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Vulnerability's Demands: Need and the Relational Self

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Abstract of the Dissertation

Vulnerability's Demands

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Persons, in the words of Annette Baier, are "essentially second persons" ("Cartesian Persons" 1981, 172). Not only are we 'second persons' insofar as personhood arises through a childhood in the care of others, and insofar as each of us is born new in an old world where our entry has always been preceded by others; persons are also second persons insofar as we each know ourselves as a 'you' before knowing ourselves as an 'I'. This work explores one strand of what it means for the self to be thus bound to others. A self so bound is a self that not only experiences deep needs for the care of others but that is also able to experience a robust set of needs to care *for* others, many of which take the form of second person needs. Second person needs occur when another's needs give rise to corresponding needs of one's own to either care for her directly or to see her needs otherwise answered.

Against a tradition that, since the days of Plato, has characterized need as a form of poverty or lack, I begin my relational account of need by approaching it as a form of vulnerability. To be in need is to be vulnerable to harm. Second person needs are one of the immersive ways in which we experience vulnerability's intimate demands. Second person needs express an intertwinement of our welfare with the welfare of others powerful enough to make responsiveness to another's need an urgent and dire part of our own good. Second person needs tend to expand and intensify as one's relational bonds are enriched and deepened. While exposing one to the prospect of deep, even life-shattering harm, second person needs thus cannot be reduced to liabilities, for to be without these needs would also mean existing without caring and holistic investments in the welfare of others, something that is a crucial aspect of a good human life for most persons. These positive dimensions of need have long gone without note in philosophy much as have need's relational dimensions. My dissertation corrects these oversights.

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In 1981, Annette Baier made an engagement with Descartes' *Meditations* the occasion for an articulation of an elegant view of the self as relational. In her essay "Cartesian Persons," Baier maintains that even a God could not be a person without a childhood in which that God were surrounded by other persons, cared for in the arms of other persons, and came to know herself as a self through another's recognition (1981, 181). We become persons through the ties to others that precede our entry into the world, that surround us as we grow, and that hold us fast even in our last days of life.

Considered attention to the role of language in childhood development carries Baier to a description of persons as essentially "second persons" (180). Not only are we 'second persons' insofar as personhood arises through a childhood in the care of others, and insofar as each of us is born new in an old world where our entry has always been preceded by others; persons are also second persons insofar as we each know ourselves as a 'you' before knowing ourselves as an 'I'. Baier explains: "My first concept of myself is as the referent of 'you', spoken by someone whom I will address as 'you'… The second person, the pronoun of mutual address and recognition, introduces us to the first and third" (186).

This work turns to the second person relationships through which all of us first come to know ourselves to explore one strand of what it means for the self to be constitutively bound to others. A self so bound—a self that is a 'you' before being an 'I'—is a self that not only experiences deep needs for the care *of* others but that is also able to experience a robust set of needs to care *for* others, many of which take the form of what I call 'second person needs.' Second person needs occur when another's needs give rise to corresponding needs of one's own to either care for them directly or to see these needs otherwise answered. Need is not a vestige of life's physiological demands that stands impervious to the relational bonds at the heart of human life. Instead, some of the deepest human needs, with second person needs to care for others among them, are rooted in the relational self—the self that experiences itself as a 'you' addressed by another before experiencing itself as an 'I' standing alone.

Against a tradition that, since the days of Plato, has characterized need as a form of poverty or lack, I begin my relational account of need by approaching it as a form of vulnerability.[i,1] To be in need is to be vulnerable to harm. This prospective harm becomes real harm in the event that a need goes unanswered. Yet those things that we need in order to avoid harm are not necessarily things that we lack. As Soran Reader has persuasively argued, one can need something very dearly which one already has such as the clean drinking water and the home free from toxic environmental pollutants that First World privilege invisibly grants to many who would feel the dire pangs of these needs if luck found them born in another country (2007, 599).

Need's characterization as lack is contested not only by the truth that our needs remain needs even when they are satisfied, but also by the relational quality of many of our deepest needs, including second person ones. One's needs do not end with the necessities of sustaining one's bare, physiological life (if physiological life is indeed ever 'bare'). They also include the necessities of our relational welfare. These necessities can be even more fundamental to one's overall health and flourishing than one's physiological needs alone insofar as personhood is founded and sustained through relational ties. Some of the most vital relational needs include the need to be loved by one's life partner, the need for respect from one's peers, and the need for recognition of one's agency and interests by the other persons with whom we all share this world.

Yet even this set of relational needs captures only part of the relational needs that many people experience as integral to their sense of self and that must be answered in order for that self to be sustained. Together with the need for love, friendship, respect, and recognition stands a set of relational needs of a different tenor. These are those needs that I call second person needs. This set of needs as a whole might be summarized under the heading of one very powerful and wide-ranging human need: the need to care for others. In addition to having a need of one's own for clean drinking water and a home free from environmental pollutants, for instance, many people will also experience the need to be able to offer both of these things to their child, to the stranger passing by who is on the verge of collapsing from thirst, or to the friend of years gone by who finds herself alone and down on her luck, seeking refuge for the night. Such exemplars of the need to care for others are both a part of a rich relational life and one of the immersive ways in which we experience vulnerability's intimate demands.

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[i] Endnotes can be found on page 13.

The need to care for others is a deep human need that often accompanies the need to be cared for by others (expressed in the diverse forms of the need for respect, recognition, love, friendship, and more). Not only is this need an expression of our relational bonds and of our corresponding vulnerabilities; it is also a profound expression of the moral tenor of relational life. Here, vulnerability's demands take the form of our needs, and express an intertwinement of our welfare with the welfare of others powerful enough to make responsiveness to another's need an urgent and dire part of our own good.

Further, the propensity to form second person needs is highly ambivalent: It has the positive potential to open us to others in life-enhancing and beneficially self-transformative ways at the same time that it exposes us to the potential for harm. In its ambivalence, the second person need to care for others reveals a dimension of human need that is starkly at odds with any account of need that defines it essentially as a form of poverty or of lack, such as Diotima's tale as recounted in Plato's *Symposium*. Relational needs, and second person needs in particular, are fundamentally defined by the ambivalent form of vulnerability to which they open us, and not by an essential relationship to poverty.

Need's characterization as a form of lack lends itself to a view of need as self-protective and self-interested; the person in need fights to protect her own interests where they stand in jeopardy and to restore her own isolated good where it lies compromised. Yet human needs go far beyond announcing and protecting isolated self-interests insofar as they include the requisites to our well-being as persons whose welfare is relational, who are invested in the world, and defined by what we care about. We see this vividly when the needs of another become emphatically one's own, the moment of a second person need's upsurge: one person's need to recover from an infection becomes the need of her friend for her to recover, to the extent that her friend is even more diligent than she is about seeing to it that she takes all of the proper steps to aid her recovery; the wrongs of the persecution and mistreatment of a group of people are so deeply felt by others that their needs for safety and protection become the needs of others to ensure their safety and protection even at great personal expense and risk; one's intimate sense of a stranger's hunger becomes one's own need to share one's food, and it hurts if one's offer is rejected.

All these moments are ones in which one's relational ties to others find one vulnerable in the world in ways that one would not be but for these connections and the investments of care

they entail. Yet these moments also reveal the role that second person needs can play in a full human life marked by robust ties of love and care to others. Second person needs tend to expand and intensify as one's relational bonds are enriched and deepened. Relational needs in general often express self-defining investments of care in the world, as well as robust, positive ties to others. Second person needs in particular—expressive of one's need to care for others—can be positive assets in one's life insofar as they reinforce bonds to others that help give our life its color and its value. While exposing one to the prospect of deep, even life-shattering harm, second person needs thus cannot be exhaustively reduced to liabilities, for to be without these needs would also mean existing without caring and holistic investments in the welfare of others, something that is a crucial aspect of a good human life for most persons.

These positive dimensions of need have long gone without note in philosophy much as have need's relational dimensions. Still, an attention to the positive valiances of relational need cannot replace sensitivity to the potentially devastating experiences of harm to which these needs make one vulnerable, nor to the unequal satisfaction of human needs of all varieties in the global world. To find one's ability to care for other's truncated through global forms of oppression or through social and political injustices unique to one's own community—and so to find one's second person needs unanswered—is to fall subject to a largely unacknowledged form of violence. This violence targets the relational self insofar as it is one of our most precious bonds to others—the need to care for others as much as for ourselves—that it damages. Yet it also targets the moral self insofar as a fundamental dimension of moral life is enwrapped in this profound expression of our investments of care. The ability not only to care for others but to experience a second person need of one's own for another's needs to be answered is a holistic resonance of a very special moral capacity, the capacity to make another's welfare a part of one's own good. This aspect of the moral self arises from and depends upon the relational dimensions of selfhood. It is marred by the global injustice and social violence that strips many communities and social groups of the full freedom to care for others according to their own relational needs.

Eva Kittay's work offers numerous examples of occasions in which moral harm can be said to befall someone when what I call their second person needs go unaddressed. Her work is thus a resource I repeatedly turn to throughout this project in order to illuminate both the moral and the relational harm of trespassing against second person needs. Kittay's work on global care chains (2008), for instance, draws attention to the moral harm that migrant careworkers

experience when global economic conditions force them to choose between providing direct care to their own children, but going without the monetary means to provide them with nourishing food and sufficient shelter, or leaving their children at home for years at a time as they seek better means to provide the food and shelter they need through employment in another country. Kittay's *Love's Labor* (1999) is also attentive to the harm of having one's propensity to care for others restricted. At one point in this text, for instance, she captures the devastating presence of this form of moral and relational harm in the lives of the sugarcane workers in northeastern Brazil whom global injustice has left without the means to support some of their children, and who thus elect under constraint to allow the weaker among them to die (173-174). For Kittay, this is "a gross case of injustice… on the part of the land and sugar cane plantation owners and the corrupt government that permit the conditions of extreme poverty to persist," as well as on the part of "the U.S. and… multinational corporations who profit from this misery" (174, 218 n. 258).

Even within the isolated context of First World nations such as the United States, the harm of going without the means to care for others—and thus without the means to protect one's own relational and moral selfhood—is all too common. Abortion debates seldom address the social conditions that severely impair many people's ability to care for a child within the U. S., including an inhumane maternity leave policy that mandates a scant six-week leave period and provides no pay, and a health care system in which the best insurance option for many is a high deductible plan in which huge sums must be paid out of pocket before any coverage begins. Many within the U.S. are thus constrained by the economic climate created by rampant neoliberalism to make a choice that often results in harm to their relational and moral selves, sometimes in the interest of protecting the welfare of children already under their care.

While the gross violations of second person needs that happen due to poor public policies and global economic injustice are often the unintentional consequences of neoliberal capitalist economies, second person needs are often intentionally made the target of violence in times of war, armed conflict, and genocide. In the recent armed conflict in Syria, for instance, government forces were reported to have ripped children from the arms of their families in the Karm el-Zaytoun and Adiwaya neighborhoods of Homs to then burn or slaughter them before loving eyes (Rundle, 2012). The testimonial writing of Ruth Elias attends to similar forms of relational violence inflicted in the Holocaust camps. In "The Last Days of Auschwitz," Elias

recounts her harrowing and traumatic experience of having her newborn daughter made the subject of Josef Mengele's sadistic experiments, a relational trauma that eventually lead to Elias taking her daughter's life (Adler, 1995).[2] Primo Levi, also interred in the Holocaust camps, additionally attests to having his relational as well as his moral personhood made the target of the Nazi's intentional, systematic violence. Levi's writing expresses the haunting, life-long sense of shame that followed the gross truncating of his ability to express his moral need to care for others in the camps. This haunting sense of shame is but one part of the experience of social death many so-called 'survivors' of the Holocaust underwent in the camps, and which later cost many the remaining vestiges of their lives through suicide.[3]

The Ethics of Relational Need

In her own explorations of vulnerability and its ethical implications, Erinn Gilson works to reclaim vulnerability's positive potential against exhaustively negative accounts, much as my work does with need. In both "Vulnerability, Ignorance, and Oppression" (2011) and *The Ethics of Vulnerability* (2014), Gilson counterpoises her characterization of vulnerability to those that begin and end in defining vulnerability as the liability to injury. Gilson describes vulnerability much more ambivalently as an "openness to being affected and affecting in both positive and negative ways" and "in ways that one cannot control" (2011, 310; 2014, 2). She elaborates: "when it comes to both the forms it takes and the ways it is experienced, vulnerability is neither inherently negative nor positive." Vulnerability is not "tantamount to harm" but instead encompasses "passivity, affectivity, openness to change, dispossession, and exposure, which are the basis for certain fundamental structures of subjectivity, language, and sociality" (2011, 310). While vulnerability is what makes it possible for one to suffer harm and to be subjected to certain forms of egregious interpersonal violence, Gilson also captures that vulnerability is a fundamental form of openness to affection that allows one to experience the thrills of love and desire, to invest oneself in the world through bonds of care, and to find peaceful comfort in the safety and security of long-standing relationships. Many relational needs share in these positive features of vulnerability at large while also being marked by the distinctive qualities of need itself—a sense of urgency, of compulsion, and an action-orienting (and sometimes even life-directing) charge.

Gilson's distinctive attention to vulnerability's ambivalence is foundational to her account of the ethical imperatives to which vulnerability gives rise. She insists that "[w]e must both condemn the way that vulnerability is exploited and encourage the cultivation of forms of vulnerability that enhance shared social life" as well as "vital movements of intimacy, transformation, and learning" (2014, 11-12; 145). This multivalent approach to an ethics of vulnerability is another juncture at which my work dovetails with Gilson's, as I also strive to capture the multifaceted ethical implications that vulnerability's demands—in the form of relational needs—often carry. One ethical conviction of my work is that there is a special moral virtue in the propensity to experience many second person needs. This virtue is just one ethical dimension of relational life that has been largely overlooked in western philosophy.

Vulnerability is more than an ontological condition. Many vulnerabilities, in Gilson's words, are both "a product of injustice and a virtue one develops to contest injustice" (2014, 2). Here, vulnerability's ambivalence intersects with its ambiguity, that perplexing and often alarming meeting of seemingly oppositional qualities to which Simone de Beauvoir devoted an entire ethical treatise, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1948). The vulnerabilities to which many relational needs attest express this coupling, as they are at once the product of injustice and an embodied, holistic form of moral virtue that revolts against it. The relational need to share a very sparse supply of water with a companion in Auschwitz, which Primo Levi recounts in his essay "Shame," for instance, is at once a sickening consequence of a system bent on the physiological torture and ultimate destruction of those held captive to it, and a revolt against the destruction of the moral and relational self together with the decimation of the body (1988, 79-81).

An especially harmful consequence of stripping vulnerability bare of its positive valiances is that the virtue that lies in the cultivation of certain relational needs is diminished and obscured. Encouraged to eschew our own needs and abjure our vulnerabilities through the reductive framework that sees vulnerability as no more than the precarious potential to suffer harm, we miss the ethical import in the cultivation of a healthy set of relational needs that testify to our constitutive ties to others and that intertwine our own welfare with theirs. On this note, an ethics of relational need also requires entering into a potentially transformative re-examination of one's constitutive connections to others. This transformative work aids the development of healthy and mutually enriching relational ties.

Yet while the virtue in cultivating those second person needs that are life-enhancing and positively self-transformative requires attention, so too does the potential for second person needs to entrench self-undermining and socially harmful relational ties. An ethics of relational need must also be committed to a thorough consideration of our responsibilities to answer to others' second person needs as much as to attend to the cultivation of some of our own, but this study must be just as sensitive to the harmful and potentially oppressive side of vulnerability's relational demands as it is to their life-enriching expressions. Some relational needs are primarily, if not exhaustively, pernicious while others are principally beneficial. These principally pernicious needs ought not be further cultivated and, in many cases, ought not even be supported through social and interpersonal care. For instance, many women have long suffered oppression through internalizing social norms that demand their self-sacrifice, and many may have to go through the transformative upheavals that follow from refusing to heed asymmetrical and self-diminishing second person needs in order to heal from the damage. Contrarily, however, other relational needs cry out with an urgent and undeniable ethical appeal, such as Ruth Elias' need to feed her child—an expression of the "preservative love" that Sara Ruddick has argued is fundamental to being a mother (1995, 65-81).

Ultimately, it can never be far from mind that as one's relational needs strengthen, deepen, and find more socially inclusive expressions, they also become all the more deeply ambiguous. These needs are at once able to further promote our welfare through fostering life-enhancing and self-enriching relational ties and also better poised to break the self apart, as the deeper these ties become the more one becomes vulnerable to coming undone oneself as others' needs go unanswered. Thus, ethically astute investments in the deepening and broadening of positive relational needs return us to the import of ethically appropriate responses to others' relational needs, something that has long gone underappreciated as an ethical imperative, thus allowing relational needs to be ignored, underappreciated, exploited, and abused.

Chapter Synopsis

The chapters that follow share attention to second person needs as well as to their ethical implications. The first chapter makes the case for why a characterization of need as a fundamental form of vulnerability to harm best captures the relational dimensions of need. This

chapter also devotes itself to a description of second person needs and a study of several examples. The experiences of Holocaust Rescuers Irene Gut Opdyke and Helen Jacobs are chief among them. It attends to the deep-seated qualities of many relational needs, including second person ones, and considers the devastating harm that can sometimes follow when second person needs go unmet. This chapter also considers what ethical and political obligations we have to answer to the needs of others and introduces the idea that cultivating certain second person need is part of the ethical art of living virtuously.

The second chapter considers the taut relationship between relational needs and autonomy, arguing that while all needs are non-elective by definition, some needs are deep-seated expressions of relational autonomy. It engages with feminist work on relational autonomy as well as with Harry Frankfurt's concept of 'volitional necessity' in order to contend that relational needs, with second person needs among them, can be powerful expressions of volitional necessity. This chapter also considers the role that investments of care play in relational needs, and argues that ethical responses to the relational needs of others depend in part on the nature of the investments of care from which they arise.

The third chapter delves furthest into the constitutive conditions of relational selfhood. It critically examines Jean-Paul Sartre's phenomenological approach to relational selfhood, putting it into conversation with Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Susan Brison. Rooted in Husserl's notion of intentionally, Sartre's phenomenology begins with a split between subject and object, albeit one in which all subjective experience is conditioned and supported by its object. This split is never overcome for the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness*, resulting in a seemingly unresolvable conflict between the subject and the Other in which the Other's subjectivity cannot be acknowledged together with one's own. While Sartre argues that the self is relationally constituted, he also distinguishes the subject from the self, portraying the self as a denatured version of the subject that has been stripped of its freedom. The chapter appeals to Brison's account of the remaking of the self and the restoration of autonomy through positive relations with others in *Aftermath* as a way to argue against Sartre that the concrete human experience of freedom is in fact a relational one.

The final chapter returns to Sartre's work but focuses on his treatment of need, found principally in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Sartre describes need in the *Critique* as a bridge between necessity and freedom insofar as need is the catalyst for all human *praxis* and thus the

engine of human history. Yet he also describes need in the context of scarcity as a motivation for violence and as giving rise to an ethics characterized by pre-emptive acts of self-defense and the demonization of the Other. It then turns to the work of Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas' work characterizes the Other in need as issuing an infinite ethical demand which can only be answered in an equally infinite act of giving. Hearing and heeding this demand is what allows the human being to be 'otherwise than being', in his words—defying being's investment in its own self-persistence. However, Levinas also makes room for one's own needs to be recognized as morally salient by insisting that while one is infinitely responsible to the Other, one is always also an Other to a third party. The chapter ends in suggesting that attending to second person needs—and the relational dimensions of selfhood to which they attest—may offer a richer way to understand the relationship between need and ethics than that offered in either Sartre's phenomenology or Levinas' metaphysics insofar as second person needs can reveal ethical commitments so self-defining as to give rise to some of our most fundamental needs.

Going Global

These chapters thus each follow one of the many paths that a study of second person needs and their pertinence to ethical and relational life might take. Together, they aim to begin to describe the overall import of this special form of vulnerability's demands to ethical life. Ultimately, our second person needs to care for others demand still more attention, not only in thought but also in concrete political and ethical life. One dimension of their ethical import which I have only been able to begin to touch on here is the need for an ethical study of relational need to "go global" if it is to be appropriate to our contemporary world.[4] If one's second person needs testify to the deep-seated coupling of one's welfare with one's intimate family members and closest friends, or with those who belong to one's social identity group or to the members of one's most immediate community, but never testify to an affinity between oneself and others separated by the chasms of racial, sexual, and class difference, by national boundaries, or by global privilege and global oppression, ought these needs be protected, let alone fostered?

Considerations of global justice make clear that ethical considerations of second person needs must be alert to the dangerously narrow expressions of care for others that can be embodied and entrenched in them. They must be especially alert to hierarchical evaluations of

the worth of different social groups furthered through these needs. Nonetheless, experiencing second person needs of one's own to promote the welfare of those most near and dear to oneself can itself be an effective path towards globally-sensitive experiences of relational need. Second person needs not only contest need's equation with lack but also contest its traditional relation to satisfaction. As Emmanuel Levinas suggests in "On Escape," the Platonic account of need as a form of poverty serves to align need with the pursuit of satisfaction, and to align satisfaction with the restoration of an original plenitude offering peace and happiness (Levinas, 2003). Yet second person needs are not indicative of a fall from grace, or of the coming undone of a supposedly perfect self-sufficiency that originally belonged to us and to which one can only aspire to return through need's quenching. Instead, speaking again to the positive valiances of relational needs, one often finds that the more that one's needs to care for others are gratified, the stronger and wider reaching they become. Levinas' description of metaphysical desire in *Totality and Infinity*, meant to distinguish metaphysical desire from any form of need, is perfectly germane to the need to care for others: "it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it…the Desired does not fulfill it, but deepens it" (Levinas 1969, 34).

In the context of nurturing, healthy, and enriching relationships, second person needs often become some of the profoundest and most vital needs one can feel and the more one feels them, the more one's deep-seated sense of connectedness to others expands and broadens. While the vulnerabilities one's needs announce might turn some towards global violence in the interest of pre-emptively defending themselves and their loved ones from prospective harm, an open relationship to one's own needs often serves instead to enhance one's sensitivity to the needs of others and to deepen one's investments in their welfare. Judith Butler's *Precarious Life* (2004a) describes the violent reaction of the United States to the exposure of its own vulnerability that occurred on September 11th, 2001, an instance of a defensive and self-serving response to the threats that vulnerability poses. Yet she also captures the ambivalent potential in heightened awareness of one's vulnerability. To this effect, she writes:

> I consider our recent trauma to be an opportunity for a reconsideration of United States hubris and the importance of establishing more radically egalitarian international ties. Doing this involves a certain "loss" for the country as a whole: the notion of the world itself as a sovereign entitlement of the United States must be given up, lost, and mourned, as narcissistic and grandiose fantasies must be lost and mourned. From the subsequent experience of loss and fragility, however, the possibility of making different kinds of ties emerges. Such mourning might

> (or could) effect a transformation in our sense of international ties that would crucially rearticulate the possibility of democratic political culture here and elsewhere. (2004a, 40)

Tragically, however, the United States responded to the exposure of its vulnerability on September 11th, 2001 by seeking to restore its "imagined wholeness" through military means of violence against others, "denying its own vulnerability, its dependency, its exposure where it exploits those very features in others, thereby making those features 'other' to itself" (Butler 2004a, 40-41).

In contrast, an example of the socially transformative response to the exposure and heightening of one's vulnerability for which Butler hopes might be found in the experiences of many new parents. New parents often find that their caring investments in the welfare of their own child—the depths of which are often unimaginable before the child's birth—are an avenue through which a previous sensitivity to the global plight of other children and parents turns over into an urgent need to take action. Convictions regarding the right to clean drinking water the world over, fair economic support for the work of care, adequate health care for all children regardless of their parent's nationality or mode of employment, and the political and social need to bring an end to the environmental racism that devastates the health of many indigenous children in North America, to name but a few, can all shift from cognitive commitments to heart-wrenchingly urgent ones through the experience of the vulnerability's of one's own child.

Ultimately, insofar as our relational ties do not end with our immediate connections to our family and friends, or even with bonds to our home nation and our local communities, but reach around the globe, so too must our lived investments in others' welfare. The ethics that attends to relational needs is thus tasked with breaking barriers to globally-connected experiences of second person need. As part of this task, and in order to avoid losing its imperative charge to an insolent form of sympathy that, in the words of Susan Sontag, "proclaims our innocence as well as our impotence," this ethics also requires "reflection on how our privileges are located on the same map as [others'] suffering", as privileges we are unwilling to forego often play a contributing role in harms which we otherwise protest (2003, 102-103).

Yet second person needs always go beyond sympathy with others plights to an embodied and holistic experience of an urgent need of one's own for others to receive care. Where sympathy may fail to give rise to action, second person needs are immediately compelling,

seeking redress as a lived priority for one's own wellbeing in its intimate connections to the wellbeing of others. Further, that the experience of second person relational need is a corporeal as well as an emotional experience, and not a reductively rational one, often enhances rather than impedes its potential ethical efficacy. The holistic virtue in some second person needs is part of a rich ethical life that circumvents the issue of moving from knowledge of right and wrong action to right conduct insofar as the experience of second person need is immediately motivating. To deploy a phrase from Erinn Gilson's work anew, second person needs and the according vulnerabilities which they announce often testify to a knowledge of oppression, discrimination, violence, or injustice that has been allowed "to 'sink in'"—that is, as she writes, "to sink into our bodies, into our emotional responses, into our most basic interpretations of the world and ourselves, and not just… into a set of beliefs we hold" (2014, 95). In this respect, at the same time that certain second person needs can be dangerously sedimented expressions of limited self-interests, the cultivation of globally-sensitive needs of one's own for others to be cared for may be one of the most powerful—and underappreciated—tools we have in the fight against global injustice.

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[1] An account of need as lack can be found in Plato's *Symposium*, *Timeaus*, *Republic* and *Philebus*.

[2] I first encountered Elias' testimony in Susan Brison's *Aftermath*. Brison's account of Elias' trauma will be discussed in Chapter Four.

[3] As Susan Brison reports in *Aftermath*, Primo Levi was one among many victims of the Holocaust, including Jean Améry and Paul Celan, to commit suicide years after his internment in the camps had ended (Brison 2002, 65-66).

[4] In "The Global Heart Transplant and Caring Across National Boundaries," Eva Kittay places the same demand on an ethics of care (2008, 144).

1 Together in Need:
Relational Selfhood, Vulnerability, and Ethics

> I did not ask myself, Should I do this? But, How will I do this? Every step of my childhood had brought me to this crossroad; I must take the right path, or I would no longer be myself.
>
> —Irene Gut Opdyke, *In My Hands*

> I am often asked how I had the strength to stand so firmly, in the face of such risk, on the side of the persecuted Jews. My answer is that I followed my drive for self-preservation. If Hitler had already destroyed my country, I wanted to at least keep my personal world intact.
>
> —Helene Jacobs, *Rescuers*

> ANTIGONE: … the body of poor/ Polyneikes, who died so miserably—/ They say a proclamation has been cried/ To all the citizens that no one may/ Hide it inside a grave, wail over it/ Or weep for it, it must be left unmourned,/ Unburied…/And this is the very order that they say/ The noble Kreon has proclaimed to you/ And me –to me, to me he says it!
>
> —Sophocles, *Antigone*

Relational Need

Connections between one's own welfare and that of others abound if we pause to look for them. Experiences as common as the inability to sleep soundly knowing that someone you care about is driving home late at night testify to the interconnectedness of human welfare. So too does the feeling of a leap of joy or a burst of energy on learning of someone else realizing a dream they long pursued or succeeding in a hard-fought struggle, with which many are familiar. Indeed, many of our strongest and most moving emotions—rage, jealousy, desire, indignation, love, shame, and more—are ones that are often fuelled by the power of our connections to others.[i,1] Beyond this, the universal fact of being someone's child is a form of interconnectedness to others in which all of us share.[2] Less common examples of human interconnectedness include the reports by some midwifes as well as some doulas of experiencing strong sensations in their own bodies mimicking those undergone by the mother they are supporting.[3] These extraordinary, palpable moments of interconnection between one's own embodied experience and that of

[i] Endnotes can be found on pages 63-66.

another to whom one is bound through supportive care also emphatically attest to the deep-reaching and multi-dimensional nature of our ties to others.

Likewise, while the triggers may be vastly differently and the event far from ordinary, I suspect that many people have probably lived through a time when an affront to another individual or to a group complicated one's own ability to feel at home or at peace in the world. In such an event, one may find oneself agitated and restless, either unable to go through the ordinary motions of their daily life or carrying out these motions without any sense of investment in them, as one's concerns lie elsewhere. In such an event, one may find oneself grappling minute-by-minute with how to respond to the new composition of the world that includes this affront in it, and one often redirects one's time and energy—either willfully or in spite of one's deliberate intentions—towards trying to find a way to counter it. In some extreme instances, living on in a world with substantial affronts to the well-being of others in it can mean losing the very person one feels, understands, or knows oneself to be. In such instances, what is lost is the ability to be oneself in the world as it takes on this hostile face towards others.

When I try to imagine my life uncoupled from my partner's, for instance, my life ceases to be recognizable to me as *my* life. I know with my whole person that a serious threat to his welfare would be a threat to the formative ground of my own selfhood. The "becoming undone" of the self, to take a phrase from Judith Butler's *Undoing Gender*, in a world where the well-being of another person or another group of people has been jeopardized speaks to the extent to which some of the most deep-seated and entrenched aspects of personhood are bound to the welfare of others (Butler 2004b, 1).[4]

Irene Gut Opdyke and Helene Jacobs, whose words introduce this chapter, are both women who came to the aid of persecuted Jews in various ways during the Holocaust. Their responses were utterly courageous and, unfortunately, also utterly extraordinary. The actions of these women as well as those of other Holocaust rescuers are a beckon of hope in a world that was and still is profoundly impoverished for having far too few people in it who are as willing to respond to threats to others as these women were.[5] Yet the fundamental and motivating bond both of these extraordinary women articulate between their own sense of self and the welfare of the Jewish people is nonetheless exemplary of a common human reality of self-constituting interconnections between the self and others, many of which are socially and politically suppressed, and many of which either go unacknowledged or are actively denied. Sophocles'

Antigone shows another face of such bonds in the vital interconnectedness Antigone feels between her own sense of self and the treatment of her brother's body. As her words above capture, it is an affront to her unique relationship to Polyneikes, her brother, that she be expected to leave his body unburied just as is any other citizen of Thebes.

In this chapter, I take up Opdyke and Jacobs' words of testimony to the deep-seated interconnectedness of human selfhood to suggest that one of the strongest expressions of the constitutive bonds that tie our selfhood—together with our welfare—to that of others comes in certain experiences of need. Doing so entails challenging some ideas about need in philosophical history. It also requires approaching need through a relational framework. I begin by addressing some prevailing ideas about need in order to show the ways in which a relational understanding of need poses a challenge to conventional frames of thinking.

Relational needs are, at large, needs that arise from interconnections between the self and others, and speak to the extent to which fundamental aspects of human welfare have relational dimensions. Such needs also arise from our investments of care in the world and in the good of particular others, and through our treatment at others' hands. Needs for such things as recognition, love, friendship, acceptance, appreciation and respect number among the most universal relational needs. As a general rule, moreover, such needs, by virtue of being relational, are needs that one cannot meet oneself. This feature of relational needs means that some of these needs may give rise to ethical and political claims, claims that these needs be met either by others persons or by institutional support structures.

A powerful and important subcategory among such relational needs is the category of what I call 'second person needs.' Second person needs occur when one's experience of the needs of others gives rise to certain needs of one's own. Some such needs arise from physiological interconnections. An infant's cry, for instance, causes the mother's breasts to fill with milk such that, just as the baby needs to be fed, the mother needs to nurse.[6] Other relational needs arise when our own investments of care in the world meet with the needs of others in such a way that answering to these needs is lived as urgent and imperative for our own sense of well-being and, sometimes, as urgent and imperative for maintaining our very sense of self. In such instances, we experience another's state of occurent need as one that we ourselves cannot tolerate or endure. This intolerance gives rise to our own urgent and emphatic need for a change to the other person's condition in order that our interconnected welfare be protected together

with theirs. In this way, second person needs reveal our dependency upon those who are often also dependent on us. Second person needs that arise from fundamental interconnections between our welfare and that of others are often the kind of needs that can result in devastating harm if unmet. Further, they can only be adequately understood and identified through a relational understanding of the self.

After addressing a few of the important ways in which relational needs—with second person needs among them—stand in contrast to some historically-ensconced and still socially-customary ideas surrounding need in this chapter, I lay out some of the principle features of need understood relationally. First giving an account of the framework of traditional theories of need and of the inability of relational need to appear within it, I then advance the argument that a fundamental criterion for defining need is the presence of vulnerability to harm. This does not mean, however, that having a need is something that is purely harmful. Although every need in the full sense of the word entails a vulnerability to harm, I explain how having certain needs can enrich one's life.[7] Many of these life-enriching needs also can result in the development of virtuous dispositions. They show a cultivation of a caring character in which one recognizes, validates, and responds to interconnections between one's own good and the good of others. I turn to the examples of second person need offered by Irene Gut Opdyke and Helene Jacobs to illustrate this often overlooked aspect of moral life.

Yet while every need entails a corresponding vulnerability to harm, only some needs make morally salient claims on others. One factor that an ethics of need must weigh is the seriousness of the harm involved, as some of these potential harms are more fundamental to one's welfare than others. Joel Feinberg argues that the object of harm is always an interest, and thus that harm is "an injury to something in which [one] has a genuine stake" (1973, 26). Characterizing harm in relation to interests, he adds, "permits us to appraise harms by distinguishing between more and less important interests" (26). Defining harm in relation to interests also has the benefit of making clear that going without those goods that answer to our interests can be just as harmful as some seemingly more direct forms of injury, for "to be effectively deprived of all food is clearly to be harmed as much as to be given poisoned food" (30). Moral and political obligations to meet needs should reflect that, in the words of Feinberg, "[w]e harm a man when we deny or deprive him of something that he needs," yet they should also reflect that some of our needs are more vital than others, and thus give rise to greater harm

when unmet (30). Following David Wiggins, I define a 'vital' need as one that is integral to our flourishing and is a fundamental component of our overall wellbeing. Vital needs are not reducible to such universal physiological necessities as food and shelter, however, but include relational goods such a love, care, respect, and companionship.

Further, as Wendy Rogers, Catriona Mackenzie and Sue Dodds explain, "[w]hich needs are vital to a particular person will depend not only on universal facts about the human condition, but also context-specific factors about her social, political, and personal situation and identity" (2012, 22). A context-sensitive analysis is thus essential to determining harm and, in turn, to determining the moral salience of others' claims of needs. I argue that some relational needs are often among those that are most vital to one's welfare, and thus that their violation gives rises to highly egregious forms of harm. Many of these relational needs thus have strong claims to moral and political attention on the part of others. However, the harm that can befall one through ruptures in relationships—sometimes even so severe as to result in the upheaval of one's very sense of self—must always be weighted against the harm of maintaining oppressive relationships and living with a diminished sense of one's own life prospects. An ethics of relational need, then, cannot simply respond unilaterally to all vital forms of harm. Instead, this ethics must be context-sensitive and especially alert to the internal effects of oppression.

Need: From Plato to Freud

Need is a phenomenon of human experience that has often been under-theorized in classical works in philosophy. While need has played substantial roles in the work of such canonized figures as Plato, Marx, and Freud, to name a few, it is often invoked by these thinkers in ways that take its definition and its parameters somewhat for granted. Marx's treatment of need is one of the most appealing from among this set, yet despite his significant insights into need, Marx often fails to substantially define the term. Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Program," for examples, proclaims: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!" (1994, 317). Yet what makes a need what it is goes unaddressed in this piece of writing. Additionally, Marx and Engels's *The German Ideology* asserts that the activity undertaken to produce the means of our subsistence is the first mover of human history: How the production of the means of our subsistence occurs determines our mode of life and, with it, our social relations (1994, 107; 115). However, this evocative claim is unsupported by a clear account of need as

such. Still, one of the major assets of Marx's account of need is that he finds it to be integrally connected to our species-being, the fundamentally social aspect of human existence, and thus he offers an account of need into which the relational dimensions of human life would seem able to figure.[8]

Plato discusses need in his *Timaeus*, *Philebus*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*. In *Republic*, he distinguishes a mode of political and social life where the "bare necessities" are fully met from a mode of political and social life in which the "luxuries of civilization" are enjoyed (1977, 1011-1012; 372a-373b). The treatment of this first city, however, is quickly abandoned in favor of unearthing justice in a city that is prepared and willing to go to war for the sake of furthering the luxuries of its people. The first form of social and political life, dismissively and derisively, has come to be commonly referred to as "the city of pigs" following Glaucon's characterization of it at 372d. Yet this alleged 'city of pigs' has much to recommend it, and its quick dismissal might be read as one of the many instances of irony in the book.

Plato's invocations of need can be used to illustrate one long-standing tendency in the conception of need. Considered ontologically, need has often been understood as a form of lack. One influential instance of this characterization of need comes in his *Symposium*. In Socrates' retelling of his dialogue with Diotima, he affirms her depiction of need as the power out of which other forms of longing (such as love and desire) come to be. Need leaves its mark in the search for something lacking in one's present state of being that characterizes all longing. We see need's mark on desire, for instance, in the search for reunion with our original other half of which Aristophanes tells (189e-191d). This understanding of need as a form of lack often gets cashed out in an understanding of need not as a meaningful state of being in its own right but as a limitation on freedom. It also grounds the notion of need as a marker of some form of privation or penury; a state from which one attempts to return to an earlier state of fullness through acquiring an object which would satisfy this lack.

Built upon this Platonic conception of need is the Freudian view of need as a phenomenon with an endogenous basis, a framework of need unshaken by the relational and familial context in which Freud understands the formation of the ego, and unaffected by the multiple, distinct dimensions of selfhood his work highlights. In his *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, Freud describes "the major needs: hunger, respiration, sexuality" as arising from what he calls endogenous stimuli (1966, 297). Such stimuli are understood to be both internal

and somatic, and a part of "*the exigencies of life*" (297). Importantly, moreover, such needs seek relief and find it only though the coming about of changes in the external world. Such needs require that the organism save up a store of energy to meet their demands. Within the framework of Freud's larger project, which paints a picture of the human nervous system as always seeking out ways to release stores of energy, the role of need as an endogenous stimulus is extremely significant. It is the basis for the development of our psychic life; "the *mainspring*", as Freud expresses it, "of the psychical mechanism" (316).

Freud's association of need with the requisites of a kind of bare self-preservation and/or with those of an almost instinctual self-defense in *Project for a Scientific Psychology*—and thus with interests that precede our relations with others rather than with interests that are constituted or informed by these relations—is not merely the passing thought of one early work. Freud reiterates many of the same ideas in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Here, the exigencies of life are what motivate psychic development, despite the nervous system's tendency towards inertia, and these exigencies of life first impress themselves on the organism "in the form of the great physical needs" (1995, 477). Our needs must be expressed so that they can come to be satisfied; it is towards this end that the child cries, flails, etc. Further, whatever satisfies a need in the first instance impresses itself onto the psyche such that it becomes the desired object of the need's satisfaction in subsequent instances. In the 'wish', Freud argues, we seek ever after to relive the original experience of satisfaction.

Freud continues to think of need in such ways in his works of subsequent years, and ultimately develops his more elaborate but equally endogenous theory of the drives out of this early account of need. In "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes" (1957), for example, Freud explains that needs qua drives bring the psychic apparatus to life by making a demand upon it for a particular kind of action. While a drive always seeks out an object of satisfaction outside the organism itself, these objects do not form or even inform the drives.

In *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (1983), Jay R. Greenburg and Stephen A. Mitchell suggest that, although his later work complicates some elements of the picture, the overall tendency to begin his psychological account with endogenously-determined drives—rather than with interpersonal relationships—remains a constant of Freud's thought. Freud's later work highlights the psychic import of relationships with caretakers, and develops an understanding of both the psychic structures of the ego and of the superego as developing out of

these relationships. Yet Freud continues to draw on the model of endogenously-determined stimuli to explain and define many of the dynamics of these relationships rather than rethinking endogenous aspects of his psychology in light of a relational understanding of the structures of the psyche. The relationship of needs to objects of satisfaction develops from out of a somatic disturbance into a specific set of relations to particular objects, among which other people are included. The individual and her needs come first, and social relations come second, motivated by the organism's biologically-driven pursuit of satisfaction. To such effect, Greenberg and Mitchell explain that, for Freud, "[t]he unit of study of psychoanalysis is the individual" and "the essential aim of the individual is to achieve a state of quiescence, of freedom from the pressure of endogenously arising stimulation;" that "from the perspective of content the drives are reducible to two independent sets of needs which arise on the basis of man's biological inheritance… in no way influenced by the social context"; and, finally, that "[f]or Freud the object [here, another person] must suit the impulse, while for theorists of the relational model the impulse is simply one way of relating to the object" (44).

Relational and Second Person Needs

Both these historically-sedimented conceptions of need—first, as lack, and, second, as fundamentally concerned with isolated, individual self-interests—are challenged by *relational* needs. Second person needs in particular reveal that selfhood is not delimited by the boundaries of one's skin. Second person needs not only illuminate our investments in the world as persons who care for others, but also illuminate that these investments of care can reach so deep that one's very sense of self can be shattered by the harm or mistreatment that befalls others. Insofar as the capacity to experience relational needs—with second person needs among them—requires a set of investments of care in one's social world, moreover, such needs are neither originally endogenous nor concerned with any isolatable self-interest.

Second person needs defy the notion of need not only as self-interested but also as, essentially, a form of lack. For many people, the investments of care in the welfare of others that give rise to these needs are an essential feature of a rich and fulfilling life. In this respect, They hold out the possibility that a need is something one can be better off—and not only worse off—for having. In many instances, it is a deeply positive thing to have a relational need despite the potential harm to which it leaves one exposed. Investments of care that reach far enough down

into oneself that they make up a sustaining and defining part of one's person are things that give life some of its most important and valuable dimensions of meaning.

Eva Kittay captures something of the enriching potential I find in second person needs in her writing on relations of dependency. Relations of dependency are often charged with both strong affection and substantial trust—often including trust with another's very life. For these reasons, Kittay writes, "the ties formed by relations of dependency are among the most important ones we experience" (1999, 36). Frequently, moreover, for care to enter into relationships of dependency, "relaxes our own boundaries of self, which makes way for an emotional bond that is especially potent" (36).[9] Understanding and acknowledging the needs of the relational self enriches one's self-awareness, and has meaningful implications for one's own self-care. It also enriches understandings of the other people with whom we share this world, together with our ability to effectively respect and support their welfare.

Yet while a wholly deleterious conception of need misses the ways in which having certain needs is an entailment of life-enriching investments of care, it should not go under-emphasized that any and every need entails a vulnerability to harm. Nor should it go without note that relational vulnerabilities to harm can be violently exploited or unjustly ignored.[10] To this effect, Kittay points out that the special openness to another that occurs in relationships between a caregiver and a dependent is ambivalent: At the same time that these aspects of the relationship allow for it to have a unique, life-enhancing richness, having both one's trust and one's emotions invested in another person upon whom one is highly dependent introduces new—and often profound—vulnerabilities to harm at another's hands (36). It is just as crucial to recognize the forms of life enrichment that follow from the entwinement of one's welfare with that of others as it is to recognize the distinct forms of harm that can follow from this enmeshment.

Need and Vulnerability

While I have highlighted certain canonical accounts of need in the history of philosophical and psychological thought in order to illustrate some long-standing tendencies in conceptual work on this topic (tendencies which also prevail in many common-place conceptions of need), significant strides have been made in recent philosophical work towards changing the terms in

which need is understood. G.E.M. Anscombe, Joel Feinburg, Harry Frankfurt, Wendy Rogers, Catriona Mackenzie, Susan Dodds, Sarah Clark Miller, and David Wiggins are among the recent theorists who employ a definition of need hinging on the criterion of vulnerability to harm.[11] Vulnerability to harm turns over into real and present harm in instances where needs go unmet. Among these thinkers, moreover, David Wiggins argues that it is the fact that needs entail such vulnerability to harm which accounts for the special moral and political obligations they often carry. While some needs can go unmet without compromising the flourishing of the person who experiences them, many cannot. David Wiggins together with Wendy Rogers, Catriona Mackenzie, and Sue Dodds are among those who argue that it is this later group of needs, which they call "*vital* needs", that carry the strongest moral and political weight (Wiggins 1987, 17; 2005, 13; Rogers, Mackenzie, and Dodds 2012, 22).

The harm criterion offers a very valuable alternative to philosophical conceptions of need as lack, and one that importantly defies alignment with isolated, non-relational conceptions of both selfhood and welfare. It is a way of defining need that works to distinguish need from desire, to justify the special ethical and political weight needs often carry, and to identify certain relational needs as among those that carry this weight. When the criteria for determining which needs are vital to one's welfare is both the degree and the kind of harm that will result if they go unsatisfied, many relational needs turn out to figure among one's most vital needs, and thus among those needs with strong moral and political salience. Surely, if a fundamental part of human flourishing lies in developing caring relations with others, then the relational needs which arise out of these relations—including second person needs—will often be vital to one's welfare.

Using the criterion of harm to define need also allows for distinguishing need from other lived experiences, such as love, political, social, and ethical commitment, and other forms of deep-seated conviction, with which it is often intricately enmeshed. At the same time, it allows for these multiple ways of experiencing our investments of care in the world to mutually inform one another. A need can be the effect of our love, our convictions, our social and political sensitivities and more without being morally and politically irrelevant for it, or ceasing to count as a real and legitimate need. In turn, experiencing certain needs can wake us up to—and even deepen—the investments of care in the world to which it is tied.

Insofar as this criterion thus allows us to see that our relational needs are often informed by things such as love and care, it also allows us to see that needs are not only present when we

feel some form of desperation, privation, or penury, but can be present together with feelings of joy and even of bliss. The fact that investments of care and love can give rise to needs allow for certain needs to go hand in hand with feelings such as these at the same time that these needs can, for the same reason, concern some of the interests most fundamental to our welfare, and can both expose and respond to some of our most deep-reaching vulnerabilities. While need is not necessarily thought of as opposed to feelings such as love, care, and other deep-seated feelings of connection to others and of investment in a world that shapes us as we also shape it, need is nonetheless quite often conceived of as easily separable from such feelings and investments. Yet consider the tendency to express to those we love just how much we need them. While love for another person and need for that person can be improperly conflated, they also frequently go hand in hand. Further, the feeling of an undeniable need for the person I love can be a powerful realization of our joy in loving them.[12]

One way to understand relational needs is as the exposed strands of our ties to others, both in particular and at large. In the grips of some relational needs, one may feel that one *must* do x or that one *cannot* bear y. In such instances, a relational need is lived as an immediate and urgent motivation to action or as an insuppressible intolerance of a certain state of affairs. To be impeded in acting as one's needs demand or to be forced or coerced into bearing what one's needs assert one cannot may result in extreme forms of harm.

The severity of this harm hinges on the extent to which the need from whose violation it stems expresses an interest that is vital to one's relational welfare, including both one's ability to feel at home in the world and one's ability to be oneself in it—two things that are richly interconnected. The extent to which certain relational needs are needs one recognizes as vital to one's welfare is something that often hinges on the degree to which one is aware—in a holistic and not merely rational way—of the welfare of others as interconnected with one's own. Further, one's awareness of one's own relational needs is something that is affected by the social and political parameters of schemes of recognition, and not only by individual relationships. Still, one's own awareness of these needs and self-articulation of their import is not the only criteria by which their significance for one's flourishing and integrity can be assessed. Complex investments of care complicate our own discernment of our most pressing needs, and it may sometimes be the case that others are more aware of our relational needs than we are.

Using the criterion of vulnerability to harm to define need not only captures a crucial reason why claims of need matter ethically, socially, and politically, but also allows for the recognition of real and genuine needs that are neither universal nor innate. Allowing that human needs can be unique, particular, and shifting is necessary to the recognition of relational needs. Moreover, defining need on the basis of vulnerability to harm allows for need's ambivalence by overturning its seemingly essential relationship with lack. If vulnerability to harm is the criterion for determining need, then we can have needs that are very real without anything lacking in our current conditions just insofar as we can identify real vulnerabilities to harm in our lives without any immediate threat of these vulnerabilities passing over into real and present harm. Further, insofar as vulnerability to harm is an objective component of need that can be recognized and assessed by others, using this criterion to determine need is also helpful in connecting first-person experiences of need to ethical, social and political obligations.

Additionally, if vulnerability to harm is the criterion for determining need, there is no reason for all needs to have an endogenous basis. As Rogers, Mackenzie, and Dodds have noted, "[b]ecause we are complex, embodied, social, affective, and intelligent beings, we have a range of needs which must be met in order to flourish, from basic needs for nourishment and shelter through to complex social needs, for example, for friendship and meaningful work" (2012, 22). Many social needs are what I term relational needs. Friendship, among other common social needs such as the need for love and for recognition, is a need that requires other people to regard us in a particular way, and is thus not a need that anyone can meet themselves or that anyone can have outside of relations to others.

Lastly, identifying need by the criterion of vulnerability to harm allows us to recognize that some relational needs can be as vital to one's welfare as the basic needs of food and shelter. It seems worth devoting some time to illustrating this point, as it is one that many prevailing notions of autonomy cover over. It is also a notion that contradicts normative priority schemes that position universal, physiological needs—such as that for food and water—as the most dire and vital of all human needs. To be sure, in circumstances where food and water is scarce, or where one's life is clearly in danger, biological needs such as the need for food or water are extremely forceful and can have an immense impact on one's feelings, on one's actions, and on the shape of one's daily lives, but these needs are not always experienced with either priority over other needs or with emphatic force. Due, for one, to the material privileges allowed some at

the expense of many others, the capacity to satisfy these needs with relative ease allows for the capacity to defer them. In such situations, the dimensions of one's existence in the world that extend beyond one's biological life often take precedence. Examples of this are surprisingly common: We are capable of staying up all night when we so desire, or when other commitments such as work demand our time, we often eat in accordance with our taste or our feelings (rather than in accordance with the kind of nourishment our body seeks), and we can push ourselves physically to the point of injury despite the warning signs our body gives us to stop.

Further, while food, water, and shelter are fundamental requirements for human life, even these needs are affected by social relations. Marx's attention to how we produce the means to meet our needs, including our 'barest' physiological needs such as those for food and water, shows that even these needs are not inert but are informed and transformed by the goods that satisfy them. These goods, in turn, are informed by social relations of production. In his *Grundrisse*, for instance, Marx argues that there are different kinds of hunger satisfied by different kinds of food: "Hunger is hunger, but the hunger gratified with cooked meat eaten with a knife and fork is a different hunger from that which bolts down raw meat with the aid of hand, nail and tooth" (1973, 92). What and how we eat, when and how we sleep, if we reproduce and in what relationships, and more, are at once activities driven by some of our most basic needs and, at the same time, some of the most dynamic, socially-mediated aspects of human life. Further, immanent within every need is some evaluation of a preferred mode of satisfaction. This evaluative and dynamic feature of need is a crucial part of what throws us into the world as actors and producers. Accordingly, any account of need that restricts legitimate needs to a-particular universals and inert biological necessities would fail to recognize even our most basic physiological needs.

Further still, in certain instances, relational needs can carry an equal or greater emphatic force than even one's most vital physiological needs; it is not just desires that can trump our basic needs, but other kinds of *needs*. When a political prisoner elects to undertake a hunger strike, forgoing food at great expense to her personal health in order to make a political statement, that prisoner may be understood to be privileging social and political needs above those of her own body. Additionally, when any parent puts her own physical welfare at risk to protect that of her children, she privileges second person needs before isolated physiological ones. What these examples illustrate is that our most vital needs are not always physiological

needs. Needs concerned with the welfare of a larger social group or with that of other particular individuals to whom we are intimately bond can have equal or greater force in certain circumstances than one's biological needs, and can be more vital to one's overall welfare. It is fairly commonly accepted that there are some political and moral obligations to meet fundamental physiological human needs (at least as they pertain to members of one's own nation), but it is much less commonly accepted that relational needs should be granted the same moral and political weight. Assessing claims of need on the basis of the extent to which they are vital to one's welfare, and thus on the criterion not only of vulnerability to harm but of more and less vital harms, challenges this position.

The Criteria of Vitality and Vulnerability

While David Wiggins' treatment of need does not address relational needs *per se*, it does provide many important insights that allow for the recognition of relational needs as genuine needs, with all the moral and political weight this entails. Thus, it is to Wiggins work that I now turn. Wiggins, both independently and in his work with Sira Dermen, is himself influenced by G.E.M. Anscombe, Joel Feinberg, and Aristotle. Further, his work has influenced others working on need and vulnerability, such as Wendy Rogers, Catriona Mackenzie, and Susan Dodds.[13]

In "Claims of Need," the first chapter of *Needs, Values, Truth* (1987), Wiggins argues that employing the criterion of harm to define need allows for an understanding of need that is adequate to substantiate its ordinary and intuitive relevance for questions of justice and entitlement. He begins by confronting the inevitable question of the relationship between need and desire. Needs, Wiggins insists, carry a "special practical and argumentative force," and are grossly misunderstood if thought of as a special class of desires (9). Often, Wiggins suggests, what such an understanding of need as nothing more than a special kind of desire amounts to is the view that needs are simply 'wants' voiced as demands. Such a view allows needs to be dismissed as an illegitimate means of appeal to rights and entitlements operating through the subterfuge that they have more moral weight than desires. Wiggins captures this skeptical attitude toward needs claims very acutely in quoting a remark exemplary of it made to him in professional conversation: "'Is a need just something you want but aren't prepared to pay for?'" (5).

Colleagues of my own have posed similarly pointed questions to me, as many seem to suspect that making claims of need is ultimately a means to give one's own, self-serving desires a force they ultimately don't warrant. Many also seem to suspect that claims of need are a means of placing responsibility for answering to one's needs onto other shoulders rather than taking up the responsibility of meeting them oneself. However, Wiggins insightfully points out that the special force that claims of need carry is implicitly recognized even in such dismissive remarks (5-6). This force must have some basis in the distinctive nature of needs in contrast to desires. "It would be a sort of word magic," he writes, "if so striking a difference as that between 'want' and 'need' could arise except from a difference of substance" (6).

What, then, makes a need a need? What way of understanding a need can capture its "special practical and argumentative force"? According to Wiggins, "[s]omething that has been insisted upon in most analytical accounts of needing is that needing is by its nature needing for a purpose" (7). While Wiggins doesn't challenge this general point, he argues that it is an overly wide understanding of what purposes can give rise to needs that allows needs to be conflated with desires. Any desired goal can give rise to conditions necessary to meet that goal. Such contingent needs are *instrumental* needs in Wiggin's terminology. An instrumental need is one that results from a hypothetical imperative—the need for an axe, for instance, in order to chop a piece of wood into kindling. Wiggins finds many analytic philosophers (ex. A.R. White, Brian Barry, and Antony Flew) reducing all needs to instrumental needs, and thus effectively reducing them to a subcategory of desires: one needs an axe, to return to the above example, only insofar as one *desires* to chop wood (7 n. 11). Yet such needs, according to Wiggins, are not ones that truly fit "the meaning of the word" (9). Rather, the only needs that fit the word's true meaning are those that arise from the purpose of avoiding harm.

To capture this point, as well as the sharp contrast it introduces between a need and a desire, Wiggins proposes the following definition of need: "a person needs *x* [absolutely] if and only if…he will be harmed if he goes without *x*" (14). What a need entails is thus an essential vulnerability to harm. This essential vulnerability to harm is the necessary and sufficient condition for determining 'absolute' needs on Wiggins account, that is, needs that are not contingent on a voluntary interest in satisfying a given desire and thus merely instrumental to fulfilling one's desires.

Importantly, Wiggins places a particular emphasis on the *necessity* of this vulnerability to harm in his definition of absolute need: Harm must *necessarily* follow if a need goes unmet (7 n. 10). In this respect, Wiggins takes himself to be following an idea present in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: what is 'necessary' is anything that amounts to a "non-negotiable (or-in-the-circumstances-non-negotiable) good" in respect to avoiding harm (26).[14] It is in light of this necessary relationship to harm, moreover, that Wiggins sees need as carrying its distinctive moral and political force (9-10). Thus, defining need according to the criterion of necessary vulnerability to harm helps to makes sense of and substantiate the strong intuition that claims of need carry a hefty moral and political force, and matter in ways that claims of desire do not.

What counts as harm is a matter worthy of discussion, as Wiggins is well aware, but this doesn't change the fact that one can draw a sharp and definitive line between need and desire on the basis of the criterion of vulnerability to harm in the case of needs that is not present in the case of desires.[15] When it comes to assessing the political and moral relevance of the claims of need, however, a more robust account of relevant forms of harm is necessary. For Wiggins, not all claims of need have the same moral and political weight. It is vital needs—needs that one "*cannot get on without*" or that one's "*life will be blighted without*"—that have the greatest moral and political charge (9; Wiggin's emphasis). Relational needs, including second person needs, often meet these criteria. A young child, for instance, surely cannot survive without the love and care of others, and any human live is severely blighted without recognition and respect from others. Further, to be made to passively bear witness to acts of violence against those one loves, as has been done to many persons in times of armed conflict and genocide, is to be subject to a profound form of harm that can leave one's very self shattered beyond repair.

Need and Dependency

Wiggins follows his definition of need according to the criterion of vulnerability to harm with two valuable points for my purposes concerning its implications. The first of these points is that needs are "*states of dependency*" in the sense that we depend on having the objects of our needs met if we are to avoid harm (16). Here again Wiggins' takes a cue from Aristotle's account of necessity in the *Metaphysics*. As Wiggins and Sira Dermen emphasize in their work together, Aristotle deems something necessary or needful if it is a thing "without which it is impossible to live (as one cannot live without breathing and nourishment) or without which it is not possible

for good to exist or to come to be or for bad to be discarded or got rid of (as for example, drinking medicine is necessary so as not to be ill…)" (quoted in Wiggins and Dermen, 1987, 62-63). It is in respect to realizing the vital goods of our lives that the objects of our needs, for Wiggins and Dermen, are things upon which we depend.

Defining need according to the criterion of vulnerability to harm thus also serves to illuminate the extent to which dependency is an inevitable part of every human life insofar as need is inescapable for us all. Although the ways in which both need and dependency figure in each of our lives varies and changes, the fact that both need and dependency figure in all human life does not. Indeed, as Eva Kittay explains, not only are we dependent on the objects of our needs, but we all also dependent on other persons at some point in our lives to procure the things we need for us. This second order dependency is just as inescapable a part of human life as is the first order dependency of which Wiggins speaks. She writes: "[T]here are identifiable states of our life history in which dependency [on others] is unavoidable, either for survival or for flourishing" (1999, 29). These states of our life history include "[t]he immaturity of infancy and early childhood, illness and disability that renders one non-functional even in the most accommodating surroundings, and the fragility of advanced old age" (29). Second order dependency is a fundamental reality of human life, and while this dependency is shaped by social, political and cultural conditions, such "dependency for humans is as unavoidable as birth and death are for all living organisms" (1999, 29). From our second order dependency, wherein we depend on another for what we depend upon, moreover, comes a need for those relationships that arise from our second order dependencies.

The reality of both need and dependency is in tension with accounts of personhood that begin with the premise that persons are self-standing moral agents. Yet these realities are readily accommodated in accounts of personhood that are connection-based. Further, as Sarah Clark Miller has noted, "how we do or do not care for one another in our shared moments of dependence marks a matter of great moral importance," and highlighting the essential connection between need and dependency is important in any consideration of need's moral and political relevance (2005b, 140).

Additionally, insofar as needs can produce dependencies as well as result from them, such as happens when second order dependencies led to a continuous need for the special relationships that answer to these dependencies, the phenomenon of need bespeaks a way in

which one can be dependent without necessarily being passive in one's dependency. Our own agency contributes in complex ways to both our relational needs and our social dependencies. Wiggin's work offers one insight that is particularly helpful in setting the stage for a consideration of the complex entwinement between need and autonomy. He emphasizes that insofar as needs are states of dependency, needs correspond with certain interests—although he stresses that the need and the corresponding interest should not be viewed as *identical* (17). In this way, our needs can give rise to desires insofar as one desires to avoid harm. Here, then, needs and desire *do* overlap, yet in a way that does nothing to undermine an absolute need's moral and political significance, and in a way that does not collapse the two. Absolute needs remain clearly distinguished from both instrumental needs and desires insofar as absolute needs bear a necessary relationship to harm that instrumental needs to not. Yet absolute needs may nonetheless give rise to desires, for one can desire something just because one needs it. Through our desires, we can actively identify our will with our needs, electing to be moved to action by that which also necessitates action.[16]

The Uniqueness of Absolute Needs

Wiggins stresses that absolute human needs are often non-general, non-universal, and non-basic in the sense that they are not determined by hard and fast "laws of nature, unalterable and invariable environmental facts, or facts about human constitution" (15). Needs can be individual, particular, and circumstantial and yet give rise to vitally-compromising vulnerabilities to harm just as do universal and basic human needs such as the need for water. Wiggins invokes Shakespeare's *King Lear* in illustration of this point (20, n. 22). There is no universal or basic human need to have a hundred knights in one's service, but in Lear's particular situation as one who has abdicated the throne and no longer has a home of his own, to forego this retinue of knights is to leave himself gravely susceptible to harm:

> *Goneril*: What need to five and twenty, ten, or five,/ To follow in a house where twice so many/ Have command to tend you?
> *Regan*: What need one?
> *Lear*: O, reason not the need; our basest beggars/ Are in the poorest things superfluous:/ Allow not nature more than nature needs,/ Man's life's as cheap as beast's (1911, 1070; Act II, Scene IV: 265-270)[17]

Shakespeare's words ironically illuminate that a reductive approach to need that seeks to locate it in only the barest necessities of human life ultimately fails to locate need at all. Wiggins' corresponding suggestion is that it is only in recognizing and acknowledging those genuine needs that are *not* dictated by our bare existence that one can adequately appreciate Lear's unwillingness to part with his retinue of knights.

Moreover, the special political and moral force Wiggins sees in the claims of need is not dependent on their being either objective or universal. Unique, particular, and circumstantial needs can have just as deep and far-reaching moral and political implications as any supposedly objective or universal needs because meeting these needs can be just as vital to one's welfare. The criterion of liability to harm, as Wiggins and Dermen explain, is not one that necessitates that needs are any less "subjective" than desires (Wiggins and Dermen 1987, 65).

Further, taking up Wiggins' criterion of vulnerability to harm as a way of differentiating need and desire is not incompatible with stressing that those needs that result from investments of care in the welfare of others are not merely reducible to liabilities to harm, but can also be a positive and enriching aspect of human life. After all, a need that is met, following the criterion of liability to harm, is no less a real need by virtue of its satisfaction. As Wiggins' himself aptly points out, "all sorts of things that I already have are things that I need" (6 n. 9). Soran Reader makes a simpler point concerning need in "The Other Side of Agency" (2007). She writes: "Having needs… is the normal condition of every contingent being in the universe" (599). One is made "passive, helpless, or vulnerable" by one's needs only when they become *occurent* – that is, when they are unmet – and cannot be met without assistance from others (599).

Second Person Needs

Vulnerability to Harm and Second Person Needs

Many second person needs, as well as other needs that stem from investments of care in the world, are needs that it is a very good thing both to have and, equally, to have satisfied. Antigone's strong bond to her brother is not harmful in and of itself; rather, it is positively enriching. The same is true for the emphatically felt, deep-reaching bonds between their own welfare and that of the persecuted Jews that moved both Opdyke and Jacobs to become Holocaust rescuers. These needs open one to harm when the welfare of others to whom one's

own welfare is tied is violated or under threat, and when these relational needs are not recognized as giving rise to political and moral obligations for their own satisfaction. Yet there is nothing fundamentally harmful or privative about the needs themselves. One of the benefits of defining need on the basis of the unique relationship it bears to harm is precisely that it does away with the long-standing tendency to conceive of need as bearing an essential relationship to lack. On this understanding, one is thought to only need that which one lacks, and need itself is accordingly only understood negatively.

Irene Gut Opdkye and Helene Jacobs both express a guiding sense that maintaining their own personhood in the face of the persecution of the Jewish people during the Holocaust necessitated aiding the Jews. It is in this respect that their experiences are exemplary of second person needs. While one might hear Helene Jacobs' assertion that it was her "drive for self-preservation" that gave her the strength to aid the Jews as self-effacing, I hear it as attuned to the self-constitutive and often under-acknowledged roles that relations to others inescapably play in one's life. It attests to the very real need for others to be treated in a particular way to which these relations can give rise. In a world that sets self-determination and dependency at odds, and lauds self-determination while belittling dependency as a form of shortcoming, it is possible to be alienated from this deep-reaching truth about human life. It is even possible, if not common, to have a willful desire to disavow it. Accordingly, the self-awareness both Opdyke and Jacob show in their words of testimony, as well as that which they showed in their actions, is all too rare.

Pierre Sauvage, born in the French village of Le Chambon where many Jewish people were sheltered during the Holocaust, troubles the tendency to portray the rescuers as 'selfless'. "The adjective 'selfless'," he writes, "…precludes any understanding of the people it is misleadingly used to praise" (1986, 138). In his thinking, "Hitler and Eichmann suffered from what could be called a particularly dreadful form of 'selflessness,' but that could not be said of the people of Le Chambon." Rather, he explains that "…the people of Le Chambon and elsewhere had a very secure, very anchored sense of self, a spontaneous access to the core of their being, that resulted in a natural and irresistible proclivity to see the truth and act upon it" (138). Moreover, showing a sensitivity to the interpersonal nature of selfhood, he emphasizes that one lesson to be learned from Holocaust rescuers such as Opdyke and Jacobs is that "to care about other people is also to care about yourself" (141).

Opdyke and Jacobs are not alone among the Holocaust rescuers in making assertions that reveal a poignant sense of interconnectedness between their own welfare and that of others. Other rescuers also speak of the needs of the Jewish community giving rise to needs of their own to provide aid, and of the necessity of doing so if one's very sense of self is to remain intact. For instance, in an interview for Malka Drucker and Gay Block's *Rescuers*, Johannes Devries recounts a conversation that occurred between himself and his wife before the two decided to take Sholomo Harrington into their home: "We talked for some time," recounts Devries, "but we decided, 'When you would close the door on someone like that and you heard later that he was destroyed, how would you feel the rest of your life? I think I would be destroyed myself" (1992, 22). Less directly, in her interview with Drucker and Block, Liliane Gaffney offers, as an answer to the question of why one would have chosen to aid the Jews when it put one's own life at risk, that in the time of the Holocaust "if you didn't live for others as well as yourself it wasn't worth living. To be human we need each other" (97).[18]

Second Person Needs and Virtue

It is a common tendency of Western thinking to draw a sharp line between self-interested action and action that is other-oriented. Yet Alasdair MacIntryre notes that what such a division ignores are "those types of activity in which the goods to be achieved are neither mine-rather-than-others' nor others'-rather-than-mine, but instead are goods that can only be mine insofar as they are also those of others" (1999, 119). Acknowledging such goods requires acknowledging our own dependency on others. Acknowledging dependency not only allows for recognizing that protecting and defending the welfare of another can be essential to protecting and defending one's own welfare, but also for reconfiguring acts of benevolence according to MacIntryre. When such acts are concerned with goods that are my goods just insofar as they are those of others, another person's need is not an occasion to "reassure ourselves about our own goodwill," for caring for another is also an act of self-care. Further, the particular relationship that the other person—whether a stranger, a family member, or a member of one's community—bears to me cannot be generalized or abstracted away as it is in detached acts of charity (119).

Acting in the protection, defense, or pursuit of goods that are one's own just insofar as they are those of others, moreover, is both benevolent and ethical according to MacIntyre. Neither the benevolence nor the ethical quality of an act is fundamentally compromised if it also

contributes to one's own self-care. Instead, there is a connection between ethical action and self-care, yet recognizing it requires introducing a set of virtues usually left out in philosophical accounts. MacIntyre calls these virtues "the virtues of acknowledged dependence" (120). An instance of acting according to such virtues occurs when "someone gives to another in significant need ungrudgingly, from a regard for the other as a human being in need, because it is the minimum owed to the other, and because in relieving the other's distress I relieve my distress at his or her distress" (121). In so doing, one demonstrates "just generosity": justice is present in this action insofar as what is given is something that is owed on the basis of need, yet for this very reason what is owed cannot be proportioned out in accordance with something that has been given me, and exceeds any calculus of what is proportionally due.

Moreover, such an act exemplifies an "attentive and affectionate regard" for the other in need, something that the virtue of just generosity requires (122). In MacIntyre's example, it is the distress felt oneself due to the distress of another that reveals the kind of affective regard for the welfare of another necessary to make this particular act an ethical act. The same distress, I would add, indicates the presence of a second person need for someone else to be treated in a particular way, a need that both illuminates the intertwining of another's good and one's own and renders this intertwining affectively lived as a virtuous disposition to care. It is this kind of need to which many of the Holocaust rescuers testify.

MacIntyre follows Aquinas in calling the distress felt oneself over the distress of another *misericordia.* He notes that while this form of feeling may arise in response to the needs of those in our family or in our larger community, "to direct the virtue of *misericordia* towards others is to extend one's communal relationships so as to include those others within those relationships" (125-126). *Misericordia*, commonly translated reductively as 'pity', is thus a bondedness felt in our lived experience between our own welfare and that of another that can extend our affinities to those to whom they have not previously reached.

To understand such a bond between one's own welfare and that of others as bespeaking second person needs gives to it not only ethical import as a sentiment arising from a genuine acknowledgment of our own interdependencies (which it is ethically, socially, and politically important to work to foster) but also allows that there may be ethical, social, and political obligations that extend to answering the distress of those who experience distress at the distress of others. Moreover, it allows for the recognition of the deep and egregious harm that can be

done when acts of violence target vulnerabilities that arise through relational bonds, and thus target the second person needs to which they give rise. A consideration of our relational needs, with our second person needs among them, can illuminate just how deep our investments of care in the world and in the welfare of others run, and how much other's wellbeing often matters to our own. Ultimately, moreover, an attunement to the needs of the relational self better enables us to recognize certain forms of harm that might otherwise go overlooked or underestimated, and to mitigate or prevent them. That there is a life-enhancing dimension to having certain relational needs does not make these needs any less deserving of ethical and political attention, or any less issues of concern from the perspective of social justice. This is because these needs, just like the need for food and shelter, can be part of our vital good, and can cause devastating, even life-shattering, harm if unanswered.

Other-Regarding Interests

Joel Feinberg's interest-based account of harm is also suggestive of second person needs. Feinberg recognizes that it is possible to have "other-regarding" interests, a notion not far afield from that of second person needs insofar as our needs are the basis of many of our interests. An other-regarding interest occurs when "*C* has 'invested' a desire so strong, durable, and stable in *D*'s well-being, that he comes to have a personal stake in it himself" (1984, 70). This abiding interest in another's welfare is genuinely other-regarding, according to Feinberg, when it treats another's welfare as an end in itself, and not merely as a means to furthering one's own isolated good.

Feinberg notes that the form of love known as *agape* has often been defined by appeal to other-regarding interests: to feel *agape* is to have "an interest in the advancement of someone else's interests" (71). When other-regarding interests tether one's welfare to that of another, whatever harms the other directly, indirectly harms the one bound to them through these interests. "Can anyone doubt," Feinberg asks rhetorically, "that one harms a loving parent by maiming his or her child… or that one harms a loving husband or wife by causing a disappointment that plunges his or her spouse into despair?" (71). "The loving parent or spouse and the public-spirited zealot," he adds, "can make no distinction between their own interests and that of their children, or spouse, or party" (73).

That other-regarding interests are complexly intertwined with self-regarding ones has often been treated as cause to discount their genuineness. This assumes, however, that our interests are isolated before they are entwined, and that the good of others can be cleanly separated from one's own good. Relational needs defy any easy division between the goods of the self and the goods of others insofar as they challenge the conventional boundaries of the self.

Yet although other-regarding interests defy any ready division between self-interests and the interests of others, Feinberg notes that some other-regarding interests can nonetheless be aptly characterized as "blamably selfish" (73). These blamably selfish interests are those that pursue "the interests of *some* other people (for example, a daughter and a son) at the expense of still *other* people (for example, their neighbor's children)," for it is "selfish wrongly to benefit one's own loved ones at the expense of others" (73). This is an import consideration to which any account of the political and ethical salience of second person needs must attend. However, it is certainly not always blamably selfish to answer to the vital interests—and thus to meet the needs—of those to whom one has an especially intimate relationship. Intimacy is often a prerequisite to both genuine understanding of another's needs and to being able to adequately answer to them. And it is certainly not the case that caring for the needs of one's own intimates *must* come at the expense of other's welfare, although the global relationship between the privileges had by many persons in First World nations and the forms of oppression experienced by those in other nations must always be considered, as must the effects of one's current actions on future generations. Further, while one might suspect that our strongest other-regarding interests and second person needs will always be concerned with the welfare of those who are most near and dear to us, the testimonies of Holocaust rescuers will Opdyke and Jacobs prove otherwise.

Feinberg's own account of other-regarding interests draws a sharp line between concerns for the welfare of strangers and concerns for those with whom one has long-standing and ongoing relationships. He argues that the other-regarding interests of moral and political relevance are those that are stable and abiding. These interests, he writes:

> …should be contrasted with the more common phenomenon of spontaneous sympathy, pity, or compassion which can be directed at total strangers. It may make *A* very unhappy to see *B* (a stranger) suffer, and A may do what he can to help *B*, from genuinely disinterested, compassionate motives. But the harm that has been done to *B*, say by a hit-and-run motorist who knocked him down, is not

> *also* harm done to *A*. The interests of *A* have not been invaded by the harm done to *B*; he has only suffered some vicarious unhappiness on *B*'s behalf which will leave his personal interests largely unaffected. (1984, 70-71)

While Feinberg captures an important difference between fleeting investments of care and enduring ones in terms of importance for one's overall flourishing and vitality, he nonetheless obscures the intricate ways in which the welfare of a perfect stranger can in fact become permanently enmeshed with one's own good. Witnessing a hit-and-run accident, for instance, can radically change the long-term interests of the witness. To see such an event happen may leave one haunted by the sense that their home is not the safe, caring place that they once believed it to be but rather a cold, dangerous, and cruelly self-interested one. The effects of witnessing such an event might run so deep as to permanently upend one's sense of community, causing one to feel the need to either leave their home in the hopes of finding a more caring place to live or to take great pains to try to rectify the climate.

The importance of one's sense of one's larger community to one's own welfare is just one way in which the welfare of perfect strangers can in fact be an integral interest of one's own. Many who have been witnesses as well as responders to car accidents find themselves feeling connected ever after to the person to whom they offered aid. Driving home late one summer's night, I was the first to pass an accident on a dark country road. Rather than seeing the car, I first saw only a woman darting into the road. After calling for help, I ran to her side, gave my shirt to stop a wound, and held her hand as she looked into my eyes asking if she was dying. When the ambulance arrived, she asked if I would visit her in the hospital, feeling the same sense of emotional connectedness to me at that moment that I have ever after felt to her. This is but one story of how a passing encounter with a stranger in need can affect one's long-term investments of care.

Vital Needs in Oppressive Climates

Despite the importance of the harm criterion to his understanding of need, David Wiggins also emphasizes that distinguishing between absolute and instrumental needs by way of the criterion of vulnerability to harm is not sufficient grounds to determine any need's moral and political relevance. Wiggins emphasizes that meeting some interests

corresponding to one's absolute needs is *vital* to one's well-being, while meeting others, albeit necessary to avoiding harm, is not equally vital. "Vital interests" correspond to vital needs, and are both "entrenched" and "scarcely substitutable" (1987, 17). Elsewhere, Wiggins writes that the objects of such needs are "things without which the subject in question will be seriously harmed or else (in so far as s/he lives on) will live a life that is vitally impaired" (2005, 31). It is these vital needs, or states of dependency, and their corresponding vital interests that Wiggins deems to carry the strongest moral and political weight.

I share in Wiggins' sense that needs that correspond with what he calls 'vital' interests have greater moral and political weight than do other needs. What must be additionally understood, however, is that some of our most vital interests arise out of our investments of care in the world (some of which are investments in other's welfare) and are formed in and through relationships with others. The capacity for one's very selfhood to be compromised and even shattered as a consequence of how others are treated in a shared world—to which the reflections of Irene Gut Opdyke and Helene Jacobs, among other Holocaust rescuers, attest— speaks to the vital nature of some of our relational needs and to the entrenched investments of care for others to which they are tied.

Moreover, even among our vital needs those that one cannot meet oneself have an especially strong ethical and political weight. According to Soran Reader, these needs, when unmet, are the only needs in relationship to which one is fully passive. She explains:

> Even if a need is occurent, if I can meet the need for myself, I am not passive. Indeed, it is hard to think of a more active condition, than the condition in which I have an occurent vital need which I can meet for myself. If I am deprived of air, but can find a way to break the window that is coming between me and my air supply, I am about as active as I will ever be (and probably a lot more active than I would ever like to be). (2007: 600)

Still, even with this additional specification in mind, Wiggin's notion of 'vital needs' may be too broad to accurately pick out which of our relational needs have moral salience, and which of those with moral salience have the greatest moral weight. Some relational needs, for instance, may be both "entrenched" and "scarcely substitutable"—two of the qualities Wiggin's uses to determine a vital need—but having them satisfied may do more harm than good. The need that many young girls feel to look "pretty" and to be seen as sexually desirable by the

opposite sex is one example. Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus' recent film *Sexy Baby* (2012) follows three women as they confront a social world in which they are both objectified by others and play a hand in their own objectification. Ken Alpert, the father of the youngest of the three, who is twelve when the film begins and fourteen at its conclusion, recounts having once read his daughters a book called *Cinder Edna*. Cinder Edna is Cinderella's neighbor, who uses her own wit to find happiness where Cinderella relies on her looks. After reading the book, the father asks one of his daughters—five years old at the time—which of the two characters she would rather be. Her response is that she would, of course, want to be Cinderella, because she's the pretty one. The moment captures a social narrative that devalues women by reducing them to objects of others' desire internalized in the desires of women themselves at a very young age.

If the criterion for defining need is vulnerability to harm, and the criterion for defining a 'vital' need is that it be entrenched and non-substitutable, it might seem that a self-devaluing investment such as this one could count as the source of a morally salient need. Wiggins description of vital needs as needs that one "*cannot get on without*" or that one's "*life will be blighted without*" does a better job of capturing which of one's need have the most moral salience, but still struggles when confronted with relational needs that internalize oppressive values. A young woman may feel, for instance, that she cannot endure life in a body that is anything other than an ideal, hyper-sexualized object of male fantasy and that her life will be blighted unless she is able to have the plastic surgeries necessary for her to embody this fantasy. Is her desire for surgery, then, a vital need to which others ought respond?

Constitutive Needs

One way around this hurdle is to appeal to an objective rather than a subjective view of what constitutes vital harm to this young woman's life, although such a tactic risks paternalism. Another strategy is to seek a still more detailed account of vital harm. Here, Sarah Clark Miller's work, which establishes a defining connection between moral salient needs and moral harm (which, for Miller, equates to harm to one's agentive capacities) offers a way forward.

Miller's work introduces a category of needs that one cannot meet oneself called 'constitutive needs'. Her account of constitutive needs is as follows:

> Constitutive needs arise in situations or conditions in which the agency (or the potential for agency) of an individual is acutely endangered. They are constitutive

> in that such needs must be met for an individual to develop, maintain, or re-establish agency… To be a full agent in the world, in the sense of being able to carry out action effectively and to determine and achieve ends, individuals will need more than capabilities provided by agency understood as rationality and autonomy. Some level of emotional attunement and relational ability will also be necessary. (2005a, 115)

Constitutive needs are needs that must be met in interpersonal relations and by social and political institutions. For Miller, there is an interpersonal, social and political responsibility as well as an ethical duty to meet such needs insofar as moral harm—harm to the very capacity to live as a person with interests, goals, and ends in the world—will come to the person whose constitutive needs go unanswered (2005a, 116).

The category of 'constitutive needs' Miller outlines is thus one that speaks to the moral responsibility to answer to certain needs experienced by others, both in our political and social arrangements and in our personal relationships, where these needs are vital for agency. In *The Ethics of Need* (2012), Miller substitutes the term 'fundamental needs' for 'constitutive needs,' yet continues to stress that these needs are those that one cannot meet oneself and that must be met in order that one "be able to choose and carry out action in the world," thus threatening "the harm of compromised agency" if unanswered (2012, 4; 23). While a young woman's investment in undergoing plastic surgery in order to better appeal to masculine fantasies of the female body might be able to pass Wiggins' criterion for a vital need, it certainly would not pass Miller's criterion for a constitutive/fundamental one.

In offering this account of constitutive/fundamental needs, Miller is operating within an expanded Kantian framework of morality, in which it is agency that is the source of moral worth insofar as agency makes it possible for one to be, in Kant's terms, an "end in itself" (Kant 1997, 4:428-4:429; 36-38). Having agency, for both Miller and Kant, means having the capacity to select ends in the world and to strive for their realization. Our actions are ethical when they protect and promote agency in others, and we are able to act ethically insofar as we have the capacity for agency ourselves. Miller breaks with Kant's strict rational basis for agency in stressing that meaningful relationships and an emotional depth of investment in the world are just as key to one's capacity to "carry out action effectively and to determine and achieve ends" as are rationality and autonomy as traditionally conceived, a point that the above examples of women's self-objectification in oppressive social climates helps to illustrate. Yet she remains

committed to giving agency pride of place in moral life. She also remains committed to the Kantian principle that rationality is necessary for agency, although she emphasizes that degrees of rational capacity can vary widely (2014, 25).

Miller's expansive reworking of the Kantian conception of agency has much to recommend it. A widened account of agency that is sensitive to its social as well as its emotional components, Millers explains, is something for which many feminist critiques of autonomy have called. She quotes Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, who describe these critiques as "emphasiz[ing] that an analysis of the characteristics and capacities of the self cannot be adequately undertaken without attention to the rich and complex social and historical contexts in which agents are embedded," and as "point[ing] to the need to think of autonomy as a characteristic of agents who are emotional, embodied, desiring, creative, and feeling as well as rational creatures" (148-149 n. 27; quoting Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000, 21).

One benefit of emphasizing the role that positive relationships and healthy emotional investments play in supporting agency is that it gives our relational and emotional needs, and not just our rational ones, fundamental moral importance. In order for the human capacity for agency to flourish, human beings need more than rationality alone. They also need healthy interpersonal as well as social and political relationships and positive emotional attachments. Illustrating the importance of relational and emotional wellbeing for agency, Miller has her reader "think of a child who although he has been meticulously taught various scientific theories, has not once heard an emotionally supportive utterance from anyone in his world—not from parents, teachers, or peers." She asserts that "[s]uch a child, mired as he is in an emotional and relational wasteland is not likely to develop into a fully functioning agent, even if others meet every need related to his rational agency" (2012, 75-76).

Further, through including relational and emotional capacities amongst the necessities for agency, Miller aims to contest the reductive conceptions of agency that have served to exclude those with non-normative or declining cognitive powers from its sphere, and thus to diminish the moral importance of their needs. When relational and emotional welfare are included amongst the requisites of agency, the fundamental needs of those with limited or non-normative cognitive powers (a group which includes all of us in infancy, many of us in times of illness or extreme trauma, and most of us in old age) can be recognized as having the same moral relevance as the needs of any other population, and the harm that befalls one when these needs go unmet can be

recognized as just as devastating to one's agency as is having one's rationality compromised (2012, 24-25). "An individual with impaired rational agency," Miller explains, "may still exhibit her agency in ways that draw on her emotional or relational abilities" and "[t]he harm that results when others deny her emotional and social needs is as damaging as the harm that a fully rational human being experiences when her rational needs are denied" (26).

I gravitate towards Miller's concept of constitutive/fundamental needs for the moral and political obligations to answer to those needs that promote and protect agency that it insists upon as well as for its attention to the role that emotional and relational life play in agency. Further, making a careful assessment of the relationship between needs and agency can be fundamental to assessing the moral value of many relational needs, including second person ones. Many relational needs arise out of one's investments of care in the world. While these investments of care can enrich one's life and enhance one's agency, they can also be self-diminishing and agency compromising. Some relational needs—such as the need to appear "sexy"—internalize oppressive self-conceptions, and some second person needs prioritize the welfare of others at much too great a cost to one's own wellbeing. For instance, while appreciating one partner's need for meaningful work is surely important, relocating one's family because his need is lived as a second person need of one's own without also attending to one's independent needs—such as the need to maintain one's friendships, to advance one's own career goals, and to be in a familiar and supportive surrounding community as one cares for one's child—may compromise one's agency.

Thus, investments of care that give rise to agency-compromising relational needs demand critical scrutiny. Yet it is not clear that it is only those needs that are fundamental to one's agency that can make moral claims on others, especially when agency is understood to require a minimum level of rationality. In restricting the category of fundamental human needs to those needs that must be met in order to enable and support human agency, Miller continues to think about the ethics of need from within a narrow Kantian framework.

The parameters of agency certainly warrant expansion beyond the bounds of Kant's own thinking, which reduces agency to an effect of rational capacities alone. Yet the bounds of what counts as a fundamental human need also warrant expansion beyond the confines of any strict relationship to agency, even when agency is understood in Miller's expansive sense. While Miller's agentive approach helps to rule out any obligations to attend to agency compromising

needs, it cannot be only those needs that support the capacity to "to be self-determining, in short, to choose and to carry out action in the world" that have moral salience, for it is not agency alone that is vital to a rich human life (Miller 2005a, 115). Thus, while Miller's account of constitutive/fundamental needs succeeds in outlining a criterion by which to prohibit ethical obligations to foster agency compromising needs, it fails to recognize a constitutive set of relational needs that do not bear a direct relationship to agency.

A healthy relational life is itself a fundamental good for any human being even if it fails to enable agency, as long as it does not *inhibit* agency. The relationships one has with intimate others as well as the relationships in which one stands to one's larger social and political world have moral salience not merely because they play an important role in one's capacities to determine and pursue a set of ends in the world, but because they are in themselves fundamental dimensions of being a person. An ethics of need must attend not only to the serious harms that result from compromised agency, but also to the grave harms that follow when the relational dimension of human life at large and its role in our flourishing is devalued. Further, despite Miller's aspirations, an ethical study of need that fails to consider moral personhood outside of the bounds of agency cannot grant equal moral weight to the needs of all persons with non-normative cognitive powers or those that care for them, as some cognitive disabilities are so severe as to leave one without the minimal rationality necessary to determining one's own ends.

Personhood and Care

Eva Kittay's "At the Margins of Moral Personhood" argues that personhood exceeds capacities for self-determination and agency. In this essay, Kittay responds to an argument that equates personhood with capacities for self-determination found in the work of Jeff McMahan. McMahan argues that personhood, together with the moral status it entails, hinges on experiencing continuity between one's current state of existence and both a past and future self. Without this continuity, "rational egoistic concerns for our future," which allow us to act in the pursuit of ends and to determine our own good, are not possible and, on McMahan's account, one cannot belong to a moral community (2005 ,103). One lacking these rational capacities, he presumes, makes no contributions to the good of others and is accordingly not entitled to any moral consideration by others.

Kittay stresses that the absence of capacities to anticipate the future, to integrate one's present state of existence with both the future and the past, and to direct one's actions self-consciously towards a future end—such as occurs for an anencephalic infant—is a profound and mournful loss for any human being, even if that being has no conscious awareness of its own welfare. Yet even without self-consciousness of its own, this being still has a well-being that others can assess and for which they can care, for why else is the birth of an anencephalic infant the source of immense grief for a mother bonded to that child? This grief is not just for her own loss as a mother but is also inseparably connected to grief on her part for the sake of the child, incapable as it is of a life comparable to that of other infants and fated soon to die (110). This grief illustrates that there are things that are good and bad for this child, even if the child has no rational capacity, just as it illustrates the deep connection between a child's welfare and its mother's, for what harms the child also harms anyone who cares for it.

Through appealing to the relationship between a mother and an anencephalic child, Kittay thus captures that the loss of the capacities of self-consciousness and self-determination that the anencephalic infant experiences is *not* a loss of moral personhood. Moral personhood is not synonymous with agentive capacities. Personhood is simply not a matter of capacities of any sort pertaining to isolated individuals, but rather of relational connections. Personhood involves meaningful, caring, affecting, and engaged relationships with others. Further, these relationships do not necessarily have to be mutual, such as is the case with the relationship between a mother and her anencephalic child or with a child who lives on after a parent's death but continues to feel deeply bonded to that parent (111).

To better illustrate how relational connections, and not agentive capacities, establish moral personhood, Kittay writes intimately of her own daughter, Sesha. Sesha is severely cognitively disabled, a reality that is a part of her complex and unique moral personhood, not a revocation of it. Sesha "has the capacity to enjoy life, to share her joy through her smiles and laughter, to embrace those who show her love and care, and to bring joy to all whose lives she touches." Sesha, "through her warmth, her serene and harmonious spirit, and her infectious love of life enriches the lives of others" (123). Sesha's loving and joyous relations with others are an essential part of her moral personhood; they are as essential to both her experience of good in the world and of her ability to bring good into it. Engaging in these relationships with others does not depend on the capacity for future-oriented self-consciousness or for setting deliberate ends

for oneself. Yet surely Sesha would be seriously harmed without the goods brought into her life by the care of a loving family and by the embrace of others who have made her care their vocation. In turn, the lives of those that love and care for her would be devastatingly blighted without her in it.

A relational conception of moral personhood that parts ways with any delimitation of moral life on the basis of agentive capacities allows for an enriched understanding of the constitutive needs of the moral person and an improved ethics of need. Whereas an agentive approach to moral personhood first delimits the capabilities that are essential to agency and then seeks to support these capabilities, a relational approach to moral personhood attends to the dynamics of both interpersonal and social and political relationships, heeds the role that these relationships play in a good human life broadly construed to include multiple forms of joy and sorrow, and considers the moral significance of needs that arise without the context of these relationships.

Kittay explains, for instance, that the particular relationships one stands in to others come with distinct moral responsibilities to attend to others' vulnerabilities and to care for their needs. To use Kittay's example, the relationship of parenthood—a social relationship more than a biological one, albeit a social relationship that often builds upon a biological foundation—comes with a particular set of moral obligations to the child due to both the child's need and one's heightened ability to answer to it (2005, 111; 1999, 28). Among this set of moral obligations is the obligation to "care for one's child for the child's own sake" and thus to promote her independent interests and not one's own isolated self-interests by means of the child (1999, 145). This obligation holds between parents and any child, whether anencephalic or highly-cognitively functioning, insofar as the child is dependent on the care of others to meet its needs, and insofar as its parents—whether biological, adoptive, or otherwise—are especially well-positioned to meet these needs (1999, 31; 35). The special responsibility that a parent has to care for a child can be taxing, but providing this care is also an essential part of a mutually life-enriching bond.

Further, a child's need for care from a parent gives rise in turn to a parent's need for social support from a larger community, for it is such social support that enables the parent to perform the work of care well. These interconnected needs are among those that an expanded ethics of need—which considers the role of relationships in human flourishing at large, and not merely in promoting agentive abilities—deems morally salient. Just as certain unique

responsibilities to answer to the needs of a child fall to that child's parents, corresponding moral and political obligations to answer to the needs of caretakers fall to society. In *Love's Labor*, Kittay calls the ethical principle of caring for another as that other in turn cares for a third party the principle of *doulia*, invoking a Greek term that has come to be used for one who supports a mother as that mother in turn supports a child (1999, 68).[19]

A relational conception of moral personhood helps to capture the equal moral weight of attending to the first person needs of both dependents and dependency workers (including those that are important to one's agency *and* those that are important to one's relational life at large) as well as to second person needs. Second person needs are often experienced by those in caretaking roles but can be experienced by anyone with deep relational investments. Indeed, caring for the second person needs of caretakers can be an effective means to enhance the charge's agentive life as well as that of the caretaker, for even if a charge is unable to set ends for themselves, a good, invested caretaker often has the best sense of their good and the best strategies for how to realize it. Many of these needs are ones that Miller's agentive account seems to be able to recognize as giving rise to moral obligations bearing on others, insofar as they are fundamental to the agency of the caretaker who has made another's good their own end. But if the moral personhood of a dependent is seen as wanting insofar as that dependent lacks the rational capacities necessary for agency, might not the relational needs of those that care for him or her seem misguided? While Miller's own work certainly wouldn't endorse this position, and while Miller herself might even wish to contest it, it is a door that her agentive approach leaves opens. A relational approach to personhood closes that door.

Without social and political arrangements responsive to the needs of those who attend to the needs of others, moreover, caring for the needs of another will often come at the expense of attending to many independent needs of one's own, including those needs that are vital to one's agency. This is one reason why attending to the claims of need is an urgent social and political task. Insofar as every human life begins and ends in periods of dependency, protecting some of the most important goods in a human life, including the goods of agency but not ending with them, requires dignifying the needs of both dependents and dependency workers. As Kittay writes in *Love's Labor*, we are all equal in being "some mother's child" (1999, 25). Because we are all someone's child, our needs have equal moral significance not only when meeting these needs is tied to ensuring our agentive capacities but also when it ensures the best possible life for

us given any range of our capabilities, and thus equally ensures the best possible life for those whose own wellbeing rises and falls with our own.

Patiency and Agency

I've introduced Kittay's work to highlight a limitation in Miller's account of fundamental needs insofar as it restricts these needs to those that exclusively support one's agentive capacities, albeit where agency is understood to have relational and emotional requisites as well as rational ones. Another voice worth introducing into this conversation is Soran Reader's. In "The Other Side of Agency," Reader argues that philosophy has tended by and large to conceive of persons as agents. This way of understanding personhood, according to Reader, hides what she calls 'patiency.' Whereas agency involves action, patiency involves being acted upon (2007, 581). Patiency encompasses multiple fundamental aspects of personhood left out of the agentive conception of it and accordingly maligned. These aspects include incapability, necessity, dependency and, in tandem with these, "suffering, weakness, vulnerability, [and] constraint" (578).

For Reader, patiency is "the other side of agency" in the sense that some form of patiency is a necessary condition for every form of agency. Beginning with perhaps the broadest conception of agency, where agency is equated with action, Reader points out that to act is also to suffer: "When I lift a cup to my lips," she explains, "I suffer its weight" (588). In turn, Reader argues that every capacity to act presupposes a liability to suffer. Just one respect in which this is true according to Reader is that every capacity entails a corresponding vulnerability to the loss of the same capacity. Further, every freedom presupposes a corresponding constraint. Employing the freedom to speak, for example, entails entering into the constraints of speaking a particular language (590). Lastly, every form of human independence relies upon certain essential dependencies including the health of one's body, the welfare of the planet on which that health in turn depends, and a period of maternal support (591).

Insofar as such forms of patiency are necessarily presupposed by and/or required for agency, Reader argues that they are just as fundamental to personhood as agency. Further, defining personhood on the basis of agency and failing to recognize the important and inescapable role that forms of patiency play in human life is harmful to social welfare. Forms of

patiency are maligned and rendered shameful "privations of personhood," while agency is lauded without attention to its constitutive coupling with patiency (592). Certain social groups are equally maligned insofar as they are associated with patiency. Women, the disabled, and welfare recipients are among them. One of the necessary steps in the project of granting needs, vulnerabilities, and dependencies their appropriate moral value is thus overturning the social devaluation of patiency.

Towards this end, Reader stresses that a patient is not an object. One can be acted upon rather than acting without ceasing to be "a knower, a thinker, a moral being," as well as a subject and engaged participant in the world (593). In the mode of patiency, one may even be more exhaustively self-aware and self-present than in the mode of agency "because we are not distracted from the experience of presence to self by activity, by the effort of acting on things and persons in the world" (593-594). This idea resonates with Aristotle's positive evaluation of the merits of contemplation in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where contemplation is a happiness only possible once the work of acquiring knowledge is over and done.

In one moment of the text, Reader addresses the harm she sees being done to those who have been targets of sexual violence by the agentive conception of personhood. As long as patiency continues to be equated with objectification and stripped of its powerful subjective dimensions, those subjected to violence are unlikely to have meaningful correspondences between their personhood and their suffering recognized. Following an experience of sexual violence, one's humanity is treated as something to "recover" in moving out of a stance of victimhood and into one of survivorship—a move that Reader identities as a change from a focused awareness of one's patiency toward a firm and exhaustive grounding in one's agency (595). The failure to recognize that one remains both a full subject and a full person while also a victim of violence exacerbates the harm violence does. This problem disproportionately affects women according to Reader, as "women are more often and more completely victims" in our society than are men (596). Thus "the personhood of more women is denied when our culture as a whole operates with the unbalanced agential conception" (596).

While Reader's work achieves its goal of contesting the narrow equation of personhood with agency, however, her unwavering focus on patiency in the place of agency may work against sensitivity to the complex entwinement of experiences of agency with those of patiency. Her wariness of the term 'survivor' for those that have been the targets of sexual violence is one

example of this shortcoming in her work. Certainly Reader is right to warn against any social expectation that those who have endured the horrendous violence of a sexual assault must forego their sense of victimization to re-enter the sphere of dignified personhood. But being a 'survivor' of sexual violence does not mean ceasing to also be a victim of sexual violence, and achieving a healthy, integrated relationship to the trauma of sexual violation often demands accepting the ambiguity of being at once a 'victim' and a 'survivor' of this violence.

Reader's unwavering attention to patiency as the underside of all forms of agency may also work against a careful attention to the distinct moral and political obligations to which different kinds of patiency, and different contexts of its emergence, give rise. Looking at how Reader employs a point from Kittay's "At the Margins of Moral Personhood" in her own work on personhood serves to surreptitiously illustrate this point. In the interest of exemplifying her claim that every mode of agency presupposes a mode of patiency, Reader writes: "Eva Kittay reminds us of this two-edged aspect of capability when she compares the moral worth of two people, her daughter Sesha who lacks many capabilities but is a good person, and the Nazi doctors who were unfortunately extremely capable, but did a vast amount of harm" (590).

In invoking this example, Reader follows Kittay's own suggestion that the harmfully misused capacity for a conception of the good among these doctors may have in fact diminished their moral worth through the egregious harm their actions caused others. Yet whereas Kittay makes this point in order to argue for the moral personhood of someone like Sesha, who has not once in her life maliciously harmed another being but who has brought an immense amount of good into the lives of those around her, Reader's own deployment of the example serves to illustrate an ontological point about agency's inevitable accompaniment by patiency. Reader argues that by having diminishing their moral worth through abuses of their agentive power, the Nazi doctor's revealed a deep vulnerability for self-harm underlying their capacity for moral agency. Having the capacity for rational moral deliberation rendered these doctors vulnerable, Reader thus suggests, in a way that Sesha is not.

While I take Reader's point about capability's fundamental entanglement with vulnerability to be ontologically true, I find Reader's employment of this particular example to illustrate it insensitive. Reader's use of the example highlights the vulnerability among these doctors, positioning them as potential victims of their own abilities, without consideration of the dramatic moral and political difference between this form of vulnerability and those pertaining to

the severely cognitively disabled or, for that matter, to the Nazi's doctor's victims. Even given the ontological focus of this particular essay, I see this as a troubling oversight.

In "Why Bioethics Needs a Concept of Vulnerability," Wendy Rogers, Catriona Mackenzie, and Susan Dodds make the point that bioethics needs "a context-sensitive analysis of specific kinds and sources of vulnerability," not just attention to vulnerability as a universal fact (2012, 11). They stress that vulnerability is at once "an ontological condition of our humanity" and a term used "to pick out greater than ordinary vulnerability, recognizing that people vary in their exposure to risk and in the resources at their command to counter such risks" (12). The universal, human vulnerability to bleeding when cut, for instance, is a different kind of vulnerability than lack of access to health care insofar as the one is an entailment of embodiment and the other is a result of social and political conditions that may be unjust (12). Considering how vulnerability can be differently experienced during pregnancy is another way to illustrate this point. While pregnancy is an embodied condition that necessarily entails vulnerability, the kind and the degree of vulnerability experienced in pregnancy depends on access to midwifery care as well as obstetric care, the opportunity to have care provided in one's home as well as in a hospital setting, public funding for the support of a doula, and much more.

Moral and political obligations to respond to vulnerability's demands as they are expressed in the form of needs must differ in accordance with both the kind and degree of vulnerability at issue, and with the context in which a given vulnerability occurs. Kittay's *Love Labor* is attuned to the importance of context, arguing that both how one comes to be specially positioned to meet certain needs and how these needs arise matters a great deal to any assessment of moral responsibilities to extend care. Kittay points out, for instance, that one can become especially well-positioned to meet the needs of others through injustice and oppression as well as through chance circumstances and elective decisions, and that injustice and oppression can give rise to exploitative needs.

Kittay takes up Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* to illustrate this point. In the novel, Miss Butler, the last surviving member of a family whose wealth was acquired through slavery, chooses to commit suicide rather than life a live in which the privileges slavery afforded her are lost. Having servants numbered among these privileges. In her psychological inability to endure life without such privileges, Miss Butler shows a real and deep vulnerability to harm as well as a dire need for the service of others, yet to treat this need as one to which a response is morally

obligatory on the part of those best situated to answer it—the servants she and her family have long exploited—would be perverse. Her need is premised upon a set of practices that have been morally harmful to others, diminishing their worth and their moral value while enhancing her own. Whether moral obligations follow from a given need depends both on the nature of the need from which the vulnerability arises and on whether there is any moral cost in answering it. A need that arises through the moral diminishment of others and that can only be met through their continued moral diminishment is not a need that there is any moral obligation to answer regardless of how vital to someone's welfare it might be (1999, 58).

Rogers, Mackenzie and Dodds identify Reader's work on need as one resource for a development of a context-specific analysis of vulnerability, highlighting her attention to the difference between vital needs and other kinds of needs and to that between dispositional needs and occurrent needs as particularly helpful. Rogers, Mackenzie, and Dodds also make the excellent point that highlighting the essential role that vulnerability plays in every human life "encourages responses to 'more than ordinary vulnerability' that are based in a sense of solidarity, rather than paternalistic forms of intervention" (14). In this respect, an ontological approach to vulnerability and a context-sensitive approach are complementary rather than opposed. Yet an over-emphasis on the shared ontological condition of vulnerability can work against a morally and politically sensitive treatment of vulnerabilities that are non-normative as well as of those that are intensified by social and political blind-spots and prejudices, for it fuels the mistaken assumption that we are all not just vulnerable but that all of our vulnerabilities have equal moral weight.

In Dialogue: Kittay and Reader on Agency and Patiency

Reader identifies Kittay's work as having made valuable strides towards breaking through the agentive conception of personhood (602). For Reader, however, even Kittay's work hasn't fully recognized how fundamental and pervasive patiency is to personhood. She believes her own point that the human being is everywhere and at all times dependent, insofar as every mode of independence presupposes dependency, goes even further in unsettling an agentive conception of the person than does Kittay's attention to the moments of dependency that inevitably mark every human life (603). Without recognition of the utter pervasiveness of human dependency, Reader

believes that dependency will continue to appear as a mode of privation and of lack rather than as something that makes its own valuable contributions to the richness of human life (603).

In a footnote to her paper, Reader further articulates the overlap and divergence between her views on patiency and Kittay's in this way: "Although Kittay and I agree dependency and care are neglected and important, we disagree about whether promotion of agency is a good remedy. Kittay argues that it is only through attribution and recognition of their agency, that patients can gain equality as citizens, and that dominant agents can come to recognize their own passivity and vulnerability" (603, n. 53). While Reader and Kittay come together in emphasizing that personhood is neither dependent upon nor exhausted by agentive capacities, they have different strategies for how to redress the moral and political oversights that result from a reductively agentive view of personhood.

As Reader here captures, while emphasizing that personhood is relationship-dependent rather than property-dependent, and while emphasizing that dependency is a fundamental feature of all human life, Kittay's arguments uphold the moral salience of protecting and promoting agency for all persons for whom agency is possible. For those who have little or no ability to determine and pursue their own goods, Kittay argues that it is vital for others who stand in caring relationships to them to aid them in the pursuit of these goods, with as much non-paternalism and attention to the person's self-expression of interests and desires as the circumstances allow. It is equally vital for those that care for others to have their own needs, vulnerabilities, and dependencies attended to in turn.

Kittay turns to Amartya Sen's capability model as a means of including the needs of those that are vulnerable in non-normative ways, as well as the secondary needs of those that care for these vulnerabilities, in political schemes of equality and justice. Sen's model stresses that is it our capabilities, understood as freedoms to function, that must be equalized in any truly just and equal—and thus *moral*—political arrangement.[20] Unlike Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach to justice, Kittay emphasizes that Sen's model allows for variations in human capabilities because it does not assume that these capabilities are the same for all persons (1999, 132). Justice requires promoting and protecting everyone's capabilities, no matter what form they take, as well as taking the necessary redistributive steps to ensure that all persons have the equal freedom to actualize their differing capabilities. Sen's model also has the advantage of avoiding paternalism by recognizing that while all capacities are to be supported, it remains up to

each of us—at least so far as we are able—to determine which of our capabilities we want to most fully actualize.

Kittay points out, however, that one shortcoming of Sen's own articulation of his capabilities-based approach to justice and equality is that it is not sensitive to the fundamental role that relational life plays in both our capabilities and our freedom to actualize these capabilities. For this model to be truly helpful for achieving social justice and equality, the integral role that caring relationships play in the realization of certain capacities must be recognized, and these fundamental relationships must be supported just as much as are individual capabilities themselves. Not only are a dependent's capabilities affected by the presence or absence of adequate care, the ability of a caretaker to support and enable certain capacities contributing to the well-being of a charge often depends on the caretaker being supported in turn by others. Supporting these nested relationships of dependency is thus another requisite to social justice and equality.

Yet Kittay explains that while Sen's capabilities-based model of equality fails to attend to the relational context in which capabilities are held, this model is nonetheless readily amenable to revision in accordance with a relational conception of capability that allows the nested relationships of need, vulnerability, and dependency that care work requires to be given their due. With such a revision, what is "just another form of *individual-based* equality" can become a "*connection-based*" form of equality: the capabilities of those who cannot attend to their own care directly can be attended to by others, and the capabilities of those who do this work of caring can be attended to in turn (179). Kittay explains how this model could apply to the disabled as well as to those that extend care to them:

> The disabled person determines alone or along with family and dependency workers the valued functionings [i.e. capabilities which one has elected to actualize] as they arise out of his abilities and possibilities. On the other hand, the family and other dependency workers (that is, all who care about and for the disabled person—whether familial or employed) also need to be accorded an equality of capability. They too must be able to determine their valued functionings and have the freedom to realize these functionings. (179)

I see the emphasis on agency in Kittay's work, both in her turn to Sen's capabilities approach and elsewhere, as coming with much positive potential for drawing out the moral and political ramifications of what Reader calls patiency, rather than falling away from sensitivity to

just how fundamental patiency is to personhood. Much in the same way that Reader herself emphasizes that agency entails patiency, one might also emphasize that patiency also often entails agency. Rather that ushering in the return of a privileging of agency over patiency, however, recognizing this fact allows us to understand the layers of complexity as well as the ambivalences in lived experiences of vulnerability, dependency, need, and more—something that Reader's work and my own share in a concern to highlight.

Suffering, to use an example that Reader repeatedly invokes, is not a mere form of privation, for every form of suffering necessarily presupposes a positive capacity or ability to suffer. While a human being lifting a cup to its lips feels the resistance of that object, a machine performing the same task does not have the same capacity for awareness of the weight of this object counter-posing its movements. This capacity is at once a form of vulnerability and the opening to rich and responsive modes of engagement with the world. This rich affective opening becomes all the more vivid when the illustrations concern relations between two sentient beings, rather than those between a sentient being and an object. Many relational needs show this entwinement of activity and passivity with a special vivacity, for experiencing relational needs, and second person needs in particular, requires that one be sensitive, compassionate, engaged, and open to others—and, not uncommonly, to a degree that grates against social norms of affective investment and concern. Sensitivity, compassion, engagement, and openness are all ambivalent modes of both agency and patiency. Fostering and enabling capabilities such as these can thus be readily coupled with dignifying, validating, and humanizing agency's "other side."

Second-Order Constitutive Needs

I have already emphasized the important alternative to Miller's largely Kantian conception of personhood as premised solely on agency that I believe Kittay's work, as well as Reader's, offers. Yet rather than forego Miller's agency-centered approach to determining an ethics of need altogether, I favor expanding it by attention to the invaluable role that healthy, caring relationships play in human flourishing. In this way, Miller's sense of the particular importance of constitutive needs can be combined with the insights into personhood and dependency in Kittay's work. One caring for the welfare of another who cannot care for it directly has a corresponding set of needs attached to one's investments in and capacities for extending care to

another. The satisfaction of these needs is fundamental to the ability to pursue the good of the person under one's care. It is also vital to the welfare of the caretaker.

Combining this insight from Kittay's work with some aspects of Miller's account of constitutive/fundamental needs, we can say that these relational needs introduce a second level of constitutive needs. Further, meeting these needs is vital to the determination of both a set of goods worth pursuing and to the pursuit of these goods for one whose independent capacities for either the determination or pursuit of one's own goods are limited. These 'second-order' constitutive needs arise through the pursuit of the good of one whose independent capacities for either the determination or pursuit of their own good are limited, and pertain to the welfare of the caregiver as well as the charge. Introducing this additional layer of constitutive needs, I believe, is both in keeping with the spirit of Miller's work and in keeping with Kittay's emphasis on the moral and political obligations to care for those who are in turn caring for others. In turn, what both Kittay and Reader's work add to Miller's analysis of needs that give rises to duties to care is an utterly crucial sensitivity to the fact that moral and political obligation to support vital needs go far beyond enabling capacities for choice and self-determination. It is in two respects, then, that I would expand the category of constitutive needs, allowing it to include both second-order needs and dependencies (which may well be in keeping with Miller's own implicit intentions) and to include the needs of personhood understood beyond the limits of the Kantian conception. Constitutive needs—now understood to include both first-order needs for agentive self-determination as well as for welfare more broadly, and second-order constitutive needs that support such needs in others who cannot identify them or pursue them alone—are needs that "require care," in Sarah Miller's words, and give rise to moral responsibilities to extend it (Miller 2005a, 142).

On this expanded model, moreover, just as one can have direct constitutive needs one can also have second person constitutive needs—second person needs the meeting of which is fundamental to maintaining and protecting one's own welfare, and that emerge from the relational dimensions of selfhood at large. Taking relational selfhood seriously means recognizing that any harm done to one person has repercussions for others. It affects those that are bonded to that person through immediate connections of love and care, those whose welfare is connected to theirs through group relations of identity, those whose sense of self is tied up with the actions of their larger political community, and more.

Moreover, while there may be times when considerations of justice trump the obligation to meet the expressed needs of certain persons, even in these times there may still be social, political, and ethical obligations to extend care to those who have second person needs connected to them. For instance, Eva Kittay writes in *Love's Labor* of a conversation with a friend at the time of Clarence Thomas' senate confirmation hearing: "While we were listening to Thomas with a skeptical ear, she remarked that as much as she wanted the truth exposed it was not her desire, nor did she think it was Hill's desire, to see Thomas publicly pilloried. 'After all,' she said, 'he, too, was some mother's child.'" (24). Kittay interprets her friend's remark (a friend who had herself been a governess, and thus in a position of heightened vulnerability to sexual violence) not as bespeaking a direct empathic concern for Thomas, but rather one for his mother, through which concern only indirectly extended to him (24). While any obligation to directly care for Thomas's own vulnerabilities to harm in this situation is complicated by his actions towards Hill, obligations to care for others whose welfare is bonded to his are not undone. How this care is enacted must take the crime into account, but that crime does not undermine moral and political obligations to those whose good depends in part on the welfare of the one who has committed it.

Caring about Need: A Proviso

To experience any need is to find oneself vulnerable to harm if that need goes unanswered. Yet need is different from other vulnerabilities because of the compulsory, non-volitional power it has. While a young woman taking the leap of expressing her attraction to someone for the first time will be vulnerable to the harm of rejection, this doesn't necessarily mean that this young woman has a 'need' for the object of her attraction's mutual affection. She might, for instance, take the rejection as a sign that her affects were misdirected to someone who did not deserve them, and reorient her attachments towards someone more able to value them. An absolute need, in contrast, is not so easily shaken. It is, in Wiggins' terms, "entrenched" and "scarcely substitutable".

Some needs arise independently of our investments of care, such as the need for food and for shelter. We may find ourselves caring about food and shelter *because* we need them, but our care is not the basis of our need. In contrast, other needs arise because of our investments of care. This is a point that Harry Frankfurt has made in his work on care, as will be furthered considered

in the following chapter: caring can give something vital, non-substitutable import in our lives that would not have it but for our care. As Annette Baier explains in her own work on this point, through these investments of care, "we make ourselves vulnerable in ways we need not have been to the losses and griefs we will suffer when what we care about is defeated, or tortured, or dead, or permanently absent from our lives. To care is to make something important, above and beyond what must be important to us simply as sentient beings with desires" (1982, 273).

We have an ethical responsibility to critically examine our own needs so as not to make demands on other people, other animals, and on the planet that excessively and flippantly tax them. This responsibility extends to our investments of care. Those investments of care that are not set by needs that precede them, but that instead give rise to needs that we would not have otherwise can be immensely life-enriching, enhancing our connections to others, our depth of engagement with our world, and our potential for joy together with sorrow in it. Yet we must also be willing, in Baier's words, to take the "risks of loss and defeat" that caring involves, including "the risks of finding out that one's objects of care, and so one's actual carings, are not worth one's while" (273). Insofar as the needs that arise from our investments of care are just as capable as any other needs of rendering us vulnerable to vital, capability-compromising forms of harm, they are just as capable of making ethical demands on others. This makes taking the risk of critically scrutinizing our own investments of care a part of our ethical responsibility to care for those others who in turn care for us.

The testimonial words of Irene Gut Opdyke and Helene Jacobs that opened this chapter show that caring is itself one of our deepest moral powers. By entwining our own welfare with that of others, care carries us beyond complacency in the face of other's suffering. Care is *more* than sympathy; it is also a wellspring of vital needs—the second person needs of one who is a 'you' before being an 'I'—that break down barricades between convictions and conduct. This is one reason why Annette Baier's insistence of critically scrutinizing one's investments of care is so apt. The critical power of reflection so often emphasized at the expense of all other facets of ethical life has its place here, drawing us into the transformative moments of self-discovery necessary to ensure that our investments of care are one that are worthy of care's own incredible power.

When it comes to determining what moral obligations there may be to respond to the needs of others—that is, to respond to vulnerability's demands, it is fair to expect others to take

the same risk of critically scrutinizing their needs, together with the investments of care that give rise to them, that we must demand of ourselves. Risking the losses involved in giving up unhealthy, blamably selfish, or dangerously shortsighted investments of care is part of what an ethical relationship to care demands of us all. Because care is the source of many of our most vital relational needs, engaging in the risky practice of critical scrutiny is also a crucial part of the ethics of need.

If the criterion of vulnerability to harm is to serve as a measure for determining responsibility to answer to other's need, it too cannot be shortsighted. Immediate damages must be weighted against future gains, including those that come when a grave loss compels us to positively transform ourselves and to alter what we care about. Here, the ethics of attending to need requires delicate, context-sensitive, and ongoing engagement in the art of balancing respect for another's ends with caring resistance to another's self-harm. Aristotle teaches that the virtues are so deeply dependent on action and experience that those who would learn them cannot rely on any rules of reason for guidance; instead, the student of the virtues must look for guidance in the actions of someone who already has them. Excellence in the difficult art of balancing respect for autonomy with resistance to abetting acts of self-harm is a form of virtue, and learning it begins in seeking the guidance of those who seem to have it. The best mothers, fathers, uncles, and friends are among them, as are the very best of those whose vocation in life is the work of care. We mature in our relations to those who care for us as we learn to appreciate their refusals, resistances, and rebuttals as much as their unwavering support and inexhaustible love, sometimes even coming to know our true friends and allies by it. The ethics of relational need demands that we extend the same qualitatively-complex care to others that we value so deeply from them.

The ethics of need demands that social and political support be extended to meet all needs that are vital to agency (although not necessarily to meet all ends set through it). Yet it also demands the same support for all other capabilities. The needs that must be met in order, for instance, to ensure that Sesha can enjoy the pleasures that her sensitivity to music allows her or that her sense of connection to others make possible, have just the same moral salience as those needs that support agency. Further, an ethics of need must also recognize and validate second person needs, those needs that make another's wellbeing a constitutive part of one's own good. These needs have too long been forgotten in moral life at the same time that they have been cruelly, tragically, and sadistically exploited.

Between Need and Autonomy

To begin to build a bridge from this chapter into the next, the final issue I want to emphasize here is that sensitivity to the relational nature of need illuminates even more complex intertwining between need and autonomy than has yet been brought to light. Many of our most fundamental relational needs are informed by our choices and actions in the world as well as by social forces and relationships that far exceed our willful control. Having a degree of agency in the shaping of one's own relational needs, however, does not essentially compromise their validity as needs, their vital role in one's welfare, or their ability to give rise to ethical, social, and political obligations pertaining to others. Relational need, and second person need in particular, can go hand-in-hand with experiences to which it is often opposed, such as that of choice and other expressions of autonomy, self-determination, and agency. More pointedly put: Relational needs, with our second person needs among them, can be expressions of one's agency. Agency shows itself through the experience of certain relational needs insofar as some of these needs arise from one's deepest and most profound commitments in the world.

As emphasized above, having one's relational needs met is part of the scaffolding that ensures and supports one's agency in the world. Moreover, having one's relational needs recognized and responded to by others enables the development of the capacity to acknowledge one's own fundamental interdependency, insofar as it interweaves one's welfare with that of others, by making doing so feel safer and more sustainable. Having one's relational needs acknowledged, protected and cared for thus fosters the capacity for the rich investments of care in particular others and in the larger world that give rise to second person needs in the first place and, with them, to what we might call, following MacIntrye, the virtue of 'just generosity' (1999, 122). Beyond this, the various intertwined relationships that exist between one's relational needs and one's agentive commitments illuminate that vulnerable subjects—as we are all when in need— remain in important and fundamental respects also autonomous subjects; vulnerability and agency are not essentially opposed and dichotomous features of personhood any more than are agency and need.

Still, Wiggins' emphasis on the fact that an absolute need is one that necessarily causes harm if it goes unmet might seem to make it impossible for one to play an agentive role in the

constitution of their own relational needs through acts of choice or agency—something that often happens in a heightened way in instances of relational need—and to simultaneously have these needs count as morally salient ones. If our needs are in any way reflections of autonomous choices, how, one might ask, borrowing a phrase from Harry Frankfurt, can they have enough "necessity in them" to count as morally relevant needs? (1998, 108). Surely, if responding to the needs of others is to have any moral precedence over responding to their desires, needs must be something one cannot voluntary choose *not* to have in any given situation. Otherwise, one could easily remedy one's own vulnerability to harm through one's own choosing. A need that can be easily lifted through willful volition is not one that gives rise to ethical, social or political responsibilities bearing on others. I have already brought some dimensions of this issue to light in stressing that the most morally salience needs are one's that one cannot meet oneself. Still, even if this is so, one might well ask: if one plays an agentive role in the shaping one's own relational needs, doesn't this always already strip them of any moral or political purchase for others?

This problem stems from drawing misleadingly sharp divisions between activity and passivity, something Reader effectively demonstrates to be a pervasive problem in thinking about need. What can't be overlooked is that the entrenched investments in the world and deep-seated bonds to others that motivate many of our active and deliberate choices derive from much more than the deliberate and willful part of ourselves. Many of our most deep-reaching commitments of care in the world and many of our most entrenched bonds to others at once involve exercises of our autonomy and exceed them. In this respect, one may experience willful motivations to act in a particular way that one can nonetheless do no other than follow. In such instances, an immediate and urgent motivation arises out of the deepest structures of our selfhood, rather than out of a conviction derived from a rational calculus abstracted from who we are, what we care about, and the other persons to whom we are intimately tied. Vital harm will often follow if one is restricted in acting as these motivations require.

The agentive commitments from which morally and politically relevant second person needs arise are of this sort—they cannot be fleeting or superficial commitments which one can give up without significant harm to oneself results; rather, they must be deeply entrenched and beyond one's immediate volitional control.[21] To return to the epigraphs with which I opened the last chapter, the "I must" expressive of many experiences of second person need is the kind of

phenomenon at work when Antigone rushes to the burial of her brother without the slightest deference to the danger this might in turn place her in. When Ismene emphasizes that the burial is forbidden by Kreon's law, Antigone's ready answer is one of complete indifference to this fact given that it is her brother, one who is dear to her, whose treatment is in question: "Ismene: What? You're thinking you will bury him,/ When this has been forbidden by the city?/Antigone: My brother, yes… I will not be caught betraying him" (Sophocles 55-58).

The same kind of phenomenon is at work in Irene Gut Opdyke's response to the situation of Herschl and his family during the Holocaust, and is captured in her words of reflection: "I did not ask myself, Should I do this? But, How will I do this?" (142). She asks the later question, and not the first, out of an emphatic sense that to do anything other than to try to help Herschl would have destroyed her own sense of self. In both of these cases, moreover, to be motivated to act by a thought like "…in this situation, it is morally obligatory to protect them" would be, as Bernard Williams so aptly puts it, to have "one thought too many"—a thought that would bespeak a deficit of genuine, meaningful concern more than it would show a properly moral consideration for the right thing to do (1981, 18).[22]

Both of these examples show that relational needs can involve the exercise of one's autonomy at the same time that they supersede it in multiple and complex ways. Further, not all actions connected to the experience of second person needs must happen in a flash or without a decisive and deliberate moment of election. That one has a real need, for instance, to return to the case of Antigone, for one's brother to have a proper burial, does not mean that one cannot also intentionally and deliberatively elect to give that burial to him: That one is not able to elect to do otherwise does not necessarily entail that one cannot also elect to do precisely what one does.

In some instances, to cease to care and to be invested in the world in the way that is foundational to the existence of certain needs would be to cease to be the very person that one is. Such investments of care are defining features of one's selfhood. To cease caring in such self-constitutive ways or to be prevented from acting in accordance with care's imperatives can lead to the coming undone of the self. In such instances, these investments of care in the world coincide with integral and entrenched needs—the kinds of needs that I have tried to argue are often of especially strong moral and political concern.

Still, there may be times when maintaining the self (and thus the set of relational needs) to which these investments are tied is in fact more damaging that breaking it apart, such as, for

instance, when a women stays in an abusive relationship because her sense of self is deeply tied to her relationship with her abusive partner, and she can't imagine living without him. The kind of harm that can result in the coming undone of the self is always the kind of harm that warrants special ethical concern. Sometimes, this risk gives rise to imperatives to prevent the harm from happening; in others, it gives rise to imperatives to help rebuild a life in the aftermath of a life-changing transformation in one's investments of care.

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[1] Others have also expressed the relational dimension of some of these emotions. Jean-Paul Sartre, for instance, describes shame as a mode of self-awareness that has being-for-others as its condition (e.g. *Being and Nothingness*, 1956, 347-351). Judith Butler also speaks poignantly of the relational dimension of certain affects in *Precarious Life*. She writes, for example, that passion, grief, and rage "tear us from ourselves, bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in lives that are not our own, irreversibly, if not fatally" (2004a, 25).

[2] Eva Kittay makes this point in *Love's Labor* when she emphasizes that we are all "some mother's child," a fact that has important, but often overlooked, implications for justice and equality (1998: 23).

[3]Some report these sensations as occurring prior to being contacted by the expectant mother to say that her labor has begun, and others report sensations that mimic the mother's own during the process of labor itself. In the documentary film *A Doula Story*, Loretha Weisinger discusses how she often experiences pain the night before a mother she has been supporting informs her she is in labor. Likewise, in *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth,* Ina May Gaskin describes a time when feelings in her own cervix signaled to her that the mother whose labor she was attending was rapidly dilating (2003, 242).

[4] In *Undoing Gender*, the text from which I've taken this term, Butler speaks of coming "undone" as the painful, at times even life-compromising, effect of limitations in social and political recognition. Her analysis primarily addresses the implications of these schemes of recognition as concerns sex and gender (e.g. Butler 2004b, 2). In *Precarious Life*, published the same year, Butler vividly illustrates the relational nature of both selfhood's constitution and its undoing in describing death's impact on those who live on. The experience of loss that follows a death, she writes, may be one in which:

> …something about who we are is revealed, something that delineates the ties we have to others, that shows us that these ties constitute what we are, ties or bonds that compose us. It is not as if an 'I' exists independently over here and then simply losses a 'you' over there, especially if the attachment to 'you' is part of what composes who 'I' am. If I lose you, under these conditions, then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself. Who 'am' I, without you? (2004a: 22)

[5] Adequate consideration for those that experienced their own welfare as tethered to that of the Jews—as well as for the Jews themselves—would of course have meant a different political response from other nations to the Holocaust, and not merely different individuals responses to immediate needs. As Irving Greenberg has stressed:

> The Allies' failure to confront the uniqueness of Jewish destiny in the Holocaust was a major factor in the successful killing of the six million Jews. When the Jews of America begged the Allies to bomb Auschwitz, they were refused outright. They were told that it was a war to 'make the world safe for democracy.' One could not ask for a guarantee of a *particular* fate for the Jews (Introduction to *The Courage to Care*, 1986, 14).

In acknowledging the significance of the actions of Holocaust rescuers, Greenberg rightly stresses that "we must also be aware that failure to help those who were endangered rests not only on those who were right there and did nothing to hinder the Nazis but also on those who, possessing the power to help on a great scale, found other priorities and other responsibilities" (15).

[6] This physiological experience is discussed in Harry Stack Sullivan's *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychology* (1953, 37-40).

[7] I will later address an important difference introduced by David Wiggins' in "Claims of Need" between instrumental needs and needs that are truly fit "the meaning of the word" (1987, 9). Instrumental needs are those needs that follow from a particular project in the world that one can readily, voluntarily, and without significant harm, elect to forego—for instance, the need for a pen in order to write down an unfamiliar address. Such needs have very different ethical and political implications than needs that one cannot simply elect not to have, and that result in significant harm if unmet.

[8] Remarks on the concept of 'species-being' that highlight its social character are frequent in Marx's writing. One instance comes in "On the Jewish Question," where Marx writes: "Only when the actual, individual man has taken back into himself the abstract citizen and in his everyday life, his individual work, and his individual relationships has become a *species-being*, only when he has recognized and organized his powers as *social* powers so that social force is no longer separated from him as *political* power, only then is human emancipation complete" (1994, 21).

[9] Kittay also valuably notes that "[t]hese bonds can even transcend those of the human community and extend to all sentient creatures, especially those that 'complete' the caring relationship by responding to care appropriately" (36).

[10] That social and political responsiveness to, and even recognition of, need is not equally distributed to all persons must also be emphasized. Social and political norms operate to make certain person's needs much more likely to be ones that call forth responsive needs in others. These norms work to delimit who counts as a part of 'our' community and who is marked as an 'outsider' to that community. These norms thus significantly affect whom one identifies with,

whom one cares for, and whose welfare one does and not does recognize as meaningfully connected to one's own. Adequately responding to the needs to all persons requires expanding the parameters of our lived sense of connection to others.

[11] See, e.g., Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy" (1958), Feinberg's *Social Philosophy* (1973), Wiggin's "Claims of Need" (1987), Frankfurt's "Necessity and Desire" (1998), and Rogers, Mackenzie, and Dodds "Why Bioethics Needs a Concept of Vulnerability" (2012).

[12] I am grateful to Eva Kittay for suggesting some of these points of connection between need and love to me.

[13] See Rogers, MacKenzie, and Dodds, 2012, 22.

[14] Developing this point in his work with Sira Dermen, Wiggins asserts that insisting on a necessary relation between absolute need and harm thus "redeploys one of the earliest accounts of needs, need, and needing in all of philosophy" (1987, 63).

[15] For Wiggins attention to the issue of harm, see 1987, 11.
[16] This point will be furthered discussion in Chapter Two.

[17] Wiggins quotes the last two lines from the play (1987, 20, n. 2).

[18] Seine Otten, also among the Holocaust rescuers, also gestures towards the relational character of selfhood and the interconnectedness of human welfare in his interview. Reflecting on the question often posed to him of whether he "taught [his] children to help other people," Otten asserts that teaching others to help is beside the point, and tells this story about his daughter to illuminate what 'the point' in fact is:

> …for the three months since my wife died my daughter has come here three or four times a day. She has cooked meals for me. And besides that, she goes once every fortnight to the old-age home to visit a man who has one leg and who is blind and deaf. I tell her this is nice of her, and she says, 'No, it's my duty. It's so we don't feel alone in the world (1992, 67).

[19] My past work in crisis intervention at a sexual assault center gives me some very concrete grounds out of which to appreciate the importance of the principle of *doulia* for which Kittay calls. The sexual assault center for which I worked functioned under the operating principle that two crisis intervention workers always be jointly on call, either to respond to phone calls for support or to lend assistance to anyone who came to the center in person. If I were to take the first call of the night, my partner would be there to find any resources I needed during the call. Yet, even more importantly, she would be there at the end of it to support me as I processed what I had experienced on the phone. In turn, I would be there to provide the same support to her in a reversal of roles. In this way, the center ensured the emotional and interpersonal support vital for its workers to maintain their own wellbeing and to accordingly be able to provide support to others.

[20] For example, the capability to feed oneself expresses itself through the function of satisfying our hunger and avoiding starving when we have the necessary freedom to do so.

[21] Another response to this problem can be drawn out of Kant's moral philosophy, where autonomy of the will—together with moral agency and human dignity—is located in the capacity to give laws to oneself. For Kant, the only moral obligations one can have and the only moral actions one can undertake are one's to which we have willing bound ourselves through the exercise of our own reason. For Kant, the exercise of one's autonomy in arriving at a moral necessity in no way compromises the necessity. Rather, this exercise of autonomy is the condition according to which morality is made possible.

[22] Opdyke's question is strikingly similar to the one that Carol Gilligan hears in Amy's response to the moral dilemma of whether or not a man should steal a drug to save his sick wife. This particular response lies at the heart of her argument for an ethics of care in *In a Different Voice*. Gilligan explain that "Amy is answering a different question from the one the interviewer thought had been posed. Amy is considering one *whether* Heinz should act in this situation, ('*should* Heinz steal the drug?') but rather *how* Heinz should act in response to his awareness of his wife's need ('should Heinz *steal* the drug?')…Amy assumes the necessity for action and considers what form it should take" (1982, 31).

2 Need and Relational Autonomy:
The Bonds of Care

> Being vulnerable makes it possible to suffer, to fall prey to violence and be harmed, but also to fall in love, to learn, to take pleasure and find comfort in the presence of others, and to experience the simultaneity of these feelings. Vulner*ability* is not just a condition that limits us but one that can *enable* us.
>
> —Erinn Gilson, "Vulnerability, Ignorance, Oppression"

> Being able to care for those we love is… a most precious form of freedom.
>
> —Eva Kittay, "The Global Heart Transplant and Caring Across National Boundaries"

The word 'vulnerable' comes from the latin *vulnus*, meaning 'wound.' Literally, any vulnerability is an ability to be wounded. More broadly put, it is an ability to be subject to harm or injury. Robin May Schott argues that vulnerability in this sense speaks to the capacity for one's body as well as one's interests to be turned against oneself, and thus alerts us to the limits of our autonomy in a shared world. As she explains, "vulnerability implies the risk that one's capacities and one's weaknesses will be used against oneself, against one's consent" (2010, 64).

Yet just as needs give rise to vulnerabilities that can impinge on our autonomy, so too can autonomy give rise to needs—and hence vulnerabilities—that further express it. Often taken to be dramatically at odds, like characters acting as foils in one of Shakespeare's plays, autonomy is not necessarily counter-posed to either need or vulnerability. Autonomy is not a negative form of freedom—a freedom from constraint—but a positive form of freedom which, according to Marilyn Friedman, "involves choosing and living according to standards or values that are, in some plausible sense, one's 'own'" (2000, 37). Autonomous actions are those that express desires, interests, and commitments that one identifies as germane to oneself, whereas actions that contravene one's autonomy feel at odds with oneself—as if they are being carried out 'despite ourselves' even though we remain the one's acting.

It is certainly true that one's autonomy can be painfully undermined through the abuse of one's needs and the violation of one's correlated vulnerabilities. Some of the most horrifying forms of violence—torture, for example—take advantage of the ability for our needs to be turned

against us, impinging on our capacity to live according to our own values by creating a situation of intense physiological duress. Yet autonomy is also something that can be enhanced, enriched, and expressed through our relational needs and through the vulnerabilities that follow. As Erin Gilson reminds us, vulnerability is ambivalent, for the same openness and exposure to others that allow one to be wounded also allows one to be affected by others and to affect them in positive, life-enhancing ways. Further, the vulnerable subject—the kind of subject we all are when in need—can also be a self-directed and self-determining subject in important and fundamental respects. To be exposed to the possibility of injury is not necessarily anti-thematic to the exercise of one's autonomy in the world. Instead, exposing oneself to certain vulnerabilities—as we do, for instance, whenever we allow ourselves to love someone, or wholeheartedly throw ourselves into fighting a battle we are likely to lose—can be a positive part of enacting our autonomy. In such moments, we may not only be vulnerable but also *willing* to be vulnerable.

Some of the most powerful moments in which we come up against the demands that our relational needs, with our second person needs among them, place upon us are also moments of transformative self-discovery, revealing complex dimensions of our investments of care in the world previously unacknowledged, unrealized, or ignored. The death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in August of 2014, for instance, might be described as such an event. For many, Brown's death stirred to life a need to name racialized police violence and to fight for a world without this violence in it, a need that demanded political action. Yet this demand did not counterpoise the autonomous interests of the protestors who felt it; instead, it empowered, invigorated, and focused these interests. Tiffany S. Flowers is one among those who felt drawn to go to Ferguson after Brown's death. When asked in an interview for NPR how she became involved in events in Ferguson, she responded: "I felt the need to do something after Trayvon Martin and Renisha McBride. My soul is weary… I felt I had to go to Ferguson," and goes on to describes herself as "hungry to help," a phrase that expresses the sense that needs can be relational and spiritual as well as physiological (Boswell, 2015).

In the powerful, self-transformative moments in which we encounter relational needs we did not previously have (or, at least, did not know ourselves to have) that intersect with our autonomous interests, we also newly encounter our own vulnerability. As a face of those unique needs that move us at the same time that we will ourselves to be so moved, vulnerability here reveals itself as a component of our autonomous investments of care in the world and as an

inescapable dimension of our relational life, and not *just* a liability to harm. Many relational needs such as the need for a world free of racialized violence arise out of exercising the very dear freedom to care for others to whom we have strong interpersonal, social, or political ties. The ability to develop these kinds of needs—and the fundamental importance of having them answered—is a frequently overlooked component of autonomy.

Antigone's fervent commitment to bury the body of her brother in Sophocles' play can be read as another example of a need arising from the very precious freedom to care for others. This is a need that enhances Antigone's autonomy, rather than undermines it, at the same time that it renders her vulnerable to harms such as imprisonment and death to which she would not be otherwise exposed. A further example can be found in the life and work of Martin Luther King. King's non-violent work of civil disobedience was driven by the conviction that "we can't wait," a phrase which also came to name one of his best known collections of writing (*Why We Can't Wait*, 1964). What King could not do as an African American man confronting racial violence—wait passively for things to change—was also an expression of what he felt he *must* do in the interest of social justice for the African American community. This sentiment is expressed in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail": "For years now I have heard the word 'Wait!' It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never.' We must come to see…that 'justice too long delayed is justice denied'" (1964, 80-81). King's feeling of an inability to wait coupled with a necessity to act is one that I read as expressive of a vital, relational need arising from a life-defining investment of care in the welfare of an oppressed community, an investment that made King vulnerable to harm at the same time that it expressed his autonomy, albeit under the constraints of social injustice.

Yet while investments of care play a strong hand in distinguishing those values and interests that feel like 'our own' from those desires and ends that move us but seem to do so despite ourselves—and thus have a crucial role to play in our autonomy, not all investments of care are one's that is it beneficial to foster and protect. Some of these bonds may be harmful, ethically dangerous, and even oppressive at the same time that they are deeply entrenched in one's sense of self. Altering these attachments is painful, but it is also a crucial step in arriving at a healthy sense of one's self and in making choices that respect one's own worth together with that of others. To take a phrase from Annette Baier, "caring about caring" enough to take the risk of transforming our investments of care—and thus also transforming ourselves—is a

fundamental prerequisite to achieving a healthy, and ethically virtuous, sense of autonomy (1982, 273).

Relational Autonomy

In order to see the interconnections between autonomy and need, a relational understanding of autonomy as well as of need is necessary. It is in our relationships with others—both intimate and wide-reaching—that our autonomy has its support, and yet relational life on the whole has often been approached as opposed to autonomy. This dichotomy between relational life and autonomy is one part of the complicated history of autonomy that tethers it to fictitious illusions of independence for some social groups, shored up through the unacknowledged labor of others. Autonomy, as Marilyn Friedman writes, all too frequently fails to be understood relationally at all, representing "a masculine-style preoccupation with self-sufficiency and self-realization at the expense of human connection" (2000, 35). Insofar, moreover, as a notion of autonomy that connotes atomistic independence, self-reliance and disconnection has traditionally been highly valued, experiences of connection—including those of relational need—have been simultaneously devalued. People of color, the poor, and some groups of women have characteristically been cast on the undervalued side of the divide, with both political and ethical superiority granted to those who appear to be able to support themselves—often relying on an invisible economy of care workers, migrant laborers, and more, to do so. These supposedly self-sustaining individuals have been taken as the paradigm of 'autonomy' while those that sustain them through their unacknowledged and undervalued labor have been chastised as 'needy.'

Given such issues, some feminists have wondered if the notion of autonomy has any merit at all and if it might be best to leave it behind altogether. Yet the problematic history of the notion of autonomy, and the limitations of such atomistic versions of it, doesn't preclude the concept in general from having important benefits. If it can be shown, against the grain of this tradition, that the capacity for autonomy is in fact developed and fostered relationally, then autonomy and human connectedness cannot be fundamentally at odds, even if autonomy comes with the potential to disrupt some of one's established relationships—something that is often all for the better in instances where these relationships are abusive and exploitative, or where breaking free of them hinges on establishing new, more positive connections with others.

Autonomy has traditionally been associated with will, volition, agency, and deliberative choice, all defining capacities of the actors imagined in the social contract tradition of political philosophy and in Kant's deontological vision of moral life. Yet being able to enact these capacities hinges on relationally-dependent qualities such as a sense of self-worth and of self-respect. It also depends on having the social support to pursue that which one cares about against the odds, and on having a wide array of imaginary possibilities open for one's future, something which one's social and political situation can either foster or impede.

Indeed, the capacities traditionally associated with autonomy are relationally dependent in at least three respects. First, they are developed in and emergent from one's relationships with particular others. This is evident in the struggle we face to be guided by our own voices if, for instance, we are repeatedly treated as unworthy of respect by those in our intimate sphere. Second, these capacities are affected by one's social group identity. Hence one struggles to develop a strong sense of self-worth if constantly confronting a barrage of objectifying and dehumanizing representations of oneself on the basis of one's sex, gender, or the color of one's skin. And, thirdly, the capacities necessary for autonomy are realized in relation to a complex of institutional structures that delimit viable possibilities for action, self-expression, and more. It is because of such institutional requisites for autonomy that, in institutional climates that fail to provide adequate parental leave, for instance, parents struggle to reconcile their concerns for quality time with their family with their career aspirations. Autonomy thus has a much stronger connection to relational, social, and political aspects of human life than is generally acknowledged, and a supportive relational climate is an indispensable background condition of autonomy.

But are the characteristic traits of autonomy *compatible* with need, vulnerability, and dependency? Marilyn Friedman argues that in order for choices or values to count as one's own, one must reflect on these values and choices and consider what guides them. Such reflection, for Friedman, can be emotional as well as rational. Additionally, this reflection must not be coerced, and must happen within the parameters of what one deems morally permissible (2000, 37). This conception of autonomy, and this set of requirements for its realization, in no way hinges on an atomistic conception of the self or a sense of what is one's own that can only arise if aspects of human life such as need, dependency, and vulnerability are excluded from any relationship with one's self-determination. Autonomy in Friedman's sense is also compatible with a relational

conception of selfhood, whereby persons, as Annette Baier has argued, only become persons through relations with other persons (1981). Here, insofar as autonomy involves living according to choices and values that are 'one's own,' what must be acknowledged is that one's sense of self develops in the context of one's relations to others. Thus, what feels germane to one's self depends on these relationships, sometimes to our benefit and sometimes to our detriment.

Having a sense of what is one's 'own' is also often said to require an integrated self, that is, one that is "cohesive and unified" (Stoljar and Mackenzie 2000, 11). This condition of autonomy may seem on the surface to be in tension with the insights of many feminists who highlight the intersectional nature of identity. 'Intersectional identity,' a term first introduced to feminist philosophy by Kimberlé Crenshaw, refers to identity as it is formed at the intersection of a multiplicity of co-informing but often conflictual social positions (such as being a woman, being of color, being upper class, and more).[i,1] All social positions have different implications for one's life and different effects on one's identify, but these implications and effects cannot be readily teased apart where social positions cross, as they inevitably do for us all.

Diana T. Meyer's argues, however, that if integration is understood as an ongoing process and one that doesn't necessarily exclude tensions between different commitments, this standard feature of autonomy may also be compatible with an intersectional understanding of identity. Diana T. Meyer's conception of autonomy shares in Friedman's sense that autonomy entails having a strong, reflective sense of values and choices that are one's "own." Meyers argues that arriving at this sense of autonomy requires the development of a nested set of capacities: the capacities of self-discovery, self-direction, and self-definition (Meyers 2000, 174-175). Each of these capacities requires some form of reflection, and autonomy at large entails, as Mackenzie and Stoljar explain, "the capacity to exercise these skills to achieve an integrated but dynamic self" (2000, 17). For Meyers, the layered and multi-faceted nature of the self-realization that comes with this set of autonomy skills is key to coupling autonomy with a dynamic understanding of selfhood that is able to sustain internal conflicts, to navigate ambivalences in investments, and to reconfigure its desires and interests according to context. Meyers argues that only such a dynamic conception of selfhood can capture what autonomy must look like given the intersectional nature of identity in the contemporary social world.

[i] Endnotes can be found on pages 113-115.

Many thinkers including Diana Meyers also recognize that autonomy bears a very significant relationship to one's investments of care.[2] For Meyers, achieving clarity about who and what one cares about and about how much one cares for certain persons or things, as well as being able to act on these investments of care, is a crucial part of autonomy (2000, 151). At the same time, however, Meyers emphasizes that which investments of care are identified as one's own is affected by the set of social positions that structure one's identity without being exhaustively determined by them. Each distinct social position that marks one's life entails distinct interests and investments, some of which may well be in conflict with each other. Thus, one's investments of care cannot be expected to be any more unitary, homogenous, or transparent than the self that holds them (152). Still, Meyers argues that a multifarious or even contradictory set of investments of care doesn't undermine autonomy at large. Instead, heterogeneous social positions can contribute to autonomy competency by allowing those that belong to oppressed groups to see outside the limits of normative values and investments of care imposed for the benefit of certain groups at the expense of others, and to develop a set of values and investments of one's own that defy the norm.

Need and Relational Autonomy

Many relational needs, including second person needs, emerge through exercising one's autonomy in order to develop investments of care in the world, to recognize these investments, and to orient one's life around them. These investments are often developed, exposed, and expressed through exercising the set of capacities of "self-discovery, self-definition, and self-direction" that Diana Meyers considers those of "autonomy competency": a set of capacities developed in and bound by a relational context (174-175). For instance, while the need for love and respect may be broad, if not universal, the need for the love of one particular person, or the special need for the respect of the person who one most strongly admires, are both shaped by one's unique investments of care in the world. They are often also shaped by aspects of autonomy such as having a self-directed relationship to particular others, and having a life-orienting self-awareness of one's most fundamental commitments and desires.

While some theorists have emphasized that not having certain needs met jeopardizes one's autonomy, and have based an ethical imperative to answer to needs on this claim, the fact that the development and recognition of certain needs can enhance autonomy has been largely

overlooked. Overlooked in turn are ethical imperatives to protect, if not promote, the ability to develop and maintain the investments of care in the world from which autonomy-enhancing relational needs arise. Sarah Miller's notion of fundamental needs—referred to as "constitutive needs" in her early writing (2005a, 115)—is exemplary of accounts of need that exclusively identity needs as potentially endangering autonomy. Fundamental needs, Miller explains, are "needs that others must meet in order for a person 1) to avoid significant harm; 2) to be able to choose and carry out action in the world; and 3) to be self-determining. Fundamental needs arise in situations or conditions in which the agency (or the potential for agency) of an individual is acutely endangered," and "must be met for an individual to develop, maintain, or reestablish agency" (2012, 4). For Miller, there is an ethical duty to meet such needs insofar as moral harm, which impairs autonomy, befalls anyone whose constitutive needs go unaddressed. Thus, the ethical imperative to protect and foster autonomy gives rise to a duty to meet other's constitutive needs.

The choice that many migrant care workers have to make between leaving children behind in one's home country in order to pursue work abroad which can improve their means to support their children and staying at home with them but without adequate means for their support, discussed in Eva Kittay's "The Global Heart Transplant and Caring Across National Boundaries," exemplifies the way in which the failure to have certain needs meet jeopardizes one's moral autonomy: neither the choice to stay nor to leave is free of self-compromise, and finding oneself in a situation that requires that one make this kind of compromise means that moral harm will inevitably befall the one who makes it. The moral fault, however, doesn't lie with the one forced into this compromise by these needs, but with the injustice of institutions that fail to see to it that all these needs are met (2008, 148).

In her account of fundamental needs, Miller astutely captures how and why moral autonomy requires that certain needs be met. Yet it is not only having certain needs met that is key to ensuring moral autonomy on my view. I see being enabled *to develop and maintain* certain relational needs as itself a key aspect of fostering autonomy at large. Having more rather than less needs can enhance one's autonomy, with the proviso that these needs are also fulfilled. If some of our relational needs follow from life-orienting and self-directing investments of care, the extent and the character of one's needs reveals the extent to which one has experienced the very dear freedom to care for particular others and for one's larger social world as one so elects,

to positive shape one's own life and the lives of those one encounters, and to express and realize the love and joy one finds in a shared world—all aspects of relational autonomy. If autonomy is a human capacity worthy of fostering, promoting, and protecting, so too is the capacity to develop life-enhancing relational needs, as key aspects of autonomy are realized, expressed, and furthered through them. If we have ethical obligations to ensure the autonomy of others, these obligations, then, must include both meeting other's fundamental needs *and* fostering the development of those relational needs that contribute to a flourishing life, especially those that are tied to investments in the welfare of others that contribution to our own flourishing together with theirs.

Importantly, however, to insist that some forms of need, vulnerability, and dependency can contribute to autonomy is not to suggest that all forms of need should be fostered and enabled. Some needs are ethically irreverent and some are socially violent, just as are some investments of care (such as those of white supremacists, sexists, and anti-Semites, to name a few). Nor are all investments of care and the needs that follow from them expressions of autonomy; some are the result of internalized, oppressive values. While some forms of need can be autonomy-enhancing, others are by and large—if not exhaustively—detrimental to autonomy. Many of these forms of need are the products of oppressive forms of socialization, and many also stem from investments of care produced in debilitating social contexts—investments that are often highly detrimental to one's own welfare. Such forms of need are marked by their damaging effects on the self together with their failure to make any meaningful contribution to life-enrichment. Even needs that are a constitutive part of one's sense of self, such as the need to be loved by one's partner although that partner is abusive, can fall into this category, shoring up a self of sense that is often dangerously deluded in regard to it's own worth. Disentangling autonomy-enhancing from autonomy-undermining forms of relational need is thus a crucial task for an ethics of relational need.

In their work on relational autonomy in connection with vulnerability, Catriona Mackenzie, Wendy Rogers, and Susan Dodds claim that many relational accounts of autonomy regard autonomy as "a socially constituted capacity, in the twin senses that its development and exercise requires extensive social scaffolding and support and that its development and exercise can be thwarted by exploitative or oppressive interpersonal relationships and by repressive or unjust social and political institutions" (2014, 17). They thus emphasize that understanding

autonomy relationally allows us to see that the autonomous subject and the vulnerable subject are one. Unlike other thinkers, such as Martha Fineman, who they see as treating vulnerability and autonomy "as oppositional concepts," Mackenzie et al. treat the two as interlocking. Accordingly, they seek "an account of autonomy that is premised on recognition of human vulnerability that explains why we have obligations not only to protect vulnerable persons from harm but also to do so in ways that promote…their capacities for autonomy" (16). They are particularly concerned with the social obligations to respond to the needs of those that are "more than ordinarily vulnerable" in ways that promote autonomy rather than undermine it (17).

Mackenzie, Rogers and Dodds attention to the effects of vulnerability on autonomy, however, leads them to see fostering autonomy as opposed to "entrench[ing] or exacerbate[ing] existing vulnerabilities," for they focus on vulnerability's potential to impede autonomy, not its potential to enhance it (2014, 17). This approach to vulnerability is similar to Sarah Miller's approach to need in that both emphasize that vulnerability to harm, if not redressed, can undermine autonomy. Thus, while stressing that the vulnerable subject and the autonomous subject are one and the same, the ethical significance Mackenzie, Rogers, and Dodds find in the entanglement between autonomy and vulnerability concerns responsibilities we have to work to decrease vulnerability so as to further autonomy. For them, vulnerability, with all its ties to need, is something to be minimized in our lives.

Some vulnerabilities are undeniably 'pathogenic'—Mackenzie et al.'s term for vulnerabilities that are "generated by…morally dysfunctional or abusive interpersonal and social relationships and sociopolitical oppression or injustice," and that "undermine autonomy or exacerbates the sense of powerlessness engendered by vulnerability in general" (9). The heightened vulnerability of African American men to police violence is one example of a pathogenic vulnerability, as is the vulnerability of trans* persons to hate crimes, and women to rape. The notion of pathogenic vulnerability is an especially helpful concept to employ in an effort to disentangle autonomy-enhancing and autonomy-undermining forms of vulnerability, and can readily be applied to the set of vulnerabilities that follow from certain relational needs, such as the need for the love of an abusive partner.

Still, some vulnerabilities correlated with relational forms of need are life-enriching and autonomy-enabling. Such vulnerabilities follow from positive attachments that contribute to one's flourishing together with that of others at the same time that they render us vulnerable to

harm. I could not be hurt by the loss of a friend if I did not first care for her, for instance, nor could someone who has no appreciation for their dependency on the natural world experience the harm of having a forest cut down in the same way as the person who sees and appreciates this dependency. Yet with the absence of these forms of vulnerability would also go a meaningful bond to another person and an enriching connection to the environment. Our positive attachments may not always be synchronous with each other, given the intersectional nature of identity. Yet autonomy can still be expressed through isolating and acting on the particular attachments that have the strongest connection to our guiding values in a given context, and through embracing the ambivalence of our attachments insofar as this ambivalence is germane to a dynamic sense of self.

Further, coming up against one's needs, where these needs follow from self-defining investments of care in the world, can be a heightened experience of one's own power: an urgent and undeniable need can usher in the felt knowledge that one is capable of much more than one previously felt, believed, or even imagined. In demarcating what one cannot tolerate or cannot endure, needs often simultaneously demarcate what one *must* do, even if it requires calling on reserves of strength one wouldn't have otherwise believed one had. The coupling of a enhanced sense of vulnerability with novel experiences of one's own power is something that many mother's attest to experiencing during natural childbirth within an environment where, in the words of Heidi Reinhardt, it is "safe to be vulnerable" (Heidi Reinhardt in Ina May Gaskin 2003, 114). There is safety is exposing one's needs and correlated vulnerabilities to harm in a context where vulnerability is treated as compatible with capability and power, where vulnerability is recognized as existing side by side with autonomy rather than being its antithesis (allowing one's expressed interests to be respected together with one's needs), and in a context where one trusts that others will care for those needs that we cannot care for ourselves.

Relational Need, Autonomy, and Ethical Obligations

A major ethical issue arises concerning those needs that are expressions of autonomy, however, as the coupling of need and autonomy threatens to jeopardize the special ethical import often granted to claims of need. One might argue that there can be no special moral obligation on the part of others to see that someone's needs are met in instances where these needs follow from

their autonomous actions. Autonomous actions, it is assumed, must be elective actions. Thus, by electing to act otherwise, one might argue, the person in need can spare themselves from having the need in the first place, thus freeing others from any ethical responsibility to attend to that need. In other words, the harm to which the need renders one vulnerable is not *necessary* harm, as one can escape it through one's own actions.

This method of reasoning away any ethical responsibility on the part of others to attend to needs (and hence vulnerabilities) that emerge out of expressions of autonomy is undone by the fact that many such needs are not needs that one can opt out of having despite their relation to one's will. This seeming paradoxical quality allows for these needs to give rise to moral obligations pertaining to others. It also allows these needs to share in the freedom associated with autonomy while also entailing the necessity associated with need.

Many relational needs are these kinds of needs: They are so deeply entrenched in the meaningful dimensions of one's life and in the constitutive aspects of one's selfhood that one cannot voluntarily elect *not* to have them at the same time that they express and enact the values one identifies as 'one's own.' To see this, we can reflect once again on Irene Gut Opdyke's need to aid Herschl and his family during the Holocaust. As she describes it, "every step of [her] childhood had brought [her] to this crossroad," and, were she to fail to "take the right path," she "would no longer be [her]self" (1999, 142). The need she feels to aid Herschl and his family arises from a long series of choices and from a set of entrenched values that Opdyke identifies as making her who she is. This need is thus an expression of her autonomy, yet it also reveals that autonomy is something very different from the empty freedom to elect one's course of action in any given moment. The self-directedness that is so fundamental to autonomy shows itself in Opdyke's ability to act in a way that accords with a series of connected choices and settled dispositions of her own, despite finding herself in a context that it grossly hostile to them. In the moment that she encounters Herschl, Opdyke thus has the freedom to *violate* the need to provide aid to Herschl and his family that has arisen out of a sequence of past choices made in her life, but she cannot simply will herself not to have this need. While her actions respond to this need, moreover, they also poignantly enact her own will in a climate set against it. She thus both *chooses* to help Herschl and his family and *needs* to do so.

Despite its shortcomings in understanding autonomy relationally, of which many feminist thinkers are rightfully wary, Harry Frankfurt's work is a provocative resource for illuminating

the paradoxical coupling of need with autonomy found in many instances of relational need. Frankfurt's concept of volitional necessity illuminates how certain courses of action can at once be experienced as utterly necessary—as what *needs* to be done—and yet also be experienced as heightened expressions of one's autonomy. Further, the concept of volitional necessity he articulates can be extended beyond the bounds of his own thinking to illustrate how relational needs can arise through investments of care, how these needs can exist in tandem with heightened experiences of autonomy, and how these needs can nonetheless remain non-volitional. I thus turn to Harry Frankfurt's account of volitional necessity in an attempt to unpack the complex relationship between necessity and autonomy captured in some forms of relational need, and to further my contention that needs that arise from certain expressions of one's autonomy can indeed make ethical claims upon others.

Frankfurt on Autonomy and Care

Harry Frankfurt's account of autonomy has been highly influential in contemporary philosophy. This account offers many rich insights concerning the complex couplings of necessity and autonomy, the substantial role that investments of care play in shaping our lives, and the value of our feelings in alerting us to our most entrenched and genuine investments of care. It also avoids any prescriptive account of what the objects of autonomous self-expression must be, thus escaping the risk of paternalism. Most importantly, his unique conception of autonomy leads him to the very intriguing notion of 'volitional necessity.'

Yet Frankfurt's account of autonomy—upon which his conception of volitional necessity is grounded—is far from being relationally attuned. This is a pervasive problem with Frankfurt's thought that leads to serious limitations on even its most insightful fronts. The atomistic assumptions at play within Frankfurt's account of autonomy thus warrant consideration and critique from a relational point of view in order to better understand both the limitations and the benefits of his work.

Frankfurt's Conception of Autonomy: Orders of Desire

In the essay perhaps most central to establishing his basic conception of autonomy, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" (1998), Frankfurt argues that the capacity for autonomy of

the will is what characterizes personhood. For Frankfurt, autonomy stems from the distinctive capacity to have what he calls second-order desires in addition to first-order desires. "First-order desires," he elaborates, are "desires to do or not to do one thing or another" (12). Such desires stand in contrast to "second-order desires" (12). Second-order desires are desires to want to be moved by certain motives and desires, and, on the other hand, to not to want to be moved by others.

One's will, for Frankfurt, amounts to whichever of one's first-order desires are effective—that is, moving one to action (14).[3] Freedom of the will, which, for Frankfurt, is autonomy, hinges on the capacity to endorse or alter one's effective volitions on the basis of one's second-order volitions. Simply making choices and having motives for one's actions are not in themselves signs of freedom of the will; instead, it is in taking a stance concerning which of these choices and motives are desirable to act upon that autonomy of the will becomes possible. In turn, autonomy of the will is exercised when one's second-order volitions succeed in determining the first-order desires that move one to action.

When one's second-order motivations and values take hold of one's will, Frankfurt claims that a course of action will feel like it is one's "own." In contrast, when one's second-order volitions fail to determine one's actions, these actions can feel like they are happening against one's will and by way of volitions estranged from one's self (18). Here, the phenomenological experiences that coincide with what Frankfurt deems autonomy and the lack thereof match up with our basic intuitions about what autonomy feels like: autonomous actions feel like they express our desires, interests, and commitments, whereas actions that contravene our autonomy feel at odds with our settled sense of self, and as if they are being carried out by some estranged actor within us.[4]

Feminist theorists have pointed to certain benefits of Frankfurt's account of autonomy in terms of first and second-order desires and volitions, such as its emphasis on the importance of the critical capacity to refashion oneself (e.g. Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000, 29 n. 38). Many have also emphasized some of its limitations, especially from a relational point of view. Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar characterize Frankfurt's account of autonomy as both hierarchical and structural insofar as it "distinguish[es] different, hierarchically ordered elements of the self and characterize[s] autonomy as requiring a certain kind of structural organization of these different elements" (2000,14). As they note, Irving Thalberg was the first to point out that one

significant issue with any hierarchical and structural theory of autonomy is that it splits the self into a number of distinctive levels, the higher of which is generally regarded as truer or more authentic than the others (14).[5] Yet it is not clear that one's reflective, second-order desires and volitions are any more authentic or truly one's "own" than are one's first-order desires and volitions. These aspects of one's self may be filtered more heavily through reason and reflection in many instances, but this doesn't necessarily make them more germane to one's 'real' self.

The filter through which they pass can also be an ideological form of reasoning, which one is willing to accept as a guideline for one's action because the prevailing ethic deems it better than other modes of acting to which one's first order desires may be immediately attuned. When Huck Finn first discovers that Jim, a runaway slave, has boarded his raft in an effort to escape from his master, for instance, he swears he won't report him despite knowing how others would judge him for it: "People would call me a low-down abolitionist and despise me for keeping mum—but that don't make no difference," Huck tells Jim (Mark Twain 2003, 52). Later, he has a crisis of conscience as he and Jim near a town that promises to offer Jim a route to the North and thus to freedom:

> I began to get it through my head that he *was* most free—and who was to blame for it? Why, *me*… I tried to make out to myself that *I* warn't to blame, because *I* didn't run Jim off from his rightful owner; but it warn't no use, conscience up and says, every time, 'But you knowed he was running for his freedom and you could a paddled ashore and told somebody'… I got to feeling so mean and miserable I most wished I was dead. (123-124)

Heeding the voice of his 'conscience,' Huck decides to go ashore and turn Jim in and yet, when he comes across two men searching for runaway slaves, he can't bring himself to follow through on his intentions: "I tried, for a second or two, to brace up, and out with it, but I warn't man enough," Huck reports, blaming this act of 'wrongdoing' on his poor upbringing while also recognizing that he would feel just as rotten had he followed through on his intentions (125). Later, when Jim is identified as a runaway slave and held captive until his owner can be found, Huck finally decides to overthrow the normative social values that continue to sound in his head in order to break him free, allowing his immediate feelings towards Jim to ultimately win out over his reflective assessments of right and wrong.

This example can also serve to illustrate that one's second-order volitions and desires are just as liable to be affected by normative social expectations—and thus compromised in their

autonomy—as are one's first-order volitions and desires. For instance, in a culture that privileges heterosexuality, one may reflectively want to desire an opposite sex partner, and even feel estranged from one's self when this reflective interest fails to motivate one's actions. But it is not at all clear that this second-order desire is aptly described as an "autonomous" desire. Frankfurt's theory of autonomy, as Marilyn Friedman has argued, is inattentive to the fact that both lower and higher-order desires and volitions are affected by social norms and, in this way, are relationally-informed (2000, 15). The same analysis can be applied to Huck's crisis of conscience as he helps Jim make his way to freedom: in a culture that supports slavery, Huck's reflective sense is that he ought to turn Jim in, yet this sense is much more reflective of the social norms of his time than are the immediate and connected feelings that prevent him from following it. Although these feelings are the far less reflective set of Huck's values, they are nonetheless the far more socially autonomous ones.

Frankfurt does acknowledge the significant role that emotion can play in our autonomous life, recognizing it as at times more connected to our autonomy than our deliberative reflections and intentions. Yet he insists that emotion of this sort is the effect of a certain kind of reason, thus continuing to privilege reason over feeling (e.g. 1998, 187-189). Moreover, he maintains his hierarchical and structural account of autonomy despite his insights into the role emotion plays in autonomy, and does not address the challenge to his hierarchical account of autonomy that 'emotional autonomy,' as we might call it, may pose.

In raising these reservations regarding Frankfurt's theory of autonomy, however, I do not mean to suggest that any "autonomous" desires must be immune to social influence. Recognizing that autonomy is a capacity that can be both relationally-fostered as well as impaired means acknowledging that autonomy is intertwined with social existence, and not isolated from it. Rethinking autonomy relationally requires rethinking the relationship that autonomous action and autonomy competency bear to social influence. In failing to take note of the fact that social norms often greatly influence even our most reflective desires, Frankfurt's theory risks suggesting that the sphere of second-order desires is immune from social influence and that autonomy is tethered to an ideal of perfect social immunity. Moreover, in failing to pay heed to issues of social influence, Frankfurt's theory skirts the crucial question of how to determine what counts as an expression of autonomy in light of the complex social scaffolding of the self.

In "Relational Autonomy and Freedom of Expression," Susan Brison introduces a similar criticism of Frankfurt's account of autonomy in noting that it is ahistorical—Frankfurt pays no attention to how one's higher-order desires are formed. Yet Brison explains that "[s]ome conditions under which higher-order desires are chosen are autonomy undermining and others are autonomy enhancing" (2000, 284). For Brison, understanding how a certain set of preferences is formed is highly relevant to determining the relationship these preferences bear to autonomy. Further, Brison argues that the very capacity for autonomy develops following substantial interpersonal interaction with others and socialization into the norms of a culture. One's autonomy can thus be either made or broken by way of one's social relations: "whether and to what extent we are autonomous," Brison writes, "depends on our relation to other people" (283). Frankfurt account places all of the responsibility for developing autonomy on the individual, disavowing the role of social life in either fostering or impinging it.

Furthermore, Brison makes the point that if part of the value we give to autonomy hinges on the conviction that autonomy is key to the capacity for fashioning one's own life course, then it matters not only that one be able to reflectively guide one's will but also that one have a robust set of imaginative possibilities for one's own life at one's disposal, and a strong sense that multiple life choices are viable options in the social and political world in which one lives (285).[6] In leaving aside the social context in which human life takes place and in which the capacity for autonomy develops, Frankfurt fails to consider how autonomy is affected by the differing range of viable possibilities for action and existence that society presents to different people, as well as how relations with others can both enhance and diminish the imaginable life courses available to different social groups (285).

In an effort to partially defend Frankfurt from some of these criticisms, Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar point to one positive reason why Frankfurt's account of autonomy might not address the issue of social influence. For Frankfurt, they insist, autonomy is not a matter of asserting a 'true' self untouched by society over and against social norms and modes of conditioning. In this respect, it simply doesn't matter to him whether the sources of our second-order volitions and desires are external or internal, and of our independent formulation or suggested to us by our social world. They argue that autonomy, for Frankfurt, is a capacity for critical self-revision through the employment of reflective powers, and that wholly legitimate

expressions of it can be in keeping with social norms just as they can break with them (2000, 29 n. 38).

But socialization *does* matter to understanding and exercising autonomy even when autonomy is understood primarily as a capacity for reflective self-direction. For one, certain forms of self-revision made possible through the capacity for reflective self-control may be further enactments of social modalities of oppression. An example would be a teenage girl's desire to realize the objectifying, overly-slender body image presented as an ideal in Western media, resulting in a very deliberate and willful case of anorexia. It is not at all clear that, in such an event, what Frankfurt deems autonomy should in fact be fostered and promoted. Part of the value of autonomy lies in the possibility it holds out of breaking with oppressive social norms, and if any given exercise of self-revision is equal regardless of whether it furthers one's own oppression or works to overcome it, much of the promise of autonomy may be lost from the outset. While the goal of standing outside social influence altogether is built on misleading illusions of independence and isolation, to aim to foster capacities that allow one to critically respond to oppressive social norms does not necessarily entail any like illusions about a true self wholly separate from a social one. Rather, at the same time that certain social relationships inhibit autonomy, others enable it.

Indeed, the flipside to failing to recognize how socialization can negatively impair autonomy is failing to recognize how socialization can also foster it. Both Susan Brison and Marilyn Friedman stress that failures to consider socialization's influence on autonomy are also failures to recognize the interrelationship between autonomy and dependency (Friedman 2000, 39; Brison 2000, 283). The abilities for self-reflection and self-transformation that Frankfurt praises either flourish or flounder depending on the care and support one receives from particular others and from society at large. Friedman also points out that whereas autonomy has traditionally been associated with men, much of the labor of *fostering autonomy* has traditionally been carried out by women. Thus, to neglect the ways in which autonomy is socially supported is to neglect the historical role that women have played in sustaining men's autonomy, fueling the myth of the "self-made man" (39-40).

Wholeheartedness and Autonomy

In his essay "Identification and Wholeheartedness," Frankfurt attempts to address two potential weaknesses of his theory of autonomy as articulated in "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," both of which were already alluded to in this earlier essay. One of these is the point that, just as there can be conflict between first-order desires, so too can there be conflict among desires of a higher-order (1998, 21). The second is that there is no reason to suppose that higher-order desires and volitions have to end at a second-order—it is possible for one to have desires about one's second-order desires, to have desires about one's desires about one's second-order desires, and so on ad infinitum (21; 166-167). Second-order desires are no more necessarily unified and coherent than are first-order desires. Further, the possibility that one might have desires about these desires, just as one can have desires concerning one's first-order desires, suggests that one can be more or less reflective in relation to these higher-order desires as well in relation to one's more immediate desires.

Frankfurt introduces the notion of "wholeheartedness" in an attempt to simultaneously address these two interrelated issues. The concept also serves to illustrate the kind of self-integration that Frankfurt views as crucial to autonomy. 'Wholeheartedness' is an unequivocal stance on which among one's desires one endorses as motivating desires, and, among these desires, on which are to have priority over others. Wholeheartedness is there when one's will is unified and coherent rather than divided. Moreover, it is present when one's commitments are decisive and resounding, so much so that no differing higher-order preferences are even imaginable (165).

Achieving wholeheartedness requires that one's self-conception become inseparably linked with a decisive commitment. Wholeheartedness thus closes any gap between one's sense of oneself and a commitment to a particular course of action (170). It is in making wholehearted decisions, which involves both the hierarchical ordering of some desires and the flat-out rejecting of others, Frankfurt explains, that one "create[s] a self out of the raw materials of inner life" (170). It is in such acts of internalizing and externalizing certain aspects of one's inner life that, according to Frankfurt, one also takes responsibility for the self that one is (171-172).

In the absence of wholeheartedness, in contrast, second-order desires may conflict and numerous first-order desires may be subsequently endorsed, leading to a lack of self-integration, a lack of self-determination, and, ultimately, to a lack of autonomy. In this respect, Frankfurt stresses that "a person's autonomy may be threatened even by his own desires" (171). It is

wholeheartedness that secures one's autonomy against the threat of being moved by desires with which one does not fully identity, which one has not unreservedly endorsed, and which are in tension with desires that "the agent has constituted himself to include" (171).

In "Intersectional Identity and the Authentic Self?: Opposites Attract!," Diana Meyers claims that self-integration, unity, consistency and transparency—all of which Frankfurt praises in the notion of wholeheartedness—are aspects of autonomy that have often been described in terms of "authenticity" (152). Meyers shares Frankfurt's interest in authenticity as a component of autonomy. Yet she focuses her attention less on the "internal structures of the authentic self" than on the constitutive processes that lead to experiences of authenticity—primarily, the exercise of the capacities for both self-discovery and self-definition (154). This approach, together with a focus on the complexity of social subjectivity, leads to a critical reading of many of the values Frankfurt applauds. His version of authenticity, on her account, leaves no room for ambivalence or opacity about which courses of action and which desires are apropos to one's authentic self. Nor does it leave room for productive and transformative tensions between one's desires and volitions in autonomous life. As Meyers writes, for Frankfurt, "[t]o have an authentic self is to be wholeheartedly committed to a rank ordering of the desires one has decided to satisfy and to be wholeheartedly disassociated from those of one's desires one has decided against satisfying" (2000, 169). This view of authenticity opposes it to any conflict amongst one's desires and volitions and to any ambivalence about which of one's desires should be incorporated into one's self-conception rather than cast out.

Yet when one considers the multiplicity of social group identities that often inform one's sense of self—which Kimberlé Crenshaw has described in terms of "intersectional identity" (Meyers 154), it becomes apparent that internal conflict is only readily avoidable for those whose various social group identities give rise to harmonious interests, something true for only very privileged social groups. One benefit of Frankfurt's notion of "wholeheartedness," on Meyers' view, however, is that it captures the strong sense that some form of self-integration is nonetheless a necessary component of autonomy. Meyers acknowledges that autonomous subjects generally feel "at one with themselves", and Frankfurt's concept of wholeheartedness provides a way to understand the basis of such a feeling (169). Yet Meyers stresses that this view of autonomy nonetheless oversimplifies the social aspects of selfhood. One may, for instance, experience victimization as a member of an oppressed group and yet endorse a view of oneself as

a survivor and a fighter rather than a victim. Yet to 'wholeheartedly' externalize one's social victimization and embrace the alternative view of oneself as a survivor risks dangerously falsifying one's experience in a context of social violence (170). A more ambivalent relationship to both victimhood and agency is called for given the complex interrelationships between self and world. Anyone subject to oppression through social injustice, moreover, is likely to experience some ambivalences in their sense of self without this necessarily making them less autonomous than those that do not.

In the current social world where individuals are socially aligned in a multiplicity of different, often conflictual ways through membership in various social groups, Meyers shows that the goal of a single order of priorities for anyone that remains consistent over time and in all circumstances may be misguided (153). In such a world, authentic selfhood seems instead to demand that one's differing interests, for instance, as both a woman and a person of color, be prioritized in different contexts. Constantly prioritizing one of these sets of interests over the other might come of being willfully out of touch with the complexities of one's social situation, something that would cost one the productive spur to innovative agency that Meyers' sees in working to navigate such tensions. Where Frankfurt stresses the importance of arriving at a decisive order of desires in order to achieve autonomy, Meyers thus points out that experiencing conflict between desires that one holds equally valuable and germane to oneself can either force one to find a way to satisfy both or lead one to "work to change the social situation that brings them into irresolvable conflict" (171). A third alternative is to attempt to escape the social situation that brings about the conflict. For Meyers, while autonomy involves having some sense of one's priorities as well as externalizing and rejecting some features of one's self and strongly identifying with others, an autonomy-enhancing relationship to oneself must remain dynamic. One must be able to readjust one's self-conception and one's volitional goals as, for instance, one's circumstances shift, new forms of attachment emerge, and one's entrenched values come under critical scrutiny (172).

In these respects, the conflicts among various forms of identity are not necessarily autonomy-undermining. Instead, these conflicts can work to "introduce a wedge of optionality that authorizes *individualized* reflection and choice" in any given situation and regarding any particular course of action (164). Meyers elaborates: "The light social interpretation sheds on seemingly personal conduct makes room for autonomous self-definition—thoughtful

clarification or reshaping of one's desires, personal traits, values, interests, and goals—and thus for autonomous self-direction—plotting a course of action that enacts those attributes as fully as possible" (165). Still, in order for autonomous choices not to end in psychic turmoil for those that defy the expectations of their social positions, collective, social work must be done to challenge group norms. Meyers account is thus both relational in focusing on how social identities work to place differing expectations on different individuals and in stressing that full autonomy requires social support as well as individual self-discovery and self-definition. "[S]elf-definition," she writes, takes place at both the individual level and the collective level and… self-definition at one level interacts with self-definition at the other" (167).

For Meyers, moreover, authenticity and integration are two different things, and self-integration is *not* a prerequisite to autonomy. However, self-integration, for Meyers, is one of the potential rewards of living authentically, which requires recognizing rather than disavowing tensions in one's investments, treating certain values as provisional rather than exhaustive, and more. As such an effect, self-integration is not a static quality but an ongoing process issuing from the continual—and at times quite trying—exercise of autonomy skills. Conflicts in identifications and investments aren't necessarily a sign of a failure to achieve autonomy but can instead be a catalyst to more inventive exercises of one's autonomy skills.

Finally, whereas attentiveness to intersectional identity promotes autonomy competency, Meyers emphasizes that lack of awareness of intersectional identity, in contrast, can jeopardize it. To fail to recognize the multiplicity of one's group attachments because certain of these attachments are treated as normative and neutral—such as being white, heterosexual, male, and more—or because certain of these attachments are treated as secondary to others—such as belonging to a Caribbean ethnic group in relation to being a person of color in a racially stratified society—is to fail in self-awareness (157). Those in socially and politically oppressed groups often express these group identities as delimited in ways that those who belong to privileged groups do not, but membership in both privileged and subordinated groups has great influence upon one's values, actions, and assumptions. Full self-awareness thus requires knowledge of both one's privileged and one's subordinated group identities (159). One may very well attempt to challenge and disrupt aspects of one's group identities, but doing so authentically requires "analyzing the social significance of one's community of origin, disclosing to oneself the ways in which associated norms have become embedded in one's cognitive and motivational structure,

appreciating how entrenched they are, and assuming responsibility for the ways in which one may enact them" (159). Failures to recognize the role that group alignments play in one's life leads to mistaken views about oneself, and thus undermines autonomy.

Wholeheartedness, Volitional Necessity, and Care

Meyers' point that the particular vision of self-integration Frankfurt asserts by way of the notion of "wholeheartedness" does not adequately take into account the complexities of intersectional social identities and the possibilities for autonomy they present is an apt critique of this aspect of Frankfurt's work. Here, Meyers reveals how much of the relational context of human life Frankfurt has left out of consideration, and illuminates how thoroughly notions of self-knowledge and self-directedness long associated with autonomy may have to be rethought in order to genuinely reflect our social complexity. Next, I want to explore the relationship that Frankfurt's idea of 'wholeheartedness,' both as made explicit in the essay that bears its name and as it appears in a less developed form in "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," bears to what is for me the most compelling aspect of Frankfurt's work on autonomy: his intriguing coupling of a heightened form of autonomy with the experience of a kind of necessity—or *need*—in the concept of "volitional necessity."

For Frankfurt, the decisive, resounding event of wholehearted identification with a certain volition over all others can work to take a particular course of action out of the realm of immediate, volitional choice. It is no longer subject to deliberation or to potentially being trumped by another desire; rather, it is "locked in" so to speak, so much so that it becomes fundamentally self-defining—an essential part of who one is. At this point, one's wholehearted identification of one's will with a certain course of action over others and with certain investments of care in the world gives rise to what Frankfurt calls 'volitional necessity.' My consideration of the role of first and second-order desires and of wholeheartedness in Frankfurt's account of autonomy have been stepping stones on the way to addressing this pivotal concept.

Of volitional necessity, Frankfurt writes: "There are occasions when a person realizes that what he cares about matters to him not merely so much, but in such a way, that it is impossible for him to forbear from a certain course of action. It was presumably on such an occasion, for example, that Luther made his famous declaration: 'Here I stand; *I can do no*

other'" (1998, 86). The inability to act otherwise in this example is not a result of a lack of either power or capacity but, rather, of an inability to *will* any course of action but one.

In this respect, volitional necessity can be understood as a paradigmatic case of what Frankfurt refers to as "wholeheartedness," occurring when one's will is so resolute and steadfast at every level that it is not shakable either by one's consciousness intentions or by subsequently elected courses of action. It might thus seem that the notion of volitional necessity would be subject to the same issues that arise in light of intersectional identity as is the notion of wholeheartedness. However, the fact that volitional necessity concerns staunch resoluteness of the will regarding one particular course of action may save it from these problems. This characteristic of volitional necessity allows it to be highly contextual—and thus situationally-dynamic—in terms of the courses of action it prohibits and those it necessitates. For instance, a women of color might find that a lived identification with all persons of color moves her such that she feels she has no choice but to protest police violence against African American men, while, in a different context, a strong lived identification as a woman of color in particular moves her to protest forms of violence against women within the African American community despite the risk that their protest might be used to perpetuate the very racist stereotypes that contribute to making African American men so vulnerable to heightened forms of police violence.

Frankfurt's notion of volitional necessity is compelling not only for its ability to weave together autonomy and necessity but also for the fundamental connection he draws between volitional necessity and investments of care. For Frankfurt, volitional necessity is the upshot of our strongest investments of care (91). However, what Frankfurt understands by 'care' has certain strict limitations. For one, he insists upon a stark separation between ethical commitments and investments of care without paying any attention to the copious amounts of work in care ethics that argue for the intertwining of the two (e.g. 80; 90). Ethics, for Frankfurt, is a realm of evaluation unaffected by the fact that human beings "are creatures to whom things matter" (80). While both ethical investments and investments of care involve evaluating how best to act, and thus involve exercising both one's will and one's judgment, their similarity ends here. "Ethics," writes Frankfurt, "focuses on the problem of ordering our relations with *other people*" while care, on the other hand, concerns "what to do with *ourselves*" and "what is *important to us*" (80-81).

Frankfurt further insists that it cannot be moral conviction that moves one in experiences of volitional necessity insofar as volitional necessity is the upshot of one's investments of care, which are personal investments. Moral investments, in contrast, must be impersonal—applying to all persons in like situations (90). For Frankfurt, the sense of volitional necessity that follows from some of one's strongest investments of care wards against violations of one's own integrity, and, in this sense, against deep harms to ourselves, but not against ethical violations of either duty or obligation (91).

Yet investments of care can also be ethical investments in the welfare of other people. Indeed, not to care about others, whether they are bound to us emotionally or not, is a deep moral failing, one so profound as to be, in the words of Lisa Tessman, "morally horrifying" (2005, 83). Being wholly lacking in such a sense of care is something we associate with extreme psychic disorders, such as psychopathy and sociopathy, and is morally equivalent to lacking a sense of justice. Drawing a sharp divide between ethics and care misses not only the pivotal ethical importance of the capacity to care about the welfare of others, but also fails to recognize that our own relations with other people often number among those things that are of the utmost importance to us and, even more profoundly, that who we are is shaped by our relations with others. Drawing this stark divide between ethics and care is one more way in which Frankfurt's thinking shows itself to be overly individualistic rather than relationally attuned. The distinctiveness of certain relational ties and their role in the constitution of the self means that one's investments of care are often complexly intermingled with one's ethical responsibilities to others. The two cannot be teased apart into self-interested investments of care on the one hand and other-oriented ethical concerns on the other without doing harm to the nature of these investments and without obscuring the relational nature of the self. If investments of care can also be ethical investments, experiences of volitional necessity can be at once deeply personal experiences of one's own needs (as these needs arise not from any universal set of human attributes but from one's investments of care in the world) *and* some of the strongest lived experiences one can have of one's own ethical commitments.

Frankfurt's View of Care and Care Ethics

In radical contradistinction to Frankfurt's view of care as that which exclusively concerns what is important to us as isolated individuals, many feminist accounts of care found in care ethics describe it as fundamentally other-oriented. Care is often described, moreover, as being most effectively and genuinely expressed when one's investments in another's well-being are affectively lived and not merely perfunctorily performed. The affective ties to others that mark good care can run so deep that meeting another's needs becomes fundamental for one's own sense of well-being, as happens, for instance, when a parent can't sleep for the sound of their child crying or when one finds they cannot walk past someone sleeping in the street for another day and do nothing without feeling sick in the stomach.

Sarah Clark Miller draws a defining connection between care as such and meeting the needs of others. As discussed in Chapter 1, Miller's notion of constitutive/fundamental needs isolates a special moral relevance belonging to needs that one cannot meet oneself. It is when one has such needs that another person is called upon to exercise what Miller understands to be a very distinctive moral capacity—the capacity for care. Miller draws on Joan C. Tronto's account of care in *Moral Boundaries* (1993) to highlight the defining connection care bears to the needs of others. For Tronto, Miller writes, "to have a need is to require care" and any caring response to a need will be one that treats that need as the basis for determining how one must act (2012, 47). Miller also draws on the work of Diemut Bubeck, who insists, in Miller's words, that "[c]are must necessarily be other directed," and involve two parties—one caring and one being cared for (47).[7]

One particular kind of care, compatible with both Tronto and Bubeck's view, comes of what Miller describes as "the distinctive ability to adopt and advance another person's self-determined ends as one's own" (77). The second person needs I discussed in the first chapter of this work are often the result of just this kind of investment in another's welfare. For Miller, such a form of care hinges on a distinctive kind of moral power; the power to determine ends for oneself "in accordance with the self-determined ends of others" (78). All told, caring, for Miller, is "the process of responding to another's need by understanding their self-determined ends, adopting those ends as one's own, and advancing them in an effort to cultivate, maintain, or restore their agency" (79). Further, such care is based on what Miller quite insightfully understands as a distinctive moral capacity to set ends for oneself according to the ends of others (79).[8] This capacity is an often-overlooked moral power, and care accordingly involves a set of

moral responsibilities that have likewise gone overlooked in many traditional accounts of moral life. Attending to the constitutive roles that relationships to others play in the formation of the self, in ongoing processes of self-definition, and in the development of one's deepest investments and values allows the dimensions of moral life expressed in caring for others to be seen.

Yet it is just such moral aspects of care that are excluded by Frankfurt's sharp distinction between care and ethical action. That Frankfurt's view of autonomy is devoid of committed attention to relational life contributes to his unwavering belief in a stark divide between ethics and care, shoring up his conviction that "integrity" is a personal matter whereas morality must be utterly impersonal in nature. Additionally, unlike in the work of many care ethicists, there is no sense of any crucial relationship between care and need in Frankfurt's work, a connection that works to bind investments of care at once to a concern for the welfare of others and to a very important kind of ethical responsibility.

Like Sarah Clark Miller, Joan Tronto, and Diemut Bubeck, Eva Kittay also draws poignant connections between need and care, and likewise generally defines care in ways that stress that it is something one person extends to others in situations of dependency. Moreover, Kittay emphasizes that caring is a part of moral life, not only insofar as we have moral responsibilities to care for those in need but also insofar as we have moral responsibilities to care for those who do the work of attending directly to the care of those in need.

In "When Caring is Just and Justice is Caring," Kittay writes of her daughter, Sesha, that "[f]oremost among her needs is the need for care" (2001, 259). That the need for care itself can be anyone's most urgent and emphatic need suggests that care simpliciter, and not just the ends it meets, is a substantive good in human life without which we are all vulnerable to harm, and some much more so than others (although those who are most deeply dependent on others and least able to meet their needs themselves experience a fundamental need for care much more palpably, consistently, and resolutely than others). What precisely is this very precious good called care for which someone can have such a dire and fundamental need?

Kittay characterizes care in three ways: as "a labor, an attitude, and a virtue" (259). "As labor," she explains that care "is the work of maintaining ourselves and others when we are in a condition of need" (259). In addition, "[a]s an attitude, caring denotes a positive, affective bond and investment in another's well-being" (259). Finally, "[c]are as a virtue" is "a disposition manifested in caring behavior (the labor and attitude), in which 'a shift takes place from the

investment in our life situation to the situation of the other, the one in need'" (260, quoting Gastmans, Dierckx de Casterlé, and Schotsmans 1998, 53). *Good* care for Kittay is not just the performance of the labor of caring, but also the manifestation of the affective attitude of caring. Further, providing consistently good care requires that the virtue of caring and the affective attitude of care accompany the labor.

In this trifold account of care, Kittay captures that care extends well beyond the work of responding to needs one cannot meet oneself to include a need for the kind of care that is carried out with an ongoing investment in the welfare of its recipient at its heart. This is something that is possible because of the extent to which human life is bound up in self-defining relationships to others. These relationships are what allow for what is "*important to us*," to employ Frankfurt's language, to include the welfare of others and our responsibilities to them, how others treat us, and also how others *feel* towards us (Frankfurt, 81). Both good care and consistently good care are essentially other-directed, and respond to needs of others that are often both fundamental to their well-being and relational. Moreover, these forms of caring for others are ones in which one's own investments of care in the world are often fundamentally tied to meeting these needs. Someone who not only performs the labor of care but also experiences its affective bonds and integrates it virtuously into their own ends is someone who can be profoundly hurt by harms that befall another, especially through unfulfilled needs. For example, if the needs of a child go unmet, a good caretaker is often harmed together with the child.

Both the attitude of care and the virtue of care that Kittay articulates bespeak ways of being invested in the world that do not fit with Frankfurt's view of care as fundamentally opposed to ethical life. They do not fit with his notion of care as concerned exclusively with the interests of an isolated self, nor with his view of ethics as exhaustively impersonal, a view which discredits the ethical relevance of these forms of care from the outset without considering the complexity of their content. In contrast, in drawing attention to the moral importance not only of an affective attitude of care but also of a *virtue* of care, Kittay illuminates that good care follows from a distinctive moral power founded on the relational ties of human life.

Investments of Care as Conditions of Ethical Life

Miller, Tronto, Bubeck, and Kittay all offer definitions of care that regard it as essentially other-oriented: on all their accounts, caring is caring for someone that cannot met their needs

themselves. Frankfurt's definition of care is vastly broader. For Frankfurt, not all instances of care must be other-directed nor must all involve meeting other's needs. His account of care is aligned instead with a wide-reaching, colloquial sense of the term according to which one can care, for instance, about doing well on an exam, being physically healthy, and more, just as one can care about the welfare of others. All of these things can be "*important to us*," and thus meet Frankfurt's broad definition of care (81). Bernard Helm also defines caring about something in terms of its having import to the one who cares about it, and being thereby "worthy of attention and action" (2009, 250). While it is not in accord with the definition of care found in feminist work in care ethics, I do not take issue with Frankfurt's broad use of the term 'care'. What I do insist on, however, is that some investments of care are at once personal investments *and* ethical, other-oriented investments. Accordingly, the failure to authentically identify these investments or to act in accordance with them can at once seriously jeopardize one's personal integrity and be a moment of moral failure in one's relations with others. The ethical dimensions of these investments doesn't keep them from constituting a very fundamental part of one's sense of one's self. Nor does their relationship to one's personal integrity keep them from having fundamental ethical dimensions. Any strict bifurcation of ethical investments from investments of care excludes a substantial portion of what people often care about—and, indeed, often care *most* about—from recognition under the term.

Further evidence of the enmeshment between ethical investments and investments of care can be found in the difficulty in clearly demarcating ethical commitments and investments of care from one another. For instance, many vegetarians would not be able to disentangle their commitments to the ethical treatment of animals from investments of care in the welfare of other animal species. Likewise, many people who have been early responders after the event of a car crash or any other event placing human life in jeopardy might find it a very strange and foreign exercise to attempt to separate an immediate, response-motivating feeling of concern for the wellbeing of those involved from a sense that lending aid is the right thing to do; in such moments, for many people, investments of care are also ethical investments and ethical investments are also investments of care. In many such events, what matters to us just *is* what is important for the well-being of others.

One of the examples Frankfurt employees to support a strict contrast between ethical investments and investments of care can instead serve to make a case for their coupling. He

writes: “If a mother who is tempted to abandon her child finds that she simply cannot do that, it is probably not because she knows (or even because she cares about) her duty. It is more likely because of how she cares about the child, and about herself as its mother, than because of any recognition on her part that abandoning the child would be morally wrong” (90). Frankfurt may be right that many mothers would not naturally identity their sense of responsibility to care for their own child with a Kantian sense of ‘duty,’ especially if moral actions that are truly motivated by duty cannot be simultaneously motivated by one’s inclinations. But this is not necessarily because the mother’s sense of ethical responsibility to her child is distinct from any investment of care pertaining to the welfare of her child, as Kant would insist it must be. Kantian duties are impersonal, abstract, and universal moral principles, whereas the particular sense of moral obligation that a mother often feels for a child is uniquely dependent on the nature of the relationship between herself and her child in particular. To feel a sense of ‘duty’ in this instance may in fact indicate a lack of sufficient moral feeling rather than testify to a special moral sense dignified through its complete separation from the realm of feeling. In this example, a fully adequate moral sentiment concerning the welfare of one’s own child seems to hinge on a sense of responsibility that is inseparable from the unique relationship one bears to a child as its mother, a relationship that often comes simultaneously with both affective ties and with a lived sense of interdependent welfare wherein some of one’s strongest and most vital self-interests take their cue from the interests of the child. To identify and act on a ‘duty’ to care for the child separate from any other form of personal investment is not the only way to act ethically, although the ability to recognize and follow through on such a duty is certainly an important ethical fail-safe when these other dimensions of ethical feeling are absent.

Bernard Williams’ *Moral Luck* (1982) offers one highly-influential critique of the impersonal and unfeeling view of morality found in Kant’s moral philosophy, a view which Frankfurt mimics in his blunt divisions between what matters to *us* and ethical responsibilities, and between duties and obligations to others and the forms of care for one’s own integrity expressed in volitional necessity. Of Kant’s work, Williams writes: “the moral point of view is specifically characterized by its impartiality and by its indifference to any particular relations to particular persons” (2). For Kant, moral motivations are unambiguously different in kind from those that arise from our particular relations to specific individuals. Moreover, personal relationships have no place in moral action. This divide in Kantian ethics rings out in Frankfurt’s

treatment of the above example of a mother's care for a child, and in Frankfurt's complete bifurcation between investments of care and ethical investments throughout his work.

Yet Williams' argues that there are multiple ways in which personal relationships are a crucial part of moral life, and neither an impingement on it nor an antithesis to it. To begin, Williams notes that *who* acts in many situations in our lives, moral and otherwise, makes a difference to those involved. If I make a promise to a friend, for instance, it matters that I, and not just anyone, fulfill that promise. Further, a friend—and, likewise, a mother, a husband, a sister, a child, and more—cannot be replaced by any other person, both at large and in the role of answering to any specific ethical responsibilities that come with standing in a very particular relationship to another human being. Other people are not readily substitutable in their ethical relationships to me just as I am not readily substitutable in my own ethical relationship to them.

The importance of unique relational ties in determining one's particular moral responsibilities to others holds in extraordinary life circumstances just as it does in daily life. Williams' considers the hypothetical situation of two people in urgent peril, one of whom is one's wife. Kant's—and, I would add, Frankfurt's—impersonal morality requires that one find and act on a universal principle if one's choice to save one's wife is to be morally justified. Yet Williams' explains that to rely to any such principle to determine the ethical course of action is to have "one thought too many" (18). There is a poignant, immediately motivating moral reality already present in the fact that one's wife is in peril, and the need to seek out a universal principle in order to establish the moral justice in going to her aid shows both a troubling callousness to this moral reality and a lack of the special kind of moral sentiment that is rooted in relational life.

Drawing his insights into the importance of personal, relational attachments to human life at large and to moral agency in particular to a close, Williams writes:

> [S]omewhere one reaches the necessity that such things as deep attachments to other persons will express themselves in the world in ways that cannot at the same time embody the impartial point of view, and that they also run the risk of offending against it./ They run that risk if they exist at all; yet unless such things exist, there will not be enough substance or conviction in a man's life to compel his allegiance to life itself. (18)

The pivotal place that Frankfurt gives to investments of care in volitional life echoes Williams' sentiment that one's personal investments and concerns lie at the very heart of one's investments

in the world; it is these attachments, more than any others, that reflect the fact that people generally care about who they are and what they do. Yet what Williams draws from this point, and what Frankfurt rejects, is that these investments also tend to motivate one's ethical investments: it is because of one's personal investments in the world—which for Frankfurt, are investments of care concerning both who I am and what I do—that one is able to concern oneself with questions of how one's actions affect others. For Williams, without personal investments in the world, ethics could not get off the ground.

Reading Williams' view of the relationship between personal investments and ethical commitments into Frankfurt's example of a mother's investment in caring for her child, we might say that it is the distinctive relationship to the child that gives rise at one and the same time to the strong affective sense of care for the child *and* to an ethical feeling of obligation to answer to the child's needs which many mother's—whether biological, adoptive, or otherwise—experience.[9] As we have seen, Frankfurt's own treatment of this example draws a sharp line between acting out of investments of care built on distinctive lived relationships and acting out of a sense of moral right and wrong, thus dividing relational responsibilities and affective investments from ethical ones in accordance with Kant's strict delimitation between acting *in accordance with duty* and acting *from* duty. Yet the example works against Frankfurt to illustrate the extent to which our relational and affective investments are often intimately bound up with moral ones. Moreover, to answer to the needs of a young child without any sense of intimate love and affection is often to fail to answer fully to the child's holistic needs, while nonetheless meeting some barren form of these demands. To employ Kittay's three-fold sense of care, it is to fulfill the labor of care without showing the affection or demonstrating the virtue that makes care *good* care. Receiving an emotionally striped-down and disinvested form of care may satisfy some dire needs tethered to one's physiological welfare but it can also be emotionally scarring, and can injure a person's sense of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-worth, thus doing a great deal of moral harm in the process.

Still, as Miller argues in making a case for the importance of recognizing a *duty* to care, for a caregiver to demand of themselves that they extend care in certain moments— for instance, when their affective investments are wavering or in instances where some of their self-interests are at odds with that of the one in need of their care—is also an important ethical responsibility. A sense of on-going responsibility to those in need of care and, especially, to those in need of

our care, can be found in recognizing a moral obligation separate from our own, personal investments (2012, 62; 68). Yet the richest sense of ethical responsibility remains one that is not based on an abstract moral calculus that determines right and wrong action across the board, independently of relationships, and on the basis of duties rather than felt investments. Rather, there are many instances in which a fuller kind of ethical investment, at once more self-gratifying and more holistically affirming to those who receive care through it, depends on a deep-seated awareness of moral responsibility that is inseparable from our relational ties to particular others and from our ongoing (if occasionally waning or redirected) investments of care in their welfare—investments that cannot be fully separated from investments in our own.

Personhood and Care

In addition to the issues pertaining to the sharp divide Frankfurt insists upon between ethics and care, there is also an overly rationalistic and end-driven view of personhood at play in Frankfurt's account of care. Written into the fabric of care, for Frankfurt, is reflexivity, devotion (which makes life more "than merely a sequence of events" insofar as it demands self-fashioning), prospectiveness (an orientation towards the future), and a continuing sense of oneself (83). Insofar as investments of care are what Frankfurt calls "guiding" investments, they can only occur for a subject that recognizes each moment of its life as tethered to the next, and who binds the various moments of life even more intimately and meaningfully together through these investments (83).

While there is certainly a kind of self-fashioning and devotion at play in many expressions of care, and while one of the most profound aspects of the capacity to care is that it allows for dimensions of meaning to color one's life that wouldn't be possible without it, Frankfurt's overall account of these features of care among others tends to render care the kind of investment that is only possible for a certain kind of subject, the kind of subject that has a continuing sense of herself, a sense of her own relation to the future, an ability to determine ends and goals according to that relationship to the future, and to purposively direct herself towards those ends. This is the only kind of subject, moreover, that ultimately counts as a *person* for Frankfurt. For Frankfurt, to be a person is to exercise the capacity for care and, in particular, to exercise the capacity to care about one's *will* (12; 16-17).

Having the rational capacities necessary for self-determination and for future-oriented, end-directed action is a defining feature of the Kantian view of both autonomy and personhood. As Kant writes in the *Groundwork*, "rational beings are called *persons* because their nature already makes them out as an ends in itself" (1997, 37; 4:428). For Kant, the rational capacity for determining one's own ends is the source of inherent dignity and is the ground for the moral respect of which persons alone are worthy. Beings that lack this capacity are mere "*things*" and deserve no special moral consideration (37; 4:428). Frankfurt's views of personhood and of autonomy, much like his division between ethics and personal investments, ring of this Kantian influence. The implicit connection between personhood and reason that underlies Frankfurt's claims regarding self-determination and end-driven action is voiced in "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of the Person" when he explains that "it is only in virtue of his rational capacities that a person is capable of becoming critically aware of his own will and of forming volitions of the second order" (17).

In Chapter Two, I used Kittay's work, in dialogue with that of Miller, to highlight some of the limitations of a view of personhood that hinges on either the capacity for reason or the capacity to determine ends for oneself, and suggested instead that it is one's relationships to others people that determines personhood. These points of critique apply equally to the commitments underlying Frankfurt's account of care insofar as these commitments also make rationality an essential criterion for personhood. It is worth adding here that the relationships in which we stand to others, as Agnieszka Jaworska and Julie Tannenbaum explain, "can alter what [we ourselves] can do" (2014, 270). Some of the most morally significant capacities that we have, Jaworsky and Tannenbaum argue, are ones that require the "active participation of another human being," including the capacity to be in what they call a "person-rearing relationship"—a relationship with the goal of allowing someone to grow up to become a self-standing person, even if this goal can only be imperfectly realized and a "next-best end" must be substituted (261; 270). Their points resonate with Annette Baier's insistence that all persons "essentially are *second* persons, who grow up with other persons" and, through a prolonged period of dependency, come to acquire those capacities that allow for self-consciousness and end-directed action—including the ability to speak a language, to integrate the present with a sense of one's past as well as with one's hopes for the future, and more (1981, 180). As second persons, Baier

explains, our ends "are set by [our] beginnings". Thus we are all "essentially successors, heirs to other persons who formed and cared for" us (181-182).

Volitional Necessity: At the Crossroads of Need and Autonomy

Despite his work's shortcomings, however, Frankfurt still offers some very valuable ideas about care, and ones that match many strong intuitions about it. For one, while I would argue that one *can* care about something only in the moment of its lived experience, without any thought to its future or any investment in it beforehand, when one cares about something or someone, this investment often does guide one's actions, and can even be life-determining. Further, Frankfurt stresses that "caring about something *makes* that thing important to the person who cares about it," or, in other words, that the kind of activity caring is entails that "what happens to the thing [one cares about] must make a difference to a person who cares about it" (92). In Frankfurt's terms, care thus involves a certain degree of identification between oneself and the object of one's care; the things that we care about are things that *affect us*. One way in which this is evident is that when one cares about something, harms and benefits to the object of one's care redouble in harms and benefits to oneself. Frankfurt explains: "A person who cares about something…*identifies* himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending upon whether what he cares about is diminished or enhanced. He thus concerns himself with what concerns it, giving particular attention to such things and directing his behavior accordingly" (83).

The identification of one's own welfare with that of the objects of one's care is also what allows for us to have second person needs—needs of one's own for another to be treated in a particular way. Although Frankfurt insists on a stark divide between investments of care and ethical life, the ability to form second person needs through making other people the object of one's care undoes this divide. This ability is a very special moral power that is seldom acknowledged in accounts of ethical life—one that hinges on the capacity to care about others in such a way that any harm that befalls them also befalls oneself.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, in some cases, we care about something precisely because it already makes a difference in our lives and to our welfare. In others, it is the fact that we care about something in the first place that introduces new vulnerabilities to harm into our lives as well as new prospects for our lives' betterment. Hence, at the same time that care opens us to

some especially wonderful and extremely precious forms of life enrichment that would not otherwise be possible, it also introduces new prospects for harm: caring can make one vulnerable to harm oneself if harm befalls the object of one's care.

Given this relationship between care and vulnerability, it is crucial to recognize that just as certain vulnerabilities can be pathogenic, so too can certain investments of care. "[M]orally dysfunctional or abusive interpersonal and social relationships and sociopolitical oppression or injustice" can generate some investments of care that "undermine autonomy" just as they can generate autonomy-undermining vulnerabilities to harm (Mackenzie, Rogers, and Dodds 2014, 9). Thus, it is always crucial to consider whether the things that one cares about warrant that care, and thus warrant the potential harm that care introduces into one's life.

One might wonder if there is something inherently unjustifiable about *all* investments of care where, without such investments, one simply would not be susceptible to certain kinds of harm. For Frankfurt, it is the inherent value of caring itself that rules this out. That caring "serves to connect us actively to our lives in ways which are creative of ourselves and which expose us to distinctive possibilities for necessity and for freedom", he explains, justifies many investments of care regardless of the potential harm to which they expose us (93). Caring about worthwhile objects and not irreverent ones, such as, for example, not stepping on cracks in the sidewalk (Frankfurt's example) or having the latest style of jeans, however, is something that is required by the inherent dignity and value of the capacity to care (94). Thinking relationally about autonomy, one might add that caring about things that enrich and enhance one's own life together with that of others, that contribute to one's well-being and flourishing, and that challenge oppressive social norms are crucial aspects of healthy, autonomy-enhancing investments of care in a world where investments of care can play a role in furthering the oppression of others as well as oneself.

Annette Baier draws particular attention to this last point in her own work on Frankfurt. As briefly discussed in Chapter Two, Baier argues that caring's ability to introduce new forms of vulnerability in our lives demands that we care responsibly by taking upon ourselves the work of critically investigating our investments of care. The result of such an investigation is "either an endorsement and confirmation of our loves and loyalties, or their alteration, devaluation, and even destruction"—with which "go[es] not only the elimination of the losses and griefs those loves invited, but also the enrichment and joys they brought" (1982, 274). While it can be

positively self-transformative, undertaking a critical investigation into what one cares about is thus also risky work. Through caring about caring enough to risk such scrutiny, she explains:

> We can come to see our loyalties and loves as sick, or infantile, or as self-deceived, or as perverse or unnatural, or as futile postponements of a too demanding love we are fated to end by accepting. Any one of these findings may transform, degrade, or destroy the caring which, in our loyal confidence that it would stand critical scrutiny, we cared enough about to put at risk…("Caring About Caring", 1982, 275-276)

Yet what Frankfurt's work reveals, she insists, is that "to care at all is to risk loss and grief over and above that which is inevitable to us as beings with desires and sentience," a truth that cannot be forgotten when we press ourselves to engage in the critical work that caring about caring demands (276).

Much of the special dignity of care that, on Frankfurt's account, also demands care's critical scrutiny, comes from the strong connection between care and the will. Frankfurt emphasizes that caring about something goes beyond the formulation of a mere intention and beyond making an elective choice to direct oneself in any particular way. Care, for Frankfurt, is an *effective* investment, one that moves one "all the way to action," whereas both intentions and elective choices may fail to do so (14; 84). The action-motivating power of care shows just how closely it is tied to the will. Indeed, that care has this unique connection to action shows that it is much more intimately tethered to the will than are momentary intentions and elective choices. Hence, "[t]he formation of a person's will," Frankfurt explains, "is most fundamentally a matter of his coming to care about certain things" (91).

Yet, quite strikingly, Frankfurt also emphasizes that investments of care, unlike intentions and elective choices, are not necessarily—or even ordinarily—under one's immediate control, although one's choices over time affect them. One's investments of care do not readily change with the tide of one's elective choices or intentions. While certainly susceptible to being affected by one's choices and intentions, these investments are rooted in more entrenched and less momentarily alterable aspects of one's selfhood. One might make a decision to act in a particular way, Frankfurt stresses, but nonetheless "discover that he does not have and that he does not subsequently develop the feelings, attitudes, and interests constitutive of the sort of person which his decision has committed him to being" (85). In such instances, one is either unable to follow through with one's elective decisions or manages to do so only at great expense to one's

integrity. Here, Frankfurt's account of care intriguingly works to locate the will in the affective, emotional, social and historical depths of selfhood, and not just in the realm of reason, deliberation, intention, and choice. This is despite the fact that Frankfurt himself does not consider the social nature of our investments of care, and generally only considers their historical nature in the context of an individualistic timeline for the formation of identity.

Volitional necessary occurs in just those instances in which one's guiding investments of care do not stand under one's immediate volitional control. In such events, it is not up to us—at least in the moment—to be moved as we are. Any intentions we might have or choices for courses of action that we might elect that are out of accord with our guiding investments of care will either fail to direct our action or will succeed in doing so only at great harm to more fundamental aspects of our self. This feature of volitional necessity defies conventional notions of autonomy. Nonetheless, Frankfurt argues that experiences of volitional necessary are not experiences in which one's autonomy is compromised. Rather, they are experiences of *heightened* autonomy. People "tend to regard it [volitional necessity] as actually enhancing both their autonomy and strength of will," Frankfurt explains (87). Additionally, he characterizes volitional necessity as having "a liberating effect" at the same time that it is an experience of a will so steadfast it is beyond one's immediate control (88). Volitional necessity thus illustrates the truth that, in Annette Baier's words, "we display our wills more in what we cannot but do and feel than in what we can directly control" (1982, 275). This is a truth to which Huck's Finn repeated inability to turn Jim in attests in Mark Twain's novel: Huck finds time and again that he is unable to follow through on a set of intentions that go against the grain of his deeper feelings.

But, one might ask, can't volitional necessity's power to trump one's volitions work against contesting oppressive social norms in a climate where some social groups are brought up to play a personal role in their own disempowerment and oppression? What if, for instance, a young woman decides to confront her employer over a case of inequitable treatment but then finds in the moment before initiating the confrontation that she is unable to follow through with it because a deeply-entrenched commitment to 'not causing trouble' or to being 'nice' takes hold? What if she discovers, in other terms, that she has a second person need to be submissive to someone engaged in her own exploitation? Or, what if one harbors socially noxious and unethical commitments of care, such as a commitment to white supremacy? Certainly, as Annette Baier explains, "[w]e are not content to say to Hitler, to Sadat's assassins, to fanatical

Jewish groups, 'Care about what you find you can care about'. We must, somehow, be more discriminating" (1982, 277).

That one's elective decisions can contest one's deep-seated investments of care and defy the relational needs tethered to these investments may often be to their credit, even if there are also occasions in which our deeper investments know better than does our momentary judgment alone. Moreover, according to Baier:

> I need not believe caring a matter for decision to see it as a matter in which there may be faults, indeed the worst faults of all. Seeing them *may* not cure them, and having seen them may not even lead us to want them cured…Sometimes, however, change does follow an exposure of the hollowness of our loves, or of the self-deceit needed to sustain them. Such change, if it occurs, will also be a case of 'volitional necessity', not of a decision or a choice in any ordinary sense of choice. But it may still be in one's control, since one can control in ways other than by a series of effective decisions or acts of will. (275)

While volitional necessity may sometimes be the cause of wrong action and of self-harm, Baier here suggests that volitional necessity can also be a powerful tool in combatting internalizations of one's own oppression and in reorienting our investments of care. This is especially so if we allow that self-transformative experiences of volitional necessity can arise through engaging in sustained critical reflection, even if some experiences of volitional necessity cannot be brought to a halt through self-reflection alone.

Further, although Frankfurt's concept of volitional necessity initially seems compatible with the experience of losing one's momentary resolve to stand up for oneself to an entrenched disposition to undervalue one's own welfare in relations with others, it isn't clearly so. Frankfurt emphasizes that one doesn't feel estranged from oneself when experiencing volitional necessity as one might when in the grips of another sort of necessity or another kind of compulsion. While Frankfurt states that in many cases of volitional necessity "the agent experiences himself as having no choice but to accede to the force by which he is constrained even if he thinks it might be better not to do so," these experiences of compulsion are not experiences of self-estrangement, even if they are at times experiences of being overcome (86). People do not feel, as Frankfurt writes, like "helpless bystanders to their own behavior" when experiencing volitional necessity but instead experience an "enhancing [of] both their autonomy and their strength of will" in such events (87). Failed attempts to redirect one's will while experiencing

volitional necessity only serve to better reveal the resoluteness of one's will and the nature of one's most genuine investments of care. They thus leave one feeling more at one with themselves rather than more self-estranged. It is thus that one can experience a distinct kind of freedom and a heightened sense of autonomy in experiencing volitional necessity.

This feature of volitional necessity challenges the prospect that some pathogenic investments of care could in fact necessitate one's actions in this profound way. The women considered above who actively elects to confront her employer over inequitable treatment but then finds herself unable to go through with initiating the conflict because of entrenched dispositions she has to avoid causing trouble and to privilege other's welfare over her own, for instance, most likely *does* feel estranged from herself in finding she is unable to carry through with her intentions. This sense of self-estrangement can work to alert her to the fact that her most germane investments of care, and her deepest relational needs, may be out of accord with actions that privilege other's well-being at the expense of her own self-respect. Even though she may care about not upsetting her employer, she may discover through the experience of self-estrangement that arises if she fails to voice her own interests that she cares more about being treated equitably, and thus that she cares more about herself—and has a stronger sense of her own self-worth—than she previously realized. This is so even if she still struggles to act in accordance with these investments of care.

Going one step further, moreover, Frankfurt also insists that volitional necessity requires an unwillingness to alter one's own unwillingness (87). Investments of care alone cannot give rise to the kind of two-fold resoluteness of the will at play in instances of volitional necessity; what is required in that one "cares about caring about" something for this resoluteness to be present (87). This too protects against volitional necessity being aligned with oppressive forms of socialization. To redeploy my previous example, while some women may care about not upsetting an exploitative boss, it seems highly unlikely that these women would also 'care about caring about' not upsetting their boss. In fact, they would most likely feel quit emphatically that they *do not* care about this self-effacing tendency that nonetheless repeatedly manifests itself in their lives. Instead, they would strongly prefer not to have it.

Still, Frankfurt looks to highlight the heightened willfulness in volitional necessity and its distinct liberating potential in a number of somewhat perplexing ways. For one, he insists that volitional necessity does not so much "impel" one into acting in a given way but instead

"mak[es] it apparent to him that every other course of action is unthinkable"—one that he "cannot will to perform" under any imaginable conditions (86; 181).[10] In a similar vein, he writes that "[s]uch encounters differ from situations in which a person finds that he is unable to forbear, whether or not he wants to do so, because he is being driven to act by some desire or by some compulsion which is too powerful for him to overcome" (86). Frankfurt also asserts that experiences of volitional necessity are not experiences in one feels "passive" (87). Rather, Frankfurt insists that "[a] person is active when it is by his own will that he does what he does, even when his will is not itself within the scope of his voluntary control" (88). He thus insists that there is no dimension of passivity at play in volitional necessity despite the sense of being overpowered that often accompanies it.

These points of distinction between volitional necessity and other experiences of being moved despite one's intentions or even against them help to illustrate why experiences of volitional necessity are often free from shame, whereas other experiences of necessitation are not.[11] And yet, in both of these points of distinction, discomfort with the very component of necessitation that makes the idea of volitional necessity so compelling seems to resound. What makes "volitional necessity" a form of necessity at all if not some real and fundamental way in which one is 'impelled' by it, and some form of passivity at play in it, even if there is also a crucial element of active self-assertion at work?

The idea of volitional necessity captures the overpowering feeling of submission to an urgent and dire need which one cannot elect away at the same time that it illustrates, through its attention to the pivotal role that care plays in the formation of one's will, how such genuine forms of need can be the outcome of one's own autonomous investments; they build upon one's choices even if they are not controlled by them at every turn. The concept of volitional necessity thus captures one way in which necessity and autonomy can be united, and shows the influence of Spinoza on Frankfurt's thought.

Yet despite the merit in Frankfurt's crucial point that one feels more rather than less autonomous when experiencing volitional necessity, I want to insist that to experience volitional necessity is also to find oneself in the grips of a powerful and deep-seated form of need. This is a form of need that can be quite indifferent to one's current desires and intentions, that it is often beyond one's present ability to overcome, and to which one is accurately described as being 'subject' on my view (although not on Frankfurt's). A more accurate description of the lived

experience that Frankfurt draws attention to through the notion of volitional necessity, then, might be one that recognizes it equally as a form of necessity in which one is indeed impelled to act in a particular way at the same time that it is one in which all other courses of action are deemed unbearable and unthinkable by the subject; a lived experience in which one is at once subject to a force beyond one's own control and yet identifies one's own active investments as profoundly aligned with this force. This distinction is pivotal when considering the ethical claims that experiences of volitional necessity can make on others. Insofar as volitional necessity finds one compelled in a way that is beyond one's control, the vulnerabilities to harm to which one's volitional necessities expose one have enough necessity in them to make ethical demands on others.

Although some of his efforts to distinguish volitional necessity from other forms of necessitation, such as his insistence that is it a completely active stance and not in any way a form of passivity, seem to deny it, Frankfurt does repeatedly draw attention to the real aspects of *necessity* in volitional necessity. He recognizes, for instance, that in many cases of volitional necessity "the agent experiences himself as having no choice but to accede to the force by which he is constrained even if he thinks it might be better not to do so" (86). Still, he emphasizes repeatedly that these experiences of compulsion are not experiences of self-estrangement, even if they are at times experiences of being overcome, for they are encounters with entrenched and resolute commitments of one's will that follow from investments of care. Any failed intentional, elective, or deliberative attempts to redirect one's will in such moments, moreover, often serve to better reveal one's own commitments of care. Thus they are at odds with the experiences, for example, of an unwilling addict trying to stop herself from smoking but fighting a losing battle.

Among the complex aspects of the coupling of volition and necessity that Frankfurt captures through the concept of volitional necessity is that, in certain instances, discovering that one *cannot* act otherwise than one does, not for lack of the capacity or the power to do so but because of a staunch *unwillingness* to act otherwise, can be a very powerful way of encountering the depths of one's investments of care and their pivotal ties to one's autonomy. While volitional necessity certainly works to restrict what one finds it bearable to do, this is a kind of restriction through which autonomy can be enhanced. In running up against one's strongest investments of care, one comes to know these investments as giving definition and meaning to one's life and as fundamentally informing the very person that one is. It is in such moments that we thus discover

some of the commitments of care most foundational to our sense of self and to our personal integrity, and experience our autonomy in the world through them.

Such events, moreover, may be ones in which one's emotions are more in touch with one's guiding investments of care—and hence, for Frankfurt, more closely aligned with one's will—than are one's deliberative intentions. An example that Frankfurt uses in another context also works well to illustrate a possible scenario in which one's emotions, rather than 'trumping' one's will, might serve as the best guide to what that will really is – i.e. to one's most integral commitments of care. "Consider a mother," he writes, "who reaches the conclusion, after conscientious deliberation, that it would be best to give up her child for adoption, and suppose that she decides to do so. When the moment arrives for actually giving up the child… she may find that she cannot go through with it—not because she has reconsidered the matter and changed her mind but because she simply cannot bring herself to give the child away" (1999, 111). This mother is utterly unable to move herself to give up the child, for Frankfurt, not because her will is too weak but because it is too strong—it cannot be budged by her process of rational deliberation, being obedient instead to her entrenched investments of care. On his analysis, her will hasn't failed her; instead, it has protected her against the harm to herself that she might have otherwise done by following through on a deliberative course that was insensitive to what she truly cared about.

This example thus illuminates how volitional necessity can serve to protect us against expending our own energies to pursue courses of action that do us harm by turning against our entrenched investments of care. Such investments of care can include commitments to one's own worth that rail against socially-learned dispositions to undervalue one's self, to underestimate one's capacities, or to live under the veil of a limited sense of what is possible for one's own life. Experiences of volitional necessity can also be one's that express one's deepest relational needs and demand that these needs be respected and answered by others, even where one's momentary, volitional choices might violate or ignore these needs and thus result in self-harm. Insofar as it can trump self-undermining or ethically suspect intentions, desires, and value-commitments, volitional necessity may thus be one of the strongest weapons we have against adaptive preferences and investments of care developed in oppressive social climates.

Yet volitional necessity is seldom so strong in most people. Sadly, there are far too many painful moments in many people's lives when either the truth of their own deepest commitments

of care or the best way to be faithful to them registers too late. An emotional shockwave comes in the aftermath of acting on a decision one made carefully and conscientiously, alerting one to the fact that something crucial was missed in arriving at that decision, but also often leaving one feeling crushed and broken by the oversight, and suffering the distinctive harm that comes when autonomy-enhancing investments of care go unfulfilled and the needs that follow from them go unanswered.

These are often moments when one's rational deliberative processes fail to adequately reflect one's investments of care; in the aftermath, we discover that we might have been better off if only we had been more able to heed our emotions over our immediate rational calculus. Still, Frankfurt remains wary of giving too much purchase to our emotions over our reason in alerting us to our integral investments of care. Instead, Frankfurt insists that having one's deliberate intentions overtaken by dimensions of one's felt and entrenched investments is not necessarily the same as losing one's rational self-directedness and self-control. While one's feelings may trump one's judgments in the examples above, this doesn't mean that they defy one's *reason*: one's reason and one's judgment don't perfectly coincide, nor are reason and emotions always at odds. Frankfurt asks rhetorically, drawing on an alarming passage in Hume, if being 'reasonable' means being fundamentally capable of electing to destroy the world in order to avoid a scratch to one's finger in spite of any differing emotional reactions either possibility triggers? (189). To Frankfurt, it is completely irrational and, in his terms, "unthinkable", to even consider these two options on balance against one another, although is it entirely possible to carry out such an assessment though the faculty of judgment. Further, if one was somehow able to determine it preferable to destroy the whole world, it would be up to her emotional resistance to preserve her better reason against carrying the judgment through to action.

Applying this view to the much more realistic examples above, we can say that, for Frankfurt, one's feeling are often what clue one in to the fact that she has been thinking the 'unthinkable'—that which may be imaginatively contemplated, but is utterly un-actionable. Through these feelings, one's better reason, well-attuned to one's investments of care, asserts itself in restricting one's ability to follow through on these un-actionable intentions. Indeed, if reason is a capacity that allows one to determine ends for oneself, this connection to care must be germane to it even though it makes the 'unthinkable' to a certain extent a personal affair (190).

For without any motivating investments of care, as Bernard William's work captures, it is not clear that we would have any basis on which to guide our actions and to direct and shape our lives.

Conclusion: Troubling Investments of Care

With these connections between care and personal integrity in mind, Frankfurt worries that we may lose all grip on our autonomy through excessively troubling not only what we care about but also our investments in caring about what we care about or, in other terms, through excessively troubling both our first and our second-order desires. Going too far in this direction, he cautions, may result in a utter loss of any stable sense of identity and in choices that are more like dice-throws than expressions of one's autonomous (178). If one becomes so rationally disconnected from one's self as to be able to make his will whatsoever he chooses it to be, he asks:

> [H]ow…is he to make any choice at all? What preferences and priorities are to guide him in choosing, when his own preferences and priorities are among the very things he must choose….A person like that is so vacant of identifiable tendencies and constraints that he will be unable to deliberate or to make conscientious decisions. He may possibly remain capable of some hollow semblance of choice" but "it will only be by virtue of a vestigial susceptibility to inchoate volitional spasms…inherently so arbitrary as to be wholly devoid of authentic personal significance. (178)

I agree with Frankfurt that there is something troubling about the prospect of overturning all of one's guiding investments of care. Yet feminism has long taught that some of the most fundamental aspects of one's sense of self can also be among those things that it is most worth troubling, as they can also be the effects of oppressive social systems. A women's investment in meeting certain standards of beauty based on gross sexual objectification of her person, for example, is a form of self-valuation and self-identification that most women would benefit from troubling, even if this might mean the loss of certain privileges based on a exploitive patriarchal system and even if it might impinge for some time on her guiding sense of self. Frankfurt does acknowledge that there are some instances when altering one's guiding investments of care is important—his example is that of altering what one is willing to eat based on a stark scarcity of food (187). Yet Frankfurt's account leaves too much of the social context of our investment of care out of consideration, and some of the merits he accordingly locates in resolute and decisive

forms of willful commitment are simply not adequately indicative of how one might achieve effective autonomy when the social context of autonomy is taken into account.

Nonetheless, as emphasized above, some of the features of his account of volitional necessity makes it especially immune to further entrenching oppressive investments of care, such as his insistence that volitional necessity requires caring about what one cares about, and his insistence that volitional necessity involves a heightened experience of self-unification in contrast to one of self-estrangement. In this respect, volitional necessity may serve as a weapon in fighting oppressive forms of socialization that strip autonomy from certain social groups and as a rich resource in promoting autonomy over and against oppression. Because experiencing volitional necessity can contribute to enhancing and enriching one's autonomy in a socially unjust world, and also because deep harm can come in repeating eluding experiences of volitional necessity, there may be an ethical responsibility to assist others in identifying the force of volitional necessity as it pertains to their own lives. There may also be instances where we have an ethical responsibility to assist others in realizing what volitional necessity has commanded due to the harm that will otherwise befall them. This responsibility, however, remains contingent on the value of the particular pursuits in question, and cannot be determined on the basis of vulnerability to harm for the individual in question alone. Caring about caring requires that we ethically scrutinize both our own investments of care and those of others, especially when these investments are so profound as to give rise to experiences of volitional necessity.

Further, another way to characterize volitional necessity is as a potentially autonomy-enhancing form of relational need, developed through relational investments and ties. If we have moral obligations to promote other's autonomy, as many ethical theorists have argued, then we may also have moral obligations to promote the development of these autonomy-enhancing forms of relational need, and not just to answer to them. Insofar as every need is a vulnerability to harm, this responsibility also entails promoting the development of certain forms of vulnerability—those that both enrich one's life by furthering healthy investments of care in the world and that are tied to the enhancement of one's autonomy. One form that both of these ethical obligations might take is that of fostering the ability to develop and maintain the kind of life-enriching investments of care in the world and in the welfare of others from which volitional necessity, especially in the form of second person needs, can arise. To reinforce a point with

which this essay began, if volitional necessity follows from these investments of care, its presence in someone's life must bespeak the extent to which that person has experienced the very precious freedom to care for particular others and for their larger social world as they so chose, to shape their own life and the lives of those they encounter through their investments of care, and to express and realize their commitments of care in the world. The ethical obligation to promote volitional necessity, and the autonomy-enhancing forms of relational need it often entails, thus entails an obligation to foster these very precious forms of freedom.

Still, one's investments of care together with the needs to which they give rise must also be subject to critical scrutiny if they are to play a part in a healthy form of autonomy. As Catriona Mackenzie writes, and as Annette Baier also argues, one must always take time to reflect on "whether what we care about is worth caring about or worth caring about in the way or to the extent that we do" (2000, 135). Some investments of care, including those that give rise to second person needs, are not of our choosing, such as attachments to our immediate family, and some may be entrenched remainders of elective decisions we made at another time, now no longer in sync with our developed sense of ourselves. To alter these attachments means both some form of loss, and, ultimately, some substantial alteration of the self, but it does not necessarily mean harm. Instead, altering these attachments can be highly beneficial to one's welfare at the same time that they can play a crucial part in creating a more just and ethical world. The relationally autonomous self, as Diana Meyers shows, is not static but dynamic, compelled to realignments, new forms of identification and disassociation, and to changed values, all in part through transformations in one's investments of care. Autonomy lies in actively negotiating this ongoing process, a task made infinitely more challenging—but also all the more important and rewarding—by the fact that these complex aspects of our self often exceed our momentary, volitional control.

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[1] See Crenshaw's "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics" (1998).

[2] Catriona Mackenzie and Harry Frankfurt also stress the importance of care to autonomy. See Mackenzie's "Imagining Oneself Otherwise" (2000). The role of care in Harry Frankfurt's account of autonomy will be discussed below.

[3] It is worth noting here that it may not always be one's *desires* that move one to action. Frankfurt himself acknowledges in a footnote that he is "neglecting related phenomena such as

choices and decisions" in this particular treatment of the will (1998, 12 n. 3). I would add that needs—and, importantly, needs that are not lived simultaneously as desires and are not in accord with one's desires—can also move us to action. An example of Frankfurt's own is illustrative here. Frankfurt addresses the case of a narcotics addict who "…hates his addiction and always struggles desperately, although to no avail, against its thrust. He tries everything that he thinks might enable him to overcome his desires for the drug. But these desires are too powerful for him to withstand, and invariably, in the end, they conquer him" (17). Frankfurt understands this addiction in terms of a desire, as befits his account of the will. Such an addiction may, in fact, be lived as a desire: many addicts do indeed desire the very thing that they wish they could avoid. Yet this kind of addiction may also be lived as a need and not as a desire at all; one may feel compelled to carry through with taking the drug while desiring *not* to do so, and one may well have a physiological dependency that circumvents one's desires.Good

[4] Frankfurt also stresses that the fact that we can have second-order volitions at all stems from that fact that we are the kinds of beings that care about what we do (16). Care plays a central role both in what it means to be a person for Frankfurt, and in autonomy. It also plays a key part in his notion of volitional necessity, to be considered below.

[5] See Thalberg 1978, 211-225.

[6] An in-depth inquiry into the importance of imaginative possibilities for one's own life is offered in Catriona Mackenzie's "Imagining Oneself Otherwise" (2000, 124-150). This essay considers the role that imagination plays in autonomy, as well as how one's ability to "imagination oneself otherwise" is relationally affected.

[7] A fuller definition of caring in Bubeck's work is as follows: "Caring for is the meeting of the needs of one person by another person where face-to-face interaction between carer and cared for is a crucial element of the overall activity and where the need is of such a nature that it cannot possibility be met by the person in need herself" (Bubeck 2002, 163; quoted in Miller, 47).

[8] One troubling aspect of Miller's account of the kind of care that takes another's ends as one's own, however, is her continued insistence that this form of care, and the correlated moral power on which she sees it to rest, is something special and unique to human beings (e.g. 2012, 77-79). She does troubles her own suggestion that these capacities are characteristically human by considering the case of some Japanese Macaques who "seem to have identified the inferred needs (and possibly ends) of their granddaughters, and responded by providing essential care both over an extended period of time and outside normal patterns of familial care," yet she is not willing to go so far as to deem theirs an example of the kind of care that shows the special moral power to treat other's ends as one's own (81). Aside from the fact that Miller has given little consideration to the substantial work available on non-human animals' expressions of care necessary to justify her contention (e.g. in Franz de Waal's *Primates and Philosophers* and elsewhere), I do not understand why it should matter in the slightest whether or not this capacity for care is uniquely human, if not for some nascent interest in reserving all forms of morality, and the special kind of worth that certain philosophical traditional have taught us comes with it, for human beings alone. [I also still worry if it isn't too focused on a notion of autonomy that

may not be available to all human beings. The language of self-determining one's end concerns me, although the structure of her argument is very appealing and very close to what I want to say when I say that caring for another is taking the other's cares one's own. I don't think you have seen this work.]

[9]Bernard Williams has himself written about the claim that serves as Frankfurt's paradigm case of volitional necessity—Luther's assertion "Here I stand: I can do no other". His study of the example is the essay entitled "Moral Incapacity" (1993). The name of the essay alone makes quite clear that, in contradistinction to Frankfurt, Williams' read this claim as attesting to an experience of coming up against something Luther found himself *morally* unable to do. good

[10] More precisely, it is willing oneself to perform any action but one that is unthinkable, even in the event that there are good, rational reasons to do so. Frankfurt describes such experiences of the "unthinkable" as a form of revolt against attempts to reshape a resolute will on the part of one's will itself (182). One might set one's mind on carrying out a certain action but discover in the effort to do so that getting that decision to move one to action is in fact unthinkable.

[11] However, when Huck Finn finds himself sick at the prospect of turning Jim in and unable to carry through with his intentions, he returns "feeling bad and low" as he firmly believes he has "done wrong" (127). For Huck, shame thus *does* accompany acting on volitional necessity, as this act sets him against the normative ethos of his community and against his own intentions. Huck's experience thus illuminates that an experience of volitional necessity can be one in which one believes oneself to have trespassed against others—thus inducing shame—even if it cannot be one in which one trespasses against one's own deepest convictions.

3 Born Supported:
Need and Selfhood in a Shared World

> …[W]e walked together, hand in hand, silent, sunk in our worlds, each in his worlds, the hands forgotten in each other. That's how I've held out till now."
>
> —Samuel Beckett, *Texts for Nothing*[i,1]

> …[O]ne remakes oneself by finding meaning in a life of caring for and being sustained by others. While I used to have to will myself out of bed each day, I now wake gladly to feed my son whose birth, four years after the assault, gives me reason not to have died. He is the embodiment of my life's new narrative and I am more autonomous by virtue of being so intermingled with him.
>
> —Susan Brison, *Aftermath*

Voicing the capacity for certain forms of interpersonal violence, such as her own sexual assault and attempted murder, to utterly decimate a life even if one physically survives them, Susan Brison's *Aftermath* (2002) also courageously confronts the task of living on after violence. This task demands that one remake oneself, something that cannot be done alone but only through forging bonds with other persons, for it is these bonds that compose us. Finding the trust in the world and the strength in oneself necessary to bring a new life into it is one way in which Brison remakes herself after the assault. Having her bonds of love and care for others not only renewed and reinvented but also infinitely expanded through the birth of her son solidifies this brave and beautiful rebirth.

Susan Brison's articulation of her life-renewing relationship of care to her son also captures what I have been calling second person needs. His need to be fed is her need to feed him, and she feels and responds to it gladly insofar as love and care connect their mutual welfare. Thus, Brison's experience shows that second person needs are not only present when we feel some form of privation, but can also be present together with feelings of both joy and autonomy. This experience also shows that second person needs are not purely negative but can be life-enriching. These needs reveal that one often becomes vulnerable in new ways—but often also equally capable of experiencing new forms of affection and life-enrichment—insofar as one cares about what occurs in the world and what happens to those with whom one shares one's world. As Brison demonstrates, a relational self is one that can be broken through acts of

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[i] Endnotes follow on pages 158-159.

violence, yet it is also one that can be remade through positive connections to others that foster relational autonomy and self-love (38). Her need to care for her son is thus an *autonomy-enhancing* form of second person need. Brison argues, moreover, that being able to open oneself to such investments of care in the world and in the welfare of others, rather than undermining or overwriting self-care, often requires caring for and valuing oneself. It was realizing that she "was capable, morally as well as physically, of killing in self-defense", she tells her reader, that gave her the courage to bring a child into the world—a dark thought, perhaps, but one premised on an rejuvenated sense of her own life as valuable enough to fight for (65).

At the same time that second person needs can be a necessary condition for some of our most precious and irreplaceable joys and can give our life some of its deepest dimensions of meaning, second person needs always remain liabilities to harm. Although there is a positive dimension to many of these needs that must be acknowledged, the risks of harm they entail cannot go unnoted. Second person needs expose some of the relational self's most integral self-interests—interests that are tethered to the welfare of others. These relational self-interests are the source of some of our most profound vulnerabilities to harm as beings whose boundaries do not begin or end with our own skin. Second person needs redouble other's vulnerabilities to harm in our own. Brison captures the profundity of the vulnerability that second person needs open in us when she describes her own realization that "…to bring a child into the world… would, far from making me immortal, make me twice as mortal" (65).

Further, although even second person needs such as Brison's need to feed her son are not biologically hard-wired but arise in part because of what we ourselves do to cultivate certain relationships, one cannot in any given moment simply choose not to have them. They are much too entrenched, and much too fundamental a part of ourselves, to be shaken by a momentary, elective act of the will. Thus, these needs meet one of the key criterion for ethical significance. One may in some abstract sense be 'free' to act otherwise than in accordance with one's second person needs, but one can not do so without doing significant harm to one's self and without turning one's capacity for choice against one of the core things that makes such a capacity so valuable: its ability to direct one's life, at times despite great hardship and despite the odds, towards those things and those relations that make the world a place of joyful and rewarding interconnections with others.

As discussed in the previous chapter, however, there may nonetheless be times when one does more harm to oneself by maintaining the investments of care that give rise to second person needs than by breaking them and thereby transforming both one's self and one's relational life. The harm of perpetuating such investments of care is greater than the harm of breaking them when these investments of care are contributing to one's oppression or to the oppression of others, and giving rise to needs that are self-harming or pathogenic. An ethics of second person need must be able to distinguish healthy, autonomy-enhancing investments of care and relations to others from harmful and oppressive ones.

Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1956) is known for its dismal outlook on relations with others. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre treats interpersonal relationships as principally, if not exhaustively, conflictual and threatening rather than reciprocal, caring, or mutually supportive. This is something for which his work has often been rightfully chastised in feminist circles. Yet while it largely fails to capture the positive side of relational life, Sartre's early work excels in revealing some of the phenomenological dimensions of oppression. In this respect, it is an indispensible guide to some of the wounds that the relational fabric of our lives can open and to the violence that we can do to others through objectification. Sartre's early work also offers a phenomenological argument for the relational character of the 'I,' counterpoising itself to the work of Husserl in doing so and aligning itself in some respects with the work of Merleau-Ponty.

Further, many critics have argued that Sartre's unflinching commitment to ontological freedom in *Being and Nothingness* transports what purports to be a concrete, situated and experiential philosophy out of the social, political, and historical depths of our lived experience and into the realm of idealization and abstraction.[2] Relational needs belong to a subject that is embodied, dependent, and subject to the power of its own entrenched limitations. While needs are sometimes thought of as simply bare biological necessities or as primarily self-interested and self-defensive, relational needs arise through our ties to others and include needs for others to be treated in a particular way. Such relational needs cannot be understood through an abstract philosophy, but only through one that is markedly concrete, reaching lived experience in its affective, embodied, and inter-relational depths. Nor can they be understood through a philosophy that is insensitive to our dependencies on others, and to our capacities to shape both ourselves and our world through investments of care. If Sartre's philosophy is to have anything

to offer to a consideration of relational needs, then, it will have to answer to the challenge of abstraction in its account of human freedom, and its insights into the relational nature of selfhood will have to be tested against its tendency to reduce interpersonal relationships to ones of conflict and antagonism.

Sartre's later work argues that "real" freedom has social, political, and material prerequisites (1968, 34). It thus moves away from the ontological vision of freedom offered in *Being and Nothingness* that allowed Sartre to so troublingly place the responsibility for one's action under torture on the shoulders of the victim while ignoring the culpability of the torturers. Yet even *Being and Nothingness* offers a more nuanced and conditional account of freedom than some of its most troubling claims suggest. First, Sartre's account of embodiment in *Being and Nothingness* highlights the material conditions of freedom, making clear that while consciousness might be pure intentional activity, it always belongs an embodied subject whose position in the world is delimited and whose sense of self is affected by being an intentional object of another subject's awareness. Second, Sartre's account of being-for-others in *Being and Nothingness* suggests that freedom is ethically constrained by our responsibilities to other subjects before whom one can feel ashamed.

In considering Sartre's work and the contributions it can make to a study of relational need, I begin with his account of consciousness as fundamentally intentional, for it is insofar as it is intentional that Sartre understands consciousness as a pure, translucent, and indeterminate *nothingness* granting radical freedom to being-for-itself. Yet Sartre also insists that intentional consciousness is a relational activity that ties the subject who carries it out to the objects of that subject's awareness. Further, while Sartre's account of intentionality is inspired by Husserl, Sartre deviates from him in his early work by arguing that there is no "transcendental *I*" or "ego" to guide consciousness' phenomenological engagement with its objects (*The Transcendence of the Ego* 1960, 31-42). For Sartre, the ego that Husserl treats as transcendental is in fact a form of the relational self, something that follows from our being-for-others. Although ontologically distinct from consciousness as pure intentionality, the self that arises out of our being-for-others is another dimension of our self-awareness, and one that informs our experience of our own vulnerability—and thus, we can conjecture, of our needs—on Sartre's account.

Further, insofar as Sartre understands consciousness fundamentally as a *nothingness* and, by this, as a gap in being, it might seem by implication that Sartre's phenomenological ontology

would be one that is out of touch with the concrete specificities and complexities of embodiment as it pertains to lived experience. While need can be a form of conscious experience insofar as it is a way in which we can be aware of ourselves, the self we are often urgently and emphatically aware of in an experience of need is one that exceeds any pure, unencumbered, and self-surpassing consciousness. This excess comes in part from the tangible experience of bodily vulnerability that coincides with many experiences of need. Thus, a philosophy of relational need requires a phenomenology that is attentive to embodiment.

I posit that this is a demand that Sartre's work can at least partially satisfy. *Being and Nothingness* includes a lengthy chapter on the body that describes the intertwining of consciousness and embodiment at the level of our intentional experience, thus emphasizing that intentional consciousness is fundamentally embodied. Sartre's account of embodiment in *Being and Nothingness* buttresses Sartre's radical commitment to freedom with an unwavering commitment to human facticity, that is, to certain settled "facts" about one's existence. However, it always voices an understanding of conscious experience as thrown into the world *beyond itself* even in its embodiment, making the body an unperceived and silent support to intentional consciousness. One's own body only becomes a perceptible object for oneself by way of its first appearing as such for another. While our embodiment is at times lived as reaching beyond itself towards its objects and towards our projects in the world, I will argue against Sartre that it can also be experienced immediately and non-reflectively in all of its material weight, specificity, and flesh without it first having appeared to another in this way. Moreover, I will also argue that one's body is not always perceived by others as an object, as the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness* relentlessly maintains. While Sartre's objectifying account of the body-for-others offers insights into how one's relationship to one's own body can be negatively affected by one's relations with others, helping to explain, for instances, some women's tendencies towards self-objectification in climates of oppression, it misses the positive ways in which our embodied self-experience is informed by relational life.

Sartre's conflictual approach to being-for-others is even more vividly seen in the account of being-for-others that precedes *Being and Nothingness*'s chapter on the body. Here, we can see that by starting with consciousness as a pure thrownness into the world, Sartre begins from an understanding of human experience that does not allow intentional consciousness the depth and complexity that relationships to other people bring to it. Instead, it stratifies subjective, lived

experience; a purely intentional version of being-for-itself is treated as preceding our being-for-others, making the experience of our being-for-others necessarily one of a hostile assault on our freedom. Further, while our relations to others reveal us to ourselves, for Sartre, the self they reveal is largely portrayed as something we make it our project to escape and as something that is experienced as a threat to our freedom rather than as a constitutive part of it. In engaging with this aspect of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, I argue that Sartre's thought remains more like that of Husserl than he himself realizes. Sartre describes the conscious subject as imparting meaning to the world prior to any relation to others, and describes the Other as unraveling this meaning, as if there were a subject with an intentional orientation towards the world there before any encounter with another subject. Still, some of Sartre's own insights into relational selfhood challenge this narrative, as they reveal a self that I am for another always already there together with any consciousness that one has of the world.

I ultimately hope to show that *Being and Nothingness* offers a richer account of lived experience than it may seem if reduced to its most bare ontological commitments, and that it offers some important insights into the oppressive aspects of relational life at the same time that it provides a phenomenological framework out of which a more positive account of relational life can begin to be conceived. Yet I also aim to show that a consideration of relational needs poses some major challenges to Sartre's understanding of freedom and relation life in this early work. Second person relational needs such as Susan Brison's need to feed her son cannot be understand through a philosophy that is insensitive to the co-constitution of self and Other in an originally intersubjective world. They cannot be understood by a philosophy, to invoke Beckett's words above, in which, sunk in our own intentional worlds, we are forgetful of our hands in each others. Likewise, these needs cannot be understood through a philosophy that is insensitive to our capacities to shape both ourselves and our world through our other-oriented investments of care in it, and to do so in ways that limit our freedom at the same time that they give both our freedom and our life at large much of its value. Despite some of its valuable insights into oppression and into the self-constitutive dimensions of relational life, Sartre's early philosophy does not go far enough in committing itself to a material and embodied account of human freedom or to a radically relational account of the human subject. Still, its failures are ones that can be learned from, as they illustrate why an account of the positive dimensions of relational

life must begin with the conscious subject in its dependency on others, and with a subject that is a 'you' before being an 'I'.

Intentionality and the Self

Intentional Consciousness

A key aspect of Sartre's account of "being-for-itself" in *Being and Nothingness* is his theory of consciousness as intentional. The concept of intentionality is a response to both epistemological and ontological problems of how consciousness can reach things in the world beyond itself, and plays a pivotal role in allowing Sartre to take the phenomenological, lived experience of objects of one's conscious awareness as the starting point for his ontology without it thereby being reducible to a representational account of being. The concept of intentionality is crystallized in the principle, drawn from Husserl, that "[a]ll consciousness…is consciousness *of* something" (11). For Sartre, that consciousness is always consciousness *of* a certain object means that the objects of our conscious experience are not *in* our consciousness, either in the form of representations or of impressions, but, rather, are outside of us in the world. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre expresses this point thusly: "to be conscious *of* something is to be confronted with a concrete and full presence which *is not* consciousness" (22). Through his theory of consciousness as intentional, Sartre thus sees the first act of his phenomenological ontology as that of reestablishing consciousness' "true connection with the world" (11).

While *Being and Nothingness* offers the more considered treatment of the concept, Sartre's early essay "Intentionality" (1970) offers a particularly evocative description of it. Here, Sartre employs this Husserlian concept to position his own phenomenology against philosophies of consciousness, both realist and idealist, that treat consciousness as the kind of thing that 'digests' its objects, as if consciousness "trapped things in its web, covered them with a white spit and slowly swallowed them, reducing them to its own substance" (4). The notion of intentionality allows Sartre to insist, for instance, that the pool of water before me as I walk to the train on a rainy night isn't drunk in by my consciousness of it. Rather, my consciousness is nothing other than a bursting forth towards this pool, underneath this moon and these stars, reflecting those lights from the other side of the path. Sartre describes the experience of

perceiving a tree in like terms: "You see this tree, to be sure. But you see it just where it is: at the side of the road, in the midst of the dust, alone and writhing in the heat" (4).

An 'intention' is not a thing *in* consciousness, as we might conventionally conceive it, but the very form of consciousness itself (14). Consciousness *qua* intentionality is an insubstantial activity that throws itself beyond itself in relation to its objects—into the midst of the world, into the wet night where the water pools. As intentional, consciousness is a bursting forth towards something other than itself and beyond it, in relation to which it arises but into which it cannot be absorbed anymore than its object can be absorbed into it. And it is nothing more than just this bursting forth: "There is nothing in it," writes Sartre "but a movement of fleeing itself, a sliding beyond itself"; "[it] is just this being beyond itself, this absolute flight, this refusal to be a substance which makes it a consciousness" (4-5).

Sartre takes up Heidegger's language of being-in-the-world to further express this point: "To be is to fly out into the world, to spring from the nothingness of the world and of consciousness in order suddenly to burst out as consciousness-in-the-world" (5). Insisting on the inescapable absoluteness of consciousness as intentional, Sartre adds: "When consciousness tries to recoup itself, to coincide with itself once and for all, closeted off all warm and cosy, it destroys itself." (5) As intentionality by its very nature, consciousness must always be beyond itself in the world, even if there might exist a desire to turn inward or to otherwise close off this relationship. Indeed, to achieve such a goal would be to cease to be conscious at all. Sartre reiterates this point in *Being and Nothingness*: "…for consciousness there is no being outside of that precise obligation to be a revealing intuition of something—*i.e.*, of a transcendent being": Consciousness cannot but stand in this intentional relationship to an object which it is not and which surpasses it (23). Further, the object consciousness encounters "gives itself as already existing when consciousness reveals it" (24).

In this respect, that consciousness is intentional also means, according to Sartre "…that consciousness is born *supported by* a being which is not itself" (1956: 23). This dependence of consciousness on a being that it is not means that what is other than consciousness has an ontological priority over it, and, importantly, that consciousness does not begin in a void for all its translucency, but only in immediate relation to what is other than and beyond itself. Intentionality does not throw consciousness beyond the world it encounters, for, without an object, there can be no intentional consciousness. Hence, consciousness is a self-transcending

activity only insofar as it is supported by what is beyond it and other than it. Thus, for as much as consciousness is fundamentally a kind of emptiness, it is only ever experienced in immediate and concrete connection with that to which it is intentionally related.

Positional and Non-Positional Consciousness

Sartre's account of intentional consciousness also understands consciousness in ways that challenge a defining connection between consciousness and reflectivity. Reflectivity cannot be a basic structure of consciousness insofar as reflection turns away from the world and in upon one's experience itself. Yet this does not mean that intentional consciousness has no awareness of itself. If intentional consciousness was not aware of itself, Sartre tells us, it couldn't properly be described as consciousness at all (1956, 11). To describe consciousness as intentional, for Sartre, is to say that consciousness is wholly directed outside of itself towards the things at the same time that it is aware of itself in its immediate experience of them. Intentional consciousness encounters itself immanently within its transcendent movement towards an object. As such, intentional consciousness is immediately rather than reflectively self-aware.

Reflection splits consciousness in two by making consciousness an object to itself, thus missing the moment of awareness within intentional consciousness as such and falling into an infinite regress. Yet consciousness does not begin in reflection, but rather in the non-reflective mode of self-awareness immanent to and co-present with conscious *of* an object. This awareness is an immediate, non-cognitive relation of consciousness to itself (12). Sartre calls this immanent mode of awareness "non-positional consciousness" to distinguish it from "positional consciousness," or consciousness that "posits" an object. He asserts that "every positional consciousness of an object"—i.e. every intentional moment of consciousness—"is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself" (13).

Whereas 'positional' consciousness is consciousness *of* an object in the world, non-positional consciousness is consciousness of the transcendence of that object as well as consciousness of the gap between itself and that object: it is consciousness of an object as exceeding one's consciousness of it and of one's consciousness as other than that object. Sartre adds that even calling this spontaneous and immanent consciousness a 'non-positional consciousness of itself' risks dividing consciousness and its object, and thus falling back into reflection. The denominator 'consciousness (of) self,' he suggests, might more accurately capture

the oneness of non-positional consciousness with that of which it is immediately and non-reflectively aware (13).

How is it possible to have an awareness of an object transcending consciousness from within one's own non-positional awareness of it? Sartre explains this by appealing to the particular point of view according to which things always appear to a conscious observer. Intentional consciousness necessarily carries an implicit reference to itself as point of view, or a 'background', before which awareness of an object occurs. A perspectival awareness of an object always also entails an awareness of the possibility of its appearing otherwise—that is, from another point of view. Thus, perspectival awareness allows for an awareness of an object's transcendence in relationship to consciousness itself. It is also the grounds for a dehiscence between consciousness and its object; consciousness is always both consciousness of an object (positional consciousness) and consciousness of itself as not being that object insofar as it is a point of view on that object (non-positional consciousness). Further, its perspectival character means that non-positional consciousness always alludes to itself as *embodied*, and is thus neither abstract nor immaterial despite being, fundamentally, a gap in being and thus a form of 'nothingness' for Sartre.

Moreover, Sartre maintains that non-positional consciousness, unlike reflective self-consciousness, is a mode of awareness that cannot "pass judgment" on itself: It cannot be ashamed of or embarrassed by itself, it cannot love itself or reject itself, it cannot applaud itself or question itself, etc. (12). All of these modes of awareness are ones in which consciousness turns back on itself in reflection and takes itself for its own object. The immediacy and spontaneity of non-positional consciousness permits none of these relationships. Instead, these are modes of self-awareness that are premised on our being-for-others according to Sartre: it is our existence as an object of another subject's awareness that is the condition for our own reflective awareness of ourselves. Katie, I recall that I had the same feeling last time—which is that I don't understand how this relates to what you are doing with needs and second person needs.

Intentionality and the 'I'

In *The Transcendence of the Ego*, written before *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre argues, against Husserl's own contentions in *Ideas*, that consciousness *qua* intentionality has no "I" behind it—

thus, that there is no "transcendental *I*" or ego (37). This is a position that he also maintains in *Being and Nothingness*, and that is supported by his distinction between positional and non-positional consciousness. Intentionality is co-extensive with one's engagement in the world, and neither unified by nor grounded in a pre-existing subject-form that would be its condition of possibility. Although Sartre maintains that non-positional awareness arises together with any intentional consciousness of an object, the "I" as such appears only on reflection to a backwards-turning consciousness. In reflection, the "I" appears as a kind of horizon from which the discrete moments of our experience cannot stand apart, as if they emanated from it rather than it being composed of them. Reflective self-consciousness, according to Sartre, thus throws out a seemingly transcendent ego there prior to all experience insofar as it treats the 'I' that emerges in reflection as if it were there behind intentional consciousness all along (81)In being so posited, moreover, the 'I' comes to wield the power to act as a burden on consciousness, to make it heavy by weighing it down with its past history, and to hold it back from its radical openness in relation to the world. Likewise, consciousness comes to acquire an interiority that seemingly severs it from the world, carving out an interior space into which the objects of consciousness would come to rest, no longer as real but as mere subjective representations. This strips consciousness of its immediate relation to the world, and treats it as if an essence precedes its existence (42).

As Sartre explains, Husserl, like Descartes, arrives at the position that there must be a transcendental 'I'—or 'ego'—unifying and conditioning our lived experienced because we cannot *reflect* on our experience without finding an 'I' alongside it (36-37). For instance, in reflecting on a lived experience of grief, I find myself there along with the grief; in recollecting a particularly beautiful bird I saw in the forest, I find myself in the forest with the bird; or, in reflecting on my act of doubt, I find myself accompanying the doubt (43).

Yet reflection differs fundamentally from intentional consciousness in taking itself for its own object and, as Sartre writes, "…the consciousness which says *I Think* is precisely not the consciousness which thinks" (45). As Sartre account of non-positional consciousness in *Being and Nothingness* aims to show, intentional consciousness can be aware of itself as such without positing itself as an object, and thus entering into the mode of awareness within which the 'I' has been shown to appear. Further, what is true of consciousness as such an object is not necessarily true of consciousness prior to self-reflection. The 'I' is simply not present in non-reflective, non-positional consciousness; the 'I' is 'a modification of consciousness introduced through the act

of reflection. We see this when we direct our attention on consciousness' objects in the world, and let our consciousness itself fall into the background. In this mode of engagement, Sartre argues, we do not find an "I":

> When I run after a streetcar, when I look at the time, when I am absorbed in contemplating a portrait, there is no *I*. There is consciousness *of the streetcar-having-to-be-overtaken*, etc., and non-positional consciousness of consciousness. In fact, I am then plunged into the world of objects; it is they which constitute the unity of my consciousness; it is they which present themselves with values, with attractive and repellant qualities—but *me*, I have disappeared. (48-49)

In positing an 'I' prior to all consciousness which acts as its ordering principle, Husserl, on Sartre's view, failed to remain true to a very profound implication of his own theory of intentionality—that while our immediate intentional engagement in the world is situated, there is no self there before it or over and above it.

To maintain that there is no transcendental subject prior to experience, however, is not to maintain that there is no "I" at all. Rather, Sartre contends in *The Transcendence of the Ego* that the 'I' is an *object* of our consciousness, and not a pre-existing subject-form that organizes and unifies it all. If the self is something 'out there in the world' that is made through my actions rather than something that precedes them, however, it is no less real for not being there behind my actions all along. This self, born in the world rather than before it, is a powerful and significant force influencing one's actions and experience in the world. Yet because there is a distance between my immediate consciousness of the world and my self as constituted in the world, this self never *determines* my actions.

For Sartre, the self, or the 'I,' is made up of distinct moments of intentional consciousness, and thus comes into being through consciousness rather than preceding it. In this sense, the 'I' is no mere hypothesis or abstract principle but a real "concrete totality" given in and through existence itself, rather than there before it (76). Sartre compares it to a melody, made up of a series of separate notes which together compose a unique, patterned whole that is more than the sum of its parts (73). Moreover, it is a concrete totality in which our past is retained without determining our future. This retention of the past is one way in which intentional consciousness achieves the unity, often attributed to a transcendental subject form, which allows us to say of our experiences that they are *mine*. As Phyliss Sutton Morris explains,

a consciousness that holds onto its own past is a consciousness that "unifies itself in time" (1985, 186).

Further, if the 'I' exists outside of consciousness "*in the world*," then we have no privileged access to our own selfhood (32). Quoting Rimbaud, Sartre claims in *The Transcendence of the Ego* that, as outside us in the world, the "'I is *an other*'," and another person can know us through our actions or through the significance we take on through a series of social positionings just as well as we can know ourselves (97). This idea is already there in Sartre's "Intentionality," where Sartre concludes in asserting that "…everything is finally outside, everything, even ourselves. Outside, in the world, among others" (5). In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre take this claim even further by contending that it is only on the basis of my 'being-for-others' that I come to acquire a sense of myself; in being aware of myself as an object for another subject, I become able to turn back upon myself in reflection to become aware of myself as an 'I'. This is a point that Phyllis Sutton Morris' has made. For Sartre, she explains, "the discovery of myself as an object for others is a necessary condition…of developing the distinctively human capacity to reflect on what we are… Sartre's account of how we develop (or self-deceptively try to avoid!) the skill of reflective self-knowledge through the often unwelcome objectifying assistance of others contrasts sharply with the solipsistic Cartesian claim that we have direct, privileged access to our own desires, goals, and motives" (1999, "Sartre on Objectification", 74-75).

Being-for-Itself and Being-in-Itself

As we have seen, Sartre's distinction between positional and non-positional consciousness implicitly invokes consciousness' embodiment by referencing consciousness' point of view. Further, in distinguishing non-positional consciousness from reflective consciousness, Sartre also calls upon a distinction between immediate self-awareness—an awareness without an 'I' or ego behind it—and awareness centered around a self that first emerges through our experience of being an object for another subject. Thus, this distinction already invokes the two aspects of Sartre's early work with which the remainder of this chapter will engage, his account of embodiment and his account of being-for-others.

Before turning to these aspects of the text, however, there is a sharp ontological bifurcation between consciousness and its objects at the heart of *Being and Nothingness* that

must be explained. This distinction comes into play with Sartre's understanding of intentional consciousness as fundamentally transparent and self-surpassing; that is, as *nothingness*. We have seen how, in "Intentionality", Sartre describes things in the world in ways that make them out to be dense and opaque, whereas consciousness, in ontological distinction, is described as completely translucent. In turn, in *Being and Nothingness*, the fact that it is intentional and thus opens up a gap between itself and its object comes to define what Sartre calls 'being-for-itself' in contrast to 'being-in-itself,' thus placing intentionality, and the empty consciousness throw out of itself into the world, at the heart of Sartre's ontological distinction between these two modes of being.

Being-for-itself and being-in-itself are, for Sartre, "two radically separated regions of being" that are "*in theory*…without communication", a division that *Being and Nothingness* sets out to mend (30). Being-for-itself is the mode of being that belongs to beings with intentional consciousness, and thus to human beings as *subjects*. It is that mode of being which opens up a gap in being through its difference from its objects. Being-in-itself, in contrast, is the mode of being of *objects.* As Thomas Martin explains, being-in-itself "is identical with itself", unlike being-for-itself which, according to Sartre's paradoxical formulation, "is what it is not and… is not what it is" (Martin 2002, 12; Sartre 1956, 100). As Martin explains, objects such as chairs, tables, and rocks exist in the mode of being-in-itself, but so too does consciousness if and when it becomes fixed and objectified, such as happens when its past is severed from its open future, when it becomes an object of reflection for itself, or when it appears as an object before another consciousness (2002, 12-13).

The distinction between being-for-itself and being-in-itself raises several potential problems. Not least among these is the issue of what room is allowed to one's distinctive lived history, interests, goals, concerns, and more in the formation of one's intentional orientation in the world. A supposedly perfect translucency allows consciousness to reach its objects in their opacity, yet a perfect translucency seems incompatible with a personal, situated, and historical subject. How can consciousness be colored by any of the unique, concrete, and specific aspects of who we are, such as our concerns, our feelings, our distinctive interpretative horizons, our goals, our investments of care in the world, our relations to others, and more if it is ultimately only a perfect, inescapable nothingness?

A further correlated question, moreover, is that of how this theory of consciousness can account for the fact that consciousness is always and necessarily embodied. As we learn from Sartre's "Intentionality," consciousness cannot assimilate its objects because consciousness has neither stomach nor web: it has no depth, no 'inside,' and no 'essence' but that of its existential transcendence. But if this consciousness, thrown into the world, has no depth, no interiority, and no density, how can it exist materially and concretely at all? How is consciousness related, for example, to the living being walking down a dark path in the rain, feeling her heart race as lighting cuts through the sky and as the distant sound of the train's whistle signals that she needs to hurry?

Sartre's bifurcation between being-for-itself and being-in-itself also leads to problems when the object of consciousness is another consciousness. Whereas "[c]onsciousness is a being whose existence posits its essence," it is supported by a form of being of a precisely opposite nature: Consciousness is always "consciousness of a being whose essence implies its existence" (1956, 24). This conviction is part of what underlies *Being and Nothingness's* problematic tendency to reduce relationships to others to ones of struggle and conflict: our encounters with other people, on Sartre's account, tend to reduce them to objects no different from any others rather than respecting and validating their subjectivity or finding the affirmation and validation for our own projects in the world in our care and concern for them. If this tendency is to be overcome, we need to acknowledge our own existence as fundamentally, to use Sartre's language, both *for-itself* and *for-others*, with our being-for-others giving rise to certain aspects of our being-for-itself that are positive components of meaningful relational autonomy rather than detriments to subjective life.

Embodiment in *Being and Nothingness*

Whereas embodiment largely goes unmentioned in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, it plays a role in Sartre's understanding of the unity and the 'mine-ness' of our lived experience in *Being and Nothingness*. Moreover, it is intricately connected to intentionality in the later text. Certainly, Sartre's understanding of intentionality does not always explicitly draw attention to consciousness' embodiment. Yet it is always implicitly referential to our embodied situation. In its attention to the spatial details of how objects appear to consciousness, for instance, Sartre's

account of intentionality captures the idea that any particular intentional consciousness is a finite, situated opening unto an object whose possibilities of appearing are infinite. Consider, for instance, this passage from the *Being and Nothingness*'s introduction: "A table is not *in* consciousness—not even in the capacity of a representation. A table is *in* space, beside the window, *etc*. The existence of the table in fact is a center of opacity for consciousness; it would require an infinite process to inventory the total contents of a thing" (11). The particular details of an object's spatial situation as it appears to consciousness reveal the finitude of consciousness and its embodiment at the same time as they reveal the infinity of the object, its inexhaustible excess over any given appearance. Echoing the spirit of Descartes' argument for the existence of God, Sartre claims that the infinity of the object revealed through our non-positional consciousness of it insures that our conscious experience is an experience of objects in the world and not merely of representations in our own minds. Further, it is because the lived body is the finite, situated center of orientation in which consciousness is submerged that things appear to us as situated and, thus, as in the 'world' at all.

In *Being and Nothingness*'s chapter on the body, this point becomes even more pronounced. "A rug," writes Sartre, "which would not be hidden by the table, a rug which would not be either under it or above it or to one side of it, would not have any relation of any kind with the table and would no longer belong to the 'world' in which *there is* the table" (405). Our situated experience of things has as its condition a center of orientation in an embodied perceiver who is likewise situated in the world. Moreover, consciousness as intentional cannot even be conceived without this implicit reference to embodiment insofar as intentional consciousness is always extended into the world. "For human reality," writes Sartre, "to be is to-be-there; that is, 'there in that chair,' 'there at that table,' 'there at the top of that mountain, with these dimensions, this orientation, etc.' It is an ontological necessity" (407). Consciousness, body, and world are inescapably entwined in intentionality.

Simone de Beauvoir's *She Came to Stay* (1954) makes similar points. Beauvoir's novel was written before *Being and Nothingness*, and is arguably a significant (and unacknowledged) source of inspiration for several of its major philosophical insights.[3] In the novel's opening chapter, we find protagonist, Françoise, at work in a small, familiar study in an equally familiar theatre building. Despite its almost complete emptiness, Françoise has the feeling that the theatre is unusually alive because of her own alert presence in it. Underlying and haunting this

sentiment, however, is a sense of the limited expanse to which her awareness extends: "the walls of her little office" are "radiant with human warmth and light," but, beyond them, the theatre is "inhuman and pitch-black, with its deserted corridors encircling a great hollow shell" (11).

Françoise ventures out into the dark corridors, moved by the desire to bring the whole of the theatre to life by making herself its witness. While this attempt is marked by sharp notes of solipsism—"When she was not there… all this did not exist for anyone; it did not exist at all"—it also conveys a strong sense of the inevitability of the world exceeding her awareness of it, and of the futility of attempts to bring it exhaustively to light (12). Her desire to light up the theatre carries her further and further from her starting point. Moving from the theatre's corridors into its auditorium, she becomes aware that "[s]he would have had to remain there forever in order to perpetuate this solitude and this expectancy" brought to light within it as it appears before her, an observer who sees its walls "calling for Pierre [the theatre's director and Françoise's partner], for the footlights, and for an enraptured audience" (12). Yet she simultaneously realizes that "she would have had to be elsewhere as well—in the prop-room, in the dressing rooms, in the lobby; she would have had to be everywhere at the same time" (12). These opening scenes of Beauvoir's novel thus convey a sense of one's finite, embodied, personal and historical experience opening unto a sense of the infinite, and of an experiential world that exceeds one's grasp of it at the same time that its unique values emerge in appearing before a finite, embodied observer.

Sartre's account of embodiment in *Being and Nothingness*, likely inspired in part by Beauvoir's novel, attempts to overcome what he sees as a pervasive and embarrassing misunderstanding of both consciousness and embodiment in the history of philosophy. In treating consciousness as fundamentally reflective, philosophy has long turned consciousness inward and drawn it out of its immediate relationship with both the lived body and the world. Cut out of the world and posited as a disembodied surveyor passing over it, consciousness can have no real relation *with* the world: if "I place myself in a state of simple surveying," writes Sartre, "the world disappears in the absolute equivalence of its infinite possible relations" (421). Further, the body has all too often been understood first and foremost in the mode of an object of knowledge rather than as unified with our intentional orientation towards the world.

Against such a purview of both consciousness and embodiment, Sartre emphasizes that the body as it is immediately lived is experienced as a mode of being-for-itself fundamentally

intertwined with intentional consciousness, and is ontologically distinct from the body posited as an object of knowledge. Indeed, prior to reflection—and, thus, prior to our experience of being an object before another subject—there is no "consciousness *of* the body" (434). This entails both that consciousness is inescapably situated and that the lived body is not something that consciousness may take up willfully towards its ends, as if activity and agency fell solely on the side of consciousness and passivity and objectivity fell to that of the body. At the most fundamental level of my experience, my lived body is not an object distinct from myself as subject. Unlike other things in the world, my body does not serve me as an instrument nor do I experience it as something I possess. I do not *use* my body, *have* it, *apprehend* it, or *adapt to* it, explains Sartre, for I *am* it (419; 426-427; 433-434).[4]

Further, for Sartre, the lived body is not only the implicit reference point of one's situated, phenomenal experience but is also a center of orientation around which a purposive world—a world in which objects appear as something that I can do something *with*—is built. The "body as being-for-itself" cannot be something that I use, grasp, or apprehend insofar as it is what makes it possible for things in the world to appear in the form of instruments for one's projects: "It is the instrumental-things," writes Sartre, "which in their original appearance indicate our body to us" just as it is the things in the world that reveal one's consciousness; the lived body "is at once the unknowable and non-utilizable term which the last instrument of the series indicates… and at the same time the orientation of the entire series" (426; 428).

Whereas Sartre's treatment of intentionality in other respects might seem to suggest that it bears a disinterested relationship to its objects, Sartre here reveals that this is not so. Intentionality is a relationship that a subject with not only a unique point of view but also a particular set of interests and values bears to objects. Accordingly, intentionality is always a revelation of a world not only with a practical order but also populated with value through one's own projects in it (424).

This claim in *Being and Nothingness* adds a new premise to Sartre's early thought. In *The Transcendence of the* Ego, Sartre's position is not only that there is no transcendental subject prior to conscious experience that unifies it and makes it possible, but, moreover, that the values and the unity that consciousness experiences in its intentional relationship to its objects comes to it from them. To this effect, Sartre explains: "The object is transcendent to the consciousness which grasps it, and it is in the object that the unity of consciousness is found" (38). The

temporal persistence of the objects of consciousness—that is, the fact that, as Phyllis Sutton Morris explains, "[t]he object does not just disappear (as an image might) when we cease being conscious of it"—but (?) is a condition for the unity of our lived experience (1985, 183).

In contrast, in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre revises this argument for the unity of our experience by contending that the unity and the values that we discover in the objects of our experience are, in the words of Hazel Barnes, "way[s] by which consciousness *chooses* to live its relationship to the world" (Barnes 1956, xvii; emphasis added). While intentionality throws us out into the world, Sartre argues in *Being and Nothingness* that the unity and the values that we find there are expressions of our free activity: through introducing a gap into being, consciousness carves out a horizon of significance for itself within the fullness of being (16). It is, in this sense, *sui generis*, born supported by the plenitude of being, yet carving out an order in that world that was not there before. Intentionality, Sartre now argues, "makes there be a *world*" where there would otherwise be nothing more than "indifferent self-identity" (405; emphasis added).

As the center of orientation for these projects, moreover, there is an immediate interconnection between intentionality and embodiment for Sartre, and it is not only our chosen values and pursuits but also our embodiment that unifies our experience. As Hazel Barnes writes: "[M]y body's instrumentality is so fused with conscious intentions that the two are no more separable than a skier's leg is separable from his skiing" (1999, 31). Of course, however, one's embodiment does not always seamlessly fall into line with one's projects. Here, we might contrast Barnes' example with that of a figure skater in the process of learning a new jump. She may know how to comport her body to allow for the extra degree of rotation in the air that will bring her full-circle before she lands, and know how to reposition her arms, extend her back leg and adjust the bend in the knee of her landing leg to meet the ground smoothly and gracefully. Further, she may set her intention to comport herself in just these ways. But a set intention is different from the immediate, non-reflective intentional relationship one's lived body bears to the world, and one's body does not always fall effortlessly and immediately into alignment with one's deliberate intentions. Instead, it is through the practice of making deliberate intentional adjustments to her immediate comportment that she comes, slowly and with effort, to be able to perform the jump without reflection. Sartre's account of embodiment allows for this back and forth between immediate and reflective relations to our own embodiment through emphasizing

that our embodiment, in parallel with our subjectivity, is experienced in a multiplicity of ontologically distinct ways, with the "body as being-for-itself"—the body that is fused with intentionality—only the first among them (404).

Moreover, just as consciousness is constantly surpassing itself towards the world revealed through it, the lived body as being-for-itself, for Sartre, is constantly surpassing itself towards a future adaptation to the world as instrument-nexus. In this respect, the body is the ultimate reference point of the world as "the correlate of the possibilities which I *am*" that "appears from the moment of my upsurge as the enormous skeletal outline of all my possible actions," both present and to come (425). Simone de Beauvoir's words in *The Second Sex* express a similar idea: "…the body is not a *thing*, it is a situation: it is our grasp on the world and the outline for our projects" (2010, 46).

Yet Sartre also claims that, in its role as my practical adaptation to the world and as the site of convergence of all of my intentional experiences of it, the lived body is itself predominantly unperceived. While there is an immediate, pre-reflective relationship between things in the world and the lived body, and while the world of my experience necessarily refers back to my embodiment, insofar as I *am* my body, it does not stand out before me as an object but is only immediately and implicitly lived: It is "never *given* to me but only indicated by a sort of gap"; it is "inapprehensible"; it is "a sort of hollow"; it is "*passed by in silence*" (425; 430; 434). Thus, the body as being-for-itself is *indicated* by the objects that appear to me, but does not itself appear. To exemplify this general rule, Sartre writes: "What I perceive when I want to lift this glass to my mouth is not my effort but the *heaviness of the glass*—that is, its resistance to entering into an instrumental complex which I have made appear in the world" (427). Likewise, "I do not apprehend *my* hand in the act of writing but only the pen which is writing" (426).

Sartre pushes this point so far that even pain becomes an apprehension of the surrounding world in relationship to our projects, and not an apprehension of our body as such. He takes as his example the experience of pain in one's eyes while reading a book, and argues that pain

> …can itself be *indicated* by objects of the world, i.e. by the book which I read. It is with more difficulty that the words are detached from the undifferentiated ground which they constitute; they may tremble, quiver, their meaning may be derived only with effort, the sentences which I have just read twice, three times may be given as 'not understood,' as 'to be re-read'. (437)

As such, pain is "[s]imply the translucent matter of consciousness, its *being-there*, its attachment to the world" and cannot be apprehended other than as a particular way in which the world appears to me. Pain "can be existed…only if it is surpassed" (438).

In these ways, Sartre slides from the claim that I *am* my body to the claim that my body cannot be perceptible to me. What seems to be motivating Sartre here is a concern to maintain the transcendence he has established for consciousness while nonetheless unifying it with the lived body. For, as he writes, "it is necessary that I lose myself in the world in order for the world to exist and for me to be able to transcend it" (419). The body can be nothing more than a "hollow" at the heart of the world, and the hand that grasps the pen or that lifts the glass to my mouth must vanish, if intentional consciousness is to be at once unified with the lived body and remain fundamentally *nothingness*, a mode of being ever surpassing self-identity as it is thrown beyond itself into the world. Sartre thus attempts to maintain the translucency he claims for intentional consciousness—its utter absence of weight, inertia, and depth—by making the fundamental, intentional mode of our embodiment equally weightless and translucent.

The importance of understanding intentionality and embodiment as intimately and immediately one cannot be understated, nor can that of resisting treating both embodiment and consciousness as primarily self-enclosed, self-sustaining, and self-constituting rather than constituted in relationship to the world. Yet Sartre's insistence on our body as silent and imperceptible insofar it is immediately and non-reflectively lived is quite troubling. Rather than allowing that our embodiment can be at once a way of accessing the world that is itself felt and perceived, Sartre places the weight and density of our embodiment in a reflective relationship we come to have to it conditioned by its first appearing as an object to another. He thus treats it as disconnected from and set against our immediate intentional relationship to the world.

Yet some of the moments when our embodiment is especially strongly felt are the moments in which we most poignantly experience our goal-oriented and value-laden relationship to our world. The experience of relational need, introduced above, can be just such an experience. Often, we discover our own needs, for instance, through a clenching in the stomach, a quickening of the heart, or an inability to sleep. These states of unrest in our body alert us to the fact that we *must* do something, even if that thing goes against what our previous deliberations had set our course towards. To defy our embodied knowledge, often expressed in the form of *need*, is also often to defy our strongest and most deep-seated investments of value in

the world and to throw our very sense of self into turmoil. In this regard, a deep attunement to our own embodiment, not as a silent background to our projects but as something that can viscerally express our strongest values, can be pivotal to honouring our own investments of meaning in the world. Our body often has an ingrained attunement to our investments of care in the world and to our most fundamental concerns. This attunement shows itself when aspects of our embodiment become empathetically pronounced, such as happens when one feels sick to one's stomach when one is on the precipice of trespassing against one's better judgment. In this respect, the pronounced experiences we can have of our own embodiment are often a fundamental part of experiencing our value-laden and goal-driven orientation towards the world rather than a mere weight or drag upon our projects and our freedom.

Further, as Simone de Beauvoir's work in *The Second Sex* has shown, experiencing one's own embodiment as wholly 'surpassed' is a form of 'bad faith,' and occurs through the illusion that all weight, determinacy, and specificity belongs to others rather than to us. Bad faith is the attitude of self-deceit wherein one flees from either one's freedom or from one's facticity by living as if one's existence is exhaustively aligned with either one of these traits alone, often also expelling the rejected side of one's existence onto others.[5] One could not live one's own embodiment as "passed by in silence" if not for maintaining the illusion that another is the repository of all of embodiment's material reality and concrete specificity (4-5). Male denial of embodiment, Beauvoir explains, has had disastrous social and political consequences for women historically.

Beauvoir also emphasizes that "[b]ecause the body is the instrument of our hold on the world, the world appears different to us depending on how it is grasped" and that "biological data… are an essential element of woman's situation," even though the body is nonetheless not "a fixed destiny for her" (44). Sartre's concern to not reduce us to the 'what' of our embodiment does not excuse the extreme denial of the lived body as something that we feel and perceive in its specificity and concreteness, not only as an opening onto our projects but right here where I am, immediately and non-reflectively. Beauvoir's work shows, moreover, that we can both acknowledge the specificities of embodiment and recognize that our selfhood is not reducible to them.

Moreover, while Sartre's insistence that *I am* my body strongly suggests that there is no gap at all between consciousness and embodiment, this is not all Sartre says concerning the

relation between the two. He writes: "I *am* my body to the extent that I *am*; I *am not* my body to the extent that I am not what I am" (430). For someone other than Sartre, this addition might not signify much, but, for Sartre, this assertion is one that breaks consciousness and embodiment apart. Consciousness as nothingness transcends its embodiment by reaching out beyond the present moment into an open future, thus entailing, in Beauvoir's words, that one's body is not one's destiny. Despite insisting on their intertwining, then, Sartre here unravels the intimate connection between consciousness and the "body as being for itself" that he has elsewhere forged: He reserves a remainder of 'nothingness' for consciousness, hereby granting a freedom and transcendence to consciousness that surpasses that of the body, and tethering the body to the in-itself. Thus, embodiment comes to be viewed as "that which [consciousness] surmounts and nihilates by making itself consciousness" (434).

Sartre additionally describes the body as that which catches the for-itself again and again in the in-itself, as if, despite the unity he has described between intentional consciousness and the lived body as being-for-itself, the body ultimately tethers consciousness down and consciousness, in turn, perpetually seeks to escape it (430).

Sartre does at one point recant his claim that the lived body is fundamentally imperceptible to us in acknowledging an inevitable awareness of our own embodiment accompanying all consciousness, but only to describe this awareness as *nausea*:

> This perpetual apprehension on the part of my for-itself of an *insipid* taste which I can not place, which accompanies me even in my efforts to get away from it, and which is *my* taste—this is what we have described elsewhere under the name of Nausea. A dull and inescapable nausea perpetually reveals my body to my consciousness… it is on the foundation of this nausea that all concrete and empirical nauseas (nausea caused by spoiled meat, fresh blood, excrement, *etc*.) are produced and make us vomit. (445)

All told, it thus seems that embodiment is never truly accepted by Sartre as a concrete part of one's intentional relationship to our world, but only peacefully tolerated as long as it does not impinge on an abstract intentional relationship to the world. When it so impinges on our freedom, it makes us vomit.

Indeed, Beauvoir too sings the praises of the lived body as "our grasp on the world and the outline for our project" while fearing the concrete qualities of the body (2010, 46). As Constance L. Mui explains, for Beauvoir, "[t]he female body, with its menstrual cycle and

childbearing function, is not something that could be 'ignored' or 'passed over in silence' so that the conscious female subject could engage single-mindedly in projects of transcendence" (1999, 112). Instead, for Beauvoir, "woman *is* her body as man *is* his (?), but her body is something other than her": an "alienated opaque thing" that mires her in repetition and immanence through its childbearing functions (2010, 29).

Yet surely our body can be at the foreground of our lived experience in the world without it thereby becoming a prison, as it is, for example, in many experiences of athletic accomplishment, erotic love, and even of childbirth under conditions of care and support. Our body can be present to us without being objectified and alienated from ourselves as subjects. And it is only when it is so present that we are able to experience the myriad joys—both subtle and profound—of our embodied life, as well as the distinctive kinds of values that can come into one's experience only through it.

The Body for Myself as Known by Another

As his description of the experience of nausea makes clear, the body as being-for-itself, aligned with our intentionality as its silent support, is but one mode in which we can experience our embodiment for Sartre as well as Beauvoir. This is the modality of experience in which our embodiment is aligned with our subjectivity rather than alienated from it. Yet our embodiment can also be experienced, for Sartre, in the mode of what he calls the body for myself as known by others. In this modality, my body *does* appear to me. Moreover, it appears to me as an object. This way of experiencing our own embodiment, Sartre argues, is possible only by way of a detour through another person's observation of us, in which my body exists as an object for another conscious perceiver (445; 460).

We can see how the strong ontological separation Sartre draws between these modes of embodied experience and his onus on the body as fundamentally unperceived combines with a certain way of understanding our relations to others in Sartre's treatment of the phenomenon of double sensation. 'Double sensation' occurs in seeing oneself seen or in touching oneself touched; that is, when one experiences one's body as both sensing things in the world beyond itself and also itself being sensed. Unlike other phenomenologists such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, Sartre insists that double sensation is not a fundamental or primary way of experiencing one's own lived body. Sartre's example of the break between these two modes of embodied

experience in a phenomenon where they might seem to overlap begins with another person's perception of my body. For Sartre, this is a necessary detour insofar as one's own body cannot be primordially experienced as knowable, seeable, or touchable, but only becomes apprehensible to us in such ways through someone other than ourselves first perceiving it as an object. Sartre writes:

> When a doctor takes my wounded leg and looks at it while I, half raised up on my bed, watch him do it, there is no essential difference between the visual perception which I have of the doctor's body and that which I have of my own leg. Better yet… there is no essential difference between the doctor's perception of *my* leg and my own present perception of it. Of course, when I touch my leg with my finger, I realize that my leg is touched. But this phenomenon of double sensation is not essential: cold, a shot of morphine, can make it disappear. This shows that we are dealing with two essentially different orders of reality. To touch and to be touched, to feel that one is touching and to feel that one is touched—these are two species of phenomena which it is useless to try to reunite by the term 'double sensation.' In fact they are radically distinct, and they exist on two incommunicable levels. (402-403)

For Sartre, there are moments when I encounter my own body as an object of knowledge at a distance from my own non-reflective intentional awareness of it, yet they are always premised on my body first appearing as an object before another subject—in this example, a doctor. Further, in these moments, what I encounter is a *thing*, and not that which I *am*. Experienced in this way, the leg in the hospital bed becomes something that I might use "to pull on my trousers or to change a dressing on my wound," and thus an object "I surpass…toward my own possibilities" rather than "the… *possibility which I am* of walking, running," and more (403).

For Sartre, true double sensation is not possible, for I simply cannot "apprehend it [my body] in the process of revealing an aspect of the world to me" (401). To apprehend my body in this way requires that there is a distance between myself and it, yet there can be no distance between myself and my body as that by which things are immediately and non-reflectively revealed to me (401). While Sartre emphasizes that "[t]he structure of the world demands that we can not see without *being visible*" and "implies that… we can not *act* without being *acted* on," insofar as I *am* my body, I cannot apprehend it in the mode of an object (317; 426). I only apprehend my own body as an object when it has been alienated from me through another's gaze.

That the body touched and the body touching belong to two radically incommensurable ontological dimensions of embodiment does not necessarily mean, however, that they cannot overlap in our experience. In an attempt to defend Sartre from criticisms of this sharp ontological dimensions in his philosophy of embodiment, Hazel Barnes emphasizes that consciousness "always fluctuates between the reflective and nonreflective modes, often in lightning flashes within a single minute," and that "I do not cease to have an implicit awareness of my body when I do not focus on it directly" (1999, 31). Rapid fluctuation between different modes of embodiment as well as implicit awareness of one mode of embodiment while immersed in the other is entirely possible for Sartre at the same time that these modes of bodily experience remain ontologically distinct, with the immediate, non-reflective experience of one's own body the ground for all others.

Yet the key point in Sartre's ontological account of the body unaddressed in Barnes' defense of it is that I can only come to this experience of my own body in exteriority through the detour of another first perceiving it this way. The phenomenon of double sensation challenges just this ontological divide between embodiment as first and foremost a situated, concrete-but-imperceptible experience of intentionality and the body as object. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty's account of double sensation in *Phenomenology of Perception* is not entirely different from Sartre's on the points Barnes' reading emphasizes. Like Sartre, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that my body, as it is lived, is indissolubly "*with* me," and that, for this reason, "I cannot array it before my eyes" (2003, 104). The lived body *as* lived "is a thing which I do not observe" (104). This leads Merleau-Ponty to say, not unlike Sartre, that "if I can, with my left hand, feel my right hand as it touches an object, the right hand as an object is not the right hand as it touches: the first is a system of bones, muscles, and flesh brought down at a point of space, the second shoots through space like a rocket to reveal the external objects in its place. Insofar as it sees or touches the world, my body can therefore be neither seen nor touched" (105).

Yet although Merleau-Ponty, like Sartre, thus insists that one's body cannot simultaneously be lived as both touched and touching, Merleau-Ponty differs radically from Sartre in insisting that "[m]y body…is *recognized* by its power to give me 'double sensations': when I touch my right hand with my left, my right hand, as an object, has the strange property of being able to feel too," and "[w]hen I press my two hands together… both hands can alternate the rôles of 'touching' and being 'touched'" (106). He adds: "[I]n passing from one rôle to the

other, I can identify the hand touched as the same one which will in a moment be touching. In other words, in this bundle of bones and muscles which my right hand presents to my left, I can anticipate for an instant the integument or incarnation of that other right hand, alive and mobile, which I thrust towards things in order to explore them" (107). For Merleau-Ponty, double sensation is an original ontological experience of our own embodiment rather than one conditioned by another subject first perceiving it as an object. Moreover, we experience our body in double sensation as, reversibly, both intentional and objective, with each of these ontological dimensions nascent in the experience of the other. Further, as Dan Zahavi has emphasized, in both its intentionality and its objectivity, we experience our body as *ours* (2001, 161). Both the anticipation of the touching in the touched and the reversibility between the two reveals each of these modalities of embodiment to be a different manifestation of one and the same basic reality: *My* lived body. Indeed, the wounded leg in Sartre's example is still *my* leg despite my alienated relationship to it, and not any mere object in the world.

For Merleau-Ponty, then, the experience of double sensation reveals our embodiment as a primordial mode of being-in-the-world in which subjectivity and objectivity as well as activity and passivity are deeply intertwined and ambiguous, although not indistinguishable. The stark divisions Sartre draws between the body as being-for-itself and the body for-myself as known by another thus amount to nothing more than analytic impositions written over the immediate, lived experience of embodiment on Merleau-Ponty's account. Where subjectivity and objectivity, activity and passivity, and being-for-oneself and being-for-another bifurcate in Sartre's phenomenology, they enfold in Merleau-Ponty's.

Moreover, as Dan Zahavi also emphasizes, for Merleau-Ponty, double sensation is not only a nascent anticipation of intentionality in exteriority and of alterity in ipseity, but, likewise, a nascent anticipation of how I can be experienced for another and another experienced for me which dissolves any clean and unambiguous bifurcation of self and other into exclusive subject and object positions (163). Further, experiencing my own embodiment as at once both interiority and exteriority in that makes intersubjective experience possible for Merleau-Ponty. Zahavi quotes a particularly powerful passage from *The Phenomenology of Perception* to this effect: "What spectacle," Merleau-Ponty asks, "can ever validly induce me to posit outside myself that mode of existence the whole significance of which demands that it be grasped from within? Unless I learn within myself to recognize the junction of the *for itself* and the *in itself*, none of

those mechanisms called other bodies will be able to come to life: unless I have an exterior others have no interior" (quoted in Zahavi, 162-163).

Instead of recognizing the junction of being-for-itself and being-in-itself as something originally experienced within one's own embodied life, however, Sartre contrasts a *doctor's* view of one's body with one's own lived experience of it to arrive at it, thus rendering the experience of the being-in-itself of one's own body both objectifying and alienating. This choice of perceivers matters insofar as the highly clinical and objectifying relationship to another's body that a surgeon might have is not the only relationship another person can have to one's body. A mother holding her child, for instance, certainly does not view the child as "a certain living object composed of a nervous system, a brain, glands, digestive, respiratory, and circulatory organs…" (401). Indeed, any good surgeon does not exhaustively view the body under the knife as an object, but also, simultaneously, if not predominantly, as the *person* under her care. Others do not necessarily see us as objects but can recognize our subjectivity at the same time that we recognize theirs, something that, according to Merleau-Ponty, depends on our own nascent recognition that each of us is at once both a subject and an object in the world.

Being-for-Others in *Being and Nothingness*

Intentionality and Being-for-Others

Sartre's account of being-for-others in *Being and Nothingness* insists on the radical alterity of the Other to me and of myself to the Other. It also treats the self as a relationally-constituted object of reflection. Against Husserl and Heidegger, and not unlike Levinas, moreover, Sartre emphasizes that both of these aspects of our being-for-others and of others' being-for-me are experienced in our concrete, face-to-face encounters in the world. Our being-for-others and their being-for-me is not merely an ontological background to our lived experience but is something by which we are "touched to the quick" in our lived experience in the world (302).

Sartre's treatment of our concrete relations with others focuses on conflictual encounters, and the relational self that emerges from these concrete encounters with others is treated almost exhaustively as negative and harmful rather than positive and enriching. Nonetheless, certain aspects of his understanding of interpersonal existence can be taken up towards an understanding of concrete, interpersonal relations as giving rise to aspects of our selfhood, which, I will argue, can be 'world-making' in Sartre's distinctive sense. A 'world', for Sartre, is not any set of

surrounding objects with which a consciousness, intentional subject interacts, as if consciousness and being-in-itself were originally bifurcated only to subsequently unite. Rather, for Sartre, being-for-itself "makes there be a world" through its difference from being-in-itself, which it surpasses towards a set of possibilities for existence of its own devising (405). Our being-for-others can be said to be enfolded into being-for-itself in its world-making function when the possibilities that being-for-itself surpasses being-in-itself towards are shaped by our concrete relations to others. Yet if there is no being-for-itself prior to one's being-for-others, as I will argue here, then the world we make through our investments of value, and the projects which we strive to realize on the basis of these investments, is always already shaped by our being-for-others.

Just as he divides the body as it is felt, seen, and perceived from the body as it reaches out of itself towards the world as the silent support of intentionality, Sartre divides selfhood as constituted through being-for-others from one's immediate awareness as a conscious subject intentionally tethered to the world. In this division, Sartre's account of being-for-others misses the extent to which our relations to others can in fact constitute our world-making investments and values. Much as is the case with Sartre's understanding of embodiment, both the problem of making our relations to others out to be primarily conflictual and the problem of treating these relations as if they do not originally inform our investments of value and our future-oriented projects follow from Sartre's strict ontological divide between being-for-itself and being-in-itself, between transcendence and immanence, and between subject and object. Additionally, they follow from treating being-for-itself, and not being-for-others, as our primordial, ontological relationship to our world. This starting point allows Sartre to assume that one first creates a world of meanings, values, and investments and the Other pulls it away, thus causing him to miss the extent to which our future-oriented, world-making investments of meaning and value emerge out of our relations to concrete others, and to see conflict where he might otherwise see mutual investments of care.

Still, there are multiple forms of self-experience that are constituted in and through our relations to others for Sartre. Importantly, moreover, among these is an immanently lived, pre-reflective mode of self-awareness and not just alienated modes of self-awareness encountered through reflection (301-302). What makes this mode of awareness distinct from other non-reflective forms of self-awareness, however, is that it is a form of awareness of oneself as an

object appearing before another subject. It might seem that a non-reflective mode of experience would not be accompanied by self-awareness at all, yet, as we have seen, that non-reflective experience is also consciousness experience is a commitment at the very heart of Sartre's phenomenological ontology. Indeed, what makes our non-reflective and immediate intentional consciousness of being-in-itself apt to be described as 'being-for-itself,' as Dan Zahavi has noted, is just that it is a mode of self-awareness, albeit one that is immanent to and co-present with our intentional awareness of objects (2010, 215). Reflection does not exhaust self-awareness. Instead, reflection is a particular kind of self-awareness that happens when we turn away from our immediate consciousness *of* being and turn back in upon our own awareness, such that it becomes its own object. As such, reflection is a mode of self-awareness that misses the most fundamental level of our lived experience as conscious subjects. What is more, insofar as reflection turns inward, it leaps over our immediate self-experience in a world shared with others.

To understand certain forms of our non-reflective self-experience as relationally-constituted is, first of all, to understand being-for-others as constitutive of certain aspects of our immediate experience of being-for-ourselves-in-the-world. More specifically, what being-for-others opens within our immediate lived experience, for Sartre, is "an intimate relation of ourselves to ourselves" that would not be possible without it (301). As attention to Sartre's account of embodied intentionality has shown, originally, and most fundamentally, Sartre takes it that my acts in no way refer back to *me* as a doer behind them; I *am* these acts throwing me beyond myself into the world, and nothing more. It is in this way that Sartre understands my being-for-itself as an absolute nothingness and a perpetual escape from any fixed and solidified existence (349). Yet the fact that we exist in a shared world radically changes this insofar as my existence for another subject fundamentally alters my relationship to my self. It is through my immediate experience of myself as for another that I become able, through reflection, to appear to myself as an object and thus as a 'self'. Indeed, for Sartre, this is what the term 'self' most often signifies: not my real, engaged and intentional existence in the world but a kind of frozen denaturing of it by which I make myself appear less free than I actually am. This artificial congealing of an existence that always and everywhere retains the ability to be something other than it is an act of bad faith for Sartre.

Much like the self that emerges in reflection, my immediate, non-reflection experience of myself as for another is, for Sartre, largely conceived as a form of objectification of an original, radical freedom. Yet, unlike my reflective sense of myself, the self that emerges for me in my being-for-others is an object that is not *my* object: This self appears for me only insofar as I am "*an object for the Other*" (349). Thus, this dimension of my selfhood is there in the world beyond me in relation to another. Insofar as the other sees me as an object in their world, I become immediately and non-reflective an object to myself that I nonetheless cannot *know*.

The sense of existing immediately and non-reflectively beyond myself that emerges in Sartre's account of being-for-others has much to recommend it. It allows, for instance, that one can be much more than one knows oneself to be, and that one's sense of one's own person can exceed whatever limitations self-doubt, self-criticism, and failures of self-confidence might reduce it to. It allows that my own impact on the world and influence on others can surprise me in its richness and value, and not only in its capacity, for instance, to do harm or to have consequences I did not intend. It also entails that any attempt I make to concretely and exhaustively *know* my self rather than immanently live and feel it will inevitably reduce and degrade my own selfhood by stripping it of its openness both in relation to other subjects and in relation to my own future.

Yet the intimate, non-reflection relationship we have to ourselves by virtue of appearing before others is largely, if not exhaustively, negative on Sartre's own account, for he reduces the selfhood that it reveals to us to that of our existence as an object in another's world. What being an 'object' for another implies is that one is interpreted, judged, and assessed by another in ways that undermine rather than enhance one's freedom. Sartre's principle example of such an experience of being-for-others is the experience of shame: "I have just made an awkward or vulgar gesture. This gesture clings to me; I neither judge it nor blame it. I simply live it… But suddenly I raise my head. Somebody was there and has seen me. Suddenly I realize the vulgarity of my gesture, and I am ashamed" (302). It is not that I have turned back upon myself in reflection, but, rather, that the appearance of the other in the world has made me an object of judgment to myself within it "for it is as an object that I appear to the Other" (302).

Sartre insists that shame is possible only insofar as "I recognize that I *am* as the Other sees me" (302). For Sartre, a mere subjective impression, disconnected from my real existence, could not produce an affect as strong and as powerful as that of shame. For shame to follow, the

other's perception of me must reveal me to myself as I am—an object as well as a subject. Sartre's point, however, is not that the Other's perception reveals the 'truth' of my existence whereas my own self-experience does not, but, rather, that there is a dimension of my own existence that *is* my being-for-others, and this dimension of my existence is just as 'true' and just as real as my being-for-myself. My existence for myself as an object for another is not a distortion of my selfhood. Rather, it is the unfolding of another dimension of my existence; one which *I am* but which I do not know. It is *me* and yet it is completely incommensurable with any sense of myself I might have in a world all my own. This dimension of my selfhood is not even there *potentially* in a world without others in it.

Sartre's account of shame opens towards some ethical insights. Here, my being-for-others reveals myself to me as someone who bears an inescapable and insurmountable ethical responsibility in the world. Sartre claims, for instance, that, outside of this relationship to another, one's acts are immanently justified—their doing and their justification are one, for there is nothing of value beyond them against which they might be assessed (347-348). Being-for-others, however, means that there is a limit to my freedom and that I carry a burden of responsibility with me as an inescapable *part of me*, irreducible to something that I can definitely and exhaustively know (351). Moreover, Sartre emphasizes that we are responsible for the selves that we are in relation to others, and that to deny that I *am* this self that depends on my relation to others would be a gesture of bad faith (303; 350).

This ethical component of our being-for-others is something we might bear in mind in reading these lines from Sartre: "I need the Other in order to fully realize all the structures of my being. The For-itself refers to the For-Others" (303). However, at the forefront of Sartre's intentions in writing them seems to be something quite different. We are brought back here to Sartre's insistence that the self that my being-for-others reveals to me is the self as an *object*, where to be an object to oneself is to be alienated from one's own subjectivity and the freedom it entails. My objective existence in the world is indeed something there originally for Sartre but not something that is originally there *for me*. It is only through my being-for-others that I come to experience this dimension of my own selfhood. The idea that it is by way of appearing as an object to another that I come to exist as an object for myself, as we have seen, is also what underlies Sartre's claim that I come to experience my own body as a perceptible object only by way of another person's first treating it as one. Here as well as in this treatment of embodiment,

the claim that the other always perceives me as an object is all too quickly assumed, as is the conviction that our experiences of subjectivity and objectivity must bifurcate.

Even when one causes another to feel shame, to stay with Sartre's own example, one does not necessarily objectify them so much as make them aware of what they have done and give them pause to tarry with it and to acknowledge its implications in a world that never was and never will be all one's own. In this way, to experience shame before another subject not only allows for the subjective capacity of the person so judged to give to value their own experience and to shape it accordingly; it can even positively *demand* this of them insofar as shame is an affect that alerts one to one's unique responsibilities to other's in a shared world.

There are many other lived experiences of being-for-others, moreover, where it is hard to believe that objectification enters in at all. When I first looked upon the face of my newly born sister, for instance, I did not see an 'object' in the world. What I saw was a new beginning, a both completely mundane and utterly miraculous event, and a new source of meaning and significance in my own life that would make it forever different and richer than it was before. When she chastises me now for living too far away and not coming to visit enough, I do not feel myself reduced to an object in her eyes insofar as my actions and my choices have a different meaning and significance for her than for me which I would never assume to fully know. Rather, I feel awoken to and reminded of the fact that my actions matter more and have deeper meaning that they ever would in a world without her in it.

In *She Came to Stay*, Simone de Beauvoir draws attentive to the fact that many relationships with others are not objectifying and are instead ones in which subjectivity is mutually recognized. For instance, as the protagonist Françoise expresses of her relationship to her partner, Pierre, "The moment you acknowledge my conscience, you know that I acknowledge one in you, too. That makes all the difference" (301). Sartre, however, does not show the same sensitivity to non-objectifying relations with others in *Being and Nothingness*. Still, at the same time that Sartre emphasizes that one's fundamental experience of oneself as existing before another is an experience of oneself as an object, Sartre also emphasizes that the Other who causes me to feel shame by causing me to experience a new dimension of my own selfhood which is both mine and beyond me *cannot* be an object. In order to cause such an experience in me, the Other must be a unique source of values and projects in the world—that is, a *subject*. The other turns the objects she encounters into a world of values, ends, and goals

through her freedom. Where Sartre speaks of this freedom as 'nothingness,' it could be described in more positive terms as one's capacity to shape one's own life through investments of concern and of care within it, and through the pleasures and the values to which these investments give rise or of which they speak.

One reaction to experiencing oneself as an object in the world for another subject is to deny the other's subjectivity in order to reaffirm one's own by treating them as a mere 'thing' in the world. This reaction is a form of bad faith, and denies what our existence in a shared world reveals and impresses upon us as a concrete, immanently lived truth: That another person fills the world with values and goals just as I do and that the values and goals that she brings to it are radically incommensurable—although perhaps not *incompatible*—with my own insofar as we are different subjects. As the center of a unique horizon of values and projects in the world, the Other is not something I can *know* as I might know an object in the world, such as a table or a chair; the Other is another *subject*.

In *Being and* Nothingness, Sartre treats the gesture of bad faith that attempts to reduce the Other to a knowable object like any other in our world, and thus to deny the 'facticty' of our own existence, as extremely pervasive. He explains that one can "use bad faith so as to hide…from myself" the truth that *I am* the object-like being-in-the-world that an external view of my own body reveals me to be, at the same time that "bad faith is also a confession since it is an effort to flee the being which I am" (350-351). Where it is absent, moreover, rather than an authentic relationship to another subject that acknowledges both one's freedom and one's facticity together with that of the Other, what Sartre finds in its place is an attitude—such as, for example, masochism—that denies one's freedom by making the other person the exclusive sight of subjectivity and fixating on one's own existence as an object for them (492-493).

Yet although Sartre does not hold out much hope for authentic relationships to the ambiguity of "the human adventure" in *Being and Nothingness*, to use Beauvoir's words from *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, he does describe how an authentic relationship to another must begin (*The Ethics of Ambiguity*, 1948, 11). To authentically encounter the other is to encounter her as outside my own understanding and even beyond my possible experience; it is to encounter her as "an absence", as "strange to me", as "inaccessible to me", as "out of my reach," "beyond experience," and "outside the world" (304; 305; 307; 310; 317). In encountering the other authentically, what I can and must do is not *know* her but experience just her very un-

knowability—that is, her radical difference from me and her existence beyond my own interpretative horizon. It is her *difference* from me, her un-knowability and her inability to be reduced to a mere object in my world that is felt and lived in any authentic relationship to another subject. Indeed, it is only this experience that can reveal my own being-for-others to me. For Sartre, this original experience of oneself as for another amounts to a direct experience of the Other as a subject "in connection with me" (341). Moreover, he explains that this non-objectifying relation at the origin of my sense of myself as a being-for-others is "the fundamental relation" one bears to another subject (341).

Sartre's onus on the radical alterity of the other subject, as Dan Zahavi notes, is something Sartre shares with Levinas (2001, 159). Further, Zahavi points out that, for all that recommends it, Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity as made possible by an immanent and immediate form of self-knowledge revealed through embodiment does not allow the Other this same degree of radical alterity. Yet the same commitment to an ontological divide between being-in-itself and being-for-itself that led Sartre to deny a concrete material weight and density to our body as it is immediately lived also causes his philosophy to miss much of the promise this attention to radical alterity holds forth. That we encounter the Other fundamentally as a subject and not a mere object in the world means, for Sartre, that I must then be an object to the other. "It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other," he writes, "that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject" (344-345).

For this reason, my being-for-others, he asserts, is an experience of "my freedom escap[ing] me in order to become a *given* object" in an alien world (350). Being-for-others pins down the for-itself and closes off its escape routes, rendering it concrete and determinate rather than translucent and perfectly free (351-352). Sartre thus calls my being-for-others "[m]y original fall" (352) Further, in my being-for-others, on his account, the world drains away from me and flows towards them: "…it appears that the world has a kind of drain hole in the middle of its being and that it is perpetually flowing off through this hole" (345). Things no longer arrange themselves around me but pull away from me because the Other, as a radically novel site of consciousness, acts as a "drain hole" at the heart of my world. Sartre speaks of the experience of the world's center of value moving away from me and towards another as an experience of the alienation of the world coupled with an alienation from my own freedom (353). He thus

conceives of my being-for-others as my being in the midst of a world that has been "stolen" from me.

While Sartre denigrates responding to our own objectification and our own loss of the world with attempts to reduce the Other to a mere object and to thus reclaim the world for ourselves, how could such a struggle not ensue if what I am to another person can be nothing more than an object insofar as I recognize her subjectivity? How could it not ensue if what it means for there to be other subjects in the world is that *my* world is lost to me? I've already raised some objections to the point that another person, as a subject, can only perceive me as an object. What remains to be addressed is this additional and correlated claim that the existence of the Other is a threat to *my* world.

A Relational World

While his account of intentional consciousness might make it seem as if we are impartial or disinterested observers of being-for-itself, as we have seen, this is far from Sartre's position in *Being and Nothingness*. Rather, for Sartre, being-in-itself reveals itself as having certain values according to my projects and investments within it and my perspective upon it. It does not appear in the same way or with the same meaning to any other observer as it does to me. Looking up ahead toward the mountain path I am going to travel before reaching a small summer cabin and enjoying a weekend retreat, for example, I may see an opportunity for exercise, fresh air, and for hearing bird songs, while my partner might see a risk of re-injuring his ankle or of surprising a bear with its cubs. Certain features of being-in-itself and certain possibilities it holds open either fall back or come forth according to our projects in relationship to it, appearing as either constraints or as supports accordingly. It is these values, and the correlated interests and investments they reveal, that make being-in-itself, in Sartre's terms, a *world* and not just a collection of objects (405).

It might seem that the values that populate our lived world cannot come from a subject that is pure 'translucence' or 'nothingness,' however, but only from one with a depth of investments in it and with a sense of self-identity built in and through these investments—that is, from the kind of subject we become through our interpersonal existence. Is there a way in which being-for-itself can be a source of value in the world and can unify the objects of our experience

through its commitments to certain life-orienting projects, and yet still be a complete and utter *nothingness*? Doesn't being a source of value and unity mean that consciousness is always already, in Hazel Barnes' words, the "very formidable something" that it becomes through one's being for others? (1956: xxiv) It would seem that our values, goals, and projects in the world belong to us not merely as consciousness subjects, but as temporally-constituted beings who experience ourselves in relation to others before knowing ourselves in isolation.

Yet Sartre's phenomenological ontology provides a very different answer to this question. The temporally-constituted, relational self can take up any of a multitude of distinct relationships to being precisely because intentional consciousness is, essentially, *nothing*—a "total emptiness"—standing in contrast to and in distinction from the plenum of being which it tends towards. It is consciousness that, in introducing an ontological gap into the ontic fullness of being-in-itself, breaks being-in-itself open, and thereby allows for the introduction of value into it—a rupture in the fullness of being is the condition for all of our free projects and pursuits according to Sartre (1956, 25). Thus, being-for-itself introduces value into lived experience and shapes a world out of the plenum of Being-in-itself through the distinction of itself from it, and *nothing more*.

I find this answer to the problem just as unsatisfactory as Sartre's denial of our ability to have an original relationship to our own body in its concreteness and its ipseity. While I question Sartre's starting assumption that value is wholly given to the world by intentional consciousness—Merleau-Ponty's treatment of embodiment, for instance, shows vividly how "the world ceaselessly assails and beleaguers subjectivity as waves wash round a wreck on the shore;" how the color blue, for instance, "prompts me to look in a certain way" and the color red "accentuate[s] my reactions without my being aware of it (2004: 240-241; 244), Sartre's way of foisting the capacity of meaning and significance unto intentional consciousness suffers from other problems. One of the most poignant of these is that it would require us to be grossly indifferent to the specific values, goals, and projects that we introduce into the world. As the upshot of the differentiation of itself from being-in-itself, there is no way to explain or justify any particular value or project mattering to me more than any other. Without the specific values and projects that make a world out of mere things mattering to us—not in *general* but in their *particularity,* it begins to feel as if the freedom at the heart of Sartre's existentialism is an empty form of freedom. Pure freedom, without any values, goals, or projects drawn from our

intersubjective life to guide it, is a painfully apathetic and abstract proposition. What it affords in terms of an open horizon of possibilities is quickly undermined by the blanket equality of them all.

The early Sartre insists that what gives any choice we make in the world—and any correlated values or projects that motivate this choice— its worth is just the fact that I have freely chosen it. This is how, in "Existentialism is a Humanism," Sartre articulates his response to a student seeking advice from him on which of two possible courses of action is the right course to choose—staying with his mother and protecting her well-being, tied to his own, or joining his country's fighting forces and acting in the interest of the larger social and political welfare (2007, 30-31; 49-50). Sartre understands the value that we bring to our intentional experience of objects to be a function of our ability to do something with them as free subjects whose consciousness can never be fully collapsed with its objects. Our freedom itself thus seems to be the one and only ethical value, if we can even call it this, that Sartre acknowledges in *Being and Nothingness*, with any potential choice having just as much intrinsic merit as any other until I dignify it by actually choosing to pursue it.[6]

Contrast this with how value comes to fill Susan Brison's world as she awakens needing to feed her son described in this chapter's opening epitaph: She awakens joyfully, needing to feed him because he needs to be fed. Indeed, his need to be fed *is* her need to feed him. Moreover, this need gives to her world color and meaning insofar as she is intimately bonded with him. Her bond to him and her corresponding need to care for him doesn't negate or trump own freedom, nor her own projects and values; Rather, her bond to him and the care that moves her in relationship to this bond is the source of her values and an enrichment of her freedom insofar as caring for him gives her life new meaning.

One might thus call it a *world-making* bond, if it is indeed a subject's values and goals that make a world out of a collection of things. Beckett's words—"…[W]e walked together, hand in hand, silent, sunk in our worlds, each in his worlds, the hands forgotten in each other. That's how I've held out till now" –can be used to poetically illustrate that our relations with an other precede and inform our values: Even when we feel like we are in a world apart—as if our own world was miraculously constituted through a set of values and projects that are ours even before we come to know ourselves through our relations to others, our hands lie in one another's. In as much as our investments of care inform our values and our projects, and thus shape our

world, this world is not something we create ourselves, but something always and immediately informed by interpersonal life. Thus, our relational ties to others are not necessarily infringements on our capacity to shape the world through our values and projects in it. Instead, they are often constitutive sources for our world-shaping projects and values.

Certainly, however, the ties that connect us to others and our corresponding investments of care and value in the world are not etched in stone. Moreover, for as much as the relational aspects of our selfhood can be self-affirming and life-enriching, how we are treated by others in a shared world can also be deeply damaging and harmful. Brison's *Aftermath*, from which my opening words to this chapter are drawn, is, after all, a philosophical exploration of the aftermath of sexual violence. Brison illuminates the extent to which the relational dimensions of human selfhood entail that can one be deeply injured and even broken through one's relations to others. Our relational selfhood reaches so deep, she explains, that it is not at all uncommon for survivors of violence to feel as if they have died and that the world that was can never be regained. Brison's analysis of trauma also invokes the subject-object distinction employed by Sartre to describe the self-decimating power of violence: "Victims of human-inflicted trauma," she writes, "are reduced to mere objects by their tormentors: their subjectivity is rendered useless and viewed as worthless" (48).

Yet Brison adds that insofar as human-inflicted trauma "destroys the belief that one can *be oneself* in relation to others", it likewise destroys one's ability to "*be oneself* even to oneself, since the self exists fundamentally in relation to others" (Brison 40, quoting Judith Herman 1992, 53; Brison 40). Brison thus captures a crucial distinction left out of *Being and Nothingness*: it is in violent and oppressive relationships with other persons that our subjectivity is denied, and it is these relationships that induce trauma. However, genuinely intersubjective relationships, where one's own subjectivity is recognized at the same time that I recognize the subjectivity of another, are also possible. At the same time that the relational nature of selfhood shows itself in the experiences of trauma induced through objectification, Brison demonstrates that it shows itself just as powerfully in the self's rebuilding through establishing new intersubjective relationships in the aftermath. The relational self, she writes, is "...vulnerable enough to be undone by violence and yet resilient enough to be reconstructed with the help of empathic others," and through new investments of care in the world such as her bond with her son (38).

Moreover, while both relational selfhood in general and relational needs in particular entail vulnerabilities to harm at the hands of others, they also show that a relational vulnerability—much like relational life at large—can be much more than a liability. Sartre himself notes that our being-for-others is an immediate and non-reflective mode of awareness of our own vulnerability insofar as we are embodied beings who can be treated as mere objects by other intentional subjects (347; 358). In our most intimate and deep-reaching relations to others and in our investments of care in the world, we are also vulnerable to harm, but this vulnerability is not merely the upshot of the fact "that I have a body which can be hurt," in Sartre's words, or of the fact that relational selfhood entails that the self can be undone through how others treat us. Instead, vulnerability follows from being invested in one's world at all. I am vulnerable in the world insofar as what happens in it *matters* to me, and what matters to me is often an expression of my positive, value-informing relations to others. As a compliment of our investments of care in the world, informed by life-enhancing relationships, vulnerability is not purely negative but is part of having a meaningful relationships to others, to one's own life, and to one's world.

While Sartre's treatment of being-for-others in *Being and Nothingness* is not to be overlooked for its attention to the relational nature of selfhood, and thus is helpful in working towards a relational understanding of need, it ultimately cannot get there. Despite his insistence that the self emerges through our relations to others, and is not there before them, *Being and Nothingness* posits a form of individuated subjective experience that precedes our relations with others and gives our experience its unity through introducing its own values, goals, and projects into what would otherwise be an indifferent substratum of self-identical being. He begins with being-for-itself *qua* pure intentional consciousness and attempts to understand being-for-others through it rather than starting from our self-experience in a shared world. Even though pure intentional consciousness is but one dimension of the complex lived subject for Sartre, holding fast to an empty, intentional consciousness as the point of origin for all subjective experience prevents him from seeing how relations with others can positively inform our subjective values, projects, and goals, rather than throwing us into conflict with others. Indeed, as Sartre himself acknowledges for a brief moment in *Being and Nothingness* before he quickly forgets it: "…I have always known that the Other existed,… I have always had a total though implicit *comprehension* of his existence… which comprises a surer and deeper understanding of the

nature of the Other and the relation of his being to my being than all the theories that have been built around it" (338).

Yet while Sartre acknowledges this point in principle, he does not generally apply it to his thinking about being-for-others in *Being and Nothingness*. Indeed, in his later *Notebooks for an Ethics*, he recognizes as much himself. He describes *Being and Nothingness* as an "ontology before conversation" (1992, 6). The conversation to which he here refers is the radical transformation that occurs in one's relationship to both one's freedom *and* one's facticity when one begins to life authentically and ceases to engage in bad faith. The antagonistic relationships to others described in *Being and Nothingness* are fueled by bad faith and the denial of the ambiguity of human existence it entails. Accordingly, the violence these relationships entail can only be overcome through replacing bad faith with an authentic acceptance of the ambiguity of being-for-itself as a form of being "which is what it is not and which is not what it is"—a being that is at once free *and* delimited (100).

That *Being and Nothingness* is primarily focused on bad faith and only ever so fleetingly explores the possibility of authentic, ethical relationships to both oneself and others is something that Simone de Beauvoir notes in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. She writes: "[I]n *Being and Nothingness* Sartre has insisted above all else on the abortive aspects of the human adventure. It is only in the last pages that he opens up the perspective for an ethics" (1948, 11). The text's focus on "abortive" relationships to human existence at the expense of genuinely ethical ones follows from its being, in Beauvoir's words, "in large part a description of the serious man and his universe". She explains: "The serious man gets rid of his freedom by claiming to subordinate it to values that would be unconditioned. He imagines that the assertion of these values likewise permanently confers value upon himself. Shielded with 'rights', he fulfills himself as a *being* who is escaping from the stress of existence" (1948, 46). Thus, the serious man is one who lives in bad faith.

Sartre begins to describe what an authentic relationship to another subject might look like in *Being and Nothingness* when he speaks of the desire for a "double reciprocal incarnation" which erotic love for another person can arouse (508). This is the desire to *encounter* the freedom of another, to feel it and touch it in the flesh, and to do so through becoming freedom in the flesh oneself. It is not in the pursuit of the ideal of possessing "the Other's transcendence as pure transcendence and at the same time as *body*" alone that one wills oneself to become flesh,

but in the correlated pursuit of one's own body as more profoundly one's own that it ever was before insofar as one's freedom sinks down into it in this kind of love (512). In the caress that expresses the desire for double reciprocal incarnation, one chooses to sink into one's own body as it exists for another at the same time that one longs for the other to choose the same mode of existence. In sinking down into the flesh, one becomes heavy with one's own embodiment and suspends projects that reach beyond the present moment of being together with the person whom we are touching and whom touches us. Thus, one willingly suspends one's own projects in the world to be here and now for the Other, so that she can also willingly be here and now for me.

Yet, in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre maintains that double reciprocal incarnation is never more than a utopian fantasy. Countering Hegel's dialectical commitment to the resolution of all antagonisms, Sartre maintains that our relations with others always bifurcate such that one person takes up the role of the subject while the other is objectified, and intersubjective conflict is thus never overcome. It is only in his later *Notebook for an Ethics* that he acknowledges that authentic love is a genuine possibility in human life. Authentic love, he here explains, "unveil[s] the Other's being-in-the-world" while also "set[ting] this Being within the absolute". It "*rejoice[s]* in it without appropriating it", "give[s] it safety in terms of my freedom, and…surpass[es] it only in the direction of the Other's ends" (508). What Sartre, in this later, unfinished text, calls authentic love is thus something that is often exemplified by second person needs insofar as these needs testify to one's own autonomous investments in another person's good.

Second need persons are also often expressions of love that reaches beyond empathy, something that, as Hazel Barnes explains, is a requisite for any form of authentic love according to Sartre's *Notebooks*. Authentic love, she writes, must reach "beyond empathic comprehension of the other's attempt to pursue his or her project" by "shelter[ing] the other's freedom, making the other's goal a part of my own project but in such a way as to offer it support without substituting my own in the place of the other's projected goal and chosen means" (1999, 34). Thus, the authentic love imagined in Sartre's *Notebooks for an Ethics* shares in the same moral virtue as good care, and both can be expressed through second person needs of one's own for another's welfare to be protected; needs which 'shelter' another's good in one's own.

Yet it is not only the text's focus on bad faith but also its starting point in intentional consciousness that forecloses authentic relations with others in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre

approaches our being-for-others as if our projects, goals, and values precede it, and thus as if our relations to others appear only secondly as "the limit of my freedom" and as a threat to it (351). But, as Annette Baier has argued, we are all always and already "second persons", that is, persons who were "long enough dependent upon other persons to acquire the essential arts of personhood," who "come after and before other persons," and who are "essentially successors, heirs to other person who formed and cared for [us]" (1981, 180-184). Brison's awakening to feed her son is not something she could elect not to do without hurting herself because her own welfare and her own sense of value in the world are so deeply connected to his. Moreover, her bondedness to him is an expression of her autonomy, revealing that autonomy can be enriched, and not only impaired, through one's relations to others.

Sartre's account of being-for-others also falls short of understandings experiences such as Brison's because of its inability to recognize that certain limitations on our freedom are in fact a constitutive part of that very freedom. Sharing a world with others and having investments of care that commit us to act in ways that exceed our momentary volitional control means that there are certain things that one cannot do, cannot will, and cannot endure, but these 'cannots'—rather than a mere limitation of our freedom—are a pivotal aspect of what makes our freedom meaningful. Further, it is not an inauthentic self-deception—that is, a form of bad faith—that allows one to experience one's investments of care in the world as both constitutively informing one's autonomy *and* limiting what one can do. Rather, it is a powerful attunement to one's selfhood, and one's freedom as a component of it, as grounded in a shared world. Living out one's own welfare as intimately tethered to that of others—such as Brison does in feeling a second person need to care for her son awakened by his own need for that care—is a profound part of *making* a world, and with it, a horizon of meaning, values, and investments, through (and not against or in spite of) our relations to others. Through our care, as Annette Baier explains, "we are choosing the sort of world we want to continue in being" (1982, 278). When we care about others so profoundly as to make their ensuring welfare a fundamental project vital to our own good, we choose a world in which we flourish and fall together rather than alone.

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[1] The resonance between Susan Brison's writing in *Aftermath* (2002) and some aspects of Samuel Beckett's writing in *Texts for Nothing* is one that Susan Brison captures herself, as she uses a passage from *Texts for Nothing* to introduce a chapter of her work (Brison 101).

[2] Hazel Barnes notes the pervasiveness of one version of such a critique in her introduction to the English translation of Sartre's later *Search for a Method* (1968, vii).

[3] See Edward Fullbrook's "*She Came to Stay* and *Being and Nothingness*" (1999) for an excellent treatment of some points of overlap between these two texts, coupled with an argument that Beauvoir's novel was the inspiration for Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. Fullbrook's essay treats the point of comparison I raise here, and I am indebted to it in my own treatment of the connection between these texts.

[4] This point is one that, as Constance L. Mui explains, Sartre takes up from the work of Gabriel Marcel. For Marcel, she writes:

> [I]t [the body] is mine insofar as I do not reify it into the body-object that it is for others. Not being an object for me, Marcel insists that I do not 'have' a body as a possession, but I *am* my body. According to him, 'to say that I *am* my body is to negate, to deny, to erase that gap which…I would be postulating as soon as I asserted that my body was merely my instrument.' In other words, there is no gap or distance between me and my body-qua-mine, the kind that is established in any subject-to-object relationship. This lack of distance sets the condition of my embodiment: my body, as mine, is never thrown over to the side of objects in the field of my direct consciousness; I am thoroughly and fundamentally connected with my body as subject. (Mui1999, 109; quoting Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, 1951, 100)

[5] What Sartre calls 'facticity' is every aspect of human life that, in the words of Thomas Martin, is "object-like"—"such things as one's history, gender, race, nationality, class, bodily particulars, and so on." In short, Martin explains, "facticity is the facts about one" (2002, 18).

[6] See Harry Frankfurt's "The Importance of What We Care About" (1998) for a consideration of how this well-known example of an ethical dilemma in Sartre's work might be understood in relation to deep-seated investments
of care that exceed momentary, volitional freedom (84-85). Frankfurt notes that "[t]he young man in Sartre's
example is sometimes understood to have resolved his dilemma…by making a radically free choice" (84). Yet
Frankfurt argues that making a choice doesn't determine one's course of action, for one's entrenched investments of
care in the world may make it impossible to carry out the course of action one elects.

4 Beyond Hunger:
Sartre, Levinas, and Second person Needs

> Plato has fixed the negative notion of need: it would be a *less*, a lack that satisfaction would make good. The essence of need would be visible in the need to scratch oneself in scabies, in sickness. Must we remain at a philosophy of need that apprehends in it poverty?
>
> —Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*

> There is dignity not only in rationality but in human need itself and in the varied forms of striving that emerge from human need.
>
> —Martha Nussbaum, "Human Dignity and Political Entitlements"

Although Sartre's work does not offer a relational account of need, an intriguingly dynamic and humanistic conception of need can nonetheless be found within its pages. If there is a second *magnum opus* in Sartre's corpus to accompany *Being and Nothingness*, it is his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (2004). The *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, as well as the essay "Search for a Method" (1968) published together with it in France, marks a new stage in Sartre's philosophical thinking.[i,1] In these works, existentialism is no longer seen as an overarching philosophy that, standing alone, is able to elucidate all the truths of human experience. Instead, in "Search for a Method," Sartre describes existentialism as no more than an ideology "parasitical" on Marxism (8). Marxism, in turn, is understood as the one and only living philosophy of the day—the one and only system of thought "giving expression to the general movement of the society" and able to "[act] upon the future" (3,5).

Has Sartre then abandoned existentialism for Marxism in his later work? And, if he has, does he find a place within Marxism for the inexhaustible freedom of intentional consciousness at the heart of his phenomenological ontology in *Being and Nothingness*? In "Search for a Method," Sartre makes clear that he is not abandoning the philosophical commitments articulated in *Being and Nothingness* in this later work so much as looking to integrate them into the material, historical, and dialectical worldview that Marxism presents. For Sartre, Marxism is not an abstract determinism indifferent to the role of the individual actor in shaping his or her

[i] Endnotes can be found on pages 205-208.

world. Sartre makes much of Engel's claim that "it is men themselves who make their history, but within a given environment which conditions them and on the basis of real, prior conditions…" (31). Human beings are conditioned beings bound to a concrete, material situation and to a place and time in history. Yet human beings and their material conditions are not identical. Rather, as Hazel Barnes explains, "the most fundamental characteristic of man as consciousness is his ability to go beyond his situation. He is never identical with it, but rather exists as a relation to it. Thus he determines how he will live it and what its meaning is to be; he is not determined by it" (Barnes 1963, xviii-xix).

Contemporary Marxism, however, has lost touch, in Sartre's view, with the elements of Marx and Engel's work that emphasize the power of the individual to "*make* their history" within a scene of material constraint (87; emphasis added). It is here that existentialism has a role to play within Marxism. The integration of existentialism into Marxism, Sartre contends, will allow Marxism to speak all the more richly to freedom as well as for existentialism to become more dialectical, historical, and concrete. In these later texts, freedom remains definitive of human subjectivity, but is now analyzed as it occurs within the context of the historical movement of dialectical materialism. In this coupling, dialectical materialism becomes a movement towards a concrete social and political life befitting a subject defined by freedom, but for whom the expressions of this freedom are conditioned and bound by material constraints—chief among them, need and scarcity.

As T. Storm Heter explains, however, while freedom continues to take center stage in Sartre's philosophy, Sartre's emphasis on the material conditions of freedom in the *Critique* marks a major shift away from the largely ontological account of freedom offered in *Being and Nothingness* (Heter 2006). Whereas in *Being and Nothingness,* freedom was seen an inalienable, ontological feature of consciousness insofar as it is necessarily other than its intentional object and insofar as it inevitably escapes the present towards the future, by the time that Sartre writes his *Critique*, he has re-envisioned freedom as a concrete, material reality dependent on the satisfactions of one's needs. The Sartre of the *Critique* fully acknowledges that freedom is not merely an inner state of consciousness, and thus impervious to all constraint; it is also a concrete reality that can be granted or taken away by social and material conditions.

Heter argues that Sartre's path towards this transformation in thought begins with his attention to oppression in *Anti-Semite and Jew*. In this text, Sartre recognizes that an ontological

account of freedom alone obscures the reality of oppression, which arises from those intersubjective relationships in which one party denies the freedom of the other. Whereas *Being and Nothingness* suggests that this antagonistic violence is present in every interpersonal relationship, Sartre now recognizes it as a distinctive feature of oppressive social relationships. He also acknowledges for the first time that freedom is something that can be taken away through concrete, material restrictions on one's actions. While consciousness remains a nothingness that transcends both its object and its present conditions, human freedom concerns more than this inner freedom of thought. As Heter notes, Sartre's burgeoning material view of freedom, in contrast to his earlier ontological view, recognizes that "an attacker who gives me the choice of 'what sauce to be eaten in' can hardly be said to meaningfully promote my freedom" (referencing *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 331). Freedom is compromised, and oppression occurs, when one is forced to choose from a set of inhumane options, and not only when the capacity for choice is radically eliminated.[2]

One of the starkest expressions of Sartre's strengthened commitment to materialism within the pages of his *Critique* is that Sartre here situates need in a dialectical dance with freedom, and draws on Marx and Engel's view of need as the generative force behind all practical action to do so (Sartre 2004, 85; Marx 1994, 107-108). Need is both that in which all concrete and material freedom has its origin, and that which can undermine one's concrete freedom insofar as one can never be fully free when wanting for the basic necessities of life. This chapter addresses the account of need offered in the pages of Sartre's *Critique* and its relevance for Sartre's philosophy as a philosophy of freedom. It also explores the role need plays in Sartre's account of ethics as a form of Manichean 'counter-violence.' As we will see, Sartre argues in the *Critique* that 'ethics' begins in a defense against the threat of death posed to the human by the 'anti-human', the other rendered demonic on the basis of shared need in a *milieu* of scarcity (133). The *Critique* thus makes need in the context of scarcity the catalyst for a form of violence towards others that dares to take ethics as its name.

In response to Sartre's Manichean view of the ethics sparked to life by shared need in conditions of scarcity, the chapter also puts Sartre's *Critique* into conversation with Emmanuel Levinas' ethical metaphysics. Beginning with his early essay "On Escape" and continuing through to his last major work, *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas' work gives pride of place to need in ethical life. Where Sartre sees one's own needs, in the context of scarcity, as giving rise to a

Manichean ethics bent on the destruction of the Other, Levinas sees one's infinite responsibility to the Other in need as that which allows one to flout one's own needs, giving over to the other the bread from one's very mouth, and thus raising oneself "beyond being" (1969, 113). What Sartre presents as an occasion for violence and oppression, Levinas' work thus illustrates to be an occasion for an escape from one's own *conatus essendi*—life's drive for self-preservation at any cost. Ethics begins in an escape from being through giving over one's own means of sustenance to the Other, and not in violence justified in the name of self-defense.

Levinas' metaphysical ethics improves on Sartre's account of the role of need in ethical life insofar as it demonstrates that sharing needs under conditions of scarcity is the catalyst for an ethics of a radically different kind than that which Sartre's *Critique* imagines, an ethics that begins not in counter-violence but in privileging the needs of the Other over those of the self. Levinas' early essay "On Escape" also illustrates that need is not always the child of poverty, as Plato's *Symposium* images it. Rather, need is also that in which we seek refuge from ourselves in welcoming the Other and in seeking out being's beyond. Still, I argue that Levinas' commitment to radical alterity binds both his metaphysics and his ethics to a narrative of selfhood that is at times isolationist before it is relational. One consequence of this divide is that it leaves no room for the ethical value of second person needs. After opening up these points of conversation between the work of Sartre and Levinas on ethics and need, this chapter thus returns to the issue of second person needs and their relationship to ethical life—the heart of this project as a whole. A fundamental expression of ethical life, I argue, is to be found neither in the counter-violence that defends the self against the Other in need nor in the saintliness that infinitely privileges another's need over one's own, but in the very existence of some of our deepest needs: second person needs. Second person needs illuminate one of the most profound ethical exigencies of relational life: ethics does not always require heeding Other's need over one's own, for one's own most vital and dire needs can be needs for another's needs to be met.

Before turning to Sartre's *Critique* or the work of Levinas, however, this chapter first tarries with some of the often-overlooked ways in which *Being and Nothingness* also speaks to need. In her introduction to Sartre's "Search for a Method," Hazel Barnes suggests that perhaps the most fundamental way in which consciousness experiences itself in *Being and Nothingness* is as desire (1968: xv). Barnes contrasts the role of desire in *Being and Nothingness* with the role of need in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, she asserts,

"the most fundamental existential structure of man is *need*" and not desire (1963, xv). Barnes takes this substitution of need for desire to mark a radical shift in Sartre's philosophy: "*Desire*," she writes, "suggests the possibility of unrestricted movement, of a freedom which may change the objects of its desire at will. *Need* brings in something from the outside, a necessity which man cannot ultimately escape, no matter how much he may vary his reaction to it" (1963, xv). This inescapable necessity, we will see, is one that arises in the context of scarcity—an insufficiency of material goods to satisfy need's demands. Whereas Hume considered moderate scarcity one of the circumstances of justice, Sartre emphasizes that scarcity makes every man a potential threat to every other man's life. Human communities navigate this threat in various ways, such as through the designation of some men as subhuman practiced in colonialism, one method of society's "selection of its dead," but they never escape it according to Sartre (2004, 129).

Yet while the exigency of need seems to place it in sharp contrast with desire's freedom, Sartre argues in the *Critique* that it is through the exigency of need that the path towards concrete, material freedom is opened. Need gives rise to labor, and labor is the first and most fundamental path by which human beings alter their environment in accordance with their own ends. Need thus has a pivotal role to play in the development of material freedom, if constrained in relationship to its ends in a way that desire is not. A return to the pages of *Being and Nothingness* also troubles the sharp contrast between need and desire that Barnes attempts to draw for, as Juliette Simont notes in "Sartrean Ethics," the concrete experiences that Sartre takes up to exemplify desire in *Being and Nothingness* are none other than those of hunger and thirst, and what are hunger and thirst if not some of the most readily acknowledged forms of human need? (Simont 1992, 200). Given these exemplars, Sartre's account of the lived experience of desire in *Being and Nothingness* can be read as an early engagement with the phenomenon of need in relation to freedom, albeit not yet thought in concrete terms. Doing so serves to better illuminate some of the transformations in thinking that occur between *Being and Nothingness* and the *Critique*. It also serves to enrich an understanding of Sartre's view of need within the *Critique*, as these pages from *Being and Nothingness* inform it.

Need and Desire in Being and Nothingness

Against philosophers such as Descartes who would name thought and reflection as the fundamental activities of consciousness, Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness's* chapter entitled "Immediate Structures of the For-Itself"—the first of three chapters devoted to the subject of being-for-itself—names desire. For Sartre, our most immediate link to being is not that of a thought to an object but rather of a lack to that which it is not. Desire is the existential experience of this lack, a lack that opens up a gap between being-for-itself and its object (139). To desire is to undergo a lived experience of one's fundamental incompleteness as a conscious subject at the same time as it is to be thrown out of that incompleteness into the pursuit of that which would render it full. Desire is not a settled state, but a mode of perpetual transcendence and self-surpassing that always entails an "appeal to" something other than itself (136). As such, desire always and only exists in relation to what it is not. In language reminiscent of Hegel, Sartre thus describes desire as "the foundation of itself as a lack of being" (136). Desire's defining charge towards what lies beyond the desiring subject's present grasp constitutes it as an inwardly-lived mode of lack. Desire "determines its being by means of a being which it is not," making its own identity one that is composed of the distance between itself and its object (135).

For Sartre, being-for-itself is always marked by both the incompleteness and the transcendence characteristic of desire, for every experience of self-awareness entails an insurmountable divide between that awareness and its object. Even when the object of one's awareness is none other than oneself, the self as an object stands apart from the self that is aware of itself, rendering being-for-itself and being-in-itself both experientially and ontologically distinct. No matter how much one tries to achieve an exhaustive cohesion between oneself as a conscious subject and oneself as an object of one's own awareness, this divide persists as the very condition of consciousness. This aspect of awareness means that the conscious subject is always also a desiring subject, experiencing—at the very least—a divide between itself as an object of awareness and itself as aware, and seeking unity between its two wrought parts.

Desire is the fraught experience of one's own being, in its very being, reaching beyond itself (or surpassing itself) and returning to itself in its failure to ever fully reach its destination. Desire is thus born in transcendence (surpassing), and lived in immanence (lacking). Every desire, for Sartre, is a concrete and emphatic realization of the ontological structure of being-for-itself—not being what it is (surpassing); being what it is not (lacking). Desire does not and cannot come into the world 'objectively,' through the eyes of another, but is there at the heart of

one's own lived experience of subjectivity. In its relationship to both lack and to transcendence, desire can be said to hollow out the subject; we come to experience a gap within ourselves insofar as we seek out that which would fill it. At the same time, it is out of this hollowness that the conscious subject is thrown into transcendence—the inaugural event of human freedom.

In a passage central to his account of desire, Sartre writes:

> A being which is what it is, to the degree that it is considered as being what it is, summons nothing to itself in order to complete itself. An incomplete circle does not call for completion unless it is surpassed by human transcendence. In itself it is as complete and perfectly positive as an open curve. A psychic state which existed with the sufficiency of this curve could not possess in addition the slightest 'appeal to' something else; it would be itself without any relation to what is not it. In order to constitute it as hunger or thirst, an external transcendence surpassing it toward the totality 'satisfied hunger' would be necessary, just as the crescent moon is surpassed toward the full moon. (136)

This passage explains that a subject is requisite in order for lack to occur. Lack only shows up before someone for whom it is experienced as such. Lack is not a quality of objects, but only of the world as it is lived. Lack presupposes an imagined totality thrown out around self-identical things by a subject who can envision a future, a totality "which has been broken by the lacking and which would be restored by the synthesis of 'the lacking' and 'the existing'" (135). Sartre takes up the example of our experience of the moon in its various phases to illustrate this point. The experience of the crescent moon is conditioned by one's experience of the full moon: for the crescent moon to appear as a crescent moon at all, it must necessarily stand in an internal relationship to the full moon as that towards which it is surpassed. That which is 'missing' from the whole moon is what makes this moon the crescent moon, as well as that which would complete the whole and re-establish the totality. In this way, the crescent moon, as it is given in our intuition, is constituted in its being by what it is not. As the correlate of consciousness as a mode of existence ever transcending itself, being-in-itself thus comes to be experienced as reaching beyond itself towards that which is other to it.

Yet, strikingly, hunger and thirst are invoked here as proof that our mode of existence as conscious subjects is neither ontologically determined nor inert, like that of being-in-itself, but is incomplete and self-transcending. Thus, in the very moment where Sartre looks to illustrate the transcendence and the radical indeterminacy of being-for-itself, or human consciousness, in the mode of desire, it is experiences that are usually thought of as forms of need that he calls upon.

In this chapter, hunger and thirst are repeatedly used to exemplify desire.[3] Why is it that Sartre has selected these particular examples to illustrate desire, the most fundamental expression of consciousness as nothingness, and thus as ontological freedom, in the text?

In hunger and in thirst, Sartre goes on to explain, one lives one's own existence as that within which something is felt to be lacking insofar as consciousness escapes itself towards its desired object—food to satiate the hunger, or water to quench the thirst. According to Sartre, despite conventional understandings, neither hunger nor thirst is an objective state of affairs. Hunger, Sartre insists, is not a positive given in a body that has begun to break down its own tissues for energy anymore than extreme thirst is a positive given in a body with drying skin and a racing heart. "Thirst," he writes, "as an organic phenomenon, as a 'physiological' need of water, does not exist" (137). Dehydration, malnutrition, and starvation are objective states of a body just as are seizures, increased body temperature, decreased muscle mass, and atrophy of the stomach. They are just as evident, if not *more* evident, to the physician who examines the body as they are to the one who exists it as one's own. But hunger and thirst, as forms of *desire*, are something distinct from these objective states of the body as well as from the physiological needs that might describe them. Hunger and thirst are conscious, first-person ways of experiencing an ontological lack within one's own being as one stands in a relationship of longing to a desired object. For Sartre, hunger and thirst are never positively given within the physiological makeup of the body alone, for they are fundamentally constituted in an appeal beyond themselves; there is no hunger or thirst in any of the objective states of the body, but only in this lived appeal out of any given state to something that lies beyond it. In this respect, hunger and thirst are immanent affectations of being-for-itself's surpassing of itself; they are this surpassing lived as lack. Sartre's efforts to understand hunger and thirst as concrete exemplifications of desire thus render what might otherwise be taken for bare and base biological exigencies exemplary of the immanent movement of human existence transcending itself. For Sartre, hunger and thirst are not possible for any kind of being other than one that is aware of the insurmountable ontological gap between itself and the objects of its experience, and that projects itself out of the present towards the future.

Although Sartre's characterization of hunger and thirst as modes of desire is unique, however, their description as modes of lack is all too common in the history of philosophy.[4] This characterization often leads to an understanding of such states as limitations on one's freedom, as

states in which one seeks to return to an earlier state of fullness through acquiring an object which would satisfy this lack, and, all in all, as the marker of some form of privation or penury. Many philosophers, dating back to Plato, have espoused conceptions of desire that render it a form of lack. Hegel is chief among them, and Sartre's account of desire is clearly referential to his. In Hegel's phenomenology, the subject is compelled into a dialectical relation with its object out of a desire to fill a void within itself and to arrive at a state of perfect fullness. The difference in Sartre's account of hunger and thirst as forms of lack is that he insists that lack—as the marker of *desire*—is always prospective: an experience of lack is only possible in respect to an orientation towards a future shaped by one's goals, interests, and investments. For Sartre, as forms of desire, hunger and thirst are neither inert nor invariable physiological states but are subjective experiences shaped by one's projects and values.

I previously argued that such projects and values are inevitably shaped by one's relations with others. Thus, all states that are characterized by these hallmarks—even seemingly base biological states such as hunger and thirst—become relationally dynamic ones; they are open to change and to transformation through the relational dimensions of one's lived experience. Sartre's account of hunger and thirst as modes of the special kind of lack characteristic of a future-oriented mode of self-awareness thus has the benefit of allowing these needs to be seen as relationally dynamic aspects of lived experience.

Further, in making hunger and thirst the exemplars of desire, Sartre intriguingly renders two seemingly exclusively privative experiences potentially life-enriching ones through the relationship in which they come to stand to freedom. The experiences of hunger and of thirst are given an inescapable temporal quality in Sartre's phenomenology; they do not happen in an instant, but always hold both a past and future within themselves. Without this temporal dimension, there would be no experience of transcendence towards an open future within them. This existential relationship to the future makes hunger and thirst at once forms of desire as well as expressions of the human capacity for freedom. For Sartre, every lived experience of hunger or thirst, or any other 'desire', is a concrete realization of the fundamental mode of human existence surpassing itself towards its future possibilities as well as its impossibilities, an experience that belongs to being-for-itself rather than being-in-itself. We see the dimension of freedom in our relationship to our own hunger, for instance, in religious prohibitions against eating certain foods and in spiritual periods of fasting, as well as in secular taboos forbidding

eating certain animals in some cultures—such as dogs, cats, and horses in North America—while other cultures treat the same animals as acceptable forms of food.

The lived experience of hunger or of thirst is also a source of anguish, however, insofar as it is one in which we run up against the inevitable inability to determine our future on the basis of the present moment or on the basis of what has already come to pass. Our future welfare is not guaranteed by our past or present well-being, and nothing given in the present will ever make it so. While this indeterminacy of the future opens us to harm, it also allows for transformation and for the expression of human freedom through practical action.

Nonetheless, what Sartre here achieves philosophically by connecting hunger and thirst, as supposed modes of desire, to an open future may not sufficiently compensate for what he misses in failing to identify them as forms of need. Sartre's characterization of hunger and thirst as forms of desire risks dangerously coupling them with an inexhaustible, willful fluidity concerning the objects of one's projects, investments, and ends that does not in fact apply. Flagging this concern returns us to the question of how Sartre understands need in general within the pages of *Being and Nothingness*. Insofar as hunger and thirst are Sartre's examples of desire, it might seem that what can be said of desire can also be said of need. Yet, unlike desire, need, for the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness*, seems to fall on the side of the 'mere' physiological and the non-subjective. To posit experiences of 'desire' such as hunger and thirst as instances of need would be to strip these experiences of their lived qualities and reduce them to an inert state, as if they were the same thing in the eyes of another (that is, from an external perspective) as they are for the one for whom they are undergone. The only time Sartre invokes the term 'need' in this chapter of *Being and Nothingness* is in the one line concerning thirst quoted above: "Thirst as an organic phenomenon, as a 'physiological' *need* of water, does not exist" (1956: 137; my emphasis). This passage insists that the need for water, understood as a concrete, physiological reality of the body, is not the lived experience of thirst. A 'need', it proclaims, is an inert state of the body-in-itself, but 'thirst' is no such state. While need belongs to being-in-itself, thirst surpasses being-in-itself through the distance introduced between the thirsty subject and the quenching of that thirst. Thirst exceeds the need for water insofar as it includes consciousness of that need.

Hunger and Freedom

In *Being and Nothingness*, then, need as itself a lived experience of being-for-itself, and, moreover, one that serves as a point of origin for concrete, material expressions of human freedom, has not yet been thought through (?) by Sartre. Nor have the concrete limitations imposed on the conscious subject by material need been acknowledged. Sartre's brief essay "To be Hungry Already Means That You Want to Be Free," published in France in 1948, is a helpful bridge between Sartre's surreptitious account of need in *Being and Nothingness* and his more explicit treatment of it in the *Critique*. Written after the transition towards a material account of freedom that commenced with Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew* and reaches its heights with the *Critique*, need here appears as a transformative mode of self-awareness ushering one towards an awareness of the value of concrete freedom, both for oneself and for all persons, rather than an objective, inert, and merely physiological state of the body. [5] Nonetheless, need as such is opposed to material freedom in this text: Sartre characterizes hunger as a demand for freedom, but one that must entail—as part of this demand—a cry for freedom from need itself.

In this short essay, Sartre responds to the objection that freedom is an overly abstract concern for those living under the concrete sway of immediate needs such as hunger. Sartre argues that "[f]reedom as it exists in bougeois democracies is a hoax": These democracies claim to grant certain abstract 'freedoms'—such as the right to free speech and the right to own property—to all persons, yet the ability to enjoy these freedoms hinges on having concrete economic privileges only extended to a select few (2001, 9). Yet that freedom in these guises is a hoax does not mean that the desire for freedom at large is misguided. The interests of the poor cannot be reduced to the need for food to satiate their hunger, clean water to quench their thirst, and coal and clothes to relieve their cold; present alongside these interests is a concrete desire for freedom. The desire for freedom and the material concern for food and shelter are not opposed; instead, concrete freedom can only be had on the condition that one's material interests are satisfied.

Indeed, Sartre argues that the concrete demand to have food to eat expresses much more than a purely material interest. The demand is fueled by one's "rage at being forced, in spite of himself, [to think] only of his belly, the rage of being stuck at an impasse, of being hunted down and trapped like a rat." "Hunger," he continues, "is precisely in itself the demand to be something other than a belly, the demand to be a man" (10). The "demand to be a man", for Sartre, is none other than the demand to be free; a demand to not have one's existence dictated

by physiological imperatives alone. Further still, Sartre argues that hunger is experienced as much more than an isolated self-interest when it is caused by social problems such as unemployment. "[T]he hunger of someone out of work," he writes, "is that of all those that are unemployed at the same time" (10). The experience of hunger can thus be an experience of solidarity with a larger social group, an experience that makes this need at once a personal and a social need, and that makes the demand to have one's hunger answered a demand for the transformation of the social class system. Finally, Sartre notes that hunger is also often accompanied by a "rage because others are eating" (10). This rage has often been disdained as the contemptuous expression of envy, when in fact it is a much more noble expression of "a desire for equality and justice" (10). The concrete need for food to satiate one's hunger thus gives rises to urgent and emphatic demands for more than its immediate satisfaction: demands for social justice, deliverance from oppression, and equality.

Such demands can only be made by a being that is more than a rumbling stomach—a being who yearns for freedom as a concrete, material reality. To answer only to the physiological need that hunger expresses is thus to grossly short-change the one who voices this demand. The hungry man is in fact calling out for robust social transformation in crying out for bread, as well as crying out for his own freedom from need—the freedom to "[be] a man" (10).

The freedom from need and the freedom to act outside of its dictates is what Sartre will later speak of in "Search for A Method" as the basis of real freedom. In a striking passage, Sartre takes up Marx's declaration that freedom will have its day only after technological progress together with the radical undoing of the class system has answered everyone's material needs. It is only in such an age, he proclaims, that "there will exist *for everyone* a margin of *real* freedom beyond the production of life" (34) No attitude alone will ever be sufficient to render a starving man truly free, for hunger cannot be transcended in thought and nor can it be answered with any means of one's choosing. In the *Critique*, as we will see, Sartre will additionally argue that as long as the goods necessary to meet everyone's basic needs remain scarce, violence and social oppression as well as material want will continue to impinge upon freedom.

Need in Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason

Early into his two-volume *Critique*, Sartre boldly declares: "Everything is to be explained through need" (80). With these words, Sartre asserts that the very possibility of the dialectical movement propounded in it—a movement in which "man is 'mediated' by things to the same extent as things are 'mediated' by man" in an unending, circular process—depends on need. It is in need that this dialectical movement has its start. The human being in need of food, water, or shelter experiences the external, material world as threatening her inner, lived world with destruction. She responds to this threat by seeking to incorporate into her own life that which was previously external to it. So begins a dialectical movement between inside and outside, self and other, and man and matter that will forevermore hold us in its grips. While Sartre never retracts the ontological freedom to which he commits himself in *Being and Nothingness*, the *Critique* argues that it is through the materially-driven and concretely-situated dialectical movement that begins with need that any concrete, material freedom (i.e. any *real* freedom) to be had in the world must be found, although freedom is repeatedly plunged back into the constraints of necessity through its own material effects.

The expression of this freedom occurs by way of what Sartre here calls '*praxis*.' *Praxis*—Greek for 'action'—is the activity through which freedom, as a human potential, comes to be concretely expressed in the world. Insofar as the *Critique* proposes to study the manifestations of concrete, human freedom as well as the threats it encounters, *praxis* takes the place at the heart of Sartre's analysis that being-for-itself held in *Being and Nothingness*. In turn, where being-for-itself was tethered to being-in-itself in *Being and Nothingness*, and drawn into both immediate and reflexive self-awareness through a sense of its difference from this object, *praxis* in the *Critique* is always found in a dialectical relationship with what Sartre names '*exis*,' a passive and inert mode of being with which *praxis* must inevitably engage and which often boomerangs back upon it with unintended effects.

Sartre's invocation of need as the point of origin for the historical, dialectical movement that comes to define human life mimics a similar claim found in Marx and Engel's *The German Ideology*. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels assert that "the first *historical* act"—"the act by which [human beings] distinguish themselves from animals"—is the act in which human beings first produce their means of subsistence, thus meeting their needs through their own labor power (1994, 107). Need is the catalyst for the productive activity—labor—through which man subsequently defines his mode of life and his social relations. However, need is not immune to

the historical transformations it initiates. Instead, need is itself transformed by the mode of production, as well as the products, used to meet it. Need is thus at once the origin point for the movement of human history and a malleable point on the circular path this dialectical movement will follow.

Sartre characterizes need in the *Critique* in terms that are strikingly similar to those by which he characterizes desire in *Being and Nothingness*. The most prominent parallel comes in his declaration that need "expresses itself as *lack*" (80). Whereas desire is a lack felt by the subject in relation to its objects, however, need is a lack "within the organism"—that is, it is a lack expressed within the lived body as an organized, end-driven whole concerned with self-preservation (80). Whereas desires may be reduced to states of consciousness, needs, he now recognizes, cannot be so reduced. To experience a need is to find oneself under the compulsion of more than one's volitional consciousness; there is a material and corporeal depth to need that gives it the power to trump the hand that desire plays in directing one's actions. Yet while the experience of need is the experience of a kind of necessity, the human activity directed towards the negation of the lack need announces—*praxis*—always operates with some degree of freedom. *Praxis*, originating out of need but allowing for the concrete expression of freedom in action, is thus at once an experience of necessity and of freedom for Sartre (79). That *praxis* begins under the sway of material need makes need not only the necessary condition for human action but also that through which any real freedom must eventually arise.

In *Being and Nothingness,* we saw that Sartre cites the difference between thirst as a lived experience that appeals beyond the given state of the body to a longed-for object and objective, physiological realities such as sunken eyes and a racing heart as evidence that "[t]hirst, as an organic phenomenon, as a 'physiological' need of water, does not exist" (137). In his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, he cites the same difference as it pertains to hunger as evidence of the organic unity that underpins need: "Without a unity of basic behavior within the whole," Sartre explains, "there would be no such thing as hunger; there would only be a scattering of disconnected, frantic actions" (81). Further, where Sartre argues in *Being and Nothingness* that hunger and thirst are forms of transcendence—a key component of existential freedom— insofar as they were lived experiences of desire (and thus *not* needs), he now argues that need is itself a form of transcendence. An organism is a whole that is more than the sum of its parts, a whole that surpasses the discrete elements of which it is composed, thus making the organism

transcendent in relation to its parts. The experience of need is only possible in the context of such a transcendent material unity.

Transcendence is not only there in the unity that characterizes need as an experiential condition undergone by living things; transcendence is also a defining element of the prospective relation that need bears to the future. From the perspective of need, the surrounding, material environment appears as a field of both possibilities and impossibilities for satisfaction. "Need," writes Sartre, "is the organism itself, living itself in the future, through present disorders, as its own possibility and, consequently, as the possibility of its own impossibility" (83). To be in need is thus to occupy an existential, phenomenological mode of being that transcends one's present state towards these future possibilities.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre grants being-in-itself an ontological priority over being-for-itself that often goes overlooked. Sartre's laudatory claims regarding being-for-itself in this text are never ones that grant it ontological primacy or even ontological independence. Instead, as discussed in the previous chapter, Sartre asserts that all modes of being-for-itself, including desire, are "born *supported*" by being-in-itself: insofar as consciousness is intentional—consciousness is always consciousness *of* an object—consciousness is necessarily preceded by and dependent upon that which is other to it (123). When, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, the fundamental modality of lived experience out of which man's relationship with the external world unfolds is identified as need and not desire, this abstract, ontological dependency becomes a concrete, material one. In turn, the complete freedom of the subject to choose the objects of its pursuit is lost. The human being, as a living, organic being, reaches out of the present state of its existence towards its own future possibilities and impossibilities in hunger and in thirst, in bone-chilling cold and in sweltering heat, because it *must* reach out: organic life cannot continue without sustenance and support from that which is other to it.

According to Sartre, this concrete, non-elective dependency at the heart of all organic life demands that the human being instrumentalize itself. In need, one no longer simply exists, or *is*, one's body. Rather, one's body becomes the tool by which one strives to grasp that which will satiate one's needs. This is the route by which need induces one to engage in *praxis*, the end-driven activity through which what is given in the present moment is transformed according to what is sought for the future (82). *Praxis* begins in the tension between the present and the future as it is lived in need: in the present moment, the organism experiences itself under threat, and

thus makes maintaining its own life its future end (83). With one's future welfare cast out before one as an end to be secured, human beings use the labor power offered by their own bodies "to overcome the inertia of things"—that is, to transform the surrounding world in order to meet their needs, over and against any obstacles encountered. Such transformations are the condition for yet another form of transcendence, as what was previously external to and other than oneself is here made over into something that can be incorporated into the organism.

It is through the *praxis* sparked by the quest to satisfy our needs that man's freedom is concretely expressed in the world according to Sartre. But *praxis* is never perfectly free. It begins in the constraint of need's demands, and takes place within the confines of the *practico-inert*—the social, material, and historical environment in which it occurs. Further, the *practico-inert* can cause one's actions to have very different consequences in the world than one intends as happens, for instance, when burning fossil fuels for energy results in climate change. Sartre calls these unintended consequences 'counter-finalities.' His foremost example of a counter-finality is the deforestation inadvertently caused by Chinese agricultural practices in the context of colonialism (161-164). Counter-finalities illustrate that while *praxis* is an expression of human freedom, it can also be a force of constraint.

In its analysis of *praxis*, the *practico-inert*, and counter-finality, Sartre's *Critique* offers a much more material and concrete account of freedom than *Being and Nothingness*. While the ontological freedom of any conscious being may be inalienable, real material freedom begins in freedom from needs that belong to us as living things, and which demand to be answered. Sartre now recognizes that there is no existential attitude towards oneself and one's world that will render one concretely free when in the grips of needs such as food, water, shelter, and basic corporeal security. As long as the goods necessary to meet these needs are scarce, moreover, Sartre believes that human beings will be catapulted into oppressive relationships with one another that strip us of our real freedom.

Sartre declares in the beginning of his *Critique*, "Everything is to be explained through *need*" (95). Yet Sartre also stresses that the *Critique* moves from the abstract to the concrete insofar as it begins with the isolated individual and moves to an analysis of human collectivities. His later analysis emphasizes that individual needs are not immune to the larger sociopolitical, historical, and material conditions in which an individual life is lived. "In southern Italy," he tells us, "the agricultural day labourers, the semi-employed *bracciante*, eat only once a day or even,

sometimes, once every two days" (95). These labourers experience the pangs of hunger, but they have ceased to live them with the exigency of need, experiencing their hunger instead "as a chronic disease" (95). Their normalized experience of a base level of hunger illustrates, for Sartre, that what is in one situation an urgent need giving rise to *praxis* is in another an expression of *exis*, that passive and inert mode of being which *praxis* always confronts. Lived as a chronic condition, hunger, for these workers, is "an inert, generalized lacuna to which the whole organism tries to adapt by degrading itself, by idling so as to curtail its exigencies" (95).

This example begins Sartre's turn from an abstract and generalized account of need and its relation to *praxis* towards a more concrete analysis. By the final chapter of the *Critique's* first book, the pendulum has swung all the way from a study of need in abstraction to the side of need as it is experienced in a concrete sociopolitical and material context. It is in this chapter that we find some of Sartre's starkest claims concerning the relationship between need and freedom. Man's *praxis* is spurred to life by the exigencies of need yet, through *praxis*, the sense of constraint that began in physiological need is encountered anew in a multitude of complex forms. "[T]he exigencies of the worked Thing, the imperatives of the Other, and his own impotence" number among them under capitalism (325). In this dialectical dance with necessity, Sartre explains, "His free activity, in its freedom, will take upon itself everything which crushes him – exhausting work, exploitation, oppression, and rising prices. This means that his liberty is the means chosen by the Thing and by the Other to crush him and to transform him into a worked Thing" (325). The activity through which one seeks to free oneself from the exigency of need, in the context of modern capitalism, is also the activity through which one's material needs are rendered more constricting and severe. Subject to hunger and victim to poverty, the isolated laborer has no chance of survival other than to sell his labor for a fraction of its full value. Thus his own labor becomes the tool of his still greater future destitution and the tether of his own bonds. This choice is carried out with a somber resignation, stripped bare of the feeling of freedom. And yet it remains a form of *praxis*, not *exis*, in which "the ineluctable destiny which is crushing him moves through him," according to Sartre (326).

Freedom in the context of capitalism, Sartre goes on to explain, "does not mean the possibility of choice"—as it did in the pages of *Being and Nothingness*—"but the necessity of living these constraints in the form of exigencies which must be fulfilled by a *praxis*" (327). Under capitalism, there is no real freedom "beyond the production of life," but only a

melancholy resignation to *praxis* which boomerangs back upon us in needs newly enhanced and material constraints further entrenched. Under capitalism, one does not 'decide' to sell one's labor or act according to a set of self-selected, conscious motivations; rather, one is motivated to act by the concrete demands and material exigencies of one's situation (329). The outcome of such motivation nonetheless remains an act of *praxis* which holds in it the potential to carry us out of our current condition into one where the real freedom Sartre yearns for in the pages of "Search for a Method" can be had.

Sartre recognizes that his dogged insistence that material constraints are always answered with acts of *praxis* might suggest that man remains free no matter how extreme his material constraints. In striking contrast to his claims in *Being and Nothingness*, however, he dramatically asserts: "It would be quite wrong to interpret me as saying that man is free in all situations, as the Stoics claimed. I mean the exact opposite: all men are slaves insofar as life unfolds in the practico-inert field and insofar as this field is always conditioned by scarcity" (332). While *praxis* may someday free us from this servitude, under capitalism it is the instrument of the inhumane sentence according to which "everyone struggles against an order which really and materially crushes his body and which he sustains and strengthens by his individual struggle against it" (332). Until the longed for day in which scarcity is undone and real freedom arises, the first book of Sartre's *Critique* thus boldly concludes, the freedom expressed in *praxis* will be the means of our own slavery.

Scarcity and Need

While Sartre echoes Marx and Engel's position on need as the catalyst for the historical, dialectical movement of labor and production, his view on the role of scarcity in human history has more in common with the liberal social contract tradition than with Marxism. Sartre claims that "a bitter struggle against *scarcity*" is the catalyst for human praxis, a position that, as Michael Monahan notes in "Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and the Inevitability of Violence: Human Freedom in the *Milieu* of Scarcity", aligns him with Hobbes as well as Hume and Smith, all of whom argue that both the human experience in the state of nature and our civil path out of that state are conditioned by scarcity (Sartre 2004, 123; Monahan 2008, 49).

In a state of abundance, according to Sartre, human beings would not have the same impetus to transcend their present state towards an altered, future condition as in a state of

scarcity. It is scarcity that makes one aware of one's needs insofar as they stand unfulfilled and drives one to enter into *praxis*, an activity driven by the effort to overcome lack. Without scarcity, encountered through the lived experience of need, we would not be compelled out of the passive mode of being that Sartre names *exis* into the practical activity through which concrete freedom in the world is manifest. Scarcity is thus, as Michael Monahan explains, the driver of "human choice and freedom" for Sartre (Monahan 62). Monahan quotes Ronald Aronson to this effect: "The fantasy that human acts might be purer and more rigorous if divorced from need is the opposite of the truth. Without need we would not even have the dream of 'acting'" (2008, 62; quoting Aronson 1987, 215). In its role in both social and productive life, Sartre thus sees scarcity as that which has made human beings what we are. Scarcity has played such a fundamental role in human history and social relations, he argues, that we would not be the beings that we are without it (124).

What is scarcity such that it can serve as the catalyst for *praxis* and the spark for the expression of human freedom? While Sartre tends to treat scarcity as any form of material lack, Monahan argues that scarcity has both a descriptive and a normative meaning, which Sartre often conflates. In the descriptive sense, anything of which there is only a limited supply is 'scarce.' Yet in the normative sense, it is only those things that are in short supply in relation to a particular end or goal that are scarce (55). For instance, while there may be a finite number of muffins left over from the batch I baked last night, and thus the number of muffins I have is descriptively scarce, these muffins are not normatively scarce if I have no interest in eating anymore, having already had my fill. They become normatively scarce, however, when my hungry sister-in-law and nephew show up at the door and haven't yet eaten breakfast. Scarcity in the descriptive sense can leave us unmoved, while scarcity in the normative sense presents us with a lack that, through our actions, we may work to overcome.

Scarcity in the normative sense, however, is as much an effect of our desires, goals, and projects and it is of non-negotiable human needs and limited natural resources. Sartre captures this when he describes scarcity as "a primary unity transmitted to matter through men and returning to men through matter" (123). While the environment may only offer up a finite amount of any resource to be used for human purposes, such as flour to put into my muffins, and fertile agricultural soil on which to plant the wheat from which that flour is ground, scarcity is not simply a natural state of affairs. Rather, scarcity is a co-effecting relationship between human

beings and their environment. Indeed, the excess of material wealth that many people in First World nations experience generates its own unique forms of scarcity. The 'need' for electricity, a private vehicle, and more make certain natural goods appear scarce that, aside from these interests, would be bountiful. Take, for instance, the present global perception of oil. In a world where petroleum never came to be seen as a cheaper, more accessible substitute for whale blubber, oil would not have come to be perceived as scarce. Nor would it have the appearance of scarcity if the global world was more deeply committed to ecological sustainability even at the cost of immediate 'inconvenience' for individuals and shifts in political and economic power relationships for nations. At the same time, oil could not currently be in the process of becoming scarce if not for a limited natural supply. Scarcity thus has both social and natural conditions.

Yet while First World privilege may save some populations from the pangs of many forms of global scarcity, and while many current global scarcities might be undone through changes in lifestyle, resource management, and trade patterns, or through more equitable, just, and humanitarian distributions of goods, "[t]he fact is," writes Sartre, "that after thousands of years of History, three quarters of the world's population are undernourished" (123). What this fact means to Sartre is that the fundamental role that scarcity has played—and continues to play—in human history, social relations, and individual life cannot be denied, even if another world is possible. Scarcity is the condition in which human *praxis* takes place, and is also the condition of all our social relations.

Yet the facts of scarcity are changing. Today, according to the World Food Program, roughly one in nine people do not have enough food to support a healthy lifestyle, and 13.5 percent of the population in developing nations is undernourished—a vast improvement over the situation Sartre describes (World Food Programme Hunger Statistics, 2015). Further, the World Food Programme also reports that there is enough food in the world to feed everyone (World Food Programme, FAQ, 2015). The short supply of food, then, is not a natural condition which we must inevitably confront and struggle against, but an effect of social systems of production, regulated by neoliberal free trade agreements which have made it economically unviable for many farmers to pay the cost of preserving and transporting their goods because the price they will garner at market will not cover the expense (Monahan 48). While Sartre emphasizes that human *praxis* is both a result of scarcity and a *cause* of it, he nonetheless tends to treat scarcity

as the catalyst of human conflict rather than a result of social injustice, and to conflate the experiences of lack that result from excessive desires with those that follow from dire needs.

Indeed, at the same time that the experience of scarcity catapults us into the productive activity out of which real, concrete freedom can begin to be carved, Sartre argues that an experiential world of scarcity also gives rise to antagonistic and violent relationships with one another, rather than identifying scarcity as itself the result of these antagonistic global relationships. Against the backdrop of scarcity, he argues, other people appear as potential threats to my very life. Insofar as scarcity means that the ends we seek to gain for ourselves are not ones in which every other person can share, Sartre—echoing Hobbes—explains that we encounter other people as threats to the realization of our projects and to the satisfaction of our needs. The realization of another's project may mean the underdoing of our own. In the Other, we thus recognize "the mere possibility of the consumption of something [we ourselves] need" (128).

Sartre recognizes that scarcity can compel us to come together in mutually-beneficial collective endeavors to challenge our own impending lack and potentially destitution: "[S]carity *can*," he explains, "condition the unity of the group, in that the group, taken collectively, may organise itself to react collectively" (127). The experience of scarcity can also be a spark for the critical re-evaluation of our own 'needs,' insofar as scarcity in the normative sense is an effect of our goals and ends, and thus an expression of our alterable desires as much as our non-substitutable needs.[6] Yet scarcity can also be an incentive to form institutional social orders in which certain groups and persons are set up to succeed and others to fail, and to treat others as threats to one's own survival, points that takes pride of place in Sartre's analysis. Sartre describes the institutional ordering of success and failure in modern society as the process of selecting the dead: "[A] modern society," Sartre writes, "discreetly selects its dead simply by distributing items of expenditure in a particular way, and…at its deepest foundations, is already in itself a choice of who is well provided for and who is to go hungry" (129). Shared need under conditions of scarcity can also be a catalyst for engaging in individual acts of violence against one another, as Hobbes imagined occurring prior to the establishment of a power to rule us all in his *Leviathan*.

Sartre cites the events purported to have occurred on the raft of the *Medusa*, a frigate that sunk off the coast of Senegal in 1816, as evidence that scarcity makes collective co-existence

impossible and makes the social selection of the dead a necessity for any member of a group's survival. The subject of a famous painting by Théodore Géricault, the *Medusa* was poorly captained in treacherous waters. When it sank, the captain and his crew took the lifeboats, and left the sailors and passengers to a makeshift raft. The captain and crew first towed the raft behind their lifeboats, but later set it adrift in the interest of bettering their own welfare. When the raft was found, only a small handful of the original passengers survived. Some were the victims of exposure and others of interpersonal violence, while those that remained had resorted to cannibalism.[7] Other historical accounts of testing sea voyages offer similar evidence of humanity's calculating self-interest in conditions of scarcity, such as the privileging of wealthier passengers for limited space on the lifeboats on board the *Titanic*, and the choice of the captain of the slaveship *Zong* to thrown the slaves overboard like inhuman cargo when water supplies ran low.[8] A contemporary example of this kind of cold calculus comes from the recent tragedy in the Mediterranean, where hundreds of migrants on route to Europe from the Middle East and Africa drowned onboard the capsized ship that carried them, many of whom had reportedly been "locked in the ship's hold" by smugglers.[9]

Yet in claiming that "scarcity makes the passive totality of individuals within a collectivity into an impossibility of co-existence" and that, in the context of scarcity, "[t]he group…has to reduce its numbers in order to survive," Sartre seems to weave a dangerously deterministic strand of thought into his work (129). This move is surprising given the strength of his previous commitments to the inevitability of free choice—and thus the inevitability of ethical responsibility—in any and all conditions, although perhaps not surprising given the strength of his declaration that "all men are slaves insofar as life unfolds in the practico-inert field and insofar as this field is always conditioned by scarcity" at the end of the *Critique*'s first book (332). While the "*milieu of scarcity*" may be the backdrop against which the possibility of violence, antagonism, and conflict arises, Sartre's earlier work would insist that we always retain at least a sliver of free agency in deciding how to engage with others when resources are scarce (127). The moments in the *Critique* that suggest that violence is inevitable under conditions of scarcity stand in tension with Sartre's existentialist commitments to the inescapability of human freedom, even when that freedom is understood as requiring certain concrete, material conditions to be complete.

Although one of the benefits of Sartre's *Critique* is its investment in concrete rather than abstract forms of freedom, a concrete account of freedom need not entail determinism. Nor need it restrict freedom to something that is only possible when scarcity is radically eliminated. To use an example employed to different effects in previous portions of this work, it seems strikingly obtuse and highly misleading to describe someone who is forced by the inequalities and injustices of the global economy to choose between providing the material resources necessary to feed and shelter their children by travelling to the United States as a migrant care worker and giving their children the direct, interpersonal love and care they need to flourish emotionally as making a fully free choice.[10] Yet there is an important truth in the fact that the migrant careworker's course of action in not written in stone. To treat it as a foregone conclusion not only elides this truth but also has the pernicious social effect of obscuring the moral harm many face in having to make such a choice. It is the agonizing bind between freedom and constraint that Sartre aims to capture in insisting that any response to need is a form of *praxis*, but that *praxis* under capitalism and in the context of scarcity quickly becomes a tool of one's own exploitation.

Scarcity is a condition for *praxis* that is not of our making and that cannot be willed away. It is the situation, felt most palatably when one is in need, out of which *praxis* arises and to which it remains bound in a circular, co-informing dialectical relation. Can freedom be found within the confines of this struggle, or only through the radical elimination of scarcity and of need?

Monahan stresses that, for Sartre, "[s]carcity itself may not be chosen, but how we respond to it is chosen" (2008, 52). "[A]s any good existentialist knows," Monahan continues, "no matter how dire the circumstances, it is still up to me how I face them, and no matter how vitally necessary the resource for my survival, I may still decide to forego it" (61). The moments of seeming determinism in Sartre's account of scarcity are counterpoised with moments that reverberate with the existential commitments of which Monahan reminds us. At one point, for instance, Sartre asserts that "*praxis in principle* transcends the reifying inertia of the relations of scarcity," while scarcity nonetheless "has dominated all *praxis*" (132; 130). Sartre also emphasizes that scarcity can be the catalyst for the formation of social groups, organized to respond collectively to its threats, although he emphasizes that these groups can turn on other human groups in Manichean violence just as can individuals (127; 136).

Ultimately, Sartre's fervor lies with capturing scarcity's propensity to compel violence between men, and with illustrating the dogged persistence of this propensity wherever scarcity is felt, but not with characterizing violence as thereby inevitable as long as scarcity persists. His continued attention to human freedom allows him to recognize that while the experience of need in conditions of scarcity may induce one to violence, and while the threat of becoming either the victim or the perpetrator of violence continues to loom over us for as long as these conditions persist, hostile, antagonistic, and hateful relations with others are never inevitable. Nonetheless, as we will see, his ethical analysis of shared need in the context of scarcity tells no other story than that of a Manichean violence justified through the Other's dehumanization.

Yet while events like those of the *Medusa* or the *Titanic* present a situation rife with the possibility of violence, we learn from other moments in Sartre's philosophy that responding to these situations in a way that makes others out to be enemies is by no means a foregone conclusion. Just as scarcity is the condition under which violence is a perpetual possibility, it is also a condition for our banding together in new ways and for the sake of mutual aid. While the experience of need under conditions of scarcity can incline us to turn against one another in the interest of our own self-preservation, this experience can also be a catalyst to our joining together with one another in new, mutually-supportive ways. Sartre pays heed primarily to the upsurge of violence in response to need's demands, but the responses to the immediate threat of death of those on board vessels such as the *Medusa*, the *Titanic*, and *Zong!* was not homogenous. For instance, while some on the *Titanic* left staircase gates in third class quarters locked, John Harper is reported to have privileged the survival of others over his own welfare. Harper saw that his six year old daughter was placed on board a lifeboat but did not board himself and encouraged others to take his place, trusting that his faith in God insured his eternal salvation while believing that other might need to live on in order to receive the same otherworldly gifts.[11] The human capacity to prioritize the needs of others over needs of one's own is a rich moral capacity that Sartre fails to countenance, even if he always leaves room for the expression of freedom in any human *praxis*. This capacity tells a very different tale concerning the relationship between shared needs and ethics than the story of an ethics born in Manichean counter-violence found in the pages of Sartre's *Critique*.

The Resilience of the Capacity for Care

Perhaps despite itself, Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved* (1988) illustrates the resilient capacity of human beings to band together as much as to turn against one another in times of destitution. Levi's collection of essays offers a testimony to the moral suffering that can follow from finding oneself together with others in a situation of extreme poverty. His testimony speaks in a non-idealistic way to the potential for self-sacrifice in the face of the systematically-inflicted dire need experienced by those interned in the Holocaust camps. It also speaks to the dehumanizing experience of finding one's ability to care for others so constrained that it verges on the brink of annihilation without ever being utterly undone. In this collection of essays, "Shame" is most explicit in addressing the uniquely egregious kind of suffering that occurs when one's moral capacity to care for others is grossly curtailed under conditions of extreme scarcity. The shame of which Levi writes is the shame which befalls him, when, in the malicious, cruel, and dehumanizing climate of the camps, he confronts moments in which his own will to survive is thrown into conflict with his ethical concerns for others and with his interest in caring for them as well as himself.

Levi describes the feeling of shame that haunts him as a Holocaust survivor as a ghostly trace of another who has passed away and who might have survived in his place if he himself had acted otherwise. What haunts him, he writes, "is no more than a supposition, indeed the shadow of a suspicion: that each man is his brother's Cain, that each of us…has usurped his neighbor's place and lived in his stead" (81-82). Levi's collection also metaphorically describes his shame as shame of having surfaced where others drowned. The metaphor is a powerful one in the context of Sartre's treatment of violence in relation to scarcity: trapped underwater together with others, one might cut one's ties in order to get oneself to the surface with relative ease, one might use every last ounce of one's strength to get others to safety first, or one might go to another's aid initially but quickly find that one's own body simply won't be refused another breath, as physiological impulses kick in that drive one to the surface. The last instance speaks to an experience in which the urgency of physiological need and the felt imminence of one's own death holds one's moral ambitions in a stranglehold, and these ambitions are painfully overwhelmed by the urgency of survival in the present moment.

In "Shame," Levi gives an account of an August spent in Auschwitz when his squad of interned labourers was assigned to clear rubble from a cellar, and all suffered from extreme thirst. There was no drinking water in the camp and often none at the worksite. In the cellar, Levi

is assigned to work in a room from which he spots what looks like a water pipe. The pipe is two-inches wide and at most two meters high, and when Levi tests it, water drips out rather than pours. Three options occur to him: drink all of the water immediately himself, share it with the squad, or share it with a single companion. He drinks the water discretely in turns with his companion, Alberto (79). Later, after returning from the camps, the act shames him in the face of a third companion, Daniel, who also worked and thirsted in the rubble of the cellar that August (81).

Levi's testimony illustrates how the system of the camps sought to destroy the humanity of those it targeted through reducing their daily experience to a raw struggle with physiological necessity, and stripping them of their moral freedom through pinning them to their needs. Yet although Levi speaks of being haunted by a sense of shame at his own survival and of the persistent, sickening feeling that a better person would have drowned, this story can be read as one that testifies to the incredible resilience of the moral capacity to care for others and its ability to trump pure self-interest even under grossly hostile conditions. The target of a system which sought to stamp out his moral personhood, and pinned to the urgent demands of his own physiological survival, Levi nonetheless shares the very scarce water with a friend rather than taking it all for himself alone. His is a painfully honest testimony to the endurance of moral life, not with the fullness that it might have had outside of these inhumane conditions, and not unmarred by the violence which made Levi's moral life as well as his very existence its target, but in a fragile and vulnerable form against the odds. Far from the story of a 'hero'—one whom we might perceive as a moral anomaly—Levi's narrative offers a starkly human testimony to the inability of even the most extreme confrontations with scarcity to render caring, supportive, and morally significant forms of co-existence with others impossible.

In some of the darkest moments in Sartre's account of the implications of scarcity for social life, he turns the spotlight back on the role of need in compelling violence. He writes vehemently and unsettlingly: "I believe that at the level of need and through it, scarcity is experienced in practice through Manichean action, and that the ethical takes the form of the destructive imperative: evil *must* be destroyed" (133). In a situation of scarcity and under the sway of physiological needs which render the future that in which one's very existence has no guarantee, the Other who resembles me in sharing both my needs and my ends appears "as threatening us with death" according to Sartre (132). Here, the other person becomes our

"demonic double" and a very ugly, Manichean form of ethical life arises in which the good is identified as this evil threat's destruction. The "aggressiveness and hatred" of the Other that here arises finds its strength, according to Sartre, "*in need*" (133). Both the perpetual return of physiological needs and anxiety over their satisfaction in the milieu of scarcity fuel hatred and violence towards others that seeks to strip them of their capacity for *praxis*, and thus of their freedom.

The violence born of need in the context of scarcity, writes Sartre, "always presents itself as *counter-violence*, that is to say, as a retaliation against the violence of the Other" (133). It is only according to this mode of presentation that violence is able to appear as a form of ethical action. But the violence of the Other is originally only a potential for violence, made possible by human freedom. Thus, it is never in fact some demonic, alien version of man that one attacks when countering it, but "man as man"—that is, man as a being with the capacity for freedom enacted through *praxis* (133). Thus Sartre concludes that it is freedom, the very thing that defines one's humanity, that the violence born of need in the context of scarcity always seeks to destroy. In the terms of *Being and Nothingness*, this violence and the ethics that justifies it are thus both forms of bad faith.

Sartre's account of the role of need in compelling acts of violence might have changed dramatically if he had considered not only the potential for human needs to reach beyond the realm of physiological imperatives, but the potential for another's needs to become one's own, made possible by the constitutive ties of relational life. The need for love and for friendship, the need for the compassion and understanding of others, the need for social and political recognition and more all speak to the relational dimensions of human flourishing. Moreover, as Primo Levi's testimony reveals, our second person needs for other's needs to be met are often more powerful than our most dire physiological ones. Levi's work thus testifies to the strength with which the human spirit fights to maintain its relational connections and its investments of care in the welfare of others even when under extreme duress.

Sartre and Levinas

Emmanuel Levinas' ethical metaphysics offers a strong counterpoint to Sartre's account of need as fostering a Manichean form of ethics in the context of scarcity. Levinas' two major works, *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being*, both locate a way out of being's violent

investment in its own self-persistence—expressed in need—through ethics. Ethics, for Levinas, is the response to the Other's infinite demands—demands issued with neither force nor power, but in vulnerability, poverty, and weakness— which gives the sustenance that I might otherwise claim for myself over to the Other. Whereas Sartre describes ethics as born in a moment of counter-violence that defends one's own interests against the threat that the Other's shared needs pose to them, Levinas' work speaks of the birth of ethics in heeding the infinite demands of the Other's needs before one's own.

In order to illuminate this point of difference between Sartre's *Critique* and Levinas major works, I begin by turning an eye to some of the grounds on which Sartre and Levinas first meet. These shared grounds provide a background against which their ethical divergences can stand forth. The points of convergence between the work of Sartre and Levinas often goes overlooked because of their differences on questions of ethics and relations to others. Yet *Being and Nothingness* is intriguingly convergent with Levinas' metaphysical account of the Other as one with whom one is drawn into an immediate, face-to-face relationship but who is ever beyond one's knowledge even in this intimacy. For both Sartre and Levinas, as Christina Howells has illustrated, the Other is not even *potentially* knowable: the Other is not analogous, for instance, to the answer to a math equation that can be solved but never has been. This is because the Other, by virtue of being a subject just as I am, is a being which is, in Levinas's words, "otherwise than being."[12] For both Sartre and Levinas, the human subject—and thereby also the Other—is no mere thing in the world; the human being is the being that transcends being itself for Levinas, and being-in-itself for Sartre. Thus, as Howells writes in language much more faithful to Sartre: "I cannot ever know the other 'as he is' for precisely he *is* not" (1988, 92).[13]

Setting both thinkers apart from others in the continental tradition such as Husserl or Heidegger, Sartre and Levinas also share ground in contending that it is through an immediate relationship to the Other that the claims one has made in the world—both in terms of values we have given to it and in terms of material entitlements taken for granted in it—are confounded. In *Being and Nothingness*, as we have seen, Sartre articulates the incommensurability between the values and projects I bring to the world and values and ends given to it by the Other. Between the Other's values and mine, there is a chasm of difference that cannot be crossed. For Sartre, this difference is what allows for the feeling that my world has been wrenched away from me by the Other, a feeling that can become dangerously antagonistic and serve as an enticement to reduce

the Other—through bad faith—to an object like any other in my world. For Levinas, the radical alterity of the Other is also a potential enticement to violence, specifically, to murder. Murder is the annihilation of the Other as Other through an absolute renunciation of her otherness (*Totality and Infinity*, 1969: 198-199. Yet this temptation is challenged by an immediate ethical commandment issued to us by the Other in need, the commandment "you shall not commit murder" (233).

Further, Sartre writes of the encounter with the other as the event through which my actions lose an imminent justification, grounded in my freedom, which they otherwise held. But for my being-for-others, one's own acts would be forever justified by their doing alone (347-348). My being-for-others, however, makes me responsible in my own actions for the Other's freedom insofar as what I do can either help or hinder the Other's projects (351). I become responsible to the Other for how I live in the world, as my free acts and their effects become potential impediments to the Other's freedom as well as objects of scrutiny for the Other (347-351). As Deborah Bergoffen notes, Simone de Beauvoir makes a similar point in her first philosophical essay, *Pyrrhus and Cinéas*. Beauvoir, explains Bergoffen, insists that although inner ontological freedom always belongs to any human subject, we must all "accept responsibility for the fact that my actions produce the conditions within which the other acts" (Bergoffen 2004).

The feeling of shame, a feeling that is only possible for Sartre when one's actions are seen by another, expresses the sense of responsibility, as well as the sense of objectification, which our being-for-others opens in us. As discussed in the previous chapter, shame is the affective phenomenological experience in which I experience myself as an object of scrutiny first for another and afterwards for myself. Feeling shame requires acknowledging that the Other is able to see a real dimension of my being that I could not see myself prior to my encounter with her. It also requires that one shoulder responsibility for this dimension of one's selfhood.

In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas also finds freedom called into question by the Other and, specifically, through the shame one feels before her. Yet one feels this shame, for Levinas, not based on how the Other perceives me, but on my desire for the Other and on what this desire exposes in me. For Levinas, the Other is God-like in her radical alterity, assuring that my immediate experience of her is not a construction of my own mind, much as does the concept of God for Descartes: The Other is the infinite before which I am but humbly finite, the perfection

before which my own imperfection glares, and the height of transcendence before which my own transcendence pales. My desire for the Other is the welcoming of that which is beyond my being, and is at once "the commencement of moral consciousness" and the contestation of my freedom (1969, 84). In welcoming the Other, however, I come to rediscover my own freedom as a potential weapon against her, making my freedom itself a source of shame. "Morality begins," explains Levinas, "when freedom, instead of being justified by itself, feels itself to be arbitrary and violent" (1969, 84). Thus "[t]he welcome of the other is ipso facto the consciousness of my own injustice—the shame that freedom feels for itself" (86).

In Levinas' work, 'the face' of the Other expresses the Other's confounding demands upon me as they arise when the Other is welcomed and moral consciousness begins. The face also reveals the ethical relationship in which I stand to those demands, a relationship that upends my own interests and causes me to re-encounter my freedom not as an innocent spontaneity but as the potential for the other's murder. The concept of the face is perhaps the most well-known—but not necessarily best-understood—feature of Levinas' ethical metaphysics. The face is the concept through which he speaks of the relationship one has with the Other, the relationship in which the freedom to be otherwise than being is found and in which ethical responsibility begins. It is also through the face that the Other's need—in the form of her poverty, weakness, and vulnerability—makes an immediate demand upon me to give the means of my own sustenance away. The concept of the face is thus a component of Levinas' metaphysical ethics that intersects with Sartre's phenomenological ontology, but only to fundamentally challenge it through a dedicated attention to ethics, and, more specifically, through attention to the ethical demand made upon me by the Other in need.

The Face of the Other in Need

In contrast to Husserl, the face for Levinas is not a phenomenological concept. It is not an aspect or a side of things as they appear to us in perception. Defying representation all together, the face of the Other is "the very collapse of phenomenality" (1998, 88). The face is an absolute immediacy "torn up from the world, from horizons and conditions" (91). While a sensible object much as any other thing, the face collapses the distance intentional consciousness imposes between conscious subject and experiential object at the same time that it opens a more radical field of difference between self and Other. The face is thus at once an absolute immediacy and a

yawning abyss of radical otherness before which I cannot but be confounded in my interests and intentions. The face stands in contrast to those phenomenal objects in which my consciousness finds tools and resources for my projects in the world (88). Before the face, my power doesn't fall short but is undone in its directives.

In the face, I sense the infinity of a deep and never fully answerable poverty, vulnerability, and weakness. This is the poverty, vulnerability, and weakness of one that is dependent on food and water for her sustenance, who needs a home and a 'peaceable welcome' in it by another human being for her own integrity, who depends on another for her very creation, and more.[14] It is with the Other's infinite poverty, vulnerability, and weakness in mind that Levinas describes the Other's resistance to our power as "the resistance of what has no resistance—the ethical resistance" (*Totality and Infinity*, 1969, 199). Unlike "the hardness of the rock against which the effort of the hand comes to naught", it is only the resistance of that which has no power by which to impose its command that is ethical (198). Thus, the resistance the face of the Other poses to my projects comes from its weakness, not from its power. The face, explains Levinas, is at once defenseless against me and yet unflinching and insurmountable in its very "destitution and hunger" (1969, 200).

Yet surely the face Levinas describes is not every human face one might encounter. This face is not the face of the rapist or a murderer. Pressed in an intimate interview to revisit the concept of the face by some of his students, Levinas tells them: "The face is the frailty of the one who needs you, who is counting on you" (1988, 170). This face, then, is not the face of an assailant but rather of one who is dependent on us and who needs us. It is the face, for instance, of a hungry child begging for food at my restaurant table. While another's need can be a spur to their abuse, it also places an infinite ethical demand upon us: a demand to give to the Other all that one has, including "the bread… from one's own mouth" (1998, 77). The Other's need contests one's own claims to sustenance for, as Levinas tells his students in the more colloquial language of their interview, this face "is a demand; a demand, not a question. The face is a hand in search of recompense, an open hand. That is, it needs something. It is going to ask you for something" (1988, 169). He elaborates by telling them that both "extreme frailty" and immediate, sensible poverty lie at the heart of his concept of the face and its ethical commandments, for only one that is weak beyond weakness, one who is "the superlative of weakness…is so weak that he demands" (170).[15]

Our ethical relationship to the Other always arises at the conjunction of immediate, sensible proximity with the infinite distance of radical alterity. Drawing on words of scripture, Levinas explains: "In proximity the absolutely other, the stranger whom I have 'neither conceived nor given birth to,' I already have on my arms, already bear…'in my breast as the nurse bears the nursling'" (1998, 91). Answering to the demand of the Other always falls to me, the one before whom the face appears, although the Other never becomes familiar even when nursed at one's own breast and in one's own arms.

Being able to answer to the infinite need of the Other who always remains a stranger requires that one be able to break from the exigencies of one's own being. While we experience our own need as a form of poverty by which we are moved to action, we are also capable of experiencing the need of the Other as a form of poverty that moves us to act otherwise than in our own interests. This capacity is emblematic of the ethical relationship: it is a relationship that is otherwise than being in its transcendence of one's own physiological drives as a living organism.

Several commentators on Levinas as well as philosophers inspired by his philosophy have captured the special role that responsibility to the Other in need plays within it. For instance, David Wood claims that, for Levinas, "what comes first is a commitment to other humans, especially those in need" and Peter Attington writes that "it is man's capacity to break with reason by putting the needs of the Other first that constitutes his human essence" (Wood 2005, 152; Attington 2005, 60).[16] Enrique Dussel's philosophy also highlights the pivotal place that the Other in need has in Levinasian ethics.[17]

Beyond the Face: The Concept of Need from "On Escape" to Otherwise than Being

Levinas deserves recognition as one of the most prominent theorists of need in all of philosophy for the pivotal role he gives to the Other's need in ethical life alone. Yet Levinas' attention to need—as well as his most philosophically critical articulation of the concept—begins well before the writing of either of his two major works on ethics in his very early essay "On Escape." "On Escape" explores the metaphysical ramifications of a very deep human need, tethered to human freedom: the need for an escape from being. This essay deserves attention insofar as it devotes itself to a need that defies most definitions by its refusal of satisfaction, a need that will later be rethought by Levinas in terms of the desire that welcomes the Other and commences our moral

life. While Levinas' later work founds ethics on a contrast between need and desire according to which need is largely conceived as a form of poverty seeking to be satisfied and desire is conceived as insatiable, this early essay offers a conception of need that can be aligned with ethical imperatives.

In "On Escape" (2003), Levinas challenges the long-standing, Platonic interpretation of need as lack.[18] Interpreted as lack, need appears as a kind of fall from grace, as the poverty of a life that has lost its original self-sufficiency and now struggles to regain it through needs' satisfaction. In Plato's interpretative framework, the experience of need is cast as an experience of a momentary disruption in an otherwise peaceful whole, with need's satisfaction promising a return to this original, perfect, and self-enclosed state of being, albeit only after death.

Levinas' first challenge to this interpretative framework is addressed to the premise of self-sufficiency, which need is said to momentarily and remediably interrupt. Rather than accurately describing what it is to engage with the world as human and to exist as an "I", Levinas argues that the conceit of self-sufficiency "nourishes the audacious dreams of a restless and enterprising capitalism" (50). In the context of the ontological belief that a state of perfect, restful completeness can be found, the pursuit of satisfaction finds no end but only the fodder to extend to all reaches of the earth and to refuse all bounds. This pursuit's grossly excessive demands on the world's resources, its violent and imperialistic drive to possess and assimilate, and its crimes against other persons are justified through the Platonic conceit that peace was once ours and can be regained if only need can be sated.

The restful state of self-sufficiency that Plato imagines for the philosophical soul, however, is the ontological state of *things*, and not of humanity, according to Levinas. In things, "the very fact of being… is absolutely sufficient and refers to nothing else" (51). Where sufficiency is the ontological condition of things, insufficiency is the ontological condition of the human. To invoke the language of Levinas' later work, humanity's restlessness in any state of existence shows that humanity is drawn towards being's beyond. Both *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being* will identify this attraction to what is otherwise than being as making human beings uniquely capable of heeding ethical demands. Humanity's restless pursuit of being's beyond grants human life its dignity by raising it out of being, which persists through the 'brutal'—i.e. animalistic—assimilation and incorporation of that which is other to it.[19]

Just as humanity is stripped of transcendence by the conceit of self-sufficiency, "On Escape" argues that need is stripped of its taste for freedom by the conceit that it can always be sated. The need for escape—or, more pointedly, the need to escape from *being*—exemplifies need in the insatiable pursuit of "deliverance" from being (59). As escape, Levinas explains, "[n]eed is not a nostalgia for being; it is the liberation from being" (62). The human being is the being that suffers from its own being, and is compelled by this self-sickness to be otherwise than she is.

What is it about being that gives rise to the need for escape? In a turn highly reminiscent of Sartre's phenomenology, Levinas' "On Escape" describes our being as both shameful and nauseating. One's being is shameful insofar as it is impossible to be untethered from it (63-64). Even at the heights of ecstatic pleasure, one remains weighed down by one's own being, "condemn[ed] to be oneself" (70). Similarly, nausea is an experience of being sick with oneself: At the same time that one is "riveted" to one's own being, one is also revolted by this being (66). Nausea accompanies over-consumption and the corresponding feeling of grotesque plenitude, not painful depletion or lack, a trait that speaks to the human capacity to suffer from the fullness of one's being. Levinas contends that this suffering from over-fullness "*is the very experience of pure being*" (67). Of these two affective states, nausea is the purer form of sickness of one's very being, for shame is often felt in the presence of another, while nausea persists and even intensifies in solitude.

One can conjecture that the need for escape is formulated as a need and not a desire in this early essay because it expresses itself as an imperative. For human beings, Levinas writes, being "appears as an imprisonment from which one *must* get out" (55; emphasis added). As the testimonies of Holocaust survivors such as Primo Levi and Levinas himself attest, to be reduced to one's being—whether through having one's moral personhood crushed and diminished or through having one's language reduced to inane, meaningless babble—is to be forced to live an unbearable life for a human being, a life that is less than human.[20] The capacity to transcend one's being is the condition of humanity, and the need for escape expresses this capacity in an imperative form.

If a criterion of any need is that it is capable of satisfaction, however, the need for escape can only be a 'need' in name. The revolt from being, grounded in the affective imperative to be otherwise than one is, is a revolt without refuge insofar as it seeks to get out without "going

somewhere," the path travelled never lessening the malaise and satisfaction never found (53). [21] Without the possibility or even the hope of satisfaction, this revolt is an expression of the infinite within the finitude of human life. Denying the flesh through fasting and other "mortifications" does not offer a reprieve from the need for escape from ourselves but only brings us into a closer relationship with this need (60).

For the Levinas of "On Escape", however, that an escape from ourselves can never be found is cause to overturn need's association with satiety rather than cause to reimagine the kind of experience the cry for escape bespeaks. He argues that even pleasure—the affective experience which seems most indicative of a need's satisfaction, and for which every need seems to search—is more aptly understood as a deliverance from being than as a satiated return to it. The deepest and fullest pleasure is ecstatic pleasure, in which one experiences a frenetic and mystical sense of being beside oneself. Ecstatic pleasure is not a settled state, but an "affective event" in which we feel as if we have momentarily parted ways with ourselves (62). Nonetheless, even ecstatic pleasure is never enough to answer to the exigency of escape: At the very heights of pleasure, gorged with enjoyment, one nonetheless always wants for more, as one remains irrevocably oneself even when feeling mystically beside oneself. Pleasure's endless unfolding is testimony to the inability of the need for escape to ever be satisfied.

In this early essay, not only is the need for escape said to defy the conventional philosophical parameters of need in its refusal of satiety, it is also said to contest them insofar as it is not "just a privation" and is "something other than a lack" (56). Being, no matter its qualities or its powers, its relative grandeur or austerity, is always complete unto itself: Being "is always already perfect. It is already inscribed in the absolute" (57). Deprived of nothing, and in search of no lost object by which to restore its perfection, the human being is nonetheless moved by the need for escape from itself. For Levinas, it is the "plenitude of being" that the human being flees: For human beings, unlike all other beings, being "is a burden to itself" and experiences an exigency to be free of itself (68). Further, this need for freedom from the plenitude of one's own being is a need that "clings fiercely to the present" (59). With nowhere to go and no hope of satisfaction, this need is not prospective and does not warn of a future harm. Instead, it is an exigency of every moment of human life insofar as that life remains bound to being, and being is always too much for the human being to bear.

In his introduction to the English translation of "On Escape", Jacques Rolland argues that the wariness of being Levinas voices in this early essay remains with him through to his most mature philosophical work, *Otherwise than Being*, although "the notion of escape was going to be purely and simply abandoned as such" (2003, 42). Literally speaking, Rolland's analysis is apt: the notion of escape as such will not reappear in Levinas' work. Yet Rolland's more figurative framing of this change captures the deeper truth of the concept's relevance to Levinas' philosophy. He continues: "Yet the abandonment was extremely fecund, since it was to give rise to successive metamorphoses of the abandoned notion; and this, in such a way that to retrace their unfolding would also be to retrace the very evolution of Levinas' work" (42). One dramatic metamorphosis that the need for escape undergoes occurs in *Totality and Infinity*, where the need for escape is reborn as metaphysical desire. Metaphysical desire is desire turned towards "the 'elsewhere' and the 'otherwise' and the 'other'" (1969, 33). It is desire that ventures out beyond the safety and security of being towards what is otherwise than being and other to the self, "an absolute, unanticipatable alterity" (34).

Metaphysical desire, moreover, is insatiable desire: "it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it," and seeks that which "does not fulfill it, but deepens it" (34). *Totality and Infinity*'s opening words return to Plato's analysis of need in the pages of the *Symposium*. Plato's work, Levinas argues, has had a dangerous legacy in conceptions of desire which compromise this relationship to radical alterity: "As commonly interpreted need would be at the basis of desire; desire would characterize a being indigent and incomplete or fallen from past grandeur. It would coincide with the consciousness of what has been lost; it would be essentially a nostalgia, a longing for return" (33). Desire conceived as conditioned by a fall from grace and epitomized in the yearning to return to a previous state of peaceful and perfect self-sufficiency, continues Levinas, "would not even suspect what the veritably other is" (33).

As the need for escape is metamorphosed in the pages of *Totality and Infinity* into the metaphysical desire for that which is otherwise than being and radically other to oneself, however, the concept of need at large is returned into Plato's hands. Where desire rises above being in its refusal of satisfaction and its incongruity with lack, Levinas reconfigures the concept of need according to the Platonic characteristics "On Escape" challenged. Now contrasting desire's relationship to radical alterity with need's supposed self-enclosure, Levinas writes: "desire is an aspiration that the Desirable animates; it originates from its 'object;' it is

revelation—whereas need is a void of the Soul; it proceeds from the subject" (1969, 62). Re-inscribing this distinction, Levinas explains that need is a fall from grace, a privation, and a rupture of a previously peaceful whole; it "indicates void and lack in the needy one" and "its dependence on the exterior" (102). Need has no relation with what is beyond being; instead, it is the expression of being's drive for its own self-preservation.

In *Totality and Infinity*, the 'brutality' of being that "On Escape" so cuttingly described as criminal in its failure to move beyond itself is reborn as the 'animality' of men driven by need (2003, 73; 1969, 35). In need, one's 'dependence on the exterior' is expressed in a call to appropriate that exterior, to take it into oneself and to claim it for one's own, despite any other claims upon it. As such, need seems to be the antithesis of ethics. Ethics is "where existence suspends the necessities of existence" by heeding the exigencies of the Other rather than those of the self (104). Need stays firmly ensconced in the demands of being, while ethics, moved by desire, is that by which human beings transcends their own animal existence in responsibility to the Other.[22]

In *Totality and Infinity*, then, as Richard A. Cohen suggests, the need for an escape from being succeeds in finding the "way out of being by a new path" for which "On Escape" ends in calling (2003, 73). Levinas now recognizes a genuine escape from being as something that is possible through heeding the demand that the Other's need issues to us, a demand that fuels the desire for transcendence of one's own being (Cohen 2005, 113-114). In *Otherwise than Being*, Cohen argues, Levinas' attention shifts from "the otherness of the other person" to "the meaning of the introjection of that otherness in the morally responsible self, the self that is for-the-other before it is for-itself" (114). For Cohen, much as *Totality and Infinity's* concept of metaphysical desire "is a highly developed version of the need for escape," so too is *Otherwise than Being*'s conception of the self that is first for the other:

> In this last formulation we once again hear the resonance of 'On Escape': the self for-itself finds its genuine selfhood not in-itself, or in its historical being, but in the overturning of such self-absorption or historical absorption by the moral transcendence of being for-the-other. The 'dissatisfaction' of the obligations of morality, has priority, for Levinas, over the satisfactions of immanence, whether these latter are narrowly selfish or allegedly historically compelling. (114)

Cohen then concludes:

> Thus Levinas' philosophy is of a piece, from the core dissatisfaction of embodied solitude, its need for escape, to the obligations of morality and the work of justice, neither of which 'satisfy' its need, but better than satisfaction they respond to that need by raising the self to what is better than being: love of the neighbor. (114)

What Cohen's otherwise insightful analysis overlooks, however, is Levinas' strong and conceptually entrenched resistance to conceptualizing ethics in terms of need in his later work, now leaving need to the self-sufficiency of being which he so adamantly critiques for its crimes against the Other. After "On Escape," getting out of being is no longer conceived as something for which there is an urgent and resounding *need* but is reborn as a desire. In turn, need becomes the exclusive domain of being's self-satisfying drives, drives which must be refused if the ethical demand made by the Other is to be answered.

Despite its return to the Platonic paradigm in which need is conceived as a lack which can be satiated, and as a form of poverty which can be rectified, however, *Totality & Infinity*'s account of need remains highly philosophically original. Showing some of his psychology training (he was a student of Charles Blondel), Levinas contends that it is through the experience of need and the activities of incorporation by which need is answered, that an egoic psychic life is constructed.[23] What Levinas calls "living from," the activity of incorporation by which needs are met and life is sustained, gives rise to the affective experience of enjoyment in which we first experience ourselves as separated from and independent of our world. The enjoyment we find in the satisfaction of our need, for Levinas, is already evidence that need does not pin us to the demands of life itself but allows us to transcend these demands. The experience of satisfying our life's exigencies is not bare; rather, it is often an experience of pleasure and delight (112). These affects are the inaugural content of the ego and of a life "beyond being" (113). Not only can we experience enjoyment in the satisfaction of our needs, but we can also be happy for having these needs themselves. Need builds the foundation upon which we are later carried beyond being through desire, even if need is also responsive to the exigencies of being.

Yet although need allows for the transcendence of being, it does so through the "exploitation of the other" (115). In enjoyment, need takes what was exterior to the self and makes it the content out of which the self is sustained. In the enjoyment had in need's satisfaction, Levinas asserts, "the alienness of the world that founds me loses its alterity" as "an energy that is other…becomes…my own energy, my own strength, me" (129; 111). The ego born of enjoyment, Levinas poignantly explains, is "an existence *for itself*…as in the expression

'each for himself'; for itself as the 'famished stomach that has no ears', capable of killing for a crust of bread, is for itself; for itself as the surfeited one who does not understand the starving and approaches him as an alien species, as the philanthropist approaches the destitute" (118).

Still, enjoyment remains that in which the existent stands apart from existence for the first time, and enjoyment, initially premised on satisfaction, opens itself to the desire that finds none (117). Out of the enjoyment found in need's gratification arises the capacity "[t]o enjoy without utility, in pure loss, gratitiously"—a *human* form of enjoyment, as opposed to the supposedly merely animalistic satisfaction that precedes it (133). Need, via enjoyment, thus transports us to its own beyond, making need a conditional experience for ethics.

The transcendence of being experienced firstly in enjoyment and, secondly, in giving up the objects of this pleasure, is what makes it possible to answer to the ethical demand that the Other's poverty makes on us. In *Otherwise than Being*, this point is succinctly put: "the breakup of essence is ethics" (14). In *Otherwise than Being*, moreover, the transcendence of one's own being is said to grant the power of "breathlessness" as well as the power to give away the mouthful of bread from one's own mouth. Breathlessness is the power to stop one's very breath in deference to the demand of the Other, and it is only breathlessness, Levinas poetically proclaims, "that pronounces the extra-ordinary word *beyond*" (5; 16).

Revisiting Sartre's Critique From Being's Beyond

When, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, need becomes the lynchpin of Sartre's Hegelian-Marxist analysis of the movement of history and of social and material production, the terrain his philosophy shares with Levinas's metaphysics grows dramatically. Yet, much like their shared commitment to the absolute alterity of the Other and to freedom's loss of innocence before this absolute alterity, this common terrain becomes a point of order for a vast difference. Levinas speaks of ethics being born out of a relationship with the Other as one who has needs like mine, and which demand to be answered even if doing so leaves me without any bread to nourish myself. Ethical life thus begins through an immediate relationship to the Other as one who shares in my needs. In this relationship to the Other, what is demanded of me is more than I could ever ask of another: that I give as a saint would give. The saint, Levinas explains, is "the person who in his being is more attached to the being of the other than to his own," and it is in valuing this primary attachment to the Other that "the human begins" (1988, 173). "[T]o leave men without

food," Levinas tells us in *Totality and Infinity*, "is a fault that no circumstance attenuates" –even one's own hunger (201). Before the Other, I am always already guilty by virtue of my very being, which lives from the appropriation of what is other to it. My existence, which is essentially that which "takes for its very existence," cannot escape being unsettled, disquieted, and confounded in its relation to other's needs (93).

This infinite ethical responsibility to the Other is buttressed, however, by the demand for justice issued by a third party who appears beyond the self-other dyad. With the introduction of this 'third', my responsibility to the Other in dire destitution is complicated by my responsibility to all those others who face me as well as by my own existence as an other for others. Thus, to invoke Primo Levi's experience, Levinas contends that I cannot justly give all of my water to Alberto when Daniel is also thirsty. Here, Levinas appeals to the words of Isaiah as an invocation of the justice he proclaims: "Peace, peace to the neighbor and the one far-off" (1998, 157). The third introduces a domain of equality—a sphere of "copresence on an equal footing as before a court of justice"—where there would otherwise be only an asymmetrical relationship between two (157). Before the third, just as I cannot justly give all to my neighbour alone, I cannot be justly required to take no water for myself, for in the sphere of equality opened among all persons through the introduction of a third "there is also justice for me" (159).

Ethical self-care thus arises out of a demand for justice for all, and not out of a drive for self-preservation, for Levinas. As Alphonso Lingis explains, "[T]he entry of a third party, treating me as an other alongside of the other I faced, first institutes a kind of common terrain among us. I am, thanks to him, someone to be concerned about, someone to answer for" (1998, xli). The appearance of a third party thus reveals the nested relationships to others—in which I am always an 'other' for someone at the same time that someone else is an 'other' for me—in which concrete, ethical life always takes place. The distinctive form of moral justice that these nested relationships of myself to others and of others to me demand has much in common with Eva Kittay's concept of *doulia*, and with her notion that a relational conception of equality can be rooted in the idea that we are all "some mother's child".

Further, while the ethical relationship to the Other and the nested relationships of justice that the appearance of a third party introduces are metaphysically separate for Levinas, the demand for justice does not follow chronologically after a more primordial ethical engagement with the Other. Justice is never superimposed on a primarily binary ethical relationship, for the

third party is always already there as "the pluralism of ethical instances" (Alphonso Lingis 1998: xlii). Just as Levinas insists that "[t]he other is from the first the brother of all the other men," we are all originally and forever some mother's child, for the mother is also a third party, if only as internalized by her child, and every child's mother also has a mother present as a third in relationship to her (1998, 158).

Second Person Needs and Ethics

In *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas is wary of characterizing the ethical response to the Other's demand as itself a form of need. This response happens, he writes, "despite myself" and "cannot be converted into an 'inward need' or a natural tendency" for it answers "to an absolutely heteronomous call" (1998, 53). But what if the human being is 'otherwise than being' not only when heeding this call but also constitutively, in his or her very selfhood? What if the self is fundamental ecstatic—outside itself, beyond itself, and beside itself—in its relations with others? What if the ethical response to the Other's need that would give over the very bread from one's own mouth happens not 'despite oneself' but because each of us is a relational self, whose bonds to others form an inner part of ourselves?

Second person needs are those needs that belong to such a relationally constituted self. The fact that they appear nowhere in either Sartre's *Critique*—in which "[e]verything is to be explained through need" (2004: 80)—or within the entire corpus of Levinas's ethical philosophy—wherein ethics begins in responding to the demand placed upon us by the other's "destitution and hunger" (1969: 200)—speaks to the intransigence of an atomistic view of the self even within the work of thinkers who have made immense strides in relational thinking. It may also speak to one pernicious effect of both Sartre's and Levinas' commitment to radical alterity. To internalize the other's need in the form of needs of one's own, this passage from Levinas suggests, would be to violate the other's heteronomy in assimilating their needs under one's own. It would be, so it seems, to take what is radically other than the self and make it the self's own content, an act of consumption. Levinas' words on enjoyment in *Totality and Infinity* resound here: In the internalization of another's need as my own, the Other "loses its alterity" as "an energy that is other…becomes…my own energy, my own strength, me" (129; 111).

To experience another's needs as giving rise to a set of needs of one's own, however, cannot be a violent act of assimilation if the self begins in relation to others, flourishes or falters

in these relations, and is undone and reborn through them. It cannot be a violent act of assimilation of a heteronomous Other if the Other is always and inevitably a constitutive part of me and if, moreover, the Other's alterity is preserved even as one's relational ties to others give rise to some of the deepest and most vital needs anyone can possibly have. As Judith Butler writes in *Precarious Life* (2004a), in mourning and in grief, "I think I have lost 'you' only to discover that 'I' have gone missing as well" (22). In such moments, "one undergoes something outside one's control and finds that one is beside oneself, not at one with oneself." Thus, "grief contains the possibility of apprehending a mode of dispossession that is fundamental to who I am" and reveals "the ways in which we are, from the start and by virtue of being a bodily being, already given over, beyond ourselves, implicated in lives that are not our own" (28).

Yet, showing her own Levinasian commitment to radical alterity, Butler stresses that even as grief exposes our constitutive ties to others, "I do not always know what it is in another person that I have lost." Grief not only exposes one's relational ties but also "exposes my unknowingness" (28). One's sense of self can be utterly shattered through the loss of another person without the person who experiences this loss ever fully knowing what it is they have lost in losing the other.

Living out another person's needs emotionally, corporeally, emphatically, and urgently through a set of second person needs to which they give rise is a parallel experience to that of grief as Butler understands it, for this too is an experience in which one discovers one's fundamental dispossession—even one's needs are not self-standing, dictated by a *conatus essendi* of being without regard for the Other, but are given over to others and formed in the complex threads of our ties to them. These relational needs arise, moreover, without one's ever fully and exhaustively knowing the needs of the Other. Without any exhaustive knowledge of the Other's needs, one still experiences their demands and lives them as demands of one's *conatus*. When Levinas asserts that any internalization of the other's demands as inner needs of one's own does violence to the other's radical heterogeneity, he undermines the deep confluence between self and other out of which some of the most precious joys and greater hardships of human life are made.

Butler closes her essay on mourning in *Precarious Life* with a call for each of us to give ourselves over to our own confounding through our ties to others. This means, for Butler, "that my own language must break up and yield" before others, and that one's "disorientation and loss"

are the means by which one gains a genuine relationship with the other "as that which we have yet to know" (49). One can read these words as an indictment, in a similar spirit to Levinas's own, of any quick and self-assured translation of another's need into needs of one's own. Rather than breaking up and yielding before the Other, becoming confounded and disoriented, the experience of second person relational needs is often a split-second experience of an urgent reorientation in response to the Other. It often is also one of a steadfast, unwavering commitment to the new course of action which one's second person needs dictate.

In their mutual commitments to radical alterity, both Butler and Levinas raise legitimate concerns regarding ways of relating to the Other that fail to genuinely acknowledge their infinite difference from ourselves and that thus become violently assimilative. Yet while one may never know the needs of the other perfectly or exhaustively, one certainly needs no such god-like knowledge in order to know enough to be moved by her needs and to have one's own most vital needs transformed according to them. Indeed, one never knows *oneself* exhaustively either, and if we had to wait on such perfect self-knowledge before acting, we would be utterly paralyzed.

If we were to take Butler's appeal for any translation to break up and yield in order that genuine contact might be made with the Other to mean that we must not purport to be able to adequately recognize the other's needs swiftly, and that any translation of these needs into a set of needs of our own would be an act of assimilation set against the other's alterity, we would find the ability of our own needs to express ethical investments in the welfare of other's sorely and perversely curtailed. For to operate as if we cannot recognize another's persons vital needs, or as if any needs of our own to see these needs answered are a violent mistranslation of the other's urgent demands, would be to cripple ourselves ethically. It would find us standing, at best hesitantly and at worst inquisitively, by as others stand on the precipice of harm.

Another way to express the shortcoming in Levinas' thought is to pinpoint it as a moment in which Levinas' commitment to radical alterity hinders his commitment to ethics. Second person relational needs can be understood as deep-seated expressions of our ethical capacity to shelter another's ends under our own, a capacity at the heart of good care and authentic love. Someone with second person needs is someone who cannot wilfully elect any course of action when confronted with the needs of others, for second person needs express and enforce a commitment to seeing others distress alleviated—a commitment so deep that it has become a fundamental, sometimes even self-defining, need of one's own.

In *Aftermath*, Susan Brison recounts Ruth Elias' harrowing narrative of the violence inflicted upon her newborn daughter while she was interned in Auschwitz, briefly discussed in the introduction to this work. Pregnant when she was first taken to the camp, the child Elias' birthed became the target of Josef Mengele's sadistic scientific curiosity concerning the length of time an infant could survive without food. Elias, Brison recounts, had to endure the agonizing pain of hearing the cries of her starving child while being prevented from coming to her aid. After a week, a Jewish doctor in the camp aided in ending Mengele's horrific experiment by providing Elias with morphine to euthanize the child. The trauma that Elias' experienced as she was forced to endure the slow murder of her child is of the sort that can leave one utterly shattered, often beyond repair. As Brison emphasizes throughout *Aftermath*, those that are subjected to treatment at the hand of others that is wilfully impervious to their interests and that reduces them to the status of a mere thing ripe for manipulation often emerge feeling they are no longer the person they once were, and as if they are living on the wake of their own death. To this effect, Brison quotes Charlottle Delbo, another Holocaust survivor, who writes of her own return from the camps: "life was returned to me/and I am here in front of life/as though facing a dress/I cannot wear" (2002: 47). Delbo expresses the ghostly feeling that she did not in fact survive the Holocaust; Auschwitz, it feels to her, was where she died, and she has ever since been faced with the task of attempting to live on in spite of her own death. Delbo is one among many survivors of the Holocaust who express this ghostly sentiment.

What is particularly striking about Elias' narrative is that the cruellest, most self-annihilating harm she suffered in Auschwitz didn't target her directly. Instead, it took her newborn child as its object. Yet only the most insensitive listener would fail to recognize a deep trauma of Elias' own in this narrative. Why is it that her daughter's harm is so deeply lived as her own? Her daughter's terrible and wrongful suffering is also Elias's own terrible and wrongful suffering because we are ourselves through our relations to others. Elias's daughter's physical need for nourishment, as well as her emotional need for the loving succour with which a mother so often offers it, is the source of an urgent second person need of Elias' own to tend to her needs with "preservative love"—that love which, according to Sara Ruddick, is committed to a child's protective care and which is also the first demand of a mother (1989, 17). Thus, being inhibited from meeting this demand is an annihilation of Elias as a mother.

Answering second person needs, which emphatically announce our bonds to others, can be even more vital to our welfare than satiating first-person ones. Insofar as our relational ties make us who we are, an egregious violation of one's second person needs, such as Elias recounts, can be just as radically self-annihilating as any direct assault on one's person. Indeed, the harm of having another person to whom we are intimately tied and who is uniquely dependent upon us subjected to violence we cannot prevent can be even more unbearable than a direct assault on oneself. Brison captures this truth of relational selfhood when she writes, in respond to Elias' story: "How she managed (how she manages) to continue living is incomprehensible to me… I can (now) live with the (vivid) possibility that I might be murdered. But I cannot live with even the possibility that this kind of torture could be inflicted on my child." (57). Brison's words attest to the fact that the second person need for those we love to be recognized and respected in their immeasurable value and dignity, and to be cared for and loved accordingly, is often experienced as a deeper and more fundamental need than even the need to preserve one's own life.

Stories of falling while caring one's child, often shared in mother-to-mother internet chat groups, also lend credence to the strength of many mother's investments in the welfare of their children over and above their own. Among these stories is that of Evonne Lack, who writes of falling in a mall parking lot while carrying her child in a wearable baby carrier. She herself had countless scratches, but her child not a single one. On her own account, her body "on autopilot" had "protect[ed] the child over itself". To add to the strength her testimony, she recounts her own mother's experience of falling down a set of cement stairs while carrying both her and her twin sister: Her mother "took the impact of the cement in her teeth, knocking them out" while the two girls "gently…roll[ed] away onto the grass" (Lack, 2015). Another mother offers a response to Lack's story which eloquently captures the transformation in both need and vulnerability that many undergo after having a child: "The body knows what the most important thing it's got is… if there's no baby, it protects heart and head. If there is a baby, it protects the heart that walks around outside of your body." The relational connection one feels to one's own child is often so profound as to seemingly place one's very heart in their body.

Where Sartre's *Critique* allows for the possibility that our actions will express our capacity for freedom in challenging the impetus towards violence that comes with the experience of need in the context of scarcity, Evonne Lack's account of both her and her own mother's fall

goes further. She does not *choose* to protect her child by putting herself in harm's way. Her action is non-voluntary and unintentional. Yet it nonetheless follows through on a commitment of care that lies at the heart of her sense of self. Being non-volitional, moreover, does not make the act any less ethical. Hers is a story of the very powerful ethical force of care. The force of care is so strong that it not only makes us capable of putting another's welfare before our own, or, even more profoundly, granting their welfare the place that our own might otherwise have; care makes it possible for another's need to be the source of our own most vital needs, these needs being needs for others to be protected from harm, to be loved, to be treated with dignity, respect, and value, and much more. These needs have such strength and are such a fundamental part of one's self that the prospect of life in a world where certain harms befall the objects of one's care can be infinitely more unbearable than the prospect of one's own death.

This kind of care can be at once a fundamental expression of one's own self-care, and thus non-altruistic, and also a fundamental expression of one's ethical life insofar as its object is first and foremost the good of another. Such care, however, is not a 'break with being', as Levinas would insist that ethics must be. Instead, it is an expression of the fundamental ties to others that constitute our very being. Our ties to others are constitutive of our selves and of the values and projects we impart to the world. These ties, moreover, form a fundamental part of ethical life in which we are most deeply at home with ourselves when another's needs guide our own. Thus it is that we do not always break from our own being in the moments when we give over the bread from our mouth to another. Sometimes, it is in risking hunger or hardship ourselves for the sake of promoting the welfare of another that we are most connected to our deeper, relational needs and most at home in our relational selves.

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[1] Hazel Barnes' introduction to the English translation of *Search for a Method* notes that he understood this work as in fact the logical conclusion of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. She quotes him as saying that he places this essay first in part out of concern that it would otherwise appear as if" the mountain had brought forth a mouse'" (1968: ix).

[2] Sartre's transition from an ontological account of freedom in his early work to a material account of freedom in his later texts raises the question of whether his philosophy has undergone a radical transformation by the time he writes his *Critique*. Yet some scholars argue for an integral philosophical connection between material and ontological freedom, rather than a tension or even a stark contradiction between the two, while also acknowledging a socially and political exigent transformation in Sartre's thought after *Being and Nothingness*. Among them is

Hazel Barnes. Already in *Being and Nothingness*, Barnes asserts, Sartre saw ontological freedom as entailing "the possibility of living creatively." "But", she continues, "a society which through economic oppression or terror does everything to thwart the individual's creative act…leaves man his freedom only as a sort of abstraction" (1963, xxi). Ontological freedom is a necessary condition for concrete expressions of freedom within a social and political context, while social, political, and material freedom are necessary conditions for the meaningful expression of ontological freedom. Systems of oppression rely on the integral connection between ontological and material freedom insofar as they seek to undermine the ontological freedom of those they subjugate; thus, oppression relies on "the false premise that men are not free beings who make themselves what they are, but that they are born with an absolute nature bound up with some accident of birth" (xxi). While ontological and material freedom bear a crucial relationship to each another, however, Barnes emphasizes that Sartre's attention has shifted away from the emphasis on ontological freedom that characterized *Being and Nothingness* towards a broader and much more concrete consideration of the ways in which one's practical freedom can be undermined, something for which many of Sartre's critics have called (xxiv).

[3] E.g., pg. 136-138, 153-154, and 157.

[4] See Chapter 1.

[5] See above, footnote 2.

[6] Monahan (2008) makes this point. He writes:

> Sartre, echoing liberal social contract theory, argues that there is not enough for everyone, but not enough for everyone to *do* what? Not enough for everyone to survive, or not enough for everyone to have all that they could desire? …It is a question, in other words, not just of how much there is in the world at a given time, but of how much we need, how much we desire, and what we are doing to address those needs and desires. Scarcity in the normative sense, which is the sense that points towards threat, is contingent upon human ends – there is not enough *for* some goal or desire. The struggle against scarcity in that sense, then, is a struggle to take control not only of the resources we need, but over our desires themselves. (65)

[7] Jonathan Miles' *The Wreck of the Medusa* (New York: Grove Press, 2007) reconstructs these events on the basis of found journals and the accounts of survivors.

[8] These events are the subject of M. NourbeSe Philip's collection of poetry, *Zong!* (2008)

[9] "Hundreds of Migrants are Feared Dead as Ship Capsizes Off Libyan Coast". *New York Times*. Accessed April 20, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/20/world/europe/italy-migrants-capsized-boat-off-libya.html.

[10] Eva Kittay addresses the moral harm of having to make such a choice in "The Global Heart Transplant and Caring Across National Boundaries" (2008).

[11] See Moody Adam's *The Titanic's Last Hero* (1997).

[12] Levinas' discusses the significance of this language on pg. 3-4 of the work that bears this name.

[13] Contrary to Sartre, Levinas vociferously differentiates what is otherwise than being from not being. For him, characterizing being's other as not being sets up an oppositional relationship between being and its other—a relationship that establishes difference in the context of commonality, as if being and its other were but the flipsides of a single coin. For Levinas, to treat being's other as not being is also to confuse it with the dead—that which has passed out of being. This passing leaves a hollow in being which becomes the place of non-being, but which is "refilled with being just as quickly as it is formed" (1998: 3). The difference between being and non-being is thus much less radical than the difference between being and what is otherwise than being for Levinas, and cannot capture the radical otherness that is the subject of ethics. Levinas criticizes philosophies of nothingness less poetically but more pointedly in "On Escape": "Henri Bergson has shown that to think nothingness is to think being as crossed out. And it seems to us incontestable that nothingness is the work of a thinking essentially turned towards being" (2003: 70).

[14] April D. Capili's "The Created Ego in Levinas' Totality and Infinity" makes the last two of these points regarding the relationship between the self and the Other in Levinas' philosophy (*Sophia* 2011: 50, 677–692).

[15] Since the command that my immediate proximity to the Other's need issues to me has no force or power with which to be imposed, it is one that can be—and often is—violated, yet it is a command that never fails to be issued by this need.

[17] Dussel's philosophy also fundamentally challenges the eurocentrism of Levinas' work through thinking that is at once ethical *and* political, addressing global material inequalities and the concrete needs of the Latin America world in the context of postcolonialism and global capitalism. In *Philosophy of Liberation*, for instance, Dussel contends that "[a]mong the beings or things that appear in the world, which manifest themselves in the system along with instruments, there is one absolutely *sui generis*, distinct from all the rest…the faces of other persons" (*Philosophy of Liberation*, 1985: 40). "A person", he continues, "is not something but someone" (1985: 40). This difference,
"acquires practical reality when someone says, "I'm hungry!" The hunger of the oppressed, of the poor, is an effect of an unjust system. As such, it has no place in the system. First of all because it is negativity, 'lack of', non-being in the world, but fundamentally because to satiate structurally the hunger of the oppressed is to change radically the system. Hunger as such is the practical exteriority of, or the most subversive internal transcendentality against, the system: the total and insurmountable 'beyond.'" (1985: 41-42). The hunger seen upon the Other's face, for Dussel, is at once an unmediated ethical demand and an effect of injustice. Hunger places the

poor outside the bounds of the economic world order; the hungry are global capitalism's selected dead, to invoke a phrase of Sartre's. In turn, to answer to the demand made by the hunger of the poor is to transcendence the bounds of a system that elects the hungry out of existence.

[18] See Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium*, 203C-204A.

[19] In "On Escape", Levinas repeatedly speaks of the 'brutality' of being, thus aligning being with 'animal' life as opposed to uniquely 'human' life. See pg. 51, 56, and 65. See Woods (2005) and Attington (2005) for trenchant critiques of the privileged place that Levinas gives to humans over other animal in his ethics.

[20] In "The Name of the Dog", Levinas offers these words of testimony to the dehumanization he suffered as a Jewish prisoner of war in Nazi Germany: "[T]he other men, called freed, who had dealings with us or gave us work or orders or even a smile—and the children and women who passed by and sometimes raised their eyes—stripped us of our human skin. We were subhuman, a gang of apes. A small inner murmur, the strength and wretchedness of persecuted people, reminded us of our essence as thinking creatures, but we were no longer part of the world. We were beings trapped in their species; despite all their vocabulary, beings without language. (In *Animal Philosophy*, Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, Eds. London and New York: Continuum, 47-50, p. 48).

[21] As Levinas explains (and his translator evocatively renders), malaise is "[t]he fact of being ill at ease [*mal à son aise*]" (58). This unease expresses itself as a restlessness within being and a need to get out of being, yet without anywhere to go.

[22] Levinas' claim the human beings are alone in being able to act 'otherwise than being' by foregoing their own needs in the interest of responding to the needs others is belied by the actions of many other animals who sacrifice their own welfare to protect that of others, even outside their own species—as dogs often do their owners, and as dolphins often do for humans lost at sea or threatened by sharks. Levinas' characterization of ethics as that by which human beings transcend animal thus does an injustice to the ethical capacities of other animals.

[23] See Cohen p. 110.

Afterword: The Burdened Virtue of Second Person Needs?

Second person needs confound individualistic thinking about human welfare by showing that another's good can also be one's own. These needs are thus a testament to a relational dimension of human flourishing in which, in the words of Alasdair MacIntyre, "goods... are neither mine-rather-than-others' nor others'-rather-than-mine, but instead… can only be mine insofar as they are those of others" (1999, 119). Insofar as second person needs express the extent to which one's own good hinges on the wellbeing of others, second person needs are also a testament to the holistic moral capacity for care. The moral capacity for care is, as Sarah Miller explains, "the distinctive ability to adopt and advance another person's ends as one's own," a capacity that, according to Miller, deserves to be esteemed just as much as the capacity for self-determination deserves to be respected (2012, 77-78).

Because second person needs speak to an investment in another's well-being so profound as to cause one's own well-being to flourish or fall together with theirs, I have also suggested that having these needs can be a *virtue*, for the one who experiences them is holistically aware of the interconnections between her own good and the good of others, and is unable to stand passively by as others suffer. One way to understand the virtue in second person needs is to recognize them as a form of *agape*, an other-regarding love through which one comes to have, as Joel Feinberg explains, a personal "interest in the advancement of someone else's interests" (1984, 71). Moreover, second person needs express what Eva Kittay has called the *virtue* of care: "a disposition…in which 'a shift takes place from the investment in our life situation to the situation of the other, the one in need'" (2001, 260; quoting Gastmans, Dierckx de Casterlé, and Schotsmans 1998, 53). Kittay explains, however, that the one who manifests this disposition toward another must have their own interests supported in turn by a third party if caring is to be just, a principle of justice she refers to by the name of *doulia*.

By way of conclusion to this project, I wish to add a word 'after' my own words about second person need; a final word that both contests and challenges them. I thus turn to the work of Martha Nussbaum, Lisa Guenther, and Lisa Tessman to explore some of the ramifications of maintaining the caring disposition manifested in second person needs—and thus experiencing the deep relational vulnerability's that caring entails—in social or political climates where the principle of what Kittay calls *doulia* is lacking.

While virtues are typically dispositions that aid in our own flourishing, and thus have a central role in ethics understood in the Aristotelian sense as the art of living well, Tessman's *Burdened Virtues* (2005) argues that there are some peculiar virtues that may compromise the well-being of the one who has them at the same time that they may be ethically required of us all. I have described second person needs not only as virtues but also as ambiguous vulnerabilities that can enrich and enhance one's life at the same time that they can lead to devastating harm, a claim that would be deeply troubled if second person needs are 'burdened virtues' in Tessman's sense. Moreover, I suggest here that second person needs may indeed be paradigmatic 'burdened virtues' in climates where the care for others that they holistically express is itself un-cared for care.

In order to engage with Tessman and confront the challenges her work presents for my project, I first turn in these final pages to Martha Nussbaum's work on the emotions and to Lisa Guenther's analysis of the capacity to care as a target of social violence. Nussbaum's work is itself a subject of critique in Tessman's *Burdened Virtues*. Moreover, it is importantly similar to my own in highlighting the ethical value of the capacity to experience one's own welfare as so intimately connected to that of another that her good (as well as her harm) is redoubled in one's own.

Eudaimonistic Judgments

In her work on the emotions, Martha Nussbaum has argued that feeling compassion as well as other emotions such as love and grief entails an implicit "eudaimonistic judgment." A eudaimonistic judgment is a judgment "concerned with one's own flourishing" (2008, 10; 2001, 31). In the case of compassion, she explains, this judgment "places the suffering person or persons among the important parts of the life of the person who feels the emotion. It says 'They

count for me: they are among my most important goals and projects'" (2008, 10). In this respect, compassion defies impartiality; there is no compassion without *me* in it.

Nussbaum insists, however, that "eudaimonism is not egoism" (2008, 10). The one who is *eudaimonistic* in her emotional life is not one who defends her own interests against others but who "make[s] herself vulnerable in the person of another" (2001, 319). The eudaimonistic judgment that underpins compassion is one that recognizes the interconnectedness of self and other by identifying another's suffering as an impediment to one's own flourishing, not one that reduces another's good to the means of achieving one's isolated ends. The partiality of this judgment does not make it an immoral one, although it does make it localized: compassion, like both love and grief, looks out upon the world from the perspective of one's own life, and finds the world one sees from that perspective devastatingly blighted by the suffering of certain others.

In *Upheavals of Thought* (2001), Nussbaum unfolds these points together through reflection on the grief she experienced following her mother's death. She writes:

> What inspires grief is the death of someone beloved, someone who has been an important part of one's own life. This doesn't mean that the emotions view these objects simply as tools or instruments of the agent's own satisfaction: they may be invested with intrinsic worth or value, as indeed my mother surely was. They may be loved for their own sake, and their good sought for its own sake. But what makes the emotion center around this particular mother, among all the wonderful people and mothers in the world, is that she is *my* mother, a part of my life…The notion of *loss* that is central to grief itself has this double aspect: it alludes to the value of the person who has left or died, but it alludes as well to that person's relation to the perspective of the mourner. (2001, 31)

Nussbaum's concept of a *eudaimonistic* judgment thus captures the entwinement between one's own good and the good of others that allows for second person needs as it figures in emotional life. It also captures the role that investments of personal value in another's welfare play in this entwinement. For Nussbaum, it is only when someone is given a place of importance in relation to one's own life that their wellbeing and one's own can run together. This goes beyond granting others dignity and intrinsic worth to include recognizing others' value "as constituents of a life that is my life and not someone else's" (2001, 32).

There is both an ethical and a political component to this recognition, moreover, because a self-enfolded sense of another's value—as occurs both in emotions such as grief and compassion and in the experience of second person needs—makes another's good at once a

constitutive part of one's own good and something that one strives to realize in the world. Nussbaum illustrates this point through the example of the imprisonment of a social justice activist. Someone who has made justice for all social groups a constitutive part of her own good cannot flourish unless she is herself able to play an active role in the pursuit of social justice. Thus, "if she is in prison and unable to act, she will view her own life as incomplete" (2001, 32).

Nussbaum's attention to the *eudaimonistic* ties that must bind one's own good to the lives of others in order that the feeling of love, of compassion, or of grief can occur can serve to better illuminate the virtue in many second person needs as well as their potential political poignancy. When the constitutive entwinement between one's own welfare and the good of others breaks through our previous complacency with the imperative force of a demand for a change that would improve the lot of those to whom we feel ourselves tied—and so would at the same time protect our own good and theirs—we are moved by a second person need. Second person needs express connections between one's own wellbeing and that of others where these connections are so powerful as to compel us to answer to demands made by virtue of these connections. One thing that a second person need can demand is that I not be a bystander to others' vital harm, for this harm threatens to devastate my own life together with theirs.

Human beings are the kind of animals that depend on each other not only to live but to life well, a lesson that Aristotle himself teaches. In the *Politics*, Aristotle describes human beings as the kind of animals whose flourishing cannot be achieved in isolation but only within a community collectively striving for the good life. A life outside of this community may be adequate for other animals or for the Gods, but it can never be sufficient for a human being. A human life is stripped of the good and reduced to bare existence when untethered from its constitutive connections with others. If the virtues are those excellences of character that allow for a flourishing human life, determining what these virtues are requires considering what flourishing looks like for animals that need each other. The incredible moral and relational capacity to care for others so deeply that their good becomes a constitutive part of one's own welfare would seem to be one of the virtues of dependent animals such as ourselves. Second person needs enact this virtue as they emphatically announce that one's own good cannot be maintained without also assuring the wellbeing of others; they also demand that others' welfare be protected, and make having this demand answered a constitutive part of one's own good

Further, in these needs, one is vulnerable to harm together with the other whose welfare one personally values, and one feel the imperative force of a demand to protect this mutually imbricated wellbeing. If one is prevented from acting on a second person need, as Ruth Elias, for instance, was barred from feeding her own child in Auschwitz, one becomes the target of a moral harm to which the larger community is in turn called upon to answer, just as I was first called upon to care for the needs of another through my entwinement in that other's life. The example of Ruth Elias' traumatic experience in Auschwitz shows that together with the distinctive moral capacity to care for others so intimately as to make their good a constitutive part of one's own flourishing (thus making their needs a part of one's own vulnerability's demands), goes the need to have this precious moral ability supported by one's larger social and political community. Without this support, the virtue of caring for others so deeply as to tether one's own welfare to theirs can have an immense – and perhaps a too great – personal cost.

The Burden of Uncared for Care

One of the most egregious kinds of social violence occurs when one's ability to care for others is systematically assaulted as a means of undermining one's humanity, an assault that many of those interned in the Holocaust camps were forced to endure. Lisa Guenther's recent book, *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives* (2013), names such violence as a form of 'social death,' a concept first developed by Orlando Patterson in a study of slavery. Social death decimates one's intersubjective life through systematic acts of oppression that target the connection-based existence of the relational self. As Guenther explains, Patterson argues that the slave system—a paradigm example of a system geared towards the social death of its subjects—sought to reduce the multivalent web of social relationships giving human life meaning to a single relationship of domination: the relationship to one's master. In Guenther's words, "[t]his reduction not only circumscribes the slave's personal freedom and exposes them to radical domination by the master, since they are no longer protected by a network of kin who would intercede on their behalf, it also bans slaves *from interceding on behalf of others*" (xxii; emphasis added).

One of the most devastatingly painful parts of the total assault on the intersubjective dimensions of selfhood that results in social death is its attack on the moral ability to come to the aid of those for whom one most cares, an attack which is often also an assault on our deepest

second person needs. The violence of this assault is captured in the words of a former American slave, Mr. Reed, quoted first in Patterson's and then in Guenther's text:

> The most barbarous thing I saw with these eyes—I lay on my bed and study about it now—I had a sister, my older sister, she was fooling with a clock and broke it, and my old master taken her and tied a rope around her neck—just enough to keep it from choking her—and tied her up in the back yard and whipped her I don't know how long. There stood mother, there stood father, and there stood all the children and none could come to her rescue. (Guenther xxii; Patterson 1982, 8)

The assault on the precious capacity "to respond to the others who matter most" to us is one of the most effective maneuvers of the systematic violence that aims to exact social death (Guenther xxiii). In Guenther's analysis, this assault is the lynchpin of a system that "seeks to undermine…social, ethical, and political subjectivity… at the very sight of its emergence" in self-constitutive connections of care (xxiii).

The *eudaimonistic* connections between self and others that Nussbaum's work on the emotions captures—connections that are also at the heart of our ability to experience second person needs—reveal the danger in experiencing another's welfare as a constitutive part of one's own good in climates that assault the deep connections of relational life and the unique second person vulnerabilities they entail, such as those in which Mr. Reed was forced to live. *Eudaimonistic* connections, as the word itself implies, play a vital role in human flourishing at the same time that they can expose us to the agonizing pain of having the suffering of others and the loss of other lives tear our own lives apart. The good of those others to which one is so connected is a constitutive part of our own flourishing. Yet while without these constitutive ties to others our lives would be deeply impoverished and our flourishing grossly truncated, it is also because of these constitutive ties that another's suffering can be the source of one's own life-shattering agony and another's death, as was that of Nussbaum's mother for Nussbaum, the cause of "a gaping hole in my own life" (2001, 82).

Second person needs, like *eudaimonistic* judgments, are always a liability due to the connection-based harms to which they expose one. Nonetheless, much like these judgments, they can also be an asset, for second person needs are a profound expression of the constitutive connections of care to others that make a human life more than an empty shell. Indeed, it may be those who have been targeted by the machinations of systems of social death that are most

attuned to the immense value in these relational forms of need, for they have suffered the traumatic decimation of the social self that results from their systematic denial.

Yet does acknowledging the invaluable contribution that these forms of need can make to a good human life also mean enshrining them as virtuous expressions of social connectivity to which everyone ought to aspire? The testimony of Mr. Reed, not to mention Primo Levi and Ruth Elias, reveals that the very precious ethical capacity to make the good of another one's own—that is, the capacity to care—is often the prime target of systems of social violence that seek to destroy the relational self. Thus, being able to be, and to remain, vulnerable in the connection-based ways that second person needs entail may not be a luxury that everyone can afford. How, then, can it be just to make maintaining, and even cultivating, second person needs an ethical obligation pertaining to us all? For those whose lives are most affected by systematic oppression, the prospective harms to which second person needs expose us may be too high a cost to pay for the meaningful human connections to which they attest. Perhaps some may find the strength to continue to nourish these vital forms of relational connection, a profound act of resistance to the machinations of systems of social death. But is doing so something that can be ethically demanded of someone subject to a systematic assault on their relational life?

Further, might cultivating second person needs be much more generally a form of privilege in contemporary times, something reserved for those whose lives are relatively unscathed by global forms of injustice and oppression? Is maintaining and developing these connection-based needs a kind of "bourgeois morality," to take a term from Marx, which only those whom First World privilege has sheltered from bearing the unbearable pain of being a daily witness to the decimation of other's lives through poverty, hunger, or illness can easily afford to maintain? In discussing the ethics of vulnerability with a group of students last fall, one of them spoke of her experience volunteering in a hospital in the Philippines the previous summer. She had been stuck by a climate of apathy in the hospital, something that she eventually came to attribute to the extreme lack of resources and its effect on the medical staff's ability to effectively care for their patients. While it is deeply morally alarming, such disaffection can be a crucial coping mechanism for those who have been subject to the gross economic injustices of global capitalism and rampant neoliberalism, injustices which often cripple the capacity to translates one's care for others into effective action to remediate their suffering. Can those who truncate their affective care for others in order to be able to go on, day after day, performing the

labor of care in a context where global injustice has effectively tied their hands be rightfully chastised for it?

Regardless of how we answer the difficult question as to whether one can be ethically expected to maintain affective investments of care in social, economic, and political climates that are grossly hostile to them, however, we can recognize the moral damage that one suffers when one's capacity to care for others is impaired by injustice and oppression. A life severed from affective ties to others and truncated not only in second person needs but also – if Nussbaum's analysis of the intimate connections at the heart of emotional life is correct – short on compassion, love, and the bonds of personal investment in another's life that allow one to grief over their death, can hardly be described as a flourishing one. It is only by first taking note of the immense value in second person needs, as well as the emotional connectivity to others that they entail, that we can recognize the horrific relational violence of a world where having these needs presents, for many, a risk so great as to potentially outweigh the relational and moral harm of disaffection.

Burdened Virtues

Lisa Tessman's *Burdened Virtues* troubles easy assumptions about the good life and its component virtues by attention to the effects of oppression on virtuous dispositions. One of the dispositions that oppression burdens, according to Tessman, is "sensitivity and attention to others' suffering," something that must be present in order that second person needs can arise (84). In a world marred as ours is by immense amounts of preventable suffering caused by systematic injustice, Tessman questions whether it is possible for any human being to flourish while being sensitive to and attending to others' suffering. She argues that while sensitivity and attention to others' suffering is a fundamental moral virtue and remains so in the context of oppression, where it becomes all the more incessantly demanded, it is nonetheless set against one's own flourishing through its fundamental connection to pain. Insofar as the current climate of rampant injustice and oppression calls ceaselessly upon us to exercise this sensitivity, one's own wellbeing can be seriously compromised.

Tessman begins her inquiry into this "burdened virtue" with a reflection on her own heightened sensitivity to the suffering of other's following the birth of her daughter. Tessman writes:

> Immediately after my daughter was born, I began to experience—and still do though it has become blunted and much less constant—an excess of sensitivity to other's suffering. It was the fall of 2000, and an(other) intifada was starting up in Israel/Palestine; every night on the news there were scenes of Palestinian boys and young men being shot at, then bombed, by the Israeli Defense Force, and even more detailed portrayals of the Israelis who were killed or wounded. Watching it was anguishing; every person, especially but not only the young among them, was somebody's child, somebody's baby. I held my own newborn baby, Yuval, and envisioned in tiny flashes the terrifying and unbearable possibility that somebody might hurt her. With every new report of an injury or death I moved to imagining myself as that parent, losing my baby. All that loss! The level of pain was unfathomable (81).

Tessman's reflection captures how the experience of caring for an intimate other can trigger a deepening of care for others at a much greater remove from one's daily life. I wrote about this connection in the introduction to this work as one that can transform cognitive ethical and political commitments into urgent and emphatic ones. Investments of care or, in Nussbaum's terms, *eudaimonistic* judgments, that make another's wellbeing an integral element of one's own flourishing can transform an intellectual acknowledgement of a global injustice into an expansive second person need to guard others from harm. Sara Ruddick has also commented on the expansive reach of care, focusing on maternal care in particular. She writes: "Keeping the world safe is human work and in no way the special responsibility of mothers. Yet I am not surprised when a mother testifies that her love requires a commitment to world protection nearly as demanding as the feeding, holding, and nursing of her infant," for the welfare of any infant ultimately depends on the safeguarding the world (1989, 81).

Tessman argues, however, that a heightened sensitivity to other's suffering can be an overwhelming burden in our current world, one that is potentially devastating to one's own flourishing. In the passage above, she describes her enhanced sensitivity to violence and the loss of life after the birth of her daughter as an *excess* of sensitivity, language that marks it as a painful extreme rather than a happy Aristotelian median. She also describes such an excessive sensitivity as having to contend with an "unfathomable" amount of pain in the world today, illustrating the hardship that such sensitivity can entail for anyone whose life it colors.

While indifference to other's suffering "is morally horrifying" to Tessman, she argues that excessive sensitivity, such as that exemplified by her own experiences following her daughter's birth, "is psychically unsustainable" in our contemporary world (83). While some limits to one's sensitivity to others' suffering must thus be found in order that one's own life go on in the midst of rampant injustice, where and when to draw these limits is not morally clear. Nor is it clear to Tessman where and when to limit ethical responsibility to actively attend to this suffering, although this responsibility cannot be limitless if it is not to crush those who shoulder its weight (84).

In a world where preventable human suffering were less rampant, there might be a simple solution to this ethical dilemma. One could be sensitive to every instance of suffering and actively attend to it without becoming, in Tessman's words, "so immersed in the boundless pain of others – and so exhausted with the efforts of ameliorating that pain – that no piece of the self is left free to experience joy or to flourish" (85). But this is not our world, although most of us live as if it were. In our world, with its grotesque abundance of remediable injustices such as oppression, economic exploitation, and more, even moderate sensitivity to injustice threatens to destroy the one who has it while anything less than perfect sensitivity to other's suffering remains morally unsatisfying. "Suppose… that I open myself compassionately to a moderate number of those who are suffering," writes Tessman. "I feel with them their hardships and the mistreatments they bear, and I am moved to intervene and struggle against the injustices that cause them to suffer…" (85). As I focus my sensitivity and attention on the suffering on a limited population, I encounter enough pain here alone to overwhelm me with devastating anguish at the same time that I coldly and condemnably turn my back on the suffering of countless others. According to Tessman, anyone who strives for virtue in the realm of sensitivity and attention to others suffering will thus be at once both too indifferent and too anguished, as the virtue of caring for others and the virtue in caring for oneself are rent apart by pervasive injustice and oppression (85). This tightrope walk between indifference and anguish is but another infuriating face of the violence done to the human community through global injustice and oppression according to Tessman.

Tessman's analysis of the tension between exercising sensitivity and attention to others' suffering and ensuring one's own good in the contemporary world of widespread violence, global injustice, and preventable human suffering can also be readily applied to second person

needs. If we follow her thinking, we must conclude that the very precious ethical capacity to experience globally-minded second person needs—an especially heightened way of being sensitive and attentive to other's suffering—and the ability keep one's self and psyche intact are rent apart by the current climate of injustice and oppression, forcing a choice between caring for others and sustaining a bare minimum of psychic peace. Indeed, second person needs can be understood as an especially precarious form of sensitivity and attention to others' suffering, for having a second person need means that one's own welfare is so intimately coupled with that of others that one will not only be pained by their pain, but may also be vitally harmed by it.

Yet how far must we follow Tessman's analysis of the conflict between sensitivity and attention to others' suffering and a flourishing life? Although Tessman presents this disposition as a threat to one's own wellbeing in a climate of rampant injustice, it is not at all clear that a human life—the life of a social animal—can flourish *without* sensitivity and attention to others' suffering even if having this disposition is a cause of psychic disruption, pain, and agony that one might otherwise avoid. To lack in this sensitivity or to be unmoved by it is to fail to authentically acknowledge one's self-constitutive ties to others and to impoverish one's life by stripping it bare of the relational connections that give it much of its meaning and that allow for many of its most precious joys, even if these connections can also cause devastating pain. Moreover, insofar as we are the kinds of animals that depend on one another, caring for others is not fundamentally at odds with caring for ourselves; instead, it can be one of the deepest forms of our own self-care. Certainly, our affective ties to others make us vulnerable in the world in ways that we would not be otherwise, and making others' ends our own makes us susceptible to being harmed ourselves when others are harmed. There may also be times when we are forced to severe our ties to others in order to protect ourselves, but these times are often deeply traumatic ones because our bonds to others are such a pivotal part of our own good, and not an empty liability to harm.

Further, while Tessman's analysis stresses the heightened conflict between sensitivity and attention to others' suffering and one's own flourishing that arises in the context of global injustice, she doubts whether this disposition can make a seamless contribution to human flourishing in *any* climate. Tessman questions the potential for any "inherently painful disposition" to ever be a component of a flourishing human life, and any degree of sensitivity and attention to others' suffering will always entail pain (90). As she writes, "[s]ensitivity and attention to others' suffering involves taking on others' pain, being pained by their pain; one's

actual felt pain is part of the response to the other that constitutes the morally recommended responsive action" (93). Indeed, it is because having this disposition cannot but detract from one's own flourishing by causing pain that demanding an excess of it is a way in which oppression harms those who live in its midst (95).

If second person needs have this sensitivity as a background condition, then it seems Tessman would have to say of them what she says of the disposition to be sensitivity and attention to others' suffering in general: insofar as these needs must be coupled with pain or, at the very least, with its prospect, they are always counterpoised to one's own flourishing. However, in focusing on pain, Tessman is seeing only a part of the effect that sensitivity and attention to others' suffering has on those who experience it. Sensitivity and attention to others' suffering is an expression of the larger ethical virtue of care, and second person needs are an especially deep and holistic expression of this virtue. Caring deeply enough about others to have these needs means that one's wellbeing depends on theirs. This interdependency allows for others' joys—and not just their pains—to be redoubled in one's own, and for one's own life to be infinitely enriched through other's triumphs. While second person needs intensify the pain that another's suffering causes, the joys they also bring to our life may make this pain worthwhile to take on despite the risk of unhappiness it brings.

Tessman emphasizes that the exercise of some virtues demands that one risk the hardship of suffering pain— courage, for instance, often involves putting oneself in harm's way. Moreover, part of the merit of these virtues lies in the willingness to face pain they entail, something that it is much harder to do than it is to cultivate dispositions that only allow for pleasure. Yet this special merit does not keep these virtues from potentially detracting from one's own flourishing. The disposition of sensitivity to others' suffering may be virtuous, and so too may having certain second person needs. Yet these dispositions, according to Tessman, are likely to detract from a flourishing life rather than contribute to it, particularly if they are "especially in demand," as is the case in the current world order of rampant human suffering due to injustice and oppression (94).

The disjunction relationship between the sensitivity and attention to others' suffering and a flourishing life, together with the relentless demand for this disposition in the context of oppression, makes it what Tessman calls a "burdened virtue": one of those "traits that make a contribution to human flourishing – if they succeed in doing so at all – *only* because they enable

survival of or resistance to oppression…, while in other ways they detract from the bearer's well-being, in some cases so deeply that their bearer may be said to lead a wretched life" (96). Tessman argues that the struggle for liberation from oppression requires sensitivity and attention to others' suffering. Yet taking this virtue upon oneself weighs one down with pain, with anguish, and with the losses that come of self-sacrifice. It does not, according to her, bring joy, pleasure, or happiness—all of those positive qualities that I have emphasized are also provided to us by a connected affective life.

Reflecting on Tessman's account of the "burdened virtue" of sensitivity and attention to others' suffering, the virtue that so clearly underpins the ability to experience second person needs, I am repeatedly struck by what it reveals about the vast extent of the moral demand for second person needs in the current climate of global injustice and widespread oppression, for, as she emphasizes, for someone to be coldly indifferent to *any* instance of human suffering is morally abhorrent. So too am I struck by the potential risk Tessman alerts us to for one's own life to be devastated by second person needs in a world where the suffering of others is incessant. Yet even in such a bleak and hostile external climate, to be disaffected by others' suffering must be recognized as a form of *eudaimonistic* loss, and not merely an ethical failure.

As Nussbaum's concept of a *eudaimonistic* judgment helps to capture, second person needs are able to arise because, as relational animals, human beings are the kinds of beings whose flourishing depends on the flourishing of others. Our self-constitutive investments of care in the welfare of others give rise to some of our deepest vulnerabilities to harm as beings whose flourishing is relational. These are vulnerabilities that live outside our own body in the body of another. Further, systematic restrictions in one's ability's to attend to the needs of others that target the relational vulnerabilities that arise through our capacity to care for others so intimately as to make their own good a constitutive part of our own are some of the most egregious forms of interpersonal violence imaginable.

Still, despite the risks that caring for others' can pose, being able to exercise the precious ability to care for another so intimately as to make their welfare a constitutive part of one's own good is a vital element of a flourishing human life. Reflecting on the immense pain that both Mr. Reed, Primo Levi, and Ruth Elias suffered in having their ability to care for others severed by oppressive institutions bent on the destruction of their relational lives gives a different valence to the relationship between flourishing and the virtue of care than that expressed by Tessman. One

lesson to learn from these experiences is that caring for others is vital to human flourishing, and not merely to ethical virtue, for it is a constitutive part of a healthy relational life—a life that is tied to others in pain but also in joy.

Further, testimonies such as Primo Levi's reveal that a human life is devastatingly blighted by the systematic diminishment of the ability to sustain caring connections to others just as much—if not more—than it is harmed by sustaining these connections despite the pain entailed. It is a deep and devastating *eudaimonistic* loss, and not just a loss of virtue, to not be able to build, maintain, or honestly acknowledge the constitutive ties to others that make the good of one person a vital component of the good of others, something that especially severe forms of oppression attempt to wretch away from their subjects. If any second person needs can be aptly described as burdened virtues, it seems that those of Irene Gut Opdyke and Helene Jacob, whom felt that their lives as they had known them would be shattered if they did not aid the Jewish people during the Holocaust, must be among them. Certainly, Gut Opdyke and Jacob should not have had to bear the immense burden of extending life-preserving aid to a persecuted people at the risk of their own lives. Yet both Gut Opdyke and Jacobs adamantly express the conviction that it would have been far more painful and far more life-devastating for them to deny their *eudaimonistic* connection to the Jewish people in their midst than it was to maintain a connected sense of self in the context of Jewish persecution. Against the onslaught of her nation's destruction under Hitler, Jacobs set out to "keep [her] personal world intact" and Opdyke, to continue to be the caring person she had long been even in the face of great risk (Jacobs, *The Rescuers*).

It is undeniably painful to have a connected sense of self in the context of oppression, and what Opdyke and Jacobs had to do ought never to have been demanded of them. Yet it may be more painful still to have oppression succeed at severing the ties to others than to allow oneself to be moved by second person needs. It was, after all, oppression's victories against his relational and moral personhood, and not the painful persistence of these dimensions of his personhood despite the Holocaust camps' horrific assaults against them, that left Primo Levi deeply haunted and ultimately unable to go on in his own life. And it is the same forms of assault that make even the prospect of a harm such as that suffered by Ruth Elias when her newborn child was taken from her in Auschwitz unbearably painful to many who have heard her testimony. What can be learned from these experiences is thus that it can be a far greater harm to one's flourishing to

have one's constitutive connections to others systematically truncated than to hold fast to one's investments of care in the welfare of others, even in a context of immense and preventable suffering.

Despite the limitations of her negative take on how caring for others affects one's own good, however, Tessman's work can help us to see that maintaining the intimate connections to others that allow for their welfare to be a constitutive part of one's own good is indeed a crucial virtue for those committed to liberatory struggles. While holding fast to one's investments of care in the face of their systematic abuse may not be something that can be morally demanded of someone whose moral and relational personhood is under violent assault, maintaining these investments is an immeasurably powerful act of resistance. Tessman's work also brilliantly exposes the harm oppression does to those who are sensitive and attentive to others' suffering by populating our world with an endless amount of that suffering, never letting us rest safely in the pleasures that our caring connections to others bring for the constant onslaught of violence against them.

The Politics of Need

In the final segment of her study of the burdened virtue in sensitivity and attention to others' suffering, Tessman critically returns to her opening account of her own heightened sensitivity to others' suffering following the birth of her daughter. She explains that rather than exemplifying an ethical virtue that also has political salience in the fight against oppression, her own experience reveals why sensitivity to others' suffering is not a virtue than can be relied upon politically. This is another point in her work that critically contends with my own. She writes:

> …the anguish that I felt on this occasion had such force precisely because it ricocheted back and forth between the pain depicted on the news and the terror I felt imagining harm befalling that tiny precious one that I held in my arms…when fear shifts its focus back and forth between oneself and others quite unlike oneself, one's impulses at ending the suffering may get redirected away from social or political action. (105)

Tessman makes the same point in less personal ways elsewhere in the chapter, while also emphasizing the role that privilege plays in allowing one's concerns for one's own wellbeing to be directed down avenues that permit the suffering of others' rather than countering it. In a

liberal, capitalist society, she argues, privileged persons are much better able to protect their self-interests through use of private resources than through supporting systems of mutual aid (100-101). Often, "the compassionate but…privileged viewer of suffering is moved not to social action, but to a fearful, sometimes even panicked, movement inwards, a scurry to protect all that might be lost" (103). This is an apt characterization of the reaction of many in the Unites States to the national and personal vulnerability that the attacks on September 11th, 2001 exposed, critiqued in Butler's *Precarious Life* and discussed in this work's introduction. Tessman explains:

> In the present political and economic structures, the privileged do not protect against loss by investing in the good of the public. They protect themselves through such means as individual retirement accounts, private education for their children, security systems for their homes, and, often, through greater segregation from and discrimination against the disadvantaged, who are likely to be not only the targets of their pity or compassion but also the figures in their nightmares. (103)

Tessman's concerns about the political unreliability of compassion, especially in the context of privilege and oppression, lead her to a critical engagement with Martha Nussbaum's work on compassion in *Upheavals of Thought*. As previously discussed, Nussbaum argues that compassion requires a *eudaimonistic judgment*, a judgment that connects one's own flourishing with the welfare of others by including their welfare among one's own ends. This is a judgment that recognizes the wellbeing of others as a constitutive part of one's own wellbeing, not one that treats others as mere means to one's isolated goals, and thus shares grounds with the experience of second person needs.

Nonetheless, Tessmans finds compassion—the emotion which gives rise to the disposition to be sensitive and attentive to others' suffering—to be plagued by self-interest and thus, in the context of oppression and of privilege, unable to be counted on to motivate action that would right injustice. To this effect, Tessman points to Nussbaum's acknowledgment that *eudaimonistic* judgments arise only after one has made a "more clearly self-interested" judgment, a judgment that attaches oneself to others through the imaginative possibilities that what has befallen them could also befall me (102). It is this "judgment of similar possibilities," in Tessman's terms, that then motivates one to agitate for social and political change: "Self-

interest itself, via thought about shared vulnerabilities," writes Nussbaum, "promotes the selection of principles that raise society's floor" (2001, 320-321; quoted in Tessman, 103).

Here, Tessman finds Nussbaum in the company of John Rawls, who also makes individual self-interest the basis for social agreement concerning a set of principles that would protect the least well-off. Her critique of both Nussbaum and Rawls is the same. Our world is *not* a world of shared vulnerabilities, but of dramatically unequal ones. While all human beings may be equally ontologically vulnerable to bodily injury and harm, to disease, to the pains of poverty, and much more, we are not equally socially vulnerable to these harms. Social, economic, and political privilege protects some from these harms while oppression exposes others to them. Thus, if a judgment of similar possibilities underlies the *eudaimonistic* judgment that connects our welfare with others and makes compassion possible, we cannot rely on compassion to motivate social and political change.

The same points of critique, it seems, would apply to those globally-minded second person needs that take one's enmeshed care for the welfare of intimate others—such as one's own child—and extend it to all the world's children. If it is caring for other's whose welfare is closely tied to one's own that sparks one's investment in the welfare of distant others, what happens when the threats posed to those close to us differ vastly from those posed to others at a greater remove? If what befalls the children of Israel and Palestinian, to use Tessman's own example, cannot befall my own because global political differences preserve them from these threats of violence, will my care still extend to these distant children?

Furthermore, Tessman emphasizes that privileged groups have ways of protecting themselves against harms that oppressed groups do not, including further entrenching the social and political differences that ensure their lesser degree of vulnerability to harm in the world. When judgments of similar possibilities do occur despite social stratification, these judgments are often followed by "a fear of loss" that can have devastating social consequences. As Tessman writes, "the threat [of loss] takes a shape formed in, for instance, the racist and xenophobic imagination that anxiously and vividly conjures up images of (black) criminals and (Arab) terrorists" (103). Thus, the fear connected to the recognition of our "shared vulnerabilities" can further entrench oppression.

Ultimately, according to Tessman, if compassion relies on a judgment of similar possibilities and of shared vulnerabilities, then compassion is "just a vehicle for…attention to

oneself" (104). The privileged person for whom others' suffering serves as an alert to their own vulnerability is also a person who has more, and thus more to lose, than others, making them all the less likely to take social and political risks that could jeopardize what injustice has granted them. Thus, while compassion remains a crucial, albeit burdened moral virtue for Tessman insofar it extends recognition to those that are suffering, it cannot be counted on as a vehicle of social change (105-106).

Do second person needs have the same political shortcomings that Tessman finds plaguing compassion? Yes and no. Second person needs share deeply in the *eudaimonistic* connections between one's own flourishing and the flourishing of others that underlie compassion as Nussbaum understands it, insofar as they make the wellbeing of others an integral part of one's own good. Yet they do not rest on a prior "judgment of similar possibilities," a judgment that what befalls others could also befall me. This form of judgment is one that begins in separation from others rather than in connection, whereas second person needs begin in the depths of our relational entwinement and express our own interests from out of these depths. Further, for the one who has second person needs, another's vulnerabilities are not paralleled in like vulnerabilities of one's own. Instead, another's vulnerabilities are coupled with vulnerability of one's own to *their* harm. For the one who has second person needs, another's vulnerabilities are thus truly *shared* vulnerabilities, and not just vulnerabilities that I first witness in another and then recognize as independent prospective risks for me. Second person needs are the needs of a relational self; one whose selfhood is constitutively tied to others. Insofar as one's very self depends on these constitutive connections to others, so too depends one's flourishing. When another to whom I am so intimately tied experiences a great joy, so too do I rejoice—a unique second person experience of flourishing that this intimacy with others affords me. In turn, when she is harmed, so too am I harmed.

Further, that second person needs are *needs* means that they are compelling. In these needs, our unique relational vulnerabilities are also demands, and emphatic and urgent ones at that. While compassion can be idle, even when responsive to urgent needs in others, a second person need does not have this luxury. Second person needs, as a form of demands issued by vulnerabilities that are truly shared with others (or, in Nussbaum's words, vulnerabilities of my own "*in the person of another*"[emphasis added]), thus have a force that compassion alone does not have. In *The Ethics of Vulnerability*, Erinn Gilson alerts her readers to a distinctive form of

vulnerability, described by Helene Cixous in *The Newly Born Woman*, that is "a source of strength… rather than just a danger" (Gilson, 2014, 144). The experience of this distinctive kind of vulnerability, for Cixous, is an experience of "force in… fragility" (Cixous 1986, 116; quoted in Gilson 144). There may be no better description of what it is to experience second person needs.

Yet just as the force of second person needs can make them more politically potent than is compassion for others' suffering alone, it can also make them more dangerous, for these needs may make demands that are politically, socially, and ethically suspect. One of the greatest challenges these needs pose comes in their uncertain degree of inclusivity. These needs can fail to extend far enough to reflect the full picture of human interconnectedness for many of the reasons Tessman outlines, ending with narrow investments in the welfare of those near and dear to us which can seemingly be protected through engaging in practices that cause harm to distant others or, at the very least, through standing idly by as global injustice continues. Furthermore, in the context of global economic injustice and widespread social oppression, the bonds of care that connect us to socially and economic diverse others are constantly under assault. If these bonds become too restricted, we risk excising huge swaths of the world's population from a lived connection with our own *eudaimonia*. This excommunication threatens to give rise to second person needs that make demands that serve the interests of a limited group while hindering the interests of others.

What we can learn from this risk is that the deep sensitivities to others' suffering, as well as the integral connections between others' welfare and our own that care allows, cannot replace the need for principles of justice to alleviate social and political wrongs in the current global world. Yet the principles of justice can also not forego sensitivity to the importance of care, becoming but a hollow rational calculus that prizes itself on indifference and impartiality. Nor can justice be allowed to remain in the hands of liberal capitalism, reduced to a tool to protect the self-interests of contracting parties against counterpoised interests of others and to allow for mutually beneficial collaborations among supposedly independent persons that have no need of each other. Instead, justice must itself be attuned to the interdependent nature of human flourishing. The interdependent nature of human welfare is a profound reality of our existence that second person needs emphatically announce and protect. While justice can mitigate the risks

of narrow expressions of these needs, care alone can give rise to globally-connected versions of them.

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