim, however makes perfect sense at the same time. It's evil insofar as it's corrupting and degrading to the proper dignity of the self, and can only be remedied by asserting or taking ownership of one's self. But, we have to do that with no guarantees of success and no true understanding of what success will amount to other than the fulfillment of the abstract notion of adequate recognition. Douglass had all the evidence to suggest that standing up to Covey would result in severe bodily injury if not death, however it seems that his drive to assume his freedom in a way that properly

accords with his fully developed sense of human dignity was stronger, so his gut spoke to him and said, 'it's now or never.' He took that initial leap of faith by listening to his conscience, which in the first place requires the ability to both hear it when it speaks and interpret what it says, which indicates that it was something he had already been working at developing. The reward for taking that leap is that it offers us something to hold onto that won't lead to disappointment, but instead, to a satisfying relationship to ourselves and then others.

What the faith is a faith in, seems to only be explainable in terms of the idea that there is actually an *is* for our conscience to discern, or that the information relayed to me by my conscience is real and trustworthy as long as I do the work of keeping properly, honestly, reasonably attuned. Taking the leap reveals to me *how* to take the leap, so that I may repeat it, and further, it makes me aware of the necessary fact that I can't be the only one who is able to discern the good, and am certainly not the only one who has struggled to figure out this fundamental, mature feature of the human conscious ability. If I look to my own experience with this struggle, I realize the degree to which it has caused me to suffer, which immediately causes me to want to help others properly orient themselves towards their own wellbeing and avoid unnecessary suffering, especially those who are most alienated from themselves. I imagine this to ring true for Douglass as well, given the degree to which he doesn't demonstrate bitterness in this account. Through his own tireless effort, he was able to figure out not only how to successfully free himself from literal slavery, but also to do so in a way that seems to have enabled him to inhabit that freedom in an authentic, healthy way such that he did not find himself

locked in a new enslavement to the type of narrative consummation that adopting the

victim mentality can lead one to. Fully recognizing and accepting, in the first place, his

proper dignity and intrinsic worth as a human being, revealed to him the need to live up

to that worth and the openness to discerning his genuine opportunities for action. And

perhaps for this reason, he was able to maintain the absurd sort of faith in humanity,

maybe this just means faith in human dignity, that Camus is inclined towards, which is

enabled in the first place by the experience of the leap of faith characterized by allowing

oneself to genuinely trust what conscience says.

O as Exemplar of Bad Faith

Douglass' account above reveals the process whereby he successfully raises

himself to the status of a subject from out of his situation of extreme oppression. As a

contrasting account, I return here to Jessica Benjamin's analysis of a fictional female

character O introduced briefly in chapter 2, who willingly submits herself to a master,

which ultimately destroys her. Whereas for Douglass, the understanding he has of his

own freedom eventually compels him to risk his life in demanding recognition, in

desperately *hoping* for recognition, O gives up her own life in consummating the will of

her master.

Story of O is one of sadomasochistic fantasy, which Benjamin believes closely

parallels the themes of the master-slave relationship, where domination manifests in the

violation of the physical boundaries of the other's body. She suggests that this form of

violation is representative of the Hegelian struggle to the death that leads up to the master-slave relationship. According to Benjamin, "Reage's tale is a web in which the issues of dependency and domination are inextricably intertwined, in which the conflict between the desire for autonomy and the desire for recognition can only be resolved by total renunciation of self. It illustrates powerfully the principle that the root of domination lies in the breakdown of tension between self and other" (55). In the story, protagonist O is depicted as a voluntary masochist, or an individual who derives sexual gratification from his or her own pain and humiliation, which Benjamin reads as an allegory for the desire for recognition. Against the most common critique leveled at this text by feminists, that it is a story of a victimized woman who had no means to resist her degradation, she wants to understand what motivates the 'unpleasant fact' that people truly do consent to relationships of domination. According to Benjamin, the above critique precludes an understanding of what type of satisfaction is looked for and encountered in submission.

Benjamin chooses to analyze *Story of O* because of how she thinks it deeply challenges the reader with the notion that individuals frequently submit to oppression, humiliation and subservience in "complicity with their own deepest desires" (55). She explains that the narrator of the story, O, induces the reader to take her desire for submission seriously, as an authentic choice. "But the narrator also makes it clear that the desire for submission represents a peculiar transposition of the desire for recognition. O's physical humiliation and abuse represent a search for an elusive spiritual or psychological satisfaction. Her masochism is a search for recognition through an other

who is powerful enough to bestow this recognition" (Benjamin 56). This other she

submits to in the sadomasochistic relationship possesses the power that the self

desperately yearns for. Benjamin theorizes that through his recognition, O vicariously

gains that power.

In an attempt to understand exactly why individuals voluntarily submit to

domination, Benjamin analyzes an important passage from the novel which outlines the

specific instructions that O agrees to by entering into the sadomasochistic relationship.

Here, I include the passage because I will refer to it again in the final chapter of this

dissertation. To properly contextualize this part of the story, it is from the beginning

where protagonist O is abruptly taken by her lover to an establishment called Roissy

Castle, which has been set up by men for the ritual subjugation and violation of women

(Benjamin 56). Benjamin presents the passage as follows:

> You are here to serve your masters … At the first word or sign from anyone you
> will drop whatever you are doing and ready yourself for what is really your one
> and only duty: to lend yourself. Your hands are not your own, nor are your
> breasts, nor most especially, any of your orifices, which we may explore or
> penetrate at will … You have lost all right to any privacy or concealment … You
> must never look any of us in the face. If the costume we wear … leaves our sex
> exposed, it is not for the sake of convenience … but for the sake of insolence, so
> your eyes will be directed there upon it and nowhere else so that you may learn
> that there resides your master … [Your] being whipped … is less for our pleasure
> than for your enlightenment … Both this flogging and the chain attached to the
> ring of your collar … are intended less to make you suffer, scream or shed tears
> than to make you feel, through this suffering, that you are not free but fettered,
> and to teach you that you are totally dedicated to something outside yourself
> (56).

In this passage, Benjamin gleans much useful information regarding the direct

correlation between the master-slave relationship and the sadomasochistic one. From

the very first line, it is clear to her that O must lose all subjective agency and become a

mere object (Benjamin 56). Further, the fact that she must continuously remain open

and available for the men makes it so that O is in a constant state of violation even in

moments where she is not being acted upon (Benjamin 56-7). Benjamin's third insight

into O's situation is that she must recognize her masters only indirectly through the

penis, which represents their desire. She explains, through this indirect representation,

the masters can maintain their sovereignty because placing the penis between O and

themselves allows them to establish a subjectivity that is independent of O's recognition

(Benjamin 57).

Addressing the notion that O's abuse is more for her own enlightenment rather

than their pleasure, Benjamin suggests that this third point demonstrates how O's

indirect recognition of her masters makes it so that they do not appear to need her in the

same way she needs them. In this way, she asserts that the sadistic pleasure derived by

the masters is not "in direct enjoyment of her pain, but in the knowledge of their power

over her – the fact that their power is visible, that it is manifested by outward signs, that

it leaves marks (Benjamin 57). According to Benjamin, it is necessary for O's masters

to maintain their separate subjectivity in this way, by ardently denying any dependency

on her, if they wish to avoid the fate of Hegel's master (57). Hegel's master becomes

dependent on the slave and thus progressively loses subjectivity to him (Benjamin 57).

Related to this point is the notion that the master always becomes the object he

consumes (Benjamin 57). O's masters in fact transform her into an object by negating

her will (Benjamin 57). If they succeed in completely objectifying her to the point that

she has no will left at all, Benjamin explains that they are no longer able to "use her

without becoming filled with her thing-like nature. Thus they must perform their violation rationally and ritually in order to maintain their boundaries and to make her will – not only her body – the object of their will" (57). Benjamin's final point of analysis regarding the above passage from *Story of O* is that the use of the penis as symbolic of male mastery highlights the difference between O and her masters. She argues that it represents the denial of commonality between her and them, which serves to justify that they have the right to violate her (Benjamin 57). Further, the penis represents the master's resistance to being absorbed by the object of his control, thus guaranteeing that no matter how interdependent master and slave become, their difference will be maintained (Benjamin 58).

According to Benjamin, *Story of O* is propelled by the dialectic of control as outlined in the above. Due to the fact that a slave who is fully objectified and controlled can no longer give any recognition whatsoever, the master's struggle to possess O must be drawn out (Benjamin 58). Therefore, O's enslavement must be progressive. Benjamin explains, "new levels of resistance must be found, so that she can be vanquished anew – She must acquiesce in ever deeper humiliation, pain, and bondage, and she must will her submission ever anew, each time her masters ask her, "O, do you consent?" The narrative moves through these ever deeper levels of submission, tracing the impact of each fresh negation of her will, each new defeat of her resistance" (58). Just as the dialectic with her initial master, Rene, might culminate in his becoming bored with her nearly ultimate submission which would lead him to discard her, he introduces O to his older, more powerful and more cold and calculating step-brother, Sir Stephen

(Benjamin 58). According to Benjamin, Sir Stephen is more creative in devising new

ways to intensify her subjugation. For example, he "makes her "more interesting" by

having her branded and her anus enlarged," and demands that she obey him without his

loving her or her loving him (Benjamin 58).

The effect that this fuller relinquishing of her own sense of self has on O is that it

increases her desire, making her long to be important to Sir Stephen, or as Benjamin

suggests, to exist for him (58). She complicates the situation however in pointing out

that O has competition in her longing for Sir Stephen's recognition in the figure of

Renee, her initial master and his younger step-brother. Rene also desires recognition

from Sir Stephen, and this is the reason that he offers O to him. O understands that the

two men share something deeper and more intense than "amorous communion," which

she is utterly excluded from even while she is the medium it takes place through

(Benjamin 59). Rene's gifting of O to Sir Stephen represents for Benjamin "a way of

surrendering himself sexually to the more powerful man. "What each of them would

look for in her would be the other's mark, the trace of the other's passage." Indeed, for

Rene, Sir Stephen's possession of O sanctifies her, leaving the "mark of a god"" (59).

Here, Benjamin argues that this relationship between Rene and Sir Stephen

requires we rethink the significance of the story up to this stage. According to her

deepening interpretation, Rene's objectification of O is motivated not only by his need to

differentiate himself from her, but also by the desire to gain the father's favor (Benjamin

59). Therefore, Rene gradually lets go of his love of O so that he may deepen his sense

of identification with and allegiance to the father (Benjamin 59). This idea leads

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Benjamin to suggest that the desire for the father's recognition completely overwhelms the love of the mother, thereby transforming it into a further motivation for domination (59). Ultimately, the fact that O's importance to either of these men is non-existent in relation to the bond they have with each other represents a further aspect of her humiliation and negation (Benjamin 59). Eventually, Benjamin explains, the story becomes "heavy with O's inexorable loss of subjectivity. Playing the complementary part to her masters, O relinquishes all sense of difference and separateness in order to remain – at all costs – connected to them. O's deepest fears of abandonment and separation emerge as her tie to Rene is gradually dissolved by her bondage to Sir Stephen" (59).

According to Benjamin, O's deepest longing is to be known, which she suggests makes her like any lover since "the secret of love is to be known as oneself" (60). She compares O's wish to be loved to that of a sinner who yearns to be known by God. Sir Stephen, who O idealizes as her God, knows her immediately as bad, nasty and as reveling in her degradation (Benjamin 60). It is the case however, that the very possibility of such knowing decreases the more O submits because there is increasingly less of O as a subject to be known (Benjamin 60). The conclusion of *Story of O* is left open to two different possibilities, both of which involve Sir Stephen abandoning O. In the first version, he simply leaves her at Roissy Castle. In the second version however, O sees that Sir Stephen is going to leave her and expresses that she would rather die to which he consents. According to Benjamin, this is O's

> final gesture of heroism, her last opportunity to express her lover's will. The
> gesture is in keeping with O's paradoxical hope that in complete surrender she

will find her elusive self. For this hope is the other side of O's devotional
servitude: in performing the tasks her masters set her, O seeks affirmation of
herself. O is actually willing to risk complete annihilation of her person in order
to continue to be the object of her lover's desire – to be recognized (60).

For Benjamin, the slaves submission to the master's will embodies the ultimate

recognition of their power (62). She suggests that submission becomes the purest form

of recognition while violation becomes the purest form of assertion (Benjamin 62). In

this type of relation then, the master's assertion is transformed into domination and the

slave's recognition turns into submission (Benjamin 62). Therefore, Benjamin nicely

demonstrates through *Story of O* how the basic tension in the individual between the

desire for recognition and the need to assert oneself becomes a dynamic between

individuals (62).

Narrative Consummation: The Fallacy of Bad Faith

The figures of O and her masters represent paradigmatic examples of individuals

who fail to adequately assume their existential freedom and responsibility. In her *Ethics,*

Beauvoir analyzes the figures of bad faith as purely male, and fails to offer any

characterization of a particularly feminine form of bad faith. To be sure, her account

implies that bad faith is an attitude that both genders are capable of inhabiting, however

she does not explicitly account for the difference in how it manifests in women. While

not explained in the language of bad faith, I argue that Benjamin's account does the

work that Beauvoir failed to accomplish in demonstrating how bad faith shows up *in*

relationships. In this way, Benjamin's account beautifully compliments Beauvoir's in

closing the gaps Beauvoir has left. Benjamin's analysis is a powerful extension and exploration of Beauvoir's fundamental insight that woman is man's other. Therefore, in this section I use Benjamin to demonstrate the further insights that Beauvoir's discovery lead to.

Whereas Douglass finds himself in a situation where he is forced to enact the will of his masters against his own will, O, who is depicted as an educated middle class woman, abandons her own will completely for the purpose of enacting the will of her masters. Driven by her need for recognition, O longs to exist for the other and not for herself. She does not acknowledge her simultaneous need to assert herself. In the passage where we first encounter her, she has already made herself into the first of Beauvoir's figures of bad faith, the sub-man. We meet her as an individual who refuses to acknowledge the experience of her freedom, which renders her vulnerable to the inclinations of the serious man. It is not her own decision to go to Roissey Castle, but instead that of her lover. She agrees to enter however, because it is his will. Once she is there, she transforms into the serious man, who abides by the rules of the world she finds herself in as though they are unconditioned values or absolutes. Each time she agrees to Rene's violation of her and then Sir Stephen's, she is increasingly alienated from herself and her freedom, and becomes more and more thing-like. When she is all used up and realizes that Sir Stephen, the source of the recognition she so desperately desires, is going to abandon her, she transforms into the nihilist and wills to be nothing. The interesting distinction between o and Douglass here appears to be the role that recognition plays for each. Douglass demands recognition in order to be free. O

however, gives up her freedom in the vain hopes of being recognized. Whereas

Douglass comes to realize his own power, O completely cuts herself off from hers so

that she might vicariously experience that of her master. What seems to ultimately have

enabled Douglass to elevate himself to the status of a human being from out of his

objectification is his understanding of himself and the unjust nature of his situation.   O

fails to acquire such understanding and self-knowledge.

      In *Story of O*, O is not the only character who is acting out of bad faith. Her

masters are equally mired in this attitude of escape. Whereas O seeks recognition

without acknowledging the need to assert herself, her masters, who can be likened to

Beauvoir's serious men or adventurers, assert themselves without acknowledging their

need for mutual recognition.   They don't necessarily suffer as a result of their bad faith

in the same way that O clearly does, however, in their tyranny, they fail equally to

properly assume their freedom. Douglass' situation, which is fundamentally different

from O's given that he did not choose to be a slave, is also different in that is represents

a master-slave relationship between men. As Benjamin poignantly demonstrates, when

the master-slave relationship is between a man and a woman, there seems to be

significantly different dynamics at play which warrant further investigation in their

therapeutic implications. Both Douglass and O are engaging in narrative consummation

insofar as they are performatively enacting the will of an other, where Douglass is

clearly being oppressed and O is choosing self-degradation. However, I argue that it is

important to understand the gender nuanced motivations for assuming both sides of this

bad faith, master-slave relationship.

The sadomasochistic relationship that we see in *Story of O* is an extreme example, but this same dynamic shows up in many forms, due perhaps to the different tendencies that men and women have regarding how we deal with the tension between the need to assert ourselves and the desire for recognition. To be conditioned by the attitude of bad faith is to avoid taking responsibility for ourselves. Bad faith leads to an imbalance of power in human relationships, which manifests in dominance an submission. As Beauvoir and Benjamin point out, submission to an other is a reflection of the failure to express one's own agency and desire; it is a choosing not to choose and not to assert oneself. Inversely, domination is a denial of intersubjective dependency; it is asserting oneself without acknowledging that freedom requires mutual recognition. Both men and women assume the dominant and submissive roles, however Beauvoir and Benjamin demonstrate that men tend to be dominant and women tend to be submissive.

This insight seems to underlie many of the fallacies that Cohen identifies in his framework for Logic-Based Therapy. For example, the fallacy of "jumping on the bandwagon," where an individual acts or thinks according to what others do or say, is a submissive behavior. Alternately, the fallacy of "manipulation" where an individual gets what he or she wants through deceit or the threat of physical violence, is a dominant behavior. Both of these fallacies indicate the attitude of bad faith, however Cohen does not explicitly explore this idea. Further, women truly do suffer as a result of not being able to properly assert themselves. Given that we still consider sexism to be an issue, it is also the case that, as Benjamin suggests, men don't necessarily understand how to give recognition. As a whole, it seems clear that human beings need to learn these

behaviors and how to strike a balance internally between self-assertion and recognition giving and receiving. One of the major lessons that I take away from Douglass' account is that acquiring a deep understanding of what oppresses us can afford us the ability to search for a creative solution. I believe that Logic-Based Therapy is equipped to teach individuals how to understand themselves and their situations so that they can assume responsibility for themselves and make better, healthier choices. This model of therapy would be made stronger by incorporating a framework to address the gender-nuanced issue I propose in this project[64]

In this project, I am referring to my proposed fallacy of bad faith as "narrative consummation." An individual is engaging in narrative consummation when he or she is either performatively enacting the will of an other, or imposing his or her will on others. This shows up in many different forms in many different situations. If I pursue a career as a lawyer because my parents tell me they will cut me off financially, I am abandoning my own will and enacting theirs. Motivated by the fear of disappointing my parents, of financial strain, or perhaps of losing my relationship with them, I give up my dream of being a teacher. Because of this decision which has lead me into the attitude of bad faith, I am now more prone to being controlled by others. Alternately, If my sister stops talking to all of my friends because my boyfriend says he will leave her if she do not, I am enacting his will instead of my own. As with the fate of O, the more she obeys the ever increasing restrictions he places on her, the more she loses herself. If the secretary of a corporate CEO allows her boss to talk dirty to her for fear of losing her job, she is enacting his will instead of her own. The more she plays along with him, the bolder he

gets. He starts caressing her shoulders from time to time, and then one day his hand brushes her breast. This makes her uncomfortable, but she still plays along. She could report him, but she chooses not to for fear of rejection. Eventually he calls her into his office and wants to have sex. She is uncomfortable, but she goes along with it anyway. Each time she succumbs to his will, the more cutoff from her own she becomes. The shame and guilt she feels for not saying no to him overtakes her and she becomes depressed. Instead of standing up to her boss and asserting herself, she does nothing and begins to lose interest in life.

The above examples suggest that bad faith is progressive in that once an individual abandons command over his or her own freedom by acting according to the will of another, we become increasingly more susceptible to behaving in ways that are self-defeating. Further, as Beauvoir, Benjamin and Cohen suggest, when we allow an other to control us, the demands that other places on us increases in magnitude the more we are incorporated into his or her own will. Cohen's fallacies do not directly address the intersubjective dimension of these issues, nor the effect that bad faith or the relinquishing of responsibility has on individuals. This project gestures toward developing this additional fallacy.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Logic-Based Therapy seeks to help individuals evaluate their patterns of thought and develop their reasoning abilities. In this dissertation, I argue that it is a highly valuable resource for philosophers to help people engage in rigorous self-examination, enabling them to take responsibility for themselves and their own wellbeing. Given her lifelong commitment to human freedom and responsibility, I also argue that philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's work has much to contribute to this model of philosophical counseling.

In her *Ethics of Ambiguity*, Beauvoir identifies two fundamental attitudes that we can find ourselves in. Whichever attitude we occupy represents the perspective we assent to regarding the relationship we have to our existential freedom, that we choose more or less consciously. These fundamental attitudes are called 'bad faith' and 'authenticity.' Bad faith is the attitude that conditions us to actively evade the sense we have of our own freedom, characterized by a desire to possess for ourselves a fixed identity, which in turn directs us to define ourselves rigidly according to how we think we should, or how *one* ought. Conversely, authenticity is the attitude that allows us to more or less fully embrace the feeling we have of our own freedom, characterized by a desire to be open to Being, or sheer possibility for meaning, which then enables us to define ourselves according to what *makes sense* given the particular factors of our actual

situation. This authentic attitude, which represents the way that human beings properly or healthily assume command over our conscious abilities, can lead us to what Aristotle's *Ethics* would refer to as flourishing. Bad faith however, the refusal to acknowledge one's own freedom, characterized by ethical failure, leads us in the opposite direction, down the path of self-destruction.

In her *Ethics*, Beauvoir echoes Renee Descartes in his assertion that man's unhappiness results from his first having been a child. Necessarily, children exist in what she refers to as the serious world, which operates according to pre-determined, fixed absolutes. The child happily plays at being free, without yet experiencing freedom's demands or consequences. In adolescence, during the moment of moral choice, human beings are confronted by the full weight of their existential freedom, or the responsibility they have to justify their own existence. For most, this is an unpleasant experience, and leaves us prone to the attitude of escape, bad faith. Beauvoir imagines a number of fictional characters that signify different manifestations of this attitude. She names them the sub man, the serious man, the nihilist, the passionate man, and the adventurer. While Beauvoir does not make any explicit gender claims here, these figures appear to represent particularly male forms of bad faith. She strongly implies that women are subject to the inclination to flee from their freedom, however she does not yet explain what that looks like in her *Ethics*.

In her *Second Sex*, Beauvoir applies her philosophical position as outlined in her *Ethics* to the concrete situation of women. In this text, she expands her analysis from the subjective perspective to that of the intersubjective. Through a critical appropriation of

G.W.F Hegel's 'Master-Slave Dialectic,' she details identity formation, generally speaking, as a process that occurs inter-subjectively, or through relations with others. In this way, it involves the process of recognition whereby I am simultaneously giving and receiving feedback to and from others, which is to greater and lesser degrees mutual or unequal. Oppression results from unequal recognition, or in other words, when one side of the relation asserts itself as independent or beyond the contingency of freedom, by refusing to acknowledge the equal amount of freedom inherent to the other side. At the same time, the other side of the relation fails to adequately assert itself.

Beauvoir explores the implications of this dynamic for the concrete situation of women. She concludes that for women to finally elevate themselves to the status of subjects, they must take full responsibility for themselves, or assert themselves. For this to be possible however, she implies that men must relinquish their position as the essential. In other words, they must grant women full recognition of their status as equally free subjects. In her book *Bonds of Love*, Psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin takes Beauvoir's insights as a starting point, and offers a compelling account of *why* it is the case that women tend to fail to assert themselves and that men tend to refuse others, particularly women, proper recognition. She argues that within the individual, there exists a tension between the desire for recognition and the need to assert oneself. Healthy or authentic individuals maintain this tension within themselves in their relationships with others. When this tension breaks down however, as is most often the case, it is projected onto the intersubjective dynamic, where one individual gives

recognition (the woman) and the other asserts himself (the man). I argue that such relations of dominance and submission reveal gender specific forms of bad faith.

To be conditioned by the attitude of bad faith is to avoid taking responsibility for ourselves. Bad faith leads to an imbalance of power in human relationships, which manifests in dominance and submission. As Beauvoir and Benjamin point out, submission to an other is a reflection of the failure to express one's own agency and desire; it is a choosing not to choose and not to assert oneself. Inversely, domination is a denial of intersubjective dependency; it is asserting oneself without acknowledging that freedom requires mutual recognition. Both men and women assume the dominant and submissive roles, however Beauvoir and Benjamin demonstrate that men tend to be dominant and women tend to be submissive.

Logic-Based Therapy is a comprehensive model for the philosopher to aid individuals in gaining deeper insights into and taking responsibility for themselves by overcoming self-defeating patterns of thought. It nicely illustrates the relationship between reasoning, emotions and behaviors. As with philosophy in general however, it could greatly benefit from a woman's touch. It is generally agreed upon that historically speaking, women have been subject to the will of men. Much progress has been made, notably in the West, in elevating women to the status of free and equal subjects *in theory*. Women can vote, be educated, earn wages, and in most places, access birth control and be legally protected from spousal rape. However, words and new laws do not have the power to magically transform how one understands oneself. This is especially true given the fact that contradictions abound in our social practices and

norms. These social practices and norms are restricting on men as well, even if to a

lesser degree.

As Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre argue, human beings are free. We are

condemned to be free. In other words, the responsibility rests on each of us to figure out

what our lives means to us. Nobody, man or divine, can offer up an adequate

explanation. This existential claim is incredibly difficult to comprehend even if it is

correct that we all have an innate sense of its truth. When we are conditioned from

childhood, from all of our sources of information and interpersonal feedback, to believe

certain things about our identities and predetermined roles in this world, we are further

alienated from grasping the significance of our existential freedom. Logic-Based

Therapy as it currently stands does a good job of pointing individuals to their freedom

and what it means. However, given that oppression is such a pervasive issue of human

existence, any philosophical model of therapy ought to be equipped to help individuals

deal with its manifestation in their own experience. This is especially true given the

groundbreaking theoretical work Beauvoir and Benjamin provide in accounting for the

nuances inherent to relations between oppressed and oppressor. I focus specifically on

the oppression of women, but I would argue that Logic-Based Therapy would benefit

from the perspectives of philosophers working on issues of race and other forms of

oppression as well.

Both Beauvoir's account and Benjamin's development of its implications provide

insights into how oppressed individuals can elevate themselves to the status of free

subjects. Importantly, they force us to acknowledge the fact that women are complicit in

their own oppression. In situations where women assume roles that are imposed on them when they can reasonably choose otherwise, unpleasant and scary as the unknown alternative might seem, they are abandoning their own will. To performatively enact the will of another, which is to abandon one's own will is self-defeating. Women, who are prone to this, must assert themselves. In order for this to be possible however, they must be able to recognize that they are failing to do so in the first place. Alternately, aside from the fact that it is oppressive, men's failure to adequately recognize others is also self-defeating. In order to control others, one must actively maintain such control, which prevents one from setting up and pursuing more productive goals. Further, it precludes deep and meaningful relationships with others. Cohen lightly touches upon how issues of oppression manifest in reasoning patterns with his "world revolves around me thinking," "manipulation," and "jumping on the bandwagon" fallacies. However, in not being explicitly concerned with how the psychological dynamics of oppression impact our patterns of thought, his treatment of this issue is superficial and oversimplified. Therefore, this project argues for the development of a gender-specific framework for addressing this issue in the context of Logic-Based Therapy. I propose the inclusion of a twelfth fallacy for dealing with the different manifestations of bad faith, which I refer to as narrative consummation. Conditioned by the refusal to either assert oneself or give recognition, an individual engages in narrative consummation when he or she performatively enacts the will of an other, or when he or she imposes his or her will on another. In order to overcome the irrational pattern of thought which keeps one in the self-defeating attitude of bad faith, I suggest that the transcendent virtue for the

individual to cultivate is faith in his or her own reasoning abilities, which requires their

development.

ENDNOTES

[1] What exactly human dignity amounts to is contested, but I am concerned with a basic understanding of the concept relating to the idea that we are dignified

[2] From "Husserl's Criticism on Psychologism," by Frankel Gerard L. Margallo.

[3] From Martin Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism."

[4] From Immanuel Kant's "What Is Enlightenment."

[5] From Karl Marx's *Economic and philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

[6] From Martin Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism" and "What Is Metaphysics?"

[7] From the section on force and understanding in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

[8] From Edmund Husserl's *Ideas*.

[9] Kierkegaard's account of authenticity as outlined by Somogy Varga and Charles Guignon in their entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

[10] From Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*.

[11] From Husserl's *Ideas*.

[12] From Simone de Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity*.

[13] In her *Ethics of Ambiguity*, Beauvoir argues that ethical failure amounts to the frustration of desire in this way.

[14] From Fichte's *The Science of Knowledge* and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

[15] From G.W.F Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

[16] Referring to Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* and *Stages on Life's Way*.

[17] From Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

[18] From Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.

[19] Referring to Kierkegaard's notion of authenticity that we find in *Fear and Trembling*.

[20] From Immanuel Kant's "What Is Enlightenment."

[21] Referring to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*.

[22] From Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* and *Ideas*.

[23] From Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism."

[24] Albert Ellis, from the foreword to Cohen's *The New Rational Therapy*, pp ix.

[25] Which is the central concern in his book, *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy – It Works for Me, It Can Work for You.*

[26] Ellis, from the foreword to Cohen's *The New Rational Therapy* pg x.

[27] It is important to note here that Cohen and LBT are not wholesale anti-psychology. The National Philosophical Counselors Association in combination with the Institute for Critical Thinking, the association that LBT is affiliated with, identifies itself as working at the intersection between psychology and philosophy. It recognizes clinical depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other mental illnesses listed on the DSM as legitimate and requiring specialized treatment. However, Cohen proposes that our patterns of reasoning oftentimes are what's really to blame when we experience non-pathological depression, anxiety, rage, and other extreme and unpleasant emotional states.

[28] From *The New Rational Therapy* 94.

[29] From *The New Rational Therapy* 95.

[30] This is Beauvoir's language from her *Ethics of Ambiguity* for what I believe to be first philosophy.

[31] Beauvoir's groundbreaking insight in this text is the fact that there is a distinction between sex and gender. This distinction amounts to that between biology and social construction. In other words, I have certain biological features given to me by nature.

[32] This is a reference to Sartre's 1944 play "No Exit."

[33] From Heidegger's *Being and Time*.

[34] Camus' criticism of 'philosophy,' as described by David Simpson in his entry to the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and Ronald Aronson in his entry to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

[35] From Husserl's *Ideas*.

[36] From Plato's *Phaedo*.
[37] From Beauvoir's short essay "What Is Existentialism?"
[38] As described by David Simpson in his entry to the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
[39] Although that label should actually belong to Kierkegaard.
[40] From Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.*
[41] As outlined in Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus*.
[42] As described by David Simpson in his entry to the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
[43] ibid
[44] This is somewhat speculative
[45] As described by David Simpson in his entry to the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
[46] ibid
[47] From Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* and *Existentialism Is a Humanism.*
[48] As in, giver and receiver.
[49] In making this distinction, I am alluding to the two different theories of education Plato cites in his "Allegory of the Cave" from the *Republic.*
[50] From Kant's "Question Concerning What Is Enlightenment."
[51] From Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism."
[52] Master in a general sense.
[53] From Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*
[54] I'm still at the stage of grounding how I want this idea to be understood, but here I am trying to demonstrate the sense in which 'consummation' is performative, or enacts a change in how one understands oneself.
[55] In the sense described by Jon Stuart Mill in *On the Subjection of Women*.
[56] From *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
[57] From Chapter 2 of Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity*.
[58] This is my own interpretation of how to understand her account of ethical failure.
[59] Given that he won the Nobel Prize for his commitment to the problem of human conscience.
[60] Referring to Aristotle's *De Anima.*
[61] From Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Book III.
[62] From Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II.
[63] In the sense that Heidegger invokes; a context of pre-interpreted meaningful relations.
[64] I also believe that LBT would benefit from introducing a framework for dealing with race specific issues as well, however I am not qualified for such a task.

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