A Priori

The Brown Journal of Philosophy

Volume 6

Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

I once heard that Hegel wrote that philosophers are the civil servants of humanity. I confess that like many others I find it often (if not always!) difficult to understand what Hegel means, but after having read the papers for this year's issue I feel like I am a little closer to what Hegel was getting at. As I take it, philosophers are often in the business of producing crisis. They point out the problems that lie hidden in places where we might not ordinarily take them to rest, sometimes much to our annoyance. We may want to swat away philosophers like we might a gadfly when they do this, but then, we are forgetting what we stand to gain from them. They are more than just gadflies, and here is Hegel's insight. One of the duties of the civil servants of humanity is the production of crisis but another equally important duty is helping us deal with the crises they produce.

In the past few centuries or so, one crisis some philosophers sought to help us with was nihilism. Nowadays, in our age of information, I believe another new (or perhaps old) crisis is that there are too many crises. We are confronted with too many problems to solve. How should we handle this deluge? One way philosophers can help us here is to correct our sights—to contextualize the problems of our day in a way that we can grapple with them. With the help of philosophers, I believe we can chart our way through the deluge. It is my hope that this year's issue will help to show that the next generation of philosophers is indeed up to this task.

Eric Choi, Editor-in-Chief

Table of Contents

*Social Explanation at the Macro
and Micro Level:
An Explanation of the Death of
George Floyd**

James Ewing

I. Introduction

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed by police officer Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis, Minnesota while being arrested for the alleged use of counterfeit bills. While it is clear that Chauvin's actions were a cause of Floyd's death, much emerging anti-racist discourse has attempted to explain the event by appealing to *systemic* and *institutional* racism. The question of how best to explain Floyd's death is representative of a broader question in the philosophy of social science about when and how to cite "macro" or structural social phenomena as causes of events which include individuals.[1] In this paper, I will use the case of George Floyd's death to explore the relative merits of social explanation at the macro and micro levels. I will argue that macro level social explanation (without reduction to microfoundations) is a legitimate form of explanation that should sometimes be preferred over micro level social explanation. In Floyd's case specifically, the macro level

of explanation is adequate and to be preferred because it can provide grounds for effective social intervention which might prevent similar occurrences in the future.

For much of the last century, methodological individualism has been the predominant account of explanation in the philosophy of social science.[2] The methodological individualist's conception of the relation between micro and macro levels is often represented by a figure called "Coleman's boat."[3]
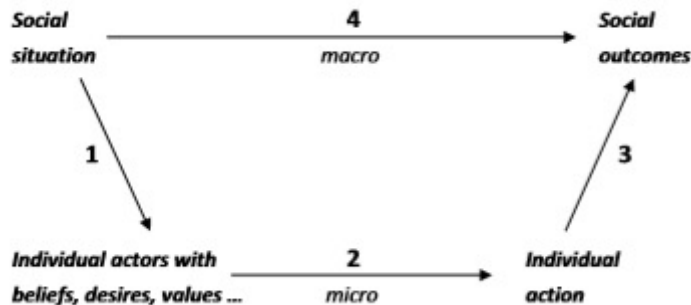

Fig I. Coleman's boat (taken from Van Bouwel[4])

This figure suggests that macro social phenomena, such as economic shifts in supply and demand, crime rates, revolutions, and systemic racism, need to be explanatorily substantiated by the individual actors. These actors (and their intentions, behavior, and interactions) constitute and are responsible for these phenomena.

In other words, social scientists cannot explain social phenomena merely by appealing to dependencies represented by arrow 4 but must trace the entirety of Coleman's boat through the micro level (arrows 1, 2, and 3).[5] John Elster explains:

> The elementary unit of social life is the individual human action. To explain social institutions and social change is to show how they arise as the result of individual action and interaction. This view [is] often referred to as methodological individualism.[6]

In economics, for example, many macro level claims are explained by referring to microfoundations. Take the macro claim that prospective tax cuts led to an increase in aggregate demand. Here, an economist might explain the economic shift by referring to changes in individual consumers' expectations and behavior: after hearing about future tax cuts, individuals believed that they would have more money down the road, so they decided to consume more now; the sum of the individuals' increase in consumption constituted an increase in aggregate demand.[7] So too, in explaining the death of George Floyd, a methodological individualist would not stop at explaining Floyd's death as the result of *institutional* racism. Rather, they would identify the racist intentions and behavior of relevant *members* of the police force and examine the *individual* interactions which

brought about his death.[8]

II. Criterion of Adequacy and Explanatory Characteristics

There may be several genuine explanations for a given explanandum.[9] While I do not have the space here to develop an account of genuine explanations, I will suppose at least that (1) their explanans contain true propositions and (2) that these propositions are explanatorily relevant to the explanandum. Of a set of genuine explanations for a given explanandum, some may be more or less adequate depending on how well they match the needs of the social context in which they are offered. In order to judge the social requirements of an explanation, I will use a criterion of explanatory adequacy adopted from Jeroen Van Bouwel. Adequacy, for Van Bouwel, is described briefly as the "relation to what the explained expects from the explanation addressing the explanatory interest."[10] I will take it to measure *how well the explanation matches the explanatory circumstances and whether it answers the explanation-seeking question appropriately*. In this evaluation, explanations and explanatory levels will be considered "adequate" or "inadequate," even though adequacy may be better understood as a matter of degrees. I use these all-or-nothing terms to signify the significance of the relative difference between more and less adequate explanations.

There are an innumerable number of circumstances where a causal explanation of the death of George Floyd might be offered or required. We may hear it in a coroner's office, a court of law, a university, a state capitol building, or in conversations between parent and child. In all of these circumstances, what constitutes an adequate explanation will be different. For this reason, there are a variety of explanatory characteristics or dimensions that could be required in different explanatory circumstances.[11]

In some circumstances, an adequate explanation will need to be one which is relatively accurate and precise.[12] Other circumstances demand an explanation which is relatively idealized and abstract. The autopsy report on George Floyd, for example, needs to be a precise, detailed explanation of the physiological processes and mechanisms that were involved before, during, and after his death. A police report, similarly, may need to outline in detail the actions, interactions, conversations which took place during the event of his death, and perhaps relevant features of the environment. In these cases, it is not enough to simply say: "George Floyd's death was caused by Derek Chauvin's knee pressing onto his neck." However, this explanation may be adequate in a court of law which is trying to determine legal responsibility for Floyd's death. In this situation, the explanation is adequate because it is sufficient

to assign blame and punishment; more detail may be provided but may not be necessary.

Now, consider a final circumstance. In an explanation to a child, it would surely be inadequate to include even this much information, that Floyd was killed as a result of Chauvin's knee pressing onto his neck. Here, we may need to abstract further, saying something like: "George Floyd was killed (or even just hurt) by a policeman." If we do not idealize and abstract to the correct extent, the explanation may become incomprehensible, unnecessarily laborious, or even harmful (to the child). In sum, different explanatory characteristics, such as precision and abstraction, match different explanatory circumstances and need only be required when the circumstances demand them.

For certain kinds of explanations to be adequate, they need to be able to facilitate effective intervention. With respect to Floyd's case, there are several explanatory circumstances which may require an explanation that leads to social intervention. They may be located in the American legislature, broad political discourse and dialogue, social justice and anti-racist activism, popular media, the classroom, or police departments. It is clear that, in many circumstances, people demand widespread anti-racist reform and intervention which would prevent similar instances of police brutality in the fu-

ture. But in order to facilitate this type of intervention, one has to have the right kind of explanation, or, in other words, an explanation that has the right characteristics.

I will call the characteristic of an explanation that provides grounds for effective intervention the *intervention characteristic*. This idea is inspired in at least a general way by the interventionist theory of causation of James Woodward, insofar as it involves intervention, pragmatism, and (social) change.[13] In the relevant circumstances, an explanation may be judged adequate only if it has the intervention characteristic, meaning *it grants the capacity to produce an effective intervention, where an effective intervention is understood as one which prevents relevantly similar events from happening in the future*.[14]

There are a few things to note about intervention and the intervention characteristic. First, because many circumstances do not permit or require intervention, the intervention characteristic may not always be linked to adequacy. Second, an explanation with the intervention characteristic does not itself intervene; rather, it lays the foundation for future intervention strategies and action. Third, any subsequent intervention should not be understood as occurring in the (past) explanandum event (of Floyd's death), but as preventing future events of this type. Finally, the intervention characteristic should

be understood as having principally epistemic and pragmatic value, as opposed to metaphysical value, for instance. I shall argue below that it is the presence of the intervention characteristic that explains why macro level explanations are to be preferred over micro level explanations in contexts where our explanatory interests involve social change.

III. Micro Level Social Explanation

Methodological individualism employs the micro level of social explanation in order to reduce macro social phenomena to their constitutive individuals. Instead of relating macro entities directly, they appeal to individuals' interactions, intentions, and behavior. Discussing the causal and explanatory role of the Protestant work ethic, Stuart Glennan offers an analysis that illustrates the microfoundational move:

> Protestant theological doctrine is neither an entity nor a property of an entity that can act upon an individual agent… It is not the Protestant ethic as such, but the particular sermon, the repeated prayers at the dinner table, or the particular things that Mom, Dad, and others say that shape the particular individual's dispositions.[15]

If we analogize this explanation to the case of George Floyd, we get the following micro level explanation:

Institutional racism is neither an entity nor a property of an entity that can act upon an individual agent. It is not institutional racism as such, but the particular actions of Derek Chauvin and other officers which caused Floyd's death. Specifically, Floyd's death was caused by Chauvin pressing his knee onto his (Floyd's) neck.

Differences aside, these micro level explanations contain the same basic explanatory sentiment: it is not a social phenomenon like institutional racism or religious doctrine which influences the individual, but the particular individuals and their behavior that are constitutive of these social phenomena.

In popular discussions of police corruption, there is a similar microfoundational move where responsible individuals are identified as "bad apples."[16] This phrase admits that while there may be a number of blameworthy individuals in the police force, the police force as a whole should not be held responsible. Importantly, this type of explanation stops at the level of the individual. It identifies "bad apples" as the cause of corruption but does not identify the social structures that turn "good apples" bad nor the institutional procedures and norms that facilitate oppressive police-civilian interactions. The "bad apple" theory of police corruption is thus a popular token example of the micro level of social ex-

planation.[17]

Micro level explanations do have explanatory power and may be adequate in some circumstances. In a court of law, if the judge and jury are only trying to determine the *individuals* responsible for George Floyd's death, and to confer blame and punishment on these individuals, then this level of explanation may be adequate because it picks out Chauvin as the causally responsible agent. In other explanatory circumstances, however, it is inadequate. If a medical professional is inquiring into the death for the purposes of medical research, the micro level (at the level of the individual) will not be adequate. Here, oddly, the micro level detail is not micro enough. The medical professional requires an explanation not merely about the individual *persons* involved, but the mechanisms and processes found *within* these people.

While the micro level of social explanation may seem useful to proponents of anti-racism and social reform, it is ultimately not adequate as it does not provide grounds for *effective* intervention. It may be objected, by some, that this level of explanation *does* create room for intervention, in more than one way. First, it allows for intervention in the sense that, because the explanation picked out those individuals responsible for the death, courts will now be able to remove these individuals

from the police force, or even society, if they are sent to prison. Once these "bad apples" are removed, similar issues will be avoided in the future. Second, if the involved individuals are identified and punished, they and others will be deterred from committing similar actions in the future. In other words, this explanation will be grounds for the prevention of both the "bad apples" and the "good apples turned bad" from committing such atrocities down the road.

In cases of police brutality against black people, the micro level, "bad apple," theory of explanation has not historically guaranteed that officers will be removed from their positions or prevented from joining other police forces upon firing, never mind going to prison. In fact, they may face little to no repercussions whatsoever. This is what happened to the officers responsible for the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Stephon Clark, and Breonna Taylor.[18] Due to the lack of accountability and intervention associated with the micro level, "bad apple" theory of corruption, history has been allowed to repeat itself again and again: black people are continually brutalized by police. One of the key issues with this type of explanation, therefore, is that it often fails to do what it was meant to do in the first place: meaningfully intervene at the level of the individual by removing those who are directly responsible.

While deterrence through individual identification and punishment does appear to have some inhibitory effects, it is not an effective or complete form of intervention. In the first place, if little or no meaningful repercussions are administered, as shown above to frequently be the case, then there is not likely to be any sort of deterrence. Additionally, Lawrence Sherman has found deterrence through punishment to be an effective strategy only in some circumstances and when applied only to certain demographics.[19] In some cases, it may actually increase crime rates. Braithwaite has found that, within police forces specifically, deterrence may not have as long-term inhibitory effects as other measures.[20] And finally, Newburn, in his *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption*, discusses four broad categories of "corruption control" that could be implemented within police forces: human resource management, anti-corruption policies, internal controls, and external environment and environmental controls.[21] Deterrence through individual punishment makes up only one part of the "internal controls" category, while a majority of the other categories go beyond individual punishment to address the social, procedural, and ethical aspects of the force. It is clear from his discussion that deterrence makes up only a small part of a much broader macro intervention scheme.

Individual punishment and deterrence cannot be con-

sidered effective forms of intervention because either they do not result in meaningful intervention at the level of the individual or they make up only a small part of a wider intervention scheme. Therefore, the micro level, "bad apple" theory of social explanation cannot be considered adequate. The underlying reason for this inadequacy and ineffective interventionism is that these explanations do not address the structural and institutional aspect of racism, aspects that cannot be reduced merely to individuals. They fail to facilitate intervention which alters the social environment which engenders and perpetuates racism.

Developments in contemporary social and political philosophy have helped highlight the structural and institutional character of racism and other forms of oppression. Iris Marion Young writes:

> Oppression in this sense is structural, rather than the result of a few people's choices or policies. Its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules.[22]

In fact, one of the five faces of oppression which Young speaks about is *systemic* violence, which includes police violence against black people.[23] Angela Davis has characterized the structural nature of the criminal jus-

tice system, especially insofar as it treats proponents of black liberation:

> The judicial system and its extensions, the penal system, consequently become weapons in the state's fight to preserve the existing conditions of class domination, therefore racism, poverty, and war.[24]

Finally, Todd May and George Yancy, in a recent *New York Times* article, address Floyd's case specifically:

> Like an organ in a human body, a Police Department is part of a structural whole. It functions to perform a certain task in the body politic; it is an organ in that body. Seen this way, each police officer is then like a cell in that organ. Before we can identify any problem in that organ, we must first understand the job that organ performs.[25]

In order for an explanation to lead to effective social intervention, it must address the structural aspects of racism that Young and others have shown to be at the core of widespread racism and oppression in society. Instead of focusing and intervening solely on individuals and their interactions, we must also identify and change the policies, norms, habits, symbols, and organization of police forces and American policing in general. In the next section, it will become clear that only

the macro level of explanation can facilitate this sort of intervention.

IV. Macro Level Social Explanation

Macro level social explanations come in a variety of forms. Here, I will limit myself to macro explanations where micro level events involving individuals are explained by appealing to *social influences*.[26] The identification of the social influence will not require microfoundations, or an appeal to individuals, though these microfoundations may be implied ontologically.[27] If we were to explain the death of George Floyd using the macro level of explanation, we might say something like: "George Floyd's death was the result of institutional racism in the Minneapolis police force." This is a relatively *meso* level explanation, because it explains at the level of a group or organization. We might also say: "George Floyd's death was the result of institutional racism embedded in American policing or American society more broadly." This is a relatively macro level explanation, as it speaks about large social entities that span multiple groups and organizations. Note that these explanations are fairly idealized and simple; they merely identify the social influence, its general location, and the affected individual.[28] More robust explanations may develop in detail the influence's causally relevant properties, mechanism, or procedures, and reveal *how* this influence took place.[29]

In the evaluation of the adequacy of macro level explanations, there are important explanatory trade-offs. With respect to precision, for instance, adequacy seems to decrease significantly with the move from micro to macro. It is not as precise to point to institutional racism within the Minneapolis police force as the cause of Floyd's death when we know his death was in fact the result of the specific actions of one individual, Derek Chauvin. As Glennan noted above, institutional racism in a police force, like Protestant religious doctrine, is not an entity or property of an entity that can causally influence an individual agent. Because a macro explanation does not precisely identify the individuals responsible, it would be inadequate in a courtroom or coroner's office. In order to assign blame, punishment, or determine the physiological cause of death, we need an explanation that identifies the individual responsible for Floyd's death and perhaps gives a detailed account of how that individual caused his death. That being said, when is a macro level explanation adequate?

The macro level of explanation of the death of George Floyd is adequate in circumstances which demand effective social intervention, and it is adequate because it has the intervention characteristic. There are several ways this level of explanation can act as grounds for effective intervention. First, it directs attention *away* from ineffective micro level, "bad apple," explanations

which have been shown to be unable to facilitate effective intervention. Second, it directs attention *towards* the systemic and institutional aspects of racism which were shown to be fundamental to racial oppression in society. Third, it identifies the relative location of this racism (the Minneapolis police force, American policing, etc.), allowing proponents of change to approach these institutions and begin to formulate preliminary intervention strategies. Fourth, relatively simple and idealized macro social explanations like those offered above can be developed into robust macro social explanations which more precisely detail the causal relationship between institutional racism and black individuals. These robust explanations can allow for even more nuanced and effective intervention strategies.[30]

There may be objections to the adequacy and preference of the macro level of explanation. First, it may be argued that because the macro level omits reference to the perpetrator of the crime, it is therefore inadequate because it cannot facilitate individual level intervention and deterrence. Note, however, that an explanation at the macro level does not preclude an explanation at the micro level. In fact, they may realistically be paired in order to address distinct but related explanatory questions and circumstances. That the macro level of explanation employs a particular perspective or orientation, and in this sense is not by itself complete or encom-

passing, does not diminish its explanatory power in the relevant circumstances. And in circumstances which require large-scale social intervention, it has been shown to be adequate. Second, it may be objected that the prospect of effective intervention at the level of police force or society seems implausible. How does one go about addressing the institutions and structures of racism which extend beyond individual agents?

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to outline macro level intervention strategies, it is clear that these types of intervention are possible. One example are the kinds of macro level intervention strategies discussed by Newburn, including a program he calls "ethical policing."[31] Another, more relevant example, is a recent bill proposed by Congress which seeks to outlaw chokeholds and other abusive maneuvers which are used by police officers disproportionately against black people.[32] This type of intervention, which targets the *procedures* of a social entity (rather than its individuals), came about as a result of the widespread Black Lives Matter movement which has relied on macro social explanations concerning the *institutional* and *structural* components of racism. Clearly, this is just a start. In order to make even greater progress at the social and political level, more robust macro level explanations and intervention techniques need to be explored.

V. Conclusion

While George Floyd's death admits of both macro and micro level social explanations, only the macro level is adequate in situations which demand effective social intervention. It is adequate because it has the intervention characteristic, which in this case manifests as the ability to identify and analyze the structural and institutional aspects of racism which are so fundamental to oppression in society and which must be altered in order to eliminate oppression. The micro level of explanation, on the other hand, is inadequate in these circumstances because the identification and analysis of the relevant individuals alone cannot be grounds for effective intervention. Historically, for example, the "bad apple" theory of police corruption has been ineffective as a means for intervening on responsible individuals and is at best a small part of a much wider macro level intervention scheme. Although, in the social and political circumstances surrounding Floyd's death, the micro level of explanation has been shown to be inadequate, this particular inadequacy does not in any sense negate the value of methodological individualism or social explanation at the micro level in other circumstances. Rather, it points to the spirit of explanatory pluralism in the social sciences. Understanding and intervening upon social phenomena will require explanation at distinct levels, of different kinds, and of various characteristics.

Notes

* In this paper, I will use phrases like "the death of George Floyd" and "the killing of George Floyd" rather than "the murder of George Floyd." In using this terminology, I do not aim to in any way misdirect, deny, or water-down either the atrocities that took place on May 25, 2020, or Derek Chauvin's individual responsibility for these atrocities which must be duly recognized. Rather, in keeping my explanandum (the thing I want to explain) neutral, I hope to set the stage for a variety of types of explanation, some of which must necessarily characterize his death as murder (perhaps legal or moral explanations at the level of the individual). However, other useful types of explanation—specifically those that recognize racism as a structural issue which requires social intervention—do not always permit the term "murder" in their explanation. Saying that systemic racism murdered George Floyd entails the substantive claim that a non-individual and non-physical thing (here, systemic racism) can murder a person. While there may be validity and merit to such arguments, I would not ask my readers to take them for granted. Accordingly, I have made the difficult decision to not use this phrasing before thoroughly unpacking it.

1. Collin, Finn, and Julie Zahle, *Rethinking the Methodological Individualism-Holism Debate* (Springer, 2014).

2. See Weber (1922), Elster (1989), Hedström and Swedberg (1996), Hedström and Bearman (2009). Close variations of methodological individualism are *structural individualism* (Hedström and Bearman 2009) and *methodological localism* (Little 2012).

3. James Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1990).

4. Jeroen Van Bouwel, "Do Mechanism-Based Social Explanations Make a Case for Methodological Individualism?," *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 50, no. 2 (2019): 265, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10838-019-09446-w.

5. Daniel Little (2006, 2012) argues that a *meso* level could be situated in between the macro and micro level to describe medium-sized social groups like firms and mid-sized organizations. Additionally, as noted by Ylikoski (2012, 2014), terms like *macro*, *micro*, and *meso* should be thought of as perspectival. There are no set or absolute macro and micro levels; rather, their relative placement depends on the perspective and purpose of the explanation. While more explanatory work can be done to identify intermediate levels, here I am taking macro levels to encompass all levels of social organization above individual human agents.

6. Some, like Craver and Bechtel (2007), would understand arrows 1 and 3 in Coleman's boat as describing relations of constitution and arrow 2 describing a relation of *causation*. It is not the macro level phenomenon as such which is influencing Floyd, but the constitutive individuals which influence Floyd. In other words, there is *intralevel* causal influence but not *interlevel* causal influence. While metaphysical questions about the nature and possibility of top-down causation are important, my claims concerning intralevel and interlevel *explanation* are largely independent of these questions.

7. N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, Ninth (Cengage Learning, 2018), 735.

8. For the sake of simplicity, I will not focus on any of the other police officers or bystanders besides Chauvin who may have been

involved in the event of Floyd's death.

9. Jeroen Van Bouwel, "Explanatory Strategies Beyond the Individualism/Holism Debate" in *Rethinking the Individualism-Holism Debate* (Springer, 2014), 153-176.

10. Van Bouwel, 157.

11. Petri Ylikoski and Jaakko Kuorikoski, "Dissecting Explanatory Power," *Philosophical Studies* 148 (2010): 201–219. The characteristics mentioned below are derived primarily from Van Bouwel (2014) and Ylikoski and Kuorikoski (2010). Van Bouwel discusses adequacy, accuracy, and efficiency, while Ylikoski and Kuorikoski discuss non-sensitivity, precision, factual accuracy, degree of integration, and cognitive salience. These characteristics largely overlap and will not receive individual attention in this paper. I only allude to a few.

12. Precision in this sense should be understood as adding detail to the explanandum so as to shrink the possible range of contrasts (Ylikoski and Kuorikoski 2010). "A bright navy-blue car" is more precise than "a blue car" because there are fewer possible contrasts. Precision may or may not imply microfoundations.

13. James Woodward, *Making Things Happen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

14. To *whom* the explanation grants the ability to effectively intervene will depend on the explanatory circumstances. It may be a single individual, many individuals, an organization, or even a government.

15. Stuart Glennan, *The New Mechanical Philosophy* (Oxford UP, 2017), 142-143. Glennan's concern here is more ontological than it is methodological. However, the case provides a concise exam-

ple of how a methodological individualist could explain macro level influence.

16. Tim Newburn, *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption: Lessons from the Literature*, ed. Barry Webb (London: Research, Development, and Statistics Directorate, 1999), 14.

17. The "bad apple" theory of explanation should not be conflated with methodological individualism per se, but should be understood as a type of popular explanation which makes a similar microfoundational move. Many methodological individualists may not be satisfied by "bad apple" explanations of police brutality. My focus here is primarily with the micro level of explanation and not methodological individualism.

18. "Breonna Taylor: Timeline of Black Deaths Caused by Police," *BBC News*, September 23, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52905408. The case of George Floyd may mark a step in the right direction. Contrary to past cases, Chauvin was arrested and has been charged with 2nd degree murder. This indictment, however, may have been the result of sweeping macro level explanations of institutional racism in American policing.

19. Lawrence Sherman, "Defiace, Deterrance, and Irrelevance: A Theory of Criminal Sanctions" *Journal of Reasrch in Crime and Deliquency* 30, no. 4 (1993): 445-473.

20. John Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame, and Reintegration* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).

21. Newburn, *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption*, 28.

22. Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression," in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 1990), 41. Also, see Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford Uni-

versity Press, 2011).

23. Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression," 61.

24. Angela Davis, "Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation," in *The Angela Davis Reader,* ed. Joy James (Blackwell, 1998), 39–52.

25. Todd May and George Yancy, "Policing Is Doing What It Was Meant to Do. That's the Problem." *The New York Times*, June 21, 2020.

26. "Macro level" explanations usually proceed from macro to macro or meso to meso. I will be talking about a "macro level" explanation which proceeds from the macro to the micro level (institutional racism to George Floyd). I leave a more complete ontological discussion of "downward causation" for further research. If we are speaking of institutional racism within a police force influencing George Floyd, then there does not appear to be downward causation, as Floyd is not a constituent entity within the police system (see Craver and Bechtel 2007). However, if we are talking about institutional racism as an American-wide phenomenon, then there does seem to be downward causation because Floyd is a constituent entity of this larger social entity.

27. See Daniel Little, "Explanatory Autonomy and Coleman's Boat," *Theoria* (Spain) 27, no. 2 (2012): 137–51, https://doi.org/10.1387/theoria.3016. This discussion has interesting parallels to the work of Hilary Putnam (1973) and Jerry Fodor (1974) in the philosophy of mind literature.

28. These preliminary explanations have a similar thrust to that of Craver's (2007) *mechanism sketch* and Glennan's (2017) *bare causal mechanism*.

29. See Glennan, *The New Mechanical Philosophy*, 68.

30. Further research may also develop a more intentional link between interlevel social explanation and social *mechanisms*. See Hedström and Ylikoski (2010), and also Machamer, Darden, and Craver (2000) and Glennan (2017).

31. Newburn, *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption*, 45-49.

32. Felicia Sonmez, Paul Kane, and Rhonda Colvin, "House Passes Broad Police Reform Legislation in Wake of George Floyd's Killing," *The Washington Post*, June 25, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/house-poised-to-pass-broad-police-reform-legislation-in-wake-of-george-floyds-killing/2020/06/25/445307f8-b6ed-11ea-a8da-693df3d7674a_story.html. Also see Kimberly Kindy, Kevin Schaul, and Ted Mellnik, "Half of the Nation's Largest Police Departments Have Banned or Limited Neck Restraints since June," *The Washington Post*, September 6, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/police-use-of-force-chokehold-carotid-ban/.

Bibliography

Bouwel, Jeroen Van. "Do Mechanism-Based Social Explanations Make a Case for Methodological Individualism?" *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 50, no. 2 (2019): 263–82. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10838-019-09446-w.

———. "Explanatory Strategies Beyond the Individualism/Holsim Debate." In *Rethinking the Individualism-Holism Debate*, edited by Julie Zahle and Finn Collin, 153–76. Springer, 2014.

Braithwaite, J. *Crime, Shame, and Reintegration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

"Breonna Taylor: Timeline of Black Deaths Caused by Police." BBC News, September 23, 2020. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52905408.

Coleman, James. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1990.

Collin, Finn, and Julie Zahle. *Rethinking the Methodological Individualism-Holism Debate*. Edited by Finn Collin and Julie Zahle. Springer, 2014.

Craver, Carl F, and William Bechtel. "Top-down Causation without Top-down Causes." *Biology and Philosophy* 22 (2007): 537–63.

Davis, Angela. "Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation." In *The Angela Davis Reader*, edited by Joy James, 39–52. Blackwell, 1998.

Elster, Jon. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences. Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*, 1989. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511812255.

Fodor, Jerry. "Special Sciences (Or: The Disunity of Science as a Working Hypothesis)." Synthese 28 (1974): 97–115.

Glennan, Stuart. *The New Mechanical Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Hedström, Peter, and Peter Bearman. *Oxford Handbook of Analytical Sociology*. Edited by Peter Hedström and P Bearman. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Hedström, Peter, and Richard Swedberg. "Social Mechanisms." *Acto Sociologica* 39, no. 3 (1996): 281–308.

Hedström, Peter, and Petri Ylikoski. "Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36, no. 1 (2010): 49–67. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102632.

Kindy, Kimberly, Kevin Schaul, and Ted Mellnik. "Half of the Nation's Largest Police Departments Have Banned or Limited Neck Restraints since June." *The Washington Post*, September 6, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/police-use-of-force-chokehold-carotid-ban/.

Little, Daniel. "Explanatory Autonomy and Coleman's Boat." *Theoria* (Spain) 27, no. 2 (2012): 137–51. https://doi.org/10.1387/theoria.3016.

———. "Levels of the Social." In *Handbook for Philosophy of Anthropology and Sociology*, edited by S. Turner and M. Risjord, 343–71. Amsterdam; New York: Elsevier, 2006.

Machamer, Peter, Lindley Darden, and Carl F Craver. "Thinking about Mechanisms." *Philosophy of Science* 67, no. 1 (2000): 1–25.

Mankiw, N. Gregory. *Principles of Economics*. Ninth. Cengage Learning, 2018.

May, Todd, and George Yance. "Policing Is Doing What It Was Meant to Do. That's the Problem." *The New York Times*, June 21, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/opinion/police-violence-racism-reform.html.

Newburn, Tim. *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption: Lessons from the Literature*. Edited by Barry Webb. London: Research, Development, and Statistics Directorate,

1999.

Putnam, Hilary. "Reductionism and the Nature of Psychology." *Cognition* 2, no. 1 (1973): 131–46.

Sherman, Lawrence. "Defiance, Deterrance, and Irrelevence: A Theory of Criminal Sanctions." *Journal of Research in Crime and Deliquency* 30, no. 4 (1993): 445–73.

Sonmez, Felicia, Paul Kane, and Rhonda Colvin. "House Passes Broad Police Reform Legislation in Wake of George Floyd's Killing." *The Washington Post*, June 25, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/house-poised-to-pass-broad-police-reform-legislation-in-wake-of-george-floyds-killing/2020/06/25/445307f8-b6ed-11ea-a8da-693df3d7674a_story.html.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkley: University of California Press, 1968, 1922.

Woodward, James. *Making Things Happen*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Ylikoski, Petri. "Micro, Macro, and Mechanisms (Chapter 2)." In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (Edited by H. Kincaid), Oxford University Press, 21-45, 21–45. Oxford University Press, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-801854-5.00002-9.

———. "Rethinking Micro-Macro Relations." In *Rethinking the Individualism-Holism Debate*, edited by Finn Collin and Julie Zahle, 117–36. Springer, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-05344-8.

Ylikoski, Petri, and Jaakko Kuorikoski. "Dissecting Explanatory

Power." *Philosophical Studies* 148 (2010): 201–2019.

Young, Iris Marion. "Five Faces of Oppression." In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 39–65. Princeton University Press, 1990.

———. *Responsibility for Justice*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Truth on the Stand: Fragmented Consciousness & The Credible "Knower"[1]

Devon Bombassei

This essay interrogates the nature of fragmented testimony as evidence. I specifically explore cases of witness testimony that fall outside the domain of what is considered, in the mainstream, credible. My analysis begins with a grim fact about the nature of courtroom bias: survivors of trauma—and those who suffer from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or associated psychoses—are more likely to produce incoherent testimony and, as a result, are often discredited as sources of knowledge and truth.[2] These particular speakers are attributed, what I term, a 'survivor-credibility-deficit' [3] (a lack of credibility assigned to trauma survivors by those adhering to conventional indicators of epistemic integrity). While I explicitly use the term 'survivor' to refer to one who has suffered a trauma, it also, for the purposes of this essay, includes those who must bear the disorienting and often variable symptoms of mental illness.

The fragmented consciousness raises an epistemic quandary. Dr. Nora Strejilevich (Argentinian writer and survivor of state terror) observes: "Society favors systematizing testimony as a collection of facts... [trauma testimony, however] voices the intimate, subjective, deep dimension of horror. Having witnessed the abyss of atrocity, survivors can no longer rely on knowledge or facts as the basis for thinking."[4] Oral narrations that are non-sequential or fractured (opposite common notions of a "'good' victim account'") are often, whether this occurs implicitly or explicitly, de-valued.[5] As such, those who present testimony lacking the usual "credibility markers" (linearity, detail, and coherence)[6] are denied sympathetic engagement and respect as capable knowers. The speaker, it seems, faces a "testimonial injustice"[7] (one I will term "communicative-prejudice"), due to his or her psychological state and the inconsistent articulation of lived experience.

The complexity of our historical moment renders trauma testimony particularly sensitive. Many cultural mythologies, for instance, stand at the intersection of race, gender, and trauma.[8] While this piece examines the nature of truth, it also, more fundamentally, explores the essence of narrative and authorship. An ethnography of trauma testimony entails questions of control, the dichotomy of author and subject, and visibility. Professor Donna Haraway, in her research on primatology,

brilliantly examines power dichotomies in spaces of narrative-formation: knower versus knowledge-object, author versus subject.[9] Oftentimes, the knowledge-object or subject is the "pretext," or "the site for the construction of others' discourses," while the author is the originator.[10] Our politics of credibility is inextricably tied to factors of race, gender, and myths of "otherness."[11]

In the United States, the "racialization of criminality"[12] has, in part, effected an unparalleled level of mass incarceration. People of color are more likely to face false accusations of crime[13] (e.g., "scapegoating black males"), limited access to competent attorneys, and extreme penalties which undoubtedly cause deep emotional and physical suffering. At the same time, many women—horribly battered, demeaned, and still grappling with trauma—are just discovering their voices and the power of collective speech against previously "untouchable" perpetrators. In many of these instances, innocent persons lose control of the narrative—they become mere "plots" for the inscription of another's discourse.[14]

Certainly, then, the juncture of race, gender, and trauma raises many important considerations. Throughout history, social and political factors have affected the telling (and perception) of truth. Who may author trauma testimony and what is the role of listener? Should trau-

ma testimony be evaluated and, if so, by what metrics? Who, if anyone, may re-write or re-tell such narratives? How should truth be defined in spaces of fragmented testimony? What this predicament requires, by way of philosophy, is a balanced methodology for the consideration of unconventional testimonies in our current historical moment. In presenting this methodology, I explore loss and reclamation, authorship and control, narrative and truth. The respectful treatment of collective trauma narratives—from the Holocaust, Argentinian genocide, and Guatemalan Civil War—will inform my approach to individual testimony.

The discipline of phenomenology (specifically, the writings of Edmund Husserl) has prompted my re-valuation of testimony that is "broken," that "leaves some aspects in the dark," or that is "altogether wrong in the end."[15] The aim of this piece is three-fold: (1) to describe communicative prejudice as a second legitimate form of testimonial injustice (the first form, identity-prejudice, is noted below); (2) to develop a phenomenological epistemology in consideration of unconventional testimonies; and (3) to imagine, or carve out, a valued epistemic space for the fragmented consciousness, which is often discredited or entirely dismissed in judicial proceedings.

In her book *Epistemic Injustice: Power & Ethics of*

Knowing, philosopher Miranda Fricker notes "identity-prejudice" as a major (if not main) source of testimonial injustice.[16] It is evident, however, that the scope of testimonial injustice is broader. The witness who offers fragmented testimony (perhaps an individual who suffers from PTSD or schizophrenia) may also be attacked in his or her "capacity as knower," due to factors unrelated to ethnicity or gender.[17] He or she is denied a valued, epistemic position in authoring truth. Thus, it is not sufficient to describe testimonial injustice solely as bias against the *subject* authoring testimony (e.g., due to his or her race, gender, class, etc.). In addition to identity biases that target the individual, it is also necessary to evaluate biases against the subject's *communication/ speech* (which, in the context of this paper, target the speaker's processes of recollection and articulation). Accordingly, I give specific critical consideration to those instances in which the capable knower, due to mental illness or other psychological circumstances, is unable to render coherent testimony.

The epistemic position of the trauma survivor as witness is unique. There is often a momentary disconnect, "a point between witness and testimony that can be seen as a moment of trauma" and which indicates "a distance between [the experience of] trauma and the language [used to describe] trauma."[18] This momentary disconnect is, more often than not, visible in

"the shrugged shoulders, the winces, the tears, and the silences that punctuate [these] oral testimonies."[19] Similarly, many have classified the testimony of the individual who suffers from schizophrenia as specifically "anti-narrative."[20] One who experiences psychosis is prone to depersonalization, hallucinations and delusion, as well as "disorders in the realms of perception, sensation, cognition, and emotion."[21] These factors render the sufferer's experiences complex, "messy," and generally inimical to coherent narrative.[22]

The consequences of offering "broken" testimony (i.e., testimony that does not meet the traditional "credibility markers" of linearity and coherence) are significant.[23] Louise Ellison and Vanessa Munro state that:

> Traumatized victims will see their allegations unfairly dismissed on the basis of a misinterpretation of common trauma reactions and those who struggle to provide a coherent, organized account will be more likely to withdraw from the criminal process for fear of being deemed an unreliable witness.

> For those who reach trial, moreover, the risk of their trauma being misconstrued to the detriment of their perceived credibility is arguably more pronounced, given the…tendency of defense advocates to portray common trauma reactions as abnormal or sus-

picious.[24]

There is, however, another profound reason why trauma survivors and those who suffer from psychosis encounter communicative prejudice. As described above, there is often a noticeable divide between the traumatic event, as experienced, and the language, if any at all, capable of conveying such trauma. It seems, then, that this is a prime example of what Fricker terms "situated hermeneutical inequality": "[a] concrete situation [in which] the subject is rendered unable to make communicatively intelligible something which it is particularly in his or her interests to be able to render intelligible."[25] As Dr. Claudia Welz said of Holocaust testimonials, "ordinary language proves to be inadequate… 'no one can describe it' and 'no one can understand it' are typical statements."[26] As a result, the trauma survivor suffers a similar fate to the witness who is discredited due to his or her ethnic or gender identity—a "prejudicial exclusion from participation in the spread of knowledge."[27]

The principal question that emerges, then, is whether truth may still be detected in the non-linear or disjointed narrative. In other words, can the fragmented consciousness serve as credible knower? The short answer is yes. The endeavor herein is not to identify an infallible mechanism to detect truthful testimony; rather, it is to identify what is fundamentally required

(and what is offered by way of philosophy) in justifying trauma narratives. A phenomenological epistemology, which focuses on justifying first-hand lived experience, proves particularly useful. The aim is not to "ensure that we know everything or that all our justification is infallible,"[28] but, rather, to answer whether "my belief is justified, and, if so, what acts justify it and what gives these acts their justificatory force?"[29]

The work of Husserl proves particularly suited to this endeavor. Dr. Ülker Öktem notes that while for Descartes evidence meant seeing something with absolute certainty, the concept of evidence for Husserl was not so defined. According to Husserl, evidence did not have "a single meaning," "an absolute or apodictic nature."[30] Rather, "[evidence] is not decisive in character; it is variable, bears the nature of suspicion, depends on some other experiences, does not have a harmonious nature (bears unclear aspects), and emerges with unclear results."[31] For Husserl, evidence is inextricable from experience—that is, from consciousness (whether fragmented or not).[32] As such, evidence (i.e., our experiences) may have "varying degrees or grades of adequacy."[33] Most critically, "evidences… are relative… not certain, allowing for doubt one way or the other." In order to find truth in what is purportedly "broken," then, is to find the "same, permanent essence in all acts of consciousness."[34] In other words, truthful testimonials will

not constitute apodictic "data."[35] Evidence is the "consistent perception of truth," no matter how fragmented an individual's testimony may be. Husserl recognizes that, although there may be several variations of a phenomenon (e.g., event, memory, etc.), a "unified synthesis of essences"[36] is still possible. Disjointed memories may constitute "fragments of complete acts."[37] Then, while the content of distinct memories may vary, it is still possible to discern the "same object."[38] As Strejilevich says, the aim is to "piece together the fragments, the ruins of spared recollections in order to produce some meaning."[39]

In his noetics, Husserl provides for a critical flexibility (or a sliding scale) in our credibility judgments. As Dr. Biagio G. Tassone explains, "different experiences can differ in the degree of justification they provide because they can differ in their respective phenomenology."[40] Experiences may differ, that is, in their degree of "clearness," distinctiveness, or "self-givenness."[41] The more lucid and distinct the experience, the greater justificatory power the act or memory holds. Optimistically construed, this rule does not necessitate that memories of trauma and truth be mutually exclusive.

Professors Ellison and Munro describe trauma memories as a compilation of "hotspot moments often recalled out of sequence."[42] As psychiatrist and psycho-analyst Dori Laub (who herself survived the Holocaust as a child) confirms, these are moments of "minute" and "explicit" detail—instances that are a "general source of amazement...in their accuracy and general comprehension."[43] It is not that these testimonies must be told start-to-finish in chronological fashion but that the same essence, or phenomenological content, must be detected. Indeed, it was Husserl who described the PTSD sufferer's experience of memory as "nonserially ... [embedded] within consciousness."[44] In other words, trauma memories are not sequential "flows" but "whirlpools."[45] Moments of unprecedented specificity, "seared" in the mind, may be anchoring points from which to further corroborate the actuality of events.[46] Spoken testimony, true to the narrator's subjective experience, forms one part of a "whole text."[47] Rather than constituting an objective certainty, the trauma testimony helps to form the basis of our understanding of individual experience.

In addition to denying that evidence inhabits one particular form, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology offers another promising approach to the present enquiry. By way of the *epoché*, holding the reality of things in suspension,[48] Husserl proposes a "bracketing" of the objective, scientific world.[49] The purpose of "parenthesizing" the noumenal world is to "do away [with] our own biases and prejudices about the world around us."[50] In

doing so, we "free ourselves from the unquestioned acceptance of the everyday world."[51] Bracketing ensures that our "previous understandings ... and assumptions about the phenomenon of interest" do not interfere with the subject before us.[52] By this account, it is possible to shed ourselves of the prevailing criteria applied to personal trauma narratives. By re-envisioning what constitutes credible narrative organization, it is possible to limit (or eliminate) the degree of communicative prejudice suffered by trauma witnesses or those who experience mental illness. As Strejilevich states, "a truthful way of giving testimony should allow for disruptive memories, discontinuities, blanks, silences and ambiguities."[53]

The next step toward a comprehensive analysis of trauma testimony is to situate one's personal lived experience within the constellation of evidence. It is to wed clinical, linguistic, and legal analysis to create a complete and truthful profile of events. For example, a study comparing linguistic coherence in those with PTSD to those without indicated that the former often "focus attention on themselves and subsequently use more first-person singular pronouns."[54] In addition, those enduring emotional pain often use fewer conjunctions and cognitive words (e.g., 'think,' 'believe,' 'know').[55] In these oral testimonies, "narrative *disorganization*" is actually a reliable indication of trauma (a fact affirmed by

Husserl).[56] From a clinical standpoint, it is important to perform a "trauma-informed [evaluation]" that respects the idiosyncrasies of one's history and symptomology. During the legal proceeding, "determinable" or "documented" facts/records play a crucial role in contextualizing and/or contesting a witness's testimony.[57]

A phenomenological epistemology is also applicable outside of the courtroom. This is especially true in the writings of Welz, who studies the processes of recollection and articulation specific to Holocaust survivors. Welz's research cites the therapeutic value of an individual who is given the chance to deliver a personal oral history, a moment facilitated by endowing the survivor with a certain epistemic respect:

> Before any content of a testimony can be told, one needs to participate in a relationship with someone who will listen. The Yale project of recording Holocaust testimonies has proved therapeutic: the testimonial process in the presence of a listener who accompanies the survivors on their journey back into the past not only takes them back to the pain, horror, and sadness that is associated with that past; rather it also engages them 'in claiming a story of their own which holds together the fragments of their memory.'[58]

The "Yale project" to which Welz refers is the Fortunoff Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, a collection of 4,400 survivor and witness testimonials containing 12,000 hours of recorded video, deposited at Yale University.[59] In this case, Welz claims, parting from traditional norms of narrative structure not only permits one's story to come to the fore—unhampered by rigid, preconceived standards—but also unveils history's true essence: "'It is rarely possible to include Holocaust trauma in a neat, coherent historical account of what has happened…' but, even if it were feasible, such an account would 'in its neatness, empty history of its horror and trivialize the problems of witnessing the Shoah.'"[60] In other words, not only do established "credibility markers"[61] label the individual who attempts to articulate a trauma narrative inferior, but these markers also detract from the true essence of the individual's lived experience. The norms of narrative structure force the survivor and his or her personal history into a shape that is both rigid and unfamiliar. This communicates to the individual that he or she is less important than preserving *mainstream* perceptions of credibility. To bracket these accepted conventions for trauma narratives and to re-focus on the true essence of an individual's personal history as articulated (even, and especially, if fragmented) is to recognize "the legitimacy of a certain form of knowledge."[62]

To correct for automatic prejudices against an individual's testimony—whether identity-based or communicative—is to cultivate (or regain) a "critical social awareness."[63] As Fricker states: "The hearer must factor into his net credibility judgement the likely impact on his spontaneous perception—and if possible, the impact on the speaker's actual performance too—of the relation of… power that mediates between himself and the speaker."[64] To do so is to internalize and act on a powerful tenet of Husserl's phenomenology. His transcendental phenomenology is alternatively called "transformative/transformational phenomenology" to emphasize it most fundamentally as a path toward "self-awareness, reflection, and … change."[65] While Fricker speaks specifically of identity-based prejudice, her point is equally applicable to communicative prejudice. Testimonial injustice, in its myriad forms, requires high vigilance, a shedding of credibility assumptions in order to gain access to the essence of the speaker's lived experience. This process is required in order to avoid "missing out on truths offered by the interlocutor *and*… doing them an injustice in their capacity as knower."[66]

Moving beyond this process, how might we imagine, or carve out, a valued epistemic space for one who might otherwise suffer from communicative prejudice? It begins, as previously mentioned, with a critical self-awareness. For Husserl, meaning must be unsullied by the in-

terpreter's own agenda or view of the world. Truth likely will not arise as a bold declaration but will only surface after continual engagement and dialogue with the traumatized witness. From a phenomenological perspective, it is necessary to be as "open and presuppositionless as possible."[67] The act of articulating a trauma narrative, in and of itself, justifies a baseline epistemic respect for the author of such testimony: "Everyone knows that perception, memory, and expectation deceive, and yet they justify not the absolute certainty of the existence of the matters of fact perceived, remembered, expected, but the reasonable assumption, nevertheless."[68] In other words, granting epistemic respect to all who testify to trauma does not require *veracity* of testimony as a prerequisite. Once traditional credibility assumptions have been re-negotiated and the speaker respectfully engaged, it is appropriate to consider what, in the unique context of the individual's history and narrative, provides justificatory thrust to his or her words. In the case of personal trauma allegations, this process requires one to anchor the individual's testimony, aided by critical "hotspot" moments, within the broader web of evidence.[69] The evaluator(s) must be at once wary of his or her own propensity toward "credibility discounting" and a persistent advocate of the truth.[70] He or she must collect and re-piece a framework of meaning with what was said and what remains uncaptured by spoken language. The evaluation process is immersive:

one must orient oneself within the consciousness of the witness—stretch oneself to understand how the events the witness testifies to "have altered the fabric of [his or her] world."[71]

This process forces one to reconcile a longstanding binary in the discourses on bio- and gender politics: the binary of emotion and rationalism. In order to ensure that an individual who testifies to trauma is accorded epistemic respect during trial, the evaluator(s) must be both empathetic and analytic. The evaluator(s) of trauma testimonies, to reach ultimate understanding, must absolve artificially construed divides— between empathy and objectivity, feeling and reason, and narrative and truth. In a way, then, I propose a new judicial politics—one more patient with the sensitive information at hand and willing to discern how the pieces fit together in the uncertain terrain between fact and fiction. A methodology, that is, eager to discern the subtext—buried in the gaps, silences, and shrugs—of trauma testimony; one that is ready to substitute traditional credibility markers in the rigorous pursuit of truth. The intersection of race and gender in our current historical moment renders trauma testimonies particularly complex cases. I am hopeful that the toolkit of a phenomenological epistemology—one that weds respect for individual experience and the ultimate truth—may provide a modest philosophical source of resolution.

Notes

1. In thinking of the title for this piece, I almost decided on "The Trauma Survivor as Credible 'Knower.'" It soon became evident, however, that many individuals—not just trauma survivors, but also those who suffer from schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, for instance—experience a "fragmented consciousness" in which memories become hazy or distorted, and outsiders increasingly likely to derogate the speaker's credibility. As such, I chose a title that I feel better embodies this injustice—and the myriad forms that it can take. See Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power& the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 16.

2. Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," *International Journal of Evidence and Proof* (May 2016): 25.

3. This phrase is inspired by what Miranda Fricker originally termed 'identity-prejudicial credibility deficit' in order to refer to the personal affront on the credibility of one's testimony owing to his or her race, gender, etc.

4. Strejilevich, Nora. "Testimony: Beyond the Language of Truth." *Human Rights Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (August 2006): 701–13.

5. Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," *International Journal of Evidence and Proof* (May 2016): 20-21.

6. Ibid., 20-21.

7. Fricker, Epistemic Injustice, 17.

8. Patton, Tracey Owens, and Julie Snyder-Yuly. "Any Four Black Men Will Do: Rape, Race, and the Ultimate Scapegoat." Journal of Black Studies 37, no. 6 (2007): 872. Accessed July 28, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40034959.

9. Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. London: Routledge, 2015.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. The case of the Scottsboro Boys is just one example of "the racialization of criminality" (see also the Groveland Four). On March 25, 1931, a group of nine young black men and boys boarded a Southern Railway train in search of work in Memphis, Tennessee. As the train passed through Alabama, a fight broke out between the black men and a group of white youths. On board at the time were Victoria Price (21 years old) and Ruby Bates (17 years old). Fearful of penalization due to their failure to purchase a train ticket, the young women accused the black men of rape. On March 30th, the group of men were charged with rape by an all-white jury. Archives specialist for the National Archive Jay Bellamy states, "the prosecution's case … rested heavily on the testimony of Victoria Price, who was often evasive in her answers, pretended not to understand the question, or flat-out lied [about definitive facts like her occupation]." Other evidence included the testimony of Doctor Bridges, who reported that no blood was found on either Ms. Price or Ms. Bates and neither sustained internal damage consistent with rape. When Bates, after a period of absence, returned to testify for the defense, she conceded that there had been no rape and it was Price's idea to accuse the defendants of a crime in order to evade being arrested themselves. On November 22, 2013, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles posthumously pardoned the last three of the nine men who were convicted 82 years pri-

or. See Bellamy, Jay. "The Scottsboro Boys: Injustice in Alabama." *National Archives*, 2014. For more information on racial injustice pre- and post-Civil War, see "Reports." Equal Justice Initiative, n.d. https://eji.org/reports/.

13. Hale, Chelsea and Matt, Meghan. "The Intersection of Race and Rape Viewed Through the Prism of a Modern-Day Emmett Till." *American Bar Association*, July 16, 2019. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/diversity-inclusion/articles/2019/summer2019-intersection-of-race-and-rape/.

14. Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. London: Routledge, 2015.

15. Öktem, Ülker. "Husserl's Evidence Problem," *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenolog*y 9 (May 2009): 4.

16. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 28.

17. Ibid., 1.

18. Bernard-Donals, Michael and Glejzer, Richard. "Between Witness and Testimony: Survivor Narratives and the Shoah," *College Literature* 27.2 (2000): 4.

19. Ibid., 2.

20. Ibid., 2.

21. Woods, Angela. "Rethinking 'Patient Testimony' in the Medical Humanities: The Case of Schizophrenia Bulletin's First-Person Accounts," *The Journal of Literature and Science*, (2014): 1.

22. Ibid., 2.

23. Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," *International Journal of Evidence and Proof* (May 2016).

24. Ibid.

25. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 162.

26. Welz, Claudia. "Trauma, Memory, Testimony: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Ethical Perspectives," *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 27 (January 1970): 105.

27. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 162.

28. Berghofer, Philipp. Husserl's Noetics–Towards a Phenomenological Epistemology, Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, 50: 2 (2019): 151. DOI: 10.1080/00071773.2018.1525798.

29. Ibid., 151.

30. Öktem, Ülker. "Husserl's Evidence Problem," *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* 9 (May 2009): 3.

31. Ibid., 2.

32. Ibid., 3.

33. Ibid., 3.

34. Ibid., 3.

35. Ibid., 3.

36. Ibid., 8.

37. Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," *International Journal of Evidence and Proof* (May 2016): 24.

38. Berghofer, Philipp. 'Husserl's Noetics –Towards a Phenomenological Epistemology,' *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* (2019): 126.

39. Strejilevich, Nora. "Testimony: Beyond the Language of Truth." *Human Rights Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (August 2006): 710.

40. Tassone, Biagio G. "Husserl's Logical Investigations: Theory of Science and the 'Breakthrough' to Phenomenology" in *Noesis: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of*

Language, Epistemology and Political Philosophy, Stephen Rainey and Barbara Gabriella Renzi (eds.), (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005): 61.

41. Ibid., 61-62.

42. Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," *International Journal of Evidence and Proof* (May 2016):

43. Laub, Dori. "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle." *American Imago* 48, no. Psychoanalysis, Culture and Trauma (1991): 75.

44. Larrabee, Mary Jeanne. "The Time of Trauma: Husserl's Phenomenology and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." 18 *Human Studies* No.4 (1995): 355.

45. Eilifsen, Margareth. "Capture the Unexpressed: Anecdote as a Device in Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research." *The Info-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* 11 (May 2011): 3. https://doi.org/10.2989/1PJP.2011.11.1.7.1106.

46. Healy, Melissa. "Must Reads: Here's What Experts Who Study Sexual Violence Say About the Credibility of Christine Blasey Ford's Testimony." *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 2018. https://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-ford-testimony-credibility-memory-20180928-story.htmlPg 9.

47. Ibid.

48. Grayling, A. C. *The History of Philosophy.* (London: Penguin Books, 2020): 474.

49. Neubauer, Brian E., Catherine T. Witkop, and Lara Varpio. "How Phenomenology Can Help Us Learn from the Experiences of Others." *A Qualitative Space* (2019): 4.

50. Marinay, Wendell A. "Edmund Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology," PhilArchive (https://philarchive.org/archive/MAREHT, n.d.), accessed June 30, 2020: 4.

51. Ibid., 7.

52. Neubauer, Brian E., Catherine T. Witkop, and Lara Varpio. "How Phenomenology Can Help Us Learn from the Experiences of Others." *A Qualitative Space* (2019): 4.

53. Strejilevich, Nora. "Testimony: Beyond the Language of Truth." *Human Rights Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (August 2006): 701–13.

54. Miragoli, Sarah, Camisasca, Elena, and Di Blasioa, Paola. "Investigating Linguistic Coherence Relations in Child Sexual Abuse: A Comparison of PTSD and non-PTSD Children." *Heliyon* (February 2019).

55. Ibid., 2.

56. Ibid., 2.

57. Welz, Claudia. "Trauma, Memory, Testimony: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Ethical Perspectives," *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 27 (January 1970): 122.

58. Ibid., 121.

59. Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," *International Journal of Evidence and Proof* (May 2016): 20-21.

60. Woods, Angela. "Rethinking 'Patient Testimony' in the Medical Humanities: The Case of Schizophrenia Bulletin's First-Person Accounts," *The Journal of Literature and Science*, (2014): 11.

61. Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," *International Journal of Evidence and Proof* (May 2016).

62. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 8.

63. Gibson, Sharon K., and Lisa A. Hanes. "The Contribution of Phenomenology to HRD Research." *Human Resource Development Review*, June 1, 2003. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484303002002005.

64. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 16.

65. Gibson, Sharon K., and Lisa A. Hanes. "The Contribution of Phenomenology to HRD Research." *Human Resource Development Review*, June 1, 2003. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484303002002005.

66. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 126.

67. Leiviskä Deland, A.C., G. Karlsson, and H. Fatouros-Bergman. "A Phenomenological Analysis of the Psychotic Experience." *Human Studies* 34, no. 1 (2011): 40.

68. Berghofer, Philipp. "Husserl's Noetics–Towards a Phenomenological Epistemology," Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, 50: 2 (2019): 130. DOI: 10.1080/00071773.2018.1525798.

69. Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," *International Journal of Evidence and Proof* (May 2016): 23.

70. Tuerkheimer, Deborah. "Incredible Women: Sexual Violence and the Credibility Discount." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 166 (December 2017): 1.

71. McDonald, Mary Catherine. "A Prismatic Account: Body, Thought, Action in Trauma." T*eorema: Revista Internacional de Filosofía* 37, no. 3 (2018): 94. https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26510240.

Bibliography

Bellamy, Jay. "The Scottsboro Boys: Injustice in Alabama." National Archives, 2014, www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2014/spring/scottsboro.pdf.

Berghofer, Philipp. Husserl's Noetics–Towards a Phenomenological Epistemology, Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology 50, no.2 (2019): 120-138 doi: 10.1080/00071773.2018.1525798.

Bernard-Donals, Michael and Glejzer, Richard. "Between Witness and Testimony: Survivor Narratives and the Shoah," College Literature 27.2 (2000): 1-20.

Bufacchi, Vittorio. "Knowing Violence: Testimony, Trust, and Truth," Revue Internationale de Philosophie 67, no. 265 (2013): 277-291.

Dupre, Louis. "The Concept of Truth in Husserl's Logical Investigations," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 24, no. 3 (March 1964): 345-354.

Eilifsen, Margareth. "Capture the Unexpressed: Anecdote as a Device in Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research." The Info-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology 11 (May 2011): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.2989/1PJP.2011.11.1.7.1106.

Ellison, Louise and Munro, Vanessa E., "Taking Trauma Seriously: Critical Reflections on the Criminal Justice Process," International Journal of Evidence and Proof (May 2016): https://doi.org/10.1177/1365712716655168.

Equal Justice Initiative, "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror" (3d Ed. 2017).

Grayling, A. C. The History of Philosophy. (London: Penguin Books, 2020): 1-581.

Hale, Chelsea and Matt, Meghan. "The Intersection of Race and Rape Viewed Through the Prism of a Modern-Day Emmett Till." American Bar Association, July 16, 2019. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/diversity-inclusion/articles/2019/summer2019-intersection-of-race-and-rape/.

Haraway, Donna Jeanne. Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science. London: Routledge, 2015.

Healy, Melissa. "Must Reads: Here's What Experts Who Study Sexual Violence Say About the Credibility of Christine Blasey Ford's Testimony." Los Angeles Times, September 28, 2018. https://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-ford-testimony-credibility-memory-20180928-story.html.

Miragoli, Sarah, Camisasca, Elena, and Di Blasioa, Paola. "Investigating Linguistic Coherence Relations in Child Sexual Abuse: A Comparison of PTSD and non-PTSD Children." Heliyon (February 2019): 1-20.

Larrabee, Mary Jeanne. "The Time of Trauma: Husserl's Phenomenology and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." 18 Human Studies No.4 (Oct. 1995): 351-366.

Laub, Dori. "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle." American Imago 48, no. PSYCHOANALYSIS, CULTURE AND TRAUMA (1991): 75–91. https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.com/stable/26304032.

Leiviskä Deland, A.C., G. Karlsson, and H. Fatouros-Bergman. "A Phenomenological Analysis of the Psychotic Experience." Human Studies 34, no. 1 (2011): 23–42.

Mason, Caleb. "Don't Pretend the Kavanaugh Facts Are Unknowable." The Atlantic, September 28, 2018. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/09/did-ford-tell-truth-committee-can-find-out/571603/.

Marinay, Wendell A. "Edmund Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology," PhilArchive (https://philarchive.org/archive/MAREHT, n.d.), accessed June 30, 2020: 1-9.

McDonald, Mary Catherine. "A Prismatic Account: Body, Thought, Action in Trauma." Teorema: Revista Internacional de Filosofía37, no. 3 (2018): 83–100. https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26510240.

Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Injustice: Power & the Ethics of Knowing," in Epistemic Injustice: Power& the Ethics of Knowing (Oxford University Press, 2007): 1-177

Neubauer, Brian E., Catherine T. Witkop, and Lara Varpio. "How Phenomenology Can Help Us Learn from the Experiences of Others." A Qualitative Space, (April 2019): 90–97. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2.

Öktem, Ülker. "Husserl's Evidence Problem," Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology 9 (May 2009): 1-14.

Patton, Tracey Owens, and Julie Snyder-Yuly. "Any Four Black Men Will Do: Rape, Race, and the Ultimate Scapegoat." Journal of Black Studies 37, no. 6 (2007): 859-95. Accessed July 28, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40034959.

Strejilevich, Nora. "Testimony: Beyond the Language of Truth." Human Rights Quarterly 28, no. 3 (August 2006): 701–13. https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2006.0038.

Tassone, Biagio G. "Husserl's Logical Investigations: Theory of Science and the 'Breakthrough' to Phenomenology" in Noesis: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Language, Epistemology and Political Philosophy, Stephen Rainey and Barbara Gabriella Renzi (eds.), (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005): 51-72.

Tuerkheimer, Deborah. "Incredible Women: Sexual Violence and the Credibility Discount." University of Pennsylvania Law Review 166 (December 2017): 1–58.

Welz, Claudia. "Trauma, Memory, Testimony: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Ethical Perspectives," Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis 27 (January 1970): pp. 104, 104-133, https://doi.org/10.30674/scripta.66571.

Woods, Angela. "Rethinking 'Patient Testimony' in the Medical Humanities: The Case of Schizophrenia Bulletin's First-Person Accounts," The Journal of Literature and Science, February 19, 2014, pp. 2, 1-15, https://doi.org/10.12929/jls.06.1.03.

Buberian Intersubjectivity and Racist Encounters

Kwesi Thomas

… it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me.[1]

In this essay, I explore a few ways that the German Jewish philosopher Martin Buber can contribute to the philosophy of race. More specifically, I will here explicate what Buber's dialogical "ontology of the inter-human" in *I and Thou* and *Distance and Relation* can tell us about racist encounters.[2] I begin by defining our term "racist encounter" via a brief analysis of an exemplary case (I.1), and then explicate the Buberian frameworks of intersubjectivity born out of our respective texts, applying each to the racist encounter under consideration (I. 2-3). Through this exercise, I reach the counterintuitive conclusion that, vis-a-vis Buberian intersubjectivity, in a racist encounter neither the addressed nor the addressee is a self. In part II, I respond to the objection,

Why apply Buber to the philosophy of race at all? by demonstrating the unique contribution his philosophies of intersubjectivity stand to offer in comparison to the philosophical foundations underlying Frantz Fanon's denouncement of racism in *Black Skin, White Masks*.

I. Buber, Applied
I.1 A Racist Encounter

> … in the heat of the moment the woman snapped, "You know, it's people like you who make your whole race look bad—You're an utter idiot!" And the young man reflexively retorted, "Oh, I'm the idiot? I study philosophy at UofT!".… "Oh, yeah right buddy!"…

This event shows us three significant features of a racist encounter. First (1), from the woman's initial remark—"it's people like you who make your whole race look bad"—we see that she takes the young man to be not an individual but a representative of a broader type, a "whole race." In order for this to happen the woman must (a) identify the individual's 'racial' quality or set of qualities, i.e., his black skin, and then (b) abstract that quality away from the individual, placing him in a category with others who also share that trait, *a racial group*. Moreover (2), this racial group is no mere assertion of similarity in terms of that singular racial quality. Rather, her perception of that trait is coloured by an as-

sortment of historical-social expectations: biological, psychological, economic, cultural, etc. This racialized group, therefore, has its own definite features, and the young man is perceived as an instantiation of that abstract racial archetype or image. Thus, the woman's unwillingness to accept his claim to intelligence, her "*yeah right*," reflects that a university education is at odds with her expectations of his racial type. It further reveals her pretension to knowing the stranger; familiarity with a racial archetype poses as knowledge of the man before her. Lastly (3), this image, this simulacrum, is spoken *to* the man. That is, her perception of him is not only within her mind but is proposed to him in the encounter.

Thus, in this analysis we will broadly define a racist encounter as a moment where an individual (1) picks out a racial quality of another and abstracts away from that individual, placing them in a fictitious racial group with others who also ostensibly share that quality; (2) associates that racial group with another set of attributes (via a socio-culturally given racial image); and (3), pronounces this set of expectations associated with the racial group over the other.

I.2 Distance and Relation
What can Martin Buber's *Distance and Relation* tell us about such encounters? In this text, he argues that in social life we (a) distance others from ourselves thereby

accepting their independence from us as *an* other, and then (b) (sometimes) relate to them as a unique self before us.[3] In the first act, "setting at a distance", we grant an individual an existence independent of ourselves, the status of *a general other*.[4] This other is a being that exists "in itself," rather than a being that only exists "to me," i.e., as part of my world.[5] The distancing which asserts this otherness makes possible, though does not necessitate, a second movement, *relation* (i.e., "making present").[6] In this act, the distanced and generic other "becomes a *self* for me," a person with whom I engage.[7] In relating to them thus I affirm their *selfhood*—their individuated being, i.e., "personal qualities and capacities," and becoming, i.e., potential, confirming them in their "depth of human individuation."[8] Thus, the first movement of *distancing* identifies the person before me as an "other", while the second, occasional movement of *relation* engages with the person before me as *this* unique and particular self.[9]

To Buber, this completed act of relation is the ground of self-becoming for both I and other.[10] He argues, "when the other knows that he is made present by me in his self… this knowledge induces the process of his inmost self-becoming."[11] That is, the other is only able to become a self via my recognition and affirmation of their selfhood.[12] Importantly, this is a *reciprocal* encounter whereby both become selves together symbiotically,

"in the mutuality of making each other present."[13] More awkwardly, the other must recognize me in my selfhood in order for me to simultaneously become a self which can give them their selfhood.[14]

Understanding this odd claim requires us to clarify Buber's notion of selfhood. When we prod deeper into Buber's work, we find that he does not picture selfhood as something that an individual attains at some obscure stage of development, once and for all. Rather, *he sees selfhood as a mode of being which emerges or retracts depending on how/if we are engaged with others*. Since it is clear that we are self-conscious in moments when we are not directly engaged with an other, in order for this claim to be plausible, one must distinguish between self-consciousness and selfhood. This distinction is forthcoming in Buber's above argument: before "*making present*" one another and thus becoming selves, both individuals must have already *distanced* the other from themselves, and such distancing requires some minimal level of self-consciousness (since to say that another is not-I requires a concept of I).[15] Here it is evident that Buber does not see the minimal self-awareness necessary for distinguishing an individual from oneself as constituting full selfhood. Just as my awareness of the other in the mode of distancing is generic, my self-awareness is similarly indeterminate.[16] Buberian selfhood thus exceeds vague self-aware-

ness; it is *significant cognition and realization of one's unique particularities and potentialities in relation to another*.[17] With this definition in place, we can understand Buber's claim that two individuals can not be selves without a certain form of encounter. Until they engage in a mutual exchange of affirmation and confirmation of each other's being and becoming, they can not actualize integral aspects of their being (their self) which only emerge in relation to a "you" which calls back "you."[18] This principle I will henceforth designate as 'co-dependent selfhood'.

Vis-à-vis this framework of intersubjectivity, the racist encounter is a moment of distancing without relation. To begin, the racist encounter requires the act of *distancing* since the racist individual must see their addressee as another human being before them, existing independent of them, in order to address them with language at all. Insofar as our woman has addressed the man, she distances him to recognize him as *a generic other*. Here, however, the movement stops short; she does not encounter the man in a genuine form of *relation*. In the act of relation, an individual "makes present" the other in their unique individuation, affirming their particular being and becoming.[19] But in our ordeal, the woman engages with the young man as an instance of a racial group and thus obstinately encounters the qualities associated with that group rather than him. Thus,

her artificial assertion of his sameness with others, her projection of his racialized identity, bypasses his unique selfhood which stands ontologically distinct from the foisted racial image. In this sense, he remains scarcely perceived by the woman at all. Our subject here shares in the all-too-common experience of black subjectivity illustrated by Ralph Ellison's "invisible man":

> I am an invisible man… [though] I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone. Fibre and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.[20]

The insidious character of the racist act here begins to rear its head. If selfhood only comes into being when both individuals make the other present to themselves in a mutual relation, the woman's inability to see the man's individuated self means that he is not given the possibility to actualize it.[21] This certainly resonates with our common-sense understandings, and experiences, of the effects of racism on subjects. When an individual is addressed as a mere instantiation of a racial group, there is little they can do to become an individuated self *to their addressee*. Those attributes which conflict with the racial image remain unseen, deemphasized, or altogether rejected. Indeed, even those with salient qualities that conflict with the racial image do not escape

the stereotypical pigeon-hole, as they are then defined by their contrast to that image and are given the status of 'walking paradox,' e.g. "he's such an *articulate* black man." As Fanon incisively describes, "I was walled in: neither my refined manners nor my literary knowledge nor my understanding of quantum theory could find favour [to the white gaze]."[22] Further, via Buber's theory of co-dependent selfhood, individuals who are deprived of the opportunity to unfold their self to an other are also denied the ability to be a self *to themselves*.

More alarmingly, in the racist encounter the woman, i.e., the racist individual, makes impossible her own self-becoming. That is, since one becomes a self in a reciprocal relation of making present an other, the racist thought-act effectively forecloses the possibility for the racist individual to actualize their selfhood. In relation to this "negro," this simulacrum, I am unlikely to see much more of myself than I would vis-a-vis an inanimate object or non-human animal posited as already-known. The other is given as a captured animal and further interrogation into the banal creature is unnecessary when one has recourse to zoo sign descriptions. In not seeing the one before me as a self, I have no opportunity to see my self by relating to them as such. Instead, here both remain generic to each other and themselves. Like ships in the night, they discern the distant silhouette of *an other*, yet both remain engulfed

in darkness, indeterminate. In short, the double-edged consequence of Buber's theory of co-dependent selfhood in *Distance and Relation* is that in refusing to see the self before us, as one does in a racist encounter, we simultaneously reject our own.

I.3 I and Thou

What light does Buber's philosophy of dialogue in I *and Thou* throw on our affair? In this text, Buber famously argues that there are two ways of addressing an other, which correspond to two modes of being for the addressee. As he writes, "the world is twofold for man in accordance with his twofold attitude," and accordingly "the I of man is also twofold."[23] The two ways to address the other, as You or as It, reconstitute the individual who speaks them. Thus, these means of address are reflected in two word pairs: I-It and I-You.[24] In the basic word pair I-You, one addresses the other as the immediate presence (*Gegenwart*) before them and, in explicit correspondence with the act of relation in *Distance and Relation*, "stands in relation [to them]."[25] This address is an encounter whereby one relates to the person before them with their whole being, encountering them as a presence *unmediated by and irreducible to any qualities or concepts*, as an indescribable and whole "You."[26] Further, this "relation is reciprocal" as it requires the You to also approach them as a You in return, and only in this way does either individual become an I.[27] Impor-

tantly, since the person is not encountered as an object but as a presence, in this form of address they are not able to be manipulated, coordinated, instrumentalized, or ordered as such.[28]

On the other hand, one can address the other before them as an It. In the I-It address, the subject turns toward the other as an object, an aggregate of qualities caught in the web of Newtonian time-space.[29] The subject's view of the objectified other is mediated by concepts and qualities, they perceive them as "a condition that can be experienced and described."[30] In contrast to the I-You relation, this experience of the person as an object (*Gegenstand*) allows one to coordinate, order, and manipulate that person, employing them as a means to an end, as an "It for self."[31] In engaging with the other as an object perceived by a subject, the subject has a superficial experience (*Erfahrung*) rather than a relational encounter (*Erlebnis*) with the other.[32] Consequently, just like in the mode of distancing without relation, the I in the word pair I-It is not given to either party in this encounter. Though the perceiving subject certainly has some vague awareness of their own being as the one who is desiring, thinking, experiencing, etc.—what some characterize as "pre-reflexive self-consciousness"—they do not experience themselves in their fullness, in relation to the other.[33] Here we see again the distinction between a *self* and a *self-aware subject* in

Buber's thought. Though the I of I-It is a subject, they are reduced from their "substantial fullness to the functional one-dimensionality of a subject that experiences and uses objects."[34]

The racist act is certainly an I-It experience. In the I-It address, a subject perceives the other as an aggregate of apparent qualities and as mediated by concepts.[35] Correspondingly, in our racist encounter the woman picks out a quality of the individual, his black skin, and associates it with a larger set of expectations by placing him in a racial group. She does not *encounter* the individual present before her but *experiences* him as mediated by and reducible to the racial image/concept.[36] Undoubtedly, his blackness is "a condition that can be described."[37] With the racist encounter now situated within this Buberian framework as an I-It experience, we can employ Buber's descriptions of such experience to delineate consequences of such behaviour for both the addressed racialized subject and the racist addressee.

I and Thou spells out ethical implications for the recipients of racist acts that reach beyond the denial of selfhood we discerned in *Distance and Relation*. Everyday racist encounters like our subject's are commonly thought of as one-off aberrations which, though potentially psychologically damaging for the racialized individual, do not have deeper ties to systemic racial

oppression. However, understood as an I-It encounter, such seemingly benign encounters reveal a latent ontological foundation at the core of the exploitation and oppression of people groups. This is because in experiencing individuals as reducible to an aggregate of qualities as one does in a racist encounter, we experience them as objects to be used for our purposes, manipulated and coordinated as beings "for us."[38] Thus, the *prima facie* relatively harmless perception of an individual as reducible to a racialized quality prepares the ontological groundwork for them to become fodder within the cogs of a system, consumed as natural resources, disposable. This insight, paired with the historical contours of transatlantic slavery, renders Achille Mbembe's thesis "to produce Blackness is to produce... *a body of extraction*."[39] Let me here speak directly: to delimit and describe me as a black person as being x, *whatever x may be*, reflects a mode perception akin to enslavement; in both cases I am reduced to an object ready-at-hand for your use.[40]

I and Thou also gives us resources to understand how the racist act, in a ricochet, harms the racist addressee. Since the I of the I-It relation only experiences the other as an object, it does not have a substantial You from which it can receive its own You, and thus, it cannot become a self.[41] This accords with what we have said of the self-denying nature of the racist act in our

application of *Distance and Relation* to the issue. Yet, *I and Thou* further clarifies just how the subjectivity of the addressee is barren in the I-It relation by its characterization of such an I's subjectivity as *experiencing* (*erfahrung*) rather than *encountering* (*Erlebnis*).[42] In contrast to the encounter, experience is a superficial ordeal: we send our ideas out ahead of us to order the world before us. However, in doing so we do not meet the world itself, but our own ideas.[43] Accordingly, the German verb for experience used here, "*erfahrung*," has the connotation of superficial driving (*fahren*) over rather than deep familiarity (*kennen*), and is thus also is used as a term for dry empirical knowledge.[44] Therefore, the I-It experience has a monological character: "we do not participate in the world," but meet only our mental apparatus projected onto it.[45] And since it is the core of Buber's dialogical philosophy that "actual life" is an encounter with otherness, those who remain siloed within the I-It experience are not engaged with the deep recesses of life itself but partake in a pseudo-life.[46] Bereft of a genuine experience of otherness, the racist individual remains alone while before an other. Their counterfeit gaze has deprived both themselves and the other of a genuine encounter, the only place where either could arise from their hiddenness to become a self in the full Buberian sense.[47] Thus, Buber's theory of co-dependent selfhood and philosophy of dialogue univocally indict: no one is their self in the

racist encounter, indeed, they barely drink from the living waters at all.[48]

II. Why ask Buber at all?

Though we have been able to produce fruitful insights regarding racism via the application of Buberian thought, there are certainly much more direct routes to a philosophical discussion of racist encounters. Since we can point to numerous texts in critical race theory which speak to the phenomenology of racism insightfully and explicitly, why go to the trouble of fleshing out Buber's philosophy and applying it to racism at all? In response, I will here compare Buber's dialogical philosophy with the philosophical foundation of a preeminent text in critical race theory, Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, in order to show the unique philosophical contribution that it brings to the discussion.

In the capstone chapter of *Black Skin White Masks*, "The Lived Experience of the Black Man" (ch. 5), Fanon explicates the psychological effect that being treated as a racialized object has on a subject. He begins the chapter thus:

> I came into this world anxious to uncover the meaning of things, my soul desirous to be at the origin of the world, and *here I am an object among other objects*. Locked in this suffocating reification, I ap-

pealed to the other so that his liberating gaze… [by] taking me out of the world [would] put me back in the world. But… *the Other fixes me with his gaze, his gestures and attitude*.[49]

Fanon here beautifully describes how a racialized subject is denied the realization of those aspects of themselves which transcend the status of object via their perception by those around them, i.e., "the white gaze." He re-states this experience of being "locked in" a perception of oneself as a racialized object in explicitly philosophical terms when he writes: "the black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man."[50] That is, racialized subjects are not perceived as having aspects of their being which elude the domineering omniscience of the white gaze. This reverberates in James Baldwin's autobiographical remark; he was not only "spat on" but "*defined and described*."[51] Thus, Fanon's goal in the wider text is to "release" the black man from this prescriptive image and its effect via psychoanalytic and phenomenological analysis aimed at the "disalienation of the black man."[52]

To a certain degree, Buber and Fanon are concerned with the same content: Buber treats the objectification of persons in an abstract and general manner, while Fanon treats it in the specific case of European anti-black racism. Where Buber, in *Distance and Rela-*

tion, gestures toward the idea that the self is formed and comes to the surface only in contact with another who meets one in a reciprocal relation as a individuated self, Fanon begins with a racialized individual harkening another's "liberating gaze" to bring them to the plane of humanity.[53] Again, where Buber, in *I and Thou*, argues that humans should not be only experienced as objects but encountered as I's, Fanon informs us of the specific experience a "black" subject has when their perception is mediated by the objectifying gaze of the dominant "white" world. Therefore, though Buber's general philosophy can be applied to speak abstractly to racism, Fanon speaks with a clear and direct voice of its concreteness. Further, Fanon, unlike Buber, takes up an in-depth analysis of the genesis, internalization, and phenomenology of racialized subjects.[54] Thus, we again ask, why bring Buber to bear on the issue at all?

Our answer lies in the ideal toward which Fanon drives and by which he condemns the racist act, his philosophical foundations. Fanon's critique of the racialized perception of individuals is couched within an individualist-existentialist philosophical anthropology that views humans as, ideally, self-creating individuals. As he writes, "There should be no attempt to fixate man, since it is his destiny to be unleashed. The density of history determines none of my acts. *I am my own foundation*."[55] Vis-a-vis this ideal that humans are self-deter-

mining and self-creating beings, their "own foundation," the projection of a racist image upon a subject and the binding of individuals to a racial group is a sin against their human potentiality to be a world transcending creative agent.[56] Thus, Fanon's goal of disalienating the black man is precisely aimed at unlocking both whites and blacks from the strictures of historical-racial ideas, allowing each individual to assume "the universalism inherent in the human condition" and take up their calling as free-standing individuals.[57]

This self-creation ideal by which Fanon here criticizes racism tends toward an egregious hyper-individualism. Fanon is certainly aware of the role of others in forming a subject's sense of self, i.e., of intersubjectivity, as without such awareness, the impression of a foreign racialized image on an individual would be near negligible and not require his extirpation.[58] Despite this acknowledgement of intersubjectivity, *Black Skin, White Masks* views the role of others in the formation of a self as almost wholly negative. Since the ultimate goal of the project is individual self-creation, others and the outside world more generally only stand to get in the way of one's becoming their "own foundation."[59] And, even when an other, like Fanon here, comes on the scene to help a subject recover their essential commission, their task is predominantly negative: they are to clear away alien artifices and get out of the way so that the subject

can take up the mantle of self-creation. Thus, though in later works Fanon seeks to develop a conception of intersubjectivity that provides room for a community and others to inform and affect a subject in a healthy way, such space is markedly absent in this landmark analysis. Though this hyper-individualism is by no means philosophically indefensible, it does operate without an eye toward the positive role that others stand to play in the formation of our selfhood.

In light of this weakness, Buberian intersubjectivity — his dialogical philosophy and theory of co-dependent selfhood—provides us with an alternative philosophical foundation by which to criticize racism and towards which to push. Recall that in applying Buber's thought in *Distance and Relation*, we concluded that since self-becoming is dependent on one entering into proper relation with another, and the racist encounter is an affair without such a relation, in such encounters neither party is a self (in the full Buberian sense). And in applying *I and Thou*, the racist act was rendered as an I-It affair in which both parties are manifested as manipulable objects of superficial experience. Both of these indictments of the structure and consequences of racist encounters rest upon Buber's unique philosophical anthropology and human ideal that "all actual life is an encounter" and "whoever lives only with [experiences of objects] is not human."[60] That is, in stark contrast

with Fanon, the racist act is condemned on Buberian grounds because it falls short of the proper form of inter-human relation and not because such inter-human affectation is in principle wrong since interruptive. Put otherwise, where Fanon criticizes racism because it interferes with the human commission to 'create oneself,' Buber criticizes it because it is a perversion of the genuine human contact central to our experience of ourselves.

Therefore, though Buber's work admittedly lacks the explicitness regarding race that a critical race theorist like Fanon has, he stands as an important voice to bring into the conversation chiefly because his ontology of the inter-human offers us an alternative philosophical anthropology by which we can criticize racism and seek a more humane future of relations across difference.[61] Ultimately, despite the fact that Fanon's criticisms are undergirded by a philosophical ideal which drives in a different direction than Buber's, there are points at which it seems that Buberian intersubjectivity provides the path to where Fanon hopes to go, a world in which "both ['black' and 'white' persons] move away from the inhuman voices of their respective ancestors so that a genuine communication can be born."[62]

III. Conclusion
In part I of this essay, I exposited Buber's theories of

intersubjectivity in *I and Thou* and *Distance and Relation* and applied them to an exemplary racist encounter. From this exercise we worked out the insight that Buber's philosophy of dialogue and co-dependent selfhood renders the racist confrontation a rejection and mutilation of the selfhood of both the addressed and the addressee, removing both from the depths of human life found in encounter. In part II, I defended the legitimacy of applying Buber to the issue of racism by showing the unique philosophical contribution his philosophy of dialogue and theory of co-dependent selfhood stand to offer vis-a-vis the individualistic philosophical anthropology foundational in *Black Skin, White Masks*. That Buber's philosophy can make such a contribution, we must add, should not be surprising given his personal experiences as a Jew living in Germany and Austria through the early-to-mid 20th century.[63] As we know all too well, this historical-social position designated him as a manipulable, racialized object and, I hope to have shown here, his abstract philosophy of intersubjectivity stands as a living indictment of such modes of encounter.[64]

Notes

1. Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man, (New York: Random House, 1992 [1952]), 3.

2. Paul Mendes-Flohr, Martin Buber: A Life of Faith and Dissent, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2019), 50.

3. Martin Buber, "The Social Dimensions of Man: Distance and Relation" in Martin Buber on Intersubjectivity and Cultural Creativity, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 58.

4. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 58, 66, 64.

5. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 58.

6. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 58, 66, 67.

7. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 66, 67.

8. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 63, 64, 65, 67.

9. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 66.

10. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

11. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

12. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

13. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

14. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

15. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

16. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 66.

17. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

18. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

19. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 63-65, 67.

20. Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man, 3.

21. Buber, "Distance and Relation", 67.

22. Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2007 [1952]), 97.

23. Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 53.

24. Buber, I and Thou, 53.

25. Buber, I and Thou, 55, 59.

26. Buber, I and Thou, 59, 62, 81.

27. Buber, I and Thou, 62.

28. It is worth noting here that this qualification bespeaks the foundational influence of Kantian ethics in the work; Buber, I and Thou, 63, 68, 81.

29. Buber, I and Thou, 59, 81.

30. Buber, I and Thou, 59, 62-63.

31. Buber, I and Thou, 63, 80.

32. Buber, I and Thou, 55.

33. Buber, I and Thou, 63-64, 62, 80.

34. Buber, I and Thou, 80.

35. Buber, I and Thou, 59.

36. Buber, I and Thou, 59.

37. Buber, I and Thou, 59.

38. Buber, I and Thou, 63, 80, 81. This connection between the subject-object relation and the domination of the object, even when human, is also well expressed by Adorno and Horkheimer in their Dialectic of Enlightenment: "Enlightenment stands in the same relationship to things as the dictator to human beings [as a subject to an object]. He knows them to the extent that he can manipulate them… their "in itself" becomes "for him"" (Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr [California: Stanford University Press, 2002], 6.).

39. Achille Mbembe, Critique of Black Reason, trans. Laurent Dubois (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 18.

40. I am not here comparing the experience of a racialized subject with an enslaved person. Rather, pointing to the common percep-

tive-ontological structures operating within an oppressor's mind in both cases.

41. Buber, I and Thou, 62.

42. Buber, I and Thou, 80.

43. Buber, I and Thou, 56.

44. Buber, I and Thou, 56.

45. Buber, I and Thou, 56.

46. Buber, I and Thou, 62, 83.

47. Buber, I and Thou, 67.

48. This claim of the absence of selfhood of both parties must not be confused with the claim that neither are persons. Contrariwise, for all intents and purposes both are and remain moral and legal persons. However, our conclusion is that both are deprived of the fullest manifestation latent in the ontic position of 'person', selfhood. One suspects, however, that the disintegration of selfhood undermines the moral and legal personhood which is its symbolic representative.

49. Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 89. (emphasis mine)

50. Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 90. A common lament against Fanon is his androcentric focus, he is often found writing as if the only note-worthy agents in race relations are men. The exclusion of women from this picture is certainly problematic and consequential. However, it is outside of our scope here to discuss it. Thus, for our purposes, we will read his descriptions and prescriptions for "man" as denoting "humanity".

51. James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1969 [1964]), 37.

52. Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, xii, xiii, xiv.

53.　Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 89.

54.　Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 91, 92.

55.　Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 205.

56.　Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 119.

57.　Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, xiii-xiv, 201.

58.　Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, xiv.

59.　Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 205.

60.　Buber, I and Thou, 62, 85.

61.　Paul Mendes-Flohr, Martin Buber: A Life of Faith and Dissent, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2019), 50.

62.　Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 206.

63.　See Mendes-Flohr's Martin Buber for an outstanding English bibliography.

64.　For example: living in a Vienna whose mayor's platform rested on anti-semitism. Steven Beller, Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 68; George Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism, (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), 141.

Bibliography

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1969 [1964].

Beller, Steven. *Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Buber, Martin. *I and Thou,* translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Touchstone, 1996 [1923].

Buber, Martin. "The Social Dimensions of Man: Distance and Relation" in *Martin Buber on Intersubjectivity and Cultural Creativity*, edited by S. N. Eisenstadt, 57-67. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. New York: Random House (Modern Library Edition), 1992 [1952].

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*, translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2007 [1952].

Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. California: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Mbembe, Achille. *Critique of Black Reason*, translated by Laurent Dubois. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017.

Mendes-Flohr, Paul. *Martin Buber: A Life of Faith and Dissent*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2019.

Nietzsche and the Fulcrum of History

Sean-Michael Pigéon

Friedrich Nietzsche's thinking fundamentally altered the trajectory of continental philosophy in a way only a few others have. Notoriously opaque but brilliant, Nietzsche's works span from aesthetics to morality to theology, forcing philosophers, historians and politicians of all stripes to wrestle with his ideas and their implications. Nietzsche's philosophical paradigm is based on a few central tenets, and these are primary features of his writing that deserve special attention. One of these is Nietzsche's idiosyncratic conception of the death of God. A second is Nietzsche's categorization of temporality. While scholars have contributed a wealth of literature on Nietzsche, both regarding the death of God[1] and his conception of Time[2] (Time in a metaphysical sense, not time as merely a succession of events), this essay seeks to situate Nietzsche's conception of the death of God *within* his temporal system, arguing that Nietzsche's framework is most potent when the two are properly considered as intimately connected.[3]

This essay will first give background on the philosophical milieu in which Nietzsche wrote, focusing heavily on the then-prevailing thoughts regarding Time. Based on a close reading of Nietzsche's texts, specifically *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, *The Gay Science*, and *The Will to Power*, I argue that the death of God should be understood as a temporal and embodied fulcrum within Time, which allows for non-dialectical progress.

Background

Friedrich Nietzsche rejected many of the philosophical notions that dominated the Academy, but his thought developed and remained in dialogue with that tradition throughout his life. The German idealist tradition reached its zenith of influence after Georg Friedrich Hegel published *The Phenomenology of Spirit* in 1807, which dramatically altered subsequent continental philosophy. His system sprouted from the roots of Kant's critiques of empiricism and rationalism in his treatise *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). In that *Critique*, he argued for transcendental idealism, the notion that nearly everything we experience is ideas, appearances generated and given meaning through mind.[4] Hegel wrote in this academic German idealist vein, which rejected to varying degrees our understanding of the thing-in-itself (*Ding an sich*) by stressing the phenomenological barrier between the world-as-it-is and one's perception of it. The Phenomenology of Spirit argued powerfully

for a progressive view of Time borne out through the interactions of different regimes and societies. Reduced to its barest form, Hegel argued that the defining ideas within societies would conflict and eventually progress (later characterized by Johann Gottlieb Fichte as a thesis-antithesis-synthesis engine) towards a perfect system, deemed "the end of history."

While Hegel and his disciples were influential and the prevailing Western philosophical school of their time, other German idealists did offer contrasting views on Time and progress. Coming before Hegel, Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism postulated a rather cold and static universe. According to Kant, while we might perceive change over time as a substructure that frames all of our experience, we can never meaningfully know the world itself is changing. The most notable influence on Nietzsche's thought was Arthur Schopenhauer, who put forward a cyclical view of Time. In Schopenhauer's conception, the noumenal was accessible and consisted of an all-encompassing will. This will, formulated in Schopenhauer's most notable work *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), is blind and irrational, neither seeking to "go" anywhere nor "progress" towards anything. Schopenhauer wrote in *The World as Will and Representation* that:

   The true philosophy of history consists in the insight

that, in spite of all these endless changes and their chaos and confusion, we yet always have before us the same, identical, unchanging essence, acting in the same way today as it did yesterday and always.[5]

Nietzsche believed Schopenhauer to be too pessimistic and world-denying, but Schopenhauer's influence on him was nevertheless profound.

Throughout these thinkers, the common thread is their radical de-emphasis of the individual and personal autonomy in favor of larger metaphysical, historical structures. By far the most dominant thinker of this time, Hegel argued for an inevitable progressive history where individuals may further the march of history but not thwart it. One of Hegel's protégés, Fitche, considered Hegel's framework *too* agentive. He argued that self-consciousness itself was a social construct and that individuals are only self-aware via the existence of the whole.[6] Fitche pushed this thought to an unsavory political conclusion, namely German nationalism. Schopenhauer believed that individuals were manifestations of a singular monad, the will. Schopenhauer's ethics are even more self-denying, concluding that denial of life through asceticism was the only remedy to suffering. If characterized in broad strokes, the German tradition subsumed individual agency, preferring to examine universal superstructures and metaphysics.

Friedrich Nietzsche stood outside this framework, forcefully critiquing the idealist tradition that dominated German philosophical schools. He made his disdain known in 1874, writing:

> I believe there has been no dangerous vacillation or crisis of German culture this century that has not been rendered more dangerous by the enormous and still continuing influence of this philosophy, the Hegelian. The belief that one is a latecomer of the ages is, in any case, paralyzing and depressing: … Such a point of view has accustomed the Germans to talk of a 'world-process' and to justify their own age as the necessary result of this world-process; such a point of view has set history, insofar as history is 'the concept that realizes itself', 'the dialectics of the spirit of the peoples' and the 'world-tribunal', in place of the other spiritual powers, art and religion, as the sole sovereign power.[7]

Nevertheless, while he rejected many idealistic premises and conclusions, Friedrich Nietzsche still attempted to answer the same question that post-Kantian idealism struggled with: What is Time, and where is history going? In the process, Nietzsche simultaneously rejects Hegel's dialectical progressivism while maintaining a meaningful sense of historical progress by radically empowering the individual. In his seminal work *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche sought to topple the aforementioned visions of history and their individual-denying praxeology.

The Two Epochs and Individuality

This section will consider how Nietzsche conceives of Time, arguing that his framework supposes two distinct epochs: before the death of God and after the death of God. These epochs help to situate both the moral and political underpinnings of Nietzsche's other writings. Nietzsche discusses the concept of Time in many areas of his writing, often in confusing and contradictory ways. However, it is still possible and necessary to identify his temporal structure's main themes to better understand the moral and metaphysical implications of his other writings. *The Gay Science* contains the most crucial passage on Time:

> The Madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "'Whither is God?' he cried; 'I will tell you. We have killed him-you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward. forward. in all directions? … Do we not feel

the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too. decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.'"[8]

The most striking feature is that, for Nietzsche, God may be dead, but yet He was alive. God's death is an event, a deed that is jarring and even bloody. He goes on to write that "[God] has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off of us?"[9] While one might say Nietzsche is merely using an extended metaphor, that would be a bit reductionist, as it seems to embody more than pure allegory. Nietzsche writes at length about the event's material manifestations, calling attention to the physical space left by God, the coldness of the world without Him. Even the air's smell is affected, but this effect is not merely some physical manifestation, these changes specifically affect *us*. The Madman asks his audience (but, more accurately, Nietzsche asks us, his readers) if *we* smell anything, if we need lanterns, or if we feel the coolness of the air. The physicality of the new era the Madman heralds demands our attention.

The second peculiar aspect of this section is the way Nietzsche employs temporal language. The passage's power is best laid bare in full:

> "I have come too early," he said then: "my time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars-and yet they have done it themselves.[10]

The Madman laments that he came "too early," and this statement is never fully explicated. This essay will not specifically seek to answer why the Madman is too early, but it is important to hopefully prove that the deed's specific timing—both the death of God and the realization of His death as separate events—is essential to the author. For Nietzsche, "God is dead and we have killed Him" is not merely a statement of a fact that transcends Time but is a part of, and a defining event *in* Time. The temporality must be necessary since the Madman can be too early or too late.

When we view the death of God as an event, a happening, it provides clarity on Nietzsche's later writings in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. In *Zarathustra*, he writes: "Once blasphemy against God was the greatest blasphemy; but God died, and therewith also those blas-

phemers."[11] He is juxtaposing an individual's action within his temporal framework, where the same action can have the different ethical content *after* God's death but not *before*. Thus, in the Nietzschean sense, Time is not a progressive series of events but two societal ages that are radically, irreversibly, different because of the death of God. Nietzsche then widens the difference between his two epochs. In fact, the two seem to be practically opposite in character. His writings indicate that, as the nature of Time has changed, so has the way we relate to Time. For Nietzsche, the death of God broke the steady, cyclical nature of Time.

Before moving to Time after the death of God, it is first necessary to analyze Nietzsche's understanding of the older age. Nietzsche writes in *The Gay Science* that the old age focused on the "preservation of the species … time and again [humanity] relumed the passions that were going to sleep" and that "the [passions] re-awakened again and again…" He further writes that "… the ploughshare of evil must come time and again."[12] The idea of an endless cycle returns in Nietzsche's *Notes on the Eternal Recurrence* where Nietzsche famously laments how at the "hour of Noon" humanity will consider "the mighty thought of the eternal recurrence of all things."[13] This pessimistic and cyclical stasis is reminiscent of both Kant and Schopenhauer before him.

While it is unclear if Nietzsche believes this "eternal return" is a permanent fixture of life, his earlier writings indicate that he thinks that after the death of God we have transcended the eternal recurrence and have entered a new, and scarier, age. In *The Gay Science*, The Madman cries out in fear: "What did we do when we unchained the Earth from its Sun? Whither is it moving? Whither are we moving now?" For Nietzsche, while it may be good that we are not bound in a static cycle, we are now pulled in different and unpredictable directions. After God's murder, we are chaotically free. In the wake of the event of God's death, Nietzsche foretells of a new "age" beginning that will be more "manly," "warlike," and will prepare humankind "for one yet higher."[14]

It may seem that Nietzsche embraced a form of progressive history like that of Hegel, but there is one crucial distinction in Nietzsche's framework. Hegel's understanding of the movement of history is predominantly, if not entirely, apersonal. Rather than individual actors with their own motives and desires, the "Geist" or "world-spirit" is the ultimate actor in a Hegelian framework. His philosophy is detached from any examination of individuals, which he considers "most tedious dead-and-alive stuff… it gives evidence of the pure selfishness of baseless pride, the word most on its lips is 'people.'"[15] People are not entirely unimportant—but only insofar as they are useful examples and instru-

ments of the Hegelian superstructure of thesis-antith-esis-synthesis. The superstructure of the system re-mains the crucial object of analysis. This overarching vantage point is most salient in Hegel's conception of the "end of history," the final point that is inevitable as Time moves forward. There is no room for agency and personal action within the Hegelian framework to thwart history's continual movement and progress. The future is not unmoored as it is in the Nietzschean sense, nor does it remain static in the Kantian sense, but instead there is one unchanging direction to the arc of history.

For Nietzsche, this is untenable. Nietzsche's writings strongly reflect a view that gives space for an individu-al's agency to move history. It is important to note that history is not moving "forward" nor "backward" with-in the Nietzschean paradigm. The very fact that the world's history can move at all shows that any sense of anchoring to a single world-historical point is unin-telligible. History is unmoored, which precisely renders the notion of "forward" and "backward" arcs of history impossible. If history were moving from one point to another, then moving "forward" would not constitute a true agentive movement but the Hegelian historical current carrying individuals towards a goal. There is no arc-of-history for Nietzsche, which emphasizes the in-dividual nature of his framework.

His views on an individual's impact can be observed in three distinct ways. The first is how Nietzsche sets the scene(s) in which his characters tell the audience his philosophy. Nietzsche typically speaks through a singu-lar individual, whether that be Zarathustra in *Zarathustra* or The Madman in *The Gay Science*. When Zarathustra brings the word of God's death to the masses, the fo-cus is always squarely on him, the *one person* who does some great heroic deed or speaks with philosophical insight. The significance of this device is brought into relief by comparison. Hegel, in contrast, seeks to "bring Philosophy closer to the form of Science" and writes with a systematic but opaque style.[16] Marxist dialectical materialism, whether it is in *The Communist Manifesto* or *Das Kapital*, focuses on "class warfare" in a similar way. Marx is quite explicit in the depersonalization in-herent in his philosophy. The subsumption of the indi-vidual into classes is a necessary part of the paradigm, writing: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" in *The Communist Manifes-to*.[17]

Nietzsche's literary focus on individual characters and how they affect the story and history is only part of his overall emphasis on how we are free to be uniquely our-selves after God. The second component of his work in this regard is in his writings on the Übermensch ("Over-man"). Hegel, somewhat surprisingly, found himself in

awe of what he saw as a "world-soul … who … reaches out over the world and masters it" in Napoleon.[18] His awe is unexpected because it cuts against Hegel's framework that history is moved and created by unceasing dialectical processes rather than people. This is precisely Nietzsche's view. However, the Overman is not a caricatured warlord or petty dictator who seeks exclusively to dominate others. The Overman is part of a larger society that humanity will eventually reach. As society chaotically moves forward, certain Overmen will begin to transcend beyond being human, all too human. In such a society, we would see our present humanity as a bridge to a better society. Crucially, the responsibility for reaching this society is not externalized onto "the proletariat" or "the Geist" but calls the reader to action. We are asked by Zarathustra: "What have you done to overcome [humanity]?"[19] The focus continues to remain on us to act and fill God's void.

One might argue that this Overman society is an example of history moving "forward," which would contradict Nietzsche's earlier question "Whither are we moving? … Backward, sideward. forward. in all directions?" However, Nietzsche discusses the kind of humanity that will arise from the death of God, not the manner of society that will be formed by them. Nietzsche gives little idea about the societal structure of the society of the Overmen, be it hierarchical, egalitarian, democratic or monarchical. For him, it is not an end to history, but part of the continual process of historical disclosure.

Nietzsche's third and most explicit way of showing his emphasis on personal praxis lies not in *The Gay Science* or *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, but in *The Will to Power*, a manuscript published posthumously in 1901 and again in 1906. Hints of his aims can be seen in his other works, such as when he tells his readers to "live dangerously" and instructs the audience to "be robbers and conquerors" in *Zarathustra*.[20] However, in *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche finally lays the individual ego as one of his philosophy's cornerstones. He writes: "Insight: all evaluation is made from a definite perspective: that of the preservation of the individual, a community, a race, a state, a church, a faith, a culture … he raises himself to justice—to comprehension beyond esteeming things good and evil."[21] It is clear that Nietzsche's framework prioritizes the "evaluation" of the individual over that of the collective. He fervently argues for the reader to realize that one can, and should, seek their own will to power. He writes "...you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!"[22] This passage shows the definitive break he had with the earlier German idealists and is a particular rebuke of Schopenhauer, who suggested that individuals seek to destroy the will. Willing oneself to power is not a collective pursuit, for Nietzsche and is, in fact, necessarily a rivalrous one: "The great man

feels his *power* over a people."[23] He writes derogatorily of slave morality and the equality that accompanies it: "Egoism! … everyone unconsciously thinks every ego is equal to every other ego. This is a consequence of the slaves' theory of *suffrage universal* and 'equality.'"[24] These writings paint a more complete picture of his temporal structure, one without direction that can be altered by anyone with the singular will strong enough to change humanity's trajectory.

Nietzsche's Temporal Implications

Nietzsche's philosophical totality is not without sizable gaps. His framework is openly nihilistic with little room for meaning, transcendental or not. Frustratingly, Nietzsche gives little clear guidance on how The will to power should manifest itself in the reader's life. Nietzsche's very own model, Zarathustra himself, ends with his legacy still unfulfilled. Zarathustra's aphoristic style even seems contradictory at intervals, a charge that Nietzsche might even concede. *The Will to Power* praises "the wisest man" who, Nietzsche believes: "would be the one richest in contradictions."[25] The paradigm Nietzsche creates is not a systematic examination of ethics. However, his thoughts on Time and individuality are often tragically misunderstood. This is particularly true in how he views the death of God, which I would argue is a robust philosophical conjecture.

It is a common misperception that Nietzsche glorified and reveled in the death of God, but as I have argued, he instead viewed it as a watershed moment in Time. For Nietzsche, this change may be—but is not necessarily—a positive good. "Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it" is written as a challenge to be met but can also be read as a threat.[26] A plain-text reading of the Madman's speech in *The Gay Science* does not leave the reader with joyful auspices for the future. It is interesting to note, although perhaps unsurprising, that Nietzsche puts himself (the killer of God and the messenger of His death) at the fulcrum of history on which our very conception of Time itself shifts.

The main question that remains is whether Nietzsche's notion of Time and individuality is accurate. On a metaphysical level, I would argue it holds up to serious scrutiny. There are two schools of thought that Nietzsche responded to and against which his thought should be compared: dialectical progressivism and cyclical stasis. Hegel's dialectical idealism was highly influential in Nietzsche's day, both politically and intellectually. However, his predictions carry less weight as his socio-political engine of "progress" no longer appears inevitable. Some might argue that "progress" has slowed or reversed. The Prussian-German monarch that Hegel

adored was overthrown, with little advancement made. The restoration projects of the German nation-state in the 20th century left millions of corpses, and an entire continent decimated. Our modern electoral processes do not appear to fit the mold of progressive synthesis. Political parties and voters behave haphazardly, almost as if they were unfocused.

The outgrowth of dialectical Idealism and dialectical materialism slowed significantly after 1989 with the Soviet Union's collapse. However, the promise of a peaceful communist end-of-history ended earlier in 1968 in Prague when Leonid Brezhnev sent Soviet troops to quell the Czechoslovakian reform attempts. Marx's "specter of Europe" was but a ghost.

Conversely, the Kantian and Schopenhauerian temporal framework of the static or cyclical "thing-in-itself" seems inaccurate. The "thing-in-itself" may indeed be beyond our reach, but we phenomenologically do experience meaningful changes in history and time, which cannot be ignored. This notion was capitalized on by Freud and Heidegger, who both contend that rather than focusing on the Kantian noumenal, philosophical examination should focus on thorough self-examination and ontology. Neither the static nor cyclical views of Time adequately account for the historical and personal trends that shape our being.

The Nietzschean answer appears more compelling: the death of God fundamentally changed our conception of Time and individuality. Before that event, history was in a state of stasis. Admittedly, kings died, and territory changed hands, but this did little to affect the overall epoch's *regime* of kingship, warfare and religiosity. "Slave morality" reigned. Over and over again, masses lived and died at the hands of rulers claiming divinity or who derived their authority from the gods. The death of God shook this concrete pillar of civilization, and with it, our conception of history itself. It threw us into a chaotic and uncertain reality where individual will is now prominent.

The phenomenologically-experienced world seems to match Nietzsche's philosophical predictions. Restricting our historical focus to the Western civilization, the culture and geography Nietzsche inhabited, we see that Time, metaphysically, has changed. It is more chaotic. Before the death of God, regimes persevered through great political, economic and sociological struggles. Ancient Egypt, from the reign of Narmer until the mid-4th century, maintained its authority for nearly 30 centuries.[27] Egyptian rule was not universally constant, but yet powerfully static in comparison to modern nation-states. The Roman era, characterized generously as beginning with the Roman Kingdom in 753 B.C. until

the fall of Rome in 476 A.D., endured for around 1,500 years. The Byzantines managed to continue for another thousand years afterward, indicating the lasting power of the Greco-Roman civilization.[28]

After the death of God, though, regimes and entire paradigms collapsed practically instantaneously. Politically, the Third Reich, characterized as an instantiation of the Roman Empire, lasted little more than a decade. Napoleon, a man so world-historical even Hegel took notice of his influence, was emperor for less than ten years. Modern democratic elections typically cycle through candidates within eight years or less. The primary modern economic system, capitalism, requires constant "creative destruction" by rewarding individual breakthroughs to function properly. Technological obsolescence forces rapid change, often at startling speeds. Stability is so unusual, in fact, that regimes such as Putin's Russia, Xi Jinping's China or Kim Jong Un's North Korea are examples of modern political *failures*. Our globalized world is not Hegel's stable "end-of-history" nor Kantian stasis. Quite the opposite, the modern world is a rootless one that is "plunging continually, Backwards, sideward, forward in all directions," as Nietzsche wrote.

Nietzsche's work on Time and the individual requires serious consideration. Both have significant ramifications for the way we view ourselves and the age we live in. His temporal paradigm challenged Marxism, and while this may have regrettably exposed his work to co-optation by right-wing nationalists, his thought was also used by anarchists and revolutionaries.[29] While Nietzsche's musings on Time and individuality are interesting in their own right, I argue these philosophical concepts are most robustly understood as being linked. The connective tissue between these two is the death of God, properly understood as a historical event upon which the two metaphysical eras turn. Hegel's work in these fields had a massive impact on the socio-political landscape, but the influence of Nietzsche's work is difficult to overstate. While Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Marx's grand systems are bold and daring attempts at explaining the world, many of their historical conceptions have lost their intellectual luster. In contrast, Nietzsche's emphasis on the seismic impact of the death of God and the way it empowers our individual agency in the development of history continues to resonate to this day.

Notes

1. Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Peter Fritzsche. Nietzsche and the Death of God: Selected Writings. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2013.
2. Dries, Manuel. Nietzsche on Time and History. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008.
3. For other literature on Nietzsche and his conceptions of the

connection between the death of God and Temporality, see Tragedy, Recognition and the death of God: studies in Hegel and Nietzsche and On 'Untimeliness': Temporal Structures in Nietzsche.

4. Stang, Nicholas F., "Kant's Transcendental Idealism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), retrieved from: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/kant-transcendental-idealism.

5. Schopenhauer, Arthur. The World as Will and Idea. Vol 3. Sixth ed. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1909.

6. Beck, Gunnar. "From Kant to Hegel—Johann Gottlieb Fichte's theory of self-consciousness." History of European Ideas, 22:4, 275-294. 1996. DOI: 10.1016/S0191-6599(96)00006-X

7. Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Daniel Breazeale, and R. J. Hollingdale. Untimely Meditations, 104. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 1997.

8. Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Walter Kaufmann. Essay. In The Gay Science; with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs, 125. New York: Random House, 1974.

9. Ibid.

10. Nietzsche. The Gay Science, 126.

11. Nietzsche, Friedrich. Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None (ebook #1998). Translated by Thomas Common. Project Gutenburg, 1999.

12. Nietzsche. The Gay Science, 79.

13. World Heritage Encyclopedia. "Eternal Return." World Heritage Encyclopedia, n.d.

14. Nietzsche. The Gay Science, 228.

15. Weiss, Frederick G. Hegel: the Essential Writings. New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1974.

16. Hegel, G. W. F. Phenomenology of Spirit. Translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

17. Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. The Communist Manifesto. Translated by David McLellan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

18. Taylor, Jonathan. Mastery and Slavery in Victorian Writing, 69. Basingstoke, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003..

19. Nietzsche. Thus Spake Zarathustra.

20. Nietzsche. Thus Spake Zarathustra.

21. Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Walter Arnold Kaufmann, and R. J. Hollingdale. The Will to Power: a New Translation, 149. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1968.

22. Nietzsche. The Will to Power, 550.

23. Nietzsche. The Will to Power, 506.

24. Nietzsche. The Will to Power, 198.

25. Nietzsche. The Will to Power, 150.

26. Nietzsche. The Gay Science, 125.

27. History.com Editors. "Ancient Egypt." History.com. A&E Television Networks, October 14, 2009. Retrieved from: https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/ancient-egypt

28. The Fall of Constantinople in 1453 is a well-established end date for the Byzantine Empire. However, the precise dates of the beginning and end of ancient cultures and dynasties is less crucial than the broader stable system of monarchical rule. The dates for the establishment and end of Egyptian or Roman rule are, admittedly, not exact.

29. Holub, Robert C. "Nietzsche: Socialist, Anarchist, Feminist."

German Culture in Nineteenth-Century America: Reception, Adaptation, Transformation (2005): 129-49.

Bibliography

Beck, Gunnar. "From Kant to Hegel—Johann Gottlieb Fichte's theory of self-consciousness." *History of European Ideas*, 22:4, 275-294. 1996. DOI: 10.1016/S0191-6599(96)00006-X

Dries, Manuel. *Nietzsche on Time and History*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008.

Hegel, G. W. F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Holub, Robert C. "Nietzsche: Socialist, Anarchist, Feminist." *German Culture in Nineteenth-Century America: Reception, Adaptation, Transformation* (2005): 129-49.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. Translated by David McLellan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (ebook #1998). Translated by Thomas Common. Project Gutenburg, 1999.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Daniel Breazeale, and R. J. Hollingdale. *Untimely Meditations*, 104. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 1997.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Peter Fritzsche. *Nietzsche and the Death of God: Selected Writings*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2013.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Walter Kaufmann. *The Gay Science; with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, 125. New York: Random House, 1974.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Walter Arnold Kaufmann, and R. J. Hollingdale. *The Will to Power: a New Translation*, 149. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1968.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Idea*. Vol 3. Sixth ed. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1909.

Taylor, Jonathan. *Mastery and Slavery in Victorian Writing*, 69. Basingstoke, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Weiss, Frederick G. *Hegel: the Essential Writings*. New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1974.

Perfectionism and Ableism

Amanda Lopatin

Perfectionism is a theory of well-being which states that well-being is based on human nature: a person's well-being is correlated with the extent to which they develop their characteristically human features. One concern is that perfectionism is an ableist theory of well-being—that it automatically caps the well-being of certain individuals based on their (lack of) physical and mental capabilities. If this is true, it is a problem because this account of well-being does not match the experiences of people who are disabled.[1] For example, the American Deaf Community has a rich and vibrant culture. Many people who are deaf believe that their deafness enriches their lives, opt not to undergo procedures in order to hear, and choose to have deaf children. It seems that many such people would reject the idea that their well-being is lower than that of a similarly situated hearing person.

I argue that though at first it seems that perfectionism can be modified such that it is not inherently ableist, this modification does not succeed. I first motivate a definition of perfectionism which holds that features are relevant to well-being proportionally to how different humans would be if they never had that feature. I then explain how well-being can be measured such that a disabled person's well-being is not automatically limited. Next, I argue that this version of perfectionism creates new problems that the theory cannot handle, and thus that perfectionism (as it can best be defended) is ableist. Finally, I show that perfectionism leads to troubling results when used in a consequentialist theory of right action, and thus we should not accept it as an account of well-being.

Whether or not perfectionism is indeed ableist depends on which features the theory identifies as relevantly characteristic of human nature. One feature that is not up for debate is rationality. Perfectionists generally hold that practical rationality, the capacity to design and carry out plans to accomplish goals, and theoretical rationality, the capacity to pursue academic knowledge, are characteristic human features.[2] In addition to rationality, many perfectionists also believe that embodiment, taking up physical space, is characteristic of human nature. I agree that embodiment is characteristically human, but I think we need to be more specific.

What does it mean to take up space in a characteristically human way? I argue that characteristic human

features are features that make humans different in some non-arbitrary way. We can identify them by imagining what humans might have been like if we never had certain features. For example, humans have opposable thumbs, allowing us to grasp and manipulate objects. Any individual human could lack this feature, but if humans had never had thumbs, we would be very different creatures. Unable to grasp objects, we would have invented very different tools, and with these different tools, we would have built different societies. Some scholars believe that the fine motor skills made possible by the thumb contributed to the development of the human brain.[3] Humanity would look very different if humans never had thumbs. Contrast this with a less relevant feature, like having eyebrows. If humans never had eyebrows, we may have gotten more sweat in our eyes, but this would not have influenced the basic facts of human life. We can use this test on all of our features: if humans never had some feature, (how) would we be different? The more different we would be, the more the feature is characteristic of human nature.[4] This test even accounts for rationality, the one undisputed characteristic feature of human nature, as well as human capacities for knowledge and friendship. The test also gets directly to the heart of what is intuitively appealing about perfectionism: if well-being is based on what it means to be human, then the factors that contribute to well-being ought to be those that *make* us human and not some other creature. Perfectionism, then, claims that a person's well-being is correlated with the extent to which they develop the features without which humans would be meaningfully different.

Under this definition, perfectionism has two options in evaluating well-being. The first option is extrospective evaluation: comparing each person to some ideal human who has developed their human features as much as possible. Under this evaluation, well-being is a test with several categories, and having a disability gets you an automatic zero on the given category, lowering your final score. As a result, disabled people automatically have capped well-being. The second option is introspective evaluation: comparing each person to their own capabilities, the extent to which their own features are capable of development. With this evaluation, a disability means the relevant test section is thrown out and does not factor into your final score.

Let's consider how each of these options evaluates the example of Paulie, who lost both of his legs while serving as a marine in Afghanistan. Paulie experiences chronic pain, but he is also a decorated Paralympic wheelchair racer and considers himself to be flourishing. Using an extrospective evaluation, losing his legs likely decreased Paulie's well-being because legs are an essential human feature. It is possible that Paulie's

well-being has stayed constant or increased. If he is now developing his other characteristically human features more, this could outweigh the well-being he lost. However, having legs is extremely relevant to human nature—if humans had never had legs, we would be radically different—so it seems difficult to make up the lost well-being. In contrast, an introspective evaluation finds that Paulie's well-being has increased. Having lost his legs, leg-related features and achievements are removed from the well-being equation. As a Paralympic athlete, Paulie is now developing his capacities for competitiveness and achievement, so his well-being increased. This introspective evaluation is consistent with perfectionism, aligns Paulie's experience of his own well-being, and avoids inherent ableism.

Though it at first seems that perfectionism can use introspective evaluations to avoid ableism, these evaluations create other problems for the theory. Specifically, introspective evaluations fail to show that well-being decreases when we are ailing and even counterintuitively suggest that well-being increases with physical and cognitive decline.

One problem for introspective evaluations is their inability to show that an ailing person has lower well-being. Consider a person with serious depression. They may be severely incapacitated—only able focus on

a task for a few minutes at time or only able to bring themselves to shower once a week. But as long as they are doing everything they can, an introspective evaluation would say they are thriving.

A perfectionist could respond that the capabilities included in an introspective evaluation do not constantly update—a person's capabilities are determined at some point (presumably when they are healthy) and their well-being is assessed introspectively, but relative to their capabilities at this one point. While this response may at first look attractive, it results in a theory that is still ableist—just only for acquired (non-congenital) disabilities. This result can be defended by the notion that people born with a disability don't know what they're missing out on and that people who acquire a disability do, but this is not always the case. Perhaps a person becomes disabled as a young child, and eventually they do not remember life before the disability. Even for people who become disabled as adults, it seems that many have the capability to adapt and adjust to their new life, as happened in Paulie's example. If we accept this response from the perfectionist, Paulie's well-being would decrease after losing his legs, even though introspective evaluations were proposed specifically to avoid this result.

Not only do introspective evaluations fail to explain why

an ailing person's well-being *de*creases, they in fact suggest that an ailing or disabled person's well-being *in*creases—that it is better to lack a feature altogether than to fail to develop that feature. For example, introspective evaluations seem to suggest that, all else equal, a person has higher well-being if they are infertile than if they are capable of pregnancy and do not have children.[5] Bearing children is relevantly characteristic of humans; if humans never bore children, we would be very different creatures – we would not even exist. So, a person has higher well-being if they develop their capability to reproduce by having children and lower well-being if they leave this capability undeveloped. Take, for example, two women: Juna (who is infertile) and Jane (who is fertile). Assume that the facts of their lives are the same (aside from fertility) and that neither actually wants to have children. An introspective evaluation tells us that Juna has higher well-being than Jane in virtue of her being infertile because bearing children is completely removed from the calculation of her well-being while this factor remains in play (and unsatisfied) for Jane.

This result seems wrong for two reasons. First, even with no differences in their actual lives, the two women have different levels of well-being. We could even assume that neither Juna nor Jane knows the state of her (in)fertility (so there's no chance that Jane's well-being

is lowered by some sort of guilt for her decision not to have children). With this stipulation, we have two people who to their knowledge are exactly the same, but they have different levels of well-being. Next, it seems odd that a person should be attributed higher well-being *because* they lack a certain capability. If ableism is a problem for extrospective evaluations, dis-ableism (automatically *boosting* individuals' well-being based on their lack of physical or mental capabilities) is a problem for introspective evaluations. So, introspective evaluations are not a viable version of perfectionism. Perfectionists must, therefore, evaluate well-being extrospectively—that is, in an ableist fashion. Of course, the well-being of a disabled person does not depend solely on their disability. But all else held constant, an able-bodied person will have higher well-being than a disabled person.

Perhaps this should not be troubling. Maybe the intuitions of some disabled people, that their well-being is enhanced rather than diminished by their disability, are wrong. But even if perfectionism offers an accurate account of well-being, there are troubling results when it is plugged into a theory of right action. Take, for example, perfectionist consequentialism. Such a theory claims that an action is right if it produces the best consequences (the best consequences being the ones which produce the most well-being) and well-being is

calculated using perfectionism. This theory of right action would cause us to favor able-bodied people over disabled people. It would claim that because able-bodied people have the capacity for higher well-being, we should invest our efforts in raising their well-being and should neglect disabled people because even our best efforts to increase their well-being would not allow them to rival able-bodied people. While this may not be the obvious result in every circumstance, it is in one key example. If forced to choose between saving the life of an able-bodied person or saving the life of a disabled person, a perfectionist consequentialist would save the life of the able-bodied person because of their higher capacity for well-being. Perhaps perfectionist consequentialism would even encourage feticide or infanticide of a disabled baby in order to make room in a family for an additional able-bodied child instead. These results are disturbing because they contradict the notions that people are equally deserving of respect and dignity and that we should help people who are disadvantaged.

I have argued that the most viable form of perfectionism is an ableist one. While perfectionism can avoid ableism by using introspective evaluations, this version of the view is unable to show that well-being decreases when we are ailing and even suggests that well-being increases with physical and cognitive decline. The version of perfectionism that remains, one that uses extrospective evaluations, is ableist. This is a problem both because an ableist theory contradicts intuitions of well-being and because it produces troubling results when plugged into consequentialism. As a result, we should reject perfectionism.

Notes

1. I am aware that the term disabled has negative connotations, but I use it intentionally. The term "disabled" fits well with the social model of disability which holds that disability is not something in your mind/body that needs to be fixed, but is instead something which arises from encounters that a person has in/with a society that does not accommodate them. According to this model, a person is impaired, and this impairment becomes a disability when the world is set up such that it does not accommodate for the impairment. I use the term "disabled" with this model in mind.

2. Bradford 2016, 127.

3. Adler 2020

4. Presumably there is some threshold that determines whether or not lacking a certain feature would substantially change what it means to be human, but determining where these boundaries lie is not the goal of this paper.

5. While infertility may not be a prototypical disability, I consider it fair game because it is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Bibliography

Adler, Jerry. "Why Do Humans Have Thumbs?" Smithsonian Magazine. Accessed March 25, 2021. www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/why-do-humans-have-thumbs-180953393/.

Bradford, Gwen. "Perfectionism." In The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-Being, 124-134. Edited by Guy Fletcher. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016.

Appeals to Reason:
The Consolations of Stoic Dialectic and
Theory in Cicero's Tusculan Disputations
Gabriel Sánchez Ainsa

Introduction

On March 45 BCE, only a few months before he wrote his *Tusculan Disputations* (*TD*), Cicero wrote to his confidant: "Atticus, everything is over with me, everything, and has been for long enough, but now I admit it, having lost the one link that held me."[1] These are the self-assessments of a father whose daughter had died weeks earlier. Here we see the legendary former Roman consul confessing that he has lost everything he found valuable and that he stands as far away from happiness as possible.

Cicero's grief, or luctus, reveals a complex structure of beliefs, and to combat his grief, he tells us that he took to writing philosophical works, including his *Tusculans*.[2] In this essay, I shall argue that reading *TD* as belonging to the consolation genre—as Cicero seems to want us to—explains the Stoic content and dialectical form of book V. For Cicero, the analytical strength

of Stoic theory and syllogisms provides a robust theoretical groundwork necessary for comforting a person who has lost a loved one. Therefore, my purpose in this essay is twofold: to demonstrate that Cicero's writing, against some interpretations, does contain rigorous philosophical discourse, and to provide an example of how philosophy and argument can enrich and benefit human life.

To explore these claims, this essay first provides Cicero's intellectual background and philosophical method employed in the *Tusculans*. Secondly, I outline the Stoic-Ciceronian theory of *luctus*, followed by a discussion of consolation and Cicero's failed *Consolatio*. Lastly, I focus on the most powerful arguments in *TD* V (sections 37-44) for the Stoic theses (that "virtue is sufficient for a good life" and that "virtue is the only good") in order to examine their role in consolation. I will defend the claim that the Stoics' theory of emotions relies on Stoic theses of happiness and goods, and show that, since Cicero looks for comfort in the former, he must defend the latter two. I conclude by suggesting that the philosophical therapy presented in the *TD* requires a certain style of writing: rather than the oratorical techniques of the Peripatetics, the dialectical method of analytical and consistent argumentation championed by the Stoics.

Cicero's Intellectual Background in the Tusculans

By the time that Cicero wrote his works on ethics, like *De Finibus*, *Tusculan Disputations*, and others, Greek philosophy had flourished and diversified. The Classical and Hellenistic age saw the rise of a variety of schools of thought, each advocating for a distinct system of logic, physics, ethics, and way of life.[3] As such, the Hellenistic schools are individuated by their views on the happy life and human good and how they argued to those ends—to be a Stoic meant to believe that moral virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness; to an Epicurean, freedom from anxiety; to a Skeptic, suspension of judgment. Accordingly, somebody like Cicero, writing about the end of human life, had many options to choose from and many arguments for and against each of them.

Furthermore, in Cicero's lifetime, the Academy itself saw a split between the methods and doctrines of the "Old Academy," whose champion in the first-century was Antiochus of Ascalon and his Roman student Marcus Brutus, and the "New Academy," represented at the time by Philo of Larissa. It is beyond the scope of this paper to completely assess the historical background, but I should note how Cicero judges this split to manifest in ethics. What defines the Old Academy is a return to the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, and so, Cicero seems to often collect all Old Academics, Platonists,

and Aristotelians under the label of the "Peripatetics," especially when he contrasts them with the Stoics. According to the Peripatetics, the human good is constituted of psychic goods (e.g., virtue), bodily goods (e.g., health), and external goods (e.g., wealth, love, etc.). Note how the Peripatetics, then, are in direct opposition to the Stoics in their theory of value and happiness, for whom virtue is the sole good. Included in the Peripatetic school are Theophrastus, Crantor, and Antiochus, but, as we shall see, there are subtle differences between these notable members. The New Academy, on the other hand, presented not a set of doctrines as much as an argumentative method of skepticism. New Academics suspend their judgments for the sake of argument, offer critiques of others' dogmatic views, and inquire into the truth dialectically in the manner of Socrates. Cicero studied under both Antiochus and Philo, and eventually followed the latter and came identify with the New Academy.

With this historical background in mind, we should address the method which Cicero takes in the *TD*. Cicero splits the *TD* into five books, each depicting a dialogue between Cicero and his student "A." The structure of each book is parallel: A proposes a thesis at the beginning of each book ("death is an evil"; "pain is an evil"; "the good person feels distress"; "the good person feels passions"; and, finally, "virtue is not sufficient for

a good life") and then Cicero seeks to argue against it. He approaches each thesis through the style of the New Academy: examining both sides of the issue and choosing whichever seems more likely to be true.[4] Thus, even though he often takes the side of the Stoics, Cicero adopts the skeptical method that began when Arcesilaus took over the Academy, continued with Cerneades, and reached Cicero through Philo of Larissa.[5] Imitating these thinkers, he commits to the Socratic method of looking for "what seems true" (*simillimum veri*) by examining the different views on a particular thesis.[6] Because of this on-going dialogue of ideas in the *TD*, whether it be with his interlocutor or just the battling of Peripatetic and Stoic theses, Cicero can evaluate each theory based on how effectively they solve the problem at hand and how likely they are to be true.

This *eclectic* method makes his work unique among philosophers of this period.[7] For our purposes, there are two mains reasons to pay attention to his method. First, the New Academy had historically taken the role of umpire in the debate between Stoics and Peripatetics, and so Cicero can engage with their arguments fully and assess their validity without fearing inconsistency.[8] Second, the theses addressed in the *Tusculans* clearly spoke to him personally at the time; thus, Cicero's assessment of these arguments *pro* and *contra* provides

a unique perspective into the value of the Stoic and Peripatetic (and, occasionally, Epicurean) doctrines. For a theory cannot be valid if it yields false conclusions; a good theory of human life must provide an outline of living well and cannot fail to heal our sorrows.[9] If Stoic or Peripatetic theory contradicts Cicero's experience, if their therapies cannot cure his soul, then he is, and we are as well, justified in abandoning whichever doctrine fails. And there can be no doubt that *TD* belongs to the *consolation* genre, as Cicero's last line suggests that he had the intention of comforting himself: "I could have found no other relief for my most bitter and various sorrows and grievances coming from all places."[10] On the other hand, for reasons which we shall explore later, we should not simply regard this text as another *Consolatio*.[11] Nor should we regard this work as another oration sine ratio which soothes the soul solely through rhetorical means. Written after the ethical work of *De Finibus*, *TD* deals with the Hellenistic theories with rigorous analysis; thus, we can subject Cicero and his arguments to the same analysis and expect a certain degree of theoretical consistency. That is, T*usculan Disputations* awakens philosophical interest because it shows how a non-philosopher may engage in philosophical practice to improve the quality of human life. Cicero portrays himself as a human being dealing with human affairs through therapeutic arguments.

Ciceronian Emotion

Having outlined the general themes and background of *TD*, let us begin our inquiry. We should start with a question of definition: what are emotions or the so-called "passions" (*pathē* in Greek, *perturbationes* in Cicero's Latin)? In *TD* III-IV, Cicero lays out a "cognitive thesis of the passions," often associated with the third-century Stoic Chryssipus. According to this theory, human emotions come about from our structures of beliefs and judgments about what matters to us most deeply.[12] In this Stoic-Ciceronian view, a passion is an "upheaval of the soul" brought about by some "belief of good or evil."[13] To *feel* such-and-such emotion about so-and-so is, in part, to *think* that so-and-so is quite good or bad for me, linking each emotion to some cognitive evaluation.

In particular, the family of emotions of anxiety, distress, and mental pain, all of which jointly translate and capture the semantic field of the Ciceronian Latin *aegritudo*, come from the belief that there is some present evil which the patient considers worthy of suffering. A person feeling aegritudo must think "so-and-so is a great evil for me" and "I ought to suffer it." As such, *luctus* is a sub-species of *aegritudo* and has the same type of cognitive structure. In fact, such judgments seem to plague some of Cicero's letters to Atticus of this time. We have already seen how Cicero thinks that the death

of Tullia is a great evil in his letters to Atticus of March 45 BCE, but he is also familiar with the belief that he should *hurt*. He tells us of a shrine that he wanted to build for Tullia, and he speaks of it as a duty and obligation.[14] Elsewhere, he says that even if he could get rid of his pain, he would not.[15] In some twisted way, Cicero thinks it right for him to be in mental pain—he *wills* the suffering. Once we take these into account, we may suspect Cicero's person relation to Stoic theory and why he chose to follow it here. After all, since the Stoic theory accounts for his own experience, it would seem rational for him to favor it as a framework.

Let us return to the *Tusculans*. Having provided a general definition of passions and *aegritudo*, Cicero suggests a refined definition for *luctus*: it is "the *aegritudo* caused by the bitter death of loved one."[16] The implication here is that the griever has the belief that the death of the loved one is a present evil worth suffering for. It is worth noting, though, that Cicero provides at least two ways of interpreting how the death of a loved one may be an evil: it could be an evil for the dead loved one herself and/or an evil for the living lover. The former possibility has already appeared in the Tusculans, when Cicero assessed the argument that death is an evil because it deprives our loved ones of the comfort of life.[17] However, he challenges this belief throughout book one, arguing that death is *not* an evil for the dead.

To assess these arguments is beyond the scope of this paper; all I shall note is that, by arguing that death is not an evil for the dead, Cicero has already taken care of the first type of luctus. If death is to be an evil, it is not because it harms the dead but those who must live on.

The luctus we are left with, then, is the personal one which Cicero speaks of both in his letters and whenever he mentions his being deprived of "the consolations of family life" in *TD*.[18] In addition, the griever experiencing this second kind of luctus believes that she loves her deceased loved one more than she loves herself.[19] If this griever believes that the life of her loved one is more lovable than her own, then she must also believe that the presence, company, and well-being of her loved one are of so much value to her compared to her own well-being that, once the loss takes place, she should devote her life to mourning and even constructing shrines across her country. The griever would not desire a good life for themselves if it meant not being able to suffer for the loss of her loved one. Hence, luctus requires a certain pain and aversion to happiness.

However, in the Stoic-Ciceronian framework, all these beliefs constituting the passion are false. Michael Frede has noted that the Hellenistic philosophers have a notion of natural or "right reason" (recta ratio): rationality is not only the faculty of information-processing and

inference-drawing, as it is for the moderns, but it also contains certain logical truths within itself.[20] This is to say, there exist some propositions about the universe which our minds acquire from and by nature. There are natural tautologies. In fact, we see these notions in *TD*: Cicero's definition of a passion as "contrary to right reason" (*aversa recta ratione)* and "against nature" (*contra naturam*) implies that the causal belief of each passion goes against Frede's natural reason.[21] The passions, Cicero concludes (following the Stoics), are normatively problematic, that is, they are "wrong" because they involve false propositions about what is naturally good or evil for us. To treat *luctus*, then, a comforter must prove false this belief the loved one's death is an evil for which we should suffer and which should take away our happiness.

Consolation

Before we examine how the structure of *luctus* influences Cicero's arguments in *TD* V, we should analyze Cicero's first therapeutic attempts. In 3.76, he lists the treatments suggested by different philosophers, from Stoics to Epicureans. Cicero tells us that he attempted all of them in another (lost) work of his, the Consolatio. He wrote this treatise to himself merely weeks after Tullia's death, even though he was aware that Chryssipus warned that philosophical treatments should not be applied during convalescence from recent wounds.[22]

In his letters, Cicero admits that the *Consolatio* is not bringing him enough comfort or benefit.[23] He seems to allude to this in *TD* 3.76 when he clarifies that these methods must be used at the right time. Even the reliable Chryssipean method of persuading an emotional person that feeling passions is wrong is not useful in this time of distress—for how could we convince a mourner attached to their luctus that they should not feel it?[24] *Consolatio* was Cicero's attempt to comfort himself, but it partly failed because he had not waited long enough before writing it: his wound was too fresh. *TD* may be a second attempt, for the methods which he had used before can only be applied once the person has had some time to recover.

There is another relevant difference between *TD* and *Consolatio*, though. Margaret Graver notes that, based on what we know of this lost work, Consolatio follows the Crantorian tradition: a more Academic-Peripatetic approach in form and content.[25] Crantor emphasized that emotions are natural, implying that they should be felt and that treatment consists in regulating aegritudo.[26] In the TD, Cicero, though still owing a debt to Crantor's influence on the larger consolatory tradition, moves away from the Crantorian position on emotions.[27] He stands closer to the Stoics by arguing, with them, that emotions are not natural and should be extirpated. In fact, his preferred treatments appeal to the Stoic cogni-

tive thesis of passions: they remove luctus by changing its causal beliefs.[28] For Cicero, even the natural method of letting time heal our wounds is essentially about the restructuring of cognitions of the mourner. Time gives experience and chance for reflection, and these allow mourners to reassess their value-commitments once they get a better grasp of the larger picture and recognize that such events are "by no means bad enough to overturn a good life."[29] Nevertheless, what if there are things which are worth suffering for and which may destroy happiness, as Crantor and Theophrastus claim in 3.71 and 5.24, respectively? If Consolatio stands closer to Crantor, it would struggle to provide comfort, for these Academics think it natural to feel luctus. On the other hand, if the more Stoic *TD* proves that there is no such evil worth unhappiness, then this work may solidify through intellectual discourse the healing which time has granted to Cicero.[30]

Passions, Goods, and Logical Fallacies

In fact, Cicero attempts this therapy via the analytical defense of the Stoic thesis of happiness (virtue is sufficient for a happy life) of *TD* V. Yet, in the proem addressed to Brutus, Cicero, reflecting on his grief due to external circumstances, appears to slightly doubt this thesis:

Or on the other hand, if virtue is subject to many un-

certainties of chance and the handmaid of fortune, if it is not strong enough to protect itself, I fear that it would seem that we should be putting our prayers rather than placing our faith in virtue. For my part, reflecting by myself on those events of chance in which fortune has fiercely tried me, I begin to doubt this thesis [that virtue is sufficient for a good life] and dread the fragility and weakness of human beings.[31]

This comment inserts a therapeutic mission to *TD* V, giving it a persuasive power which a rawer argument would lack. If he can prove that virtue brings happiness, and if Philosophy is the "explorer of virtue and expeller of vice," then Philosophy can comfort a Cicero who has "taken refuge in [philosophy] amidst these terrible misfortunes."[32] Following observations along these lines, Douglas argues for this distinction between *TD* V and *De Finibus* IV-V: in the latter, Cicero can more freely argue against the Stoics and grant more ground to the Peripatetics, but the writer of the awe-inspiring "hymn to Philosophy" in *TD* V is completely committed to her promise and needs to believe that virtue is enough for happiness.[33] This commitment to Philosophy is one to therapeutic arguments. While we explore the arguments in this book, we should remember the commitments under which they operate.

Cicero's first argument (from the freedom from pas-

sion) relies on his results in *TD* IV and appears there.[34] We can see here the logical link between his treatment of the passions and the Stoic thesis of happiness. The syllogism is:[35]

(**A1**) If a person has virtue, then she must have freedom from passions

(**A2**) If a person has freedom from passions, the she must have happiness

Therefore, (**A3**) if a person has virtue, then she must have happiness.

This would seem a satisfactory proof of the thesis that "virtue is sufficient for a good life," as Cicero's interlocutor thinks. But immediately after, Cicero points out that there exists a *bi-conditional* relationship between the Stoic theses of goods and happiness: if virtue is the sole good and vice the sole evil, then virtue is sufficient for happiness; conversely, if virtue is sufficient for happiness, then virtue is the sole good and vice is the sole evil.[36] Cicero compares his argument to that of a mathematician: "if there is anything pertaining to their [i.e., the mathematician's] thesis which they have previously showed, this they take for conceded and proved; in this way, they only demonstrate those arguments about which nothing has been previously written."[37] In contrast, philosophers wish to put everything before the audience and do not assume any lemmas. This com-

parison is not a mere stylistic lesson from Cicero to his interlocutor—it suggests a deeper logical problem for Cicero and the method of the Stoics. He points out that the Stoics, as meticulous dialecticians, prove both their theses of good and of happiness independently from each other: "for each subject must be dealt with their own demarcations and arguments."[38] If they were not careful to treat them separately, though, they would risk either being inconsistent or committing a logical fallacy. As we shall see, for Cicero, this observation reveals the larger logical structure of his arguments and those of his Peripatetic and Antiochean adversaries.

At this point of book V, this bi-conditional is merely a logical relationship which Cicero uses as a metric for consistency for the different positions. Of course, the Stoics consistently consider both theses true. Cicero contrasts them with Theophrastus, who consistently argues for the factual falsehood of the claim that there are no external goods and, therefore, argues that "not all good people are happy."[39] On the other hand, the Antiocheans deny the logical bi-conditional and claim that even if virtue is sufficient for a happy life, virtue and vice are not the only good and evil things.[40] They explain this inconsistency by introducing degrees for happiness and claiming that "virtue by itself can make a life happy but not happiest (*beatissimam*)."[41] We shall see later how Cicero considers these last philosophers

to be inconsistent.

However, the logical bi-conditional creates a fallacy for Cicero's earlier argument from the freedom from passion. For to prove premise (**A1**) of the argument, he relies on his work in book IV in which he assumes the thesis of book V. In 4.34, he describes virtue as a disposition which may be reduced to "right reason" (*recta ratio*). Cicero, then, identifies virtue with wisdom. In his definition of wisdom, the sage has right knowledge (justified belief not contradicting Frede's natural reason) and does not value externals (i.e. wealth, love, success, or all "human things" (*humana omnia*) in comparison with virtue.[42] For these definitions to stand, Cicero must also assume that externals are neither good nor evil by nature, that only virtue is good and only vice is evil. Consequently, when completely laid out, the argument from the freedom of the passions is as follows:

(**B1**) If a person has virtue, then she has wisdom [by definition]
(**B2**) If a person has wisdom, then she has correct beliefs of the normative value of things [by definition]
(**B3**) Externals are neither good nor bad (compared to what is morally good or evil) [by assumption]
Therefore, (**B4**) if a person has virtue, then she must have the belief that "externals are neither good nor bad"

(**B5**) If a person has such-and-such passion, then she must have the belief that "so-and-so external is either quite good or bad for me" [by Cicero's cognitive thesis of the passions]
Therefore, (**B6/A1**) if a person has virtue, then she has freedom from passions
(**B7/A2**) If a person has freedom from passions, then she has happiness [by definition]
Therefore, (**B8/A3**) if a person has virtue, then she has happiness

Note that Cicero needs to assume (**B3**), that externals are not that important, to prove that the good person is free from passions and therefore happy. Yet, the Peripatetics (whether Theophrasteans or Antiocheans) do not grant this assumption, resulting in a divergence from the Stoics in their treatment of passions.[43] Both Stoics and Peripatetics will agree that if externals had some value by nature, then the sage would judge as such. However, unlike the Stoics, the Peripatetics claim that the death of a loved one is an evil according to right reason; thus, the Peripatetic sage correctly believes that the death of a loved is an evil. Consequently, the Peripatetic sage does experience some moderate *luctus*.[44] On the other hand, the Stoic sage experiences absolutely no *aegritudo*, nor *luctus*, for there are rational affects equivalent to each passion except for forms *aegritudo*.[45] This apathy results from the Stoic sage

not evaluating the death of a loved one as a true evil. This difference explains the link between each school's theories of goods and of passions and, hence, how Cicero's commitment to the consolation of philosophy may motivate his proofs for the Stoic thesis of goods.

Furthermore, because of the bi-conditional relationship between the Stoic theses of happiness and of value that we have already discussed, the only way to show that virtue is the sole good and no external is worth our suffering is through the thesis of book V that virtue is sufficient for happiness. In other words, Cicero needs conclusion (**B8**) to prove premise (**B3**), which he needs to prove (**B8**) itself; thus, the argument is circular and has no analytical strength. Nevertheless, the therapeutic value of the arguments in *TD* V shines through here: for if Cicero can argue that "virtue is sufficient for happiness" and that "if virtue is sufficient, then virtue is the sole good and vice the sole evil," then he can prove that "no external has any relevant worth." And if he proves that "no external has any relevant worth," then he has some theoretical basis to combat *aegritudo* and *luctus*, for these come about from the belief that the death of a loved one is worth suffering for and enough to kill a good life. Only when these theses have been demonstrated can the cognitive therapies delineated in *TD* III-IV better treat luctus. Furthermore, if this therapy must be somewhat cognitive, then it requires a

consistent argumentative basis. To reiterate, the Antiocheans against whom Cicero argues here do not have the logical consistency required for cognitive consolation. Hence, we may read a consolatory motivation in the following arguments in *TD* V which provides greater consistency to the text as a whole.

Stoic Dialectics

Let us turn to the arguments in 5.37-54, the more "Stoic" (analytical) part of the book. Cicero begins this section with a naturalistic argument, for, as he signals, "from which point could I better begin than from our common parent, nature?"[46] This passage (5.37-39) presents itself with a fresher, more powerful, and more philosophically-grounded argument than those which have come before, not only because he has colored it with his own rhetorical gift but because he grounds an ethical claim on a robust theory of physics much more difficult to challenge. The authority which physics provide fill this passage with a greater argumentative strength than it otherwise would lack.

In this passage (5.37-39), Cicero provides a picture of an ordered cosmos, one in which nature has gifted all living beings with some ability inherently linked to their way of living. In addition, each being tends to become perfect with respect to their own nature, namely, their mode of living and thus particular ability, that "nature

willed that each living creature be perfected according to their own kind" (*in suo quidque genere perfectum esse* [*natura*] *voluit*). In this way, as plants hold their inner seed from which they grow their "flowers, fruits, or berries," as animals hold the powers of sensation and movement, so it is with human beings. In our case, the human soul, derived "from the divine intelligence" (*ex mente divina*), can be made perfect if "cultivated and refined" (*excultus*) and free from "falsehood and error" (*erroribus*) such that it acquires "perfect reason" (*absolutam rationem*), which is human virtue (*virtus*). Note that this notion of virtue as perfected intellectual capacity, that is, as wisdom, matches that given in *TD* 4.57, where Cicero argues that virtuous people are free from errors and therefore from passions.

His next step in 5.37 is to introduce a refined notion of happiness (*beatum*). Earlier in the dialogue, he defines it as the "fullness of combined good and complete separation of evil."[47] Now, he limits it to the nature of the being in question, "happy is that being who lacks in nothing and who has accumulated and fulfilled all things *within the extent of its nature.*"[48] With this refined definition of happiness, Cicero completes his proof: since human happiness must refer to the human goods, and since these must exist within a human life, and since our human soul and powers characterizes a human life, then, we must concede, human happiness "is the prop-

er mark of virtue." How can we deny, then, that all virtuous people must be happy?

This formidable argument concludes that happiness lies in virtue; however, the Antiocheans also lay claim to this argument.[49] The naturalistic argument only demonstrates that virtue is necessary for and constitutive of a good life, to which both Stoics and Antiocheans will agree. Still, the naturalistic argument is not enough to establish the Stoic thesis that "virtue is sufficient for a good life." And so, to prove his Stoic thesis, Cicero needs to dismantle the idea that there is a *happiest* life in which virtue needs externals.

Cicero executes this with his next argument (from *securitas*) in 5.40-42. If we follow the Antiocheans, the happiest life relies on the acquisition of all goods of soul, body, and fortune. Yet, nobody can perfectly secure nor guarantee the presence of external goods and absence of external evils. Loved ones can always be lost, and tragedies can always happen; these things are not up to us. Antiochus' happiest person may lose her status at any point in the future. Furthermore, because she is also wise, she must recognize and be aware of her own fragility. As such, it follows that she will always live in fear and be subject to distress. Can we even call such a person happy if she does not have *securitas*, or "the absence of distress upon which a good life lies"?[50]

Cicero seems to think that the Antiocheans cannot insist that the happiest life lies in virtue while claiming that there are external goods, for the existence of externals which are necessary for the best life entails that human life is fragile and, thus, that the sage should live in fear and be vulnerable to distress. Clearly, a person who concedes that the death of his daughter is a terrible evil cannot be satisfied, safe, or virtuous. If happiness lies in virtue, and if we want happiness to be possible, Antiochus must be inconsistent. This can only mean that if virtue is indeed necessary for happiness, then there can be no external goods. It immediately follows that virtue is in fact sufficient for a good life.

As predicted, once Cicero has shown that (i) virtue is necessary for a happy life (through his naturalistic argument) and that (ii) if virtue is necessary for a good life, then there can be no external goods or evils (through his argument from *securitas*), he returns to the tranquility of the sage in 5.43-44. Here, Cicero outlines the same argument as in 4.38 and 5.17; now, however, he has greater theoretical grounding for this claim that 'sages are free from passions.' He associates tranquility with happiness, which has been argued to lie in virtue. Since the sage has virtue, she then has everything she needs: she has secured all human goods and does not experience any human evils. It follows, then, that she must be in a state of perfect tranquility, and as Cicero

extensively discusses throughout the *Tusculans*, this tranquility of mind is associated with, if not identical to, happiness, and "therefore, the sage is always happy."[51]

Concluding Remarks

This conclusion that the sage is always happy corroborates my hypothesis that the arguments in *TD* V have a therapeutic motivation, at least to extent that the thesis that the sage is free from passions (and therefore from luctus) follows from his naturalistic argument and argument from securitas. And if the best human beings do not have to suffer this terrible passion, then it is neither natural nor rational for any human being. Indeed, the object of luctus, the bitter death of the loved one, may not be such an evil so as to destroy any hope of happiness. Once this belief begins to grow in our minds, once we dispel the misguided notion that our lives have been ruined, the consolations of the philosophers may have some sway. Thus, through these Stoic arguments and theories, Cicero consolidates the possibility for the cognitive therapies which, if we believe him, did provide him solace in difficult times.

On the other hand, Cicero concludes book V by playing down the contrast between Stoic and Peripatetic theories of goods. He even concedes that the Peripatetics practically make the sage happy by making virtue supremely good compared with everything else; how-

ever, they seem to do so "as eloquent men tend to do at length" with the strength of their claim subsisting in their rhetoric.[52] But to persuade through the art of rhetoric is the same as through the art of reason. Cicero leaves this latter analytical style to the Stoics.[53] Even if he mocks their "little syllogisms" (*conclusiunculas*) Cicero sees more of a theoretical foundation and consistency in the Stoics than in the Peripatetics, who have more of an empty speech than a rigorous theory. Understanding the cognitive basis of luctus, Cicero needs to appeal more to reason to fundamentally challenge the passion's causal beliefs. In this essay, I have argued for Cicero's motivation to sustain the complete Stoic system to provide their cognitive consolation. I have focused on the more analytical sections, and perhaps he defends the Stoics more wherever he needs their form. But arguably, these sections provide the foundational framework for the consolation of the whole *Tusculans*. As such, without the Stoic logic and dialectic of these passages, the project of the work would fail, and as he confesses in his closing line, he "could have found no better relief for his so bitter sorrows and various struggles coming from all sides."[54] At the same time, having been an orator, Cicero understands the value of rhetoric, hence his interest in establishing a "rhetorical philosophy."[55] The complexity of the *Tusculans*, then, makes this work stand out, and its unique style in form and content provide us with a more human philosophy

of virtue and happiness which should interest philosophers for its own sake.

Cicero was a non-philosopher who saw great value in philosophical activities in a time of crisis. He lost his family, his reputation, his republic. Even if his arguments and the dry syllogisms of the Stoics do not move us today, our generation, raised through financial, social, political crises and a global pandemic, can learn something from the Ciceronian project. We should not think, unlike some of our predecessors, that philosophy has nothing to say about our joys or sorrows nor that it has nothing to do with our everyday life. On the contrary: the promise of philosophy is to enrich human life and make it worth living.

Notes

1. *Letters to Atticus* XII. 23.1, trans. Bailey. Unless otherwise specified, I provide my own translation of Cicero's Latin. I abbreviate *Letters to Atticus* as *Att.* and T*usculan Disputations* as *TD* and cite them by book and section.
2. (*Att.* XII.38.1)
3. Hadot (1995) argues that each school developed their own way of life around their views on the highest good and happiness as well as their unique spiritual exercises.
4. See *TD* 1.8, 2.9, 5.11 for some insights into how Cicero views his method as New Academic following Socrates, Cerneades, Philo, and Aristotelian dialectic.

5. See Powell (1985, 19) for Cicero's New Academic background.

6. *TD* 1.8

7. As commented by Powell (1985, 3).

8. Cicero comments on the role of the New Academy in the debates between Stoics and Peripatetics in *TD* 5. 120.

9. As Nussbaum (1994) points out in her classical work on Hellenistic ethics, the use of "therapeutic arguments" is especially prevalent in Hellenistic philosophies such as Stoicism and Epicureanism.

10. *TD* 5.121

11. Months before he wrote *TD* and weeks following the death of his daughter Tullia, Cicero attempted to console himself by writing a "consolation like no other," which ultimately did not bring him the comfort which he sought; see *Att.* XII. 14. 3.

12. In her classic analysis of Hellenistic theories of emotions, Nussbaum (1994, 371-377) notes that the Stoics considered propositional beliefs to be a necessary cause, constitutive of and, in the case of Chryssipus, even identical to the passion in the question. Thus, to remove the emotion, all one must do is remove the belief. In selecting Zeno's definition in *TD* 4.11, Cicero puts himself in this same tradition. Note that it is not essential whether Cicero considers beliefs to be identical to the passions; all he needs is to argue for some intrinsic relation, even if merely causal.

13. *TD* 3.24

14. See *Att.* XII. 18.1: "*sed iam quasi voto quodam et promisso me teneri puto*" and note the cognitive connotation of "*puto.*"

15. See *Att.* XII. 28.2: "*maerorem minui [littera consolatione], dolorem nec potu nec, si possem, vellem*" and note Cicero's emphasis

on his grief as voluntary.

16. *TD* 4.18

17. *TD* 1.30

18. See above, *Att* XII. 23.1 and also *TD* 1.84

19. *TD* 3.73

20. Frede (1986, 104-105)

21. *TD* 4.11

22. *TD* 4.63

23. *Att*. XII.14.3:"T*otos dies scribe, non quo proficiam quid sed tantisper impedior–non equidem satis (vis enim urget), sed relaxor tamen.*"

24. *TD* 3.79

25. Graver (2002, 187)

26. As Graver (2002, 188) proposes.

27. See note 14 and *TD* 3.71-72

28. The Chyrssipian, Cleanthean, and Cyrenaic methods, as well as reflecting on the endured grief of others, are the methods he favors; they all have in common that to heal our mental pain, we have to change our beliefs.

29. *TD* 3.53

30. It is worth noting that some months have passed in between Tullia's death and the *Tusculan Disputations*, while the *Consolatio* was written immediately after. In the time in between Tullia's death and *TD*, Cicero wrote other philosophical works, including *De Finibus*. If we take his comments in *TD* III on the importance of letting time do its healing seriously, then we might suppose that these months do somewhat help him in his recovery. Finally, I should note that Cicero stops mentioning Tullia's death later in his letters

to Atticus, suggesting that he eventually does recover from his soul-wrecking grief, at least so as to live a more active life.

31. *TD* 5.3. I provide the Latin here: "*Sin autem virtus subiecta sub varios incertosque casus famula fortunae est nec tantarum virium est, ut se ipsa tueatur, vereor ne non tam virtutis fiducia nitendum nobis ad spem beate vivendi quam vota facienda videantur. Equidem eos casus, in quibus me fortuna vehementer exercuit, mecum ipse considerans huic incipio sententiae diffidere interdum et humani generis imbecillitatem fragilitatemque extimescere.*"

32. *TD* 5.5

33. Douglas (1985, 210-211)

34. *TD* 4.38

35. *TD* 5.17

36. ibid.

37. *TD* 5.18

38. *TD* 5.19

39. *TD* 5.25

40. *TD* 5.21

41. *TD* 5.22

42. *TD* 4.57. I provide the Latin here: "*sapientam esse rerum divinarum et humanarum scientiam cognitionemque, quae cuiusque rei causa sit; ex quo efficitur, ut divina imitetus, humana omnio inferiora virtute ducat.*"

43. For Nussbaum (1994, p. 390-391), this is a crucial discrepancy between the Stoics and Peripatetics which results in their divergent views of emotions.

44. *TD* 4.38-39

45. *TD* 4.14

46. *TD* 5.37

47. *TD* 5.28

48. *TD* 5.39, emphasis added

49. "*Et hoc quidem mihi cum Bruto convenit, id est, cum Aristotele, Xenocrate, Speusippo, Polemone*" (5.37). This argument is similar to Aristotle's "function argument" in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7

50. *TD* 5.42

51. *TD* 5.44

52. *TD* 5.85

53. In his *Tusculans*, Cicero has a tendency of drawing a distinction between the dialectical style of the Stoics and the rhetorical style of the Peripatetics: "Because Chryssipus and the Stoics, when they discuss the upheavals of the soul [emotions], spend most of their time making distinctions and definitions, that part of their discourse in which they claim to heal souls and hinder them from being agitated is quite small. However, the Peripatetics bring much to the healing of souls, but they put aside the thorns of making divisions and definitions. I wonder, therefore, whether I should spread out the sails of rhetoric or whether, before that, I should drive forth the oars of dialectic" (4.9).

54. *TD* 5.121

55. See Douglas (1985, 200).

Bibliography

Bailey, Shackleton D.R., translator. 1966. Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Douglas, A.E. 1985. "Form and Content in the *Tusculan Disputations*." In *Cicero the Philosopher: Twelve Papers*, edited

by J.F.C. Powell, 197-218. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Frede, Michael. 1986. "Stoic Doctrine of the Affections of the Soul." In *The Norms of Nature: Studies in Hellenistic Ethics*, edited by Malcolm Schofield and Gisela Striker, 93-110.　　　Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graver, Margaret. 2002. "Appendix A: Crantor and the Consolatory Tradition." In *Cicero on the Emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4*, 187-194. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hadot, Pierre. 1995. *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* Éditions Gallimard.

Nussbaum, Martha. 1994. *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Powell, J.F.C. 1985. "Introduction." In *Cicero the Philosopher: Twelve Papers*. Edited by J.F.C. Powell. Clarendon Press, Oxford.