

THE LOVE OF NIKE:
ON THE DENIALS OF RACIALIZED PATRIARCHY AND
THE PHILOSOPHY OF COURAGEOUS OVERCOMING

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: The Love of Nike: On the Denials of Racialized Patriarchy and the Philosophy of Courageous Overcoming

Motivated by student survivors of sexual violence at the ‘University of Nike,’ this dissertation claims the denial of trauma is a central motor to the temporal operation of racialized patriarchy and its *philonikian*, or ‘victory-loving,’ notions of masculinity. I bear witness to this ‘temporality of denial’ in the institutional responses of the University of Oregon and UO-alum Phil Knight’s Nike corporation to the group sexual assault of Jane Doe by three university men’s basketball players. I also think through philosophies of overcoming this ancient operation of patriarchy in contemporary times.

Simone de Beauvoir suggests that patriarchy provides tempting avenues to flee our freedom of *becoming* who we are by denying the ambiguity of our human subjectivity. Instead, human potential is funneled into hierarchical gendered destinies derived from ancient perceived binaries of natural, embodied sex difference prescribing masculine material, political, and ontological domination. Rape, war, and conquest are central to this logic, a logic racialized in the Modern era of European colonization. Recent trauma-informed feminist psychology suggests that denial is a psychological mechanism that has efficiently abetted patriarchal oppression throughout history. I suggest Plato, the ‘father’ of the contemporary Academy, may have recognized this in his philosophy. To overcome centuries of masculine bias in interpretation, I undertake a close feminist translation of the war veteran Socrates’ pursuit of the virtue ‘*andreia*’ (ἀνδρεία), both ‘manliness’ and ‘courage’ in the Greek, through several dialogues contextualized within their dramatic placement in the history of the Peloponnesian War. Socrates’ pursuit of ‘*andreia*’ includes a critique of the denials of *philonikian* ‘manliness’ and a hunt for an alternative *philosophical* understanding. I suggest this wisdom-loving ‘*andreia*’ is articulated as a gender-critical vision of the strength and courage of love to

recollect and rebirth oneself in the aftermath of trauma. Finally, I return to Beauvoir's feminist philosophy of freedom and its temporality of repetition to further distinguish the 'forgetting' of denial from the 'forgetting' involved in trauma's overcoming. The latter requires we collectively sacrifice the destinies of patriarchal ontology as we continue to build a world in which victims of trauma might not only survive, but meaningfully *live*.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION:
PHILONIKE AND PHILOSOPHY

Now emulating these courageous men and deciding that good-spiritedness depends on freedom, and freedom depends on good souls, never overlook the perils of war.
—Pericles

The beauty of flowers and women’s charms can be appreciated for what they are worth; if these treasures are paid for with blood or misery, one must be willing to sacrifice them.
—Simone de Beauvoir

One of the many traditions at the University of Oregon (UO) is a practice in which Duck fans collectively kick their heels up, throw their hands up, and throw their heads back in a chorus sing-along to the earworm, “Shout!” The song is regularly played before the fourth quarter of home football games at Autzen Stadium to pay homage to the campus’ history as a major filming location for the 1978 cult classic, *National Lampoon’s Animal House*. The song was written for the film’s infamous college-party toga scene and performed by the then-merely-fictional band, “Otis Day and the Knights.” Starring John Belushi, the film presents a satire of university fraternity culture, academia, and authoritarian administration.

In the fall of 2015, the advertising arm of Phil Knight’s Nike corporation released an ad recreating the toga scene, which was also entitled “Shout!”¹ Knight is an alum of the University of Oregon where he was a member of the Phi Gamma Delta (ΦΓΔ aka ‘FIJI’) fraternity. He and his family are top donors to and, arguably, top beneficiaries of the UO. The Nike ad debuted at the University of Oregon’s homecoming football game in order to celebrate “the *heritage* of Oregon Athletics.”² The homecoming football game

¹ The advertisement can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/148549870> (accessed March 2018).

² This quote came from an email to fans from the University of Oregon Athletics Department dated 9 Sept. 2015. “Heritage” has long been considered a term celebrating the legacy of white supremacy. This common meaning is intensified not only by Nike’s racist business model, but also the historical setting of Nike and the University of Oregon’s location in the one state of the union explicitly founded as a racist utopia. See Matt Novak’s popular “Oregon was Founded as a Racist Utopia” in *Gizmodo* 21 January 2015 (<http://gizmodo.com/oregon-was-founded-as-a-racist-utopia-1539567040>) where he discusses James J.

just so happened to coincide with the university's 'Parent's Weekend.' The enticing ad has since been incorporated into the regular home game spectacle for both football and basketball games, which are respectively played at UO's Autzen Stadium and Matthew Knight Arena. The latter was constructed chiefly by means of Knight's donation; its name commemorating his late son.

The advertisement is a who's-who of University of Oregon celebrity alumni and students. Produced by Nike's long-time Portland-based advertising agency, Wieden+Kennedy, the advertisement short begins with the University of Oregon's Donald Duck mascot, nicknamed 'Puddles,' gently serenading three fawning young women at the foot of the fraternity house staircase. 2014 Heisman trophy winner, number two 2015 NFL draft pick, and resident Duck hero, Marcus Mariota replaces John Belushi in his iconic descent down the staircase. Staying true to Belushi's original form, Mariota grows annoyed with the scholastic romanticism in his path and violently smashes Puddles' classical guitar before continuing to the party in the basement. There, we are introduced to a 48-year-old Ty Burrell (of *Modern Family* fame) whose character "Lawrence" aka "Pinto" is hailing a young woman to dance. In fact, he shouts at her over the party noise. With "Go Ducks!" as a stage back-drop, *the* "Otis Day and the Knights" band then strike up the famous earworm, "Shout!," to the delight of the toga-clad aging alumni audience. Everyone dances—not only in the ad, but also the mimicking home stadium audience. Everyone shouts a little bit softer now. And a little bit louder now. By the end of the song, everyone is jumping up and shouting it now. The ad then concludes with the Nike swoosh and slogan, "Just Do It."

In its originally released version, the ad included stylized freeze-frame credits to inform the stadium's audience of the identity of better and lesser known alumni-of-note.³

Kopps' *Eden within Eden: Oregon's Utopian Heritage* as well as the history of Article 1, Section 35 of Oregon's Constitution "No free negro, mulatto, not residing in this State at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall come, reside, or be within this State, or hold any real estate, or make any contracts, or maintain any suit therein; and the Legislative Assembly shall provide by penal laws, for the removal, by public officers, of all such negroes, and mulattoes, and for their effectual exclusion from the State, and for the punishment of persons who shall bring them into the state, or employ, or harbor them."

³ The Vimeo video currently available and included in n.1 above no longer includes the freeze-frame credits, and the original version is now unavailable online. The 9 Sept. 2015 email to campus listed the following alumni in the ad: "actor Ty Burrell; ESPN anchor Neil Everett; pro-football legends and television personalities Ahmad Rashad and Dan Fouts; former pro-football players Joey Harrington, Kenny Wheaton and Anthony Newman, who became a Ducks football commentator; world-record decathlete

While Knight, commonly known as ‘Uncle Phil’ to Duck fans, is conspicuously absent from the advertisement’s drinking party, his presence lies just behind the curtain. As I said, the ad concludes with his company’s slogan, “Just Do It.” Both versions of the ad—named and nameless—elicit the frenzied fans of Autzen Stadium and Matthew Knight Arena to venerate not only the Duck heroes on screen but also their patron goddess and corporate sponsor, Nike. Nike’s birth is the stuff of campus legend, herself the brain-child of ‘Uncle Phil’ and his track coach, Bill Bowerman, in their time together at the University of Oregon’s world-renowned Hayward Field.⁴ She is modeled after the winged Greek goddess of victory, Nike, who was accomplice to Zeus and often a messenger from the gods to us mere mortals. Her loyal heroes “BECOME UNTOUCHABLE”⁵ by her grace. She is an angel of victory. An angel of domination. An angel of war.

If the ad would have continued into the next scene, it may have been forced to give Nike’s name to the devil if not re-write the original script. In the original film, the plot continues from the first hailing “Shout!” of flirtation in the basement to “The Dilemma” in the bedroom. There, Mr. Burrell’s character “Pinto” contemplates sexually assaulting his dancing partner after she falls unconscious while in a state of sexual undress. (Later in the film while again in a state of undress, the young woman reveals to Pinto that she is merely thirteen years of age). In the notorious “Dilemma” scene, Pinto is flanked on his shoulder by the evil devil of his desire for domination—his *‘philonikia’*—urging him to “Fuck her! Fuck her brains out! Suck her tits. Squeeze her buns. You know she wants it.” When suddenly, the good angel of his conscience appears to admonish him, “For shame. Lawrence, I’m surprised at you.” The devil responds, “Ah, don’t listen to

Ashton Eaton; Oregon track star Galen Rupp; professional football athletes Marcus Mariota, Dennis Dixon, JJ Birden, LaMichael James, Kenjon Barner and Brandon Bair; former Oregon track stars English Gardener and Mandy White.”

⁴ In April 2018, the University of Oregon unveiled plans to “renovate” the historic stadium and its grandstands through a donation by Phil Knight and his wife Penny Knight. The size of the donation remains undisclosed, but it is likely astronomical as the plans include razing current structures to rebuild a stadium with three times the capacity. The Eugene city council voted against seeking ‘historic status’ to protect the grandstands. See Chavez 2018 and Adams 2018.

⁵ This was an actual tag-line to a series of Nike poster ads utilizing the likeness of quarterbacks Mariota and Winston for Nike’s ‘Vapor’ cleat. The ad descended onto campuses earlier that year alongside the 2015 Rose Bowl Semifinal National Championship.

that jack off. Look at those gazongas! You'll never get a better chance." In the film, the good angel succeeds in persuading the character against raping her with the line "if you lay one finger on that poor, sweet, helpless girl you'll despise yourself forever" (Landis 1978).

Would a Nike advertisement conclude this way? We know the answer. Nike advertisements always conclude with the deified, winged whisper: "Just Do It."

Nike released the ad for the University of Oregon and its Athletics Department shortly after the university institution had settled a highly publicized lawsuit with one of its students, Jane Doe. Jane Doe was enrolled as a freshman at the university when she was raped by three players of the university's Nike-sponsored men's basketball team. The players assaulted her during an evening of post-game victory celebrations just prior to the team's participation in the 2014 March Madness tournament, a multi-billion-dollar annual national athletic spectacle. Her assailants were permitted to participate in the tournament despite her and her father's reports to campus and city police. In her lawsuit, Jane Doe charged that the University of Oregon and basketball coach Dana Altman had violated Title IX, the Clery Act, and her medical privacy when they recruited a basketball player who had been suspended from his previous school for sexual misconduct, when they failed to meet campus crime reporting obligations, and when they seized her private campus counseling records with neither her nor her therapist's consent.

Jane Doe filed her legal claim exactly one week after the University of Oregon's football team won the 2015 Rose Bowl Semifinal National Championship. The UO was led by Heisman-winning quarterback, Marcus Mariota, in their victory over the defending champions, Florida State University (FSU). FSU was led in their defeat by their own Heisman-winning quarterback and soon-to-be first overall draft pick over UO's beloved Mariota, Jameis Winston. Winston was himself embroiled in legal battles for his alleged sexual assault of then-fellow FSU student, Erica Kinsman.⁶ Both Kinsman and Jane Doe's treatment by their respective universities became central narratives in the then-soon-to-be-released documentary on campus sexual violence and institutional betrayal, *The Hunting Ground* (2015).

⁶ In 2017, Winston was again accused of sexual assault by a woman whom had driven his Uber in 2016. See Gartland for *Sports Illustrated* 2017.

In the month after Jane Doe filed her lawsuit against the university and a month prior to the release of *The Hunting Ground* documentary, the University of Oregon filed a counter-lawsuit against Jane Doe charging her with defamation. The counter-claim was soon dropped after massive public outcry. Jane Doe's own claim was settled out of court later that summer of 2015 after the university hiring of Michael Schill, an expert in property law, to the position of president of the University of Oregon.

It seems clear to me that Nike's motivation for releasing the ad was part of a concerted public relations campaign to regenerate lucrative excitement for the upcoming college athletics season, the University of Oregon, and the tuition and Nike revenue generated therein in the aftermath of growing public awareness of the high price of college sports, fraternity culture, and the toxic 'hunting ground' atmosphere of American college campuses. It was an act of denial. Albeit hushed and mystified in the celebratory celebrity spectacle of collegiate athletics and fraternity culture, the underlying message of the advertisement condoning, encouraging, if not deifying the act of rape is clear. Beloved Nike exhorts us beyond deliberation to "Just Do It."

This dissertation is about the denial inherent to the 'love of Nike.' This dissertation is also about the overcoming found in the pursuit of another love, another angel: the love of wise Sophia.

It is also an imperfect discussion of a few of the many ambiguities in-between.

Though unpaid high-profile black college athletes, such as Jane Doe and Erica Kinsman's assailants, tend to be more visible in media discussions of campus sexual violence, recent studies have shown that sexual assaults on campus commonly cluster around white fraternity parties while also generally spiking by 41-percent on home-game weekends (Lindo, Siminski, and Swenson 2015; see also Rosenthal, Smith, and Freyd 2014; and Dick and Ziering 2015). Under the guise of academic pursuit and 'amateur' athletic competition, it seems to me that the appealingly distracting advertisement, "Shout!," was a piece of a broader culture of denial that must be maintained in order for contemporary parents, their children, and alumni to gleefully, voluntarily, and eagerly participate in a structure of racialized patriarchal domination that is an essential element of collegiate athletics today.

Jane Doe was sexually assaulted in the spring of my fourth year of doctoral study at the University of Oregon. The institutional response to her trauma sent shockwaves throughout the community, sparking widespread campus protests and heightening the urgency of desperately needed policy changes. Months prior to the public fervor, I became active in my graduate labor union and campus feminist groups on the issue of campus sexual harassment and violence. I was motivated by a kind of desire for justice, a desire for the good. This was fueled by receiving numerous disclosures of sexual violence from undergraduate students and peers, including revelations of a serial sexual harasser on the faculty of my department, in my first year of graduate school. One of the groups, the University of Oregon Coalition to End Sexual Violence began holding meetings in the January prior to the assault of Jane Doe. This was when I first met my mentor Jennifer Freyd. This would have also been around the time when Doe's "most forceful" assailant was recruited to the UO's men's basketball team. The organizing of the UO Coalition to End Sexual Violence, university labor unions, and undergraduate student groups aided the groundswell of public outcry and activism internal and external to the University of Oregon in the aftermath of Jane Doe. In many ways, the #TimesUp and #MeToo movements have built on the intense student activism on the issue of sexual violence that emerged nationwide in the years 2014 and 2015. It is out this political activism that my own philosophical thinking on trauma has emerged.

Groundbreaking feminist trauma theorist Judith Herman offers that nearly every breakthrough in the study of psychological trauma develops in relation to political change. She begins her own historical account of the study of trauma with the nineteenth-century study of women and their '*hysteria*' by Jean-Martin Charcot and his students Pierre Janet, Josef Breuer, and Sigmund Freud. She observes that their studies were enabled by the French Revolution and the zeal of Enlightenment science and democratic-republican ideals that rejected the hierarchical religious ideology of the Catholic monarchy.⁷

⁷ Prior to this period, women labeled 'hysterics' had been thought of "as malingerers, and their treatment had been relegated to the domain of hypnotists and popular healers" such as exorcists and witches (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 10 and 15). That is, traumatized 'hysterical' women were considered to be possessed by demons in the European Medieval and Renaissance period prior to the modern era of Enlightenment. Charcot's student Freud is widely recognized as the first in his generation to *empathetically listen* to his female clients—seeing them as humans with rich inner lives rather than objects to be managed. Herman

As you the reader have likely already surmised, I suggest pushing this history of the study of trauma back to ancient Greece. I do this not because of the Greek origins of the word ‘*hysteria*’ (*hysteria*, ὑστέρα) but because I think the ancient philosopher Plato offers a critique of the denial inherent to *philonikian* conceptions of ‘manliness’ that is worth revisiting today. The interpretation of Plato that I offer is one of many, and it is one that I believe has been suppressed and denied by the masculine bias of scholars, translators, and interpreters throughout history.

The ‘love of Nike’ goes beyond mere corporate semantics. I suggest herein that the ‘love of Nike’ represents the very ontology of patriarchy in its now-racialized and ancient forms. I understand patriarchy as an ancient material, political, and ontological system of domination that was maintained through history and explicitly racialized in the modern era of European global colonial conquest and the creation of so-called ‘Western’ civilization. Indeed, the ‘love of Nike’ has ancient roots. In ancient Greek, the ‘love of Nike’ is termed “*philonike*” (*philonikia*, φιλονικία), which is literally translated today as the “love of victory.” As the Greek language suggests, the ‘love of Nike’ is the love of victorious domination. And as my interpretation of Plato and others suggests, this ‘love of Nike’ depends on a static temporality of denial.

argues his early work, *Aetiology of Hysteria*, was the closest in his generation to recognizing the devastating and lasting effects of past child sexual abuse. In listening to ‘*hysterical*’ women, Freud began to realize that hysteria may not be a woman’s pathology, but rather a response to the profound sexual abuse often suffered early in childhood. Moreover, he began to approach an understanding that such abuse was far from sporadic or isolated by class-status; rather, many hysterical women were suffering from the abuse not simply from ‘degenerate perverts,’ but from their elite, respected, wealthy and powerful fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, and husbands (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 14). Freud subsequently stopped listening to traumatized women and retreated into the heights of his now infamously abstract psychoanalytic theory. This, per Herman, marks the first instance of ‘episodic amnesia’ within the discipline.

The reality of trauma resurfaced in psychiatry in the aftermath of World War I as male veterans returned home from the horrors of European trench and chemical warfare. Rather than displaying the ‘manly honor’ of a soldier, young men instead exhibited symptoms of the supposedly female-malady, *hysteria*. Instead of investigating the similarities of these gendered experiences of trauma further, the new diagnostic category of ‘shell-shock’ was created and later adapted into ‘Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder’ in the aftermath of Vietnam and the anti-war movement. Important research in trauma has also been offered in light of the history of genocidal practices against the Jews in World War II as well as the legacies of colonization of indigenous, black, and Asian peoples. The concepts of transgenerational, epigenetic, and communal trauma emerged from these histories and study. And as Herman indicates, the study of trauma returned again to think through the abuse of women and children within the battered-women’s and feminist movements of the 70s and 80s, bringing her in 1997 to propose a new diagnosis of “Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” meant to encapsulate the range of traumatic experience and offer a diagnostic alternative to stigmatizing diagnoses, such as somatization disorder, borderline disorder, and multiple-personality disorders (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 121-123).

In this dissertation, I bring to light a thoroughgoing criticism of patriarchal *philonikian* conceptions of ‘manliness’ and the denial inherent to it. From Plato and in conversation with the feminist existentialist philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir, decolonial feminism, and contemporary trauma theory psychology, I argue that the infliction and denial of traumatic harm associated with the love of victorious domination is a central motor to the operation of racialized patriarchy, especially masculinity. I suggest this criticism of patriarchy’s *philonikian* ‘manliness’ may be found within Plato’s dialogues by tracing Socrates’ lifelong pursuit of what it means to live a good human life, more specifically whether and how it is possible to become a good man. But this criticism of *philonikian* ‘manliness’ and denial by the genealogical father of the ‘Western’ academy has been lost to masculine bias in the hegemonic majority of subsequent interpretations (cf. Bluestone 1994 and Townsend 2017). That the contemporary academy and general society remains mired in the temporality of denial is part and parcel of a historical, patriarchal, silencing shift from the very foundation upon which contemporary Western education systems have actively been constructed: Plato’s Academy. To be blunt, this dissertation suggests that the racialized patriarchy of the contemporary academy, no less ‘Western’ civilization, rests on a foundation of trauma’s denial.

As I’ve said, this dissertation is also about the overcoming related to the ‘love of Sophia,’ the ‘love of wisdom,’ or *philosophy* (*philosophia*, φιλοσοφία). Through my engagement with Plato, Beauvoir, decolonial feminism, and trauma theory psychology, I also interpret a philosophy of overcoming trauma and its denial at individual, social, and ontological levels. In contrast to *philonike*’s denial, the *philosophy* of overcoming offers that one must recollect the traumas of the past rather than deny them before one can truly forget them in the present process of rebirthing the self after traumatic rupture.

I take an interdisciplinary approach to my philosophical analysis and reinterpretation of ancient and contemporary texts and phenomenon. I engage contemporary decolonial feminist literatures to understand and think through the structure of racialized patriarchal domination. Contemporary trauma theory psychology further guides my philosophical inquiry into the centrality of denial in perpetuating racialized patriarchal domination and thinking our collective overcoming. Philosophically, my approach is highly influenced by the Continental tradition of meaning excavation.

Namely, I follow Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist ethics of freedom and its repetitious temporality of being and becoming.

Beauvoir claims in the "Introduction" to *The Second Sex* that the "perspective we have adopted is one of existentialist morality" (Beauvoir 2010, 16). Beauvoir distinguishes this existentialist morality from that of a calculative consequentialist, utilitarian, or liberal ethics focused on maximizing the *happiness* of individuals within a community. Instead, existentialist morality focuses on "What precise opportunities have been given us, and which ones have been denied?" (Beauvoir 2010, 16). Rather than center an ethics on *happiness*, Beauvoir centers her ethics on *freedom*. For Beauvoir, we accomplish our freedom through time in a constant process of converting our mere being into becoming who we are concretely through projects, that is, by what we do. The task of freedom is only accomplished "by perpetual surpassing toward other freedoms" (Beauvoir 2010, 16). Freedom is a "constant conversion" or a repeated repetition (Mann 2014, 41; see Beauvoir 2010, 160). Beauvoir clearly states that "there is no other justification for present existence than its expansion toward an indefinitely open future" (Beauvoir 2010, 16).

This existentialist ethics of freedom also provides a definition of evil. Beauvoir writes, "[e]very time transcendence lapses into immanence," that is, every time our becoming is reduced to mere being or mere survival, "there is degradation of existence into 'in-itself,' of freedom into facticity" (Beauvoir 2010, 16). We are reduced to mere things, caged in a frozen present of mere survival by the foreclosure of future possibility. Conclusively, Beauvoir states "this fall is a moral fault if the subject consents to it; if this fall is inflicted on the subject, it takes the form of frustration and oppression; in both cases it is an absolute evil" (Beauvoir 2010, 16). And as a feminist, Beauvoir is particularly interested in utilizing this existentialist morality to understand the concrete opportunities that have been provided and denied to women and others subjugated in the history of patriarchy. It is this feminist existentialist morality in conversation with contemporary feminist 'trauma-centered' theories in psychology and decolonial feminisms that I bring to my interpretation of contemporary phenomena and ancient texts alike.

In my interpretation of Plato, I bear particular mind to the historical unfolding of trauma and its denial during the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath. This forms the historical setting to the dramas of Plato's philosophical dialogues that feature Socrates' voluntary, communal, and lifelong pursuit for the meaning of becoming a virtuous good man. In some ways, I track Plato's own tracing of Socrates' personal 'ladder of love' (cf. *Symposium*). This is a 'hunt' for excellence. I attend namely to Socrates's chase of the meaning of 'andreia' (ἀνδρεία). Commonly, the virtue of 'andreia' meant 'courageous manliness' to the Greek ear, differentiating the rationality of men from their mere human biological being, or *anthropos* (ἄνθρωπος). In some ways, *andreia* was to *anthropos* as living (*bios*, βίος) was to mere life (*zoe*, ζωή) for the Greeks. The mythical Achilles along with his raging, vengeful desire for victory (*nike*, νίκη) was commonly thought to exemplify the pinnacle of this Greek virtue of 'manliness' (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία). But as my interpretation reveals, Plato's Socrates seeks to overcome this *philonikian* notion of 'manliness' and the denial central to its temporal operation. In this, I believe Plato offers a philosophy of the *human*. This is a philosophy that recognizes the strength and courage of the 'love of Sophia' in its capacity for supporting the soul's process of recollection and rebirth. It is my hope that the new meaning revealed in my interpretation will prove useful to readers in the continued battle to overcome the traumatic betrayals and denials of racialized patriarchy that remain sedimented in the policies, practices, and culture of our contemporary institutions.

The word 'trauma' derives from the Greek word for 'wound' (*trauma*, τραῦμα). Contemporary trauma theorists and practicing therapists understand psychological trauma to be an embodied reaction to a *wounding* of the embodied self at spiritual, emotional, cognitive, psychological, physiological, and neurobiological levels. This wounding almost always involves the terrorizing betrayal of trust in others, that often institutes a profound temporal *rupture* of the self (cf. Burstow 2003, 1304; Herman 1998 and 1992/1997/2015, 33 and 51-52; and van der Kolk 2015). Traumatic rupture *twists* our temporal experience such that we subconsciously relive the terrors of the past in the present. Denial maintains this traumatic rupture and twisted folding of time.

I find that in the aftermath of traumatic rupture, time is lived in two very distinct modes of *repetition*: the repetitions of trauma's denial and the repetitions of trauma's

overcoming. The repetitions of the love of Nike (*philonikia*, φιλονικία) and the repetitions of the love of Sophia (*philosophia*, φιλοσοφία). These may and do often overlap, but conceptualizing their distinction is vital. *Philonike's* repetitions of denial entail a temporality of crisis management, trapping subjectivity into a dull yet horrifying oscillation between the attempt to forget and the inevitable triggering and reliving of past traumatic memories and habits of survival. The present is lived as a repetition of the horrors of the past. This repetition of the past in the present often forecloses possibilities of both the present and the future. It is a living death. As Bessel A. van der Kolk's important and so-titled book suggests, "the body keeps the score" of these terrorizing, self-rupturing events despite our desperate desire to forget or deny them, our desire to have a "Just Do It" attitude.⁸

Traumatic experience and its denial is thus *fatalistic* in two senses. It is a kind of *death* of the soul, which must be reborn if it is to live again. And, having barred with denial the process of memorialization, the unintegrated *imprint* of past traumatic experience can dictate the possibilities of the present and future. Left untended, past traumatic experience *repeats* itself. Despite our best efforts to forget traumatizing past encounters, the memory and emotions of traumatic experience remain within our bodies. Denying traumatic memory only leaves us more susceptible to painfully reliving the trauma and inflicting its harm not only on ourselves but also onto others, including those we love. It is no secret that traumatized people may commit acts that traumatize others. As van der Kolk suggests, such acts can be understood or contextualized as repetitions of surviving traumatic experience. Transcendence lapses into immanence, freedom into facticity, living into survival.

Survivors become better and worse crisis managers of the present triggering of their past memories and survival habits. The skills honed through these survival habits are often ambiguously beneficial or harmful depending on one's social situation. For example, aggressive lash-outs triggered by traumatic memory have been historically

⁸ I must make clear here that the allegations against Bessel A. van der Kolk claiming he bullied employees of his Trauma Center along with his subsequent firing became public after the completion of this dissertation manuscript. My engagement with his writing herein is not an endorsement of his behavior. While theory cannot be solely judged on the basis of its author's imperfect behavior, actions do matter. I believe the employees. And I hope that what I have to offer within this dissertation might contribute to the ongoing conversation as we continue to navigate the ambiguities of our collective overcoming.

permitted or even demanded of white men, often serving them in the fields of business, politics, and war. Whereas similar behavior or other habits of trauma survival displayed by women, persons of color, and/or queer persons have historically landed them in psychological or criminal institutions (i.e., *hysteria*), if not raped, lynched, or killed.

The pain of past traumas in present crises may be inflicted on others violently, as seen in victim-perpetrators of sexual assault or genocidal tyrannies. The pain of trauma may also be inflicted passively in its aftermath, such as the mis-attunement between a post-partum depressive mother and her infant. But as a result of the material and ontological function of racialized patriarchal masculinity, white men are generally afforded more latitude and opportunity to inflict violence against others in their repetitions of trauma denial than women, persons of color, and sexual minorities, whose survival habits may and all-too-often do make them more susceptible to future re-victimization.

In contrast to the “Just Do It” attitude of the temporal repetitions of *philonikian* denial, which ultimately maintain the *ruptured*, *dissociated*, and *fatalistic* state of the traumatized self, trauma’s overcoming entails repetitions akin to *rebirth*. Ideally, the overcoming of trauma is a constant recollection and caring for the sites of the original crisis to continuously give loving birth to a perpetually *re-integrated*, *re-associated*, and *freely living* self who may in turn be continuously better able to care for the pieces that remain traumatized. Our capacity to continuously overcome trauma stems from our human strength and courage for love, care, and regeneration. It is no mere accident that these virtues have been defensively derided as all-too ‘feminine’ within traditional, Western patriarchal society: they are the very capacities that have threatened patriarchy’s grip since ancient times. If I may be so bold, trauma’s overcoming is a temporality of living one’s freedom that resists or transcends the temporality of denial’s *fatalism*, a fatalism upon which racialized patriarchy materially and ontologically depends.

Jane Doe’s is a case example among countless others for considering the centrality of denial to racialized patriarchy, joining similar accounts in the 2015 documentary on campus sexual violence, *The Hunting Ground*, as well as Jessica Luther’s journalistic account in her 2016 book, *Unsportsmanlike Conduct*. The problem of sexual violence and other forms of trauma are not unique to institutions of higher

education. The contemporary #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, and #TimesUp movements are making this fact increasingly visible. However, I focus on this particular case of trauma and denial in the academy for several reasons.

First, I focus on the academy because my interpretation of Plato suggests that the overcoming of the trauma and denial inherent to common *philonikian* ancient Greek conceptions of ‘manliness’ may have been the central mission of his Academy. By placing Plato, his dialogues, and his Socrates into historical context we can understand that Plato was writing from, to, and for a society that had been traumatized by the brutal devastation of the Peloponnesian War.

The Peloponnesian War was, essentially, a six-decade-long civil war between the Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta emerging out of the last decade of the two states’ joint fifty-year conflict against the Persians.⁹ Indeed, the ancient Greeks were more often at war than not during the fifth and early-fourth centuries BCE. While Plato established his Academy approximately two decades after the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War, the society remained continuously at war. But in contrast to the *philonikian* ideals governing warring Greek society, Plato’s Academy was ideally governed by the “love of wisdom,” or *philosophia*. It was a ‘hunting ground’ where men and women could freely gather to jointly hunt not each other but the good life in the traumatic aftermath of the Peloponnesian War. An outdoor garden to recollect and overcome social and internalized traumas and denials. The pursuit of the ‘hunters’ consisted in the study or care (*meletan*, μελετᾶν) for their traumatic memories rather than denying them while supporting one another’s continual process of birthing, or repeatedly repeating, their good spirit (*eudaimonia*, εὐδαιμονία) to accompany them in the aftermath of their soul’s traumatic wounding.

Derived from the ancient Greek goddess of victory, ‘Nike,’ our contemporary ‘University of Nike’ model of academia reveals in its very name that it is governed by the “love of victory.” Explained above, this “love of victory” is “*philonikia*” (“φιλονικία”) in

⁹ The Peloponnesian War is commonly understood as the war between the Greek city states of Athens and Sparta that took place from 431-404BC as famously chronicled by the historian Thucydides. However, this war was a continuation of a previous civil war between the city states that had begun in 460BC in the last decade of their fifty-year joint military efforts against the Persian empire. The ‘first’ Peloponnesian War was resolved by a peace treaty meant to last thirty years, but only lasted fifteen. Its violation commenced the ‘Second’ Peloponnesian War, commonly understood as *the* Peloponnesian War. See Ste. Croix 1972.

the ancient Greek or what we might for our purposes term “philonike.” In chapter three, I explore Plato’s pun-filled literary critique of the historical General Nikias’ “philonikian” understanding of “courageous manliness” (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία). With Plato, I demonstrate “philonike” is a misguided linear, future-oriented temporality whose priority is to calculatively seek or maintain glory into the future. But this “Just Do It” attitude neglects the importance of presently recollecting past traumatic memory. This ‘Nikian neglect’ perpetuates the violence of traumatic repetition, such as the infliction of sexual violence on the contemporary ‘hunting ground’ of college campuses, while inhibiting the possibilities of the present and blindly ignoring the uncertain character of the future. As I’ve said, denial is a *fatalistic* temporality. It is a *fatality of the soul*. And this fatality, left untended, predetermines the course of the future by the inevitability of denial’s traumatic repetition alongside the all-too-assuring over-confidence of the linear, calculating orientation towards the future. The temporality of the ‘University of Nike’ is the temporality of denial, prioritizing false-assurances of glorified racialized patriarchal dominance now and into the future while undermining the human freedom of its dependents.

I focus on the University of Oregon in particular as it happens to be the self-identified ‘University of Nike’ *par excellence*, being proudly integral to the rise of billionaire alum and former-Duck track athlete Phil Knight’s global Nike empire and business model development. Rather than offering academic space and resources for the free pursuit of self-knowledge and self-growth, the ‘Nike model’ of education capitalizes on the economic desperation of schools and their athletic programs wrought by decades of public disinvestment from education. It does so to utilize the unpaid bodies of (mostly black male¹⁰) students to model and fuel desire for the brand clothing manufactured by the underpaid labor of (mostly brown female) workers in the global South. As Jessica Luther further notes, this business model of contemporary academia is dependent upon the accessible sexual (ab)use of women and “a society that minimizes and/or ignores rape” (Luther 2016, 80-81). Here, I add that this model is further dependent upon

¹⁰ According to a 2017 study by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, black men comprise 53% of college basketball players and 44% (compared to 42% white) of college football players on Division I teams (Lapchick et al 2018, 19). Writing for *Time* magazine, Diane Roberts notes that “black men comprise 57 percent of college football teams, on average. At some universities it’s over 70 percent” (Roberts 2015).

philonike's temporality of denial. That is, the 'Nike model' is egregious not only because it takes advantage of racially and sexually vulnerable people on campus and throughout the globe under the auspices of academic and athletic excellence, but because its very power and logic relies on the temporality of denying their traumatization.

Indeed, the University of Oregon's particular history of denial and betrayal in the face of sexual harassment and violence informs the thinking of some of my mentors. Now widely used in the #MeToo movement, the concept of 'institutional betrayal' and 'institutional denial' was developed by feminist psychologist Jennifer Freyd in the context of her own tenure at the University of Oregon. Indeed, the University of Oregon serves as a case example in the 2013 book co-authored by Freyd and her University of Oregon colleague, Pamela Birrell, *Blind to Betrayal*. Freyd defines 'institutional betrayal' as "the wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution upon individuals dependent on that institution, including failure to prevent or respond supportively to wrongdoings by individuals (e.g., sexual assault) committed within the context of the institution" (Freyd 2016).¹¹ That is, institutional betrayal is the failure of institutions to either prevent harm to individuals within the context of the institution (such as sexual assault or sexual harassment) or compassionately respond to individuals dependent upon the institution in the aftermath. Freyd further explains that 'institutional denial' is a form of 'institutional betrayal' and observes that denial is a common response of perpetrators and bystanders when accused of perpetrating or facilitating traumatic harm. And, as we will discuss, such institutional failures undermine trust between individuals and institutions and exacerbate the original harm.

In chapter II, I engage with contemporary decolonial feminist literature and trauma theory psychology to discuss the centrality of denial to racialized patriarchy in the academy. As a case example, I discuss the institutional denial of the University of Oregon

¹¹ See also see also Jennifer J. Freyd, "The Psychology of Betrayal Trauma: Memory, Health, and Gender," Lecture at Thompson Hall Science and Mathematics Seminar, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma Washington, 6 March 2008; Jennifer J. Freyd, "Betrayal Trauma: Memory Health Gender," Colloquium, Department of Psychology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM, 11 April 2008; Melissa Platt, Jocelyn Barton, and Jennifer J. Freyd, "A Betrayal Trauma Perspective on Domestic Violence," *Violence Against Women in Families and Relationships*, ed. Evan Stark and Eve S. Buzawa, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2009): 185-207; Carly Parnitzke Smith and Jennifer J. Freyd, "Dangerous Safe Havens: Institutional Betrayal Exacerbates Sexual Trauma," *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, v. 26 (Feb 2013): 119-124; and Jennifer J. Freyd and Pamela J. Birrell, *Blind to Betrayal: Why We Fool Ourselves We Aren't Being Fooled*, Hoboken: Wiley, 2013.

in its response to the sexual assault of Jane Doe. I further explain the concept of traumatic rupture and outline the temporality of the repetitions of denial and the repetitions of overcoming. Through this, I begin to demonstrate that in order to truly forget the past in order to become who we are we must do our best to lovingly recollect and care for the part of us that remains shackled by traumatic memory.

In chapter III, I recollect the traumas and denials of *philonikian* masculinity at the genealogical origin of the history of ‘Western’ philosophy. Against traditional interpretations that remain clouded in masculine bias, I offer a feminist interpretation of Plato’s philosophy that pays particular attention to the veteran Socrates’ pursuit of the meaning of ‘manliness’ (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία). Plato provides a kind of philosophical, albeit ironic, account of Socrates’ hunt for the meaning of ‘manliness,’ strategically placing the development of the pursuit within the history of the Peloponnesian War. For the reader’s ease of reference, I’ve included a timeline of the ancient Greeks at war and the dramatic dating of Plato’s works in the Appendix to this dissertation. In my interpretation, I find Plato’s Socrates dissatisfied with the unjust war-mongering of *philonikian* ‘manliness’ and its inherent temporality of denial that wrought the devastation of Athens. I derive this interpretation through a close reading of *Parmenides*, *Protagoras*, *Laches*, and *Cratylus*. And through a close reading of *Symposium*’s “Speech of Diotima” and *Republic*’s “Myth of Er,” I find Plato to be suggesting a *philosophical* vision of ‘manliness’ that is the temporality of human overcoming in the aftermath of trauma. Namely, this is the strength and courage (or so-called ‘manliness’) of love to recollect and care for the past memories of the self and constantly give birth to a good-spirit (*eudaimonia*, εὐδαιμονία) to accompany us in our life after trauma.

My interpretation suggests Plato’s ancient academy was a ‘hunting ground’ where men and women freely gathered to jointly pursue living the good life in the traumatic aftermath of the Peloponnesian War. The pursuit consisted in the study or care (*meletan*, μελέτην) for their traumatic memories rather than denying them while supporting one another’s process of giving birth to, or repeating, their best self after enduring the living death of traumatic wounding. Plausibly, Plato presented this temporality of overcoming as an alternative and solution to the violent repetitions of trauma’s denial central to ancient war-mongering masculinity. This rebirth may help individuals live well in the

aftermath of traumatic experience, ideally minimizing the repetition of trauma's infliction at individual and social scales (i.e., war, rape, assault, neglect etc.). Plato's *Republic* concludes with the Myth of Er's suggestion that forgetting is part of the process of overcoming as much as it is part of denial. As the myth teaches, one would do best to recollect and hold onto the lessons of one's life as best one can when one inevitably passes through the "Plain of Forgetfulness" and the "River of Uncaring."

In chapter IV, I return to the ambiguities of 'forgetting' with the feminist existentialist philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir to further delineate the 'forgetting' of fatalistic *philonikian* denial and the 'forgetting' of free *philosophical* overcoming. Beauvoir presents a feminist existential-phenomenological analysis of patriarchy as relying on the *rupture* and *denial* of the ambiguity of human subjectivity, bifurcating the ambiguity instead into 'naturalized' gendered destinies to tempt us to flee our freedom. Her analysis helps to distinguish the forgetting of denial and the 'forgetting' she believes to be involved in the repetitions of freedom. The 'forgetting' of freedom or overcoming requires having first found oneself, having first recollected oneself. To find oneself *self-assured*. It also entails a collective sacrifice of the comforting, but disillusioned, certainty of the future offered by patriarchy's gendered destinies.

As I show throughout this dissertation, we must lovingly remember in order to forget. Recollecting our own selves, our own past, we become better able to set our past traumas aside as we constantly become who we are in the present towards an open future. But, this entails a sacrifice of our love for Nike and her tempting whispers to make room for, instead, a new albeit familiar love: the love of wise Sophia.

CHAPTER II
COURAGE NOT CRISIS MANAGEMENT:
THE REPETITIONS OF DENIAL AND OVERCOMING AT
THE ‘UNIVERSITY OF NIKE’

I do not believe in ‘forgive and forget.’ To forgive in the truest sense, we must remember
first and then forgive, even in regard to ourselves.
—Jessica Stern

Introduction

This chapter suggests that trauma and its denial are central mechanisms establishing and perpetuating the ontological, political, and material systems of racialized patriarchal domination. Building on ancient systems of heteropatriarchy, what I and others call ‘racialized patriarchy’ is understood as a creation of the modern era of European colonization in order to justify, systematize, and naturalize the heinously traumatizing practices of genocide and slavery as well as rape and war (Omi and Winant 1994; Smith 2006 and 2012; Kendi 2016; Burke 2019). Said simply, I understand racialized patriarchy as an ontological, political, and economic system that thrives on the denial, justification, and perpetuation of traumatizing terror.

Most of us have been traumatized in some manner. While, some of us are rendered more vulnerable in the colonial and capitalistic systems of racialized patriarchy than others, no one of us are immune to its effects. Psychologists and psychiatrists in the newly emerging field of trauma theory emphasize suggest that while each experience of trauma is unique, there are observable commonalities. As influential trauma theorist Bessel A. van der Kolk suggests, trauma is an experience of either one’s own near-annihilation or witnessing the near or completed annihilation of another (van der Kolk 2015, 258). He further claims that there is an observable spectrum to trauma, varying in degrees of severity and chronicity of exposure (van der Kolk 1988). The feminist trauma thinker Bonnie Burstow argues that traumatic experiences are additionally nested in, layered between, and compounded by previous traumatic exposure (Burstow 2003). Trauma theory psychology suggests that experiences of trauma disrupt and fragment an individual’s complex, embodied connections that give rise to subjectivity.

As I mentioned in chapter I, the word trauma derives from the Greek word for ‘wound’ (*trauma*, τραῦμα). On the view that I accept here, psychological trauma is defined as an embodied reaction to a *wounding* of the embodied self at spiritual, emotional, cognitive, psychological, physiological, and neurobiological levels that almost always involves the terrorizing betrayal of trust in others instituting a profound temporal *rupture* of the self (cf. Burstow 2003, 1304; Herman 1992/1997/2015, 33 and 51-52; and van der Kolk 2015). This wounding rupture *twists* our experience of time such that we subconsciously relive the terrors of the past in the present. Denial maintains this rupture and folding of time.

On this view, the defense mechanism of denial perpetuates and exacerbates the fragmentation of trauma, leaving part of us consciously oblivious to the fact that another part of us remains stuck reliving the terrors of the past in the present. In denial, part of us is ‘in’ time, consciously integrated into the historical narrative arc of our unique human lives, while another part of us remains ‘out’ of time, an animal frozen by and in the immemorialized past terror. Because past traumas have not been memorialized and integrated into narrative time, our ‘out’ of time animalian self often perceives past threats as if they were happening in the present thus inducing a repeated state of survival mode. The past is *repeated* and relived in the present, greatly increasing the potential for self-harm, re-victimization, or perpetration in the present and future.

Decolonial feminist scholars observe that racialized patriarchy is a social system that determines which part of our collective human community is destined to be ‘in’ time and which part is destined to be ‘out’ of time (Lugones 2007; Mignolo 2002 and 2011; Burke 2019). Which of us is within human history? Who has a past that can be and is celebrated? Who has a bright future to be protected from disruption? And which of us is relegated to represent if not be forced to relive the terrors of our collective pre-historical ‘primitive’ past? Whose past has been lost or degraded? Whose future has always already been disrupted and foreclosed?

I suggest and further explore the manner that racialized patriarchy seizes on and depends upon trauma’s fragmentation of subjectivity and the temporality of denial. Traumatic experience bifurcates the connections and ambiguities of embodied subjectivity. Its denial perpetually repeats the harm into the present and future. Racialized

patriarchy systematizes and naturalizes this bifurcation and repetitious operation of denial into a socio-political ontology.

My claim is that this temporal structure of racialized patriarchy's denial is observable in contemporary institutional responses to sexual violence on our university and college campuses. While some recent efforts have been pragmatically commendable (at least to an extent), these efforts will ultimately fail in a social and institutional environment dedicated to trauma's denial. As van der Kolk concludes, "as long as we continue to live in denial and treat only trauma while ignoring its origins, we are bound to fail" (van der Kolk 2015, 350). We can neither individually nor collectively overcome trauma and the system of racialized patriarchy trauma establishes, perpetuates, and enables until we stop denying it. While this concept seems to be a painfully simple truism (i.e., that one must recognize a problem in order to solve it), it is one that has yet to sink into our collective consciousness, let alone the consciousness of top decision-makers. The contemporary academy is not immune to the denial of racialized patriarchy. Despite its historical commitment to pursuing and speaking the truth, the contemporary academy both suffers and manufactures the denials of racialized patriarchal domination.

I first discuss the historical ontology of racialized patriarchy to contextualize the recent institutional failures regarding campus sexual violence. I then offer as an all-too-familiar and important case example the institutional betrayals and denials of the University of Oregon as witnessed in the aftermath of the 2014 group sexual assault of 'Jane Doe,' a young black woman then-enrolled as a freshman, by three black players on the UO's Nike-sponsored men's basketball team. I then discuss in detail the psychology of the temporality of denial to explain how denial repeats past traumas in the present thus undercutting ongoing 'prevention' efforts by rendering the repetition of traumatic harm of self or others in the present and future a fatalistic inevitability. Before hope is lost, I finally conclude with a discussion of the psychology of the temporality of trauma's overcoming and the possibilities of its radical political potential.

As I mentioned in the introduction and further explore in chapter III, I focus on the academy rather than other social institutions primarily because I believe Plato's original ancient academy was precisely intended to confront the traumatic denials of ancient imperialist masculinity that plagued and ultimately destroyed ancient Athens.

This academy was governed by the ‘love of wisdom’ of *philosophy* (*philosophia*, φιλοσοφία) rather than the calculating, dominating, and characteristically masculine ‘love of victory’ of *philonike* (*philonikia*, φιλονικία). This is to say that the original academy was to be guided by a loving, constant process of careful recollection and rebirth in pursuit of the good life with others rather than by a desire to victoriously dominate others in argument or competition. This interpretation of Plato has been largely ignored and distorted through masculine bias throughout history, including during the nineteenth century construction of the contemporary American academy to ‘mirror’ and ‘progress’ from the ancient Greeks (see Winterer 2002; Syrett 2009; Bluestone 1994; and Townsend 2017). I suspect that if our contemporary universities actually strove to mirror rather than distort the philosophy of Plato’s ancient academy, the institutional betrayals and denials observed in the case of Jane Doe may not have happened.

Further, the particular case of Jane Doe put the logic of denial and its centrality to racialized patriarchy on public display in such a way that it punctuated and permeated my own feminist thinking, teaching, activism, and lived experience at the inception and writing of this dissertation while in graduate school at the University of Oregon. Though I was involved with feminist and labor organizing around the issue of campus sexual harassment and assault in the years prior to the group rape of Jane Doe, her case became the locus of a tidal wave of feminist activism and my own philosophical thinking in the months and years following. I walk through the case example of Jane Doe in detail, showing how denial operated in the institution’s logic in the aftermath of the assault as the institution neither admitted a rape had occurred nor that the institution was complicit (in fact, the rape *had* occurred, and the institution *was* complicit). I further suggest the denials of administrators operated to shore up and protect the racialized patriarchal material interests of the corporate academy, commonly and un-ironically known as the ‘University of Nike.’

The betrayals of the ‘University of Nike’ also informs the psychological theory of my mentor Jennifer Freyd. She developed her concept of ‘institutional betrayal,’ now widely used in the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements, during her tenure at the University of Oregon. As I mentioned in Chapter I, Freyd defines institutional betrayal as “the wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution upon individuals dependent on that

institution, including failure to prevent or respond supportively to wrongdoings by individuals (e.g., sexual assault) committed within the context of the institution” (Freyd 2016).¹ That is, institutional betrayal is the failure of institutions to either prevent harm to individuals within the context of the institution (such as sexual assault or sexual harassment) or compassionately respond to individuals dependent upon the institution in the aftermath. And, as we will discuss, such institutional failures undermine trust between individuals and institutions and exacerbate the original harm. Denial is a central feature to a particularly pernicious form of institutional betrayal, which Freyd terms institutional DARVO. DARVO stands for “Deny, Attack, and Reverse Victim and Offender.” It refers to the observable reactions displayed by individual and institutional perpetrators alike as well as complicit bystanders when being held accountable for wrongdoing, especially when the wrongdoing involves sexual violence. Offenders often “Deny the behavior, Attack the individual doing the confronting, and Reverse the roles of Victim and Offender such that the perpetrator assumes the victim role and turns the true victim—or the whistle blower—into an alleged offender” (Freyd 2017). This very behavior can be observed in the case of *Jane Doe v. University of Oregon and Dana Dean Altman*.²

As we will see, denial is a dangerous defense mechanism and a powerful tool in upholding relations of domination as it feeds into the victim’s own “desire to forget” (Stern 2010, 144-145). To quote at length from Jessica Stern’s brave memoir:

Denial helps the bystander. We don’t want to know what the boys we send to Iraq have done to others out of terror, or what others have done to them. We would rather not know about terror or be confronted with evil. This is as true about Abu Ghraib as it is about personal assaults and more private crimes, the crimes that occur inside families. [...] To be raped or abused or threatened with violent death;

¹ See also see also Jennifer J. Freyd, “The Psychology of Betrayal Trauma: Memory, Health, and Gender,” Lecture at Thompson Hall Science and Mathematics Seminar, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma Washington, 6 March 2008; Jennifer J. Freyd, “Betrayal Trauma: Memory Health Gender,” Colloquium, Department of Psychology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM, 11 April 2008; Melissa Platt, Jocelyn Barton, and Jennifer J. Freyd, “A Betrayal Trauma Perspective on Domestic Violence,” *Violence Against Women in Families and Relationships*, ed. Evan Stark and Eve S. Buzawa, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2009): 185-207; Carly Parnitzke Smith and Jennifer J. Freyd, “Dangerous Safe Havens: Institutional Betrayal Exacerbates Sexual Trauma,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, v. 26 (Feb 2013): 119-124; and Jennifer J. Freyd and Pamela J. Birrell, *Blind to Betrayal: Why We Fool Ourselves We Aren’t Being Fooled*, Hoboken: Wiley, 2013.

² *Jane Doe v. University of Oregon, Dana Dean Altman*, 6:15-cv-00042, (9 Feb. 2015), available at <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/1658093/merged-72683-1-1423523139.pdf> (accessed May 2018).

to be treated as an object in a perpetrator's dream, rather than the subject of your own—these are bad enough. But when observers become complicit in the victim's desire to forget, they become perpetrators too. This is why traumatized groups sometimes fare better than traumatized individuals. When the feeling of terror is shared, victims have a harder time forgetting what occurred or denying their terror. In the camps, what mattered most, Anna Ornstein explains, was whether there were witnesses willing to share the burden of overwhelming emotion. Talking about what occurred with other survivors or witnesses was an essential part of recovery, Ornstein claims. [...] This is the alchemy of denial: terror, rage, and pain are replaced with free-floating shame. The victim will begin to wonder: What did I do? She will begin to believe: I must have done something bad. But the sensation of shame is shameful itself, so we dissociate that, too. In the end, a victim who has suffered the denial of others will come to see herself as a liar. (Stern 2010, 144-45)

Overwhelmed by the emotions of traumatic memory, the self often dissociates from itself desiring to leave the pain behind. But this further exacerbates traumatic rupture and fragmentation. Exhortations by bystanders or institutions to “forgive and forget”—or, in the case of Jane Doe, to simply “forget” without even acknowledging a harm to be forgiven—feed into survivors' deep desire to forget the reality of their trauma and move on with their lives. As Stern suggests, victims may come to believe they are themselves liars, internalizing social disbelief. In the case of many rape victims, this dynamic feeds the social ‘women as liar’ trope and other common assumptions undermining survivors' credibility (see Luther 2016; Herman 1992/1997/2015). This undermines individual and as well as communal wellbeing in the aftermath of traumatic rupture.

The denial of bystanders, such as university administrators, makes them not only complicit with perpetrators but also reproduces them as very real perpetrators themselves. As we will see, institutional denial is a form of trauma perpetration that is often worse than the original traumatic harm as it inflames or festers the original wound. This only benefits the oppressors in racialized patriarchy.

In contrast to the crisis management of denial, the view that I accept holds that the temporality of overcoming is a constant, courageous process of recollection and rebirth of the self ideally undertaken with the caring support of others. In order to fare best in the aftermath of trauma, it is important for victims to share the emotional burden of the traumatic memory with others so as to hold onto the truth of the reality of the encounter. The process of overcoming memorializes the past, placing it within the temporal

historical narrative of one's life, reconnecting or rebirthing the ambiguous interconnections of subjectivity. Quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, Stern writes "I do not believe in 'forgive and forget.' To forgive in the truest sense, we must remember first and then forgive, even in regard to ourselves" (Stern 2010, 278). We must recollect the traumatic memory and the part of our self that remains terrorized by it, so we might forgive not only perpetrators of violence but our very own selves for the fear, shame, and ongoing habits of survival harbored within our traumatized bodies. It is the birth of a present self that is attuned to the terrors of our past self, as a 'parent' to a frightened 'child,' such that past terrors do not override the possibilities of the present. With this, it is suggested that we are able to hold the present open to possibilities rather than succumb to the terror and tantrums of our traumatized 'inner child.' More attuned to ourselves, we are better able to become more attuned with and connected to others. We become better friends, colleagues, teachers, parents, and lovers. We may ourselves become midwives to the self-birth of others who have been traumatized. We become better members of our collective community.

Said politically, the temporality of overcoming is prerequisite to and part-and-parcel with solidarity building. That contemporary administrators of academia refuse to engage in re-collective endeavors demonstrates just how embroiled contemporary academe is in systems of racialized patriarchal domination. Trauma must be individually and collectively *remembered, recollected, and memorialized* rather than *denied* if trauma and the system of racialized patriarchal domination is to be overcome and a new world made possible. As I show throughout this dissertation, one must lovingly remember in order to forget.

Campus Sexual Violence and Racialized Patriarchy

In May 2014, the University of Oregon campus erupted into feminist protest alleging administrators had attempted to cover up the group sexual assault of a female university student, 'Jane Doe,' by three Nike-sponsored UO men's basketball players, Brandon Austin, Danyean Dotson, and Dominic Artis, prior to and throughout the 2014 March Madness tournament. As black students, Jane Doe and each of the three basketball players were exposed to a level of public consumption and scrutiny from which most

white victims and perpetrators alike are insulated.³ And specifically as a black woman, Jane Doe endured a staggering level of institutional betrayal, denial, and backlash. Before continuing to further detail the case of Jane Doe and the institutional betrayals and denials of the University of Oregon, it is important to first critically discuss the function of racialized patriarchy as contributing to a racialized visibility of sexual violence on college campuses wherein black men are overrepresented in media discussions of campus perpetration while black women are not visible as ‘proper’ victims but rather as objects for continued consumption (cf. Crenshaw 1991; Davis 1983; hooks 1992; Narayan 1997; and Phillips 2000 among others).

Jessica Luther notes that “[b]ecause the majority of high-profile athletes are black and we tend to pay attention when athletes are involved, the issue of campus sexual assault repeatedly has a black face on it” (Luther 2016, 81). It must be underscored that more instances of sexual assault and harassment on campus are committed by privileged, white men—fraternity brothers and male faculty alike—who often remain *untouched* by university policy, the law, or public retribution. Brock Turner is, perhaps, a seeming exception. On January 18, 2015, two Swedish international students caught Brock Turner in the midst of raping an unconscious co-ed student, ‘Emily Doe,’ behind a campus dumpster. The international students intervened, and Turner fled the scene. Though he was charged, Brock Turner was treated as a human with a future. His comparatively lenient criminal sentencing by a judge convinced of fears that prison would destroy Turner’s future career in competitive swimming brought national attention and feminist furor. And Turner’s subsequent temerity to seek an appeal further exemplifies the point here (Kreps 2017). While the problem of accused black athletes reveals the structure’s attempt to protect them in a manner similar to its protection of white men, such as Brock Turner, I suggest that high-profile black athletes are protected for far different reasons than their white peers. Accused white men are understood and subsequently treated as

³ For example, white female UO student Laura Hanson was able to publicly disclose her story of being drugged and raped at a 2013 fraternity party by a white male student, Wil Smith, and the institutional betrayals that followed on her *own time* and on her *own terms* in an exposé titled “Dragged through the Mud” written by Camilla Mortensen and published in the local *Eugene Weekly* in May 2015. Though this article published Smith’s name, it is the only article that associates him with his crime beyond a blog discussing said article; Google searches of his name do not render the article (perhaps due to the commonness of his name) but require additional search terms.

humans whose future must be protected from disruptive harm. Accused black athletes are protected insofar as they are the *property* or *capital* of a team owned by white men. The visibility of black athletes as perpetrators further serves to shield the ontological, material, if not sexual violence committed by white men, including the very white men who own them.⁴

White men have historically had the privilege of denying their own sexual violence against women, either projecting it onto women themselves or onto the criminalized bodies of black and brown men. Women have long been pathologized as liars, hysterics, or, especially in the cases of black cis- and trans-gender women, subhuman beings. Media mythologies of racialized patriarchy discredits all victims of sexual violence by assuming an impossibly ‘virginally pure (white) victim’ (Phillips 2000). Those who fall short are assumed to be liars, or what Jessica Luther calls the ‘woman-as-liar’ trope (Luther 2016). It should be said here that while campus surveys estimate that one in five college women will be raped during her time on campus, general population surveys on sexual violence suggest rates are even higher among communities of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and otherwise economically marginalized populations. For example, colonized Native American women are twice as likely to experience sexual assault than any other race group despite comprising only 1.2 percent of the population; and fifty percent of transgender individuals have been or will be sexually assaulted in their lifetimes.⁵

⁴ It is here that my analysis of sexual violence in the ‘hunting ground’ of college campuses importantly diverges from that of feminist philosopher Kelly Olive’s account in *Hunting Girls* (2016). In her discussion, Oliver elides over the differences between white fraternity members and black athletes who rape (see Oliver 2016, 7). Oliver thus ignores important visual and ontological asymmetries of racialized patriarchy. Black college athletes are hyper-visualized in the public imaginary regarding campus sexual assault, allowing white peers to perpetuate trauma in the shadows. The future of most black college athletes is far more restricted than the average white athlete or fraternity member. And, unlike the prospect of most white fraternity members, the professional dreams of most college athletes will never materialize even though the toll of the lucrative sport on their unpaid bodies may be devastating.

⁵ On the one in five statistics see White House, *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault*, April 2014. On rates of sexual assault against women by race see Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2010-2014 (2015); Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, American Indians and Crime, 1992-2002 (2004); and visit the Rape, Incest, and Abuse National Network, “Victims of Sexual Violence: Statistics” (2016) accessed 3 January 2016, <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence>; on violence against transgender individuals see Rebecca Stotzer, “Violence Against Transgender People: A Review of

Simultaneously, the mythos of imperial masculinity projects the aggression of white men onto black men through the hyper-sexualization and criminalization of their race, projecting a ‘black-face’ of sexual perpetration. Under the guise of protecting white femininity, this mythology has justified the ‘heroic’ vigilante justice of white men in the public lynching of black and brown men through history. All the while, white male perpetrators retain if not strengthen their own status and power (cf. Herman 1992/1997/2015, van der Kolk 2015; Davis 1983; Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock 2011; Palacios 2016; Spivak 1988; Yancy 2008; Burke 2019; also, Mann 2012). One can see this at play in discussions of campus sexual violence. Though an overwhelming number of campus sexual violence cases occur within the Greek Life System of fraternities and sororities, most attention to the problem of campus sexual violence has focused on perpetration by black, male college athletes, thus presenting what Jessica Luther calls a ‘black-face’ to campus perpetration (Luther 2016).

Indeed, it is no accident that the “majority of high-profile athletes are black” (Luther 2016, 81). As autobiographies such as former NBA-player Caron Butler’s *Tuff Juice* attest, racist historical political-economic arrangements have left black men (and women) too few opportunities (Butler and Springer 2016). Black adolescents, especially those who remain impoverished by racist housing and economic policies, often see their future possibilities narrowed to a life of an athlete or a mortally dangerous recidivist life oscillating between the streets and behind bars (Alexander 2011; DuVernay 2016; Lipsitz 2006; Kilgore 2015; Tonry 2012; Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda 2015). As van der Kolk writes:

In today’s world your ZIP code, even more than your genetic code, determines whether you will lead a safe and healthy life. People’s income, family structure, housing, employment, and educational opportunities affect not only their risk of

United States Data,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, v 14 (2009): 170-179. For statistical comparisons of rates of violence experienced by female students and non-students, see Callie Marie Rennison “Privilege, Among Rape Victims” *New York Times*, 21 Dec 2014; and Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Rape and Sexual Victimization Among College-Aged Females, 1995-2013 (2014), which also compares rates of violence against male students and non-students.

It is important to also recognize that men are also victims of sexual violence: 3% of men have experienced rape in their lifetimes, constituting 10% of the total population of rape survivors. One study has found that college attendance multiplies the rate of male victimization by a factor of five, while the rate of sexual violence against women, though still *much* higher than men, slightly decreases upon college attendance.

developing traumatic stress but also their access to effective help to address it. Poverty, unemployment, inferior schools, social isolation, widespread availability of guns, and substandard housing all are breeding grounds for trauma. Trauma breeds further trauma; hurt people hurt other people. (van der Kolk 2015, 350)

Socio-economic circumstance is a significant factor in an individual's potential to live a healthy life. Poor socio-economic circumstances—which, make no doubt about it, are racialized—significantly exacerbate the risk of traumatic exposure, which only breeds further trauma, while undercutting access to resources in trauma's aftermath.

In the 1990s, the Nike corporation began to capitalize on the racialization and feminization of economic desperation and the attendant decline in public education funding. It began to offer schools irresistible contracts to receive Nike athletic apparel for student athletes at significantly discounted rates. As further incentive, lucrative 'shoe contracts' were offered to talented (black) basketball players—the Nike 'Air Jordan' being the first historical example (*ESPN 30 for 30: Sole Man*, 2013). Years later, we see that this business model is merely another historical example of rich, white, men utilizing the bodies of black and brown people to maximize their own private capital interests. Unpaid black male university football and basketball players sacrifice their bodies⁶ to model the latest Nike gear, gear manufactured by the sweatshop labor of mostly brown women in the global South. As D. Stanley Eitzen claims, the political-economic arrangements of the contemporary academy render it nothing less than a contemporary plantation (Eitzen 2015).⁷ Of course, the players are 'compensated' in the excesses of the

⁶ Football players particularly sacrifice their embodied minds and, indeed, the future of their very own personality according to the latest chronic encephalopathy research.

⁷ See especially D. Stanley Eitzen, "The Big-Time College Sports Plantation and the Slaves Who Drive It," and David Macaray, "Nike's Crimes," in *Sport in Contemporary Society: An Anthology*. Ed. D. Stanley Eitzen. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 177-187 and 320-321 respectively; also, the memoir of Caron Butler in Caron Butler and Steve Springer, *Tuff Juice: My Journey from the Streets to the NBA*, Guilford: Lyons Press, 2015; see also Taylor Branch, "The Shame of College Sports," *Sport in Contemporary Society: An Anthology*. Ed. D. Stanley Eitzen. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 166-174; D. Stanley Eitzen, "Ethical Dilemmas in American Sport: The Dark Side of Competition." *Sport in Contemporary Society: An Anthology*. Ed. D. Stanley Eitzen. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 137-146. [originally in *Vital Speeches of the Day* 62 (January 1, 1996)]; Samantha King, "Nike U: Full-Program Athletics Contracts and the Corporate University," *Sport and Neoliberalism: Politics, Consumption, and Culture*, ed. David L. Andrews and Michael L. Silk (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012): 73-89; Naomi Klein, *No Logo* New York: Picador, 2000/2009; Dave Zirin, *Game Over: How Politics has Turned the Sports World Upside Down*, New York: The New Press, 2013; Also see the following documentaries: Kirby Dick, dir., and Amy Ziering, prod., *The Hunting Ground*, 2015, New York, NY: The Weinstein Company, 2016, online film; Ross Finkle, Jonathan Paley, and

latest sweatshop-manufactured athletic gear as well as scholarships to cover artificially sky-rocketing tuition costs.⁸ However, NCAA rules prevent players from receiving any kind of salary—even the sale of their own uniforms may result in penalties—while white coaches, university presidents, and Nike-founder and University of Oregon-alum, Phil Knight, and their families cash in against a backdrop of public disinvestment from education.⁹

Jessica Luther writes that this neoliberal system of exploiting the bodies of black male athletes depends upon the patriarchal sexual access and exploitation of women's bodies. In her journalistic study, she finds that male college football and basketball players are often recruited with the promise that their athletic efforts will be “rewarded with access to women's bodies [...] whether it's in the form of sex partners or as eye candy” (Luther 2011, 80). Luther goes on to conclude:

The culture around (and therefore the economy of) football [and basketball] today is dependent on a society that minimizes and/or ignores rape. It is the same culture that tells these men they are only as valued by what they can do on a

Trevor Martin, dirs., *Schooled: The Price of College Sports*, 2013, New York, NY: Epix, 2013, online film; Jon Weinbach and Dan Marks, dirs., *ESPN 30-for-30: Sole Man*, 2015, Bristol, CT: ESPN Films, 2015, online film.

⁸ The reader will note Plato's original academy was tuition-free.

⁹ There's a lot of money at stake in college athletics—in 2014, the University of Oregon Athletic Department's projected revenues and expenses were “each around \$93 million” (Mortensen 2014). Coach Dana Altman earned a \$50,000 on top of his \$1.8 million salary simply for his team's participation in the March Madness tournament. Not to mention the billions generated by Nike in apparel sales. Meanwhile, public funding for education has radically dropped, leaving institutions dependent upon the private ‘donations’ of wealthy alum, such as Nike-founder Phil Knight. See Thomas G. Mortenson, “State Funding: A Race to the Bottom,” *American Council on Education*, Winter 2012, <http://www.acenet.edu/the-presidency/columns-and-features/Pages/state-funding-a-race-to-the-bottom.aspx> (accessed 18 January 2017); and Elizabeth Baylor, “State Disinvestment in Higher Education has Led to an Explosion of Student Debt,” *Center for American Progress*, 3 December 2014, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2014/12/03/102407/state-disinvestment-in-higher-education-has-led-to-an-explosion-of-student-loan-debt/>, (accessed 18 January 2017). The appropriations for higher education has been on the decline since 1980 and took a serious nose-dive in the Great Recession of 2008, thus leaving university administrators increasingly reliant on student tuition and the charity of private donors. The job of a university president has become that of fundraiser-in-chief: to maintain a university atmosphere that attracts investors, students and big business alike.; university multi-million fundraising goals. Also see Samantha King, “Nike U: Full-Program Athletics Contracts and the Corporate University,” *Sport and Neoliberalism: Politics, Consumption, and Culture*, ed. David L. Andrews and Michael L. Silk (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012): 73-89; Naomi Klein, *No Logo*, New York: Picador, 2000, 2002, 2009; Jessica Luther, *Unsportsmanlike Conduct: College Football and the Politics of Rape*, the third title in David Zirin's *Edge of Sports* imprint, Akashic Books, 2016; *Sole Man*, Dir. Jon Weinbach and Dan Marks, ESPN 30-for-30 series, 2015, film; and David Zirin, *Game Over: How Politics has Turned Sports Upside Down*, New York: The New Press, 2013.

football field [or a basketball court]. Those are two dangerous messages being handed down from above, from coaches, athletic directors, university administrators, and the NCAA. (Luther 2011, 80-81)

These two dangerous messages are the messages of racialized patriarchy. As I understand it, both messages have circulated since the patriarchal days of ancient Greece, where women were often blamed for their sexual mistreatment and too many men thought their highest glories were on the field of battle against a demonized enemy (I explore this further in chapter III; cf. Townsend 2017). Patriarchy is a fluid political and ontological system that has been the groundwork of masculine imperial consumption throughout history, becoming racialized in the modern era. In this era, just as the naturalized binary of biological sex has been utilized to derive social meaning and social roles of gender since time immemorial (at least in parts of the world), patriarchal European colonizers began deriving social meaning from phenotype to justify, codify, and naturalize practices of genocide and the enslavement of indigenous and African peoples while constructing its ‘Western’ superiority and strength against the ‘Orient’ (Omi and Winant 1994; Smith 2006; Said 1979; Lugones 2007; Beauvoir 2010). Luther’s identification of the dependency of the political-economic system upon these two messages that minimize the rape of women and tell young, black men that they are only valued for their athletic talents demonstrates the co-dependent relationship between the practices and justificatory ideology of racialized patriarchy in the contemporary academy (cf. Kendi 2016).

This contemporary political-economic system of racialized patriarchy was insulated from legal scrutiny in the Supreme Court case of *U.S. v. Morrison* (2000). The case tested the economic impact of the federal civil remedy of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which passed as an amendment to the objectionable Crime Bill that expanded and deepened the racially motivated War on Drugs (Alexander 2011; DuVernay 2016; Murakawa 2014; Tonry 2012). The case involved the 1994 group sexual assault of a white female student, Christy Brzonkala, while attending Virginia Polytechnic Institute by two of the university’s newly-Nike-sponsored football players, Antonio Morrison and James Crawford. (The reader might bear in mind that 1994 was a year in which racial division in America, especially between ‘white feminists’ and black ‘womanists’ and civil rights activists, became hyper-visible with the televised criminal

trial and acquittal of Heisman winner and former-football darling, O.J. Simpson). In its 2000 decision, the Supreme Court ruled the VAWA's federal civil remedy unconstitutional along commerce clause lines, arguing that the criminal act of sexual assault is not economic in nature and thus out of the bounds of federal authority over intra-state economic activity.

But in fact, the rapability of women and the usability of black and brown bodies are central pillars if not the very foundation of both the interstate commerce of NCAA Athletics and also the global commerce of the Nike corporation. Indeed, it is the political-economic system of racialized patriarchy. The Supreme Court's 2000 decision revealed not only its blindness to the centrality of rape to the global economy of racialized patriarchy, but also its ignorance of justice after traumatic harm. In deeming the federal civil remedy unconstitutional, the Supreme Court left victims pursuing federal accountability no other option than to abdicate their agency to the state in pursuing federal criminal charges. This further contributes to the slow, genocidal movement of the American criminal justice system and its disproportionate incarceration of people of color (Crenshaw Ocen, and Nanda 2015; Alexander 2011).¹⁰ Further, as Beth Ritchie observes, racialized patriarchy within state legal systems of criminal justice (as well as educational systems) magnify the vulnerability of black women by creating an unsafe and under-resourced environment for them to seek help. Under a "trap of loyalty," black women may feel obligated to protect black male abusers and others within the black community from the racial violence of the state. And if and when black women do come forward, they often face institutional violence rather than support (Ritchie 2012). Such was the experience of Jane Doe, which I detail in the next section.

But beyond producing disproportionate, disruptive traumatic harm to communities of color, Herman notes that the court system does not succeed in providing the "kinds of accountability" survivors seek. Contemporary criminal and university legal paradigms of sexual violence have the state or academic institution usurp the locus of agency from survivors, deciding either heroically or dismally whether to prosecute or

¹⁰ Catharine MacKinnon notes the exceptional character of the *U.S. v. Morrison* regarding race as it was a rare case in which black men were granted impunity for raping a white woman. See MacKinnon, "Disputing Male Sovereignty: On *United States v. Morrison*," *Women's Lives, Men's Laws* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 2005): 210 and 210n18-19.

punish on the abstracted behalf of survivors, citizens, and students (Herman 2005; Holland, Cortina, and Freyd 2018; also, Mann 2012). While VAWA's federal civil remedy offered survivors the potential option of pursuing justice on their own terms rather than through or in addition to criminal procedure, Herman notes that both "the financial remedies and criminal punishments imposed by the courts often fit poorly with survivor's visions of justice." Rather, survivors seek both validation of the basic facts and harms of their trauma experience from their community of others. Without this "public acknowledgement and restitution," Herman warns, "all social relationships remain contaminated by the corrupt dynamics of denial and secrecy" (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 243). The power of racialized patriarchy is dependent upon this contamination.

Decolonial feminist scholarship offers the perspective that the construction of the identity categories of racialized patriarchal domination is reliant on the bifurcation of the temporality of human lived experience. In her forthcoming book, Megan Burke brings María Lugones' decolonial feminist theory into conversation with Walter Mignolo's decolonial philosophy of temporality to offer a feminist phenomenological account of rape within racialized patriarchy. As I further discuss in the next chapter, racialized patriarchy builds off the Aristotelian conservative, patriarchal backlash to Plato's human philosophy of overcoming. Burke's account of racialized patriarchy helps to explain why and how the University of Oregon was able to settle its legal dispute with Jane Doe and suspend and expel the three black university basketball players without, as we will explore in detail in the next section, *either admitting a rape had occurred or that the institution was complicit*.

Burke explains the temporality of racialized patriarchy by offering María Lugones as a feminist intervention into Mignolo's decolonial philosophy of time. Walter Mignolo argues that linear time is a "colonizing device" that bifurcates human temporality along constructed phenotypical racial lines (Mignolo 2011, 152). By this logic, to be *human* is to be 'white' and within a linear, progressive narrative arc of history. 'White' people are considered human and therefore exist 'in' time: they have a future towards which to presently strive that proceeds in an upward, progressive arc from the past. Within this logic, 'brown' or 'black' people are constructed in the hegemonic white imaginary as pre- or sub-human animals and therefore exist 'out' of time. This 'white' construction of

‘blackness’ considers people of color representative of the ‘primitive’ animal prior to ‘white’ human history. In the ‘white’ imaginary, ‘blackness’ comes to mark the ‘backwards’ and ‘repetitious’ past from which ‘white’ humans have progressed or developed. Within racialized patriarchy, the colonized subjectivities of brown and black people are thus ontologically *frozen* in time without future, abandoned to represent and repeat the immemorial past in the present.

But with the period of modern colonization, Lugones offers that the binary gender arrangements of Europe explicitly became racialized and further bifurcated. The ‘light’ side of the colonial/modern gender system maintained *gendered* marks for *humans* who were now considered ‘white.’ To be ‘white’ was to be intelligible as a human *man* or *woman*, the latter of whom remained subservient to the former. But to be ‘black’ or ‘brown’ demarcated sub- or pre-human slave status. As Lugones insists, the *de*-humanization of colonized people was not limited to the mark of phenotype but included the mark of sex. To be ‘black’ or ‘brown’ was to be *sexed* rather than *gendered*. One was marked as a pre- or sub-human *sexed* animal, intelligible only as a ‘male’ or ‘female’ of the human animal species *but not yet fully gendered rational human men and women*. ‘White women’ may have been lesser humans to ‘white men’ in this system, but they were still considered *human*. In contrast, “[t]he slave system defined Black people as chattel. [...] Since women, no less than men, were viewed as profitable labor-units, they might as well have been genderless as far as the slaveholders were concerned...*Black women were practically anomalies*” as they were not ‘women’ but ‘female’ human chattel (Davis 1981, 5; Burke’s emphasis).

As Burke explains, according to the ontological system of racialized patriarchy, ‘white men’ and ‘white women’ are ‘in’ time while ‘black males’ and ‘black females’ are ‘out’ of time. ‘White men’ and ‘white women’ both have a future in racialized patriarchy, though the future of white women is a destiny *for* ‘white men’ that is characterized by the experience of traumatic rupture. Colonized men and women, or black ‘males’ and ‘females,’ are ‘out’ of time, doomed to repeat the past in the present. Both are cast to play the fantasy of what white men thought ‘primitive’ human behavior was like. The ‘black male’ is constructed to represent the ‘primitive’ danger to human females, thus a natural danger to present civilized ‘white women.’ While the ‘black female’ is constructed to

represent the ‘primitive’ vessel of sex as either a ‘jezebel’ or ‘mammy,’ thus a ‘natural’ victim to the ‘natural’ urges of human males. Black women, or black ‘females,’ are considered ‘out’ of time and thus ‘naturally’ sexualized and ‘naturally’ vulnerable to the ‘natural’ urges of primitive man: she is always already victim to not only ‘black males’ but also ‘white men.’ She is the ‘natural’ seductress, temptress of the species. How could a man, civilized or not, help himself? On this view, racialized patriarchy is revealed to be a victim-blaming ontology of denial shifting responsibility from the perpetration of ‘white men’ onto his ontologically-subordinate victims.

The future-oriented temporality of white male supremacy relies on this bifurcation of human temporality, freezing colonized subjectivities into a ‘backward’ repetitious temporality of the past in the present. Without a future to be ruptured, the ‘black female’ is always already violable. The crimes against her do not register as offenses in racialized patriarchy because they are not committed against a ‘human’ existing ‘in’ time. In contrast, the ‘white woman’ is always already in need of rescue, in a constant state of threat in the face of potential traumatic rupture. She is ‘in’ time and thus has a future that may (read: must) be ruptured, if not, under constant threat in racialized patriarchy. In other words, the ontological status of ‘white men’ and the impunity of their own violent perpetration relies on the simultaneous always already violability of ‘black females’ and the always already ‘white women’ damsels in need of rescue from the always already ‘primitive’ urges of ‘black males.’ The ontological status of the ‘white man’ is that of a potential hero whose flaws are always already forgiven. He’s only human, after all.

Might it be that as a black woman, Jane Doe was considered a ‘black female’ whose rape was not considered a crime because crimes are committed against *humans*? And might it be that as black men, the three basketball players were considered ‘black males’ whose aggression was due to their ‘primitive’ pre-human animal nature that threatened the civility of the white institution, outweighing the usability of their athletic bodies for institutional and Nike profits? The bodies of black ‘males’ and ‘females’ are constructed to represent the limit of Western civilization, the underside onto which the violence of Western civilization is always already projected. Our institutions are in denial—or knowingly complicit—regarding how central racialized patriarchy is to our cultural and economic arrangements. The violence continues while institutions, like the

self-identified ‘University of Nike,’ are allowed to deny and project their guilty complicity onto black and female students and laborers.

Jane Doe and the Denials of the ‘University of Nike’

In the course of writing this dissertation, I have found myself constantly returning to the meaning of four statements made in the context of Jane Doe’s case. The first is Jane Doe’s claim that she wanted to report her assault to authorities, but on her “own time.” Second, is the public plea made by an alum imploring the University of Oregon to show “courage not crisis management” in the face of Jane Doe’s allegations. Third, is the exasperated admonishment by administrator Brad Shelton to “do the math, Dana” when I inquired into the institution’s rationality and likely use of tuition monies for the institution’s legal counter-suit against Jane Doe. And finally, I continuously return to the then-incoming university president Michael Schill’s exhortation to cease discussing the case of Jane Doe for fear that doing so may negatively affect or foreclose future university (financial) endeavors, saying “What we want to do is make this university the safest university we can and if we’re constantly talking about what happened in the past, we’re taking our eyes off the future” (interview in Jacoby 2015). These are the words of a lover of Nike. He may as well have said, “don’t think or talk about it, just do it.” In this section, I contextualize and critically discuss these statements within the system of racialized patriarchy. I do so through a detailed recollection of the case of Jane Doe and the University of Oregon to prepare our discussion of the role of the temporality of denial in upholding racialized patriarchy and the temporality of its overcoming in subsequent sections.

The assault of Jane Doe occurred in the early hours of March 9, 2014 during an evening celebrating the University of Oregon basketball team’s upset-victory in their final regular season game, marking the team’s entry into the multi-billion-dollar NCAA PAC-12 and March Madness tournaments. Jane Doe’s father filed a report of the assault later that day with the campus University of Oregon Police Department. Jane Doe herself filed a report with the local Eugene Police Department days later, stating that “I was really mad at my dad. I wanted to report it, but on my own time.” Despite knowledge of these reports, the University of Oregon permitted Dotson and Artis to play and score

points in the post-season tournaments. It was also revealed that Doe's third and "most forceful" rapist, Austin, had been recruited to the team in January by Coach Dana Altman despite Austin's suspension for sexual assault from his previous school, Providence College. Coach Altman would later deny knowledge of either the reasons for Austin's previous suspension or the report filed against his three players prior to and during the March Madness tournament.¹¹

Further, the University failed to enter either report of the assault into the campus crime log, a violation of the federal Clery Act. This federal statute was enacted in 1990 precisely to bring transparency to reports of campus sexual violence (and other crimes) after the rape and murder of Jeanne Clery in her dorm room at Lehigh University in 1986. In 2013, federal policy expanded reportable areas to include those surrounding campus, such as the two separate locations of off-campus student housing where Jane Doe was repeatedly assaulted.¹² Administrators and police would later explain that the failure to enter the reports into the crime log was a calculated decision to protect the then-ongoing police investigation. It should be noted that the investigation involved the standard though highly objectionable practice of pressuring Jane Doe to act as her own investigator.¹³ Within a week of her assault, police asked Jane Doe to contact her attackers to bait them in an attempt to record any admissions of guilt. While she bravely complied, the district attorney's office decided the evidence gathered was not enough to prosecute the case despite having "no doubt the incidents occurred." The university quietly suspended the three players upon receiving the police report (Greif 5 May 2014;

¹¹ See the report from *The Oregonian*, including a video of my response after attending the press conference, by Thomas Boyd, "Video: Dana Altman Talks in Wake of Ducks Basketball Rape Allegations," *The Oregonian*, 9 May 2014, http://www.oregonlive.com/ducks/index.ssf/2014/05/video_dana_altman_talks_in_wak.html (accessed November 2016). See also see UO faculty member Bill Harbaugh's timeline, "Gottgate Cover-Up Timeline, Editorials and Reports, Questions, Resources," *UOMatters*, 13 May 2014 (last updated 1 April 2015), <http://uomatters.com/2014/05/gottgate-timeline-and-questions.html> (accessed November 2016).

¹² See "Clery Act," *Know Your IX*, <https://www.knowyourix.org/college-resources/clery-act/> (accessed 19 Jan. 2018).

¹³ See the Eugene Police Department Report, Case 14-04131, released 29 April 2014, <https://ia801505.us.archive.org/3/items/gov.uscourts.ord.124639/gov.uscourts.ord.124639.42.1.pdf>; (accessed 18 January 2017); and see Jon Krakauer, *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town*, New York: Doubleday, 2015 for further documentation of the police practice of requesting rape victims to contact their alleged attackers.

see also Edge 2014). Records of Jane Doe's assault are still missing from the campus crime log.

The case did not escape public notice, however. A thinly redacted police report graphically detailing the several assaults against Jane Doe was released for public consumption on April 28, 2014. I will not cite nor further detail the all-to-public police report. The story is not mine to share and too much has been shared and consumed in a kind of racialized pornography by the police, the media, the University of Oregon, and the public. As leading feminist trauma researcher Judith Herman emphasizes, the first principle of overcoming trauma is to center the agency of the survivor as traumatic harm is characterized by a fundamental, dehumanizing loss of agency (Herman 1992/1997/2015). As we will continue to explore, part of overcoming of trauma requires the support of others to offer the reciprocity of space, time, and recognition for the traumatized individual to care for their own self after their self-rupture. Further consumption, usurpation of agency, betrayal, and denial hinders the temporality of this process of overcoming. Remember, on the view adopted here, psychological trauma is a moment of self-rupture at communal, spiritual, emotional, cognitive, psychological, physiological, and neurobiological levels. It takes time to rebuild these connections, to reconstitute or 'give birth' to the agential self in trauma's aftermath.

Even seemingly benevolent heroic¹⁴ actions and decision-making by others, such as Jane Doe's father's report to UOPD, carry the potential to severely undermine if not short-circuit the vital and important process of overcoming in the aftermath of traumatic self-rupture. Jane Doe's time and way of having a world, her ability to tell her own story to her own self and others on her own time and on her own terms, were colonized, or "annexed," "preempted," and "undermined" (see Mann 2012, 27 and 29), by her several rapists, by her father's reporting, by the District Attorney's decision not to move forward with the case after using Jane Doe to bait for evidence, by the Eugene Police Department's release of the report, as well as by the actions of the University of Oregon preceding and following her assault.

¹⁴ I use this term in the sense provided by 'thesis three' of Bonnie Mann's "Creepers, Flirts, Heroes, and Allies: Four Theses on Sexual Harassment" (Mann 2012).

To be clear: the support victims of trauma most need is the empathetic care and reciprocity of others to enable them to make their *own* decisions and take their *own* actions on their *own* time.

Public attention was drawn to Jane Doe's police report when sports reporters began to note the three basketball players were not participating in post-season activities. Feminists and survivors on campus who were all-too-familiar with sexual trauma and the betrayals of the institution quickly organized and stormed the campus with protests chanting "survivors before sports." Meanwhile, a local Men's Rights Activist filed Title IX complaints on behalf of the players wherein he accused the protesting feminists of, essentially, being racist prudes all the while belying his own racist assumptions of the violability of the victimized black female student: despite her own report, he represented the gross and persisting social refusal to either *believe* a black woman or *see* her as someone who had been victimized. Through public records requests, this same man was also able to obtain the *un-redacted* police reports, publishing Jane Doe's identity in online manifestos and thus exposing her to racist-misogynist vitriol (for obvious reasons, I also will not cite these documents). Feminist psychologist Jennifer Freyd soon filed Clery Act complaints (Edge 2014; see Duin 15 May 2014). She also prepared a series of campus climate surveys to better understand not only the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment on campus but also experiences of institutional betrayal. Despite her work and surveys being recommended by Senator Kristen Gillibrand and the Obama White House, the university would later refuse to fund these climate surveys for fear of "confirmation bias." The university instead opted to fund an external 'objective' insurance firm to conduct risk-assessment studies while Freyd conducted her own independent survey (Woolington 11 June 2014).

As the battles between feminists and Men's Rights Activists ensued on and off-line, UO-alum turned sports and culture critic Chris Feliciano summarized the thoughts of many in a May 19, 2014 op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times*:

As an Oregon alum, I'm hoping for officials to be held accountable for the bungled response, which fuels concerns about the outsized power of the university's athletic programs and, more critically, exposes serious weaknesses in the institution's response to reports of rape. Right now, the uninspired leadership on display in Eugene is enough to make even the proudest alum want to mothball his Ducks gear.

Gottfredson, the school president, seems to believe that he can put these concerns to rest by dismissing the athletes and delivering ambitious rhetoric about this case being an opportunity ‘to become leaders in the nation in creating a campus that is safe from sexual violence.’

But that’s going to take courage, not crisis management. (Feliciano 2014; my emphasis).

Feliciano’s implied prediction that the deeds of the university’s then-President Michael Gottfredson and other top university officials would not conform to their words was proven accurate precisely because the administration operated along a temporality of denial. As I discuss, the temporality of denial is a temporality of crisis management that plays on the desire to forget traumatic experience, trapping present subjectivity into *fatalistic* repetitions of the past in the present. In contrast, the temporality of courageous overcoming would *require* the administration to *recognize* both the trauma and the centrality of its infliction and denial to current campus operations. Only through this recognition and reflection would an institution dedicated to overcoming trauma be able to implement policies that might actually foster the continued growth and life pursuit of Jane Doe and others within and without academia.

The “ambitious rhetoric” Feliciano criticized was the statement by then-university President Michael Gottfredson given in a press conference held in response to and amidst the campus uproar. There, Gottfredson falsely claimed that there were clear university policies in place regarding sexual violence. In fact, the university was just beginning the process of rewriting policies to comply with the 2013 expansion of the Clery Act and the Obama administration’s several “Dear Colleague Letters,” a series of federal guidelines for complying with civil rights statutes (such as Title IX) and education statutes (such as the federal law protecting student privacy, FERPA).¹⁵ In his press conference, Gottfredson went on to invoke FERPA to defer institutional accountability in the face of public inquiry regarding the institution’s role in the case. He stated “we are not going to violate the laws that are in place to protect students’ privacy or the rights of our

¹⁵ Gottfredson also failed in leading the conversation with these policy changes, delivering prepared remarks weeks later to the University Senate and departing without fielding questions or participating in the ensuing discussion and vote on changes to the Student Conduct Code. Some of his remarks from this speech are included in *The Hunting Ground* as a demonstration of institutional betrayal.

students—*especially* the survivor” (his emphasis).¹⁶ While Gottfredson’s response was frustrating then, it became tragically ironic months later after his resignation and near-million dollar severance package¹⁷ when it was revealed that the university had utilized a loophole between FERPA and HIPAA, the federal law protecting the privacy of medical records, to seize Jane Doe’s supposedly confidential university counseling records while preparing its own legal defense and counter-suit against her.

In early June, Jane Doe offered a critique of the University of Oregon Athletic Department and head coach Dana Altman in a local multi-part journalistic expose of campus sexual assault. She wrote:

I am angry with the culture that appears to exist in our athletic department that prioritizes winning over safety of our students. I cannot fathom how our basketball coach recruited someone who was in the middle of a suspension for another sexual assault to come to Eugene. I think that students, faculty and other community members have been asking some very needed questions of our athletic department, and I am not satisfied with the answers they have provided. (qtd. in Mortensen 2014)

Jane Doe filed a federal complaint against basketball Coach Dana Altman and the University of Oregon months later on January 8, 2015. It was poetically timed exactly one week after the UO football team’s New Years’ Day 2015 Rose Bowl victory over Florida State University.¹⁸ In her claim, she charged that:

¹⁶ Gottfredson’s statement can be found at “The Office of the President” website here: <http://president.uoregon.edu/content/president-gottfredsons-statement-media-regarding-sexual-violence> (accessed November 2016).

Additionally, it should be noted that Gottfredson’s background is in the field of criminology. There, he staked out the position that crime is the product of an individual’s lack of self-control, a glaringly racist position when contextualized against the racist and heteronormative history of policing and lawmaking. See Gottfredson’s co-written book *A General Theory of Crime* (1990) against Michael Tonry’s *Punishing Race: A Continuing American Dilemma* (2011), Philip L. Reichel’s “Southern Slave Patrols as Transitional Police Type” (1988), and Joey L. Mogul, Andrea Ritchie, and Kay Whitlock’s *Queer (In)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States* (2011) among other scholarship engaging the question of racialized patriarchy alongside inquiries into criminality and justice.

¹⁷ Gottfredson is currently employed at as a research professor at University of California, Irvine, where he had served as provost prior to his UO Presidency. For details regarding Gottfredson’s severance package, see Theen 17 July 2016.

¹⁸ Florida State was itself similarly accused of covering up the 2012 sexual assault of Erica Kinsman by active and star-quarterback, Jameis Winston. In a colonial denial of their own university’s ongoing betrayal against a black co-ed, University of Oregon students and players jeered Winston for the rape of the white Erica Kinsman with the chant “No means no” to the tune of the University of Florida’s fight song while casting the team’s ‘Seminole’ tomahawk gesture (Luther 2016, 155-156). On race, coloniality, and mascots, see Charles Fruehling Springwood and C. Richard King, “Race, Power and Representation in Contemporary American Sport,” *Multiculturalism in the United States: Current Issues, Contemporary*

- (1) The University of Oregon had violated Title IX when Coach Dana Altman recruited Brandon Austin in January 2014; and
- (2) The University of Oregon had violated the Clery Act in its neglect to:
 - (a) Follow through with her on her case; or
 - (b) Notify the campus community in a timely manner (e.g., the failure to record either her or her father’s police report in the campus crime log).

Additionally, and perhaps most egregiously, she charged that:

- (3) The University of Oregon’s legal counsel, in its preemptory legal preparation, had gained illegal and unethical access to her confidential health records at the University of Oregon Counseling Center exactly a month prior on December 8, 2014.

Jane Doe’s entire casefile, “including notes taken by [therapist Jennifer] Morlok during private therapy sessions” had been seized without the consent of *either* Jane Doe *or* her therapist (Read 2015). Rather, the UO Counseling Center Director, Shelly Kerr, had instructed her executive assistant, Karen Stokes, via email to make copies of the casefile without leaving a record of doing so. To repeat: violating standard protocol, the director of the University of Oregon Counseling Center instructed her assistant to deliberately seize Jane Doe’s records for distribution to the university’s legal counsel in its legal preparations against Jane Doe without either the consent or notification of Jane Doe or her therapist. This was an egregious violation of the fundamental ethical principle of confidentiality in therapy practice, which requires the express consent of clients to share their information. Confidentiality is meant to center the client’s agency. Though executive assistant Stokes complied with the unethical requests of administrators, she also informed therapist Morlok, who in turn reported the violation of ethics to the Oregon State Bar and the Oregon Board of Psychologist Examiners later that January (Read 2015).

Voices. Eds. Peter Kivisto and Georganne Rundblad (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2000): 161-175; see also Jennifer Guiliano, *Indian Spectacle: College Mascots and the Anxiety of Modern America*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2015.

It should also be noted that the University of Oregon football team had narrowly been eligible to participate in the 2015 Rose Bowl due to a graduate employee strike that was resolved just days prior to the Heisman ceremony where University of Oregon quarterback, Marcus Mariota, would be celebrated.

Administrators were swift in their retribution. The University of Oregon and Coach Dana Altman filed a counterclaim against Jane Doe a month later on February 9, 2015. Not only did the University dispute Jane Doe’s allegations point-by-point, but the University went on to charge that Jane Doe’s accusations were defamatory and would therefore cause a chilling effect on other survivors coming forward (Greif 19 Feb. 2015; Cremer 2015).¹⁹ In other words, under the guise of protecting students, the University of Oregon had the audacity to counter-sue one of its own students who had unquestionably been victimized by three members of the university’s basketball team—one of whom had been recruited to the team by the university’s own negligence—and after the university’s seizure and consumption of her confidential therapy records. But, according to the University of Oregon, Jane Doe was to blame for producing a chilling effect on reporting sexual violence throughout the university.

This was a clear demonstration of Freyd’s DARVO thesis: the University and Coach Altman continued to Deny wrongdoing and Attacked Jane Doe and Reversed the roles of Victim and Offender with their legal countersuit. The administration also retaliated against whistleblowers Morlok and Stokes.

Internal administrators, under the leadership of Interim-President Scott Coltrane, thought their behavior was perfectly logical. The absolute disconnect between the administrators’ logic and the wisdom of survivors and their allies became apparent at a February 16, 2015 student forum on tuition wherein administrators offered their routinized recommendations for the next year’s tuition increases. Many students and scholars in the audience, myself included, had participated in the Spring protests, as well as a December graduate employee labor strike that had threatened the university football team’s eligibility in the 2015 Rose Bowl game. We were furious at the latest revelations of institutional retaliation and betrayal. Some of us used the forum on tuition as an opportunity to inquire about the relationship between student tuition and university litigation: how many tuition dollars were being utilized to counter-sue student survivors?

Administrator Brad Shelton (then-Interim Vice President for Research and Innovation, Vice Provost for Budget and Planning, and Professor of Mathematics) grew

¹⁹ The counterclaim can be accessed here: <https://www.scribd.com/document/256331009/Jane-Doe-v-UO-Counterclaim> (accessed Oct. 2016).

flustered by the depths of our inquiries (Fontana 2015). I spoke with Shelton after the meeting to further inquire as to *why* the university had decided to lodge a counterclaim against Jane Doe. Exasperated and in a patronizing tone, Shelton responded, “Do the math, Dana.”

He told me that ethics is mathematical and that I, a student of philosophy, should obviously be able to recognize and respect the soundness of his calculative, consequentialist logic. He continued on, saying that the University of Oregon had a reputation to uphold, a name to defend, and business interests to protect. According to him, it was in the interest of current students and future enrollments to retaliate against the “defamatory” claims of the student survivor. In other words, the decision to counter-litigate was understood within the administration as a sound business move meant to protect the brand. The brand, of course, being integral to top-donor Phil Knight’s global enterprise.

The very next day, the university reassigned executive assistant Stokes’ work duties.

Ten days later, the University of Oregon dropped their counter-claim against Jane Doe in the face of a petition gathering over two thousand signatures; this happened to coincide with the national release of *The Hunting Ground* documentary that included footage of the Spring 2014 protests and Gottfredson’s responses (Kingkade 2015; Woolington 27 Feb. 2015). But dropping the countersuit was not enough to heal the profound feeling of betrayal communally felt at home and across the nation. That the University of Oregon had utilized a federal legal loophole between FERPA and HIPAA to access a student’s therapy records in the aftermath of her sexual assault in preparation to counter-sue her was a horrific violation of trust and betrayal of the academic responsibility to care. In a March 2, 2015 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, law professor Katie Rose Guest Pryal urged students and instructors against utilizing campus counseling resources, instead recommending students be advised to seek independent, off-campus counselors and therapists (Pryal 2015). In some ways, this was a public declaration that the academy was no longer a safe place to care for and pursue one’s own good life in the aftermath of trauma.

In an attempt to eschew further student protest, the University of Oregon attempted to give a quiet week's notice to Stokes of her dismissal from the University of Oregon Counseling Center during Spring Break 2015. Students protested anyway. Administrators insisted that Stokes had not been fired and was eligible to apply for other jobs within the university. But her contract with the university eventually expired, making her dismissal a drawn-out, convoluted, and dishonest firing of retaliation.

It was with the hiring of President Michael Schill on July 1, 2015 that the University of Oregon sought to finally sweep the case of Jane Doe under the rug. A specialist in privacy law, Schill was previously the dean of University of Chicago Law prior to his University of Oregon appointment. Within a month of his presidency, Jane Doe "voluntarily" dismissed Coach Dana Altman from her lawsuit. Days later on August 4, 2015, she settled with the university for \$800 thousand and free tuition, roughly the material equivalent of former-President Gottfredson's previous summer's severance package (Read 2015). Two weeks later on August 18, 2015, the Obama administration issued a "Dear Colleague Letter" taking some federal responsibility in closing the egregious loophole and clarifying the relation between FERPA and HIPPA, but both the damage and the system of denial would persist.²⁰

Therapist Morlok resigned from the University of Oregon on October 31, 2015 (Theen 2016). Weeks later, Schill secured a \$19.2 million donation from Phil Knight for the Marcus Mariota Sports Performance Complex of the University of Oregon (The Associated Press 2015). By comparison, the University of Oregon settled a lawsuit with Morlok and Stokes for a combined total of \$425,000 the following summer. And though Counseling Director Shelly Kerr received a modest slap on the wrist and fine from the Oregon Psychologists Board, to this day she maintains her title and position as Director of the University of Oregon Counseling Center (Dietz 23 July 2016).

Schill issued some of his first statements to the university in his new role as president on the same day of August 4, 2015 that the university settled with Jane Doe. In the statement posted to his university webpage, he briefly and vaguely acknowledged that

²⁰ United States Department of Education, "Dear Colleague Letter to Institutions of Higher Education: Protecting Student Medical Records," 18 Aug. 2015, available at <http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/DCL%20Final%20Signed-508.pdf> (accessed Mar. 2017).

the “underlying incident that gave rise to the litigation is an affront to each and every one of us. As president I will not tolerate the victimization of any member of our community. Period.” Here Schill repeated the language of the district attorney: the rape was merely an “incident.” Neither Schill nor any administrator would publicly admit the “incident” was a group rape or a sexual assault, even while seeking to eliminate sexual violence from its campus. Denial.

In the very next sentence of his webpage statement, Schill went on to explicitly deny that any university personnel had acted wrongfully in relation to Jane Doe and continued to issue a series of grand directives:

As an attorney and former law school dean, I want to be very clear about what this settlement means and what it does not mean. I do not believe any of our coaches, administrators, or other university personnel acted wrongfully, nor do I believe that any one of them failed to live up to the high moral standards that we value and that they embody in their work every day. I do believe we can no longer afford to debate the incident and must instead move forward and implement a comprehensive set of policies to ensure that all of our students will feel secure in the knowledge that they will be free from sexual violence and feel confident should allegations of misconduct be brought forth they will be dealt with fairly, effectively, and expeditiously. [...] We cannot wait for the new Title IX Coordinator to join us before implementing new programs on sexual violence and harassment. [...] The University of Oregon will not tolerate sexual assault or sexual violence. We will teach our students to respect each other. We will teach them to look out for each other. We will show our students that we have zero tolerance for sexual violence by expeditiously investigating and taking action without sacrificing due process. We will not rest until we succeed.²¹

If not evident in his explicit statement that no university personnel had committed wrongdoing, Schill’s characterization of continued discussion on campus regarding the betrayals and denials of the University of Oregon as mere “debate” over the “incident” belied the persisting denial of the administration despite his new leadership and abstract pedagogical rhetoric. Assertions that one will teach respect are not enough. While respect and empathy can be learned, they cannot be taught, at least not in a simple manner. Further, neither respect nor empathy can be learned in an environment where the very process of empathizing with the inner lives of persons in the community is undermined. Indeed, the impatient insistence that we should no longer “debate” the incident and “must

²¹ Available at <http://president.uoregon.edu/content/message-regarding-jane-doe-settlement> (accessed Mar. 2017).

instead move forward” precisely undermines the intention to “implement a comprehensive set of policies to ensure that all of our students will feel secure in the knowledge that they will be free from sexual violence and confident should allegations of misconduct be brought forth they will be dealt with fairly, effectively, and expeditiously.” The failure to take institutional responsibility for the “incident” beyond hand-waving and pay-offs while vociferously committing to harsher policies embroiled in those systems (i.e., zero tolerance) combined with the absolute refusal to support the individual and communal recollection of the “incident” and the systems which contributed to it ensures trauma’s persistence. It also supplants the very mission of the academy.

Any policies that attempt to prevent or address campus sexual violence (or any trauma) in the present and the future are bound to fail if those policies are either constructed or exist within an atmosphere of denial’s refusal to recollect or support the recollection of past traumatic memory. For example, the particular policy of ‘zero tolerance’ advocated by Schill to be implemented in the institution’s rush towards the future persists in the racialized patriarchal logic of the carceral state and often causes more instances of injustice than it remedies (Kilgore, 2015; Parenti 2008; Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock 2011). The academy will *never* be secure from trauma until we institutionally support the academy’s ancient mission: to learn and grow from a careful, continuous study of our past.

Schill granted an interview with the student paper later the same day that the university settled with Jane Doe and that he issued his webpage statement (Jacoby 2015). In the interview, Schill underlined his message of institutional denial. He explicitly articulated that the intention for the university settlement with Jane Doe was to enable the institution to forget the incident and move on, persisting in the mistaken belief that talking about past trauma cannot change our relationship to it. He said “The reason for the settlement was to close the chapter and to move forward. Nothing I say about that matter is going to change anything” (interview in Jacoby 2015). When asked about institutional wrongdoing in the seizure of Jane Doe’s records or the brief counter-suit against her, Schill dismissively responded, “Ditto” (interview in Jacoby 2015). He continued to insist that no person within the institution had committed any wrongdoing,

including the institutional recruitment of Austin *and* the unethical albeit legal-by-loophole institutional seizure of Jane Doe's records.

When the student reporter pressed the new president over the meaning of his webpage statement that the campus could “no longer afford to debate the incident and must instead move forward,” Schill attempted to clarify that he didn't think discussing sexual violence wasn't important but emphasized that such discussions ought to look a particular way. Rather than encouraging the continued discussion over the particular questions Jane Doe's case raised, he said:

What we should be talking about as a campus is how we can respect each other, eliminate sexual violence and the need—when sexual violence occurs—to investigate, be fair to both parties and resolve the issue. [...] What we want to do is make this university the safest university we can and if we're constantly talking about what happened in the past, we're taking our eyes off the future. This has been an issue that's divided the campus. You said it yourself. You were in this class, and people had different viewpoints. At a certain level, that's really good. That's what universities are for, to debate certain issues. When they get to the point where they keep people from acting in a way that is productive, then it's time to end it and really move forward. We've had a long period to discuss what happened, and now is the time to move forward and fix the problem. (interview in Jacoby 2015)

In this statement, Schill continued to characterize the campus discussion and the purpose of universities as “debate” of “different viewpoints” rather than the careful process of recollection in common pursuit of the good life. Thus, he simultaneously elided the institution's culpability in Jane Doe's trauma and persisted in the historical shift from the academy's original mission. As I explore in chapter III, the original academy was not a place for mere eristic debate. Plato characterizes this as the play of young hunting puppies (*Parmenides* 128b-c). Academic philosophical pursuit, however, is undertaken by mature hunting dogs for the god (*Republic* V). Such wise pursuits endure through and constantly battle the *aporetic* shackles of the soul (*Cratylus* 413d-415c) rather than abandon them when such *aporias* “keep people from acting in a way that is productive.” It is true that trauma's shackles of the soul may impede individuals from acting in a way that is “productive” to their own freedom, but as I discuss, denial's hindrances of freedom *facilitate* racialized patriarchy. To endure and battle through the *aporetic* point of trauma recollection is to battle against the function of racialized patriarchy.

Schill's interview concluded with his unambiguous support for protecting the rights of the accused while rushing through the implementation of changes, stating "I think it's important that we proceed as expeditiously as possible, while at the same time protecting the due process rights *of the accused*" (my emphasis). Now, of course due process is important, and we must remember that, historically, it has been black, Asian, and indigenous men, women, and gender-non-binary individuals who have most suffered the lack of their due process rights. But invocations of due process *especially for the accused* skews the picture of who is heard and who is believed, functioning only to reestablish the priority of perpetrators' narration of events and their denial in racialized patriarchy.

In a *New York Times* op-ed entitled "#MeToo Has Done What the Law Could Not," feminist Catherine MacKinnon discussed the persisting role of denial in inhibiting due process *for victims*, particularly female victims of campus sexual violence, despite her groundbreaking work establishing sexual harassment law. To quote her at length:

Sexual harassment law—the first law to conceive sexual violation in inequality terms—created the preconditions for this moment. Yet denial by abusers and devaluing of accusers could still be reasonably counted on by perpetrators to shield their actions.

Many survivors realistically judged reporting pointless. Complaints were routinely passed off with some version of "she wasn't credible" or "she wanted it." I kept track of this in cases of campus sexual abuse over decades; it typically took three to four women testifying that they had been violated by the same man in the same way to even begin to make a dent in his denial. That made a woman, for credibility purposes, one-fourth of a person.

Even when she was believed, nothing he did to her mattered as much as what would be done to him if his actions against her were taken seriously. His value outweighed her sexualized worthlessness. His career, reputation, mental and emotional serenity and assets counted. Hers didn't. In some ways, it was even worse to be believed and not have what he did matter. It meant she didn't matter.

These dynamics of inequality have preserved the system in which the more power a man has, the more sexual access he can get away with compelling. (MacKinnon 2018)

We live in a world in which women are *one-fourth* as credible as men, and MacKinnon's study does not even begin to account for racialized problems of credibility. In order to *concretely* be "fair to both parties," we must bear this systemic inequality in mind rather than persisting in the (over)protection of the "due process rights of the accused." I am

reminded of Elie Wiesel wise statement, “We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressors, never the victim” (Wiesel 1986). We need to believe victims and be sure they receive the support and justice they need and deserve, while simultaneously supporting the *accountability* of victim-perpetrators and their own trauma histories so that the cycle of violence might end. Not only does our current rhetoric of protecting “due process rights” perniciously equivocate victims and perpetrators, but it persists in assuming that accusers (read: women) are liars to the advantage of hegemonic racialized patriarchy. It is the very rhetoric notorious abuser-in-chief President Donald Trump’s education secretary, billionaire Betsy DeVos, has used to roll back the important federal policies and guidance on campus sexual violence developed by the Obama administration.²²

The idea that our collective future security trades-off with the lengthy and constant process of recollection *is* denial, and denial only ensures the future security of status quo systems of domination. I call this ‘Nikian Neglect’ in the next chapter to refer to the denial inherent to *philonikian* masculinity. ‘Nikian Neglect’ is the practice of denying trauma to protect and uphold the future financial, political, and ontological power, glory, and interests of white men. ‘Nikian Neglect’ neglects caring for past traumatic memories in the present. Reflective deliberation is silenced and mischaracterized as unproductive “debate” while expeditious action is taken to further deny and (mis)manage the crisis. ‘Nikian Neglect’ says what the stakeholders in racialized patriarchy want to hear about their future glory. That “what we want to do is make this university the safest university we can” while “protecting the due process rights of the accused” so the football team and its *de facto* Nike owners might “become untouchable.”²³

“Just Do It.”

²² The September 7, 2017 speech is available at <https://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/secretary-devos-prepared-remarks-title-ix-enforcement> (accessed February 2018). On September 22, 2017, Secretary DeVos rescinded important Title IX guidelines established during the Obama administration, including raising the federal guidelines for standards of proof of evidence from the ‘preponderance of evidence standard’ to the ‘clear and convincing standard,’ a standard that is nearly impossible for any victim of sexual violence to prove in so-called ‘he-said-she-said’ cases.

²³ “Become untouchable” was an actual Nike ad line emblazoned over glorified college quarterbacks Marcus Mariota and Jameis Winston that ran during the 2015 Rose Bowl. In the ads, Mariota wore ‘Duck’ wings in the style of the Angel of Death or, more aptly, the ancient winged Nike while Winston, embroiled in accusations of sexual misconduct, was depicted encircled in fire.

As we will continue to explore, denial inhibits the process of overcoming, thereby rendering the repetitions of trauma's infliction an inevitability. The *constant* process of recollecting rather than denying trauma *strengthens* the power of subjugated peoples against the system of racialized patriarchy's domination. Contrary to what Schill implies, talking about the past *does something*. It *changes* our relation to and meaning of traumatic memory (van der Kolk, 191; Brison 1997, 25). Recollecting trauma precisely "keep[s] people from acting in a way that is productive" *to systems of racialized patriarchy*. And this process takes longer than what Schill termed a "long period" of eleven to fifteen months. This is not only because systems of patriarchal material and ontological domination have fluidly existed since time immemorial, but also because the process of overcoming is a *constant rebirthing* of the self throughout a lifetime (Beauvoir 2010; Mann 2012; also see chapter IV of this dissertation). The process of overcoming is not as simple as Schill's linear understanding wherein we might "debate" for a period of time and suddenly declare "now is the time to move forward and fix the problem." Instead, overcoming the living death of trauma is a constant, repetitious process of recollection and rebirth over and again through time. Communing with one's self and sharing traumatic memory with others *changes* our relation to and meaning of our individual and collective emotional memories. There is no final "fix" but only constant recollection, rebirth, and reconnection.

The Repetitions of Denial

As I've suggested, the experience of trauma ruptures the complex, ambiguous connection between the present and narrative temporality of the individual self. And this traumatic break simultaneously disrupts our relations with others. Having been betrayed and *de-humanized* in the traumatic experience, reciprocal human relations of trust, love, and solidarity become difficult (Stern 2010, 285). This may make it difficult to recognize the humanity of others or even oneself, making the domination or neglect of others all-too-easy. Denial exacerbates and perpetuates the rupture of trauma, wringing devastating individual and social consequences that only prop up the system of racialized patriarchy. In this section, I discuss some of the contemporary science of trauma and denial to better understand these mechanisms and their efficiency for enforcing racialized patriarchy.

It is now held without much controversy in the field of psychology that the mental and physical survival and flourishing of infants is dependent upon a successful, trusting attachment to a primary caregiver and that this basic fact of human interdependency persists throughout our lives as we navigate the permeability between trusted attachments, danger, and our autonomy.²⁴ Psychiatrist Judith Herman and psychologist Jennifer Freyd both suggest that trauma usually involves a betrayal of trust. And psychiatrist Bessel A. van der Kolk offers that this betrayal often induces a neurobiological rupture between the ‘rationalizing’ prefrontal cortex and the ‘animalian’ limbic system, leaving our normal defense mechanisms to fear or stress running unconsciously on overdrive.

While scientific research into the neurobiology of psychological trauma remains in its infancy, current research proves useful in informing our feminist existential-phenomenological approach. In many ways, the nature of trauma reveals the ambiguities of our embodied human subjectivity. Philosophical dualism will not help us here for psychological trauma is neither simply a problem of the abstracted mind nor the animalian body, but a wound of the embodied soul. The unique, multi-dimensional meanings of traumatic experience can never be reduced to mere physiological components; however, it is important for us to understand and hold onto the embodied nature of trauma.

Trauma *changes* us. The contemporary science of trauma theory in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, neurobiology and neurochemistry provide increasing evidence of this fact. This embodied rupture of our soul affects both our imagination and our ability

²⁴ Despite the patriarchal desire through the history of Western philosophy for an unencumbered, atomistically autonomous rational human self, the unencumbered (white male) self has a mother and, usually, a wife among other servants and caretakers. This caretaker position has traditionally been fulfilled by women in racialized patriarchy: mothers and nannies, the latter of whom have primarily been black, brown, or lower-class women serving white mothers and their families. Racialized patriarchy simultaneously lauds these feminized caretaker positions to the heights of godliness while simultaneously rejecting them as projects for (white) men (or, in some cases, white women), which I further discuss in chapter IV (Beauvoir 2010).

On attachment, see the work of John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss*, New York: Basic Books, 1969; John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*, New York: Basic Books, 1988; Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1950; Erik H. Erikson and Joan M. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed: Extended Version*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982; and Jennifer Freyd, “Violations of Power: Adaptive Blindness and Betrayal Trauma Theory,” *SAGE: Feminism and Psychology*, 7.1 (1997): 22-32.

to mirror and recognize the mirroring of others. Part of the self becomes unconsciously stuck ‘out’ of time in the repetitions of immemorialized past traumatic experience in the present. Meanwhile another part of the self stumbles consciously ‘in’ time dissociated from and confused by past traumatic memory and current behavior. This makes it difficult to pick up on social cues of loving assurance, trust, or solidarity or imagine possibilities beyond mere survival. This has a profound effect on our relationships with friends, loved ones, colleagues, allies, and others. We become ‘out of sync’ with others to the point where we may feel we are on an alien planet, ‘out’ of the narrative arc of our social world (van der Kolk 2015, 81). This alienation leaves traumatized people at risk of triggers, self-harm, re-victimization, as well as perpetration of abuse or neglect against others.

Neurobiologists explain that traumatic experience ruptures the relation between our prefrontal cortex and our limbic system. Van der Kolk calls the prefrontal cortex the “watchtower” of our brains. It is the house of reason and it is responsible for constructing the narrative, linear temporality of our lives. It enables us to relate both to others and our own selves. Van der Kolk writes that the prefrontal cortex enables us “to hover calmly and *objectively* [my emphasis] over our thoughts, feelings, and emotions” or to practice what he calls “mindfulness” (van der Kolk 2015, 62). This ‘objectivity’ need not be dismissive of subjective emotional life as it has long been thought racialized patriarchal Western canon of philosophy. Instead, one might think of the prefrontal cortex as providing our capacity to assess our own subjective, emotional needs and desires and then creatively meet them either ourselves or by communicating them to trusted, supportive others. This is a relational capacity of the mind that feminists have long criticized men in the Western canon of philosophy for either neglecting, disparaging, or conceptualizing in terms of domination rather than care.

Practicing psychologists influenced by ‘Internal Family Systems’ theory often offer that the prefrontal cortex enables our capacity to ‘parent’ ourselves: we can unkindly discipline or abuse ourselves, neglect ourselves, or recognize, love, care, and nurture ourselves. As may be obvious, the limbic system is our reacting ‘child’ in the parental metaphor; it might alternatively be thought of as the house of memory and emotions or, as van der Kolk offers, the “cook” and “smoke detector” of the brain. The

limbic system is responsible for both housing our memories and emotions of the past *as well as* processing our present moment-to-moment encounters. Messages fire several milliseconds faster within the limbic system than between the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex, concocting our emotional response to present perceived dangers in relation to past, unconscious memories before we are even consciously aware of what is happening (van der Kolk 2015, 60). Our inner ‘child’ reacts to frightening encounters before our inner ‘parent’ notices or *attunes to* them. Stern writes that unless we have been trained, we “do not get to choose the way [we] will react when [we] are ‘scared to death’” (Stern 2010, 190). We may find ourselves responding to a threat before we are able to consciously process it.

Even when signals reach the prefrontal cortex, we may struggle to put our distress into words. We might “instinctively” call out to our mothers or gods for help, much as we did to survive as infants (van der Kolk 2015, 82; Herman 1992/1997/2015, 52). But as our calls for help fail, our synapses become flooded and overwhelmed with neurotransmitters and hormones, producing an extreme chemical imbalance in the highly sensitive limbic systems. This sends our parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems into our “more primitive way to survive: *fight or flight*” (van der Kolk 2015, 82). But fight or flight may not be a live option due to physical or ideological power differentials. As Stern underscores: neither fight or flight can help teenaged girls in the face of a gun nor young “boys who believe themselves to be serving God by servicing sick priests” (Stern 2010, 190).²⁵ And so, the human organism *freezes* as a last means of survival.

The same chemical flood in our brain elicited by traumatic experience is reproduced and even magnified with subsequent triggering. Van der Kolk writes that in individuals with post-traumatic stress, “the critical balance between the amygdala (smoke detector) and the MPFC [Medial Prefrontal Cortex] (watchtower) shifts radically, which makes it much harder to control emotions and impulses” (van der Kolk 2015, 62). With

²⁵ It is worth noting that women and even children often freeze or “laugh off” their fear both because their strength may be to no avail against the strength of an attacker who is two times their size (or more) and also because the habits of survival available to women and many girls in racialized patriarchy so often conditions them to freeze and literally shrink themselves to take up as little space as possible (cf. Young 1980; Mann 2012; Beauvoir 2010). But combat soldiers as well as women and children may simply go mute as a consequence of trauma’s imprint on the body (van der Kolk 2015, 21 and 43).

this fundamental reorganization of the central nervous system, survivors have difficulty integrating new experiences into their lives. As a result, their entire present world and sense of self may become saturated with the horrors of the past (van der Kolk 2015, 52-53 and 258). Each traumatic trigger releases chemical cocktail similar to the moment of traumatic experience, flooding the body with the same or greater intensity (D'Anniballe 2015; Sherman 2016; Herman 1992/1997/2015, 33-34). Our animalian conditioning takes over and “[t]ime freezes so that the present danger feels like it will last forever” (van der Kolk 2015, 60).

Even though the right side of our prefrontal cortex may receive messages from the limbic system, our narrative-giving language-making left side of the prefrontal cortex is unable to make sense of the messages leaving the limbic system to respond “as if the traumatic event were happening in the present” (van der Kolk 2015, 45). A client of van der Kolk’s speaks to this, writing that in trauma flashbacks “it is as if time is folded or warped, so that the past and present merge, however benign in reality, are thoroughly contaminated and so become objects to be hated, feared, destroyed if possible, avoided if not. [...] I exist in a dual state” (‘Nancy’ qtd. in van der Kolk 2015, 200). Traumatic experience *warps* time in such a way that the present is experienced as the past. We feel fear but have difficulty consciously recognizing it; instead, we feel numb (Stern 2010, 285).

In fact, “trauma affects the imagination,” inhibiting “the mental flexibility” required to let one’s mind play leaving trauma victims “trapped in frozen associations” and continuously “replaying an old reel” (van der Kolk 2015, 17 and 263). Constantly in survival mode, our basic needs are left unmet. We fight unseen enemies of the past, leaving “no room for nurture, care, and love [...] our closest bonds are threatened, along with our ability to imagine, plan, play, learn, and pay attention to other people’s needs” (van der Kolk 2015, 76). The traumatized body in survival mode has difficulty imagining other people and situations encountered in the present other than threats. Combat veterans often report states of fearful hyperarousal when performing mundane tasks in civilian life, always on the look-out for the danger around the corner and ever so suspicious of others (see Herman 2015, 250). Van der Kolk provides the example of a group of WWII veterans who were unable to engage with him in group therapy until after making him an

honorary member of their battalion, finally gifting him a WWII army-issue watch for Christmas. But van der Kolk writes that “it was a sad memento of the year their lives had effectively stopped: 1944” (van der Kolk 2015, 52-53).

Neuroimaging studies revealed that the frontal lobes of individuals harboring post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) do not activate when confronted with a stranger. They “could not muster any curiosity about the stranger,” van der Kolk explains, “They just reacted with intense activation deep inside their emotional brains [generating] startle, hypervigilance, cowering, and other self-protective behaviors. [...] In response to being looked at they simply went into survival mode” (van der Kolk 2015, 104). Obviously, if one goes into survival mode simply when someone looks at you, one lives an alienated existence. This isn’t mere or occasional shy introversion, instead “trauma can turn the whole world into a gathering of aliens” (van der Kolk 2015, 81). Bonds of trust may be broken and difficult to newly build with others, thus making it even more difficult for the traumatized individual in survival mode to get what they need: to be *seen* with *care*.

Even when a trigger passes, traumatized people struggle to make sense of their emotional responses and may instead project their shame into the blame of others. Trauma interrupts our awareness and capacity to calm down. We may all-too-easily lose our temper or distance ourselves, even from those who love us (van der Kolk 2015, 45 and 62). Neurobiologically, we all ‘need a minute’ to process our present perception. In many cases, taking a moment for a deep breath (or several) is enough to help reground ourselves in the present moment and make sense of the trigger source as well as our emotional reaction to it. Survivors of trauma often have difficulty with this process of consciously relating to their memories, emotions, and present perceptions precisely because the memory of their trauma has not yet been *memorialized* into the narrative of their lives.

Thus, survivors of trauma struggle to get through their days, living each present moment as a potential battlefield of the past. They do not spend much time reflecting on the past in the present because the past *is* present, and the present task is to survive (van der Kolk, 246). Even those survivors who appear to be thriving in their careers or even family life often “expend a lot more energy on the everyday tasks of living than do ordinary mortals” (van der Kolk 2015, 248). Philosopher Susan Brison notes that this

“disappearance of the past” is a common symptom of posttraumatic experience, along with the “foreshortening of the future” (Brison 1997, 22-23). The past may be too painful to bear, even while the present is saturated by it. Survivors speak of what they can remember or withstand of their life in segments: ‘in my previous life,’ ‘my life before...,’ or ‘my life after...’ While the past is too overwhelming to bear, the future “stirs up such intense yearning and hope that [it too is] unbearable,” which eventually reduces survivors “to living in an endless present” (Herman 1992/1997/2015 qtd. in Brison 1997, 23 and 22). The self-alienation from past and future is compounded by the alienation from others who might understand what they had survived (Brison 1997, 23). Alienated from others and from their very own selves, traumatized people exist in a constant “state of existential crisis” and may feel “that they belong more to the dead than to the living” (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 51-52).

To experience trauma is to experience a *death* of the self. A disruptive halt to life.

Trauma radically changes a person: not only their neurobiology but also their experience of time. Survivors desire to forget the unnerving details of their past and move on with their lives, but this leaves the trauma *immemorialized* and ‘out’ of narrative time. Stern speaks to the experience of traumatic rupture in her life, writing:

Some people’s lives seem to flow in a narrative; mine had many stops and starts. That’s what trauma does. It interrupts the plot. You can’t process it because it doesn’t fit with what came before or what comes afterward. A friend of mine, a soldier, put it this way. In most of our lives, most of the time, you have a sense of what is to come. There is a steady narrative, a feeling of ‘lights, camera, action’ when big events are imminent. But trauma isn’t like that. It just happens, and then life goes on. No one prepares you for it. (Stern 2010, 273-274)

Traumatic rupture does not simply rupture the narrative of our lives, but it ruptures our very ability *to narrate* our lives. In contrast to positive memories, which can be recalled as a distinct event in the past with a clear, uninterrupted beginning, middle, and end, traumatic memories are often recalled out of sequence with some details missing (often the very details requested in a police investigation) and other details (like the rapist’s smell) are all too hauntingly vivid in the present (van der Kolk 2015, 195). The impact of trauma on the limbic system leaves the recall of traumatic memories “highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented” (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 1-2). The extremes of the dialectic between absolutely forgetting the past and the sudden reliving of its

overwhelming character further unground the individual and make the task of constructive narrative memory all the more difficult (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 49-50). This may further undermine a survivor's credibility if and when they choose to report to authorities who often expect or even require complete, detailed narratives.

Survivors often undergo a 'second-rape' in the context of institutions, forced to retell their experience *in narrative form* while they are still struggling to simply survive. Victims are often asked "why didn't you report the assault immediately after it happened?" On the view that we have developed so far, we can see the insensitivity of these expectations. Especially in the immediate aftermath of a trauma. Survivors need time to reconnect with their own selves, with their own past memories, in order to memorialize them into the narrative of their lives. Without this, survivors only risk becoming *re-traumatized* by their very attempts to comply with institutional demands. Rather than being able to *retell* the past trauma in narrative form, survivors often only manage to presently *relive* the past trauma in confusing and terrifying segments. When survivors are unable to provide a clear, convincing, linear narrative of their traumatic experience, they are often subjected to the scrutiny, disbelief, and harmful decision-making of investigators or even psychiatrists (Burstow 2003). Survivors may be met with implicit and even explicit demands to forget or deny the trauma, allowing silence, denial, and the survivor's own desire to forget to prevail. Institutional betrayal exacerbates the original harm.

President Schill's demand to the campus that we move on from the questions raised by the group sexual assault of Jane Doe by three university basketball players is one such instance of institutional betrayal and denial. Rather than protecting individuals within the community, the demand to forget or deny past traumatic experience results in a collective, systematic, embodied inability to tell the truth. This silencing amnesia provides perpetrators amnesty and also allows traumatic wounds to fester, greatly magnifying the potential to repeat the cycle of traumatic triggering, self-harm, re-victimization, as well as perpetration. As Herman writes, "Denial, repression, and dissociation operate on a social as well as an individual level" (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 1-2). In the next paragraphs, I discuss the operation of trauma's denial at individual and also social levels.

Denial feeds on trauma's rupture between the emotional limbic system and our prefrontal cortex, the very rupture that makes it difficult to *narrativize* past traumatic experience. Survivors in denial register the perception of past threats in the present or even very real present threats, but "their conscious minds go on as if nothing has happened" (van der Kolk 2015, 46). It could be said that denial perfects traumatic rupture into self-deception. Jennifer Freyd terms this 'betrayal blindness' (Freyd and Birrell 2013). Her betrayal theory of trauma suggests that we become blind to, deny, or forget past and present experiences or signs of abuse and neglect *especially* if we are existentially dependent upon the persons or institutions who are harming us. Discussing the denial of abused children, van der Kolk writes:

For many children it is safer to hate themselves than to risk their relationship with their caregivers by expressing anger or by running away. As a result, abused children are likely to grow up believing that they are fundamentally unlovable; that was the only way their young minds could explain why they were treated so badly. They survive by denying, ignoring, and splitting off large chunks of reality: They forget the abuse; they suppress their rage or despair; they numb their physical sensations. If you were abused as a child, you are likely to have a childlike part living inside you that is frozen in time, still holding fast to this kind of self-loathing and denial. (van der Kolk 2015, 281)

Adults who were abused as children carry their childhood terror with them through their lives. Even adults who were not abused or neglected as children may become blind to or deny present abuse, again, especially if they are in a relationship of dependency to their abuser. We may deny the reality as a defense mechanism. We may become ensnared.

Both Stern and van der Kolk admit that "[p]ushing away intense feelings can be highly adaptive in the short run" and even "result in extraordinary public service" such as a veteran delivering life-saving care as an EMT in civilian life or a dedicated researcher publishing a groundbreaking book (van der Kolk 2015, 281; Stern 2010, 234; see Herman 1997, 41). However, while our rationalizing prefrontal cortex may become quite adept at ignoring messages and memories of distress, our limbic system simply "is not good at denial" (van der Kolk 2015, 2). Survivors become even more susceptible to triggers, constantly on-guard to a haunting threat while our bodies secrete massive amounts of stress hormones in the state of fight-flight-or-freeze. Herman calls this the 'dialectic of trauma,' which is the oscillation between the attempt to forget or deny the trauma and its

subsequent, inevitable retriggering: a dialectic between dissociation and reenactment (Herman 1992/1997/2015). Freud called it the “repetition compulsion” and later the “death instinct” after what might be termed his denial turn²⁶ (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 40-41; van der Kolk 2015, 183; cf. van der Kolk 1989). Denial festers the wound of trauma to the point that the ‘dialectic of trauma’ or the ‘repetitions of denial’ may become self-perpetuating. Feelings of terror and rage persist throughout one’s life, undermining our ability to understand our own emotions and the emotions of others (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 48-50). One can become immobilized forever (Stern 2010, 190). And this immobilizing death can have mortal consequences.

The physical tolls of denial may include the following: difficulty sleeping, weight gain or loss, chronic body pain, irritable bowel syndrome, immune system failure, fibromyalgia, cysts, asthma, cancer, and stroke (Dobie et al 2004; van der Kolk 2015). These risk factors are exacerbated by trauma-related habits of smoking, drinking, and over- and under-eating that “temporarily dull or obliterate unbearable,” “incompressible and overwhelming” “sensations or feelings” (van der Kolk 2015, 2 and 46). Some survivors of rape have self-reported becoming “promiscuous in self-destructive ways” in the aftermath of their assault (Krakauer 2015, 61). This may become a meaningful adaptation, but it may also put survivors at greater risk of re-victimization (van der Kolk 2015, 101; van der Kolk 1989; Herman 1992/1997/2015; Finkelhor et al 2007; Shumm et al 2004; Ford et al 2010; Gobin and Freyd 2009). Trauma victims may also become severely depressed and even suicidal: one in five survivors of sexual assault report attempting suicide (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 49-50).

Even non-abusive loving relations with others may disintegrate, threatening further alienation and potential trauma. Preoccupied with our own traumas and constant defenses, we may unknowingly attempt to harm our partners before they have a chance to harm us (van der Kolk 2015, 213). As I stated previously, traumatized people may inflict

²⁶ Van der Kolk writes that while Freud was the first in the history of psychology to really listen to his traumatized ‘hysterical’ patients and thereby discovering that hysteria is often rooted in early childhood sexual abuse, when “faced with his own evidence of an epidemic of abuse in the best families in Vienna—one, he noted, that would implicate his own father—he quickly began to retreat. Psychoanalysis shifted to an emphasis on unconscious wishes and fantasies, though Freud occasionally kept acknowledging the reality of sexual abuse. After the horrors of World War I confronted him with the reality of combat neuroses, Freud reaffirmed that the lack of verbal memory is central in trauma and that, if a person does not remember, he is likely to act out” (van der Kolk 2015, 183).

the repetitions of their trauma onto others through passive neglect or active violence. As van der Kolk suggests, “[p]arents who are preoccupied with their own trauma, such as domestic abuse or rape or the recent death of a parent or sibling, may also be too emotionally unstable and inconsistent to offer much comfort and protection” to their infants and young children (van der Kolk 2015, 120). It is difficult to be attuned to others when one is in a state of misattunement oneself. But the repetitions of trauma may also result in the active, violent infliction of trauma against others.

We’ve previously discussed how the internal rupture of trauma and denial is simultaneously a rupture with others, inhibiting our ability to mirror or trust others and imagine new possibilities in the present. Reciprocity is difficult for people who have been traumatized, perhaps save for reciprocal feelings of vengeance. In the process of writing her memoir, Jessica Stern discovered that her own rapist was himself sexually abused by a priest as a young boy. In an astonishing and productive act of empathy toward her abuser, Stern reflects on her own desirous capacity to perpetrate vengeful violence. She writes:

There is something attractive about the idea of becoming a terrorist in response to being terrorized. One would like to respond to terror in kind. [...] I would like to have terrorized my perpetrator, to have returned terror for terror. [...] And what if I, unable to terrorize my own perpetrator, turned my rage against others? What if I became a professional terrorist? (Stern 2010, 192)

Philosopher Simone de Beauvoir explains that vengeance strives to reestablish the reciprocal interhuman relations that are the “metaphysical basis of the idea of justice” (Beauvoir 2004, 249). To be degraded to a thing is an ultimate act of evil for Beauvoir, and she like Stern has some empathy for ideas of vengeance as they seek to rebalance the scales of harm *concretely* in contrast to the abstract penalties imposed by legal systems (Beauvoir 2004, 254). But despite its metaphysical appeal, vengeance only perpetuates the cycle of terror.

Stern as well as Beauvoir scholar Bonnie Mann offer that the denial of our shame that reproduce cycles of vengeful perpetration is tied to ideas of masculinity. Men who have been *de*-humanized through trauma often seek to reclaim their manhood, their *humanity*, by converting their shame into power by terrorizing others. Mann argues that “*the core structure of sovereign masculinity is this shame-to-power conversion*” (Mann

2014, 116; Mann's emphasis). Rather than narrativizing the trauma as past experience in one's life, denial ensures the past trauma and its shame become "the necessary motor for the realization" of the power of racialized patriarchy in the present (Mann 2014, 116).²⁷ In patriarchal society, traumatized (mostly white) men who are 'out' of sync feel entitled to be recognized as 'in' sync without doing the work of narrativizing their trauma into their lives. Rather, traumatized men in denial, assuming they are the pinnacle of *humanity*, seek to re-claim their *humanity* or *manhood* by elevating themselves in the *de*-humanizing domination of others. Supporting Mann's thesis on masculinity and shame, Stern provides her own:

This is my hypothesis. Terrorizing others—including by raping them—is a way to reassert one's manhood in the face of extreme humiliation. Feeling terrorized is humiliating. Having been raped is humiliating. To be treated 'like a woman' is humiliating. Thus, the lament of one of the victims of sexual torture at Abu Ghraib, 'They were treating us like women.' Rape is a perfect way to discharge one's shame. But like fear, shame is contagious. The shame and fear of the rapist now infect the victim, who, depending on his psychological and moral resilience, may discharge his fear and shame into a new victim, not necessarily through rape. I do not mean to assert that all terrorizers have been humiliated, or that all people who are severely shamed will ultimately terrorize others. My hypothesis is that shame is an important risk factor for savagery. (Stern 2010, 195)

Bringing Stern and Mann's observations together with contemporary trauma theory, I submit that the temporality of *denial* is central to the continued, constant operation of shame-based inflictions of violence necessary to the operation of racialized patriarchy.

Psychologist David Lisak's research on serial sexual perpetration proves informative here. His findings provide evidence for the fact that the vast majority of sexual assaults are committed by serial perpetrators who are white men. Further, these serial perpetrators consider their behavior to be normal—many rapists do not recognize their behavior as rape. Frighteningly, they measure as psychologically normal according to contemporary rubrics (Lisak 2011; Lisak and Miller 2002). In other words, sexual predators are typically not textbook psychopaths. They are 'normal' men in a society riddled by racialized patriarchy's denial. Provided institutional and ontological cover,

²⁷ Mann explains that "sovereign masculinity" embodies the shift from the "man of reason" paradigm of Enlightenment European thought towards the contemporary instantiation of masculinity in racialized patriarchy in light of the colonization of the Americas. See Mann 2014, 3, 46-47, and 56-66.

(white male) serial offenders “are constantly practicing, constantly testing the boundaries of potential victims” and “honing their skills” (Lisak as quoted in Krakauer 2015, 122).

Denial inhibits our ability to relate to or be-with the shame produced by our fearful, humiliating memories of near-annihilation. *We feel de-humanized*. This de-humanizing traumatic rupture also ruptures our ability to mirror and imagine others we encounter in the present *as human*. Or as feminist philosopher Kate Manne claims in her important analysis of contemporary misogyny, we may feel ourselves threatened by the humanity of another (Manne 2017, 133-176). White men, insecure in their own humanity, may feel themselves threatened by the demonstrated humanity of a supposedly ontologically inferior other (i.e., ‘white women,’ ‘black males,’ ‘black females’). What I suggest here is that his ontological entitlement to ‘put them back in place’ is exacerbated and even fueled by defense mechanisms of denial seeking to re-establish or re-secure power in the present. It is a battle of the past.

It becomes all-too-easy to perpetrate *de*-humanizing harm against others when one cannot even recognize oneself as human, even despite all social, political, and ontological evidence to the contrary. So too is it easy to perpetuate violence when under social, political, and ontological duress. It becomes all-too-easy to blame others for one’s own triggers and desire for if not enactment of vengeful violence. And the behavior that springs forth from this collective inability in racialized patriarchy to see, accept, or appreciate oneself or others in the complexity of our delicate, ambiguous *humanity* is an evil.

Reducing another human being to the status of a thing and thus subjecting them to the horrifying repetitions of that trauma through the rest of their lives is an evil. Beauvoir writes “[e]very time transcendence lapses into immanence [...] is an absolute evil” (Beauvoir 2010, 16). In contrast to the patriarchal, Christian philosophies of medieval scholastic thinkers such as St. Augustine, the problem of evil is not so simple as the ‘natural evils’ of a kind of pathological ignorance versus the agential ‘moral evils’ of free choice. Rather, evil stems from trauma’s denial. And this evil is the primary motor of racialized patriarchy. This is not to excuse perpetrators; it magnifies the individual and communal politico-ethical demand of holding perpetrators *accountable*. To recognize the humanity of perpetrators as individuals capable of and responsible for narrativizing their

lives so they might “distinguish evil from good” in the present, and to hold them responsible for failing to undertake this necessary, human task. “It is to will the good” (Beauvoir 2004, 257-258; see also Stern 2010, 281-282).

It is the very problem of accountability and denial in racialized patriarchy that plagues our institutions at the highest levels. As I’ve previously stated, perpetrators maintain their status of dominance through enforcing silence. Perpetrators often hold considerable power within society and “have no interest in public truth-telling” but rather become “implacably committed to secrecy” in a “ferocious battle over the question of impunity” to maintain their power (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 242-244). This is Freyd’s DARVO thesis. Individual and institutional perpetrators will deny the truth of their crimes and undermine the credibility of if not blame the accuser in order to enjoy the amnesty afforded by silence and denial. This denial both maintains the power of perpetrators while reverberating through society. Since perpetrators of violence have historically constructed and maintained current policy and legal structures, is it any wonder that our current system is inadequate?

Van der Kolk observes that “[d]enial of the consequences of trauma can wreak havoc with the social fabric of society” (van der Kolk 2015, 188-189). As evidence, he cites the denials of the damages of war in post-World War I Germany as contributing factor to the rise of scapegoating racist, patriarchal fascism and militarism in the 1930s. And of course, German fascism took cues from the racialized patriarchy as established and perpetuated in the Americas—colonization, Jim Crow, eugenics and sterilization programs, etc. (see Whitman 2017). The consequences of the denials of racialized patriarchy through history reverberate across generations and throughout communities. Trauma spreads through sustained second-hand exposure, termed ‘second-hand’ or ‘vicarious’ trauma. This means that supportive friends, family, advocates, and even researchers may be exposed through care work to traumatic experience that is psychologically and neurobiologically similar to first-hand exposure (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 2; McCann and Pearlman 1990). Group exposure to trauma can also constitute or create communities (K. Erickson 1995). But further, as has been found in Jewish, Native American, and black communities, traumatic exposure can be passed down through generations in a complex admixture of trauma-induced genetic mutations,

termed ‘epigenetic trauma,’ and situational and environmental factors (McGowan and Szyf 2010; Danieli 1998; Duran and Duran 1998).

We’ve previously discussed that racialized patriarchy bifurcates human temporality such that to be ‘white’ is to be ‘in’ time, rational, and *gendered* a man or woman, whereas to be ‘black’ is to be ‘out’ of time, emotional or irrational, and *sexed* an animal human male or female. Isn’t it possible that racialized patriarchy seizes on the fragmentation of trauma and denial such that ‘white’ people are wrongly socio-ontologically assumed to be society’s ‘rationalizing,’ narrative-giving prefrontal cortex and ‘black’ people are wrongly socio-ontologically assumed to be the ‘animalian,’ emotional, pre-narrative perceiving limbic system? That racialized patriarchy wrongly assigns whiteness as ‘in’ narrative time, the pinnacle of human rationality and no longer a mere sexed animal but a gendered man or woman? While to be black is to be ‘out’ of narrative time as the persisting remnant of pre-historic animal life? I submit the trauma’s denial efficiently reinforces this ontological system.

To be human is to live the ambiguity of our bodies, to live the ambiguous relation between our rationalizing, narrative giving self and our ‘animalian’ self of embodied memory and present emotional perception. We all have prefrontal cortexes and limbic systems that must work in relation to one another. We all have emotional responses and we are all capable of consciously relating to them, whether that relation is one of love, abuse, or neglect. The task of overcoming trauma is a continuous attempt to re-relate or re-integrate these systems by narrativizing past traumatic experience into the story of one’s life so one might freely live rather than merely survive the full ambiguity of our human experience. Herman argues, “When the truth is finally recognized, survivors can begin their recovery” (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 1-2). Extended politically, when the truth is finally recognized, we may begin the tasks of solidarity building for our collective overcoming.

The Repetitions of Overcoming

While denial is a forceful mechanism fueling racialized patriarchy’s desire for domination (*philonike*, φιλονικία), there exists another love harboring a greater strength and courage of rebirth. No one can erase the imprint of trauma from our memory, and, as

we have discussed, our attempts to do so only exacerbate and perpetuate traumatic harm. But we can alter our relation to the imprint of trauma on our bodies and within our communities by narrativizing the trauma as an event in the past—to bring what was ‘out’ of time ‘in’—to give birth to a self who is able to be fully present with ourselves and others. In this section, I explore the temporality of overcoming as a constant process of recollection and rebirth in the aftermath of trauma.

In my understanding, overcoming trauma entails a courageous, continuous process that deliberately recollects traumatic memories in order to care for the part of the self that remains terrorized by the past, to remind oneself that the reality of the past is real but also that the reality of the present is a moment of new possibility towards an open and uncertain future. The process of trauma recollection can be frustrating if not painful and it is best done with the caring support of others to ‘midwife’ the process. As I claim, the repetitions of overcoming give birth to an attuned ‘parent’ towards our traumatized inner ‘child.’ The ancient Greeks termed this “*eudaimonia*” (“*εὐδαιμονία*”) or a “good divine spirit” to accompany oneself. In the next chapter, I interpret discussion of this process within Plato’s philosophy. This attuned ‘parent’ or ‘good spirit’ expands time and space of the present moment to listen to the fears and anxieties of the inner ‘child’ to co-ponder and co-enact new possibilities beyond our reactionary habits of survival. This attuned ‘parent’ is also capable of mirroring or ‘attuning’ to the inner children or emotional lives of others. The power to give birth to our own selves is the power to *repeat* ourselves through time.

I understand this repetition in contrast to the repetitions of denial. As we have discussed, the denial of trauma renders inevitable the repetitions of past traumas in the present by maintaining if not inflaming trauma’s fragmenting rupture of the self. And while our prefrontal cortex is good at maintaining the charade of denial, our limbic system is not. Survivors often become unwittingly triggered, perceiving and responding in survival mode to past threats in the present even if the present poses no danger. Not only do such repetitions render survivors to merely survive the present rather than live it, but they also greatly increase the potential for survivors to commit self-harm, be re-victimized, as well as perpetrate harm against others. This is in part due to the fact that the repetitions of denial inhibit our imaginative capacities as well as our ability to relate

to ourselves and others with care, which are all necessary ingredients to building relations of trust, friendship, love, and political solidarity. Racialized patriarchy thrives on this operation of denial.

In contrast to denial's deadly entrapment of survivors in a frozen, alienating, fatalistic present, the repetitions of overcoming are aligned with the survivor's *freedom*. Whereas denial allows the traumas of the past to fatalistically govern the present while inhibiting imaginative possibilities, overcoming rebuilds such capacities and opens possibilities in the present toward a new future. The repetitions of overcoming are a constant process enabling survivors of trauma to *be present* with themselves and others rather than engage in the repetitions of crisis-managing survival mode induced by denial. Rather than denial's 'crisis management,' overcoming might be thought of as a kind of 'self-management' (van der Kolk 2015, 209; Stern 2010, 287). There is no 'cure' to trauma, but, ideally, through a constant process of recollecting and narrativizing the imprints of past trauma on our embodied memories, one might constantly give birth to an integrated self that is capable of managing or being-with our embodied sensations. Stern writes that her goal in overcoming trauma has been one of learning to:

[...] manage one's symptoms—to learn techniques for remaining in the present, not just in one's thoughts but also in one's feelings—even when there is no danger or urgency to fix one's gaze. [...] To learn to distinguish one's reaction to 'then' from reactions to 'now.' To recognize triggers and one's reactions to them, and to use them as clues about how to create a meaningful life. (Stern 2010, 287)

One might think of this process as the building or rebuilding of muscle memory that musicians and athletes develop through patient, caring, persistent practice that brings them from the frustration of a beginner to giving self-birth to their virtuosic excellence. Or, as the care akin to physical therapy for the deepest wounds of the human embodied soul.

There is debate within the literature among practicing psychiatrists, psychologists, and therapists as to the best vocabulary for naming this process, and the differences of opinion derive from the various disciplinary and theoretical approaches to helping individuals and communities in the aftermath of trauma. Medically trained psychiatrists Judith Herman and Bessel van der Kolk often use the term 'healing.' Whereas radical feminist psychologists such as Pamela Birrell and Bonnie Burstow insist on the term

‘coping’ (Burstow 2003; Birrell, Bernstein, and Freyd 2017). In a critique of Herman, Burstow articulates her wariness of perspectives that assume 1) the world is a fundamentally safe place, 2) that trauma distorts this perspective, and 3) that trauma survivors must therefore be ‘healed’ to a kind of epistemological normalcy. Burstow accurately highlights the way in which the world is *not* a safe place and that survivors of trauma have epistemological privilege to see the world as it really is. For example, the world really is a dangerous place for black men and women who can be shot by police officers, raped by university-recruited basketball players, or bound by global corporations to boost profits with impunity. Instead, Burstow and Birrell both offer that the task of therapy should be conceptualized as a process of aiding survivors to ‘cope’ with the ramifications of trauma in their current lives rather than seeking a ‘recovery’ or ‘healing’ return back to ‘normal.’ This feminist perspective underscores the necessity of socio-political work to change the underlying factors that gave rise to traumatic experiences (Burstow 2003; cf. Birrell, Bernstein, and Freyd 2017). Semantics aside, Burstow’s criticism is important to bear in mind, especially as both Herman and van der Kolk admit that trauma ‘healing’ is not an individual problem but is immediately a political one (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 16, 32, 97, 116; van der Kolk 2015, 350).

While I am sympathetic to the important critique of ‘healing’ offered by Burstow and Birrell, as a trained feminist existentialist thinker I must admit that I am unsatisfied with the implicit nihilism of ‘coping.’ Influenced by the existentialism of Nietzsche and Beauvoir, I use the term ‘overcoming’ to reflect the ambiguity between Burstow and Herman’s world outlook: the world is simultaneously terrifying and beautiful. An existentialist position offers that world is fundamentally *meaningless*—that there is no pre-determined meaning to be found in the universe. Rather, we human animals *create* meaning through our relations to nature and one another. We create meaning through our *becoming*. As we will further discuss in chapter IV, this is a constant conversion of our mere *being*, that we are breathing animals, into *becoming* who we are by what we *do* with others in the world through time. In contrast to some assumptions that remain latent in psychological literatures, I do not understand there to be an essential ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’ to the self, an internal truth that must be located (cf. Foucault 1990). Rather the possibilities of the present self toward the future emerge from our relation to our past

experience and others present in our world. Our freedom, or ‘transcendence,’ is that of constantly, concretely working towards the expansion of the freedom of ourselves and others. Trauma and its denial hinders this capability, lapsing our freedom into immanent survival. And this as an “absolute evil” (Beauvoir 2010, 16). I thus understand the term ‘overcoming’ as a *becoming* beyond or *over* the evil that is trauma and its denial.

To be explicit: I am not saying that an individual can finally, once and for all ‘overcome’ the problems posed by their unique trauma history, especially not in a world that remains plagued by the ontological, political, and material structures and denials of racialized patriarchy. ‘Overcoming’ is a *constant* process through a lifetime that only individuals can undertake for themselves. Though, this process is one that is ideally in relation to others. I also think that this constant individual process is vital to developing and strengthening ties of solidarity necessary to collectively overcoming racialized patriarchy.

As I previously mentioned, Judith Herman proposes that the first principle of trauma overcoming is “the empowerment of the survivor” (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 133). Ideally, our relationships in the aftermath of trauma provide us “physical and emotional safety, including safety from feeling shamed, admonished, or judged” as well as encouragement to face the reality of our traumatic past (van der Kolk 2015, 212). Poor responses to trauma survivors and their stories, such as expressions of disbelief in their narrative (i.e., “He’d never do that,” “It wasn’t that bad,” or “We were just playing”), blame (i.e., “What were you wearing?” “This always happens to you” or “You always do this”), or supporting the assailant rather than the victim (i.e., “This could ruin his career,” “But he’s such a great guy,” or “She didn’t mean it”) can significantly exacerbate feelings of alienation and self-loathing.

Further, it must be understood that the process of overcoming is one only an individual can choose to undertake for themselves. However, it is best done in the context of relationships rather than in solitude—solitude only exacerbates the alienation of trauma. Engaging with others in the process of overcoming is vital in order to reestablish capabilities of “trust, autonomy, competence, identity and intimacy” damaged in the trauma experience (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 124; see Birrell, Bernstein, and Freyd

2017; also, Erikson 1963). The infliction of trauma and its denial *de*-humanizes victims. We regain our humanity not in isolation but in our reciprocal relations with others.

Expanding on her primary principle of trauma's overcoming, Herman proposes three stages for conceptualizing trauma's overcoming. They are: 1) the establishment of safety, 2) memorializing the trauma, and 3) reconnecting with present ordinary life. It must be acknowledged that the 'stages' of overcoming proposed do not happen sequentially or neatly, but involve a constant process: steps will overlap, repeat themselves, and some will be more difficult than others (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 155; van der Kolk 2015, 206). Nevertheless, it is useful heuristic to conceptualize them as ordered stages. I understand these stages as the constant process of 1) re-collecting the beautiful capabilities of our embodied selves, 2) recollecting trauma memories harbored in the body and memorializing of them as *past* experiences rather than present threats, which 3) enables the re-birth of a self that is capable of relating to our own inner life and the inner lives of others and firmly grounded in present experience.

One would think that the first step towards overcoming trauma's denial is the acknowledgement of trauma's reality. But this is mistaken. While it is true that the recognition of past trauma is necessary to overcoming denial, it is not sufficient. Both van der Kolk and Herman agree that the first step of overcoming is the establishment of safety or "finding a way to become calm and focused" (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 155-174; van der Kolk 2015, 205). The 'talking cure' alone is incapable of changing our present embodied response to past trauma: as much as we try, "the rational brain is basically impotent to talk the emotional brain out of its own reality. [...] For real change to take place, the body needs to learn that the danger has passed and to live in the reality of the present" (van der Kolk 2015, 47 and 21). It is not enough to cognize the fact that our trauma is in the past, we have to feel it in our bodies.

The establishment of safety may include very literal self-protective measures to shield survivors from current harm: they may need to leave abusive relationships (or, in the case of children, be removed from them) and establish protective orders. But the establishment of safety also includes embodied practices re-associating parts of the self that were fragmented and *dis*-associated by trauma experience. As Brison offers, "one must first feel able to protect oneself against invasion" if one is to reestablish connection

to one's past, future, and others: we cannot relate to ourselves or others if we are or feel we are under threat (Brison 1997, 29). That is, a sense of autonomy must be restored in order for survivors to undertake the process of trauma's overcoming. Van der Kolk writes, "[t]rauma robs you of the feeling that you are in charge of yourself" as we have discussed in detail in the previously section (van der Kolk 2015, 205-207). Thus, the primary task of trauma's overcoming is getting "back in touch with *your body*, with *your Self*" (van der Kolk 2015, 205-207, 249). Before one can fully acknowledge the reality of one's trauma one must first prepare oneself to be able to be fully present with themselves in order to be *able* to bear witness to traumatic memory. We have to be physically and mentally prepared to encounter the embodied emotional response to traumatic memory. So, the first stage of trauma is a kind of re-grounding practice.

Van der Kolk suggests beginning with mindfully meditating on present embodied sensations. Neuroscience suggests that "the only way we can change the way we feel is by becoming aware of our *inner* experience and learning to befriend what is going [on] inside ourselves" (van der Kolk 2015, 208). That is, we must learn to open ourselves to ourselves—to move beyond the long-built and re-enforced barriers of denial. Contrary to Western health practices that tend towards "some form of desensitization" from emotional memories with drugs²⁸ and other institutional treatments, practices silenced in colonization such as Indian yoga, Chinese tai-chi, African drumming, Japanese and Korean martial arts, and Brazilian capoeira may be as or more important in helping individuals and communities in the aftermath of trauma (van der Kolk 2015, 209-210 and 224). Rhythmic movement is also profoundly meaningful in developing the skills of mindfulness and self-management (van der Kolk 2015, 88 and 344). Rhythm is capable of raising traumatized people from the dead, tapping into the beat of our hearts and the flow of our breath. As van der Kolk observes, it is capable of bringing an otherwise "slumped over" and "frozen" rape therapy group into a community of lively dancers attuned with their bodies and one another (van der Kolk 2015, 216).

²⁸ In a study comparing survivors' improvement on Prozac to those who received Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), a contemporary therapy treatment reliant on rhythmic eye movement, it was found that Prozac left survivors with blunted, non-integrated memories which exposed them to considerable levels of anxiety whereas survivors who processed the traumatic event into the narrative of their lives, the task of the second stage of trauma, with the aid of EMDR were capable of dismissing the traumatic event as an event in the past that is now over (van der Kolk 2015, 263-264).

Meditative practices that focus on the breath and the body, such as yoga, have been found to be especially beneficial. Allowing one's mind to focus on present, embodied sensations offers a contrast to "the timeless, ever-present experience of trauma" as we begin to recognize the transience of physical sensation in our response to and recognition of subtle shifts of body position, breath, and thought (van der Kolk 2015, 210; see 265-278). Such mindfulness practice "calms down the sympathetic nervous system" helping to diminish the triggering of survival mode in the present (van der Kolk 2015, 211). Whereas the infliction of trauma and its denial leaves survivors in a horrifying frozen present, attuning to the awareness of our bodies through yoga or rhythm changes our sense of time as we learn by *feeling* the transience of sensations in our bodies. And this "[a]wareness that all experience is transitory changes your perspective of yourself" (van der Kolk 2015, 276). The frozen present begins to thaw into a flexible, pliable present that leaves us open to experiencing and bearing witness to the sensations of past memories.

This begins to give way to our ability to name our physical sensations as well as rediscover embodied, traumatic memories, offering the opportunity to both recognize and care for them. Once we begin to become attuned to our physical sensations, van der Kolk suggests that we might begin to consciously recognize the tightness we may feel in our chest as the embodiment of our feeling of anxiety. Continuing with the example, van der Kolk suggests taking another breath might release some of the tension in the chest. But we might begin to notice the old ache in our shoulder. Staying focused on our breath and conscious of the changes in our bodies as we breathe—how the air brushes our throat on an exhale, the growing expansion of the rib cage with each breath—we further calm ourselves. Perhaps with this calm, we sense a growing curiosity about that old ache in the shoulder. Van der Kolk writes that within this calm, mindful state, one "should not be surprised if a memory spontaneously arises in which that shoulder was somehow involved" (van der Kolk 2015, 211). He suggests we might then take this further and "observe the interplay between your thoughts and physical sensations" (van der Kolk 2015, 211). How does our body register thoughts and how do thoughts register in the body?

It is easy to brush off the aches of our bodies—and denial ensures we do precisely that. For example, I always assumed the ache in my right shoulder was related to hours of practicing the piano and violin in my childhood and teenage years (privileged experiences to be sure and for which I am grateful). I assumed this pain had only become exacerbated by the long hours writing essays to maintain my straight-A student status through high school, college, and graduate school. But soon after reading van der Kolk's example of mindfully relating to the aches of one's chest and shoulder, I took a break from writing this chapter to do some mindful breathing of my own in the shower. As the water massaged my aches, I began to observe and *listen* to my shoulder. As I breathed into it, I began to recall a painful childhood memory involving my shoulder's strength to hold a closet door closed. Curious and still mindful of the water massaging my shoulder, I wondered if it had something to do with my preteen memories of my parent's linen closet. I imitated the motion, tensed, and was suddenly transported to the darkness of my parent's linen closet battling to hold the door closed against my younger brother's kitchen-knife-wielding tantrums. I had been charged to care for him alone during that summer. Though I had told my parents then, even begging them to hide the kitchen knives, it was easier to deny the scene. My parents saved money and could rest easy in their parenting decisions rather than grip the reality that both their children may be struggling—struggles that would become increasingly obvious as the years progressed.

It was only during the writing of this dissertation nearly twenty years later that my mother admitted that neither she nor my father had ever believed my cries and pleas for help that summer. Though my trauma experience is relatively minor considering, it lives on within my body. I know now that the pain in my shoulder is, at least in part, an embodied memory of my fear, shame, and alienation experienced in childhood and throughout my adolescence. The pain is as real, perhaps even more acute, than the pain that dwells in my reconstructed knee. A few years ago, I and a graduate colleague of mine were struck by an SUV speeding through an alleyway while riding our bicycles near campus. The SUV T-boned my right knee, the impact of which shattered my tibia, sprained my MCL, and sent me flying into the air. Thank heavenly Sophia I was wearing a helmet. My flight through the air was triggering to my colleague, who happened to be a veteran. He immediately went into a trained and habituated state of hypervigilance,

fighting to provide emergency care. “It was like you were hit by an IED,” he told me. It was nearly a week later that he discovered he too had sustained injuries. The collision broke several of his ribs. I required two surgeries and months of physical therapy to heal. He toughed it out—what can be done about a broken rib? I was adequately compensated for my pain and suffering after years of legal negotiation. He was not—neither by the car insurance company nor by the government that had used his body as an instrument and witness of war. This still bothers me, even after I insisted he accept a piece of my settlement.

The daily pain in my shoulder is as or more acute than the aches that today visit my knee. The pain of traumatic memory is as real as the pain of violent collision. Van der Kolk concludes that bringing awareness to the organization of emotions, memory, and thoughts in the body “opens up the possibility of releasing sensations and impulses you once blocked in order to survive” (van der Kolk 2015, 211). And the possibilities of this release opens new possibilities for the present. We need more of this awareness because we need more possibilities.

The ability to mindfully observe and tolerate the sensations of the body is a prerequisite to revisiting the traumas of the past in the second stage of trauma’s overcoming: the recollection and memorializing narrativization of trauma. The first stage prepares or re-grounds us in the present, preparing us to occupy the position of a narrator rather than a character trapped in the untold story of the past. Without this ability to be present with ourselves, we risk becoming retraumatized, triggering our habits of survival, and thus stalling the process of overcoming. If the present is too overwhelming, then revisiting the traumas of the past will only result in further trauma (van der Kolk 2015, 211). This process of memorialization builds on the work of recollecting and integrating the sensations of our bodies in the first stage to begin *acknowledging* rather than *denying* past traumas, so we might begin “putting the traumatic event into its proper place in the overall arc of one’s life” (van der Kolk 2015, 224). The second stage works at a conscious and embodied understanding that the traumatic experience happened in the *past* and is not occurring *now*. The second stage works to tell the story of our trauma in order to transform and integrate the memory into the narrative of the survivor’s life (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 175). Herman with Yael Danieli offers that in many cases it is

helpful to recollect the narrative of our lives before the trauma as a reclamation of the survivor's "earlier history in order to 're-create the flow' of the patient's life and restore a sense of continuity with the past" (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 176; see Danieli 1988). This helps survivors to provide a context for their trauma, understanding that the trauma does not define the entirety of their lives but was an experience contextualized against loving relationships, dreams, and values. The survivor might then begin to approach bearing witness to their trauma and begin discussing the trauma in terms of a fact of their lives among others, pulling together fragmented pieces of embodied memory into a narrative (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 177).

Our conscious and embodied revisitation and recollection of past traumatic memories is not to be a gratuitous endeavor to make a pornography of terrorizing experiences for self and others. Instead, the main purpose is to become conscious of or "gain conscious control over unbidden re-experiences or re-enactments" that continue to debilitate survivors in the present (van der Kolk 1989, 411). Feeling secure in one's own body through secure relations to others, such as loved ones or therapists, as well as mindfulness practices prepares an individual to "explore their life experiences and to interrupt the inner or social isolation that keeps them stuck in repetitive patterns" (van der Kolk 1989, 411). In contrast to developing children, traumatized adults have the developmental capacity to withstand such a process and "can learn to protect themselves and make conscious choices about not engaging in relationships or behaviors that are harmful" (van der Kolk 1989, 411). Through recollection of embodied sensations and past memories, survivors become strong enough to bear witness to their past memories and the pieces of themselves that remain terrorized by them. Together, the conscious 'parent' might attune to, mourn with, and care for the 'child' parts of the traumatized self that have long been fragmented, isolated, and abandoned by denial. Stage one builds this strength and stage two uses it to bear witness to our inner 'child,' bringing them from a place of abandonment 'out' of time and 'into' the narrative arc of the individual's life. To re-humanize the self.

We can begin to bear conscious witness to pieces of ourselves whose present, hyper-reactive survival mode so often mutinies and sabotages the possibilities of the present self. We begin to be able to identify the parts of ourselves that remain affected by

past traumas, the parts of ourselves persisting in survival mode erecting defensive barriers. We might recognize the scared inner child, the abandoned infant, the frightened and unheard preteen, as well as the more mature adult victim within ourselves (cf. van der Kolk 2015, 286). Van der Kolk suggests that the next step is to “simply ask each protective part as it emerges to ‘stand back’ temporarily so that we can see what it is protecting,” to put the emotions of survival mode “on hold” and instead make way for curious and “mindful self-observation” (van der Kolk 2015, 286). From the stability of this self-observation we can engage in “inner dialogues” with each parts of the self, learning from ourselves how best to take care of ourselves.

The second stage of trauma undertakes the task of recollecting traumatic memory to begin to identify and dialogue with pieces of the fragmented self, integrating the parts of ourselves into the narrative of our lives. We recognize that the pieces are still with us, they are part of our story, but that their fears are rooted in events that are now *past*. Of course, we can and must invite them into dialogue regarding decisions and actions in the present—after all, it is their wisdom that helped us to survive this far (Stern 2010, 287). However, the important difference in the constant process of overcoming is that these parts inform us through communicative inner dialogue rather than through hijacking our systems into fight-flight-or-freeze.

The third stage of trauma’s overcoming works to reconnect the self with others in present ordinary life towards building a beautiful future. For Brison, “[i]t is not sufficient for mastering the trauma to construct a narrative of it: One must (physically, publicly) say or write (or paint or film) the narrative, and others must see or hear it, in order for one’s survival as an autonomous self to be complete” (Brison 1997, 29-30). Brison emphasizes that “*Saying* something about a traumatic memory *does* something to it” (Brison 1997, 25). Sharing one’s trauma story with others transforms an individual’s own relation to their trauma history. Survivors are able to communally acknowledge the reality of the traumas against an environment that would rather they deny or forget the trauma and move on with their lives.

But just as we can be undone by others in traumatic betrayal, so can and must we be “created and sustained by others.” We are thus dependent upon and limited by “the extent of their ability and willingness to listen” (Brison 1997, 29-30). Stage three

therefore entails an element of *risk*. We expose ourselves to the possibility that those whom we are sharing our experiences may *not* listen to us, may *not* believe, and may *not* support us. An extraordinary amount of courage is thus required. However, this is a risk that *must* be taken continuously in the process of overcoming. Our human ability to communicate our inner experiences with others, to bring ourselves into the world and find ourselves recognized there, to become *friends* with others is the “opposite of being traumatized” (van der Kolk 2015, 237). It is the opposite of denial. It is freedom.

In connecting to empathetic others, a traumatized individual grows their capacity to be empathetic to others *and* to their own self, to empathetically be with one’s own experience of trauma. This is not the same as “merely being in the presence of others,” but rather the “critical issue is *reciprocity*: being truly heard and seen by the people around us, feeling that we are held in someone else’s mind and heart. [...] No doctor can write a prescription for friendship and love: these are complex and hard-earned capacities” (van der Kolk 2015, 81). Reconnection to others is not limited to an unceasing retelling of stories.²⁹ Reconnection with others must also be a kind of *creation* or *becoming* of ourselves and our communities—a space to realize with others the extent to one’s own agency in concert with others. Through the encouragement of others in activities such as music, athletics, or theater³⁰ we may develop resiliency and learn that we could and can “be better than we thought possible” (van der Kolk 2015, 357). We learn that we *become* who we are by what we *do*. That it is possible to be released from our present misery and fully live life if we decide to concretely strive for it through hours of practice alone and with others.

Risking ourselves in communicating fully to and interacting with other human beings in the world and finding ourselves reciprocally both heard and seen is a precondition for *freedom*. For philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, freedom is a reciprocal relationship that might include the action of vengeance which “bites into the world”

²⁹ The sharing of trauma stories does “lessen the isolation of trauma” and builds capacities for empathy and understanding but van der Kolk also notes that stories “can also provide people with a target to blame” and “obscure a more important issue, namely, that trauma radically changes people” (van der Kolk 2015, 239).

³⁰ Van der Kolk speaks at length of the power of theater for treating trauma, offering that they provide opportunity for survivors to confront rather than hide from the painful realities of life and transform them symbolically “through communal action” (van der Kolk 2015, 337).

(Beauvoir 2004, 254). But also, and perhaps more importantly, freedom might be realized through the reciprocal relationship of friendship and generosity (Beauvoir 2004, 254). Indeed, Beauvoir writes that friendship and generosity “accomplish this recognition of freedoms concretely” and are our species’ “highest accomplishment” (Beauvoir 2010, 159-160). By this she means that through our friends we recognize one another’s inner human subjectivity beyond and with our animalian status as objects in the world: we *humanize* one another. I return to further discuss this dependency and the *risk* involved in this social process of overcoming with Beauvoir’s philosophy in chapter IV. Put into political terms, the third stage offers the opportunity of solidarity building. Through the constant process of overcoming, we give birth to a self that is capable of attuning to itself as well as attuning to others. We are able to put our own feelings into words to share with others as well as pick up and provide subtle embodied emotional cues with activated mirror neurons. This enables us to *risk* ourselves in relations of reciprocity and care through the sharing of stories and development of a common language to name experiences. And by this, we create and sustain, or *become*, our best selves *and* our best communities.

As we have discussed, the goal of overcoming is a constant process of recollection and association: recollection and re-association of our embodied capabilities, recollection of our fragmented self into a re-associated narrative, and the recollection of our narratives to and re-association with others (cf. van der Kolk 2015, 182-183). It is a process of bringing what was ‘out’ of time ‘in’ to time, a process of bringing what was alienated into communion, a process of *becoming* human. It is the constant process of birthing a ‘parent’ self, a self-spirit or self-daimon if you will, to accompany the traumatized pieces of ourselves into the life after the death of trauma. It is a continuous *repetition* of the self in the aftermath of trauma. This is a self that is able to be with and attuned to past traumas, so they do not reign over the present, so that we might choose to repeat ourselves or *become* who we are freely rather than be captured in the stale misery of the repetitions of denial.

Conclusion

The repetitions of denial entrap individuals and society into a fragmented state of existence leaving part of subjectivity ‘out’ of time while desperately attempting to march forward ‘in’ linear time towards the future. But we carry our past traumas with us no matter how urgently we attempt to forget them. Denial of past traumas exacerbates this fragmenting alienation, rendering it difficult to see or love oneself or others, and this only ensures the repetition of traumatic experience or infliction. Trauma shamefully *de*-humanizes individuals, disrupting the narrative of their lives leaving a part ‘out’ and a part ‘in’ time. And I have suggested that racialized patriarchy seizes on the fragmentation that trauma and its denial establish and perpetuate, projecting it into a socio-political ontology placing colonized peoples ‘out’ of time and constructing ‘white men and women’ as the lead protagonists ‘in’ the narrative arc of human history (Burke 2019; Lugones 2007; Mignolo 2002 and 2011). The repetition of denial is a fragmented and warped temporality that reduces freedom into a dull and terrifying reliving of the past in the present. This is an evil in and of its self (Beauvoir 2010). And this evil of denial is the prime motor of racialized patriarchy.

We have discussed in detail both the psychological mechanism of the evil of denial as well as examined its operation upholding the benefactors of racialized patriarchy in the case example of the University of Oregon’s response to the group sexual assault of Jane Doe by three of the institution’s Nike-sponsored basketball players. Jane Doe was not recognized as a human whose life-narrative had been ruptured, feeding the racialized ontology that ‘black females’ are always already ‘out’ of time as representative of the always already violated primitive human female. Instead, her assault was made into a tragic, racialized pornography. Meanwhile, her assailants were not recognized as humans who had committed wrongdoing and were capable of acting otherwise, feeding the racialized ontology that ‘black males’ are always already ‘out’ of time as representative of the always already sexually aggressive primitive human male. And such denials only serve to project, shield, and perpetuate the violence of white men (and their supporters), thereby upholding their material and ontological interests. In the particular case of Jane Doe, the denials of the self-proclaimed ‘University of Nike’ shielded the violence and upheld the material and ontological interests of, namely, Phil Knight and the

Nike corporation as well as Coach Dana Altman, President Michael Schill, Counseling Director Shelly Kerr, and other highly paid administrators such as Brad Shelton. Despite the prevention and response efforts that have been installed since (by the work of earnest feminist, anti-racist activists along with administrators concerned about public relations and enrollment), the denials of racialized patriarchy continue to infect the social fabric of academia.

Just one year after the University of Oregon's settlement with Jane Doe, the university was accused of yet another rape cover-up involving yet another high-profile black athlete. As Kenny Jacoby reports, the university violated the very procedures and infrastructure put in place in the aftermath of Jane Doe, demonstrating the precarity of such procedures in an institutional environment of denial (see Jacoby 21 June 2017; Jacoby 25 Oct. 2017; and Jacoby 7 Dec. 2017). The repetitions of denial render the infliction of trauma inevitable. And this is the motor maintaining the ontology of racialized patriarchy upon which the 'University of Nike' is firmly founded.

Jane Doe accurately identified that the culture of the University of Oregon and its athletic department prioritizes the value of winning (and Phil Knight's billion-dollar global industry dependent upon it) over the safety and flourishing of students and this continues to thrive at the University of Oregon and elsewhere. Which is to say that the many 'University of Nike' campuses across the nation prioritize the patriarchal, dominating values of '*philonike*' over the value of '*philosophy*' in the academy. In this chapter, I have discussed the manner in which the temporality of denial is a primary motor to the dominating values of '*philonike*' in racialized patriarchy. I have also discussed the temporality of the process of trauma's overcoming, suggesting that it is a crucial part of solidarity building to overcome the deep sedimentation of racialized patriarchy in our social institutions and individual relationships. I continue this discussion in my discussion of Plato and Beauvoir respectively in the next two chapters.

In chapter III, I suggest that the insight offered herein on the operation of denial in current racialized systems of patriarchy and the process of its overcoming was offered by Plato millennia ago. Lost through history to the patriarchal rebuttal of Aristotle and subsequent masculine bias in scholarship and translation, I trace Plato's criticism of the operation of denial to *philonikian* values of dominating masculinity that perpetrated the

traumas of the Peloponnesian War that ultimately brought democratic Athens to its ruin. I demonstrate this through an explication of several oft-neglected dialogues. I then offer my interpretation of Plato's philosophy of overcoming through a new reading of *Symposium* and *Republic*. Most feminist discussions of Plato focus on these two dialogues, particularly the explicit inclusion of the female guardians in Book V of *Republic*. Without becoming too bogged down in these discussions of identity so as to thwart my focus on denial as a mechanism of patriarchy and its overcoming, I accept with other feminists and in light of the critique of masculinity I interpret in his works that Plato included females within his understanding of the human. Women, too, suffer(ed) trauma and are negatively affected by its denial. And women, too, are capable of the human process of overcoming trauma through recollection and rebirth in pursuit of the good. (In fact, as is suggested by the birthing, midwifing, as well as hunting metaphors, women may have more epistemological insight or even wisdom in this regard...) Interpreting the tripartite soul of *Republic* in light of our discussion of the neurobiology of trauma, women and men are both capable of becoming courageous warriors capable of bringing the kingly (or queenly!), overseeing and narrative-giving rational prefrontal cortex in caring, loving relation with the emotional limbic system. But my explication goes on to particularly focus on Diotima's speech in *Symposium* and the 'Myth of Er' of *Republic*. There, I find the constant process of overcoming trauma and its denial as recollection and rebirth clearly articulated. This process is a 'love of wisdom,' a philosophy, that is aimed at overcoming the denials central to the ancient patriarchal 'love of victory,' *philonike*. We would do well to return to this ancient foundation of the philosophic values of academy today.

In chapter IV, I discuss Simone de Beauvoir's own feminist existentialist articulation of denial, patriarchy, and the temporal *becoming* of human freedom. Arguably the proverbial mother of the contemporary feminist movement, central to Beauvoir's philosophy is the idea that one must first find oneself before one is able to forget in becoming who one is. This is another way of saying that one must recollect and reground oneself before one can truly set the past aside to realize the new possibilities of the present. One might consider that the temporality of overcoming offers a new way of 'forgetting' past traumas beyond the forgetting of denial. With Beauvoir, I navigate the

important distinction between the forgetting of denial and the forgetting of overcoming. The process of overcoming enables us to ‘forget’ or hold at bay the full force of past traumas in the present to hold open the possibilities available in the present toward a better future.

Three survivors speak to the importance of the process of recollecting past memories and sensations to forget them in the present. Peter commented that “he’d spent his adulthood trying to let go of his past, and he remarked how ironic it was that he had to get closer to it in order to let it go” (van der Kolk 2015, 297). One survivor, Nancy, offered that the process of recollecting her embodied sensations and giving birth to an integrated self has freed her from the shackles of her past and allows her to live freely in the present. She writes, “[t]his combination of core strengthening—psychological, social, and physical—created a sense of personal safety and mastery, relegating my memories to the distant past, allowing the present and future to emerge” (van der Kolk 2015, 200-201). And Jessica Stern writes that when, through her persistence, she and her father were finally able to freely talk about her and her sister’s rape as well as the premature death of her mother it felt like “the end of an age. The end of an age of denial. My feet can finally settle, safely now on the ground” (Stern 2010, 279).

Contrary to the forgetting of denial, the forgetting of overcoming acknowledges and recollects past traumas. And without this acknowledgement of past trauma and reciprocal restitution, all of our individual, communal, and institutional relationships will remain poisoned by denial. And this ensures the perpetuation of racialized patriarchy. If anyone’s individual or social goal is to truly ‘forget’ past traumas, they would do better to remember them. New meanings become possible and created, replacing meanings lost or challenged in the traumatic experience: new meanings of trust, autonomy, competence, identity and intimacy (Herman 1992/1997/2015, 196). The repetitions of overcoming, the constant process of recollecting and associating, opens the present to new, life-sustaining and life-fulfilling visions of the good life.

CHAPTER III
THE ANCIENT HUNTING GROUND:
INTERPRETING PLATO’S CRITIQUE OF THE DENIALS OF NIKE-LOVING
MANLINESS AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF COURAGEOUS HUMAN
OVERCOMING

Our bodies are the texts that carry the memories and therefore remembering is no less
than reincarnation.

—Katie Cannon (quoted in van der Kolk 2015)

Introduction

Academia is a hunting ground. And it has been conceptualized as such since the ancient philosopher Plato established his own Academy in the early fourth century BC. But as I suggest here and have discussed in the previous chapter, the sexually violent situation on contemporary college campuses as revealed by aptly titled documentaries, such as *The Hunting Ground* (Dick and Ziering 2015), and recent feminist philosophies, such as *Hunting Girls* (Oliver 2016), is far from the vision of academic hunting the ancient philosopher likely had in mind. In contemporary times, the sexual harassment of (mostly) female undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff is rampant within (and without) their labor in the academy. The sexual predation of young, female first-year students is so prevalent in their first six weeks on campus that feminists and administrators refer to the vulnerable period as the ‘red zone.’

As we’ve previously discussed, sexual assaults also tend to concentrate at fraternity parties, though not exclusively. Sexual assaults also spike by at least 41 percent during major men’s football and basketball game weekends and play-off tournaments (Lindo, Siminski, and Swensen 2015). Survivors are often met with institutional betrayals and denials of their experience. And administrators often permit accused players to participate in highly anticipated and financially lucrative games and play-off tournaments. We’ve also discussed that, due to the historical, material, and social circumstances of contemporary racialized patriarchy, these high-profile players are often black men. Because of this, the visibility of campus perpetration often has a black-face (Luther 2016), which further reifies the ontology of racialized patriarchy that vilifies

black men. This only serves to shield the violence of white men, who continue to host fraternity parties, maintain their jobs as tenured professors, and earn profits from neocolonial business empires.

But Plato's Academy was not to be a zone of sexual danger in which men are the hunters and women the hunted. Nor was it to be a revenue-generating and debt-producing workplace for job-training and sports spectacle balanced on the undercompensated intellectual labor of (mostly white and increasingly adjunct) instructors and the non-paid or underpaid bodies of (mostly black or brown) athletes and sweatshop laborers. Nor, still, was it to be an ivory tower of elite intellectuals divorced from the concerns of the common people.

It was likely something more akin to the alternative Kelly Oliver proposes at the end of her critical account of today's 'hunting' and 'hunted' girls (Oliver 2016). Harmonizing with much of our discussion in the previous chapter, in her book Oliver clearly argues against contemporary administrative practices of denial suggesting that we must instead "open up rather than close down discussions of rape culture" (Oliver 2016, 156). She also proposes a definition of consent that "means being sensitive to each other, sensing and perceiving the agreement of the other" (Oliver 2016, 157). That is, consent is kind of voluntary, free engagement that opens rather than encroaches upon time and space between subjectivities in their common creation of a world together, or what feminist philosopher Bonnie Mann calls "flirtation" as opposed to "creeping" (Mann 2012). I hope to contribute to these contemporary feminist accounts by suggesting that similar ideas might be found in the ancient, genealogical father of the Academy through a new feminist approach to interpreting Plato's dialogues. I suspect my personal hope is that by demonstrating roots of the alternative currently being proposed by feminist philosophers within the 'founding father' of the Academy may prove, if not narrowly helpful to feminist efforts in persuading current academic administrators and traditionalists, more broadly useful to our ongoing battles for justice.

I think Plato sought in his Academy, if not in his philosophy, a similar alternative to the 'hunting' of warring patriarchal society as that proposed by feminists such as Oliver. He and his Socrates, too, were on the critical hunt for and of newer, better Artemis figures (Oliver 2016, 163; see *Republic* Book I's setting at the new Athenian

festival of the Thracian Artemis figure, Bendis). Rather than being governed by Nike's love of victorious domination (*philonikia*, φιλονικία), Plato's thought is governed by philosophy's love of wisdom (*philosophia*, φιλοσοφία). His historical Academy was located in the open air of a simple garden, rather than in an expensive stadium or hall, where men and women joined together by their voluntary desire to pursue the good (Townsend 2017). Indeed, at least two women attended his academy, Axiotheia of Phlius and Lastheneia of Mantinea (Lynch 1972, 92-93; Reeve 2001). Rather than hunting each other, men and women were to freely hunt *together* for their own best selves. It's possible and even likely that in addition to discursive intercourse that these men and women had various erotic sexual relations with one another. But such sexual intercourse was to be *commonly* and *freely* pursued in a loving search for wisdom rather than victorious sexual conquest or domination. More particularly, the hunt for the good consisted of individuals collectively and constantly creating new knowledge and meaning through the recollection of memory so as to give birth in beauty to *eudaimonia* (εὐδαιμονία), or one's own good spirit. It was a nursery for hunting for and giving birth to, or *becoming*, good as an individual *and* a community. This, I think, was his vision of philosophy and its purpose. A vision that he fought hard to bring into fruition.

Men and women did not attend Plato's Academy to earn 'degrees,' certainly not degrees necessary for future-earnings. Money-making is not the motivation of the ancient Academy. Nor did attendees pay tuition or 'invest in their future.' Attendance was a *free, voluntary* pursuit. In fact, the Academy was funded by an endowment from a wealthy man, Anniceris, who had freed Plato from a temporary period of enslavement.¹ On the view assumed here, the motivation to attend and participate in the ancient Academy was not monetary nor glorious victory-seeking but rather a desire to become better human beings. And when the dialogues are situated according to their dramatic dating within the timeline of ancient Greek history, we can begin to understand that the purpose of the Academy may have been to give space to individuals to form a community rethinking the violent norms of masculinity and its denials in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War.

¹ Roughly fifteen years after the death of Socrates, Plato was in fact sold into slavery by the tyrant Dionysus I for his attempts at tutoring the tyrant's son, Dion, and the man who freed him, Anniceris, financed the founding of the Academy with an endowment, which Plato ensured would support the institution past his own death (Nails 2002, 247-250).

To say that Plato directly discusses the issue of psychological trauma in the direct manner attempted by some of today's psychologists, neuroscientists, and decolonial and feminist thinkers would be misleading. What I suggest, however, is that by attending to the development of the discussion of the virtue of 'andreia' (ἀνδρεία) as it is dramatically and historically situated reveals that Plato, in his ironies (cf. Kofman 1998; and Kierkegaard 1989), offers a critique of ancient norms of masculinity that circles around trauma's denial and overcoming. When traditional scholarship *does* focus on *andreia*, the focus is on individual acts of 'courage' narrowly in response to an individual's experience of fear or terror.² Most interpretations and translations of Plato fail to adequately translate the gendered connotations of this term. In his analysis of the *Laches*, for example, Gregory Vlastos simply translates the term as "courage" (Vlastos 1994, 109). This leaves him to claim that the lead question of the dialogue is "What is courage?" However, while the word 'andreia' carried connotations of 'courage,' it more specifically meant 'courageous manliness' or, simply, 'manliness.' The word also distinguished rational human 'men' from their mere animal biology (*anthropos*, ἄνθρωπος). Failing to hold onto this ambiguity in interpretation has allowed interpreters to ignore the central discussion of gender in Plato's works, namely, the central criticism of 'manliness.' For example, the *Laches* dialogue is not simply asking the question "what is courage?" but instead "what is *manliness*?" How does one *become* a man? And does becoming 'manly' conform with the Good? That is, is it possible to become a 'good man'? And what would that mean?

² See Jason Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind: On Intellectual Virtues and Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001; Michelle Brady, "The Fearlessness of Courage," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 43.2 (June 2005): 198-211; W. Scott Cleveland, "The Emotions of Courageous Activity," *Res Philosophica* 92.4 (Oct. 2015): 855-882; Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978; Robert Roberts, "Will Power and the Virtues," *Philosophical Review*, 93.2 (Apr. 1984): 227-247; and Nancy Sherman, *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy Behind the Military Mind*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Even those important contributions who helpfully acknowledge and seek to work with the ambiguities in the translation of ἀνδρεία leave Plato's critique of gender, especially in relation to trauma betrayal, rather underdeveloped. See Jill Gordon, *Plato's Erotic World: From Cosmic Origins to Human Death*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012; Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and the Impersonal Good*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Linda Rabieh, *Plato and the Virtue of Courage*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006; and Walter T. Schmid, *On Manly Courage: A Study of Plato's Laches*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.

I see these questions pondered throughout Plato's dialogues. In this chapter, I track Plato's own tracing of the war-veteran Socrates' lifelong pursuit of the meaning of *andreia* during and in the aftermath the Peloponnesian War. In many ways, this traces Socrates' movement from victory-loving 'manliness' (or *philonikian andreia*) and its traumatic cost towards the so-called 'manliness' of loving wisdom. It is the strength and courage of this love, of this kind of 'manliness,' that Socrates seeks (*Symposium* 212b). It is a move from loving the Nike Man, such as the turbulent Achilles and Alcibiades III, to loving the Good Man, or Agathon (Ἀγαθόν; see *Symposium*), who is unified with the wise Sophia. That is, the discussion of 'manliness' in Plato is a movement towards a philosophy of becoming better human beings: a philosophy of the human. In some ways, I begin here to track Socrates' personal 'ladder of love,' transitioning from a love of Nike towards a love of Sophia in our conceptions of what it means to become a 'real man.'

I do this by tracing the inquiry into '*andreia*' through six dialogues in order of their dramatic dating. I treat each dialogue within each own subsection. While this may risk appearing that I have given an episodic treatment to the dialogues rather than demonstrating the consistency and development of the discussion, I do it primarily for the ease of the reader's reference (I have also included a timeline of the dramatic dating of the dialogues within ancient Greek history in the Appendix). The subsections are organized under two broader sections. In the first section, I trace the critique of *philonikian* 'manliness' and the emergence of a distinct alternative through four dialogues: *Parmenides*, *Protagoras*, *Laches*, and *Cratylus*. In the second section, I focus on the development of this philosophical alternative in *Symposium* and *Republic*.

On my interpretation, the inquiry into '*andreia*' begins in *Parmenides*, where the young Socrates is first encouraged by the ancient philosopher Parmenides not to give up his pursuit or 'hunt' of the meaning of '*andreia*' due to difficulty or social ridicule, but rather to seek further understanding in dialogue on the topic with elites and commoners alike. In *Protagoras*, Socrates begins to distinguish the '*andreia*' of his pursuit from *philonikian* war-loving conceptualizations alongside his then-lover, the notorious Alcibiades III whose own entitled 'manliness' would embroil Athens in unnecessary conflict (i.e., the Battle of Mantinea, the Sicilian Expedition) and, likely, poisoned his relationship with Socrates. It is around the time of the *Protagoras* dialogue that Socrates

would have had his first war experience in the Battle of Potidaea where his retreat rescued Alcibiades III. It is admitted in the dialogue that heroes of *philonikian* masculinity are not necessarily ‘good’ men, and Socrates is in pursuit of a conception of ‘*andreia*’ that accords with the Good. This distinction is further pursued in the dialogue *Laches*, where Socrates begins to reveal jointly alongside his veteran comrade, the general Laches, that what we have thus-far termed the ‘temporality of denial’ is inherent *philonikian* understandings of ‘manliness’ in his dialogue with the general Nicias. Implied in this dialogue by the dramatic dating and historical figure of Nicias is the claim that misguided *philonikian* understandings of ‘manliness’ were responsible for, if not instituting the war, failing to end it and instead perpetuating it longer than necessary. The dialogue is set just prior to the brokering of the Peace of Nicias, which would prove a miserable failure. And despite the *Cratylus* being comprised nearly entirely of clever etymological word play, in this dialogue we find Socrates beginning to articulate that ‘manliness’ may be a misnomer for the virtue he seeks, a virtue that engages in battle not for battle’s sake (i.e., *philonikian andreia*) but against the shackling *aporias* of the soul. Today, we might call these shackling *aporias* of the soul the traumatic memory, denial, or PTSD.

Plato fleshes out the process of this courageous battle in the more familiar dialogues of *Symposium* and *Republic*. In *Symposium*, Plato offers his philosophy of overcoming through Socrates’ recitation of his own dialogue with the wise priestess “Diotima of Mantinea.” As I discuss, Diotima of Mantinea likely was not a historical figure but rather a play on words signaling Socrates’ self-reflective dialogue with the trauma of the Peloponnesian War, particularly the denial that led to the traumas of the Battle of Mantinea where Socrates’ comrade, the general Laches, lost his life. In this speech, Plato offers a philosophy of overcoming through a process of recollection and the re-birth of one’s own good-spirit (*eudaimonia*, εὐδαιμονία). The speech concludes with Socrates lauding the powerful strength and courageous ‘manliness’ of Love (*Symposium* 212b). Beyond clearly stating that women were capable of this ‘manliness’ of love, *Republic* continues this philosophy of overcoming, articulating in the ‘Myth of Er’ and the concept of the ‘tripartite soul’ that love is the messenger between the individual rational and emotional pieces of our individual selves (which today we identify as the

prefrontal cortex and limbic system) as well as the messenger in our social relations with others. Plato offers a philosophy of the self that admits the ambiguity between the individual and social, that individuals are comprised by what they do in relation with others and that our social arrangements have a profound impact on individual selves. But further, Plato offers that love is a messenger that may help us travel through time, to help us bring our traumatized selves ‘in’ to time as we seek to live our best self in our journey in the afterlife of trauma.

This interpretation reveals an ancient understanding of the centrality of denial to victory-loving manliness. Yet, his wisdom critical of patriarchal denial and its overcoming has largely been suppressed through millennia by masculine bias in academic interpretation. I suggest this began as early as Aristotle and maintained through the Medieval, Enlightenment, and contemporary eras, serving to reify patriarchy and its racialization in the modern Enlightenment era of European global conquest and today. In the next section, I briefly discuss the difficulty of interpretation before offering my discussion of the dialogues in the sections following.

Interpreting Plato

Most interpretations of Plato and the ancients remain shrouded in the murky darkness of masculine bias that ignore or blatantly obscure any critical discussions of trauma and gender, specifically masculinity, found in the ancient texts (Townsend 2017; also, Bluestone 1994). You’d think they were afraid of something. Indeed, as Bluestone explains, fifteenth century translators of Plato declined to translate *Republic* out of fears that the discussion of women would be offensive to contemporary audiences (Bluestone 1994, 110). That the values, customs, and purpose of contemporary institutions of higher education have been intentionally built upon such patriarchal interpretations by white men as either a mirror of Greece or a progression from it is cause for serious concern (see Winterer 2002; cf. Williams 1993; see also Syrett 2009). Contemporary feminist scholars have only begun to see through and cleanse away the dim, bewildering patriarchal obfuscation of Plato’s thought, revealing that we might do well to look in the mirror of his philosophy to see just how far the Academy has *re-gressed* from its original mission.

Prior to the modern era of colonization, Europe generally operated on a neo-Aristotelian Christian-Catholic philosophy of binary gender arrangements (see, for example, the medieval philosophy of Thomas Aquinas). This was largely based in an Aristotelian philosophy of sex, which, I believe, was a backlash to Plato's critique. Aristotle's was a deeply conservative philosophy that sought to maintain and justify the patriarchal practices of the ancient status quo (Elshtain 1981 and 1982).³ Daryl McGowan Tress argues that feminists have perhaps been too harsh on Aristotle, suggesting that his philosophy of generation might be resuscitated. Tress, however, admits that the feminist criticism is warranted (Tress 1996). While I do not spend much time discussing Aristotle's philosophy of generation in this chapter, I instead focus on Plato's. My main task in this chapter is to reveal Plato's critique of the deadly denial inherent to *philonikian* 'manliness' and his philosophy of the constant process of *becoming human* in the aftermath of trauma, his philosophy of overcoming. Aristotle's philosophy of generation, or becoming, vigorously sought to re-entrench the sex binary that Plato, on my interpretation, sought to undo. Socrates makes clear in Book V of *Republic* that the sexed roles of biological reproduction are not necessarily relevant to determining one's social, political, or moral possibilities. That is, our human birthing in

³ Aristotle considered men to be the height of humanity or the natural final *telos* of the rational human animal. In human reproduction, men were thought to supply the form or "principle within itself of such a kind as to set up movements" of the human whereas women provided the "material alone" (Aristotle *Generation of Animals* and IV.766b8-25). Men imparted the 'reason' of the rational, human animal and women provided the 'stuff' of the human animal's biology. Thus, women were considered the "first accident" or "first monstrosity" of the natural final telos of the rational human animal (Aristotle *Generation of Animals* IV.767b8-9). Women's role according to Aristotle and neo-Aristotelian pre-colonial Europe was thereby constructed as a 'naturally' subservient and obedient one to the fully rational command of men.

While he engaged in political affairs with other rational men, she was meant to carry out his will in her managerially dominant position over 'natural slaves' of the household (Aristotle *Politics* I and II). The Greek word for 'household' is '*oikos*' (οἶκος), which is the etymological root of our contemporary 'economy.' It is also the ontological root. Though there were slaves in ancient Greece and slave-like serfdom in medieval Europe, these ontological categories were not yet systematically racialized according to phenotype. Aristotle's understanding of 'natural slaves' was instead an *ableism* tied to intellectual capacity: one was a natural slave for Aristotle if one had inhibited capacities for reason not because of the color of one's skin, the texture of one's hair, or one's ethnic background (Aristotle was himself a foreigner of Athens). Aristotle pathologized the disruption of trauma into gendered and ableist identities, only allowing sufficiently 'rational' men to fully pursue a linear developmental arc of a human life. He marked the *hysterical* human inferiority of women by their physiological wombs (*hystera*, ὑστέρα), though his ableist system did not yet so easily physiologically mark the sub-rational therefore sub-human status of 'natural' slaves.

the aftermath of trauma need not and ought not be sexed. Men, too, must give birth to themselves (see *Symposium* and *Theaetetus*).

This hedges against criticisms such as Kathleen Cook's, who defends Aristotle from feminist criticism with the claim that contemporary feminists are unfair to apply today's standards to the ancients (Cook 1996, 66). However, I am claiming here that Aristotle's problematic patriarchal philosophy was a reaction to and denial of Plato and Socrates' historically-prior critique of 'manliness.' This is not to claim that Plato is a 'feminist' by contemporary standards, an issue some contemporary scholars have debated (see Vlastos 1994 and Annas 1996). These debates typically center myopically on *Republic* V (cf. Annas 1996) or on the representations of women in the dialogues (cf. Levin 1996; Blair 2012⁴). However, if we open our interpretation to the larger movement of 'manliness' throughout the dialogues, we discover something more in his discussion.

Hegemonic masculine interpretations tend to paint Plato as the misguidedly idealist proto-communist to his student, Aristotle, who is thought to have improved on his teacher's shortcomings by offering an empiricist epistemology that took seriously the political and ethical importance of privacy and private-property. In fact, Aristotle likely attended the Academy for only a brief time and in Plato's absence (Nails 2002, 248). Regardless, what Aristotle found there was likely upsetting enough to his masculine sensibilities to inspire him to react by establishing his own men's-only school, the Lyceum, and eventually tutor the imperialist-to-be, Alexander the Great. At best, Plato and Aristotle are commonly held as representatives of two sides of a debate around which the 'soul' of the Western world turns. But the debate is not traditionally understood to be about gender.

Arthur L. Herman is a good example of traditional, hegemonic interpretations. He depicts Plato's allegory of the cave as representative of his "most fundamental idea: that man is destined by his creator to find a path from the dark cave of material existence to the light of a higher, purer, and more spiritual truth" and that wisdom is only achieved "when we rise above the merely human" (A. Herman 2013, ix-x). Aristotle, on the other hand, is depicted as dissenting by insisting "on a union between form *and* matter," that

⁴ Blair, however, provides an excellent analysis of Plato's philosophy of sex, especially in regard to the difficulty of *Timaeus*.

“[i]nstead of trying to rise above mundane reality, Aristotle believed the philosopher’s job was to explain how the world works, and how as human beings we can find our proper place in it. There is no cave: only a world made of things and facts” (A. Herman 2013, ix-x). Such interpretations contribute to dangerous and misguided readings. From this, Aristotle is lauded as a hero of the concept of private property and the father of scientific empiricism. Meanwhile, Plato is understood as an ivory-tower elitist and proto-Christian metaphysician, blatantly ignoring Socrates’ method of dialoguing with common people and ancient celebrities alike while misreading the theory of the forms.

The hegemony of Aristotelian epistemology and political-economy has reigned in the biases of our contemporary patriarchal, scientific, and capitalist political age along with his suspicious reassertion of status quo heteronormative gender arrangements against Plato’s *Republic* (see Aristotle *Politics* Book I and II, especially; also, *Generation of Animals* I.20.729a9-11 and IV.1.766a20-30). This despite the fact that Aristotle’s physics have been thoroughly debunked by modern science. All the while, Plato’s imagery of the ladder of love in *Symposium* and the divided line in *Republic* respectfully bear uncanny resemblance to influential and widely-accepted contemporary psychological theories, such as such as Erik Erikson’s stages of psychological development and Kohlberg and Gilligan’s respective theories of moral development. Not to mention the importance of memory recollection in contemporary trauma theory, which we discussed in the prior chapter.

What interpretations like Arthur Herman’s miss is that Plato’s cave is not simply the darkness of mere animal humanity, but the darkness of trauma with its shameful silence, its confusion, and the compounding shackles of betrayal and denial. What is poorly characterized as “ris[ing] above the merely human” is, under my reading, overcoming trauma humanely. The cave is the darkness of the ruptured aftermath of trauma from which the self must re-birthing, to overcome the shackles of trauma and live a good life. Those who have escaped return out of love for self and other to aid those who remain shackled retreat from trauma into a place of Beauty, or a safe space surrounded by supportive midwives of the soul, to give birth to themselves after the debilitating rupture to their life narrative. The method of this birth is dialoguing with others, and Socrates especially sought to dialogue with ordinary people as elites tend to be too concerned with

their own vanity to pursue the hunt honestly (*Protagoras* 353a-b); and, as *Republic* and *Menexenus* both intimate, he hunted for the truth with both men and women. He was interested in pursuing and aiding in the birth of the Good with whoever was willing. Careful, feminist attention to trauma and masculinity operating in the text reveals this understanding.

Unfortunately, the reader will not approach the interpretation I offer through attention in the ancient Greek to the word ‘*trauma*’ alone. Plato uses the word ‘*trauma*’ only a handful of times throughout the dialogues.⁵ However, he also clouds the experience of trauma in the metaphors of a living death, the cave, and the need for rebirth in Beauty. Trauma and its denial is further signaled by Plato’s deliberate placement of the dialogues in the history of the Peloponnesian War. Instead of tracing the word ‘*trauma*’ in Plato, the reader is better off tracing the word ‘*andreia*’ (ἀνδρεία) in the ancient Greek alongside the historical dramatic setting of the dialogues. Such is my method.

Andreia was and remains a deeply politicized virtue. As I’ve briefly mentioned, it encapsulated a number of meanings in the Ancient Greek vernacular. Importantly, it signaled the coming of age, from boyhood into manhood. It was also utilized to signify the virtue of courage, long associated with male warriors, and was opposed to cowardly (*deilos*, δειλός) actions. Additionally, it distinguished men (*andres*, ἄνδρες) from women

⁵ Our contemporary word ‘*trauma*’ derives from the ancient Greek ‘*τραῦμα*’ (*trauma*), which means a ‘wound’ or ‘hurt,’ the ‘damage’ to things (i.e., ships), or a ‘heavy blow’ or ‘defeat’ in war (Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon). It is hardship suffered in a kind of battle that was often assumed to be physical, but psychological trauma often accompanies physical trauma and, as contemporary neurological research demonstrates, psychologically trauma itself is a wounding of the physical and chemical structures of the brain affecting memory-retrieval and emotional-responses.

However, Plato only utilizes the word ‘*trauma*’ a few times in his dialogues, notably in Books III and VIII of *Republic*. In Book III, when discussing the appropriate musical harmonies for the *kallipolis*, Socrates says to leave him the harmonies associated with trauma and also peaceful voluntary action (*Rep.* III.398b-399c; Grube translation). Later, Socrates makes clear that he thinks individuals should be able to seek and get help “for wounds [*traumatōn*, τραυμάτων]” in comparison to those who “through idleness and the life-style we’ve described, one is full of gas and phlegm like a stagnant swamp;” he wants folks to be able to move forward with their lives rather than stagnate and are contented to watch life from the sidelines (*Rep.* III.405b-408b; cf. *Laches*’ Lysimachus and Melesias). Individuals who *want* to overcome trauma should be able to do so. But in Book VIII, Plato shows that even those who do wish to overcome trauma can be further traumatized or harmed by the undermining of their material circumstance by greedy oligarchs. He writes, “The money-makers, on the other hand, with their eyes on the ground, pretend not to see these people, and by lending money they disable [wound/traumatize τῆρώσκοντες] any of the remainder who resist, exact as interest many times the principal sum, and so create a considerable number of drones and beggars in the city (*Rep.* VIII.555e; Grube translation). Trauma here is not a physical wound in battle, but a wound of material insecurity.

(*gunaiikes*, γυναικες) as well as rational humans (*andres*, ἄνδρες) from mere biological beings (*anthropos*, ἄνθρωπος). As has been unpacked through the recent history of feminist philosophy, ‘womanly’ behavior was and has been considered both cowardly and animalistically sub-human within this binaristic frame. It should be emphasized here that the ancient stereotypes of women differed from our own post-Victorian times: rather than being considered the more temperate and delicate easily victimized sex regarding sexuality attributed specifically to white women of the modern era, ancient women were considered far more intemperate, lustful, and sexually aggressive by means of their tempting allure in ancient times (Townsend 2017, 67-68, 77-78, and 189-190). In some ways, many ancient women were, by today’s standards, considered mere females rather than women.⁶

Andreia, therefore, was a slippery ancient signifier that enabled the elision of the meaning of courage, masculinity, temperance, rationality, and what it meant to be human. As I’ve stated, contemporary interpretations and English translations commonly and haphazardly translate *andreia* as ‘courage’ or ‘manliness,’ losing the movement of Plato’s critique of gender throughout the dialogues. This misses Socrates’ quest, begun in *Parmenides*, to understand whether the human animal (*anthropos*, ἄνθρωπος) has a form, that many call ‘manliness’ (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία), and whether that form is united with, or rather, is Good, Just, and Beautiful. Looking around war-torn Greece, it would be easy to conclude that ‘manliness’ is quite the opposite of the Good, Just, and Beautiful. Plato develops a conception of ‘*andreia*’ that moves from the love of Nike to the love of the Good Man, or Agathon, and his accompanying Sophia. This involves a philosophy of the human that includes women, that *humanizes* human females from and beyond their sexed roles in biological reproduction. If anything, Aristotle *genders* women establishing their role in the world of the human but only to re-shackle them into their inferior sexed position (see *Politics* I.2.1252a25-30, I.12.1259b10-1260a19-24, I.13.1259b35-37, II.3.1261b34-36, III.4.1277b20-23, VIII.4.1338b30; see also *Generation of Animals*, I.20.729a9-11 and IV.1.766a20-30).

⁶ This may help to contextualize the puzzling claims made in *Timaeus*. Human women, considered mere sexualized females, have a longer journey ahead of them than do men in becoming human. This is not due to inherent defects of being a woman, but rather a defect of ancient social, political, and ontological arrangements. Cf. Blair 2012.

Traditional masculine interpretations often read Plato to discover a systematic logic at work, as might be appropriate for reading Aristotle. However, as Mary Townsend writes, “Plato’s work is not a system but a cosmos, whose competing accounts ultimately place the burden and the hope of dialectic on the part of the individual reader” (Townsend 2017, xii). Plato does not *tell* or *teach* the overcoming of trauma, but instead invites or provokes his reader into undertaking their own journey deciphering and creating meaning from the text relevant to their own personal journey of *becoming human*. Indeed, interpretations of Plato often say more about the particular interpreter than the text itself (and things don’t look very good for Aristotle, from my vantage point).

Townsend continues to explain that the honest reader of Plato must immerse themselves into the ancient world, historical and fictional, and appreciate the three-dimensionality of his poetics and characters. Akin to Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*, nearly all the characters and participants in Plato’s dialogues were historical figures. Under my interpretation, even the constructed character Diotima of Mantinea was created as a reference to the 418BC Athenian defeat at the Battle of Mantinea in which Socrates’ comrade in arms and philosophical argument, the general Laches, lost his life. As Townsend explains:

It need hardly be said that attention must be paid to the logic of the arguments; but no *less* attention can be given to the fact that all the arguments come from the mouths of as three-dimensional characters as any writer for the stage has ever produced, themselves in turn carefully placed within the absolute specificity within the historical, political, and religious situations of ancient Athens and the Greek world. (Townsend 2017, xii)

I concur with Townsend and have done my best to immerse myself in the war-torn world of ancient Greece and Plato’s deliberate placement of his dialogues and choice of characters within it: the battles, armistices, and diplomatic peace efforts; the plagues; the familial and pedagogical lineage, status, character, decisions, and motivations of important political figures including the only historical woman in the dialogues, Aspasia of Miletus (*Menexenus*), the tragic generals Laches and Nikias, and the philosophers Parmenides, Hermogenes, Cratylus, and Polemarchus in addition to Socrates; gods and goddesses, particularly the virgin Artemis, the Thracian and sexual Bendis, and the Moira (Fates) as each are associated with the primary Socratic themes of hunting and

midwifery; the anti-Aspasia sentiments and politics of peace in the comedies of Aristophanes; controversies and scandals, such as the accusations against Alcibiades III and other Socratics for sacrilegiously destroying the Hermes statues and practicing the Eleusinian Mysteries prior to the Sicilian Expedition; and political turmoil over gender, marriage, immigration, and citizenship. Plato is known for his philosophy of recollection, but few scholarly studies have grounded his philosophy in the actual, historical, traumatic memories he thought so important to recollect. Our understanding of Plato's philosophy remains muddled in abstraction, when in fact it is tethered to the traumas of the then-recent history of ancient Athens.

In Appendix I, I have organized a historical timeline of the dramatic dates of Plato's dialogues within the history of the war-torn ancient Greek world from the beginning of Athenian democracy ~510/507BC to Plato's death. The process of organizing this timeline has greatly informed my reading of Plato; in building it, I relied on the narrative of Thucydides along with the historical scholarship of G.E.M. de Ste. Croix (1972) and Madeleine Henry (1997) as well as Debra Nails' important work situating the dramatic actions of Plato's dialogues within their historical setting. There may be too little detail to some moments and all too much detail for others, but the purpose is to highlight significant events that have informed my reading of Plato's critique of masculinity in the direction of a philosophy of overcoming trauma. I focus on the journey of the historical and fictionalized character Socrates to discover the meaning of 'manly courage' from his twenties through his war experiences into his old age in the midst of Athens' tremendous military decline through dialoguing with common and elite Athenians.

I trace this journey chronologically over the next two sections. There are other important Platonic dialogues to include into this discussion beyond the six I have chosen. A future project might provide a more comprehensive reading. However, I hope and believe that what I provide below offers an adequate glimpse of Plato's long-neglected discussion of trauma and masculinity relevant to the contemporary reader interested in building a better, more just world beyond patriarchy's love of Nike.

The Hunt for 'Manliness'

In this section, I trace Socrates' hunt for 'manliness' (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία) particularly his query of whether there is a form of 'manliness' united with the Good, the Just, and the Beautiful. The hunt begins in his twenties with the *Parmenides*. From there, I track the continuation of his hunt through *Protagoras*, *Laches*, and *Cratylus*, which each correspond in their dramatic dating to periods relevant to Socrates' three war-combat experiences, Potidaea, Delium, and Amphipolis respectively. In the ancient world, manly courage was associated with war combat, and, indeed, Socrates' battlefield performances are often referred to throughout the dialogues as credibility for Socrates' own manly courage (*Laches* 181a-b and 188c-189b; *Symposium* 219e-220a). In fact, the awesome destructive power of *philonikian* manliness in war is precisely the cause for concern over the question: if manly courage brings so much harm and trauma, as war makes painful evident, can it possibly be good? Is there alternative to this *philonikian* manliness that is instead a lover of wisdom? Is there a philosophical manliness?

Parmenides: Plato's Socrates begins this journey in the year 450 at the age of twenty with the then-well-established foreign philosopher, Parmenides, and his partner, Zeno, both of Elea. The discussion takes place towards the end of the Persian and First Peloponnesian Wars. While Socrates would have been of age for military service at this time, it is unlikely he served in these wars as they had been dwindling towards a fifteen-year period of peace. His earliest recorded military experience would come nearly twenty years later at the siege of Potidaea. In the dialogue, Socrates responds to a treatise Zeno has written and read aloud for his audience. The treatise provides Zeno's argument that 'being is not many,' which he explains, upon Socrates' objections, is both distinct from yet supportive of Parmenides' famous philosophy that 'being is one.' Zeno's argument is meant to be a rebuttal defending Parmenides' philosophy from his critics, such as Heraclitus and his followers. Zeno wrote the treatise when he was young and himself characterizes his motivation for writing the treatise as "a youth's love of victory [*philonikias*, φιλονικίας]" rather than "an old man's love of honor [*philotimas*, φιλοτιμίας]" (*Parmenides* 128e; my translation). Such begins the first lesson in the dangers of *philonikian* motivations.

While Zeno argues that Socrates has not quite “entirely perceived the truth of my writing,” he characterizes Socrates as “a Spartan female hunting puppy [*Lakainai skulakes*, Λάκαιναι σκύλακες; feminine construction]” because of his ability to “competently run after and track [*ichneueis*, ἰχνεύεις; ‘to track’ or ‘hunt after’] the meaning [*ta lechthanta*, τὰ λεχθέντα]” (*Parmenides* 128b-c). This is the earliest association of hunting, particularly hunting dogs, with the practice of philosophy. Plato returns to the metaphor repeatedly, especially in *Republic*. Indeed, it is in *Parmenides* that Socrates receives a lesson, of sorts, into how to be a hunter of the good.

Socrates accuses Parmenides and Zeno of focusing only on visible things, not on the intelligible forms (*Parmenides* 129a-e). Upon questioning by Parmenides, the young Socrates admits that he has a theory of the forms (the Just, the Beautiful, and the Good), but admits that he remains in doubt about whether there is a ‘form’ of the human being (*anthropou*, ἀνθρώπου) and whether this should be discussed in the same manner as the Just, the Beautiful and the Good (*Parmenides*, 130b-c). Though not explicitly expressed in this dialogue, the difficulty with defining a universal form of the human being (*anthropou*, ἀνθρώπου) is that it must either a) admit women, because they, too, are human, and therefore rob ‘manliness’ of its gendered privileged, or b) admit that the form of the human being commonly understood as ‘manliness’ (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία) is not universal and therefore is neither a form nor is it good, beautiful, and just, but rather bad, ugly, and unjust and therefore to be avoided. Quite the conundrum for the ancient young Socrates emerging into his own ‘manhood.’

Parmenides praises Socrates for grasping the difference between the visible and the invisible, that is, between the particularities of matter and the universality of conceptual definition; however, he is told by Zeno and Parmenides that he does not yet bravely hold onto the difficulties that he encounters out of concern for what others will think of him; that is, Socrates does not hold onto the question of the form of the human being yet because his query may dangerously bring into question the gendered norms of the ancient world. Maybe ‘manliness’ as it is commonly understood *isn’t* good, but perhaps this common understanding is wrong and there is a way in which *andreia* does conform with the Good, the Just, and the Beautiful. Parmenides comments that Socrates does not persist through the difficulties of his queries “because you are still young [...]

and philosophy has not yet gripped you as, in my opinion, it will in the future, once you begin to consider none of the cases beneath your notice. Now though, you still care about what people think, because of your youth” (*Parmenides* 130d-e; Gill and Ryan translation). Plato’s *Parmenides* both predicts Socrates’ future philosophical vocation and urges him to consider nothing beneath his notice, including the mundane yet dangerous question of whether manliness is good. More particularly, that he should not allow the fear of social ridicule to hold him back. As we all know, the historical Socrates was tried and executed by his peers for his philosophical ‘corruption’ of young men (*Apology*).

Parmenides then advises Socrates that the only method for managing the relation between the forms of the Good, the Beautiful, and the Just and human beings is in dialectical examination (*dialegesthai*, διαλέγεσθαι); that this knowledge cannot be directly taught. In a continuation of the hunting metaphor for philosophical inquiry, Socrates is told that he would do best in his journey if, “while you are still young (*neos*, νέος), draw yourself as a bow (*helkuson de sauton*, ἔλκυσσον δὲ σαυτὸν) and exercise more (*gumnasai mallon*, γύμνασαι μᾶλλον) through something thought to be useless and most people call trivial chatter (*adoleschia*, ἀδολεσχία). If not, the truth (*aletheia*, ἀλήθεια) will escape you (*diapheuxetai*, διαφεύξεται)” (*Parmenides*, 135d; my translation). Here, *Parmenides* encourages Socrates to pursue his inquiry through dialoguing with others on seemingly trivial matters, such as thoughts and opinions on “what it means to be a ‘man’” (cf. *Laches*). And the progression of these philosophical dialogues can indeed sound like ‘trivial chatter,’ especially to someone in denial. For example, all this talk I’ve offered of the ‘fragmented self,’ the ‘inner child,’ or ‘giving birth to one’s own good-spirit’ as a process of being and becoming *human* can sound like balderdash. It can be easier to roll one’s eyes, call it a bunch of pie-in-the-sky idealism, and carry on than to sincerely undertake the pursuit of one’s own good life. No one can *make* someone listen to or partake in these discussions—one must voluntarily take up the common pursuit. And, as *Parmenides* advises the young Socrates, a philosopher in earnest pursuit of the truth will not let such obstacles of denial deter their hunt.

Parmenides then demonstrates the dialectical process of hypothesis testing with the young Aristotle who is present (this is not the philosopher Aristotle, though it may be an allusion to him; rather, this is a historical Athenian who would later participate in the

reign of the Thirty Tyrants). In their dialogue, Parmenides and Aristotle debate the nature of being and becoming and the curious instant of change, in which something “neither is nor is not, and neither comes to be nor ceases to be” (*Parmenides* 156d-157b; Gill and Ryan translation). The dialogue ends on a rather Hegelian note with Parmenides concluding that “whether one is or is not, it and the others both are and are not, and both appear and do not appear all things in all ways, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other” (*Parmenides* 166c; Gill and Ryan translation; cf. Hegel). Thus, *Parmenides* introduces the problem of being and becoming particularly in relation to Socrates’ query about the form of the human being while also both introducing the metaphor of philosophy as a hunt and the caution against *philonikian* motivations.

Protagoras: Set nearly twenty years after *Parmenides*, the next dialogue under our study and the second dialogue in Plato’s dramatic date chronology is *Protagoras*. It is in this dialogue that Socrates clearly distinguishes common *philonikian* conceptions of ‘manliness’ from the object of his own *philosophical* pursuit. Socrates is joined in the dialogue by his then-lover, the young Alcibiades III, who would become notorious throughout the Greek world for his *philonikian* manly actions. The dialogue is set just prior to the two lovers’ departure and service in Potidaea. On the march back home from Potidaea, Socrates would rescue Alcibiades III and his expensive heavy armor while under surprise attack from the Spartans. Upon their return to Athens, it is said that Socrates stood by quietly as his beloved Alcibiades III took credit for the retreat, receiving laudatory war accolades.

The dialogue takes place within the house of Callias III of Alopece, the son of Hipponicus II and the ex-wife of Pericles (Nails 2002, 309-310, 173, and 68). With Alcibiades III’s victory-loving encouragement, Socrates engages in a *tête-à-tête* with the then-famous militant sophist, Protagoras (*Protagoras* 359e). Socrates agrees to engage in dialogue with Protagoras under the condition that the conversation consist in the frank speech or honest disclosure of the well-educated men. He says they do not have need of the distractions “of flute girls (*auletridas*, ἀὐλητριδᾶς), dancing girls (*orchestridas*, ὀρχηστρίδᾶς), or harp girls (*psaltridas*)” or even “poets (ποιητῶν),” but rather should converse directly with one another “in their own speech and logic (ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτῶν λόγοις)

[...] taking to trial the truth (ἀληθείας) and our ideas of it” (*Protagoras* 347c-348a; my translation). This is in exceeding contrast to the distractions Alcibiades III would later rain on the participants of *Symposium*, a dialogue in which we find Socrates pursuing a new lover, the ‘Good Man’ Agathon.

The primary question Socrates poses in *Protagoras* is whether wisdom (*sophia*, σοφία), temperance (*sophrosyne*, σωφροσύνη), manliness/courage (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία), justice (*dikaisyne*, δικαιοσύνη), and piety (*hosiotetes*, ὁσιότης) are all names for the same thing (*Protagoras*, 349b): whether virtue is united in one or dispersed through many. Presumably after hunting for some twenty years for the truth, we see Socrates progressing from his query in *Parmenides* about whether there is a form of the human being that is united with the Good, the Beautiful, and the Just to claim in *Protagoras* that there *is* such a form, which is commonly called *andreia* (‘manliness’ or ‘manly courage’). From the options outlined in *Parmenides*, the Socrates of *Protagoras* clearly chooses option ‘a’ that the human being does have a definable form, commonly called ‘manliness,’ and that it is unified with the other forms.⁷

His interlocutor Protagoras, however, insists that manliness (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία) is wholly different from the others as there are many people who are exceptionally courageous or manly (*andreiotatous*, ἀνδρειοτάτους) who do not exemplify the other virtues of goodness, beauty, and justice (*Protagoras* 349d). Thus, the virtues must be many and not united into one. This returns to Socrates’ own hesitation on the issue in *Parmenides*, recognizing that there are many ‘manly’ men who are not ‘good’ people—that the ancient standards of masculinity do not conform to virtue. However, through the dialogue, Socrates undermines this position through a line of questioning of whether *andreia* entails confidence, strength, power, and living a good life. Protagoras dodges this line of reasoning, bringing Socrates to suggest that the best way to clarify the issue might be to ask ordinary people, people who would not be able to afford Protagoras’ teaching fees, about *andreia* in order to better learn about the virtue and its relation to the Good, the Just, and the Beautiful (*Protagoras* 353a-b). Specifically, Socrates is interested in

⁷ Plato leaves it until *Republic* to explicitly admit that Socrates’ vision of the form of the human being includes women; however, in *Protagoras* he admits that so-called ‘manliness’ (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία) is a form unified with the Good, the Just, and the Beautiful by means of dialoguing with the militant sophist Protagoras.

discussing with ordinary people their experience with what we might today call ‘coping mechanisms’: excessive food, drink, and sex (*Protagoras*, 353c-356e). Socrates concludes that the ‘salvation’ from such coping mechanisms requires an artful knowledge of measuring pleasure and pain, and that this cannot be taught (*Protagoras* 357b-358a). Plato leaves the details of this knowledge to *Symposium*.

Socrates then returns to Protagoras’ claim that manliness (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία) is a virtue distinct from the others, asking whether manly/courageous people (*andreious*, ἀνδρείους) are prepared for the same actions as cowardly people (*deiloi*, δειλοί). Protagoras insists the two prepare for different actions: fearful cowards are inclined towards security while manly/courageous people are inclined toward terrifying things (*deina*, δεινά) (*Protagoras* 359c-d). However, this would be to characterize Socrates’ own future retreats in battle as cowardly rather than courageous, a position disputed by the generals Laches and Alcibiades III in the dialogues *Laches* and *Symposium* respectfully. Plato’s Socrates thus refutes this, arguing that the inclination toward bad, painful, or terrifying things can only be the result of ignorance (*Protagoras* 359e; see also 357c-e). Rather, Socrates offers that both the manly and the cowardly are inclined towards that which they are confident (*Protagoras* 359e). Protagoras stands by his own claim, however, of the supposed difference between manly and cowardly men saying that manly men “are willing to go to war,” which he finds honorable, while “the cowardly are not” (*Protagoras* 359e). Socrates contests Protagoras’ understanding of what is honorable through his Socratic questioning, arriving to claim that wisdom is the knowledge of “what is and is not to be feared” and that the coward acts out of ignorance of this knowledge whereas the courageous or manly man acts with this knowledge (*Protagoras* 360d). With this claim, Socrates undermines Protagoras’ original position that manliness is a virtue set apart from wisdom (*Protagoras* 360d-e). Moreover, Socrates maintains that this knowledge cannot be taught, which is contrary to the very profession of Protagoras, but can only be pursued through dialogue with others (*Protagoras* 361b-c). Socrates offers to continue searching together for the virtue of manliness with Protagoras, but Protagoras refuses out of embarrassment that his position has been completely undermined. Ironically, Socrates reigns victorious. A likely a turn-on for his lover Alcibiades III, but not Socrates’ main motivation. With this dialogue, Socrates affirms

the dialectical method taught by Parmenides and progresses to the position that ‘manliness’ must be part of the unity of virtue, but that this ‘manliness’ is not the form envisioned by war-mongers such as Protagoras or, painfully, his beloved Alcibiades.

Laches: We turn next to *Laches*.⁸ This dialogue directly pursues a definition of the virtue of *andreia* that further distinguishes the *temporal* difference between *philonikian* ‘manliness’ and the philosophical ‘manliness’ of Socrates’ pursuit. In common pursuit with Laches, Socrates begins to reveal the temporality of denial central to *philonikian* ideas of ‘manliness’ as articulated by the general Nikias. Namely, Nikias’s understanding of ‘manliness’ neglects attending to the past in its narrow focus on the future.

Historically, the generals Laches and Nikias broker a Peace Treaty shortly after the dramatic date of the dialogue. Short-lived, the treaty proved inept in restraining Alcibiades’ entitled manly desire for glory, resulting in the Battle of Mantinea. While Socrates saved Laches’ life just prior to the dialogue by retreating from the Athenian defeat at Delium (424BC), Laches would lose his life at Mantinea (418BC). In both battles, Athenians died by friendly fire due to their hoplites’ lack of practice marching—Athenians died because they were literally out-of-time with one another. They were not harmonized. The dialogue implies that the discord of denial is inherent to *philonikian* conceptions of ‘manliness’ rendering it incapable of instituting lasting peace, as Nikias would have desired. Instead, *philonikian* ‘manliness’ with its denial is only capable of perpetuating war and devastating trauma.

At the time of the dialogue, Socrates is not yet an Athenian celebrity infamous for his ‘corruption’ of the youth of Athens. This reputation would come a year later with the production of Aristophanes’ *Clouds*. The dialogue begins after Lysimachus and Melesias, both the mediocre sons of the famous Athenian public servants Aristides I ‘the Just’ and Thucydides (not Thucydides the historian, but a famous wrestler by trade and the primary

⁸ Following the timeline of the dramatic dates of Plato’s dialogues, we are here skipping over *Charmides*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*, not for their want of relevance to our topic but rather for want of space and time in our study. Indeed, there is much material to be pondered in these dialogues relevant to our query, specifically *Charmides*’ in relation to the historical death of Pericles and *Timeaus*’ introduction of the controversial wandering wombs thesis (i.e., *hysteria*) as well as the gendered hierarchy of the reincarnation of souls. For discussion of the latter dialogue in relation to Plato’s thoughts on gender, see Elena Duvergès Blair’s *Plato’s Dialectic on Woman: Equal, Therefore Inferior*, New York: Taylor and Francis, 2012.

political rival of Pericles), and the generals Nicias and Laches, prominent leaders in the Athenian military who would broker the Peace of Nicias (421BC) a few short years after the actions of the dialogue, have observed an exhibitionist performance of an individual in heavy hoplite armor (i.e., *hoplomachia*). Lysimachus explains the honest reasons he and Melesias had invited the generals to join: the two fathers would like to know whether the solitary sport of *hoplomachia* would help their young early-twenty sons (*neous*, νέους and *meirakious*, μερακίους in the text), Aristides II and Thucydides II, become real men (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία) and thereby live up to the glory of their namesakes (*Laches* 178d-181c). Both Lysimachus and Melesias consider themselves lesser, mediocre men and blame their fathers' public service for overlooking their care and education into the matter (*Laches* 178c-d; cf. *Republic's* need to bring together public service and care for the family, or at least question the dichotomy). They would like to learn from those they consider to be accomplished men (the leaders of Athens) about how to teach their sons to be manly so they might "become worthy of the names they bear," belying their assumption that the political leaders Aristides I 'The Just,' Thucydides I, Laches, and Nicias by their military leadership themselves exhibit the virtue and therefore have an understanding of how to obtain it (*Laches* 178d). An irony often lost on readers here is that the dialogue poses this question to Nicias after his own manliness has been publicly called into question by the general Cleon, a projection of the latter's own shame (Thucydides IV.27-28); Cleon's death after his violation of the armistice at Amphipolis (422BC) opened the opportunity for Laches and Nicias to broker the Peace of Nicias. In this way, *Laches* returns to think through Protagoras' claims in *Protagoras* that manly men charge into battle whereas cowardly men seek safety from it.

Laches insists that Lysimachus and Melesias must invite Socrates, who happened to be nearby, into the conversation. Speaking to the gadfly's credibility, Laches argues that 1) Socrates is "always spending his time in places where the young men [*neous*, νέους] engage in any study or noble pursuit of the sort you are looking for," and so he has experience in the very matter into which they are inquiring (*Laches*, 180c); 2) Socrates is from the same deme/community as Lysimachus, that indeed Lysimachus knows Socrates' father, Sophroniscus, and so he is to be trusted by virtue of their communal proximity; and 3) Socrates demonstrated exactly the virtue under discussion, manliness (*andreia*,

ἀνδρεία), when he rescued Laches in the retreat of Delium, adding “I can tell you that if the rest had been willing to behave in the same manner, our city would be safe and we would not then have suffered a disaster of that kind” (*Laches*, 181a-b). Lysimachus and Melesias capitulate into inviting Socrates into their query, with Lysimachus adding that Socrates indeed has:

...a duty to do so, because you are my friend through your father. He and I were always comrades and friend, and he died without our ever having a single difference. And this present conversation reminds me of something—when the boys here are talking to each other at home, they often mention Socrates and praise him highly, but I’ve never thought to ask if they were speaking of the son of Sophroniscus. Tell me, boys, is this the Socrates you spoke of on those occasions? [it certainly is]. I am delighted, Socrates, that you keep your father’s good reputation, for he was the best of men, and I am especially pleased at the idea of the close ties between your family and mine will be renewed.⁹ (*Laches*, 180d-181a; translated by Rosamond Kent Sprague)

Out of respect for his elders, the forty-six-year-old Socrates insists Nikias and Laches provide their opinions on the relevance of *hoplomachia* to becoming real men.

Nikias goes first and, true to his historic character, he does not speak frankly but instead strategically offers what he thinks audience wants to hear. Perhaps surmising from the fact that he is speaking to Lysimachus, the son of Aristides I who famously opposed the navy-builder, Themistocles, in politics and earned acclaim in the Athenian hoplite victory of the Battle of Marathon (490BC), Nikias takes a stance favorable to the practice of *hoplomachia*. His argument in its favor resembles today’s arguments in favor of the sport of American football. He claims that 1) *hoplomachia* is a fine practice that gets the young people off the couch for some exercise, 2) the sport of *hoplomachia* alongside the sport of horsemanship is “especially suited to a free citizen” in that both require wealth to participate, 3) the practice is useful on the battlefield when phalanx ranks are broken and “it becomes necessary for a man to fight in single combat,” and 4) *hoplomachia* might inspire young men to pursue the science and tactics of strategy (*Laches* 182a-d). The reader will note that these claims don’t respond to the suitability of *hoplomachia* aiding young men in their coming of age, but it is rather a list of potential

⁹ This would not be the last connection between their families, as Socrates likely either married or took in Myrto, who was either the sister or daughter of Lysimachus (Woodbury 1973; and Nails 2002, 48 and 210).

positive attributes the sport provides: it helps to stay in shape, it exhibits wealth, it may be useful when all hell breaks loose on the battlefield (as happened at Delium), and it might inspire a career in military strategy. These are all advantages to the practice, not reason why the practice itself is good. Nikias' initial response belies his disinterest in *hunting* for the truth, but rather his warring defense of a position.

Laches disagrees with Nikias, speaking frankly and arguing that one must be discerning with how to spend one's time and that *hoplomachia* simply isn't worth the trade-off. If it were a worthwhile endeavor, Laches argues, one might expect the Spartans, who held military advantage over the Athenians in landed hoplite warfare, to practice it. But instead of the solitary, spectacle-driven practice of *hoplomachia*, the Spartan hoplites practice collective march formations, reflecting the Spartans' ability to keep themselves together in time through collective movement in the face of and in the aftermath of trauma.¹⁰

Laches then offers that he's seen the man they just observed in the exhibition performance on the battlefield before, calling him 'Stesilaus,' armed with a combination scythe and spear, as singular a weapon as he was singular a man" that got caught in a ship's rigging when under attack and he became a laughing stock of his comrades and enemies (*Laches* 183a-b). Though the actions of *Laches* occur over sixty years later, this is likely a reference to the Battle of Marathon in which Stesilaus, the object of desire in a love triangle between Themistocles and Aristides I, died.¹¹ Laches concludes that

¹⁰ This strategy of marching in formation was successfully adopted by Roman legions and, as trauma theorist Bessel A. van der Kolk observes, by contemporary militaries after recognizing the importance of collective movement in confronting terrifying obstacles. Van der Kolk quotes Plutarch observing the Roman legions "It was once a magnificent and terrible sight, to see them march on to the tune of their flutes, without any disorder in their ranks, any discomposure in their minds or change in their countenances, calmly and cheerfully moving with music to the deadly fight" (Plutarch qtd. in van der Kolk 2015, 336; see Plutarch *Lives: Lycurgus* 22.3). Van der Kolk further observes in relation to Prince Maurice of Orange's use of Plutarch's observations that "[t]his collective ritual not only provided his men with a sense of purpose and solidarity, but also made it possible for them to execute complicated maneuvers" (van der Kolk 2015, 336).

¹¹ As Plutarch identifies, the political competition between Themistocles and Aristides I began with their competing love for Stesilaus. Plutarch writes in *Themistocles* that the rivalry "had an altogether puerile beginning. They were both lovers of the beautiful Stesilaus, a native of Ceos, as Ariston the philosopher has recorded, and thenceforward they continued to be rivals in public life also" (Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 3.1). Plutarch continues this theme in *Aristides*:

They were both enamored of Stesilaus, who was of Ceian birth, and in beauty of person the most brilliant of youths; and they cherished their passion so immoderately, that not even after the boy's

hoplomachia only pretends to know the virtue of manliness (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία) and may only provide an individual an inflated ego and false sense of security (*Laches* 184c). The practice of *hoplomachia* only pretends to knowledge and might only give an individual a false sense of security and an inflated ego (*Laches*, 184c).

The men then turn to Socrates, who is told that he must cast the deciding vote on the matter. Socrates objects to this demand, arguing that the pursuit of the truth is not a democratic lot of the rule of the majority opinion, but rather, like gymnastic exercise, one should follow the advice of someone who “has been educated and exercised under a good trainer.” Per Plato’s dramatic timeline, Socrates has of course trained with the thinker Parmenides, though he does not admit it here. Socrates insists that “it is by knowledge that one ought to make decisions, if one is to make them well, and not by majority rule” (*Laches* 184d-e). The reader should note here that this is not an outright rejection of democracy, but rather an insistence that democracy be a common hunt for living well together rather than the rule by the hegemony of the majority.

With this said, Socrates proposes that the question Lysimachus and Melesias are truly asking is not whether *hoplomachia* will make their young sons ‘manly,’ as this is a consideration of particularities (i.e., the visible), but rather how their sons might “turn out to be worthwhile persons,” which involves consideration of the soul (*psyche*, ψυχή; *Laches* 185a). He suggests they should seek out experts who are “good themselves and have tended the souls of many young men” and who have “manifestly taught us” to be good ourselves (*Laches* 185e-186b), and that he has “had no teacher (*didaskalos*, διδάσκαλος) in this subject” (*Laches* 186c). For despite his pedagogical engagement with Parmenides, no teacher of the subject is possible *because this is not a subject that can be taught*. It can only be *pursued* through dialogue with others. Socrates suggests that the

beauty had faded did they lay aside their rivalry, but, as though they had merely taken preliminary practice and exercise in that, they presently engaged in matters of state also with passionate heat and opposing desires. (Plutarch, *Aristides*, 2.3)

One Stesilaus, the son of Thrasylaus, is known to have died at the Battle of Marathon among chaos. It is unclear whether this is the same Stesilaus who bore the love interests of Themistocles and Aristides, however, evidence in *Laches* might suggest it was (contra Nails and discussed below). As Herodotus recounts the Battle of Marathon, “In this labor Callimachus the polemarch was slain, a brave man, and of the generals Stesilaus son of Thrasylaus died. Cynegirus-son of Euphorion fell there, his hand cut off with an ax as he grabbed a ship's figurehead. Many other famous Athenians also fell there” (Herodotus, *Histories*, 6.114; cf. Plato, *Laches*, 183d).

men should search for teachers who have a reputation for making men better.¹² However, Laches, with his military background, is uncomfortable with the absence of authority and expresses his exhaustion at listening to people pontificate about that which they do not know, especially virtue. He listens only because he witnessed Socrates display the virtue he himself thinks of as *andreia* in the retreat from Delium (*Laches* 188c-189b).

Socrates clarifies the question at hand as “the manner in which virtue might be added to the souls of their sons to make them better” (*Laches* 190b; translated by Rosamond Kent Sprague). Rather than taking on the difficult task of contemplating “the whole of virtue,” Socrates suggests the men focus on the part of virtue that seems most relevant to the “technique of fighting in armor,” which the men have identified as *andreia* (*Laches* 190c-d; translated by Rosamond Kent Sprague). Socrates offers that the men should first focus on defining the virtue of *andreia* and then think about how to add the virtue to the young, assuming that it can be added “through occupations and studies” (*Laches* 190e; Sprague translation).

Thinking the task of defining *andreia* an easy one, Laches hastily offers “for if anyone (*tis*, τις) is willing to stay (*taxei*, τάξει) in his position to ward off (*amunesthai*, ἀμύνεσθαι) the enemy (τοὺς πολεμίους) and not flee (*pheugoi*, φευγοί), then you know well that he is a manly courageous person (*andreious*, ἀνδρεῖος)” (*Laches* 190e; my translation). This definition, however, reveals a *forgetfulness* of the very example he himself provided of Socrates’ courage *in retreat* from Delium. To this, Socrates gently reminds him of the experience and explains that definitions must encompass all examples. So, Laches offers a second definition, that *andreia* “is sort of a patient endurance (*karteria*, καρτερία) of the soul” (*Laches* 192b-c; my translation). Socrates adds to this that this endurance must be “accompanied by or alongside thoughtful, practical wisdom (*phroneseos*, φρονήσεως)” (*Laches* 192c; my translation). Socrates’ questioning of Laches reveals that this wisdom or knowledge involved in *andreia* is not the knowledge of a future certainty as it takes more courage to face the uncertainty of future events (*Laches* 193a).

¹² This may be an implicit reference to the heteara Aspasia who was reputed to not only influence Pericles’ decision making, but after his death also made a sheep man, Lysicles, into a statesman (*Laches* 185a; see Henry 1995, 43).

Frustrated, Laches admits that he is motivated by a desire for victory (*philonikia*, φιλονικία) with respect to the conversation, much like the young philosophical puppies of Zeno when he wrote his treatise and the young Socrates when debating it, but Laches is annoyed that despite thinking that he knows what *andreia* is, it keeps “escaping (*diephugen*, διέφυγεν)” from him when he attempts to articulate it. Socrates encourages him with a hunting metaphor, saying that “a good hunter (τὸν ἀγαθὸν κυνηγέτην) ought to pursue the trail and not give up” (*Laches* 194b; Sprague translation). In the dead of the Athenian winter, Socrates then summons “Nikias here to the hunt,” adding that if Nikias is “strong enough or able (*dynamis*, δύναμις), he should assist us beloved men out here in the cold (*cheimazomenois*, χειμαζομένοις) in the argument (λόγῳ) and are at a loss (*aporousin*, ἀποροῦσιν)” (*Laches* 190b-c; my translation).

Again, Nikias fails to speak frankly and only says what he thinks Socrates wants to hear. He echoes the claims Socrates made in *Protagoras*, saying that 1) “every one of us is good with respect to that in which he is wise and bad in respect to that in which he is ignorant;” 2) “certainly if a man is really a good man [ὁ ἀνδρεῖος ἀγαθός], clearly then he is wise;” and 3) this wisdom is the “scientific knowledge (*epistemen*, ἐπιστήμην) of the fearful (*deinon*, δεινῶν) and the daring (*tharraleon*, θαρραλέων) in war and all other situations” (*Laches* 194d-195a; my translation). As scholars have observed, this is a gross misrepresentation of Socrates’ meaning (Rabieh 2006, 68), but it does allow Plato the opportunity to further clarify Socrates’ philosophy. Nikias thinks if one is manly, then one is wise. He confuses this wisdom with the certainty of the knowledge of what today we would call scientific fact; but Socrates thinks that if one is wise about that which is to be feared or not despite the uncertainty of the future, then one is ‘manly’ or courageous.

Laches registers that he thinks *andreia* may be different from wisdom and, in frustration, says Nikias is “talking strangely (ἄτοπα λέγει)” and “foolishly (ληρεῖ)” (*Laches* 195a). Nikias then clarifies that this scientific knowledge (*epistemen*, ἐπιστήμην) might mean knowing when it is best to live or die, revealing the Achilles’ heel of his understanding of *andreia*: his is only a knowledge of future factual certainty. But the temporality of human beings is more complicated than predicting the eclipsing of the sun: we are meaning making creatures who make choices, and these choices have the capacity to deeply harm, rupture, and undo one another as well as the capacity to deeply help,

bind, and recognize one another. Laches is right to be alarmed at Nikias' suggestion that *manliness* is a kind of divination of the future: only a fortune-teller could pretend to exhibit this kind of *manliness*. Nikias only further muddies the water by saying that anyone should be able to judge whether or not to suffer (*Laches* 195e-196a). Laches explains his confusion and identifies Nikias' squirming in the argument:

It isn't clear to me from this, Socrates, what he is trying to say. Because he doesn't select either the seer or the doctor or anyone else as the man he calls *manly* [*andreion*, ἀνδρείον], unless some god is the person he means. Nicias appears to me unwilling to make a gentlemanly admission that he is talking nonsense, but he twists this way and that in an attempt to cover up his difficulty. Even you and I could have executed a similar twist just now if we had wanted to avoid the appearance of contradicting ourselves. If we were making speeches in a court of law, there might be some point in doing this, but as things are, why should anyone adorn himself senselessly with empty words in a gathering like this? (*Laches*, 196a-b; Sprague translation)

Socrates is sympathetic to Laches' confusion and agrees to take up the reins in the argument while affirming their bond in the hunt for *andreia*, saying "I have no objection, since the inquiry will be a joint effort on behalf of us both" (*Laches*, 196c; Sprague translation).

Socrates begins with the problem that Nikias has excluded too many from the ability to demonstrate manliness/courage including the Crommyon sow, a mythical pig said to ravage the area of the land bridge between Megara and Corinth that was eventually killed by Theseus and widely held to be '*andreia*.' He asks whether the Crommyon sow is manly while the majority of humans are not? (*Laches* 196d-e) Nikias says that these animals are not manly/courageous but merely rash and lacking foresight. He also goes onto insult the common folk, saying that "you and the common people (οἱ πολλοί)" who people call courageous are, like the animals, simply "rash, whereas the courageous [*andreia*, ἀνδρεία] ones are the sensible people [*phronima*, φρόνιμα] I was talking about" (*Laches* 196e-197c). This anti-plebian sentiment is in direct contradiction to Socrates' own, which he so clearly established in *Protagoras*. It also reveals the character exhibited by the historical Nikias, who would come to isolate himself in Sicily from advisors, not even trusting a messenger to relay an oral message to Athens for help (he unconventionally wrote a letter to the Athenians begging to be relieved of his post and reinforcements sent; Thucydides VII.8-18).

Laches exclaims his annoyance at Nicias' self-righteous authority in deciding who is and is not courageous, denying the virtue of courage to "[t]hose whom everyone agrees to be courageous" (*Laches*, 197c; Sprague translation). Moreover, Laches is appalled that such hostile opinions for the common Athenian were held by "a man the city thinks worth to be its leader" (*Laches* 197d; Sprague translation). Socrates responds in irony and with a nod towards the philosopher kings of *Republic* that "it would be fitting, my good friend, for the man in charge of the greatest affairs to have the greatest share of wisdom" (*Laches* 197e; Sprague translation). He then signals to Laches, and the reader, to pay close attention to the following questioning as *it concerns the temporality of human courage*.

Socrates asks Nicias to clarify his understanding of what is meant by the 'parts of virtue' and reiterates his unity of virtue theory established in *Protagoras* (*Laches* 198a). Nicias thinks he is in agreement, but Socrates pauses to see if they are in agreement on what is fearful (*deina*, δεινὰ) and daring (*tharralea*, θαρραλέα; translated as 'hoping' by some). Socrates says that he assumes these are expectations of the evils and goods of the future (*Laches* 198b). Nicias thinks these future things can be *known* with certainty (*Laches* 198c). There is no room for uncertainty of the future on Nicias' account, as he demands security about that which is inherently insecure. Further, there is no relation between the future and the past and present. Socrates opposes this view, articulating that our relation to the future is necessarily connected to our relation to our past and present. Thus, we can have some courageous orientation to the uncertainty of the future by taking time in the present to recollect the memories of the past and learn from them together. This artful knowledge need not be ruled by the seer, but instead the artful knowledge will rule the seer's own art of the future. Our learning and recollecting from trauma memory helps us to move forward into the future. Socrates explains:

[...] there is not one kind of knowledge by which we know how things have happened in the past, and another by which we know how they are happening at the present time, and still another by which we know how what has not yet happened might best come to be in the future, but that the knowledge is the same in each case. For instance, in the case of health, there is no other art related to the past, the present, and the future except that of medicine, which, although it is a single art, surveys what is, what was, and what is likely to be in the future. [...] And I suppose that both of you could bear witness that, in the case of the affairs of war, the art of generalship is that which best foresees the future and the other

times—*nor does this art consider it necessary to be ruled by the art of the seer, but to rule it, as being better acquainted with both present and future in the affairs of war.* (*Laches*, 198d-199a; Sprague translation with my added emphasis)

Nicias goes along with this, but Socrates points out that Nicias has only “set apart approximately a third” of what *andreia* entails (*Laches* 199c; my translation). Walter T. Schmid explicates the significance of this statement, of “approximately” or “about” a third. Nicias is only interested in the future (rather than all three: past, present, future), and of the future he is only interested in predictive certainty to the exclusion of uncertainty in the future. He writes:

Nicias’ conception of the ‘science of the terrible and safe or opportune’ does not allow for this optative object, for ‘what might be.’ It allows only for what *will* be, because it presupposes the kind of Promethean science, the mastery of the future, that allows the man of wise courage to simply pick what is better for himself out of the possible futures he foresees. [...] *Nicias has, as it were, a strangely ‘mathematical’ conception of courage, a conception that removes it from the world of real danger, fear, and uncertainty and envisages its possessor as a more godlike being than ordinary mortals. He believes in science but not in freedom.* [...] The point is rather that Nicias’ knowledge of this would-be invincible, superhuman virtue is not based on experience, it simply is based on what he hopes for. [my emphasis]. (Schmid 1992, 161-162)

So Nicias’ understanding of *andreia* gets temporality wrong. Instead of offering the *temporality of courageous overcoming*, Nicias offers us the *temporality of denial*. He neglects the past and its effects on the present, with his eyes only on the future. Denial. And just as we have seen in the previous chapter, denial produces a calculative hyper-rationalization disconnected from the embodied repetition of the past in the present such that the repetitions of the past may fatalistically determine our present and future, sabotaging our freedom in the present. Nicias would limit *andreia* to the gods or limit the possibilities of the future to scientific calculation. Humans would be nothing but mere, determinate matter and our future actions would be as predictable as an eclipse.

Tragically, Nicias’ own inability to grasp his freedom or imagine possibilities of the future destroyed the Athenian navy fleet. In 413BC, a blood red lunar eclipse of the moon occurred just when the Athenians were preparing for a necessary retreat from the devastating Sicilian Expedition. Nicias basically froze. In contrast to Pericles’ attitude and scientific understanding of eclipses, Nicias relied on fortune-telling advisors and the

superstitious men in his ranks, who all assumed the eclipse was a sign from the moon-goddess Selena of impending doom on their retreat. So, the Athenians stayed encamped on the shores of Sicily, only to suffer a gruesome attack from the Sicilians and Spartans. Nikias' decision to remain in Sicily absolutely destroyed the Athenian navy fleet. Surviving Athenian soldiers bore witness to the gruesome suffering of dying comrades and carried the guilt of leaving them unburied, only to eventually be enslaved after enduring being thrown into a pit for several months. Nikias was executed (see *Appendix I* for discussion of the Sicilian Expedition).

The *Laches* dialogue ends with Nikias in embarrassment: he, the leader of Athens, doesn't know what it means to 'be a man.' Laches tells Lysimachus and Melesias to part company with him and Nikias—clearly, they don't know the answers to the questions the men seek. Instead, they should “retain the services of this man Socrates” as Laches himself would do if his own children were old enough (*Laches* 200b). Nikias says he might do the same with his own son, Niceratus, but notes that Socrates has refused to take up company with him in the past. The reader will note that Niceratus is present in *Republic*. Lysimachus requests Socrates take on the education of his son, Aristides II, and Socrates says they will have “to join in searching for the best possible teacher, first for ourselves—we really need one—and then for the young [people; *meirakiois*, μειρακτιοις is neutral and not masculine, as Sprague translates]” (*Laches* 201a; Sprague translation with my amendment). Lysimachus consents and invites Socrates to join him at his home tomorrow (*Laches* 201b). Socrates responds with the final sentence of the dialogue, “I shall do what you say, Lysimachus, and come to you tomorrow, God willing” (*Laches*, 201c). Socrates likely did return to continue hunting for the good with Lysimachus and his son, Aristides II. However, as *Theaetetus* shows, things didn't go well. Aristides II is listed as an example of someone whose soul Socrates tried to help midwife, but that Aristides II may have “set more value upon lies and phantoms than upon the truth” and was definitively an “ignorant fool” (*Theaetetus* 151a).

The reader should take several things from *Laches* in understanding the development of Socrates' philosophy of *andreia*. One would be to understand the mediocrity of Lysimachus and Melesias in their preference for spectatorship—they would rather watch a *hoplomachia* match and would rather watch Socrates dialogue with the

generals. They are merely spectators of victory-seeking ‘manliness’ and they desire their boys to be participants in the *philonikian* conception of the virtue. However, this is not the understanding of the virtue sought by Socrates. At best, the fathers Lysimachus and Melesias want them and their sons to be told what to do. However, *becoming* a ‘man’, or a courageous adult, cannot be taught, it must be undertaken by the individual with others. It is not a solitary enterprise, but one that the individual must desire and voluntarily choose to do. One must practice marching with others, practice stepping ‘in’ time with one’s community, else one marches to one’s own devastation. Secondly, the reader should note the continuation of the hunting metaphor *in preference to* militaristic metaphors, such as the strategic sparring of *hoplomachia*. That is, one must hunt the good communally with others, rather than pursue the hunt for others’ domination. Thirdly, *Laches* assumes *andreia* to be a part of the whole of virtue, that it is unified with the Good, the Just, and the Beautiful, while demonstrating the nonsense of norms of masculinity.

Fourth, and most importantly, is the observation with the historical figure of Nikias and the failures of his Peace of Nikias that Nike-loving manliness is often accompanied by Nikian neglect: denial. This Nikian denial neglects the importance of recollection of the past for making choices in the present towards a good future. Socrates performs this recollection with Laches when the latter forgets about the retreat of Delium. He is only future-oriented, and he is worried about what others will think of him, the latter worry rules over decisions of the former. His failure to understand the importance of recollecting the past and striving through dialogue with others towards the Good meant at least two critical failures in his political leadership: the doomed Peace of Nikias and Sicilian Expedition.

The Peace of Nikias failed for at least two related reasons. First, the city of Megara refused to sign onto the peace treaty in light of the decade-long, semi-annual invasion of Athens. Though they were no longer allies due to the stipulations of the Thirty Years Peace, it was the formation of the alliance between the two cities that began the First Peloponnesian War. Proxy wars persisted during the period of ‘peace.’

Secondly, Socrates (former, possible present) lover Alcibiades III seized on this chaos to avenge his grudge against Nikias and increase his own socio-political position of

leadership. Alcibiades was upset that he wasn't included in the peace negotiations, complaining that he was excluded due to his young age. He no doubt had past traumatic experience of his own. Alcibiades III's father died in the Battle of Coronea in 446BC after renouncing the family's historical diplomatic ties to Sparta in the advent of the Peloponnesian War. Alcibiades III was only six years old. He and his brother became wards of the leader Pericles, but they maintained their biological family affiliations and responsibilities (Nails 2002, 11). So, Alcibiades III felt entitled by family lineage, namely by the role his father and grandfather played as Athenian diplomats or *proxenos* to Sparta (Thucydides V.43-45; Nails 2002, 11). As retribution, Alcibiades III seized on the continued poor relations during the peace to drive a wedge between Sparta and Nikias. Eventually, he was elected to replace Nikias as general and at his urging, the Athenian allies decided to "get on with war." This led to the Battle of Mantinea of 418BC, the first battle between Sparta and Athens to officially break the Peace of Nikias (Thucydides V.61-68; cf. Ste. Croix 1972, 180). Laches lost his life in the battle. Further, these same failures would bring Athens absolute ruin in the Sicilian Expedition, an expedition Nikias could have prevented had he spoken frankly to the citizens of Athens about what a terrible idea it was, as he believed then. He also had plenty of opportunity and wise encouragement to retreat once there. But he didn't, and Athens experienced the most horrific downfall in its history.

Cratylus: In *Cratylus* we see Socrates ambivalence of the word 'manliness' (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία) as a signifier for the courageous form of the human being's becoming through a lifetime. That is, he raises the possibility that 'manliness' may obscure the *philosophical* form of the virtue he pursues. Here, he articulates that the truer form of what is commonly called '*andreia*' engages not in *philonikian* battle for battle's sake but rather battles against trauma's shackling *aporias* of the soul.

The dialogue occurs around the Battle of Amphipolis (422BC), which was Socrates' last known battle. The battle was halted by a short-lived armistice, which was broken by the Athenian general Cleon who died in the ensuing battle. This would leave Nikias and Laches able to finally negotiate the Peace of Nikias a year later in 421BC. But this was a peace in name only, as multiple proxy wars continued. The war between

Athens and Sparta would officially resume in 418BC with the Battle of Mantinea. More specifically to the characters of the dialogue, the dramatic date is set before the death of the richest man in all of Greece, Hipponicus II, and the dispersion of his estate (Nails 2002, 162). The dialogue takes place in the home of the heir of Hipponicus, Callias III. Callias' half-brother, Hermogenes is present. Hermogenes was a Parmenidean philosopher who would come to mentor Plato for a time after Socrates' death (see *Appendix*). Upon his own father's soon-impending death, Hermogenes would be denied inheritance rights, despite being acknowledged by his father and permitted to use his patronymic name. He was a son in name only. Hermogenes' mother was Pericles' ex-wife. Had she and Hipponicus married, Hermogenes would have been a full citizen and also entitled to inherited wealth. But, instead he would receive nothing (Nails 2002, 312, 172, 162, and 69). There seems to be an implicit criticism of ancient patriarchal family arrangements and the unfair exclusion of Hermogenes from future material security. This criticism sits alongside two others: that language is malleable, and we may need new name-givers for the phenomenon we encounter (i.e., 'andreia' as 'manliness' may not appropriate name the form of the human being), as well as a criticism of Parmenidean and Heraclitean temporality.

The dialogue begins with a discussion of the etymology the gods, and it is worth noting in our discussion what Socrates says about both Artemis and Ares. As background, Artemis the hunter was the twin of Apollo, daughter of Zeus and Leto. She was associated with the moon, 'Selene,' to her brother's sun, 'Helios.' She was associated with midwifery out of her compassion for the difficulty of birth after her own mother was made to suffer by Hera's jealousy through the birth of Artemis and Apollo. She asked her father, Zeus, to be allowed to hunt in the dappled groves rather than remain in the city and that she remain a virgin all her life, enabling her to be free of the rape and control of men (Townsend 2017, 122). Socrates discusses the etymology of her name,

“...Artemis appears to get her name from her healthy (ἀρτεμῆς) and ordered (κόσμιον) nature, and her love (ἐπιθυμίαν) of virginity; in like manner he who named the goddess named her a wise judge of virtue (ἀρετῆς ἴσοτρα), or also too probably, as she hates the ploughing (ἄροτον μισησάσης) of man in woman; either for any or all of these reasons did he assign this name to the goddess. (*Cratylus* 406b; Townsend's translation in Townsend 2017, 121)

To be clear: Artemis' wise virtue is accompanied by the hatred of the rape of women by men and all sex, as it distracts or ruptures her from her hunt. Townsend discusses that Artemis represents a Greek "sublation of human desire into divine *eros*; rather than some pidgin Freudian repression, it is the very kind of transformation Socrates makes use of when he personifies Eros as a wondrous hunter" (Townsend 2017, 122; see *Symposium* 203d). She continues to explain Socrates' logic that to someone who is uninterested in sex because they are in the process of hunting for themselves, any unwanted affections, such as the mortal Actaeon spying on the naked Artemis, will appear ugly and lack "the proper fear, reverence, and shame (*aidos*, αἰδοῶς) he should have when witnessing the divine form" (Townsend 2017, 124). Artemis represents the guardian of women who will hunt down male perpetrators "so that a man may learn to touch only those loves that are within his power" (Pindar qtd. in Townsend 2017, 124).

Ares, however, represents the very threat of this rape and returns to the discussion of *andreia*. Socrates explains the relation between the word *andreia* and the god is its 'hard and unbending' quality, likely a humorous reference to an erect penis:

Then, if you like, it follows that the male/masculinity (*arren*, ἄρρεν) and manliness/courage (*andreion*, ἀνδρεῖον) would be of the god 'Ares': if again it follows that he is hard (*sklēron*, σκληρόν) and unbending (*amatastrophon*, ἀμετάστροφον), which is called 'arraton' (ἄρρατον, or firm, solid), and it would be clear to call this god who is in every way warlike 'Ares'." (*Cratylus*, 407c-d; my translation)

Through this, manliness is associated with an unbending, warring nature. But this is not conducive to philosophical thinking. Dialogue requires the skills of Artemis, the patience in pursuit and the guarding against rupturing distractions. Arriving to this problem, Socrates asks to move on from discussing the gods as it "frightens" him to discuss them, seeing as their names and characters are perhaps unhelpful for understanding the form of the human being. Hermogenes, however, insists on discussing one last god, Hermes, to see whether he is 'of the family' (*genos*, γένος) of the god Hermes because Cratylus has said that he is not. Socrates explains that Hermes:

...is an interpreter (*hermeneus*), a messenger, a thief and a deceiver in words, a wheeler-dealer—and all these activities involve the power of speech. Now, as we mentioned before, 'eirein' means 'to use words,' and the other part of the name says—as Homer often does 'emesato' ('he contrived'), which means 'to devise.' And it was out of these two words that the rule-setter established the name of the

god who devised speech (*legein*) and words, since ‘*eirein*’ means the same as ‘*legein*’ (‘to speak’). It’s just as if he had told us: ‘Humans, it would be right for you to call the god who has contrived speech (*to eirein emesato*) ‘*Eiremes*’.’ But we, beautifying the name, as we suppose, call him ‘Hermes’ nowadays” (*Cratylus* 408a; Reeve translation)

Thus, Hermes the messenger god is the god of words, and he is a *deceiver*. And so, we might be deceived into thinking that *andreia* is a virtue only for men, when in fact it is a poor name given for the courage of the human being. Socrates continues to explain that Hermes has a double-natured son, Pan (‘all’), and that this messaging language god includes both the false and true forms. While the true form is divine, the false form of which “dwells below among the human masses, and is rough and goatish (*tragikon*); for it is here, in the tragic (*tragikon*) life, that one finds the vast majority of myths and falsehoods” (*Cratylus* 408c; Reeve translation). We might conclude that ‘*andreia*’ is the false word for human courage, and the deception of gendered *manliness* is where we find tragedy; the task is to hunt for the divine, true form of human courage, so-called ‘manliness.’

The men then turn from the gods to discussing celestial bodies and the elements as a progressing transition to discussing the virtues. Justice (*dikaiousyne*, δικαιοσύνη) is discussed first and is associated with the flow of light penetrating the universe (i.e., the flow of becoming through time). Socrates says it is often conflated with Zeus (*Dia*, Δία) or the penetration (*diaionta*, διαίοντα) and burning (*kaonta*, κάοντα) of the sun itself. But Socrates thinks this is problematic for at least two reasons. First, conflating the virtue with the gods does not escape the Euthyphro problem. It does not confirm whether and why we should particularly value the virtues. And second, conflating the virtues with matter such as the sun reduces human freedom to fatalistic determinism—the sun predictably sets (*Cratylus* 412d-413d). Not only is the problem that the light of the sun does not illuminate the night and is therefore not ‘universal’ in our experience, but also because the sun is dictated by a temporality of future certainty.

Injustice is then said to be that which interrupts the penetration of the light, or it *disrupts* becoming through time. Socrates states “injustice [*adikia*, ἀδικία] is really nothing more than a hindering of that which penetrates [*diaiontos*, διαίοντος]” (*Cratylus* 413d; Reeve translation). It is against these disruptions that ‘*andreia*’ fights. The virtue

gets this name not because of its ‘firm’ nature, but because the “virtue was given its name in battle” against the ruptures of injustice on behalf of the flow of justice’s *becoming* (*Cratylus* 413d). Socrates continues, explaining that if we agree with Heraclitean philosophy that “the things that are flowing, then a battle cannot be anything but an opposing flow. If we remove the ‘d’ from ‘*andreia*’ to get ‘*anreia*’ (‘flowing back’), the name itself indicates this fact.” Of course, he admits, that “courage doesn’t oppose every flow, but only the one that is contrary to justice; otherwise courage wouldn’t be praiseworthy” (*Cratylus* 413d-e; Reeve translation). Without missing a beat, Socrates immediately ties this discussion of the ‘flows’ of *andreia* to the embodied material ‘flows’ of *both* men and women. He says:

Similarly, ‘male’ (‘*arren*’) and ‘man’ [‘*aner*’, ‘ἀνήρ’] indicate upward flow [*anorhoe*, ἄνω ῥοή]. It seems to me that [‘woman’; ‘*gyne*’, ‘γυνή’] wants to be [‘womb’; ‘*gone*’, ‘γονή’], that [‘female’; ‘*thelu*’, ‘θήλυ’] wants to be [‘nipple’; ‘*theles*’, ‘θηλῆς’], and that a nipple is so-called, Hermogenes, because it makes things flourish [*tethelenai*, τεθηλέναι] in just the way that watering makes plants flourish” (*Cratylus*, 414a; Reeve translation with my emendation)

Through etymological gymnastics, Socrates clearly associates *andreia* with both men and women in their material bodies.

From *andreia*, Socrates insists on discussing its opposite, cowardice (*deilia*, δειλία). He says that cowardice is not a moral fault, but rather a debilitating ignorance that signifies the “bad movement” or rupture of injustice, explaining that it is “the strongest of the soul’s shackles” (*Cratylus* 415c; my translation). It is an *aporia*, a perplexing inability to move on and “a vice of the same sort, and so, it seems is everything else that hinders movement and motion. This makes it clear that the bad movement in question is a restrained or hindered motion, whose possession by a soul causes it to become filled with vice” (*Cratylus* 415c; my translation). Cowardice is thus the shackles of the soul in the aftermath of trauma that pauses and holds an individual’s life narrative, divorcing them from their past and removed from the future. It is the depression, drinking, drugs, promiscuity, and explosive fits of violence that are symptomatic of post-traumatic stress. It is the shackling of the dull present that forestalls the birth of the self in trauma’s aftermath (cf. Brison 1997 and 2002; also, Burke 2018).

Socrates goes on to explain that this debilitating rupture of movement is called ‘badness’ (*kakia*, κακία) in common speech and that ‘thriving’ or ‘excellence’ or ‘virtue’ (*aretē*, ἀρετή) is the opposite. He explains that this virtuous thriving signifies:

...first, ease of movement (*euporian*, εὐπορίαν) and second, that the flow of a good soul is always unimpeded, for it seems that it is given this name ‘*arete*’ (‘ἀρετή’) because it is unrestrained and unhindered and so is always flowing (*aei hreōn*, ἀεὶ ῥέον). Thus, it is correct to call it ‘*aeireiten*’ (‘ἀειρείτην’), but this has been contracted, and it is called ‘*arete*’ (ἀρετή). Now, maybe you’ll say that I’m inventing things again, but I think that if what I just said about ‘*kakia*’ (‘κακία’) is correct, then so is what I said about the name ‘*arete*’ (ἀρετήν). (*Cratylus*, 415c-e; my translation)

In other words, ‘virtue’ is the healthy, thriving *becoming* of the human throughout their lifetime. And what the Greeks called ‘manliness’ was the name for guarding this *becoming*. Later in the dialogue, Socrates returns to the appropriateness of the names of ‘manliness’ and ‘womanliness’ for men and women (*Cratylus* 430c-431b). He concludes that it is possible that we have the wrong names for these and need a better craftsman of names, a new name-giver or law-giver (*nomothetes*, νομοθέτης) (*Cratylus* 431b-e). He urges his interlocutor Cratylus the Heraclitean to:

Take courage [*tharron*, θαρρῶν] then and admit that one name may be well-given while another isn’t. Don’t insist that it have all the letters and exactly resemble the thing it names, but allow that an inappropriate letter may be included. But if an inappropriate letter may be included in a name, an inappropriate name may be included in a phrase. And if an inappropriate name may be included in a phrase, a phrase which is inappropriate to the things may be employed in a statement. Things are still named and described when this happens, provided the phrases include the pattern of the things they’re about. Remember that this is just what Hermogenes and I claimed earlier about the names of the elements. (*Cratylus*, 430c-432e; Reeve translation)

We must be brave and open to the possibility that the names we have for what we are trying to pursue and understand may be misleading and we may need new names for the virtues.

The dialogue is often dismissed by scholars as an etymological parlor game, despite the presence of *three* philosophers with whom Plato historically studied: Socrates, Hermogenes the Parmenidean, and Cratylus the Heraclitean (Nails 2002, 105 and 247; cf. Diogenes). After the death of Socrates, Plato studied with the latter two and *then* he wrote his dialogues. The dialogue demonstrates how both Parmenidean and Heraclitean

philosophies fall short in thinking the ontology of the human being. They each also justify inattention to traumatic memories. The dialogue ends with lodging such a criticism. The Parmenidean would hold that nothing can be changed about the memories and the Heraclitean would hold that knowledge could never *be* because it would always be moving (*Cratylus* 440b). But Socrates insists “there is always that which knows and that which is known” (*Cratylus* 440b; Reeve translation). And as we are discovering with increasing clarity in contemporary times, traumatic memories may rupture the self, but rather than departing from the body, they settle into it even despite an individual or community’s best efforts to deny or forget it (see Brison 1997 and 2002; also, Stern 2010). Socrates holds a position between the Heraclitean and Parmenidean view: trauma histories do not disappear with time, but they rupture an individual’s path of *becoming*. Stamped into our bodies and fluttering in the recesses of our psyche (*Theaetetus* 190e-200d), they persist in the present and risk shackling us to the stagnant aporia of the present. As I will discuss below, Plato addresses the ambiguity of this difficulty through the figure of Diotima of Mantinea in *Symposium*: because we are mortal, we move through time and experience rupture and forgetting, so there is need to re-collect our memories to produce and hold onto new knowledge, new meaning of those memories and thereby a new self, continuously through a lifetime. The process of this is loving care of the self, which is ‘manly’. Socrates encourage Cratylus to undertake this process, especially in regard to the difficulty of the appearances of names, saying he “must investigate them courageously [*andreios, ἀνδρείως*] and thoroughly and not accept anything easily—you are still young and in your prime, after all. Then after you’ve investigated them, if you happen to discover the truth, you can share it with me’ (*Cratylus* 440d; Reeve translation). Ironically, Cratylus the ever-flowing Heraclitean stubbornly stands by his position saying he has already investigated the issue: he already thinks he knows what ‘manliness’ is. *Cratylus* offers that perhaps the signifier for this ‘manliness’ should be changed; that the appearances of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are not adequate to naming the form of the human enduring this process. Today we call it ‘courage.’

In this section, I have discussed Socrates’ journey of thinking about the presumed ‘form’ of the human being, ‘manliness’, from his twenties until late forties spanning the

period of his military service. As we have observed, he held skeptical ambivalence regarding the gendered connotations of masculinity assumed to comprise *andreia*. Socrates begins to raise doubts about the gendered nature of *andreia* as early as *Parmenides*; this doubt persists as he questions the militaristic assumptions of Protagoras, Laches, and Nicias. In *Cratylus*, we saw him raising the ambiguities of language and the appropriateness of ‘manliness’ to fully convey the meaning of the virtue of the human being that he seeks. Further, rather than accepting the militaristic values of domination presumed to define the term, Socrates defines what is called ‘*andreia*’ as the artful knowledge of “what is and is not to be feared” of the past, present and future that might provide “salvation” from the aftermath of trauma and its related coping mechanisms of excessive drinking, eating, and promiscuity; a kind of rescuing retreat of the self from death and danger (*Protagoras* 357b-360d; see also *Laches*, *Cratylus*, and *Parmenides*). It cannot be taught; it can only be obtained through the process of a voluntary hunt in common with free, ordinary people (*Protagoras* 353a-b; see also *Parmenides* 135d). In Book V of *Republic*, Plato’s Socrates makes clear that he thinks women are as capable and in need of hunting the virtue and *becoming andreia* as men are, despite Glaucon’s objections that men are stronger in everything (*Republic* 455d-e; see Townsend 2017). I agree with Townsend: *Republic* is concerned not only about the *andreia* of men overcoming the traumas of combat, but also the courage of women overcoming the traumas of rape, which is so often inflicted as a weapon of war (cf. Oliver 2007). As Townsend has analyzed, the concern for rape is signaled both by Plato’s framing of the dialogue with the festival of Bendis—the sexually active Thracian version of Artemis, the rape-hating goddess of hunting and midwifery—and his cloaking the women guardians exercising naked in ‘robes of virtue’ from the gaze of the male sex (Townsend 2017, see especially xix, 67-93, and 142). That is, hunting women will be cloaked in respect as they seek to give birth to their own best selves and as they midwife the re-birth of others. One might say that women will be cloaked by virtue of their pursuit of becoming their own best self, a task all good humans must undertake after the ruptures of trauma. In the next section, I explore Plato’s philosophy for undertaking such a hunt and re-birth of the human self.

The 'Manliness' of Love's Overcoming

As I analyze in this section, the strength Socrates associates with 'manliness' is not a uniquely 'masculine' strength, but, rather, the strength of enduring a kind of re-birth of the human soul in the aftermath of trauma. This is a birth each individual is capable of and responsible for regardless of their embodied social and political position. In an act of extraordinary subversion, Plato transvalues the ancient understanding of *andreia* from a patriarchal value of militant domination to a human value of birthing the self after trauma: that is, 'manliness' isn't manly at all. To be a *real* 'man' is to engage not in *warring* but *hunting*, it is to take only from Ares the capacity to *guard* and this is a guarding of the activity of Artemis. Moreover, the hunt is to be a hunt towards an activity typically associated with women and goddesses: birth.

As we will see through an analysis of *Symposium* and *Republic*, to be a 'real man'—to really be *human*—is to have the strength and courage of *Love* to endure and protect the hunt and rebirth of subjectivity in the aftermath of trauma's living death and the institutional betrayals and denials that exacerbate it. This birth of self is easiest when done in Beauty, and more painful or thwarted altogether in situations of ugliness; and so, Love also demands the attempt to create a place of Beauty in which to give birth. It demands an attempt to create institutions that do not betray and communities that do not deny. This is done through engaging one another in the recollection of traumatic memory to create new meaning together.

Following Angela Hobbs, I read *Symposium* and *Republic* as companion dialogues. Hobbs writes that:

In the *Republic*, Socrates tells an unknown interlocutor that 'I went down (*kateben*) yesterday to the Piraeus'; while in the *Symposium*, Apollodorus recounts to his—also unknown—companions how 'the day before yesterday I happened to be going up to town'. The *Republic* descends from the realm of the Forms to the everyday world: at 516e4 the Philosopher-Ruler 'goes down' (*katabas*) from the sunlit heavens back into the cave. The *Symposium* moves in the opposite direction: it ascends from the everyday world of individual loves and their beautiful flesh to the vision of Beauty itself. In terms of our moral progress, therefore, the *Symposium* is prior. Socrates went down to the Piraeus yesterday; Apollodorus went up to town the day before. (Hobbs 2000, 223)

While I agree with Hobbs' analysis of the complementarity of the first lines and general philosophical action between *Symposium* and *Republic* 'going up' and 'going down,' her

analysis remains clouded in abstraction as it neglects the importance of the historical dramatic dating. Just as the dialogues we have previously discussed, *Symposium* and *Republic* are saturated with the trauma of the Peloponnesian War, particularly the absolute disaster of the Sicilian Expedition (415BC). The *Symposium* takes us ‘up’ to the dramas just prior to the departure for the Sicilian Expedition and *Republic* brings us back ‘down’ to respond to the trauma and denials of the common Athenian citizens in its aftermath.

The actions of the *Symposium* are set at 416BC, during a celebration of the success Agathon’s latest drama. It occurs in the aftermath of the 418BC Battle of Mantinea that officially broke the Peace of Nikias where the general Laches died along with other Athenians under friendly fire, a repetition of the Athenian hoplites’ failure at Delium (424BC) to march in step. As I have discussed, Alcibiades III led the Athenians headlong into the Battle of Mantinea to break the Peace of Nikias based in a grudge that brought the death of the good general Laches. It was also Alcibiades who vociferously supported the Sicilian Expedition. He and his Socratic companions who were accused of destroying the hermai and practicing the resurrection narrative of the Eleusinian Mysteries on the eve of the Expedition’s departure. Under my interpretation, Diotima of Mantinea is a figure through which Plato encourages his audience to recollect the tragedies of Mantinea prior to the decision to depart for the Sicilian Expedition as a method to resurrect, reincarnate, or re-birth themselves in the aftermath of trauma. The dialogue urges the audience to learn from the example of Alcibiades. The argument that is implied is: had the Athenians, especially Alcibiades III, undertaken the task of honestly recollecting the traumatic memories of the Battle of Mantinea to create new knowledge together, it is possible the horrors of the Sicilian Expedition would have been avoided.

Rather, the traumatized Athenians were spinning totally out of control. As Thucydides writes, a power struggle in Athens had ensued since the death of Pericles from the plague in 429BC. Pericles was marked by his intelligence, honest integrity, and respect for the “liberty of the people” that earned him respect and true leadership power “in what was nominally a democracy [where] power was really in the hands of the first citizen.” He was not a war-monger but, with Aspasia of Miletus by his side, attempted peaceful diplomacy with Sparta. The peace failed due to Sparta’s aggressive refusal to

negotiate with Pericles on the repeal of his modest Megarian Decree. After Pericles' death, no subsequent Athenian leader stood out with the same integrity or intelligence as he. Instead, Cleon, Nicias, Alcibiades and others all clamored for authority, adopting "methods of demagogy which resulted in their losing control over the actual conduct of affairs [...] naturally [leading] to a number of mistakes, among which was the Sicilian Expedition." Thucydides concludes that "in the end it was only because they had destroyed themselves by their own internal strife that finally they were forced to surrender" (Thucydides II.65). The Sicilian Expedition was a prime example of the consequences of internal division not only between Athenian leadership, but also the strife internal to traumatized subjectivities and wounded male egos. It is worth discussing the history of this disaster to help contextualize my following textual analysis (see also Appendix I).

Alcibiades III was responsible for breaking the Peace of Nicias, which resulted in Athenian defeat at the Battle of Mantinea. Immediately after, the Athenians turned their traumatized aggression onto the Melians, slaughtering all the men and enslaving the women and children. Alcibiades III was also responsible for entering the Athenians into the worst military venture in their history out of his and the Athenian all-male citizen's desire for riches and empire. The Sicilian Expedition was prompted by the deception of the Sicilian city of Egesta and its appeals to the Athenians for help in its Megara-associated Sicilian city-state of Selinus (cf. the historical destruction of the *hermai* and Alcibiades' comparison of Socrates to the Silenus statues in *Symposium*). Nicias might have prevented the Expedition if he would have spoken honestly, but instead he over-exaggerated the preparations necessary, which only further encouraged the eager Athenians and disparaged the minority who agreed with him into silence for fear of being unpatriotic (Thucydides VI.19-24). As a result of Nicias' speech, the Athenians assembled the largest military undertaking in all of fifth-century Greece. Nicias was elected to lead the expedition along with Alcibiades and Lamachus.

During the immense preparations for the voyage to Sicily, Thucydides writes that "it was found that in one night nearly all the stone Hermae in the city of Athens had their faces disfigured by being cut about." The *hermai* were religious statues of the messenger god, Hermes, which were a "national institution" lining the exterior of temples and the

porches of homes. Their destruction was a profound sacrilegious act, which the citizens regarded both as an omen of doom for the Sicilian Expedition as well as “evidence of a revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the democracy” (Thucydides VI.27). The Athenians blamed Alcibiades and his cohort of young, drunken men who were also accused of sacrilegious “mock celebrations” of the Eleusinian Mysteries in their “private houses” (Thucydides VI.28). Plutarch identifies Androcles specifically as leading the charge against the young men (Plutarch *Alcibiades*, 19.1-3).

The Eleusinian Mysteries were part of an agrarian psychedelic cult practice celebrating eternal life through the resurrection of Persephone and her return to her mother, Demeter. Similar to Christian Easter stories of Jesus Christ, the Eleusinian Mysteries tell the myth of Persephone’s descent into the underworld of the dead, her mother’s mournful search, and especially emphasizes Persephone’s miraculously divine ascent back to the world of the living and reunification with her mother.¹³ As stated, it was sacrilegious to practice the Mysteries in private homes, such as Alcibiades’ and his Socratic comrades were accused of doing at their drinking parties (*symposium*, συμποσίον). The men faced sentences of execution, which were far harsher than Pericles’ modest Megarian Decree against the trespass of the Eleusinian fields (433/432BC). At least three of the men in Plato’s *Symposium* stood accused: Alcibiades III, Eryximachus, and Phaedrus. Both the historical Phaedrus and Alcibiades III fled to exile, but the record is unclear whether Eryximachus was executed or escaped.¹⁴ Under my interpretation provided below, *Symposium* explains what the young men may have really been up to:

¹³ Cf. “Eleusinian Mysteries,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eleusinian-Mysteries>; see also Martin P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion*, Charleston: BiblioBazaar, 1940/2008; Antonia Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001; Sergey Uvarov, *Essay on the Mysteries of Eleusis*, London: Rodwell and Martin, 1817/reprinted in 2004 by Kessinger Publishing; and R. Gordon Wassman, Albert Hoffman, and Carl A.P. Ruck, *The Road to Eleusis: Unveiling the Secret of the Mysteries*, New York City: Harcourt, 1978/reprinted by North Atlantic Books, 2008. See also the Wikipedia entries for “Eleusinian Mysteries” and “Homeric Hymns.”

¹⁴ For the historical details relevant to characters in *Symposium* discussed above and below, see Nails’ “Excursus 1: The Sacrilegious Crimes of 415,” 17-20; see also Nails’ entry on *Symposium*, 314-315; for Apollodorus, see Nails, 39-40; for Aristodemus, see Nails, 52-53; for Phaedrus, see Nails, 232-234; for Pausanias, see Nails, 222; for Eryximachus, see Nails 143-144; for Aristophanes, see Nails 54-57; for Agathon, see Nails 8-10; for Alcibiades III, see Nails 10-17; and for Socrates, see Nails 263-269. In her discussion dating *Symposium*, Nails says that four of the party would be implicated in the crimes (Nails, 315), but this doesn’t seem to be supported by Excursus 1.

discussing human resurrection or rebirth into the world of the living, that is, the world of *becoming*, from the stagnant living death of trauma's aftermath.

Alcibiades denied the charges; it is possible that he was indeed framed by Nikias and others who dissented with the decision to embark to Sicily. Alcibiades demanded a trial before setting sail, fearing the impact of rumor-mongering in his absence. "His enemies, however," Thucydides writes, "were afraid that if the case was brought at once, he would have the goodwill of the army," as Alcibiades was very popular among the military, "and that the people would be lenient with him" given his popularity for convincing "the Argives and some of the Mantineans to join the expedition" to Sicily (Thucydides VI.29). Alcibiades thus set sail without trial to lead the Sicilian Expedition with Nikias and Lamachus.

Nearly the entire population of Athens "went down to the Piraeus" to send the fleet off for the Sicilian Expedition. Thucydides writes that the Athenians were "full of hope and full of lamentation" (Thucydides VI.30). But after the Sicilian Expedition, the Athenians stood in fear that the Spartans would attack the port of Piraeus and desperately sought to rebuild their defenses and remaining allegiances. This is the historical significance of *Republic's* opening line, "I went down to the Piraeus yesterday with Glaucon" (*Republic* 327a; Grube translation).

When the Athenians arrived at Sicily, Egesta's deception was discovered: the promised riches did not exist. Alcibiades, Lamachus, and Nikias debated what to do. Nikias held a conservative position of continuing to sail to Selinus as planned so Egesta might come up with the money, and if they refused then Athens should stay and oversee the settlement between Selinus and Egesta and then sail home to Athens along the coast "making a demonstration of the power of Athens" to other cities and not "put the state in danger by wasting her own resources" (Thucydides VI.47). Lamachus favored a surprise attack, which may have been best (Thucydides VI.49; see Kagan 2003). Alcibiades, however, did not want to risk returning to Athens empty-handed—it was, after all, his enthusiasm for riches and empire that motivated the Athenians to embark on the extravagant expedition. He suggested diplomatically appealing to allies and await their arrival (Thucydides VI.48; cf. *Laches*). Lamachus eventually sided with Alcibiades;

however, the attempt to garner allies in the region did not go very well (Thucydides VI.50-52).

Meanwhile, Athens was beset by political strife and scandal (Thucydides VI.53-60), and Alcibiades was recalled to stand trial. He was not arrested, for fear of disrupting Athens' fragile alliances at Sicily, but allowed to sail himself to Sicily with an escort. He took this as an opportunity to flee into exile and the Athenians sentenced him to death in his absence; he then began to aid the Spartans plan their advancement on the city of Athens proper as revenge against the Athenians who had crossed him and attempt "to recover a country that has ceased to be mine" (Thucydides VI.61 and 92). The Spartans also sent a contingent under Gylippus to Sicily.

When Gylippus arrived at Sicily, the Athenians had been left to the sole command of Nicias, who had grown increasingly ill and reclusive. Lamachus had died in battle, battles fought according to Nicias' original plan (Thucydides VI.62-72 and 101-103). Nicias maintained a defensive position rather than attacking the newly arrived Spartans on the shores, which only enabled the Spartans to strengthen their position (Thucydides VII.3). The situation grew dire, a two-front battle of the Athenians against the Sicilians and Spartans (Thucydides VII.16-18). Rather than retreat or attack, Nicias penned a letter to Athens. As Thucydides observes, he wrote the letter out of profound distrust in both his messenger to accurately convey the message to the Athenians and the Athenians to not kill the messenger for receiving his remarkably terrible news that the largest fleet assembled in all of fifth-century Athens was failing. He beseeched the Athenians "to either recall us, or else to send out another force, both naval and military, as big as the first, with large sums of money, and also someone to relieve me of the command, as a disease of the kidneys has made me unfit for service" (Thucydides VII.8-15).

But the city of Athens was itself under existential threat as the Spartans advanced, fortifying the city of Decelea under Alcibiades' advice. The Athenians delayed in sending ships to Sicily and refused to relieve Nicias, but assembled a fleet under Demosthenes. The assembly and departure of this new fleet left Athens greatly weakened financially and militarily; and it was all for nothing. The Athenians suffered a debilitating defeat, falling into complete disorder in a nighttime attack of Epipolae led by Demosthenes. An enormous number of Athenians died by one another's hands in the confusion. The

remaining survivors grew ill from camping in marshland. Demosthenes resolved that the Athenians should retreat at once and preserve the navy (Thucydides VII.44). But Nikias stalled the departure. He had hopes, fueled by a small party of Syracusans, that their siege would work. Himself undecided about what to do, he delivered a speech revealing his profound distrust in his fellow Athenians that refused retreat for fear of the disgrace and even executions they may face in Athens (Thucydides VII.48). The two disagreed and a decision was forestalled, and the men of the fleet began to think Nikias must be right that the siege would work to have stuck so firmly to his position in his speech. And so, out of Nikias' fear and distrust, the Athenians remained like sitting ducks (Thucydides VII.49). When Sparta sent reinforcements, the Athenians realized their mistake. Nikias refused an open discussion of their retreat, and instead sent secret messages throughout the fleet to await the order. When they were just about to retreat, the moon became red under a total lunar eclipse. The Athenians took this as dooming sign from the gods, perhaps the moon goddess Selene or her affiliated Artemis, and begged the generals Nikias and Demosthenes to wait. The sickly Nikias was also a man who prided himself on his piety and Thucydides writes that he "was rather over-inclined to divination and such things." At the recommendation of the soothsayers, Nikias demanded the Athenians stall their retreat through another moon cycle ("thrice nine days"), refusing any further discussion on the matter (Thucydides VII.50).

The Syracusans then victoriously attacked them and pursued what remained of the Athenian fleet at sea (Thucydides VII.53-57). Nikias delivered a speech of desperation to his men, telling them if they lost this battle, Athens would lose all her defenses: there were no more ships or hoplites on reserve. He concluded that now was the time for any man of special skill or good-spirit [*eupsychia*, εὐψυχία; also translated as 'courage'], that now "is the time for him to show it" (Thucydides VII.64). Thucydides remarks that the men cried out for their "wives, children, [and] gods of the native land [...] in the terror of the moment, [believing] that they will help" (Thucydides VII.69; cf. Herman 1992/1997/2015, 52 and van der Kolk 2015, 82). Indeed, things only grew worse for the Athenian soldiers, and their fears for the future only grew worse (Thucydides VII.71). The Athenians suffered a crushing defeat. Their entire fleet was captured, and they were

unable to collect their dead (Thucydides VII.72-73). Thucydides writes of the horrors they encountered:

[...] in the actual leaving of the camp there were sad sights for every eye, sad thoughts for every mind to feel. The dead were unburied, and when any man recognized one of his friends lying among them, he was filled with grief and fear; and the living who, whether sick or wounded, were being left behind caused more pain than did the dead to those who were left alive, and were more pitiable than the lost. Their prayers and their lamentations made the rest feel important and helpless, as they begged to be taken with them and cried out aloud to every single friend or relative whom they could see; as they hung about the necks of those who had shared tents with them and were now going, following after them as far as they could, and, when their bodily strength failed them, reiterated their cries to heaven and their lamentations as they were left behind. So, the whole army was filled with tears and in such distress of mind that they found it difficult to go away even roam this land of their enemies when sufferings too great for tears had befallen them already and more still, they feared, awaited them in the dark future ahead. There was also a profound sense of shame and deep feelings of self-reproach [...] No Hellenic army had ever suffered such a reverse. They had come to enslave others, and now they were going away frightened of being enslaved themselves; and instead of the prayers and paeans with which they had sailed out, the words to be heard now were directly contrary and boded evil as they started on their way back, sailors traveling on land, trusting in hoplites rather than in ships. (Thucydides VII.75)

The ailing Nikias attempted to comfort the troops by touting his own privilege and religious optimism for the future, saying:

I myself am physically no stronger than any one among you (in fact you see what my illness has done to me), nor, I think, can anyone be considered to have been more blessed by fortune than I have been in my private life and in other respects; but I am now plunged into the same perils as the meanest man here. Yet throughout my life I have worshipped the gods as I ought, and my conduct towards men as been just and without reproach. Because of this I still have a strong hope for the future, and these disasters do not terrify me as they well might do. [...] In a word, soldiers, you must make up your minds that to be brave now is a matter of necessity, since no place exists near at hand where a coward can take refuge, and that, if you escape the enemy now, you will all see again the homes for which you long, and the Athenians among you will build up again the great power of Athens, fallen though it is. It is men who make the city, and not walls or ships with no men inside them. (Thucydides VII.77)

The Athenians were captured shortly after this speech. Nikias and Demosthenes attempted to negotiate an agreement that the Athenians would pay war reparations, but this was rejected. Nikias eventually surrendered to the Spartan Gylippus, trusting him to

spare his life, but both he and Demosthenes were executed in 413BC. The remaining warriors were stored in a pit for eight months, and those that survived were enslaved. It is worth noting that Thucydides thought the execution of Nikias was highly unjust as he was “a man who, of all the Hellenes in my time, least deserved to come to so miserable an end, since the whole of his life had been devoted to the study and practice of virtue” (Thucydides VII.81-86). It is this estimation of Nikias’ virtue that I believe Plato refutes in *Laches* and throughout his oeuvre: Nikias only pretend to virtue.

In the aftermath of Sicily, the people at Athens were stunned. Thucydides writes of the intensity of their denial in the face of surviving soldiers’ accounts, writing “[w]hen news reached Athens, for a long time people would not believe it, even though they were given precise information from the very soldiers who had been present at the event and had escaped; still they thought that this total destruction was something that could not possibly be true” (Thucydides VIII.1). As stated in the epigraph by trauma survivor, Jessica Stern, “Denial helps the bystander” to avoid the terrors we perpetuate and experience at institutional and individual levels, including the moral crimes committed and experienced by soldiers and those committed in the privacy of the home. She writes that it is “bad enough” to be the victim of terrifying trauma, “to be treated as an object in a perpetrator’s dream, rather than the subject of your own,” but that “when observers become complicit in the victim’s desire to forget, they become perpetrators too.” She goes on to explain that this is “why traumatized groups sometimes fare better than traumatized individuals. When the feeling of terror is shared, victims have a harder time forgetting what occurred or denying their terror. [...] Talking about what occurred with other survivors or witnesses [is] an essential part of recovery.” In place of the terror, rage, and pain of trauma, Stern explains that denial of trauma replaces these emotions “with free-floating shame. The victim will begin to wonder: What did I do? She will begin to believe: I must have done something bad. But the sensation of shame is shameful itself, so we dissociate that, too. In the end, a victim who has suffered the denial of others will come to see herself as a liar” (Stern 2010, 143-145). Both Jessica Stern and philosopher Bonnie Mann explain how this sense of shame is so easily converted into the infliction of trauma on others, or what Judith Herman as repetition compulsion (Stern 2010, Mann 2014, and Herman 1992/1997/2015, 41). As Mann writes, “[s]hame is one of those

experiences in which I lose my way, I am *exiled*' from our place in the world with others (Mann 2014, 127-128). And to reclaim this place in the world, she writes that masculinity converts shame into power; a sense of one's shame is deflected onto others to create a sense of power. Stern puts it this way, "[t]his is my hypothesis. Terrorizing others—including by raping them—is a way to reassert one's manhood in the face of extreme humiliation. Feeling terrorized is humiliating. Having been raped is humiliating. To be treated 'like a woman' is humiliating. [...] Rape is the perfect way to discharge one's shame. But like fear, shame is contagious. The shame and fear of the rapist now infect the victim, who, depending on his psychological and moral resilience, may discharge his fear and shame into a new victim, not necessarily through rape. [...] [S]hame is an important risk factor for savagery" (Stern 2010, 195). And the Athenians did precisely this, converting their shame into resolve to carry on with the war—both after their defeat at the Battle of Mantinea, which led to the slaughter and enslavement of the Melians and the desire to embark on the Sicilian Expedition, as well as the resolve of the Athenians to persist in the war after the harrowing fall at Sicily.

When the citizens could no longer deny the truth of the matter that they had no navy and were broke, they denied their own responsibility in launching the expedition and lashed out at the public figures, prophets, and soothsayers who had advocated it and who had "encouraged them to believe that they would conquer Sicily" (Thucydides VII.1). The Athenians experienced a profound feeling of loss, stress, fear, and anxiety. Not only did they as a state and community of individuals have to confront the incredible loss of irreplaceable lives, but also that they had lost their military position with the loss of their hoplite army, cavalry, navy, and finances. Despairing, anxious, and stressed, the Athenians "had little hope of being able to survive" thinking that the Spartans and their allies would immediately take the opportunity to attack the city proper by both land and sea. So, the Athenians resolved in their pit of anxiety to shore up their limited resources and "not give in;" with desperate efficiency, they sought to rebuild their navy, their finances, and their allegiances employing austerity measures however necessary. As I said, this is the historical significance of *Republic's* opening line, "I went down to the Piraeus yesterday with Glaucon" to see how the Athenians would manage with the Thracians to pull off the festival of the Thracian huntress, midwife, and desirous Bendis

(*Republic* 327a; Grube translation). How will they *become*, hunting together and giving birth to their new selves? Moreover, unlike the Athenian's sex-despising virgin Artemis, how might the Athenians manage to include an icon of hunting and midwifing women that retains her embodied, sexual desires and the desires of men for her? Mary Townsend explores this question in significant detail, arguing that Plato's *Republic* demonstrates the ambiguities of this question (Townsend 2017). Moreover, this question is pondered through a discussion of justice at midday with young men before the evening's more raucous festivities are to begin. And so, I place *Republic* at this period of Athenian denial and fearful resolve to rebuild their military and allegiances. What if the Greeks had paused at this moment to recollect their traumas and pursue the virtue of *becoming* good humans? The festival of Bendis would have been celebrated in the spring, corresponding to the period the city of Athens received word of the failure of the Sicilian Expedition and was experiencing their period of denial, anger, anxiety, and fearful decision to rebuild their navy and strengthen their remaining allegiances. Thucydides writes, "now that they were terrified, they were ready to put everything in order. Their decisions were carried out at once, and so summer came to an end" (Thucydides VIII.1). The war would rage on for another decade, with Alcibiades III returning to a hero's welcome and departing again in exile, with more wars soon to follow.

It is impossible for me to read Plato's philosophy of recollection without keeping in mind his recent history of incredible war trauma, the institutional betrayals of both Nikias and Alcibiades, and the profound denial of the people of Athens in the aftermath of the Sicilian Expedition. In what follows, I explain his understanding of the 'artful knowledge' of constantly *becoming* a good, thriving human and community in the aftermath of trauma along with the implication that such a process of becoming may avert the affliction of trauma and institutional denial in the future. This is done through his critical disagreement with the influential peace and gender politics of the comedian Aristophanes, who held that a two-state hegemony politics of peace (that is, Sparta and Athens should just stop fighting one another and coexist) and blamed the cause of war on the presence of *unmanliness* (*anandreia*, ἀνανδρεία) in the polis, lampooning Aspasia of Miletus and the very idea of women's rebellion throughout his works. Plato reveals the way in which they were *unmanly*, but not for the gendered reasons most assume. As

Cratylus intimates, one ought not be fooled by the false underside of language. They were *unmanly* because they remained shackled to their shame (cf. *deilia*, δειλία in *Cratylus* 415c), bound to their seats in the cave of denial (cf. *Republic* Book VII). This, it is implied, is precisely because the Athenians failed to pursue the virtue of the human that is in unity with the Good, the Just, and the Beautiful: the failed to undertake a process of recollection and rebirth in the aftermath of trauma, thwarting their *becoming* good, strong, and courageous human beings by ensnaring them in trauma's dialectic and repetition (Herman 1992/1997/2015).

Symposium: The *Symposium* is framed with Apollodorus responding to a question, omitted from the dialogue, of an unnamed businessman in the year 400BC, a year prior to Socrates' death. Apollodorus himself had been successful in business in his early adulthood until he left the money-making world to join Socrates in the philosophical hunt for and birth of the Good. This decision earned him a reputation among the business elite as being 'mad' or 'soft' (*malakos*, μαλακός) and always abusively criticizing (*kakegoreis*, κακηγορεῖς) himself and others (*Symposium* 173d-e). The question is likely asking Apollodorus what he knew of Socrates' role in his followers and former lover, Alcibiades III, sacrilegious private practice of the Eleusinian Mysteries¹⁵ and destruction of the *hermai* prior to the 415BC Sicilian Expedition; that is, details into whether and how Socrates may have corrupted the youth. Apollodorus remarks that he has been asked the question before and given it much thought, though he himself was too young to attend any drinking party prior to 415BC as he would have been roughly thirteen years old or younger at the time (*Symposium* 172a-173a). But Apollodorus decides to relate a story of the infamous drinking parties that he heard from a common man, Aristodemus, who had been philosophically hunting with Socrates at the time—reaffirming Socrates' own stated method that pursuing the Good should be done with common people, rather than restricted to the elite—and attended the 416BC celebration of Agathon's award-winning first tragedy as Socrates' uninvited guest (*Symposium* 173b; *Protagoras* 353a-b). The

¹⁵ The historical private practice of the Eleusinian Mysteries by Socrates' followers along with the themes of recollection and rebirth in the *Symposium* dialogue might be considered similar to the private communion celebrating themes of freedom in Jewish Passover traditions. Judith Shulevitz suggests that the Jewish Passover tradition is a modification of the Greek symposium literature (Shulevitz 2010).

dialogue de-sublimates Socrates' hunt for 'the Good Man,' or the becoming of good human subjectivity, through his seeming erotic interest in Agathon, literally translated as 'the Good Man' (*agathon*, ἀγαθόν). Further, at least two of those accused in 415BC for practicing the Eleusinian Mysteries, Phaedrus and Eryximachus, are present to provide speeches and hear Diotima's philosophy of resurrection or rebirth, though both pass out early in the dialogue—a reference to their untimely death or exile.¹⁶ Alcibiades, who would soon be accused of destroying the Hermes statues, drunkenly crashes the party after Socrates expresses of her wisdom: he stands out as a lesson and example of the extraordinary capacity for destruction if one does not heed the importance of pursuing the recollection of traumatic memories with others to give new meaning to them so as to give birth to the good self.

The doomed Eryximachus proposes to avoid the encouragement of drinking to excess and instead give speeches on love. Following his understanding of proper dialogue among 'real men' expressed by Socrates in *Protagoras* 347c-348a, he dismisses the flute-girl from their company to "play for herself or, if she prefers, for the women in the house" as she is not to be hunted this evening, but instead the men will hunt for the meaning of Love (*Symposium* 176e). Flute-girls in attendance at ancient symposium were, more often than not, musically trained prostitutes. *Republic* with *Symposium* clarifies the mistake of Eryximachus in excluding the flute-girl by virtue of her sex and her erotic profession. As Townsend notes, women are included in *Republic's kallipolis*, or the good albeit luxurious city, as erotic courtesan companions or *hetaeras* (ἑταῖραι) as well as hunters (*thereutai*, θηρευταί), artists, musicians, poets and creators, teachers, wet nurses (*titthon*, τιτθῶν), caretakers (*trophon*, τροφῶν), hair stylists, chefs, and farmers (*Rep.* II.373a-c). *Republic* Book V explicitly states that women are to be included among the hunting guardian class. Townsend writes that "[i]t's striking that hunting and women make an appearance in Book II as part of the same action; this is precisely the same conjunction that Socrates makes when in Book V he draws women into the guardian class and has them hunt along with the men: in both cases women and hunting arrive in the

¹⁶ See Nancy Evans "Diotima and Demeter as Mystagogues in Plato's Symposium" *Hypatia* 21.2 (2006): 1-27. Evans demonstrates Plato's usage of the subversive, female-centered Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter in Diotima's speech.

same breath” (Townsend 2017, 75). So, the feminist reader should be hesitant to read too much into Eryximachus’ dismissal of the flute girl, as his action is a mistake.

In fact, upon his entrance into *Symposium*, Alcibiades compares Socrates to the statues of Silenus playing the flute as well as the seductive flute-playing Marsyas (*Symposium* 215b-d). According to myth, the wise goddess Athena invented the flute and threw it away because playing it inhibited speech, or logic (*logos*, λόγος). Marsyas took the flute and dared to compete against Apollo, the musical twin of the huntress Artemis, and was flayed for his audacity. Silenus was the tutor to the wine god Dionysus, a relationship mirroring Socrates’ and Alcibiades’ early years together. Further, the reader may note, the statues of Silenus may also reference the accusations that Alcibiades destroyed the Hermes statues prior to sailing to Sicily to fight against the city of Selinus out of temptation for riches and empire. Further, as Socrates admits in *Menexenus*, he learned this skill of seductive oratory from the *hetaera* Aspasia of Miletus, a woman lambasted in ancient comedy for causing the Peloponnesian War through her private influence over her partner, Pericles, and his leadership of Athens.

Further, Socrates deliberately cloaks his own speech in a dialogue that he claims to have had with the, albeit likely fictionalized, priestess, Diotima of Mantinea. It is in this speech that we find Plato articulating the ‘artful knowledge’ that he has only alluded to, albeit while performing it, in previous dialogues. If we read her name in the register of puns to the ear of Plato’s audience, as we did of Socrates pursuing the meaning of the ‘Good Man’ Agathon, this is a dialogue with the memory of Mantinea that demonstrates something like “you conquer (*nikes*, νίκης; 2nd person present) the seers of bad destiny (*mantin*, μαντιν; noun accusative) when you respect (*timas*, τίμας; 2nd person present or imperfect) justice (*dio*, διο; cf. *Cratylus* 412d-413d)” (*Mantinikes Diotimas*; Μαντινικῆς Διοτίμας; *Symposium* 201d).¹⁷ Socrates speaks to the credibility of Diotima’s wisdom by implying she prevented war from breaking out in 440BC, which “put off the plague for ten years by telling the Athenians what sacrifices to make” (*Symposium* 201d; Nehamas

¹⁷ This is not a definitive translation of the pun, as one might also hear “victorious seers honor Zeus” among other translations. Evans translates her name as “Zeus Honor” (Evans 2006, 8), but taken with *Cratylus*, Socrates is likely speaking about justice. Nevertheless, meaning abounds with her name: Mantinea was a city that was known for the practice of *hoplomachia*, ‘*mantin*’ ‘*nikes*’ may also refer to Nicias’ folly of following the seers, and more. See also Laurence D. Cooper, *Eros in Plato, Rousseau, and Nietzsche: The Politics of Infinity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008): 63n14.

and Woodruff translation). Indeed, the Greek world on the precipice of war in 440BC when the Spartan war hawks sought to utilize the Samian revolt against Miletus to violate the Thirty Years Peace and reinitiate war with Athens. Conflict was only averted through the diplomatic efforts of the city of Corinth, who rallied allies of the Spartan League to reject escalation to war (Ste. Croix 1972, 200-219; cf. Plutarch *Pericles* 24.1-25.7 and 28.1-29.1). Corinth reminded Pericles of their efforts when he issued his modest Megarian Decree, a response to the Corinthians' and Sparta's own aggressive impious (*asebeia*, ἀσεβεία) cultivation of sacred land (*hiera orgas*, ἱερὰ ὀργὰς) of the Eleusinian fields between the cities of Megara and Athens. Moreover, Corinth was now motivated to return to war, rather than prevent it, for its former colony, Potidaea, sought to revolt from Athens. When Pericles' refused to rescind the modest Megarian decree and demand Sparta allow Athenians the freedom to enter its city, Sparta declared war (Ste. Croix 1972, 204-205, 212, 254-256, 259-260). Here is a wisdom that can lead traumatized men to desire to avoid war.

This was a wisdom lacking at the dissolution of the Thirty Years Peace in the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War in 432BC; it was lacking again in Alcibiades' violation of the Peace of Nikias with his charge into the Battle of Mantinea and again charging to Sicily. Both outbreaks of conflict were motivated in the desire for the glories of wealth and empire and neither could be prevented by men, such as Pericles and Nikias, motivated to secure peace between the two hegemonies. Only Diotima's wise philosophy of strong and 'manly' Love could create or sustain peace.

Socrates explains that Love is a pursuer of the Beautiful, rather than the Beautiful itself as Agathon believed. Love exists *between* ignorance and understanding, mortality and immortality, as a messenger shuttling between and binding the two (*Symposium* 201e-202e); Love is *becoming*. Love, or Eros (Cupid in Roman mythology), was conceived by the needful Penia (literally 'need' or 'poverty') and her intemperate cunning to have a child by the drunken, resourceful Poros¹⁸ (literally 'means' or

¹⁸ The historical Aspasia was lambasted in comedy and common gossip for seducing powerful men, and her own son by the sheep-farmer turned politician, Lysicles, was named Poristes ("provider"/"supplier") (Henry 1995, 43).

‘resources’) on the day of Aphrodite’s birth (*Symposium* 203b-e).¹⁹ Socrates explains that Eros inherits the poverty or need of his mother and from his father “he is a pursuer (ἐπιβουλος) of the beautiful (*kalois*, καλοῖς) and the good (*agathois*, ἀγαθοῖς), he is courageous (or ‘manly’ *andreios*, ἀνδρεῖος) and eager (*ites*, ἴτης) and intensely earnest (*syntonos*, σύντονος), an awesome hunter (*thereutes deinos*, θηρευτῆς δεινός), always weaving (*plekon*, πλέκων) machinations (*mechanas*, μηχανάς), and resourceful and desiring of practical wisdom (*phroneseos*, φρονήσεως), a lover of wisdom (i.e., a philosopher, *philosophon*, φιλοσοφῶν) through all of his meaningful life (*biou*, βίου as opposed to biological animal life, *zoe*, ζωή), an awesome sorcerer (*deinos goes*, δεινὸς γόης) and druggist (*pharmakeus*, φαρμακεύς) and expert orator (or a sophist, *sophistes*, σοφιστής)” (*Symposium* 203dc-d; my translation). So, Eros lacks Beauty and wisdom, but has the capabilities to pursue it.

The dialogue between Socrates and Diotima goes on to reveal that Eros “*must* be a lover of wisdom and, as such, is in between being wise and being ignorant,” and further, that Eros is desire that beautiful and good things “become his own” (*Symposium* 204b-d; Nehamas and Woodruff translation). And “who will that person be when the good has become theirs? [...] He will be of good spirit (*eudaimon*, εὐδαίμων; commonly translated as ‘happy’)” (*Symposium* 204e-205a; my translation). *Eudaimonia* is often translated as ‘happiness,’ however, it means something far closer to ‘earned secure attachment’ in psychology, which is the idea of developing or giving birth to an internal ‘parenting’ self to listen to and attend to the cries of the internal ‘infant’ or traumatized self. Being of good spirit, or being of *eudaimonia*, is not something we are born with, but something that we *become* to accompany and, in some sense, rule over our easily triggered traumatized selves. Plato goes on, concluding through the dialogue of Socrates and Diotima that this desire to be of good spirit is “common to all human beings and that everyone wants to have good things forever and ever [...] everyone is in love” (*Symposium* 205a; Nehamas and Woodruff translation). Yet, Diotima notes, we often reserve the term ‘*eros*’ for romantic lovers, not recognizing that the pursuit of

¹⁹ Today, we would say Penia raped Poros, but Plato was likely invoking the ancient stereotype of women’s intemperate promiscuity—a stereotype that was likely used to blame women for the abuse of men. See Townsend 2017.

eudaimonia takes many forms, some of which are better than others (i.e., the pursuit of philosophy is far more meaningful than the pursuit of wealth) (*Symposium* 205b-d with 208c-d).

Plato's Diotima then takes a moment to refute "a certain story [...] according to which lovers are those people who seek their other halves" (*Symposium* 205e). This is 'Origin of Love' myth as told by Aristophanes only a few speeches prior, and so this is Plato's moment to directly refute the 'soulmate' paradigm both at its romantic registers between individuals and its political registers between Sparta and Athens. It is in this refutation that Plato reveals the details of the unteachable 'artful knowledge' that might rescue traumatized subjectivity from the coping mechanisms of trauma (i.e., excessive eating, drinking, promiscuity, etc.) and the oscillations of trauma repetition (*Protagoras* 353c-356e; cf. Herman 1992/1997/2015). This artful knowledge entails a common pursuit of the good (*agathon*, ἀγαθόν), which is the birth of a good spirit (*eudaimonia*, εὐδαιμονία) in beauty (*kalon*, κάλον), through the process of recollecting memories and creating new meaning from them. Far from an abstract idea, this is a philosophy purposefully grounded in the traumatic memories of war, plague, institutional betrayal, and the communal denial of the Athenians that was caused and exacerbated by illogical notions of *andreia*. Further, this philosophy, Plato implies, is capable of preventing war and further trauma infliction (*Symposium* 201d). The figure of Alcibiades looms as a lesson to learn from; in this part of Diotima's speech, Socrates is, in part, explaining the dissolution of his erotic relationship with Alcibiades in the aftermath of the latter's insecurely greedy, headlong charge into Mantinea and continued spirals into the Sicilian Expedition. Alcibiades was not pursuing the good; he himself says he learned the lesson of Socratic philosophy all too late.

Contrary to Aristophanes' political vision that Sparta and Athens should overcome their divisions and reunify Greece with a peaceful two-state hegemony and his romantic vision that lovers are destined to a soulmate and must seek and reunify, implying that Alcibiades and Socrates ought to overcome their divisions and return to their erotic relationship, Diotima insists that lovers pursue the good (*Symposium* 205e). Rather than pursuing 'wholeness,' lovers are willing to excise the bad within themselves and between one another in pursuit of the good—much like the willingness of a soldier

(or the soldier's medic) to amputate a gangrene limb (*Symposium* 205e-206a). Aristophanes' philosophy is a stagnant, regressive account of re-unifying individual, romantic, communal, and political ruptures. This is a past-oriented *becoming* that is not a becoming at all but rather an attempt to re-find and re-become what one was. This is a desire common to traumatized subjectivities, but it is an impossibility. The self can never be the same after trauma, there is no going back to the pre-traumatized subjectivity and attempts to do so only thwart rebirth in the aftermath. There must be a rebirth, a becoming, into the future that can only be achieved through processing traumatic memories into new meaning. The self has *been* changed by trauma, it has experienced a kind of death, and thus the self must regenerate itself into something new.

Rather than pursuing *eudaimonia* through confused notions of masculinity and glory-seeking, Diotima says the only way to pursue and have the good is by giving birth in beauty: Lovers “pursue [*diokonton*, διωκόντων] the good” by “giving birth [*tokos*, τόκος] in beauty [*kalo*, καλῶ], whether in body [*soma*, σῶμα] or in soul [*psyche*, ψυχήν]. [...] [W]hat Love wants is not beauty [...] [but] reproduction and birth in beauty” (*Symposium* 206b and 206e; Nehamas and Woodruff translation). She explains that each of us has the potential to give birth to our new self, but that this birth is easiest and best if done in Beauty. Diotima says that this Beauty is often called Moira, or the Fates, and Eiluthia, which is the goddess who presides along with the Fates and Artemis at childbirth whose name literally means “contracting” (*eilei*, εἰλεῖ) “possessed or inspired woman” (*thuia*, θυια; Feminine declension). The three Fates that comprise the Moira, Clotho of the present, Lachesis of the past, and Atropos of the future, return in *Republic* where it is emphasized that while each of us may be fated to our circumstance, we are also responsible for who it is we *become*. We are responsible for overcoming the wounds of the past, and this is easier if done in circumstances of beauty. That is, if we are securely supported by loved ones, our community, and institutions, our freedom to *become* our best selves will be both possible and easy.

Diotima explains that in the absence of beauty, that is, if one is betrayed rather than supported by institutions and networks of care, the birth of the self after trauma will either painful or thwarted altogether. She explains, in the ugly absence of beauty:

They are foul faced and draw back in pain; they turn away and shrink back and do not reproduce, and because they hold on to what they carry inside them, the labor is painful. This is the source of the great excitement about beauty that comes to anyone who is pregnant and already teeming with life: beauty releases them from their great pain. (*Symposium* 206d-e; Nehamas and Woodruff translation)

It is profoundly difficult to give birth to the self in the aftermath of trauma, especially if the trauma is inflicted or continually perpetuated by institutional betrayal and communal denial, such as exists in racist, sexist, and classist violence and war. Victims may continue to oscillate between the dialectical symptoms of reclusive depression or violent outbursts (Herman 1992/1997/2015). Diotima continues, explaining that this rebirth, this becoming, is a continual process as “reproduction goes on forever; it is what mortals have in the place of immortality. A lover must desire immortality along with the good, if what we agreed earlier was right, that Love wants to possess the good forever. It follows from our argument that love must desire immortality,” and so the self must constantly give birth to itself (*Symposium* 206e-207a). Diotima explains that the cause of this erotic pursuit of the good and its birth in the soul, the pursuit of *becoming*, is inspired by our mortal nature, by our existential and physical death. She says, “mortal nature seeks so far as possible to live forever and be immortal [or undying *athanatos*, ἀθάνατος]” (*Symposium* 207d; Nehamas and Woodruff translation). She continues, explaining that “it is for the sake of immortality [or not dying, *athansias*, ἀθανασίας] that everything shows this zeal, which is Love” (*Symposium* 208b; Nehamas and Woodruff translation). The reader should be cautious here not to read a proto-Christian understanding of immortality here; rather, this is the immortality of the self in its constant overcoming throughout a lifetime of the existential death that is traumatic rupture. It is a self that is capable of reminding oneself in moments of terror or abandonment the beauty of their relations with others “whether they are together or apart” (*Symposium* 209c). It the constant birth of the self-soothing self.

Indeed, Diotima goes on to explain that, contrary to popular belief, each individual living being is not the same throughout a life. She says that immortality “is only possible through generation (*genesei*, γενέσει) that always leaves behind another new one (*heteron neon*, ἕτερον νέον) in place of the old” (*Symposium* 207d; my translation). And this includes the generation not only of human reproduction, but also

generation throughout an individual life. For contrary to what is commonly understood, that “each animal (*zoion*, ζῷον) is said to live and be the same self—such as it is said to be the same self from out of boyhood (*paidariou*, παιδαρίου; masculine) until he becomes an old man (*presbutes*, πρεβύτης; masculine),” indeed an individual undergoes change and ruptures (*Symposium* 207d-e; my translation). Not only are these changes physical, but “even including the way (*tropoi*, τρόποι) of his soul, his character (*ethe*, ἦθη), opinions, desires (*epithumiai*, ἐπιθυμίας), his pleasures (*hedonai*, ἡδοναί), pains, fears, each of them never remain in each the same, but rather on the one hand becoming, on the other hand being destroyed” (*Symposium* 207e; my translation). As we’ve discussed, survivors are changed by their trauma and the narrative of their lives are deeply disrupted (Stern 2010, 273-274). Trauma interrupts the narrative of the self that is understood to sustain an individual throughout a life. As contemporary psychological research has demonstrated, the experience of trauma significantly effects the retrieval and emotional response to memories. Trauma makes its imprint on us and scatters the memories in our neurological aviary (*Theaetetus* 190e-200d). In the same breath as her recognition of rupture and change in an individual self, Diotima notes “[s]tranger still than this is that even knowledge (*epistemai*, ἐπιστήμαι) becomes and is being destroyed in us and we are never the same nor our knowledge, but that each piece of knowledge has the same [fate as the human in its constant becoming and destruction]” (*Symposium* 208a; my translation). She then explains that it is precisely for this reason that ‘studying’ or ‘attentive care’ (*meletan*, μελετᾶν) exists. “For forgetting or escaping notice (*lethe*, λήθη) is the exodus of the knowledge (*epistemes*, ἐπιστήμης); attentive care or study (*meletan*, μελετᾶν) produces fresh knowledge back and over the retreating memory (*mnemen*, μνήμην), saving the knowledge inasmuch as it is to be expected to be the same” (*Symposium* 207d-208a; my translation). Thus, to live, it is necessary to reproduce the self throughout a lifetime because we are not the same throughout it, but instead we experience destructive interruptions from which we must grow. The only way to do this is through the attentive care of recollecting the memories of our trauma to preserve and create new knowledge so that the self might live rather than existentially perish. Like physical birth, this regeneration of self cannot be taught. It can only be undertaken, and it is best when undertaken among the beautiful support of others.

Trauma interrupts life and memory; and the temptation to forget traumatic memories is facilitated not only neurobiologically, but also the denial of bystanders, the community, and institutional betrayal. Plato's philosophy here is nested in the very real, political problem of the Athenians, especially Alcibiades, neglecting to recollect the traumas of war as they returned to war in the Battle of Mantinea and the Sicilian Expedition as well as the communal denials of the destruction in the aftermath. Not only does this philosophy respond to the willingness to forget that is denial, but it also offers survivors who *cannot* forget the importance of the work to transform traumatic memory into new knowledge: of giving birth to the self in the aftermath of trauma.

Diotima then goes on to explain the series of stages of *becoming* of the soul reminiscent of Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development in her Ladder of Love (*Symposium* 209c-210e; cf. Erikson 1950 and 1982). The Ladder of Love provides a normative progression of the birth of the soul throughout a lifetime. It progresses from the love of an individual body, such as the trust established between an infant and a mother or the love between two young first lovers (cf. Erikson's 'Trust v. Mistrust' stage repeated again in the young adult's 'Intimacy v. Isolation' stage); to the love of multiple bodies, such as the toddler's autonomous love of individuals beyond the mother (cf. Erikson's 'Autonomy v. Shame' stage) or a young lover discovering the beauty of multiple bodies beyond their first love; to the love of the souls in others, such as the young child's initiative to gain the recognition of others and the internalization of the social (cf. Erikson's 'Initiative v. Guilt' stage) or the recognition of the inner beauty of others despite their appearances; to the love of customs, or the child's attempt to demonstrate competency in the social world (cf. Erikson's 'Industry v. Inferiority' stage) or the lover's recognition that laws, ethics, or institutional requirements may trump their particular erotic desires (i.e., pedophilia, sexual harassment, sexual assault, etc.); to the love of knowledge, such as the teenager's earnest fidelity to a political cause based in their research (cf. Erikson's 'Ego Identity v. Role Confusion') or the lover's recognition through research that there may be better practices possible than the ones available through customs (i.e., that our current laws and institutions are inadequate for grappling with the problem of sexual violence); and finally to the love of wisdom itself, such as the adult's desire to become a meaningful member of society or the lover's recognition that

the pursuit of becoming their best self through their engagement with others in creating the best community is the highest achievement (cf. Erikson's 'Generation v. Stagnation' and 'Ego Identity v. Despair' stages; *Symposium* 209c-210e). Those who have "been thus far guided in matters of Love, who [have] beheld beautiful things in the right order and correctly, [are] coming now to the goal of Loving: all of a sudden he will catch sight of something wonderfully beautiful in its nature; that, Socrates, is the reason for all his earlier labors" (*Symposium* 210e-211a; Nehamas and Woodruff translation). And this wisdom of Love that the individual will catch glimpse of is universally beautiful, never waxing or waning nor relative, but Beauty in itself that stands as a goal for us all to aim (*Symposium* 211a-d). Diotima concludes, "only then will it become possible for him to give birth not to images of virtue (because he's in touch with no images), but to true virtue (because he is in touch with true Beauty). The love of the gods belongs to anyone who has given birth to true virtue and nourished it, and if any human being could become immortal, it would be he" (*Symposium* 212a-b; Nehamas and Woodruff translation). So, lovers pursue the good in common with others, and this love of the good is *becoming* one's best self with the beautiful support of others, which is motivated by our attempt to survive our own death—our own traumatic existential death as well as our inevitable physical death—that involves a process of attending to traumatic memories to create new meaning in relation to others (*Symposium* 208a).

Upon understanding this, Socrates concludes to his audience that he has made it his mission "to persuade others that human nature (*anthropeia phusei*, ἀνθρωπεΐα φύσει) can find no better workmate for acquiring this [birth of virtue] than Love" (*Symposium* 212b; Nehamas and Woodruff translation). Socrates then praises the "strength (*dynamis*, δύναμις) and 'manliness'²⁰ (*andreian*, ἀνδρεία) of Love" (*Symposium* 212b; my translation). True strength and courage, typically associated to be 'manly' values, are thus revalued into the virtues appropriate for the feminine activity of birth to explain the *becoming* of the human soul.

Socrates' reenactment of the Eleusinian Mysteries through the wise philosophy of Diotima receives a great round of applause, during which the drunken Alcibiades and his

²⁰ I place manliness in quotations because the Greek is, I think purposefully, in a feminine in declension here with no clear grammatical need.

entourage, including a flute-girl, demands admittance to the gathering. As discussed previously, a number of references are made in the text to Alcibiades' destruction of the hermai, which became conflated with the accusations of the Socratics' practicing of the Eleusinian Mysteries, as well as the Sicilian Expedition (in particular, his ironic claim that he never retreated from a battle he started—he did exactly this at Sicily; cf. *Symposium* 217c). But importantly, Alcibiades serves as a lesson of the miscarriage of the birth of the new soul: he is literally too late to the party in *Symposium* to hear Socrates' wise words and it was too late in his own historical life at this moment to integrate the lessons therein. As a warning to Agathon, the 'Good Man', Alcibiades counsels him not to let Socrates fool him into thinking he himself is the beloved, as the roles will turn and the 'Good Man' will come to love Socrates. Socrates' name is literally translated 'Thy Strength.' So, the rather than 'Thy Strength' loving the 'Good man', the 'Good Man' will come to love 'Thy Strength' of Love and the process of undertaking the recollective birth of the soul towards the future. Conclusively, Alcibiades advises 'the Good Man': to "Remember our misfortunes, be guardedly discreet (*eulabhtenai*, εὐλαβηθῆναι): don't wait like the fool in the proverb" of the Iliad XVI.32, which states "once a thing has been done, a fool sees it," "to learn your lesson from your own misfortune" (*Symposium* 222b-c; my translation). Alcibiades' own failure to cultivate this love brought his misguided attempt to seek glory through wealth and empire; he was misguided by the repetitions of his own trauma. With the end of Alcibiades' speech, most of the party gets drunk. This is a performance of the fall of Alcibiades, Phaedrus, Eryximachus and the others' execution or exile in 415BC and thereafter. Only Agathon, Aristophanes, and Socrates remain conscious (or alive) at the end of the dialogues, clearly referencing the present absences felt by the exile and execution of their comrades. Indeed, Socrates attempts to dialogue with Agathon and Aristophanes about joining him on his mission to bring together drama and comedy into Socratic irony to help Athens overcome its trauma. However, neither Agathon nor Aristophanes live up to this: both fall asleep. But Socrates continues with his day without rest, fighting the good fight for another day (*Symposium* 223d).

The *Symposium* recollects the tragic errors of these men while offering guidance on the path to 'ascend' to the wisdom of self-love that might have saved them—not only

them from themselves, but also from the violence of trauma's repetition within a theocratic democracy at war. The *Symposium's* ladder of love provides an ironic path to ascend towards the 'eternal' via the loving process of giving birth to a good spirit to accompany oneself after trauma—a courageous mimicry of the 'ascent' celebrated in the Eleusinian Mysteries. It is critical of the common and confused attempts to seek eternal life: through the religious rites of Eleusinian Mysteries, through glorious death in battle, or through other means to numb the pain, like sex, drugs, and ancient rock and roll (flute-playing) at the *symposia*. Van der Kolk notes that drug abuse has been utilized since the times of the ancient Greeks to numb pain. Present statistics estimate that 1 in 3 to 1 in 2 severely traumatized people will develop substance abuse problems to numb the pain of their past (van der Kolk 2015, 329). It is lovingly critical of Alcibiades, who was tragically too late to the party on self-love, and an ode to Laches and others who lost their lives after the breakdown of the Peace of Nicias with the Battle of Mantinea (418BC) and the subsequent disaster at Sicily (415BC). The wisdom of women, the trauma of the Battle of Mantinea and the impending Sicilian Expedition, and the eros of philosophy haunts the narrative through the figure of Diotima of Mantinea.

Republic: If *Symposium* brings us up to the heights of overcoming trauma and the apex of the Athenian's decision to follow Alcibiades into the Sicilian Expedition out of motivation for wealth and empire, the *Republic* brings us down to the denials of the Athenians in the aftermath and their fear the Spartans would attack the Piraeus. This is done in an attempt to further communicate the philosophy of overcoming trauma and its individual and communal requirements. That is, the lover of wisdom is compelled to return to the cave out of their love for others based in their love of self: my very sense of self is dependent on the recognition of others. This love brings Socrates to rescue both Alcibiades III and Laches in retreat from doomed battles, Potidaea and Delium respectfully, as well as his willingness to pursue the good with others and offer support in their birthing of their souls in the aftermath of trauma. Judith Herman writes that this need of survivors of trauma to connect with and create a community of other survivors that work to create a new, better world is indicative of her third stage of trauma recovery (Herman 1992/1997/2015).

Republic should be properly translated as “On Citizenship” (*Politeia*, Πολιτεία). And, as I’ve discussed, I place the dialogue as likely occurring in 413/412BC in response to the denials of Athens and their phobic response to rebuild their military capabilities. It offers a contrast to what the Athenians’ might have done: rather than pursue or guard empire, the Athenians could and should have pursued and guarded the process of overcoming trauma, of *becoming* good. Rather than pursue the Good through the question of Love and Beauty, as *Symposium* offers, *Republic* pursues the Good through the question of Justice. The reader will remember, though, that Socrates understands the Good, the Beautiful, and the Just to be united, along with the philosophy of the human, or *andreia*. So, *Republic* carries the ‘eroticism’ of philosophy expressed in *Symposium* while contemplating it in relation to the concept of justice.

The dialogue is framed with Socrates’ going down to the Piraeus with Glaucon to observe how the Athenian citizens and Thracian metics of Athens would handle the festival of the Thracian huntress and midwife, Bendis (cf. Oliver 2016, 163). Bendis is another Artemis figure, though an erotic, sexual goddess in contrast to her virginal Athenian counterpart. As Townsend explains, “while there are certainly rituals and goddesses associated with the narrative arc of women’s life, as articulated by stages of embodiment from virgin to wife to mother, in another sense the goddesses represent not so much stages as alternatives” (Townsend 2017, 109). Townsend offers the example of Athena, who “hardly represents an inevitable moment in the life of any given woman, but rather a special sort of mantle, a way of being, and a specifically female one” (Townsend 2017, 109). The priestess of Athena was “one of the most important religious figures in the city,” even if she did not enjoy direct political power, her cultural power was significant. Further, Townsend notes that women would decide to switch between modes of being, providing the example of a weaver deciding to leave the mode of Athena for the mode of Aphrodite and sex work: the gods and goddesses offer different possible paths of human *becoming*. So, the introduction of the foreign Bendis to Athens offers an alternative to women who would follow Artemis in the hunt and birth of the Good while maintaining the eroticism of sexual relations without shunning sex altogether out of outrage of men’s rape of women: that is, how do we bring men and women together in a common pursuit of the good without shunning sexual eroticism without condoning rape?

It is at this register, too, that I read Plato's roles in the city: the rulers, guardians, and the producers are modes of life of an individual. I agree with Townsend that *Republic* explores the possibility and requirements of including women in the hunt for the Good; rather than rehashing the 'woman problem' in *Republic*, as so many have done, I will point the reader to her work.²¹ Instead of dissecting Book V, my focus for the remainder of this section will be on the continuation of Plato's philosophy of overcoming the trauma and existential death of the cave to give birth to a new self. I first briefly discuss Plato's 'tripartite soul' and education of the courageous warriors in relation to our discussion of trauma in the previous chapter. I then turn my attention to focus on the oft-overlooked Myth of Er in Book X.

In the books preceding the 'woman problem' of *Republic* Book V, Plato offers through the figure of Socrates a discussion of the 'tripartite soul' and the method of educating the warriors of the individual soul and the social city. I will not dwell long unpacking the 'tripartite soul' and the education of the warriors, as these are familiar and often taught concepts in today's introductory Philosophy and Political Science classrooms. Plato suggests the structure of the individual soul and the social city are similar such that to better understand the virtue of an individual soul one might first study the virtue of the social city; included in this is the admission the goodness or badness of a social city will greatly influence or determine the goodness or badness of an individual living within it. The 'tripartite soul' suggests that the individual soul is comprised of an appetitive piece, a spirited piece, and a logical piece that correspond to the virtues of temperance (*sophrosune*, σωφροσύνη), courage (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία), and wisdom (*sophia*, σοφία). Plato suggests these pieces of the individual soul correspond to social roles of money-making (as well as human reproduction), warriors, and kings.

I suggest that we read the 'tripartite soul' as an ancient recognition of the fragmentation between the emotional and rational pieces of our soul (what today we call the limbic system and prefrontal cortex) and the necessity to courageously bring them into relation. The 'tripartite soul' bears resemblance to contemporary Internal Family Systems theory (IFS), which suggests:

²¹ I will note here my disagreement with Townsend's interpretation of the philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, whose philosophy I explore in the next chapter.

Trauma injects parts [of the self] with beliefs and emotions that hijack them out of their natural valuable state. For example, we all have parts that are childlike and fun. When we are abused, these are the parts that re-hurt the most, and they become frozen, carrying the pain, terror, and betrayal of abuse. This burden makes them toxic—parts of ourselves that we need to deny at all costs. Because they are locked away inside, IFS calls them the *exiles*. [...] Each split-off part holds different memories, beliefs, and physical sensations; some hold the shame, others the rage, some the pleasure and excitement, another the intense loneliness of the abject compliance. These are all aspects of the abuse experience. The critical insight is that all these parts have a function: to protect the self from feeling the full terror of annihilation. (van der Kolk 2014, 281-282)

Plato seems to offer an ancient recognition of this splitting and hyper-defensive mechanism resulting from trauma. And his interest is to bring the fragmented, hyper-defensive pieces into harmony with one another, rather than alienated in dangerous dissociation. In the previous chapter, we discussed contemporary neuroscientific evidence that underscores the importance of physical movement and musical rhythms for overcoming trauma. Plato similarly suggests that an education in physical movement and music help to nourish the courageous warriors, better enabling them not only to endure terrifying experiences in battle but also to battle the fearful aporias in the aftermath of the living death of traumatic experience.

In Book X, Plato offers the Myth of Er to capture the importance of recollecting the pieces of oneself, of recollecting past traumatic memory, in the aftermath of traumatic rupture. The myth tells the tale of a soldier badly wounded in battle who was thought to be dead and who came back to life on his own funeral pyre just in time before it was lit. Er is offered as a messenger from the afterlife, returned back to life to teach us mere mortals the importance of the recollection in one's rebirth after traumatic death. Socrates deliberately chooses to tell this myth as a lesson of the importance of recollection instead of the myth that would be more familiar to his ancient audience, the tales of Odysseus to Alcinous regaling a series of flashbacks of the former's epic journey home from Troy (*Rep.* 614b).²² Instead, he tells the story of a Pamphylian man, Er, to demonstrate the “prizes, wages, and gifts” that await just and unjust individuals after the death of trauma (*Rep.* 613e-614b).

²² See Alexander Pope's translation and commentary of Homer's *Odyssey*, particularly his note on V.355.

The name ‘Er’ is another purposeful play on words that brings together the love or ‘eros’ of *Symposium* with courage. Commonly translated as ‘Er,’ the man’s name is ‘Ἡρός’ (*Eros*) in the ancient Greek. This would sound a lot like the word ‘Eros’ (Ἔρωσ) to the Greek ear. It might also sound like ‘Ares’ or ‘arren’ (*Ares* and *arren*, Ἄρης and ἄρρεν), the etymological root of *andreia* identified in *Cratylus*. It may also sound like ‘eirein’ for ‘to speak,’ which *Cratylus* also identifies as the root of “Hermes.” And, to get the word ‘Er,’ one only need drop the aspirated ‘h’ from either the word ‘hero’ (*heros*, ἦρωσ), the ancient signifier for the ultimate height of ancient manly courage, or from the messenger and language god ‘Hermes’ (*Hermes*, Ἑρμῆς). Remember, *Symposium*’s Diotima was clear that Eros was a messenger god, and courageous love continues to be the messenger in the Myth of Er. Love is the messenger god of the in-between, caring for the pieces of ourselves shackled by past traumatic memory and denial as we traverse into the life after trauma’s death. This traversing journey, as the myth suggests, entails a process of forgetting. And we would do best to heed the lesson of recollection from Er in order to best traverse ourselves the forgetting of becoming in the aftermath of trauma.

Socrates explains that, in his death, Eros discovered a place where souls come together from earth to recollect their sufferings and from heaven to recall the wonderful things they had experienced there. The description remarkably resembles a therapy group for victims and survivors, from which Socrates moves to discuss the just appropriation punishment for wrong-doing. The souls are then accompanied by the three Moira (Fates), the daughters of Necessity who accompany individuals at birth. These are the same Fates that Socrates explains Beauty is often called in *Symposium*, that is, the dead souls are accompanied by Beauty or the Moira in their process of reincarnation (*Rep.* 10.617c-d; cf. *Symposium* 206d). The souls must first go to Lachesis, the Fate of the past, who relays the following message:

‘Ephemeral souls, this is the beginning of another cycle that will end in death. Your daemon or guardian spirit (*daimon*, δαίμων) will not be assigned to you by lot (*lexetai*, λήξεται); you will choose him. The one who has the first lot will be the first to choose a life to which he will then be bound by necessity. Virtue knows no master; each will possess it to a greater or less degree, depending on whether he values or disdains it. The responsibility lies with the one who makes the choice; the god has none.’ (*Rep.* 10.617d-e; Grube translation)

In this, the Fate of the past informs the souls who have died that their future lot in life is not determined by the fate of destiny. Instead, dead souls are responsible for choosing their life in the aftermath of trauma. Only the individual has the responsibility to choose and bring their good spirit, their *eudaimonia*. Different models of physical beings and their general life trajectories are presented for the dead souls to choose from, “but the arrangement of the soul was not included in the model because the soul is inevitably altered by the different lives it chooses. But all the other things were there, mixed with each other and with wealth, poverty, sickness, health, and the states intermediate to them” (*Rep.* 10.618b). That is, the soul is not a static entity that persists unchanged through the processes of rebirth and the circumstances of their total concrete situation, as Beauvoir would say. Rather, our subjectivities are transformed by our situation and our relations with others. In the aftermath of trauma, the dead soul “faces the greatest danger of all” in choosing how they will live (*Rep.* 618b). Socrates advises that the pursuit of philosophy will best aid the dead soul in its choices.

Socrates tells Glaucon, because the stakes in the aftermath of death (or trauma) are so high:

... each of us must neglect all other subjects and be most concerned to seek out [*zetetes*, ζητητής] and learn [*mathemtes*, μαθημής] those things that will enable him to distinguish the good life [*chreston*, χρηστόν] from the bad [*poneron*, πονηρόν; also oppressed, painful, grievous, cowardly, or base] and always to make the best choice possible in every possible situation. He should think over all the things we have mentioned and how they jointly and severally determine what the virtuous life is like. That way he will know what the good and bad effects of beauty are when it is mixed with wealth, poverty, and a particular state of the soul. He will know the effects of high or low birth, private life or ruling office, physical strength or weakness, ease or difficulty in learning, and all the things that are either naturally part of the soul or are acquired, and he will know what they achieve when mixed with one another. And from all this he will be able, by considering the nature of the soul, to reason out which life is better and which worse and to choose accordingly, calling a life worse if it leads the soul to become more unjust, better if it leads the soul to become more just, and ignoring everything else: We have seen that this is the best way to choose, whether in life or death. Hence, we must go down to Hades holding with adamant determination to the belief that this is so, lest we be dazzled there by wealth and other such evils, rush into a tyranny or some other similar course of action, do irreparable evils, and suffer even worse ones. And we must always know how to choose the mean (*mesos*, μέσος) in such lives and how to avoid either of the extremes, as far as possible, both in this life and in all those beyond it. This is the

way that a human being becomes [blessed with a good spirit (*eudaimonestatos*, εὐδαιμονέστατος)]” (*Rep.* 618b-619b; Grube translation with my emendation)

An example is then made of an individual who had been privileged in their previous life, living virtuously simply by habit rather than philosophy, and chose to become a tyrant in the aftermath of their death. When the life of tyranny concluded in disaster, the individual shirked their own responsibility, ignoring the words of Lachesis, and “blamed chance, daemons, [and] guardian spirits, and everything else for these evils but himself” (*Rep.* 10.619c-d). It is observed that most who chose the life of tyranny “had come down from heaven and who were untrained in suffering as a result. The majority of those who had come up from the earth, on the other hand, having suffered themselves and seen others suffer, were in no rush to make their choices” (*Rep.* 10.619d). That is, those who have suffered traumas in life have a better insight into how the individual and, perhaps, society might *become* good. Bonnie Burstow and feminist standpoint theory supports this epistemological point: those who have been traumatized have the benefit of seeing the world without rose colored glasses, and thus might have better insight into what ought to be avoided and gained, what ought to be feared and hoped (Burstow 2003; cf. *Laches*). Socrates concludes that “if someone pursues philosophy in a sound manner” such as the manner prescribed by Diotima in *Symposium* and if they have modest luck in their circumstance, then they will have a good spirit (*eudaimoneo*, εὐδαιμονέω) and their journey overcoming their next death will be easier (*Rep.* 10.619d-e).

Socrates then describes the various lives the different souls chose and the process of their becoming. These choices transgress gender and species boundaries, such as the athletic follower of Artemis, Atalanta, choosing to become a man, while other souls changed from animals to humans and vice versa (*Rep.* 10.620d). After each soul had chosen their lives, they went forward to Lachesis in the order of their choosing and she “assigned to each the daemon it had chosen as a guardian of its life and fulfiller of its choice” (*Rep.* 10.620d). From there, the soul’s chosen daemon led the soul “under the hand of Clotho,” the fate of the present, while she spun the spindle of life to “confirm the fate or destiny [*moiran*, μοῖραν] *that the lottery and its own choice had given it*” (*Rep.* 10.620d-e; Grube translation with my emendation and emphasis). Again, even in the confirmation of the soul’s *fate* or *destiny* it is emphasized that this destiny is one that is

chosen in relation to circumstance: circumstance alone does not determine one's destiny. From Clotho, the daemon leads the soul "to the spinning of Atropos," the fate of the future, "to make what had been spun irreversible" as there is no going back in time from our choices (*Rep.* 10.620d; Grube translation). We can only go forward. Iterating this, Socrates says that from the irreversibility of their choices, the souls "without turning around [...] went from there under the throne of Necessity" (*Rep.* 10.620e; Grube translation). But this necessary path forward includes traveling "to the Plain of Forgetfulness [*tes Lethes pedion*, τῆς Λήθης πεδίων] in burning, choking, terrible heat, for it was empty of trees and earthly vegetation. And there, beside the River of Unheeding [or Uncaring; *Ameleta potamon*, Ἀμέλητα ποταμόν], whose water no vessel can hold, they camped, for night was coming on" (*Rep.* 10.621a; Grube translation). The reader will note that the ancient Greek word used for 'Unheeding,' '*Ameleta*' is the precise antonym of Diotima's 'study' or 'care' of retreating trauma memories (*Symposium* 207d-208a). Socrates explains that each of the souls, except Er, "had to drink a certain measure of this water" from the River of Unheeding, but:

...those who weren't saved by reason drank more than that, and as each of them drank, he forgot everything and went to sleep. But around midnight there was a clap of thunder and an earthquake, and they were suddenly carried away from there, this way and that, up to their births (*genesin*, γένεσιν), like shooting stars. Er himself was forbidden to drink from the water. All the same, he didn't know how he had come back to his body, except that in waking up suddenly he saw himself lying on the pyre at dawn. (*Rep.* 621a-b)

Er did not drink from the river, because he was instructed to be a messenger of what happened in the afterlife of trauma. Socrates then concludes the moral of the Myth of Er to Glaucon, advising him that Er's story "would save us" in the aftermath of trauma to "make a good crossing of the River of Forgetfulness [*Lethes potamon*, τῆς Λήθης ποταμόν]" (*Rep.* 621b-c). Ironically, Socrates has himself 'forgotten' that it was the Plain of Forgetfulness and the River of Unheeding, but the point stands. If one undertakes the process of recollection in giving birth to the soul, the soul "wouldn't be defiled" but be believed to be "immortal" in the aftermath of trauma "and able to endure every evil and every good, and we'll always hold to the upward path, practicing justice with reason in every way. *That way we'll be friends both to ourselves and the gods while we remain here on earth and afterwards*—like victors in the games who go around collecting their

prizes—we'll receive our rewards. Hence, both in this life and on the thousand-year journey we've described we'll do well [*eu, εὖ*]" (*Rep.* 10.620d-621b; Grube translation).

The Myth of Er and the River of Unheeding/Forgetfulness reinforce the interpretation that Plato offers a philosophy of overcoming trauma. It requires the care to recollect the memories that have become stamped into our bodies and flutter in our neurological aviary (*Theaetetus* 190e-200d) as a strong and courageous Love of giving birth to the self. We learn that our very notion of self is ambiguously tied to our community, its mores, institutions, history, myths, and imagination. And this love produces a duty, an ethical compulsion, not only to overcome trauma as an individual in relation to others but also to be the helpful other, the midwife, to individuals who have been traumatized. It is to work to create a situation of Beauty, a safe, secure space for the self and others to commonly hunt and give birth to our best selves and best community. In this process, we would do best to recollect traumatic memories and process them into new knowledge as much as possible, so we might better survive the disorientation of trauma's infliction *as well as* the forgetting of self that Plato suggests is inevitably entailed in *becoming*. Plato's philosophy of overcoming is based in a 'strong' and 'manly' Love modeled after the strength and courage of women in childbirth and the reincarnation story of Persephone rather than the masculine explosive strengths and skills Glaucon assumes (see Book V.451e; Townsend 2017, 37). This strength and 'manliness' of women to guardedly pursue and give birth to the good through recollection to become philosopher queens is further emphasized in Plato's *Menexenus* through Aspasia of Miletus's delivery of a proper funeral oration. Socrates says that she was his own teacher of oratory and that she likely wrote or significantly contributed to Pericles' famous funeral oration. The difference between Aspasia's speech as delivered by Socrates and the historical speech of Pericles is that Aspasia provides a far more thorough accounting of the history of the Greeks at war, acknowledges the city-state's culpability in creating such trauma, while critically revising Pericles' harsh prescriptions of gender roles—namely, that the courage of women is to be least talked about—into a more sex-egalitarian arrangement. Indeed, it is implied, the Greeks may have fared better had Aspasia been provided the opportunity to continue to lead the democracy of Athens.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced Plato's critical discussion of 'manliness' to reveal his critique of the dominating values and denial of *philonikian* 'manliness' and his philosophy of human overcoming in the aftermath of trauma throughout several of his dialogues. This interpretation has largely been lost to the history of philosophy in part by the lasting influence of Aristotle's denial-laden rebuttal to the argument and his reification of the gendering of *andreia*. For Aristotle, one's sex absolutely determines one's 'manliness': men are to rule and women are to obey based in his suspect biological teleology (*Politics* I.2.1252a25-30, I.12.1259b10-1260a19-24, I.13.1259b35-37, II.3.1261b34-36, III.4.1277b20-23, VIII.4.1338b30; see also *Generation of Animals*, I.20.729a9-11 and IV.1.766a20-30; cf. *Poetics*, 15.1454a23 as well as *NE* III.6.1115aa10-7.1116a15). In fact, Aristotle woefully misinterprets Plato's philosophy that women should be held in common, that is, that they should be part of the community of hunters pursuing and giving birth to virtue, to enable him to discuss political-economy and the tragedy of the commons (*Politics* II.3.1261b34-36). Elshtain helps to explain Aristotle's obfuscation of Plato's argument as "a clue that he is fending off some idea, fear, or desire he finds incompatible whether with his world view of himself, his visions for society, or his understanding of the world" (Elshtain 1981, 19). In other words, Aristotle presents a philosophy of denial. There is something in Plato's philosophy that terrifies Aristotle: namely, that 'manliness' is not what it is assumed to be and that women, too, can be 'manly' warriors and ought to rule. Plato's Academy presented a space, an outdoor garden, to support both men and women in their voluntary, joint and loving pursuit of the good life.

Aristotle's same fear and denial runs throughout the history of philosophy. If the reader will permit the nearly two-and-a-half millennia of time travel, I find this thematized in the feminist philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir. Largely written in the aftermath of World War II, Beauvoir's twentieth-century French feminist existentialist philosophy both suggests denial is central to patriarchal ontology and its resulting ethics and political economy. She also importantly provides tools for thinking the problem of 'forgetting' trauma. Patriarchy and its values of domination or *philonike* depend upon the forgetful denial of the ambiguity of human subjectivity, bifurcating them with gendered

destinies and later further dividing the human by constructions of race. But overcoming trauma also entails a kind of ‘forgetting.’ As we have discussed in this chapter, Plato’s Myth of Er suggests that forgetting is a necessary part of the structure of becoming in the aftermath of trauma, teaching us that we would do best to recollect and care for the lessons of our past as best we can as we traverse into our new life after trauma’s death. Beauvoir provides a philosophy of freedom that further delineates the difference between the ‘forgetting’ involved in the repetitions of denial and the ‘forgetting’ involved in the repetitions of overcoming. In particular, the latter entails we sacrifice the material and ontological comfort of patriarchy’s denial and accompanying all-too-certain future-eclipsing gendered destinies.

CHAPTER IV
BEYOND SURVIVAL:
BEAUVOIR’S CRITIQUE OF PATRIARCHY’S DENIAL AND HER PHILOSOPHY
OF FREEDOM’S FORGETTING

Think of how much more time and energy we would have to focus on other things
that matter if we weren’t so busy surviving.
—Rebecca Solnit

Introduction

The obstacles survivors face in the aftermath of trauma often circle around capacities of *forgetting*. As we have discussed, while denial seeks to forget the past and charge forward toward the future, the immemorialized past lingers in our embodied emotional memory. The alienating fragmentation of denial leaves survivors caught in the ‘dialectic of trauma,’ alienated from their own selves and from others in their community. The denial of institutions or bystanders magnifies survivors’ own desire to forget, making such institutions and bystanders complicit perpetrators of the harm and the pain of the memory comes to be replaced by “free-floating shame” (Stern 2010, 144-145). This increases the susceptibility of survivors to be triggered and re-live their past trauma in the present, exponentially increasing their potential to commit self-harm, be revictimized, or perpetrate harm against others through violent abuse or neglect. Survivors become frozen in time, shackled in the present by the immemorialized past. This impedes their ability to *live* their lives, to grow and become who they are.

I’ve witnessed this operation of denial first hand in my role as an instructor of feminist and decolonial philosophy. I regularly receive disclosures of trauma, particularly traumas of sexual violence, from students who find that they are unable to focus on and complete their assignments. The disclosures tend to concentrate in courses that center critical curriculum on gender, sex, race, and class.¹ The testimonials of the student-

¹ I clarify to students whether I am bound by any unethical institutional ‘compelled disclosure’ (i.e., ‘required reporting’) statuses, what that means, and how it might be navigated. It is my hope that university reporting policy changes shifting from blanket ‘compelled disclosure’ (i.e., ‘required reporting’) policies to ‘survivor-directed’ policies, such as those recently implemented by the University of Oregon, will minimize the institutional harm to students and maximize their safety and success in their learning environment. See Kathryn J. Holland, Lilia M. Cortina, and Jennifer J. Freyd, “Compelled Disclosure of

survivors I work with resemble those provided by psychiatrists van der Kolk and Herman and the numerous campus survivors of sexual violence featured in the 2015 documentary, *The Hunting Ground*. Often tearfully, student-survivors disclose both their trauma experience and their difficulty in its aftermath: depression, anxiety, hyper-vigilance, under-eating, over-eating, under-sleeping, over-sleeping, over-drinking, drug abuse, dissociation, as well as the inability to focus on the present task at hand. Post-traumatic stress. Despairingly, students share that they *cannot forget* their trauma, even if and when the detailed memories of the event remain jumbled or unclear. The embodied psychological symptoms of their trauma and the world in which they experience them prevents many student-survivors from immersing themselves into their work. They need, often to their own surprise, an extension on an assignment.

Even student-survivors who have sought and actively engaged every resource and opportunity for ‘recovery’ possible—therapy, campus and community advocates and agencies, campus or police reports, criminal and civil legal action, support groups, student and community activism groups, independent academic research, and more—often struggle. Survivors may become unwittingly disrupted further and over again by triggering reminders of their trauma experience, even as they attempt to piece themselves together and move on with their lives in academic, career, or personal pursuits. They may become overwhelmed by the burden of vicarious trauma as they rebuild their sense of community, often with other survivors.

College Sexual Assault’ *American Psychologist* (22 Jan. 2018). Regardless of institutional policy, I nevertheless communicate that I am committed to them—to both their healing and their academic success. It is my hope that new survivor-centered policies, such as those recently adopted by the University of Oregon, will relieve the confusion, harm, and chilling effect of blanket required reporting policies.

Though trauma disclosures tend to cluster around empathetic instructors with whom survivors identify who often teach courses with curricula relevant to survivors’ experience, studies demonstrate that at least one in five women on college campuses have been sexually violated, making it statistically likely to have at least six female survivors enrolled in a standard classroom of thirty enrolled students. Many LGBTQ students are also likely to be victims of sexual violence, some of whom identify as women, some of whom identify as men, and many of whom identify as transgender or gender non-binary. Additionally, and often neglected in part by their statistical rarity, heterosexual male survivors of sexual assault may also be present in the classroom. And, of course, there are students who are survivors of traumas of child abuse, war, poverty, or legacies of racist, colonial violence—sometimes inclusive of sexual violence, sometimes not. It is important here to bear in mind Bessel van der Kolk and Bonnie Burstow’s respective suggestions that there is a spectrum of severity of trauma and that traumas are often layered according to one’s ‘total concrete situation,’ as Beauvoir writes, within racist patriarchal society.

Many of my students (and colleagues) have been re-traumatized by institutional betrayal and denial. The university institution upon which student-survivors depend upon to provide a safe and accessible learning environment may and often does perpetuate trauma by failing “to prevent or respond to wrongdoings by individuals (e.g. sexual assault) committed within the context of the institution” (Freyd 2017). In chapter II, we detailed the institutional betrayal and denial committed by the University of Oregon in the case of Jane Doe. In this example and others, I have witnessed university institutions betray student-survivors and deny the reality of their vulnerability in a myriad of ways: by failing to offer or publicize campus resources and reporting options for survivors of trauma; by neglecting to adequately train faculty, staff, and students on issues of trauma and the intertwined legacies of sexism and racism; by failing to hire or fairly pay survivor advocates internal and external to the university; by turning a blind-eye to fraternity and sorority parties and their ritual practices of sexual violence for fear of losing both the Greek system as a university housing subsidy and present and future alumni donations; by active recruitment and retention of sexual predators not only on university athletic teams but also within academic faculty positions; by seizing the supposedly confidential campus counseling records of survivors assaulted by said recruited predators to fortify legal defenses and anti-defamation suits in order to protect the institution’s commercial ‘brand’; by adhering to compelled disclosure (i.e., ‘required reporting’) policies as legal insurance for the institution, even though such policies undermine survivors’ agency, impede relationships of trust with instructors, mentors, supervisors, and colleagues on campus thereby producing a ‘chilling effect’ on reporting (Holland, Cortina, and Freyd 2018); by invoking tired legal distinctions and hiring outside legal firms rather than listening to and heeding the scholarly advice of feminist and anti-racist faculty and students internal to the university; by neglecting to follow-up with survivors’ reports in a timely and confidential manner; and by failing to hold perpetrators accountable and instead generally enabling them to continue attending or teaching classes, playing in NCAA March Madness or Bowl games, or earning and retaining tenure, thus providing amnesty for perpetrators to continue inflicting harm. And this is only to name a few examples of the denial that defends and maintains the material, political, and ontological interests of the love of Nike.

The trauma experience, the perpetrator, and society's institutional complicity *haunts* survivors real and imagined in nightmares, while walking to class, at work, in emails, on the pages of course readings, and in the abyss of the blank Word document of an essay that was due yesterday. Over and again, students express to me who it is that they *aspired* to be—doctors, lawyers, scientists, philosophers, parents—and the profound disruption their trauma and the subsequent effect traumatic betrayals have wrought on their life plan. The temporality of their life project has been *ruptured*. Their “world [has] burn[ed] and crash[ed]” and they are “at the end of [their] rope” (Lady Gaga, “Til it Happens to You,” *The Hunting Ground* 2015).² Denial blocks not only the individual survivor's path of recovery, but hinders their educational project: it disrupts their ability to participate in their *human capacity to create a meaningful world in which to live with others*.

As we have discussed, the effort to overcome trauma is not an individual task nor does it reach a stage of ‘completion,’ such thinking would be to move from one stage of a living death to another. Rather, overcoming trauma is a collective process of building safety, memorializing trauma memories, and reconnecting with others (Herman 1992/1997/2015). Significantly, overcoming trauma requires the continuous, encouraging, empathetic *recognition* and support of others—even political change. I tell students I am glad to be part of this important undertaking with them, that speaking the truth of their trauma and its aftermath to another individual is a vital, courageous step in *their life*: it is to take a step from their place of *self-ruptured* vulnerability towards building a place of *self-assurance* with others in their community, precarious as this may be, so they might *become* who they aspire to be. So, they might not merely survive, but *live*. Not merely *be* (potentially on the precarious edge of suicidal *not-being*) but *become*.

² Celebrity pop-artist and sexual assault survivor Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, aka Lady Gaga, posted the following message to her Twitter account on September 18, 2017 as part of an explanation to fans for the postponement of the European leg of her 2017 *Joanne* world tour: “I’m a fighter. I use the word suffer not only because trauma and chronic pain have changed my life, but because they are keeping me from living a normal life.” Exactly two years earlier, Lady Gaga released her single “Til it Happens to You,” written for the 2015 documentary on campus sexual violence, *The Hunting Ground*. Gaga won an Emmy and was nominated for a Grammy, an Oscar, and other awards for her single. She was joined on stage at the 2016 Academy Awards by other survivors in an emotional performance of the song, which received a tear-filled standing ovation.

Sometimes students are ashamed to admit their need for accommodation, others have already grown frustrated by it. Their inability *to forget* interferes with their ability *to live their own life*. And they cannot forget precisely because they have not yet *found* something to forget: their subjectivity has been *ruptured*, their *self-assurance* undermined, resulting in a seemingly perpetual, painful, and potentially deadly life pause.

Philosopher Simone de Beauvoir provides a feminist philosophy of freedom that recognizes that *forgetting* oneself is vital to one's ability *to become* who one might be, to become the person one aspires to be. But this *forgetting* must be distinguished from the forgetting of denial. It is instead a *forgetting* associated with overcoming, which we have thus far associated with the ability to listen to and set the emotions of our past self aside to focus instead on what it is we are *doing* in the present to *become* who we are (cf. van der Kolk 2015, 211 and 286; also, van der Kolk 1989, 411). This *forgetting of overcoming* is an affirmation of freedom, the freedom to *become* the greatest possible version of oneself. This notion of *freedom* is based in a temporality of repetition that Beauvoir inherits from the nineteenth-century 'father' of existentialism, Søren Kierkegaard.³ It is a structure she explores in her novel *The Mandarins*, which is motivated by her experience of the traumatic horror of World War II and a "basic confrontation of being and nothingness" that she writes she "pursued through all my books and never resolved" (Beauvoir 1965, 270-271).

Beauvoir articulates the structure of repetition as follows: "to truly possess something," such as one's self, "one must have lost it and found it again" (Beauvoir 1965, 270-271). This loss of self is a *rupture*, the experience of which Beauvoir describes as "a time when all [...] hopes had died" (Beauvoir 1965, 270). However, the individual

³ Beauvoir is clear in her personal writings about the stunning influence of Kierkegaard on her own feminist existentialist ethics. For the progression of her reading of Hegel and Kierkegaard and her deep personal wrestling between the two, see her Thursday 21 March 1940 letter to Sartre; her 6 July and 17 July 1940 wartime diary entries; her December 21, 23, and 25, 1940 and January 3 and 9, 1941 letters to Sartre; her 9 January wartime diary entry; and chapter seven of her 1962 autobiography, *The Prime of Life*. In Beauvoir's *Letters to Sartre*. Trans. Quintin Hoare. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990): 304, 355, 357, 363, 366-67; *The Prime of Life*. Trans. Peter Green. (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1962): 373; *Wartime Diary*. Trans. Anne Deing Cordero. Ed. Margaret A. Simons and Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press): 313, 319-320. See also Ronald M Green and Mary Jean Green's bibliographical and conceptual review of Beauvoir's critical uptake of Kierkegaard in "Simone de Beauvoir: A Founding Feminist's Appreciation of Kierkegaard," *Kierkegaard and Existentialism*, ed. Jon Stewart, vol. 9 (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2011): 1-22.

may either succumb to their ruptured loss of self, perpetually caught in an *icy* present, or overcome and *re-possess* their self again in the aftermath. To do the latter requires losing oneself by seeking oneself through one's projects, though Beauvoir observes that women are particularly susceptible to the former within a social, material, and ontological structure of patriarchy.

To *overcome* rather than *succumb* to this ruptured loss of self, one must be able to choose to 'lose' oneself again in one's projects, seeking oneself there. One must 'lose oneself' in what one is doing in order to find oneself again, to truly immerse oneself in one's projects as a seeking one's own self again. Or, in the poetry of rapper Eminem, "You better lose yourself in the music, the moment / You own it, you better never let it go" (Eminem, "Lose Yourself," *8 Mile* 2002). Beauvoir understands this *losing* oneself as a *forgetting* of self. But, contrary to the forgetting of denial, Beauvoir emphasizes that one must have first *found* oneself, one must be *self-assured*, in order to *forget* oneself so one might truly possess oneself by actively pursuing themselves in their aims and projects. Beauvoir writes in *The Second Sex*:

The greatest failure a *lack of self-assurance* brings about is that the subject *cannot forget* himself. He does not generously aim for a goal: he tries to prove he is worth what is demanded of him. Throwing oneself boldly toward goals risks setbacks: but one also attains unexpected results; prudence necessarily leads to mediocrity. [...] To do great things, *today's woman needs above all forgetfulness of self*: but *to forget* oneself one must first be solidly sure that one has already *found* oneself. Newly arrived in the *world of men*, barely supported by them, *the woman is still much too busy looking for herself*. (Beauvoir 2010, 740-41; my emphasis)

Beauvoir recognizes a relation between the 'forgetting' of betrayal blindness and the *forgetting* of freedom's repetition, providing tools for thinking the delineation between the 'forgetting' of denial and the *forgetting* of overcoming. The *forgetting* involved in overcoming requires having *found* something to forget, having *found self-assurance* and being willing to *sacrifice* the security of marching towards one's future destiny in order to re-find oneself in the projects of *becoming* one's greatest self. Denial distances one from the task of finding that something. The defense mechanism of denial, or what Freyd terms 'betrayal blindness,' is a defense from the reality that one is *not* self-assured. Denial facilitates an abstracted, mythical feeling of self-assurance that denies one's place

in the world; it is in fact a succumbing to a dull survival, to mere being, to nothingness. However, succumbing to one's loss of self is not a finality. Tomorrow is *uncertain*: one might persist in succumbing to life, one may even succumb to death, but the choice to *overcome* life is also a possibility.

Beauvoir's project throughout *The Second Sex* is to provide a feminist existentialist account of the constitution of patriarchal ontology (i.e., the 'world of men') women's experience within it, revealing the denials at the heart of patriarchal ontology and how we might overcome them. She wants to understand why and how it is that women have *lost* themselves in the 'world of men' without finding themselves again? What is and has been denied in patriarchal ontology? At what cost? And what we might collectively do about it? Why is it that women struggle to *become* their own greatest selves? Why are women prone to *succumbing* to their loss of self, their self-rupture, rather than overcoming and re-possessing themselves again? Why are we not yet *self-assured* enough to *forget* or *lose* ourselves in our projects to be re-found again? What mechanism, be it internal or external, freezes our potential? Beauvoir finds that women's ontological position, her *destiny*, in the 'world of men' is an anticipation of traumatic rupture and loss of self never to be regained; her destiny is to *abdicate* or *abandon* her subjectivity and *succumb* to life as *an object* for another, for *man*. Her destiny has an anticipated target of completion, a stultifying telos that ruptures her subjectivity, of becoming an object for man as his wife, mother, or mistress—an object to be dominated and consumed, to be raped, rather than a reciprocally recognized subject to be generously gifted back (McWeeny 2017). She is left disconnected from her childhood past and condemned to a loss of her own world-making possibilities, destined to a traumatically foreclosed future. The pervasive threat and number of traumatic sexual assaults force her complicity by fear, intimidation, abuse, and neglect. Her anticipation and experience of the *self-rupture* of sexual violence saps her *self-assurance*, if she possessed any to begin with in the 'world of men,' leaving her paradoxically all-too-self-conscious to *forget* herself in *overcoming* her loss in her projects and aims. Time is warped such that possibilities of the present are reduced to experiencing or reliving traumatic rupture. And the structure of patriarchy depends on the operation of the denial to maintain the subordinate destiny of femininity and the dominate destiny of masculinity now and into

the future. We've discussed previously in chapter II that Beauvoir's existentialist morality holds that this lapse of "transcendence," or freedom, into "immanence" is an "absolute evil" (Beauvoir 2010, 16). This existentialist morality of freedom guides Beauvoir's inquiry throughout *The Second Sex*, enabling her to make critical ethical delineations without falling into the meanings or justifications of 'happiness' provided by patriarchal ontology. Setting aside the patriarchal fears of what might be lost in a new world of sex equality, Beauvoir demands an openness to what is to be gained by the rise of women from their historical and personal traumas.

The infliction of traumatic harm and its perpetuation by denial is utilized as a mechanism to enforce both norms of feminine *becoming* as well as masculine *becoming*, delineating the boundaries of patriarchal gendered destinies or what it means to become a 'man' or a 'woman' (see Katz 2006; Kimmel 2008; Mann 2014). In this chapter, I explain Beauvoir's position that living an authentic human life requires the reciprocal recognition of others and entails a constant conversion, or repetitious repetition, from *being* to *becoming*. That is, we gain recognition through overcoming our bare immanent survival to become who we are through our projects, or what it is we do to make our lives meaningful, in the world with others. But garnering recognition is not guaranteed, and this uncertainty may fill one with fear and trembling. Patriarchy denies the fact that *becoming* requires this constant conversion, instead providing easier, tempting avenues of gendered destiny to evade and soothe the existential anguish that is our freedom. Patriarchal ontology bifurcates the ambiguity of human subjectivity such that men are to become invulnerable actors of domination once and for all while women are to become vulnerable, self-abandoned objects for his domination and consumption. The infliction of traumatic rupture both facilitates the temptation to flee freedom and enforces it: rape is its central logic.

In the next sections, I first discuss Beauvoir's concepts of repetition, freedom, and gendered destiny as she explores them in her post-war novel, *The Mandarins* to better prepare our understanding of these concepts in her philosophy. I then turn to excerpts from the 'History' and 'Myths' chapters of Volume I of *The Second Sex* to explain her existentialist critique of the forgetting of patriarchy, her critique of patriarchy's denial. Denial functions to protect the all-too-certain future gendered destinies of patriarchy, and

this false certainty must be *sacrificed* if we are to embrace a philosophy of freedom. That is, we must sacrifice the comforts of denial and re-collect the immemorialized traumatized self, to become *self-assured*, in order to truly be able to *forget* ourselves in our present projects of freedom and become who we are. This is demonstrated through a close reading of excerpts from the last two chapters of Volume II of *The Second Sex*, ‘The Independent Woman’ and the ‘Conclusion.’ Beauvoir does not provide a roadmap to freedom, but she does explore freedom’s repetitious structure throughout her works.

I find Beauvoir’s philosophy of overcoming patriarchal ontology and its traumas entails continuing to build a political, economic, and social world in which women, gender-non-conforming individuals, and trauma survivors generally might find self-assurance. Moreover, it necessitates the *sacrifice* of our gendered destinies, so the future may be left open for the uncertain *possibility* of our becoming rather than *foreclosed* by the seemingly natural facts of life: so that we might not merely *survive* our traumas in alienated isolation, but so we might meaningfully *live* in reciprocity together.

Repetition and Freedom in The Mandarins

Beauvoir does not provide a feminist roadmap to freedom and out of patriarchy. Instead, she thinks through the structure of freedom’s repetition throughout her works. She particularly explores the concept in her novel *The Mandarins*, a novel published some five years after *The Second Sex* and nearly ten years after the conclusion of World War II. The novel is set in the aftermath of the war’s destruction, that is, the same historical Beauvoir herself lived and experienced. The characters even bear striking resemblance to Beauvoir, her life-partner Jean-Paul Sartre, their friend Albert Camus, as well as Beauvoir’s American lover, Nelson Algren to whom the novel is dedicated. The novel is narrated from the point of two characters, the novelist Henri Perron and the psychoanalyst Anne Dubreuilh. It is through these characters that Beauvoir explores the difficulty of freedom’s repetition in the situation of patriarchal denial in the aftermath of World War II. Beauvoir lends her own voice to both of these characters. She makes this clear in her memoir, *The Force of Circumstance*.

As I’ve indicated previously, Beauvoir clearly explains in *The Force of Circumstance* that her concept of repetition is inherited from Kierkegaard and that she

understands the concept to mean “to truly possess something, one must have lost it and found it again” (Beauvoir 1965, 270-271). This loss is a rupture that is experienced as “a time when all [...] hopes had died” (Beauvoir 1965, 270). In the memoir, Beauvoir explains that she deliberately explores this concept in *The Mandarins*. It is in the male characters of Henri Perron and Robert Dubreuilh, who are said to resemble Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre respectively, that Beauvoir explores the moment of loss as a moment from which they are no longer “content with a facile optimism” (Beauvoir 1965, 270). This loss is no longer content with the illusions of denial. Instead, they *sacrifice* this secure, easy contentment and instead choose to “take upon themselves all the difficulties, the failures, the scandal implied in any undertaking. Their old enthusiastic adherences are replaced by austere preferences” (Beauvoir 1965, 270). These characters *sacrifice* their preferences, *forget* or *lose* themselves again in their undertakings, rediscovering themselves through their projects. This attitude, however, is not guaranteed. “One might predict that in the future their hesitations may return” (Beauvoir 1965, 270). They might lose their *self-assurance* and succumb, either by consent or force, to their loss and live the remainder of their lives as a body-object overcome by the dialectical symptoms of trauma. Such is the plight of each of Beauvoir’s female characters in *The Mandarins*.

Beauvoir is “unrepentant” in her choice not to portray “positive heroine[s]” of exceptional women who “assumed an equal role with men in the realm of professional and political responsibilities” in *The Mandarins*; she instead depicts “women as, for the most part, I saw them, and as I still see them today: divided” (Beauvoir 1965, 266). This is to say that in her writing, Beauvoir describes the fragmented state of women in a situation of patriarchal denial. She does so in order to highlight the situation of most women in the ‘world of men’: as divided between the possibility of their free potential and their succumbing to their loss of self, their abdication to men. Rather than finding *self-assurance* in the ‘world of men’ of their own capacities to actively create the world, women remain in a place of divided rupture. They are unable to forget themselves; they are self-conscious rather than self-assured.

By the end of the novel, the adolescent daughter of Robert and Anne Dubreuilh, Nadine Dubreuilh “manages neither to accept her femininity nor to transcend it,” succumbing to a dull life living not for herself as a promising chemist, but rather half-

heartedly living for her husband, Henri, and their child (Beauvoir 1965, 266). After abandoning her singing career, the aging character Paula Mareuil, “clings to feminine values” by investing her entire being into her then-lover Henri, but these values “are not enough” tearing her “to the point of madness” (Beauvoir 1965, 266). Sally Scholz writes that Paula has “literally lost her *self* by failing to seek herself in her own projects” (Scholz 2017, 378). Paula is particularly consumed by betrayal blindness and denial. She does everything in her power to ‘forget’ the reality of her situation—that Henri no longer loves her, that her ontological dependency on his success is both draining and a flight from both their freedom, and that he would prefer to run off with Nadine. She fools herself into a pseudo-self-assurance, that everything is “fine.” She becomes so alienated and abstracted from her life that she is institutionalized. With the truth of her reality too much to bear, she lives instead in a dream. In a similar, though less drastic fashion, the psychoanalyst and main character Anne Dubreuilh also abandons herself by failing to “succeed in finding fulfillment in her own undertakings” (Beauvoir 1965, 266). The women have not yet *found* themselves *self-assured* in their world, a world constructed by men, in order to *lose* themselves in what they *do* so as to seek or re-find themselves in their aims and projects.

Beauvoir distinguishes herself from these women. She takes particular care to distinguish herself from Anne, who is often assumed to be Beauvoir’s own representative in the novel. Beauvoir admits that Anne “comes nearer than the others to true freedom” and is lent Beauvoir’s very own “tastes, feelings, reactions and memories that were mine”⁴ to the point that Beauvoir often speaking “through her mouth” (Beauvoir 1965, 268). However, Anne remains a *secondary* being to the men in her life. She occupies the ‘second sex’, rather than a being who embraces her autonomy to create a world to live with others. Beauvoir writes that Anne:

[...] has neither my appetites, nor my insistences, nor, above all, has she the *autonomy* that has been bestowed on me by a profession which means so much to me. Her relations with a man [Robert Dubreuilh] almost twenty years older than herself are almost like those of a daughter and, despite the couple’s deep understanding, leave her *solitary*; she has only *tentatively committed* herself to her *profession*. Because *she does not have aims and projects of her own*, she lives the

⁴ In particular, Beauvoir lends her own experience of her transatlantic love affair with Nelson Algren to the character of Anne in her relationship to Lewis Brogan.

'relative' life of a 'secondary' being. It was mainly the negative aspects of my experience that I expressed through her: the fear of dying and the panic of nothingness, the vanity of earthly diversions, the shame of forgetting, the scandal of living. The joy of existence, the gaiety of activity, the pleasure of writing, all those I bestowed on Henri. He resembles me at least as much as Anne does, perhaps more. (Beauvoir 1965, 268; my emphasis)

Anne lives a life not for herself but rather vicariously through her traumatized clients, her (sometimes abusive) lovers, her dispassionate daughter, and, most prominently, her father-like husband. She *succumbs* to life. In her work with survivors, she feels guilty that she has not experienced enough trauma to be “able to give counsel from the heights of [her] good health.” Her own concerns feel trite and she is compelled “to help these men and women *to forget*,” though she doubts her abilities to do so (Beauvoir 1954, 177; my emphasis). She sees clients cope with their nightmares by turning to “too many lovers” and “drinking immoderately” (Beauvoir 1954, 184-85). The novel ends with Anne’s contemplation of suicide. However, she “is not made of the stuff of suicides” and returns to her life to help raise her new granddaughter, Nadine and Henri’s child. But “her return to an acceptance of the everyday world seems more like a defeat than a triumph [...] she [...] is betraying something. And then, tomorrow, for her as well as for Henri, is uncertain” (Beauvoir 1965, 271). Anne betrays her own self in her life lived not for herself but *for others*. She is not *self-assured* but rather in denial. Today, as in Beauvoir’s time, our task is to sacrifice the ease and allure of denial’s forgetting. Instead, we must undertake the work to *find* ourselves so that we might *have* something to forget. So that we might become who we are.

The Forgetting of Patriarchy is Denial

Ontology is the study of what *is*. Or, rather, for our existential study, it is the study of which identities are allowed *to be* and which identities are allowed *to become* within what Beauvoir calls their ‘total concrete situation,’ that is, in their particular historical, material, psychological, social, and political place, within a world where life’s *meaning* is more important than life itself. A world where it is not enough to merely survive: one must have reasons for living. Which lives are *recognized*? What meaning is given to individual lives, to who they are, not just by their own self but by the many other

selves with whom they live? Who has a past that is remembered and a future worth living? Who has the opportunity to *make* meaning and who doesn't? Is the meaning provided, found, or created *livable*? In this manner, an existential study of ontology is a study of life and death. And a feminist existentialist study pays particular attention to the role, or 'weight' (Mann 2014), of gender in pursuing an inquiry into being and becoming: it is a study of *patriarchal ontology*.

Patriarchal ontology is built upon an ancient perceived binary that prescribes heterosexist social *destinies of becoming recognizable* from the bifurcated biological 'destinies' necessary for natural human reproduction. This patriarchal ontology is the foundation of contemporary racialized patriarchy, which I discussed in detail in chapter II. Phenotypical categories of race were created and incorporated into the scurrilous logic of ancient patriarchy during the modern-era of European colonization. Gender and its destinies have shifted through time and place, and, in our era, gender is undoubtedly racialized.⁵ What hasn't changed, as Bonnie Mann demonstrates, is that patriarchal ontology provides ready-made and enforced avenues of gendered *destiny* to justify human flights from our freedom to become our greatest selves. These destinies include what it means to become a 'man' or a 'woman,' or, with the advent of modern colonial racism, a 'white man,' a 'white woman,' a 'black male,' or a 'black female,' in patriarchal society. Patriarchal destiny prescribes (or destroys) a future, which must be defended by denial. These gendered destinies in turn provide justification for the "absolute evil" of denial's lapse of transcendence into immanence (Beauvoir 2010, 16). They provide flimsy *recognition* and justification for our tempting flights from our

⁵ I refer to 'patriarchal ontology' throughout this paper, though it may be appropriate to substitute the term 'racist heteropatriarchal ontology.' Scholars of race and gender largely agree the ontology of patriarchy took on a significant transformation in the Modern colonial era, incorporating phenotypical markers into its structure of naturalized sexual domination with the creation of race and systems of racism to legitimize economic practices of slavery. Scholars such as María Lugones and Andrea Smith have articulated that contemporary conceptions of race were built upon an ancient heterosexist patriarchal ontology which facilitated European colonial political, material, and ontological expansion while decimating non-Western modes of thinking, being, and becoming—some of which *were not* built upon a binaristic system of sex domination. See María Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Era Gender System," *Hypatia* 22.1 (Winter, 2007): 186-209; and Andrea Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing," *Color of Violence: INCITE! Anthology* (Cambridge: Duke University Press, 2016): 66-73.

freedom: it is a way of thinking and building our world that alienates us from the task of *becoming* who we are with others in a world of meaning *that we make together*.

In her book, *Sovereign Masculinity*, Bonnie Mann explains Beauvoir's philosophical position that receiving recognition from others is essential to living a human life. Mann writes, "What is certain is that, for Beauvoir, a life that does not seek recognition of some kind, on some level, is not a human life" (Mann 2014, 40). Mann notes that Beauvoir's philosophy is distinct from a Hegelian philosophy of recognition in that, in her theory, recognition does not necessitate *conflict* (i.e., Hegel's master-slave dialectic). Instead, Beauvoir offers that recognition "also comes through reciprocity, friendship and generosity" (Mann 2014, 40; see also Bergoffen 1997; Scarth 2004, 123-127; Beauvoir 2010, 159-160). But the recognition of others, be it in conflict or friendship, is not guaranteed as this recognition must be freely given: our freedom to become who we are by our actions depends on the freedom of others to offer us recognition *or not* (Mann 2014, 40). Mann continues to explain that how we receive recognition shifts throughout a lifetime. When we are infants and children, we require recognition simply by virtue of *being*. At least if we are to survive. We need the care of a mother, father, or caretaker to ensure our feeding, cleaning, and housing so we might live rather than perish from malnourishment, disease, or exposure. We need the recognition of another to ensure our safety, our survival, and our happiness. As I've mentioned in chapter II, attachment theory psychologists have demonstrated how vitally important it is to us as infants to receive recognition from our primary care-providers: if not immediately fatal, failures of early infant attachment traumatically echo throughout that individual infant's lifetime (Ainsworth and Bell 1970; Bowlby 1969 and 1988; Main and Solomon 1986).

As we grow into adulthood, we not only encounter our responsibilities to work with others to ensure our own survival (if we are so able) but also the disappointment that simply surviving, simply *being*, is no longer enough to receive the *recognition* of others we so desperately need to provide meaning in our lives, to provide reasons for living. Rather, we receive this recognition by virtue of what it is we *do* in the world, who is it that we *become* by our actions. Is this person recognized, valued, and accepted by the community? Or is this person misrecognized, devalued, or exiled? Is this person *visible*

as a person within the meaning made by others in the world, within the ontological schema? Is this person *self-assured*?

Living an 'authentic' human life requires a constant conversion from *being* to *becoming*. Beauvoir writes:

Man attains an authentically moral attitude when he renounces being in order to assume his existence: through this conversion he also renounces all possession, because possession is a way of searching for being; but the conversion by which he attains true wisdom is never finished, it has to be made ceaselessly, it demands constant effort. (Beauvoir 2010, 160; qtd. in Mann 2014, 41).

That is, an authentic life that affirms its freedom must renounce the mere fact of their *being* as deserving of recognition and instead 'lose' possession of their own self in their actions to *become* who they are within a community. The individual must *risk* themselves, generously giving themselves to others through their projects with no guarantee of reciprocity. In this way, an individual might 'truly' possess themselves as a meaning-making, free individual whose own humanity is in relation to the recognition they receive from others who also must *risk* themselves in like manner. And this process is never complete, but is rather a *constant* conversion, or a *repeated* repetition, throughout a lifetime. It is constant *rebirth*. And in order to undertake such a conversion, repetition, or rebirth we must first find ourselves grounded. We must be *self-assured*. One must *possess* one's *being* in order to *renounce* it: we must recollect our immemorialized past in order to firmly place it in the past and renounce its grip in the present moment and the present moments to come. One must have *found* oneself in order to *forget* or *lose* oneself.

The uncertainty of receiving recognition for who one *becomes* by what one *does* is terrifying, filling a subject with existential fear and trembling. One risks one's very own *self*, one's identity, and one's potential. There is thus a "fundamental human tendency to flee freedom," Mann writes, which "[m]ost often [...] takes the form of self-alienation. One alienates one's meaning-making and value-establishing capacities into a god, or a political party, or an object [...] or biology [...] or a social role." Under Mann's interpretation of Beauvoir, patriarchal ontology uses gender as "ready-made avenues for" justifying our "self-alienation" (Mann 2014, 29 and 42). These are ready-made avenues

for *denial*. These gendered destinies provide both an *escape* from freedom as well as a *barrier* to building the *self-assurance* necessary to affirm one's freedom.

Patriarchal ontology operates according to a logic that evades uncertainty by bifurcating the ambiguity of freedom. We have discussed in detail that we are embodied human animals that must live the ambiguous relation of the emotional memories of our limbic systems and the rationalizing of our prefrontal cortex, that of being a reactionary if passive object and a creatively active subject. As I've previously stated, patriarchal ontology splits this ambiguity of human subjectivity along an ancient perceived natural binary of sex difference. This is to say that the heart of patriarchal ontology is a denial that men and women are *both* human animals: both ambiguously passive and active creatures and both capable of and in need of learning to live this ambiguity in harmony. Instead, patriarchal ontology imbues the perceived natural binary with social meaning that prescribes, or *assures*, 'men' that they are destined for invulnerable conquest: that the world and its peoples, particularly its women, are his oyster. These values of dominating masculinity are the values of '*philonike*' or the 'love of victory' that we have discussed previously in this dissertation. Women, on the other hand, are destined in this patriarchal ontology to fulfilling her 'biological destiny' by becoming an object for man as his wife, his mother, and his earth-mediator (i.e., his mother's child, his cook, and his home manager or even slave). She is both prize and object of his conquering. To become a woman is to become an object for men (McWeeny 2017). In other words, patriarchal ontology is an ontology with masculine dominance (i.e., rape) as its central logic, a logic which provides ready-made avenues for identity recognition: the male dominator and the female dominated. But this recognition recognizes a subject only insofar as they are perceived to adhere to their particular gendered destiny within an ontology: the individual is not recognized for what they *do* as an individual among a plurality of peers, rather they are recognized for their adherence to performing masculinity or femininity as judged by their peers of so-called 'men' and 'women.' Of course, men are offered the opportunity in the world *they* built to individuate themselves, but even this may be closely monitored or motivated by expectations of gendered destiny.

As Mann demonstrates, gender provides ready-made justifications to flee the ambiguity, uncertainty, and terror that is our human freedom. In the guise of 'destiny,'

gender as justification facilitates our temptation to flee our freedom, which is to say our denial. This ontology bifurcates and ruptures the temporality and responsibilities of human freedom, settling individuals into easy, but often dissatisfying and even violent, pre-given social roles to eschew the risks of *becoming* recognized for who they are through their actions in a world of meaning. To better understand the gendered bifurcation of freedom, it is helpful to carefully examine Beauvoir's critical recollection of the seemingly 'natural' origins of masculine domination and the constitution of patriarchal ontology. Namely, an excerpt from her first of five 'History' chapters of *The Second Sex*.⁶

Beauvoir notes that children were a burden rather than a blessing in prehistoric and nomadic 'hordes,' who were not-yet stabilized into a constructed world of meaning-making. Infants and children were born into "a climate of total indifference" and often died of infanticide or disease. Beauvoir speculates that a mother in such climates did "not take pride in her creation" but instead "feels like the passive plaything of obscure forces, and painful childbirth is a useless and even bothersome accident," if not deadly (Beauvoir 2010, 73). Childbirth *ruptures* her own personal survival. However, as these hordes began to establish themselves into societies, "more value was attached to children." Nevertheless, Beauvoir continues writing, "to give birth and to breast-feed are not *activities* but natural functions." That is, the mother's basic tasks of ensuring the bare survival of her infant are not meaning-making activities unique to the human-animal, but rather tasks shared by all mammals for the purposes of reproductive survival. "They do not involve a project, which is why the woman finds no motive there to claim higher meaning for her existence; she passively submits to her biological destiny" (Beauvoir 2010, 73).

Childbirth thus *ruptures* her own life project of *seeking* herself in what she does; her *becoming* a mother is not an active conversion or repetition of *being* to *becoming*, but

⁶ Her 'History' chapters constitute Part Two of Volume I of *The Second Sex*; it is in Volume I that Beauvoir critically explores the masculine establishment of, perspective within, and insufficient reasoning for patriarchal ontology. She seeks to understand how and why it is that "[t]his world has always belonged to males" despite insufficient reasoning by "reviewing prehistoric and ethnographic data in the light of existentialist philosophy" in order to understand "how the hierarchy of the sexes came to be" (Beauvoir 2010, 71). In Volume II, which will be further explored in the next section, Beauvoir discusses women's multiple perspectives on patriarchal ontology, her difficulties within it, as well as her overcoming.

rather a passive submission to *being*, to her role as a reproducing female mammal, to her role as a reproductive object in the world of men. She submits to her growing uterus, her water breaking, her painful birth experience, her lactating breasts, and the instinctual cries of her infant. And in the ontology created for her by men in their freedom from the biological burdens of human reproduction, her biological destiny becomes her *social* destiny. Her biological role in human reproduction (pregnancy, birth, lactation) becomes tied to her social role as a caretaker of her children and her household, “[b]ecause housework alone is compatible with the duties of motherhood, she is condemned to domestic labor, which locks her into repetition and immanence; day after day it repeats itself in identical form from century to century; it produces nothing” (Beauvoir 2010, 73). That is, her biological destiny confines her to a temporality of maintaining biological human life. In contrast, men’s biological destiny in human reproduction is not experienced as a *passivity* but rather as an *activity*. His activity is experienced in light of a denial of his own passivity, projecting this piece of himself onto woman. His role in human reproduction alleviates him from viscerally experiencing himself as a passivity. He is relieved from the burdens of pregnancy, birth, and lactation. This leaves him *self-assured* in his own active agency to *create* a world in which his procreative progeny might live: not only does he have the time and space for creativity, his ‘active’ rather than ‘passive’ role in reproduction assures him of his *existential* capabilities to *create*. Her experience of passivity in pro-creation facilitates his experience of activity not only in the sex act but in his world-creation.

His creation flows from his ‘active’ potential in reproduction to the value of risking his own life, particularly and historically through his hunting activities (Beauvoir 2010, 73; see also Mann 2014, 37). Beauvoir notes that the male human does not serve his society “in the way that worker bees do” by simply acting as a cog in a natural machine to provide sustenance for the horde. He has already confined women to this role in accordance with biological destiny. Rather, man provides for his human community “by acts that transcend his animal condition,” by acts that go beyond mere repetition of biological life and survival into acts that create a *meaningful* world in which *to live*. In early societies, these activities, such as hunting and hunting parties, were often dangerous, “endow[ing] him with supreme dignity” (Beauvoir 2010, 73). That is, man at

his earliest moment in patriarchal ontology enjoyed the privileged cover of danger: man *risked* his life in order to kill in the hunt. Hunting, Beauvoir notes, is not a mere provision for survival in the way a mother's lactating body provides sustenance for her infant. "If blood were only a food," Beauvoir writes, "it would not be worth more than milk." Instead, the blood of others entails *risk*. Hunting is not merely a passive process of survival, but it demands a willingness to sacrifice one's own life. Beauvoir continues, "the hunter is not a butcher: he runs risks in the struggle against wild animals." Similarly, human freedom entails *risking* oneself, sacrificing one's safety and *self-assurance*, in the struggle for recognition. Beyond mere food-stuffs and bare survival, the hunter-warrior's contribution to his community is a contribution of meaning making: his risk brings honor to his society. Beauvoir writes, "[t]he warrior risks his own life to raise the prestige of the horde—his clan." In this manner, "he brilliantly proves that life is not the supreme value for man but that it must serve ends far greater than itself" (Beauvoir 2010, 73-74). The warrior demonstrates that it is not enough for a human to merely survive, there must be reasons for living: life must be meaningful.

Beauvoir continues to explain that "[t]he worst curse on woman is her exclusion from warrior expeditions" (Beauvoir 2010, 74). At an early stage in human society according to received masculine theorizing, the woman was barred according to her biological 'destiny' of *passivity* from the opportunity to *actively risk* her life and participate in her human proclivity for meaning-making. That is to say, she was barred from realizing the extent of her active agency, which today's psychologists recognize as important to developing resiliency in the face and aftermath of trauma (cf. van der Kolk 2015, 357). Instead, woman was confined to the mere repetition of giving life to human animals. Her *giving* of life is merely a participation in the bare survival and perpetuation of the human-animal species. It is not a transcendence from mere survival to a meaningful life. Beauvoir writes, "it is not in giving life but in risking his life that man raises himself above the animal; this is why throughout humanity, superiority has been granted not to the sex that gives birth but to the one that kills" (Beauvoir 2010, 73-74). She is here critically examining the historical reasons provided by patriarchal ontology that ground masculine domination in biology or nature in order to better understand our contemporary state of existential affairs. She is not providing an endorsement of

patriarchy's devaluation of life-giving.⁷ Rather, she is offering an existential understanding of the foundation upon which patriarchy stands. Through her analysis, Beauvoir both demonstrates the 'origin' of the devaluation of life-giving through women's confinement to *generic species survival* as well as highlighting the importance not only of *risk* but of *risking one's own life* to make meaning. It must be underscored that the meanings patriarchal ontology provides to life-giving and life-risking activities are perversions of human freedom for Beauvoir. Her existential examination of patriarchal ontology reveals the meanings provided by patriarchal ontology are abstractions of human freedom, they abstract and bifurcate the task of *repetition*.

The sexed split between life-giving and life-risking endeavors in early patriarchal human societies holds for Beauvoir "the key to the whole mystery" not only of the origins of masculine domination but also women's historical acquiescence to it (rather than struggle against it, as in recent times) that proves revealing for the structure of free, human intersubjectivity. Biologically, Beauvoir writes, "a species maintains itself only by re-creating itself; but this creation is nothing but a repetition of the same Life in different forms" (Beauvoir 2010, 74). That is, the species is perpetuated through procreation, which does not meaningfully individuate members of the species but rather re-produces more of the same.⁸ The infant is rather a copy (though a complicated copy!) of the

⁷ See Margery Collins and Christine Pierce, "Holes and Slime: Sexism in Sartre's Psychoanalysis," In *Women and Philosophy: Toward a Theory of Liberation*, edited by Carol Gould and M. Wartofsky, New York: Putnam, 1976; Moira Gatens, *Feminism and Philosophy: Perspectives on Difference and Equality*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991; Moira Gatens, "Toward a Feminist Philosophy of the Body." In *Crossing Boundaries: Feminisms and the Critique of Knowledges*, edited by E. Caine, E. Grosz, and M. de Lepervanche, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988; Naomi Greens, "Sartre, Sexuality and *The Second Sex*," *Philosophy and Literature* 4.2 (1980); Alice Jardin, "Death Sentences: Writing Couples and Ideology," In *The Female Body in Western Culture*, edited by Susan Rubin Suleiman, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1986; Genevieve Lloyd, *Man of Reason: Male and Female in Western Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1993; Elizabeth Spelman, "Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views," *Feminist Studies* 8.1 (1982); Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1988; Bonelle Strickling, "Simone de Beauvoir and the Value of Immanence," *Atlantis* 13.2 (1988); and Susan Suleiman, editor, *The Female Body in Western Culture*, Boston: Harvard University Press, 1986.

⁸ Despite our perceived embodied differences within the human species (i.e., sex and phenotype), scientists have found that the human species is one of the *least* genetically diverse species on the planet: there is on average only .1% to .4% genetic difference between any two humans that have ever graced the earth. In this light, human reproduction is a rather boring affair: there is no creativity or originality in the infant byproduct of reproduction. See Lynn B. Jorde and Stephen P. Wooding, "Genetic Variation, Classification, and 'Race,'" *Nature Genetics* 36.11s (2004): S28-33; and Joseph L. Graves, "How Biology Refutes our

human-animals that have come before its birth, and a copy that may (or may not) produce another iteration of itself in the future.

Freed from the burdens of being a biological Xerox machine and confident in his capabilities for action and creativity, man is able to transcend his species mere biological survival and instead *live*, to risk himself and create meaning within his world. And this meaning-making guarantees the biological perpetuation of the human species. Beauvoir writes, “[b]y transcending Life through Existence, man guarantees the repetition of Life: by this surpassing, he creates values that deny any value to pure repetition” (Beauvoir 2010, 74). Surpassing towards the future, individuating oneself, denies value to the repetition of reproductive labor. Through his participation in activities that demand he *risk* his life (i.e., hunting), he not only individuates himself within the species but *creates a meaningful world in which to give human birth*: he brings honor to his family, to his clan. He creates values that exceed and therefore de-value the value of mere species survival: he gives value to *living* and thereby to his *existence*. His service to the species is not simply in providing meat from his hunt; his sacrificial risk of his own life through hunting activities creates a meaningful world, the ‘world of man.’

In his risk-filled service to the species, “the human male shapes the face of the earth, creates new instruments, and forges the future.” Grasping the world, he creates the life-world in which the species not only survives, but *lives*. This “guarantees the repetition of Life” because the human infant is no longer a mere biological accident befalling a horde of human-animals, but rather a precious new member—progeny, even—of a world where the reasons for living “are more important than life itself” (Beauvoir 2010, 73; also, McWeeny 2017). Moreover, this meaning “guarantees” life by ensuring a default caretaker for the new infant members of the clan by assigning the role to women in accordance with her biological destiny: she is not simply a mother, she becomes Mom.

In more recent times, woman is the conduit for the meaning of the ‘world of men’ with the bedtime stories she tells their (read: his) children, or in the Disney movies she lets their (read: his) children watch. These are not *her* stories but rather tales of man’s

Racial Myths,” *The Race Myth: Why We Pretend Race Exists in America* (New York: Plume Publishing, 2005): 1-18.

grandeur. This has, of course, begun to change in recent history with the slow, hesitant, advance of the women's and civil rights movements. Even so, alternative fairy tales, alternative myths and their authors, remain exceptional; they face harsh judgment, condemnation even.

Women have historically acquiesced to the meaning men have made, which is a central puzzle for Beauvoir. But the 'key' that an existential examination of the biological explanation for masculine domination reveals is that woman has been complicit not because she is somehow incapable of resisting, but rather because part of her respects the risk of his struggle precisely because she recognizes the importance of risk and active transcendence within herself, within her own subjectivity. Beauvoir writes, "[p]ositing himself as sovereign, he encounters the complicity of woman herself: because she herself is also an existent, because transcendence also inhabits her and her project is not repetition but surpassing herself toward another future, she finds the confirmation of masculine claims in the core of her being" (Beauvoir 2010, 74). Because woman is also a human with a subjectivity that is ambiguous and free, she recognizes that the 'pure repetition' of procreation to which she has been confined is not satisfying for a meaningful human life: the repetition of animal procreation is not the repetition of human freedom. Mere biology can never surpass the animal condition because biology always dwells at the biological level. An ovary is an ovary; an ovary is not a woman nor a woman an ovary. She becomes complicit by both her denial of her own active, world-making capacities, instead projecting them and finding the projection confirmed by men.

The very structure of her human subjectivity confirms that risk is involved in receiving recognition as a human, in creating meaning. Thus, she respects his risks and sacrificially denies her own active capacity, even when these human sacrifices are abstracted into a religion, a political party, or social roles (Mann 2014, 29 and 42). Woman thus "participates with men in festivals that celebrate the success and victories of males," for such celebration of human success, even if it is only male success, provides meaning in her world.

Still today, in an era after Billy Jean King, women flock to men's sporting events and tailgating festivals; often the women play host. Sometimes the women are rendered tragically rape-able prize objects. Beauvoir explains that women's "misfortune is to have

been biologically destined to repeat Life.” She has been socially destined to her passive role in the mere ‘pure repetition’ of maintaining the Life of the species (i.e., birthing babies, cheerleading on the sidelines, or preparing Totino’s for her guys⁹) by the biological division of procreative labor. All the while, “in her own eyes Life in itself does not provide her reasons for being, and these reasons are more important than life itself” (Beauvoir 2010, 74). Human life needs meaning. It is not enough to bring a child into a world if that world does not have reasons for living. Woman’s ‘misfortune’ is that she is “originally an existent who gives *Life* and does not risk *her* life,” she *gives* life to the generic species rather than risking *her* own individuated self. This is why, historically, “there has never been combat between male and her” in the manner of a Hegelian master-slave struggle. She has always-already given herself over to men (Beauvoir 2010, 74).

On this historical, biological explanation, Beauvoir finds the existential explanation for patriarchal domination: “it is the male who opens up the future toward which she also transcends; in reality, women have never pitted female values against male ones: it is men wanting to maintain masculine prerogatives who invented this division; they wanted to create a feminine domain—a rule of life, of immanence—only to lock woman in it” (Beauvoir 2010, 74). Indeed, to pit ‘feminine values’ like mothering care against ‘masculine values’ like warrior courage only concedes the debate: ‘feminine values’ are themselves a creation of men made to lock women into passive domesticity. Further, to pit ‘feminine values’ against ‘masculine values’ would be a disavowal of her own subjectivity, a disavowal of her respect for the risking of self that is required to make meaning. To pit ‘feminine values’ is to *succumb* to them; it is to blind oneself to the denials and betrayals of gendered destiny. It is to seek a place of *self-assurance* in a destiny that is *not self-assured*. Adhering to gendered destiny is to blindly dwell in a false sense of security.¹⁰ These ‘feminine values,’ which so many women (such as Beauvoir’s

⁹ For a delightful and satirical laugh, see Saturday Night Live’s “Totino’s Super Bowl Commercial.”

¹⁰ This is akin to the false sense of security many battered women and victims of intimate partner violence experience before coming to the realization that they are being abused. Leslie Morgan Steiner addresses questions of why so many women stay in their abusive relationships and why they don’t leave with her own experience in a Ted Talk about her memoir, *Crazy Love*:

I didn’t know he was abusing me. Even though he had held those loaded guns to my head, pushed me down stairs, threatened to kill our dog, pulled the key out of the car ignition as I drove down the highway, poured coffee grinds on my head as I dressed for a job interview, I never once thought of myself as a battered wife. *Instead I was a very strong woman in love with a deeply*

character Paula) and sex-difference feminists (such Beauvoir's wannabe protégé turned critic, Luce Irigaray¹¹) have sought to 're-claim' are simply values given by men to justify women's existence, to soothe her and make her content with her lot.

troubled man, and I was the only person on earth who could help Connor face his demons. The other question everybody asks is: why doesn't she just leave? Why didn't I walk out? I could have left any time. To me, this is the saddest and most painful question that people ask, because we victims know something you usually don't: It's incredibly dangerous to leave an abuser, because the final step in the domestic abuse pattern is kill her. Over 70 percent of domestic violence murders happen after the victim has ended the relationship, after she has gotten out, because then the abuser has nothing left to lose. Other outcomes include long-term stalking, even after the abuser remarries; denial of financial resources; and manipulation of the family court system to terrify the victim and her children, who are regularly forced by family court judges to spend unsupervised time with the man who beat their mother. And still we ask, why doesn't she just leave? I was able to leave, because of one final, sadistic beating that broke through my denial. I realized the man who I loved so much was going to kill me if I let him. So, I broke the silence. I told everyone: the police, my neighbors, my friends and family, total strangers, and I am here today because you all helped me. [...] Abuse thrives in silence. [...] Recast survivors as wonderful, lovable people with full futures. Recognize the early signs of violence and conscientiously intervene, deescalate it, show victims a safe way out. Together we can make our beds, our dinner tables and our families the safe and peaceful oases they should be. (Leslie Morgan Steiner, "Why Domestic Violence Victims Don't Leave," *Ted Talk*, (Nov. 2012), https://www.ted.com/talks/leslie_morgan_steiner_why_domestic_violence_victims_don_t_leave#t-758565; my emphasis)

¹¹ See Luce Irigaray, "A Personal Note: Equal or Different?," *Je, Tu, Nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, Trans. by Alison Martin, New York: Routledge, 1993. Beauvoir had the following to say about Irigaray in two separate interviews:

I've found very interesting things in Irigaray, but I find her too ready to adopt the Freudian notion of the inferiority of women. She's too influenced by that. Although I admire Freud on a great many points, I find that in the case of women, as he said himself, there's a dark continent; he understood nothing of what women want. Anyone who wants to work on women has to break completely with Freud.... But all of them, even Irigaray, they've always begun with Freud's postulates. [...] Freud puts woman in an inferior position, which really astonishes me on the part of feminists. (in Hélène V. Wenzel, "Interview with Simone de Beauvoir," *Yale French Studies*, no. 72 (1986): 12.)

And:

S.B.: Yes, that "we want to be just like men," that is, men as they are today, when in truth we need to change the society itself, men as well as women, to change everything. It is very striking in Betty Friedan: What she wants is for women to have as much power as men do. Obviously, if you are truly on the left, if you reject ideas of power and hierarchy, what you want is equality. Otherwise, it won't work at all. [...]

S.B.: That's it, Irigaray ... she is trying to do something. She hasn't gone quite far enough, in my opinion. But she is trying to construct a psychoanalysis which would be feminist.

A.J.: What do you think of her book, *Speculum de l'autre femme*?

S.B.: I found it laborious to read because of the Lacanian style, which persists in spite of everything ... but I read her second book with far greater pleasure, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*. It's written in a much simpler style, much more direct, without a "scholastic" vocabulary-psychoanalysts have fallen into a kind of horrifying, almost Aristotelian, scholasticism. On the whole, however, I am interested in the kind of work she is doing and I found her book very interesting. Still, she seems to lack audacity, which is necessary to demolish the ideas of Freud on feminine psychoanalysis. (in Alice Jardine, "Interview with Simone de Beauvoir," *Signs* 5.2 (Winter, 1979): 227-228).

Woman has historically submitted to her man-made place of domesticity precisely because she is an existent, a human subjectivity, that “seeks self-justification in the movement of [her] transcendence” (Beauvoir 2010, 74). She ‘transcends’ through his transcendence, through the meaning *he* has made for her to dwell in. Beauvoir succinctly explains this in the “Introduction” to *The Second Sex*. Patriarchal ontology not only ensures that “Lord-man will materially protect liege-woman” concretely in his economic position in the ‘world of men,’ but that he also:

...will be in charge of justifying her existence: along with the economic risk, she eludes the *metaphysical risk of a freedom that must invent its goals without help* [my emphasis]. Indeed, beside every individual’s claim to assert himself as subject—an ethical claim—lies the temptation to flee freedom and to make himself into a thing: it is a pernicious path because the individual, passive, alienated, and lost, is prey to a foreign will, cut off from his transcendence, robbed of all worth. But it is an easy path: the anguish and stress of authentically assumed existence is thus avoided. The man who sets the woman up as an *Other* will thus find in her a deep complicity [Beauvoir’s emphasis]. Hence woman makes no claim for herself as subject because she lacks the concrete means, because she senses the necessary link connecting her to man without positing its reciprocity, and because she often derives satisfaction for her role as *Other* [Beauvoir’s emphasis]. (Beauvoir 2010, 10)

Patriarchal ontology provides her a risk-free ‘transcendence’ and ready-made justification to avoid risking *her own life* and instead submit to her biological destiny and rest contented as a loving wife, a doting mother, and a dutiful daughter. In many ways, we might consider the femininity of *philonikian* patriarchy a survival mechanism. We’ve discussed Freyd’s thesis that survivors who are dependent upon the individuals or institutions who are harming them will often become blind to their betrayal, left to live a life of self-hatred and the repetitions of denial. Patriarchy renders woman *materially* and *ontologically* dependent on man: she succumbs to his denial in order to *survive* the world he has made. And this *can* provide her satisfaction: her relationship to man *gives her life meaning*.

But today, as in Beauvoir’s day, women claim “to be recognized as existents just like men, not to subordinate existence to life” (Beauvoir 2010, 74-75). Women today simply strive to be recognized as their own individuated human selves rather than through the relations to the men in their lives (fathers, husbands, sons). This doesn’t mean today’s women seek the subordination of men to species life, we simply refuse to

subordinate our own life potential to the survival of the species any longer. We no longer wish to deny our free human subjectivity. We are no longer satisfied by merely surviving. We desire and pursue a life beyond survival. A life worth living. We wish to guarantee human life not through our role in the mere repetition of the species but through assuming our own existence to create meaning in our collective world.

Beauvoir writes that it is precisely because humanity “values reasons for living over life” that has enabled man to “set himself as master over woman” because his “project is not to repeat himself in time: it is to reign over the instant and to forge the future” (Beauvoir 2010, 75). He wishes to be invulnerable Subject once-and-for-all. While Beauvoir’s existential examination of patriarchal ontology’s historico-biological explanation for masculine domination is useful for understanding the importance of *risk* in creating human meaning, Beauvoir finds this sovereign reign of man highly problematic as it does not allow for an *intersubjective* relation (Mann 2014, 44). It is a surpassing toward the future that denies value to *self-reproductive labor*. It devalues the importance of the process of recollection and birthing oneself in time.

In chapter II, we discussed at length an example of this future-forging patriarchal mentality in the words of President Schill, who claimed “if we’re constantly talking about what happened in the past, we’re taking our eyes off the future” (interview in Jacoby, 2015). In the attempt to transcend and “reign over the instant to forge the future,” man denies the value of *overcoming*: his very attempt to live his freedom undermines it. Mann explains that patriarchal ontology *seeks to rupture* the very structure of intersubjective relation in favor of an easy, *riskless*, abstracted relation to his constructed Other. She writes:

Masculine justification, then, seeks to *rupture* or *break* [my emphasis] the intersubjective structure of human existence in favor of a mystified form of this same structure, in which the existential and material risks of our dependence on one another are put out of play. Imagining himself to be both the origin and finality of ‘his’ woman, her freedom is a tamed and docile freedom (2010, 160; 161). ‘He does not like difficulty, he is afraid of danger,’ Beauvoir writes (160), he is most fearful of all of reminders [*sic*] of that infantile helplessness that characterized his original relation with the woman/other. ‘He would have liked to have emerged, like Athena, into the adult world, armed from head to toe, invulnerable’ (165). In other words, his fantasy is to emerge into manhood without dependence and without risk, without the intersubjective vulnerability that structures the human condition.’ [...] [P]lurality, *distinction*, is here

repressed, disguised and mystified as the difference of the feminine other (a masculinist creation) [Mann's emphasis].

The kind of conversion that is at issue in masculinity formation then, at least the kind of masculinity formation that Beauvoir is concerned with, is a conversion from vulnerability to *sovereignty*. This is a perversion and disruption, even a reversal, of the constant conversion from being to becoming that is fundamental to adult human existence, even as it is a mystification and repression of the embodied vulnerability of childhood. (Mann 2014, 44)

The meaning-making of patriarchal ontology is a perversion of human freedom in that it eliminates the risks involved in being with another human freedom through its subordination of women. Denial is central to the patriarchal masculine conversion from vulnerability to dominating sovereignty: it is to deny our fundamental human vulnerability to and dependency on others.

Rather than relate with woman in her individuality, rather than respectfully flirting with her and providing her the opportunity to refuse his advances,¹² he projects his own distinct individuality onto her as sexually differentiated *Other* that he has *made* her to be, that is, as his object for the *taking*: in every woman he reads only her potential to be his object for sexual pleasure, his vessel for his progeny, or his housekeeper. The external object of his domination. Beauvoir makes this clear in the beginning of Part Three of Volume I entitled "Myths," which we must now also explicate.

As I stated above, Beauvoir does not think the masculine devaluation of *giving* in favor of only *risking* is a good one. The dominating 'love of victory' of patriarchal masculinity leaves him lonely, isolated, and solitary. In seeking only the *possession* of his hunting trophy, his trophy wife, his trophy car, or his trophy house, man eliminates the freedom of others to provide him *reciprocal intersubjective recognition*. His seeking of *possession* short-circuits the *becoming* involved in freedom and instead leaves him searching for possession, for being, for safety and certainty now and in the future. It is not an intersubjective relation of recognition, which requires *both a giving and a risking* of self in a plurality of other subjects; his is rather a sovereign subjectivity of *taking* or *consumption*. Thinking himself an entitled, invulnerable, infinite sovereign, he takes from

¹² See Bonnie Mann's thesis on 'Flirts' in "Creepers, Heroes, Flirts, and Allies: Four Theses on Sexual Harassment," *APA Newsletter on Feminism* 11.2 (Spring 2012): 24-31.

others and Nature for himself without *giving himself*. There is no reciprocity. Only domination.

With the historical subordination of woman as Other, she is projected as man's limit and negative definition of himself. Her mere presence as Other confirms to him that he *exists*: "he attains himself only through the reality that he is not" (Beauvoir 2010, 159). In the "Introduction" to *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir quotes Plato as an example of this, writing "[a]mong the blessings Plato thanked the gods for was, first, being born free and not a slave and, second, a man and not a woman" (Beauvoir 2010, 10-11). Beauvoir then brings the deliberate echoes of Plato by nineteenth-century existentialists Kierkegaard¹³ and Nietzsche into her "Myths" chapter. She does so to reiterate her point that 'Woman' is a mythical, abstract creation of men who invented her to be an object confirming the reasons for *his* being; her reasons for being are reduced to being-for-him. She writes, quoting Kierkegaard:

It is always difficult to describe a myth; it does not lend itself to being grasped or defined; it haunts consciousnesses without ever being posited opposite them as a fixed object. The object fluctuates so much and is so contradictory that its unity is not at first discerned: Delilah and Judith, Aspasia and Lucretia, Pandora and Athena, woman is both Eve and the Virgin Mary. She is an idol, a servant, source of life, power of darkness; she is the elementary silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip, and lies; she is the medicine woman and witch; she is man's prey; she is his downfall, she is everything he is not and wants to have, his negation and his *raison d'être*.

'To be a woman,' says Kierkegaard, 'is something so strange, so confused, and so complicated that no one predicate can express it, and the multiple predicates that might be used contradict each other in such a way that only a woman could put up with it.' This comes from being considered not positively, as she is for herself, but negatively, such as she appears to man. Because if there are *Others* than the woman, she is still always defined as Other. And her ambiguity is that of the very idea of Other: it is that of the human condition as defined in relation with the Other. (Beauvoir 2010, 162-163; see Kierkegaard *Stages on Life's Way* 1988, 56).

¹³ Though she writes in her diaries and letters to Sartre of the influence of Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* on her thinking, in *The Second Sex* Beauvoir solely quotes from Kierkegaard's Victor Eremita character in the 'In Vino Veritas' section of *Stages on Life's Way*. 'In Vino Veritas' is Kierkegaard's deliberate nineteenth-century 'repetition' of Plato's *Symposium*, and Victor Eremita is the pseudonymous author (or publisher, rather) of Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*. Victor Eremita invokes the attribution to Plato in his 'In Vino Veritas' speech; his speech may well be the origin of Beauvoir's own use of Plato in the 'Introduction' to *The Second Sex*.

In patriarchal ontology, woman is constructed as man's limit, his negation, his Other. She confirms his reason for being not in her own self, as her own person, but in her negative relation to him; her generalized *passivity* confirms his individual *activity*. Moreover, his relation to her mimics the encounter with another freedom while eliminating the risks involved: rather than being posited as another, concrete, human freedom to be encountered with risk, care, and potential solidarity, woman is posited as an absolute, mystical Other to idolize, consume, and subordinate.

We've discussed previously in chapter II that denial inhibits relations of reciprocity because we have difficulty recognizing the human subjectivity of others. And patriarchy seizes on this fragmentation, constructing women (and other others) as objects onto which man's vulnerability is projected. Beauvoir writes, "They did invent her" and footnotes Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*, "Man created woman—but what out of? Out of a rib of his God, of his ideal" (Beauvoir 2010, 203; qtd. Nietzsche *Twilight of the Idols* 2003, 33). Beauvoir continues, quoting Kierkegaard:

'Through woman,' wrote Kierkegaard, 'ideality enters into life and what would man be without her? Many a man has become a genius through a young girl...but none has become a genius through the young woman he married...It is only by a negative relation to her that man is rendered productive in his ideal endeavors. Negative relations with woman can make us infinite...positive relations with woman make the man finite to a far greater extent.' (Beauvoir 2010, 203 Myths chapter I; SK *In Vino Veritas* p 59-61)

Woman constructed as men's limit provides him assurance of his invulnerability, of his infinitude. Rather than a mere human fleshy freedom encountering the fleshy freedom of another human subjectivity, he is a 'Man' in relation to an always-already subordinated 'Woman.' He transcends to his invulnerable infinitude through her, his invention, because her negative presence reassures himself that *he* is not a mere cog in Life because *she* is, thus he must be something more: his life is not a safe "plentitude and rest" as he has invented hers to be, but rather his is a life of "lack and movement, it is combat" (Beauvoir 2010, 159).

But even the 'manliest' of human men are still animals, and his encounter with his own self undermines his fantasies of sovereignty. Beauvoir writes, "[f]acing himself, man encounters Nature." But his relation to his own animal nature is not one of care: it is internal self-domination, projection, and neglect. St. Augustine's philosophy of the will

of the flesh and will of the spirit exemplifies this thought. The part of his fleshy nature that he cannot dominate himself he projects externally onto Woman as an external object of domination. Beauvoir writes, “he has a hold on it, he tries to appropriate it for himself” (Beauvoir 2010, 159). He strives for the generalized, mythical *Woman* to bring himself honor: through her rescue, through her capture. She is Liege and he is her Lord (Beauvoir 2010, 10). She is both his victim to rape and to save.

But his attempts of domination over nature “cannot satisfy him” because dominated objects cannot provide him the recognition he so desperately needs. Dominated objects are not *subjects*, they cannot freely grant recognition. Thus, his dominating relation to his own passive animality characterizes his relation to life. He encounters Nature:

[...] as a purely abstract opposition—it is an obstacle and remains foreign—or it passively submits to man’s desire and allows itself to be assimilated by him; he possess it only in consuming it, that is, in destroying it. In both cases, he remains alone; he is alone when touching a stone, alone when digesting a piece of fruit. The other is present only if the other is himself present to himself; that is, true alterity is a consciousness separated from my own and identical to it. (Beauvoir 2010, 159)

However, men’s very rising above his animality and projecting his relation of nature onto women makes intersubjective relation between the two impossible by both denying his own animality and denying women their own humanity: that is, man’s sovereignty is a perversion or mimicry of ‘true alterity’ because rather than him relating to himself, other subjects, and nature in his ambiguity as simultaneously both a passive object and an active subject he instead thinks of himself as a pure Subject and woman as pure Object.

Within patriarchal ontology, woman is not yet ‘present’ to herself and is thus not yet a conscious subject that is both ‘separated’ and ‘identical’ to man’s subjectivity: she is Other. She does not yet exist as human, but only as a vessel for life: she is sub-human animal. This undermines the freedom of men, for “[i]t is the existence of other men that wrests each man from his immanence and enables him to accomplish the truth of his being, to accomplish himself as transcendence, as flight toward the object, as a project” (Beauvoir 2010, 159). Women do not yet exist as human and men find themselves all-too-human, all-too-subject: he is sovereign, but not free. In an ironic but ultimate avoidance of risk, man seeks to eliminate the *uncertainty* of his status, of his *being*, with

ideas of *destiny*; women's complicity in her self-abdication has historically facilitated his cowardice. In patriarchal ontology, man does not seek a *constant conversion* of being to becoming, but rather a single conversion from being to invulnerable, sovereign, Subject, *which ruptures him from his freedom* (see Mann 2014, 43-45). Single conversions, however, are impossible because we constantly need recognition. It is not enough to be recognized for what one does or who one is only once in one's life: we would hardly learn to recognize ourselves. Mann recognizes this and offers that masculinity operates under a continuous 'shame-to-power' conversion, discussed in chapter II, that seeks to eschew the possibility of failure, the possibility of shame, through *rage* thus converting his shame into his power (Mann 2014, 116 and 145). This mortal fear of uncertainty ruptures him from the possibilities of his future *becoming*, from the temporality of his own freedom. His is a desperate fight against the possibility of his future vulnerability, to convert the reality of his future uncertainty into the myth of his eternal, everlasting certitude.

Woman's conversion is also a rupture, or series thereof, from her freedom which converts her from being to becoming Object, particularly an object for men, which is consistently enforced both by threat of violence and her own complicity in performing her passive role (McWeeny 2017). Confined either through force or her own complicity (often ambiguously both) to the role of passive object, she is not self-assured in her own active, creative potential. She and her peers in the 'world of men' doubt and hinder her world-making capacities; it is difficult for her to forget this.

As I've stated, the anticipation, threat, and experience of sexual violence and its temporal rupture comprises the lived experience of becoming a 'woman' as a becoming object for man (McWeeny 2017). Women, and trauma survivors more generally, so often lack *self-assurance* in the 'world of men' because they cannot yet *find* a meaningful life to create for *their own selves* within it; the 'world of men' is built to undermine intersubjective human relations necessary to freedom's world-making capacity. Survivors find that their world is, quite literally, not built for them.¹⁴ To this point, Judith Herman's

¹⁴ Rebecca Solnit speaks to the subtlety of this realization in her book *Men Explain Things to Me*, "Every woman knows what I'm talking about. It's the presumption that makes it hard, at times, for any woman in any field; that keeps women from speaking up and from being heard when they dare; that crushes young

account of trauma's recent history has shown that the *meanings* women and trauma victims have found in the 'world of men' often constitute one another and trade in debilitating sexist, racist, and ableist stereotypes: the pathological hysteric, the demon-possessed damsel, the drug-abusing welfare queen, the shameful slut, among others. These stereotypes legitimize and justify the abuses of masculine domination. In the aftermath of trauma, many survivors are unable to lose or forget themselves precisely because they have not yet *found* themselves to begin with: most women and many victims of trauma have not had such an opportunity. Sexism, racism, and poverty all present traumatic barriers to developing a personal sense of security in the 'world of men,' which unjustly hinders *self-assurance*. Survivors of trauma, particularly women, are unable to be self-assured not simply because the experience of trauma undermines their trust in others and neurobiologically hinders their ability to live their lives *but also because they live in a world that is not yet meant for them*. Women are "[n]ewly arrived in the world of men" and "barely supported by them;" often, women are abused by men. Though our world is slowly changing, historical meanings given to her person and to her trauma experience linger; they are sedimented into our material, social, political, and psychological institutions and practices *as well as* our own bodies and personal behaviors.

Part of the problem of forgetting for many of my student survivors, and, indeed, most survivors of trauma, whether it be traumas of rape, war, or legacies of racist colonial violence, is that they are situated in a 'world of men' that not only does not recognize them as human subjects, but, as the examples of institutional denial discussed throughout this dissertation demonstrate, *prefers* and is *invested* in their 'forgetting,' their silence, and their blind carrying on. But this is a *will to silence*, a 'forgetting' of denial. It is not a *forgetting* of overcoming, at least not as we will understand the term throughout the remainder of this chapter. This *will to silence* is an active institutional barrier to survivors finding, remembering, and possessing themselves (i.e., finding self-assurance), so that they might *forget* or *lose* themselves in their studies and life pursuits. These barriers to building self-assurance constitute a 'hostile learning environment' *par excellence*.

women into silence by indicating, the way harassment on the street does, that this is not their world" (Solnit 2014, 4).

But this succumbing need not be final, for the future is uncertain. To become *assured* in oneself requires a sense of trust and positive recognition *by others* as well as by one's own self—to find oneself recognized as a meaningful, capable person within one's community. But trauma is a *self-rupturing* event of betrayal that undermines these capacities of trust in others and in one's own self, so even when one receives positive recognition and encouragement from others, a traumatized subjectivity may still struggle to feel *self-assured* enough in order *to forget*.

But *philonikian* patriarchal domination need not be the only way to pursue the conversion of subjectivity; indeed, it is a perversion of it. Thus far I have offered the insight that we must return to our animalian needs of immemorialized past memory in order to transcend them (cf. van der Kolk 2015, 297). Beauvoir offers an alternative to simply dominating or neglecting these needs and instead care for them, so they might be *forgotten* in the moment of becoming. She writes that the constant combat required of masculinity in patriarchal ontology “can be overcome by the free recognition of each individual in the other, each one positing both itself and the other as object and as subject in a reciprocal movement” (Beauvoir 2010, 159). There is an alternative to the conflict between men pitted against each other as sovereign subjects *as well as* conflict between men and women in the former's domination of the latter: domination is not the only means to achieve recognition. In fact, for Beauvoir, there are better avenues to receiving the recognition we humans so desperately need: friendship and generosity. Friendship and generosity entail a reciprocal risky gift of self to a self that is not them; it is reciprocal because both subjects recognize in the other the ambiguous internal structure of their human animality, their transcendence over nature and their immanent place within it. Friends give themselves to each other and receive themselves back in return: they give you meals and company when you have been injured or provide encouragement when you are frustrated in your projects, and they receive themselves back as *your* friend in the grateful thanks *you* provide, knowing that you would do the same if and when the situations are reversed. There is reciprocity between friends, and they thus “accomplish this recognition of freedoms concretely” (Beauvoir 2010, 159).

This makes the virtue of friendship and generosity difficult virtues, even “man's highest achievement,” because this business of reciprocal risky giving “is a struggle

endlessly begun, endlessly abolished. It demands that man surpass himself at each instant” (Beauvoir 2010, 159-160). Beauvoir explains the difficulty:

Put into words, man attains an authentically moral attitude when he renounces *being* in order to assume his existence; through this conversion he also renounces all possession, because possession is a way of searching for being, but the conversion by which he attains true wisdom is never finished, it has to be made ceaselessly, it demands constant effort. So much so that, unable to accomplish himself in solitude, man is ceaselessly in jeopardy in his relations with his peers: his life is a difficult enterprise whose success is never assured. (Beauvoir 2010, 160)

That is, the friend becomes a friend by a constant conversion, or a repeated repetition, that must constantly overcome his own being, his own individual concerns, his own sovereign possession of himself to give himself to another and so he might receive himself back again as that which he performed himself: a good friend. And in order to remain a good friend, one must repeat this process of converting from *being* to *becoming* ceaselessly and through *doing* the actions of a good friend. It is a constant effort to be a good friend, to show up when your friend needs you or to initiate phone calls to remain in touch. Friendship and generosity embrace the ambiguity of our human freedom, that we are both vulnerable, passive body-objects and that we are also creative, active body-subjects.

The virtues of friendship and generosity, especially *between* men and women, are made ever more difficult in patriarchal ontology because men consider themselves in *possession* of themselves into eternity while women have *not yet* possessed themselves to begin with. Men evade and suppress their *vulnerability* and she considers herself mythically *self-assured* through his protection, his mythical *invulnerability*. She is his absolute Other, between which there can be no reciprocity, no possible friendship. Only consumption. In patriarchal ontology, woman “emerged as the inessential who never returned to the essential, as the absolute Other, without reciprocity.” She *became* an inessential, a nothing, an object, that never received the respect of herself back from her community in the ‘world of men’ as an essential, as a being, as a subject. So, in some sense, her historical human task of assuming an authentic moral and ontological attitude is the reverse of man’s: she must come to first possess herself, to *become a being* once again so that she might possess something to renounce or forget in order to *become a*

friend, a philosopher, a partner; she must possess herself so she might lose herself and receive herself back again (Beauvoir 2010, 159-160). She must *find* her *self-assurance* in her own human, active capabilities so she might lose herself in exercising them, so she might re-find herself by seeking herself in her projects.

To briefly review, patriarchal ontology has created two distinct destinies, two historically sedimented rutted paths to follow that have enabled ‘men’ and ‘women’ to eschew the fundamental uncertainties and ambiguities of their human freedom (Mann 2014, 83). This is the ‘light’ side of racialized patriarchy, though Beauvoir’s analysis is also relevant for thinking the ‘dark’ underside as well (Burke 2019). She includes the problem of American racism in the very same breath as patriarchy in the epigraph to this dissertation. “The beauty of flowers” in the quote “[t]he beauty of flowers and women’s charms can be appreciated for what they are worth; if these treasures are paid for with blood or misery, one must be willing to sacrifice them” refers to the legacy of American slavery (Beauvoir 2010, 764).

Man’s destiny is to convert his *being* into an always-already invulnerable, consumptively possessing, infinite, sovereign subject with total control to forge or create the meaning of his future. Woman’s destiny is to convert her *being* into an always-already vulnerable, possess-able object for men, “abandoned” in and abdicated to an ever repeating “icy present” of maintaining life (Beauvoir 2010, 487; Burke 2018). And those humans who are either placed outside or seek to step outside these patriarchal destinies, such as ‘black males’ and ‘black females’ as well as genderqueer people or outspoken trauma survivors risk ontological if not mortal erasure. Overcoming the long-rutted destinies of patriarchal ontology is precisely what we most need to overcome the self-shattering of traumatic rupture and affirm our freedom, and this begins with sacrificing the comforting certainty that the destinies of gender provide.

The Forgetting of Freedom is Overcoming

In the previous sections, we have discussed the Beauvoir’s feminist existential reading of the history and ontological structure of patriarchy. Denial of the ambiguity of our human subjectivity is the motor of this structure, demanding men disavow their animalian passivity and women to disavow their human activity. This dictates the

gendered destinies of men and women, undermining the temporality of free overcoming for both men and women. The temporality of these temporal destinies is a temporality of denial, seizing on and producing a *rupture* from the constant conversion or repeated repetition required to *become* reciprocally recognized by others for what one *does*. Denial and the gendered destinies it enables within patriarchy provide easy, tempting paths to flee our freedom. Denial demands and feeds into an urgent desire that we *forget* ourselves. But this is a forgetting that undermines our freedom. It short-circuits our ability to find the *self-assurance* necessary to overcome the ruptured loss of self. Individuals become doomed to a dull present, oscillating between the ‘dialectic of trauma.’ And this exacerbates to the point of fatalistic inevitability the potential for self-harm, re-victimization, and perpetration.

I’ve suggested that forgetting is a structural component to the repetitious process of *becoming*. But denial does not forget in a manner conducive to freedom. In this section, I discuss Beauvoir’s conception of the forgetting of free overcoming and the sacrifice it entails. We must sacrifice the ease and comforts of the well-worn paths of gendered destiny in order to overcome patriarchal ontology so that we might at long last affirm the freedom of women, trauma survivors, those who resist the confines of gender categorization, *as well as men* to create meaning in our shared world. Or, as Beauvoir writes in her concluding sentences of *The Second Sex*, “Within the given world, it is up to man to *make the reign of freedom triumph*; to carry off this supreme victory, men and women must, among other things and *beyond their natural differentiations*, unequivocally *affirm their fraternité*¹⁵” (Beauvoir 2010, 766; my emphasis and inclusion of the original French).

Beauvoir’s philosophy of freedom’s repetition in *The Second Sex* is and has been a philosophy of the future. Her 1949 text not only provides a feminist philosophy for our

¹⁵ ‘*Fraternité*’ is Beauvoir’s original French. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier translate this term as ‘brotherhood.’ There is much to say about the translation of *fraternité* and Beauvoir’s choice to end her work on the ‘second sex’ with it. During a post-presentation conversation with Borde and Malovany-Chevallier at the 2011 Beauvoir Society Conference held in Eugene, Oregon, Debra Bergoffen insisted that Beauvoir’s meaning here does not intend a masculine connotation but rather draws on the tradition of the French revolution motto “*liberté, égalité, fraternité*.” I agree and also read Beauvoir as ironically invoking the ‘world of men’ in her philosophy of overcoming patriarchal ontology. See Bergoffen’s *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir*. See also Toril Moi, “The Adulteress Wife,” *London Review of Books* 32.3 (11 Feb. 2010): 3-6.

present overcoming into the future, but throughout *The Second Sex* Beauvoir draws attention to the manner in which patriarchal ontology seeks to solidify the meanings of the past and present into the future through an attempt to eliminate the *uncertain potential* of the future by insisting the future has been pre-determined by the brute fact of natural biology (i.e., the fallacy that a woman is a woman by virtue of her ovaries). That is, rather than narrativizing past human history as events that occurred in the past, patriarchy seizes on the fatalistic repetitions of denial to shore up and naturalize the perpetual re-living of traumatic experience in the present and into the future. That is, patriarchy thrives on denial's foreclosure of the future in order to ensure its sovereign domination. Gendered destinies provide an easy naturalization of the fatalistic repetitions of denial. Clouded as natural facts, gendered destiny provides soothing justification to ultimately evasively foreclose the open possibilities of the uncertain future.

The future is the realm of *uncertain potential* as much as it is the realm of factual, scientific predictive certainty. For example, today, we can determine the factual certainty of solar and lunar eclipses that have happened thousands of years in the past and will happen thousands of years in the future with an astonishing level of accuracy. Accounting for the drift between the earth and the moon, we can even predict that the last solar eclipse will occur "about 600 million years from now."¹⁶ Humans, however, are not simply mere matter swirling about in the abyss of the universe. We are that, true, but we are also *meaning-making* creatures in that universe: we gather together in awe at the eclipse's spectacular, revelatory reminder of our place of possibility on an orbiting rock among other celestial bodies. We have agency and imagination. We play music and converse together not out of confusion, as the birds' all-too-early evening songs, but to create meaning together while observing the eclipsed sun. Doing so, we remind ourselves that we are something more than mere orbiting matter. That we humans are not just mere *being*, mere surviving specks of dust (Nietzsche *Gay Science*, aphorism 341), but that we are free and we *become* who we are as free subjects in relation to other free subjects. We become good friends and lovers of wisdom together and through one another, creating our world together. This freedom imbues the future with the character of our *uncertain*

¹⁶ NASA lunar scientist Richard Vondrak in a statement quoted by Samantha Mawson in "Earth Will Have Its Last Solar Eclipse in 600 Million Years," *Space.com*, 31 July 2017.

potential, with the sense that it is the realm of what *could* or *might* be. As Mann writes, despite the sedimentation of patriarchal ontology in our life world, this world of meaning “is never finally closed, never resolves into *brute* necessity” as the prediction of an eclipse might (Mann 2014, 83). We don’t know with whom we might share the next eclipse because our friends are both as free and as vulnerable in life as we are. They may live their lives apart from us or succumb to death, disease, or disaster. This future uncertainty makes the moment of experiencing the awe of a present eclipse with those whom you love so very special.¹⁷

Denial undermines our capacity for both imaginatively relating with others and realizing the extent of our agency. We feel ourselves helpless and determined by forces beyond our control—forces such as the eclipse of the sun or moon. In denial, we may displace our agency to the superstitious will of the gods. Such was the case of the Athenian general Nikias in the face of the 413BC eclipse. As we discussed in chapter III, Nikias differed from the wisdom of his predecessor, Pericles, on the matter of eclipses.¹⁸ At the Athenians’ most desperate hour, Nikias notoriously went along with the superstitious, religious fortune-tellers and terrified soldiers in his company to interpret the eclipse of 413BC as a sign from the gods that they should post-pone their retreat from Epipolae after their stunning defeat in the ill-advised Sicilian Expedition. In truth, Nikias was himself in denial regarding how terrible their plight was and was terrified of returning to the city of Athens in shameful defeat. He froze. And the defeated and sickly Athenian warriors created notions of their destiny from the mere matter of nature to evade their vulnerability and the uncertainty of their future. In denial over their own agency to retreat, they projected their notions of invulnerability to the gods. Surely the gods would preserve their glory. They refused to grapple with their present failure and the possibility of their future reproach upon their return to the city. Rather than risking

¹⁷ I thank my friend Sierra Deutsch for making this point as we observed the August 21, 2017 total solar eclipse from the path of totality in Philomath, OR together with our chosen graduate school family of friends.

¹⁸ Plutarch reports of tales by philosophers praising Pericles’ sophisticated astronomical understanding when encountering the annular solar eclipse of 431BC before setting sail for Epidaurus, just before his untimely death in the plague. While assuring a fearful crew, Pericles explained that eclipses were simply the result of one body covering over another body, like a cloak covering a hand, and were nothing to fear or derive ‘destiny’ out of (Plutarch *Pericles*, XXXV).

the sacrifice of their manly pride in returning home to the uncertain, though likely, possibility of their shame, they sacrificed their rationality and, unwittingly, their city to the gods. Their delay exponentially doomed Athens. Nicias and many others lost their lives, the dead went unburied, survivors were enslaved, and the men of Athens lost their naval fleet along with any potential of winning the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides 7.50-75). You'd think the 'West' would have learned this important lesson of the 'illusions of nature' then. However, as we have discussed, patriarchal ontology has persisted in creating human destiny from mere nature so as to shore up myths of masculine invulnerability and evade the possibility of future failure to devastating consequence: ubiquitous rape, domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, feminized poverty, not to mention the traumatic effects of coloniality, racism, genocide, and war.

Beauvoir charges us in her time and today to *sacrifice* this Man-made creation of destiny out of 'nature' so that the future might be made open for the *possibility* of women's world-making in reciprocal human harmony with their community of free subjects (Beauvoir 2010, 764-65). In her *Ethics of Ambiguity*, Beauvoir makes clear that an existential ethics must *embrace* the uncertain possibility of future failure rather than eliminate it. She writes, "without failure, no ethics [...] One does not offer an ethics to a God" (Beauvoir 1976, 10). Beauvoir offers us a philosophy of freedom's authentic repetition or constant conversion that embraces rather than eschews the possibility of future failure and uncertainty that requires sacrificing the comforts of our denial and gendered destinies that have so long justified our tempting flights from *becoming* who we are. *Pace* Kierkegaard, Beauvoir offers an atheistic existentialism that assumes we live in a world of *human* meaning-making, and that 'gods' are only mythical creations that abstractly mimic the structure of human freedom. She develops his philosophy of *repetition*, recognizing that the repeated repetition (or constant conversion) of one's freedom takes faith and sacrifice. In order for women and trauma survivors to overcome their loss of self rather than succumb to it, we must collectively *sacrifice* the denial's will to forget and the accompanying all-too-certain gendered destinies of patriarchal ontology. Instead, we must do our best to *recollect* ourselves as we cross the Plain of Forgetfulness as we emerge into our life after trauma's deadly rupture. This requires continuing to build a world in which women and trauma survivors might find *self-assurance* that they might

forget, seeking themselves not in their status as survivors or women but rather in their generous pursuit of their projects. So, they might not simply complete their homework assignment, but create a meaningful contribution to their society. We must decide to *risk* ourselves by sacrificing the myth of the *certainty* and the false sense of *self-assurance* of our identities as provided by the destinies of gender.

As Rebecca Solnit puts it, “certainty that the future will be a lot like the present or will decline from it” whether it be the certainty of despair or optimism carries with it “grounds for not acting.” Rather than certainty, Solnit offers an ethos of hope, writing “[hope] can be the knowledge that we don’t have that memory [of the future] and that reality doesn’t necessarily match our plans” (Solnit 2014, 94). It is this orientation that can and must be taken towards categories of gendered destiny, and this sacrifice of gendered destiny will “have meaning in light of a human aim” (Beauvoir 2010, 228), the aim being *reciprocal, free, ambiguous, intersubjective human relations of meaning-making*.

Beauvoir opens Volume II of *The Second Sex* on women’s ‘lived experience’ with an epigraph from Søren Kierkegaard, “What a curse to be a woman! And yet the very worst curse when one is a woman is, in fact, not to understand that it is one” (Kierkegaard qtd. in Beauvoir 2010, 278 and 756¹⁹; Kierkegaard 1988, 62). Throughout Volume II, Beauvoir seeks to describe the world of men “from woman’s point of view such as it is offered to her, and we will see the difficulties women are up against just when, trying to escape the sphere they have been assigned until now, they seek to be part of the human *Mitsein*” (Beauvoir 2010, 17). Today’s woman is caught in a constructed ambiguity between the world of men with the destinies it has assigned her and its overcoming towards a world of freedom. And she is only abandoned, abdicated, or shackled to the World of Men by patriarchal ontology’s illusions of natural destiny.

¹⁹ So reads Borde and Malovany-Chevallier’s translation. Beauvoir’s original French reads “Quel malheur que d’être femme! Et pourtant le pire malheur quand on est femme est au fond de ne pas comprendre que c’en est un.” The Hong and Hong English translation of Kierkegaard reads, “If I had become a woman and could not understand what I now understand—how terrible! If I had become a woman and consequently could not even understand that—how much more terrible!” While the translation project of sourcing Beauvoir’s own text of Kierkegaard exceeds the bounds of this chapter, I understand Beauvoir to be invoking Kierkegaard to effectively say “What greater misfortune than to be a woman! And yet the very worst misfortune when one is woman is fundamentally to not understand that one is a woman, a misfortune.” I thank Meryl Altman, Jacob Barto, Marco Esters, André Wilson, and Verónica Zebadúa for their time and patience sharing their language expertise regarding this translation.

Beauvoir returns to Kierkegaard's epigraph quote in the "Conclusion" to *The Second Sex*, providing this quote of his in an additional footnote:

Gallantry is essentially woman's due; and the fact that she unconsciously accepts it may be explained by the solicitude of nature for the weak and the disadvantaged, those who feel more than recompensed by an illusion. But *this illusion is precisely fatal*... It is not an even worse mockery to feel freed from misery—thanks to one's imagination, to be the dupe of imagination? *Woman certainly is far from being verwaarloosd [abandoned]; but inasmuch as she never can free herself from the illusion with which nature consoles her, she is.* (Kierkegaard qtd. in Beauvoir 2010, 756n1; Kierkegaard 1988, 56 and 62; my emphasis)

That is, patriarchal ontology prescribes the lordman-liegewoman system which entitles her to his 'gallantry' precisely because he needs her as an object towards which to demonstrate his courage and glory in the 'world of men.' This is based only in "the illusions of nature" as we have outlined above and in the previous section: that her human destiny is bound by her natural biology. Kierkegaard writes "this illusion is precisely fatal" and Beauvoir does not let us forget the manner in which it has been existentially and mortally fatal for woman.

To demonstrate his *gallantry* requires an object towards which to express it. This requires placing woman in *danger* and in need of rescue: his gallantry requires her traumatic rupture. Further, the denial of patriarchy ensures someone (read: some man) will perpetrate harm against her. We've discussed that the repetitions of denial facilitate what Mann calls the shame-to-power conversion of patriarchal sovereign masculinity. This operation of masculinity bars both men from overcoming the repetitions of their past trauma *as well as* barring women from *becoming* who they are. Concrete economic, political, and social inequality facilitates if not prescribes the ubiquitous and often deadly violence against women: rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or intimate partner violence, psychological and emotional abuse, suicide, and murder. The statistics remain dismal. Research estimates that:

- 1) At least 23% of female undergraduates in the U.S. have experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct (UN Women figures based on the 2015 AAU Survey);

- 2) More than 1 in 4 women in Washington, D.C. have experienced sexual harassment on the street or public transportation (UN Women figures based in a survey by Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority);
- 3) Up to 70% of women worldwide have experienced domestic violence in their lives (UN Women figures based in WHO studies);
- 4) 82% of women lawmakers have experienced harassing psychological violence while serving their terms, mostly through social media in the form of “death, rape, assault, or abduction threats towards them and their families” (UN Women figures based in a study by the Inter-Parliamentary Union);
- 5) Women suffer major depression at nearly twice the rate of men (UN Women figures based in WHO studies; also, Seedat et al 2009);
- 6) Women attempt suicide nearly four times more frequently than men, though women are far less likely to complete their suicide than men due to differences in lethality of method (Chang et al 2011; Spicer and Miller 2000);
- 7) Half of all global homicides against women are committed by her intimate partner or a family member, compared to only 6% rate of fatal intimate partner or family violence among male murder victims (UN Women figures based in UN Office on Drugs and Crime study).²⁰

These are very real figures of the violence faced by women in patriarchal ontology. With rare exception, each instance is a tragic product of the illusion of nature: we have been ‘duped’ by our collective lack of imagination. On an existential view, the world of men is violent, even in the most mundane ways, because the denial of patriarchal ontology seductively fools men and women into their gendered destinies and the repetitions of denial maintain this division. He must become and remain invulnerable, virile, and

²⁰ UN Women has a compilation of contemporary research on violence *against* women at “Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women,” *UN Women*, last updated August 2017 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures#notes> accessed September 2017. For research into rates of depression by gender, see Soraya Seedat, Kate Margaret Scott, Matthias C. Angermeyer, et al. “Cross-national associations between gender and mental disorders in the World Health Organization World Mental Health Surveys.” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 66.7 (July 2009): 785-795. For research on rates of suicide by gender, see Bernard Chang, David Gitlin, Ronak Patel, “The Depressed Patient and Suicidal Patient in the Emergency Department: Evidence-Based Management and Treatment Strategies,” *Emergency Medicine Practice*, 13.9 (Sept 2011): 1-24; Rebecca S. Spicer and Ted R. Miller, “Suicide Acts in 8 States: Incidence and Case Fatality Rates by Demographics and Method,” *American Journal of Public Health* 90.12 (Dec. 2000): 1885-1891.

aggressive activity and that she must become and remain his passive object for the taking (or giving, as in the case of many arranged child and adult marriages historical and contemporary²¹). Beauvoir writes:

...it must not be concluded that her ovaries condemn her to living on her knees eternally. Virile aggressiveness is a lordly privilege only within a system where everything conspires to affirm masculine sovereignty; and woman *feels* so deeply passive in the love act only because she already *thinks* of herself that way. (Beauvoir 2010, 763)

This may sound harsh or even victim-blaming to contemporary readers, but Beauvoir's point is that patriarchal ontology and its concrete manifestations in political, economic, social, and institutional practices conspire to affirm sexual violence. Said another way, the denials of patriarchy bring women to think and experience themselves as victims, leaving them prone to future re-victimization. It is in sexual 'combat' that men and women "are fighting their own self, projecting onto their partner the part of themselves they repudiate"—the man projecting his own passivity and flesh onto her and the woman, even in the very act of her frozen helplessness, projects her own activity into him (Beauvoir 2010, 763). Often, he facilitates her passivity with drugs, demands it with emotional abuse, forces it physically—he *takes* her world-making capacities.²²

But woman is only lost, or abandoned, in so much as we remain shackled by our denial to the patriarchal illusions of nature.

Beauvoir admits that these illusions of nature are alluring, as they must be in order to tempt us from our freedom. Though *The Second Sex* is a study of gender, Beauvoir understands that patriarchal ontology's fallacy of nature has wrought other oppressions through history: racist American slavery and religiously sanctioned child mutilation. The harms of these two oppressions seemed clear and publicly acknowledged, at least from her perspective as a French woman writing in the 1940s, and she invokes them as comparison to the harms and beauty of 'feminine charm' in a spirit of coalition-

²¹ See Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975): 157-210. Also, Chris Baynes, "More than 200,000 Children Married in US over the Last 15 Years," *Independent* 8 July 2017. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/200000-children-married-us-15-years-child-marriage-child-brides-new-jersey-chris-christie-a7830266.html> (accessed September 2015).

²² He takes her world-making capacity rendering her passive and frozen even in the most mundane creepy and seemingly heroic ways as explored by Bonnie Mann in "Creepers, Heroes, Flirts, and Allies."

building. She grants to adherents of patriarchal ontology that the world of men has created an enticing ‘beauty,’ but that like the charms of the plantation or the Sistine castrati, these charms must be sacrificed. She writes:

It is true that by doing away with slave markets, we destroyed those great plantations lined with azaleas and camellias, we dismantled the whole delicate Southern civilization; old lace was put away in the attics of time along with the pure timbres of the Sistine castrati, and there is a certain ‘feminine charm’ that risks turning to dust as well. I grant that only a barbarian would not appreciate rare flowers, lace, the crystal clear voice of a eunuch, or feminine charm. When shown in her splendor, the ‘charming woman’ is a far more exalting object than ‘the idiotic paintings, over-doors, decors, circus backdrops, sideboards, or popular illuminations’ that maddened Rimbaud; adorned with the most modern artifices, worked on with the newest techniques, she comes from the remotest ages, from Thebes, Minos, Chichén Itzá²³; and she is also the totem planted in the heart of the African jungle; she is a helicopter and she is a bird; and here is the greatest wonder: beneath her painted hair, the rustling of leaves becomes a thought and words escape from her breasts. Men reach out their eager hands to the marvel; but as soon as they grasp it, it vanishes; the wife and the mistress speak like everyone else, with their mouths: their words are worth exactly what they are worth: their breasts as well. Does such a fleeting miracle—and one so rare—justify perpetuating a situation that is so damaging for both sexes? *The beauty of flowers and women’s charms can be appreciated for what they are worth; if these treasures are paid for with blood or misery, one must be willing to sacrifice them.* (Beauvoir 2010, 764; my emphasis)

The azaleas of the ante-bellum South and women’s charms, along with today’s New Jim Crow prison-made and women-worn Victoria’s Secret underwear, are “fleeting miracle[s]” that do not justify the “situation that is so damaging for both sexes” and for all constructed races. Woman’s thoughts and words betray her present, albeit stifled, subjectivity beneath her pretty, objectified veneer. She is just like everyone else, not a singular, unique Venus but rather a generic copy of Woman. It would be one thing to live in a world of beautiful women, but we live in a world that demands she pay for beauty in

²³ Above, I noted in the previous section, María Lugones’ research in decolonial theory highlights some pre-colonial indigenous cultures were not based on the same violent binaries of sex as the Western colonizers. Of the Mayan culture, she writes that they recognized homosexuals in positive terms and practiced ritualized sodomy (Lugones 2007, 200 and 201). Though Beauvoir’s own information is likely filtered through Spanish colonial records, she is here referencing the Mayan practice of sacrificing young women by throwing them into sinkhole wells so the Mayans’ water resource would be blessed and ensured by the gods. Today, we have archeological evidence of the practice. See “Chichén Itzá” in *National Geographic* 15 November 2012 <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/world-heritage/chichen-itza/> (accessed September 2017).

the World of Men with her blood and misery. This is unacceptable. We must be willing to sacrifice the dangerous, albeit temptingly beautiful, illusions of nature: the illusions of race, the illusions of the child, the illusions of sex.

However, sacrifices (as well as a woman's historical self-renunciation) only have meaning towards a future human goal. In her "Myths" chapter, Beauvoir writes, "Sacrifice and renunciations have meaning only in the light of an aim, a human aim, and aims that go beyond singular love or personal happiness can only exist in a world that recognizes the price of both love and happiness" (Beauvoir 2010, 227-228). As I stated previously, this aim Beauvoir seeks is *reciprocal, free, ambiguous, intersubjective human relations of meaning-making*. This meaning-making process is, in many ways, the process of bringing immemorialized trauma 'in' to the narrative arc of our lives. It is to share stories and reconnect with others. The snares of patriarchal ontology, however, inhibit women from the self-assurance necessary for generously aiming for that goal, the goal of her own freedom and fulfilling her human, world-making potential.

In the introduction to this chapter, I briefly discussed Beauvoir's diagnosis that women of today do not possess the *self-assurance* necessary to *forget* themselves in order to generously aim for their *becoming*. I reviewed three female characters in *The Mandarins*, Nadine, Paula, and Anne. Nadine occupies the misfortunate place of not understanding she is a woman and behaves in a manner similar to what Nancy Bauer terms the 'Lady Power' of today's young women²⁴: making themselves alluringly feminine objects available for men while staunchly demanding human respect. Nadine neither accepts her femininity nor pursues her transcendence, eventually succumbing to her feminine role as wife and mother, even if somewhat rebelliously. Paula completely *loses* herself to the illusions of nature, the illusions of the virtues of femininity. And Anne fails to find fulfillment in her personal and professional undertakings. Along with many of today's trauma survivors, these female protagonists share in common a lack of self-assurance. It is now prudent to return to the quote from Beauvoir's "Independent Woman" chapter quoted in the introduction to this chapter in greater length:

²⁴ Nancy Bauer offers this analysis through a critique of the early Lady Gaga in "Lady Power," *The New York Times Opinionator Blogs: The Stone* (20 June 2010) <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/lady-power/> (accessed October 2017).

The greatest failure a lack of self-assurance brings about is that the subject cannot forget himself. He does not generously aim for a goal: he tries to prove he is worth what is demanded of him. Throwing oneself boldly toward goals risks setbacks: but one also attains unexpected results; prudence necessarily leads to mediocrity. It is rare to see in the woman a taste for adventure, gratuitous experience, or disinterested curiosity; she seeks ‘to build a career’ the way others construct a happy life; she remains dominated, invested by the male universe, she lacks the audacity to break through the ceiling, she does not passionately lose herself in her projects; she still considers her life an immanent enterprise: she aims not for an object, but through an object for her subjective success. [...] They constantly look back to see how far they have come: this curbs their drive. They can have honorable careers with such methods, but will not accomplish great things. It should be said that many men too are only able to build mediocre careers. It is only in relation to the best of them that the woman—with very rare exceptions—seems to us still to be bringing up the rear. The reasons I have given sufficiently explain this and do not in any way compromise the future. To do great things, today’s woman needs above all forgetfulness of self: but to forget oneself one must first be solidly sure that one has already found oneself. Newly arrived in the world of men, barely supported by them, the woman is still much too busy looking for herself. [...] The desire for a feminine destiny—a husband, a home, children—and the spell of love are not always easily reconcilable with the desire to succeed. (Beauvoir 2010, 739-41; my emphasis)

At long last, newly emerging into the world of men as *subjects*, women face tremendous challenges of self-assurance necessary to generously aim for the goal of freedom that can only give meaning to the sacrifice of gendered destiny. She hesitates to *sacrifice* because she is not self-assured, she is not yet confident in what she will receive back—she does not have faith in herself that she will receive herself back (cf. Kierkegaard’s ‘knight of faith’ in *Fear and Trembling*). She does not yet understand authentic faith realizes “the present is not a potential past” but rather “the moment of choice and action” and “one always projects himself toward something, toward the future.” Instead, she remains tempted by bad faith, “to put [herself] ‘outside’” of the world of meaning-making, which “is still a way of living the inescapable fact that one is inside” (Beauvoir 1976, 76). Perhaps she remains blind to her betrayal or trembles in withdrawn solitude at the all-too-present memories of her trauma. Perhaps she just tries to get through her day. Rather than utilizing her career, if she has one, as a means to build her world, she instead views it as a means to simply survive. Her trepidation of having faith in herself toward her future is not baseless: patriarchal ontology has *taken* her without *giving* her back. She does not enjoy *reciprocal* relations because she is a human animal whose active human agency has

been denied, leaving her an animal entrapped in her own passivity. Through millennia, she has renounced her world-making capacities to man for *his world* and he never reciprocally recognized her as human, only as *his woman*, his object to dominate and consume. As his object, she does not yet *possess* herself to be able to *renounce* the satisfaction of her mere being by losing herself in her projects. For her, today as in Beauvoir's day, it is a great material and psychological achievement to simply *be*.

Barred so long from the ability to carve out *her own* life, she is grateful for the mere opportunity and seeks to protect her own private personal love and happiness rather than affirm her freedom by creating a public world with others. She does not yet *risk* herself *generously* but is instead stuck by an inferiority complex of mediocrity in her career and enticed by her desire for her 'feminine destiny' of a husband, child, and white-picket fence. Greatness is not necessarily incompatible with her family life, but the remaining sedimented patriarchal structure of contemporary family life often presents a significant hindrance that must be overcome. She tries to prove she is worthy of her new status, rather than striving beyond it. Even if finally recognized in the world of men as a singular woman, she may dwell in her own vanity (i.e., Kim Kardashian or Elizabeth Taylor). Constantly reminded of her historical inferiority, she may be unable to forget herself. It is not enough for a single, exceptional woman—such as Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, or Hillary Clinton—to sacrifice her gendered destiny and go beyond it. The exceptional woman is often reproached, resented, and harassed for her achievements. Her sacrifice alone is not enough. It must be accompanied by the sacrifices of men, women, everyone. There must be a *collective* sacrifice of the certainties of gendered destiny that eschew the fear and trembling of *becoming* so that traumatized women do not remain bound by the illusions of nature and may instead enter into the 'normal'²⁵ repetitious cycle of human freedom: possessing herself, losing herself, and possessing herself again.

As Beauvoir has demonstrated, patriarchal ontology presents a fallacious definition of woman that binds her destiny to her biology and her mystery as a constructed Other. In the "Conclusion" to *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir emphasizes that woman is human, like men, and she is thus defined "by the way she grasps, through foreign consciousnesses, her body and her relation to the world." The difference that

²⁵ Cf. the first epigraph quotation of this chapter by Lady Gaga.

separates young men and women is a constructed one “purposely dug out from early infancy; later it would be impossible to keep woman from being what she *was made*, and she will always trail this past behind her.” Understanding that woman *was made* by human men makes it “obvious that her destiny is not fixed in eternity” even if it remains difficult to pinpoint the origins of her historical subordination (Beauvoir 2010, 761). In addition to acknowledging rather than denying her human potential, the weight of the history of patriarchal ontology must be acknowledged in her overcoming.

Beauvoir writes that while modifications to her economic status are necessary to her freedom, they are not sufficient. She must continue to pursue her rise, a rise provided by the free revolt of those who came before her and the changes they fostered, to contribute to building a world where she does not face impediments to her freedom due to her gender (Beauvoir 2010, 764). She must work to ensure the changes to her economic situation “brings about the moral, social, and cultural consequences it heralds and requires” so that “the new woman” may “appear” (Beauvoir 2010, 761). Her rise must herald her creation of a *new ontology* that allows her to Exist beyond her mere survival. She must “shed her own skin,” sacrifice the destiny imposed on her and “cut her own clothes.” She, however, cannot do this alone:

She will only be able to do this if there is a collective change. No one teacher can today shape a ‘female human being’ that would be an exact homologue to the ‘male human being’: if raised like a boy, the young girl feels she is an exception, and that subjects her to a new kind of specification. Stendahl understood this, saying: ‘The forest must be planted all at once.’ But if we suppose, by contrast, a society where sexual equality is concretely realized, this equality would newly assert itself in each individual. (Beauvoir 2010, 761)

Beauvoir continues to write that such a society of concretely realized sexual equality would treat the little girl from her very first moments with “the same demands and honors, the same severity and freedom, as her brothers, taking part in the same studies and games, promised the same future, surrounded by women and men who are unambiguously equal to her;” in which case her psychology would be profoundly modified. She would not envy the boy for his penis nor be soothed by a promise of her future child; she would not develop “an ‘inferiority complex’; correlatively, the boy would not have a natural ‘superiority complex’ if it were not instilled in him and if he held women in the same esteem as men.” She would not desire to be an object for her

father, but rather seek to emulate him *as well as her mother*. “The mother would enjoy the same lasting prestige as the father if she assumed equal material and moral responsibility for the couple; the child would feel an androgynous world around her and not a masculine world.” She would feel that her sex does not doom her to passivity and inactivity, but she would instead feel in her very body a capacity to grasp and shape the world. Rather than succumbing to “the brutal descent into femininity” in puberty, she would ‘surpass’ it “toward a free adult future.” She would embrace her eroticism rather than feeling it to be a crisis. Moreover, she should be educated *with* boys so that “the august mystery of Man,” that is ‘Woman,’ “would have no occasion to arise.” Little boys and little girls would come to know one another in each other’s humanity. And the young heterosexual woman might seek a partner, rather than a “male demigod.” Such a society can be created not simply by “abolishing the contingencies and miseries of the human condition but of giving her the means to go beyond them” (Beauvoir 2010, 761-762). There must be a collective world-building that facilitates her “favorable development” so that her sacrifice of gendered destiny may be justified. The revolt of her ancestors has brought “men, in their own interest [...] to partially emancipate women.” He must go beyond these measures and sacrifice the all-too-soothing-certainty of the destiny of invulnerability that his myth of Woman provides him. So too must today’s women *continue* to sacrifice the meaning provided by the world of men.

Today’s courageous and faithful women “need only pursue their rise, and the success they obtain encourages them; it seems most certain that they will sooner or later attain perfect economic and social equality, which will bring about an inner metamorphosis” (Beauvoir 2010, 764). Her economic and political rise will create a world in which she can be *recognized* as in her own humanity because she will live with others who are willing to recognize her for what she *does* and who she *becomes*. She will be *self-assured* and capable of losing herself to become great.

Conclusion

Despite changes brought by the feminist movement between Beauvoir’s 1940s France and our location in today’s present-day America, “today’s woman is [and remains] torn between the past and the present” (Beauvoir 2010, 761). She is caught

between the tempting, habitual, and historically sedimented familiarity of patriarchal ontology and affirming her present freedom into the future. She is caught in an ambiguity between her destiny of self-abdication in a frozen present and her *becoming* human through repetitious repetition, through constant conversion. She is caught between the fatalistic repetitions of denial and the free repetitions of overcoming. Only the latter can offer the ‘forgetting’ that she most needs.

Her courage to affirm her freedom must not only grapple with the fear the element of future uncertainty her generous risk and sacrifice brings, but she must also overcome the very real and present violence toward her that seeks to enforce her gendered destiny in the world of men. Assertively, Beauvoir writes, “We will not let ourselves be intimidated by the number and violence of attacks against women; nor be fooled by the self-serving praise showered on the ‘real woman’; nor be won over by men’s enthusiasm for her *destiny*, a destiny they would not for the world want to share” (Beauvoir 2010, 15; my emphasis). We must not be intimidated by the ubiquity of sexual violence on our campuses and in our greater world. We must not be lured by the temptation to stay in the place carved for us by the World of Men. We must fight against his over-gratuitous gestures to rescue us in his seemingly benevolent ‘compelled disclosure’ (i.e., required reporting policies). We must persevere in our creation of a world that allows women and those traumatized by patriarchal ontology to ‘cut our own clothes,’ to *become* who we are. To have space and time to develop trust in the recognition we receive from others, to do the work of trauma healing in order to become secure in our *self-assurance* so that we may lose ourselves in the *doing* of our projects and come to *possess* ourselves by it.

Men too must sacrifice. Courageous women must also be met by the courage of men who are willing to “sacrifice all the benefits they derive from the myth” of Woman. This requires accepting the *risk* of freedom’s vulnerable uncertainty so that men too might affirm their freedom in authentic, intersubjective human reciprocal recognition. Even the most progressive men, such as campus administrators and policymakers, may be unwilling to make such a sacrifice because “they know what they lose by relinquishing the woman of their dreams,” they would lose their privileged destiny of invulnerability, “but they do not know what the woman of tomorrow will bring them” (Beauvoir 2010, 14). We need to relinquish the comfort of denial and the illusions bestowed by gendered

destinies to instead accept, even embrace, the open, uncertain future of humanity. Beauvoir is confident, that if men and women of today “assumed” the ambiguity of their human condition “with lucid modesty, as the correlate of authentic pride, they would recognize each other as peers and live [even their] erotic drama in harmony” (Beauvoir 2010, 763). They would recognize that:

The fact of being human is infinitely more important than all the singularities that distinguish human beings; it is never the given that confers superiority: ‘virtue,’ as the ancients called it, is defined at the level of ‘what depends on us.’ The same drama of the flesh and spirit, and of finitude and transcendence, plays itself out in both sexes; both are eaten away by time, stalked by death, they have the same essential need of the other; and they can take the same glory from their freedom; if they knew how to savor it, they would no longer be tempted to contend for false privileges, and fraternity could then be born between them” (Beauvoir 2010, 763).

Their sacrifice of gender destiny would be justified through the creation of a world of intersubjective reciprocal reciprocity. This new world would not do away with desire or love: it would replace the fleeting fabrications of Man’s Woman with authentic, reciprocal, intersubjective generous recognition.

The bodies and pleasures of women and her eroticism will not cease to exist; they will exist both for herself *and for him as well*. Beauvoir writes:

First of all, certain differences between man and woman will always exist; her eroticism, and thus her sexual world, possessing a singular form, cannot fail to engender in her a sensuality, a singular sensitivity, her relation to her body, to the male body, and to the child will never be the same as those man has with his body, with the female body, and with the child; those who talk so much about ‘equality in difference’ would be hard put not to grant me that there are differences in equality. [...] restoring woman’s singular sovereignty will not remove the emotional value from amorous embraces. [...] *To emancipate woman is to refuse to enclose her in the relations she sustains with man, but not to deny them; while she posits herself for herself, she will nonetheless continue to exist for him as well*: recognizing each other as subject, each will remain an *other* for the other; reciprocity in their relations will not do away with the miracles that the division of human beings into two separate categories engenders... (Beauvoir 2010, 765-66)

Sacrificing the destinies of gender will not eliminate the ‘miracles’ of sex difference, rather we will receive these miracles back. Through history and into today’s present, we have possessed meanings of human freedom in the abstract form of patriarchal ontology. Forgetting, in our era, must entail the risky individual and collective sacrifice of the

destinies of gender to overcome patriarchal ontology. We must lose ourselves and the meanings given to our identities in our present moment, forget them through our sacrifice, so we might then *truly and concretely* possess our human freedom. Together through our own activity, we will build a world not only for future generations but also for *ourselves*. We will *become* excellent.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION:

REPEATING THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE OF PHILOSOPHY

I have said before that this dissertation is about trauma's denial and its overcoming. But this dissertation has also been a speech on love. I've told the ancient story of a bad relationship with Nike and how this 'love of victory' brings out the worst in us. Domination and denial. I have provided a feminist recollection of Plato's ancient critique of this *philonikian* 'manliness' of patriarchy and the denials inherent to it. Racialized in the modern era, we have discussed that denial remains a central motor to the contemporary iteration of racialized patriarchy. Denial warps time such that past traumas are relived in the present without our conscious awareness—we literally "Just Do It" whether we freeze, fight, or flee in response to traumatic triggers or even, possibly, in seeking rage-filled vengeance. The self-defensive denial of institutions and bystanders only feeds into the "desire to forget" and denials of victims (Stern 2010, 144-145). Individual and institutional denial results in a repetition of the past in the present magnifying the risk of traumatic triggering, self-harm, re-victimization, and active and passive perpetration. We discussed that denial remains a central motor to the operation of what Bonnie Mann terms "sovereign masculinity" in the era of racialized patriarchy, perpetuating colonial patriarchal ontologies placing 'white men' and 'white women' 'in' time and 'black males' and 'black females' 'out' of time (cf. Burke 2019 and Lugones 2007). And we have discussed the operation of the repetitions of denial upholding racialized patriarchy in the case example of Jane Doe and the institutional betrayals of the 'University of Nike' *par excellence*. These denials continue to reverberate throughout the institution.

Be we have also discussed the possibilities of a different lover: wise Sophia. In addition to Plato's ancient critique of *philonikian* 'manliness,' I also offered his *philosophy* of the temporality of human overcoming. This 'love of wisdom' is a 'strong' and 'courageous,' or 'manly,' love that is able to care for the pieces of our soul that remain traumatized by past memory. It is the birth of a good-spirit (*eudaimonia*, εὐδαιμονία) to accompany our past traumatized selves in order to 'forget' or table them as

we traverse into our life in the aftermath of trauma. His philosophy and, likely, his original Academy was guided by a pursuit of the truth with others motivated by love rather than desire to win an argument or competition. While the contemporary American academy was built by men of the nineteenth century to ‘mirror’ and ‘progress’ from the ancient Greeks, I suspect that if our contemporary universities actually strove to mirror rather than distort with racialized patriarchal bias the philosophy of Plato’s ancient academy, the institutional betrayals and denials observed in the case of Jane Doe would not have happened (see Winterer 2002; Syrett 2009; Bluestone 1994; and Townsend 2017). This is not to romanticize the ancient past or claim a final fixed interpretation of its philosophy. Rather, it is to observe the value of Plato’s original academy that was itself produced in response to the traumas of war, sexual violence, migration, and disease that brought the patriarchal, xenophobic, democracy of Athens to its knees. It is this ancient patriarchal, xenophobic, democratic society in denial that our own society has romanticized and laid as its foundation. Both democracies were and are mired in the traumas of war, sexual violence, migration, and disease while teetering on and occasionally plunging over the brink into oligarchical tyranny.

We further delineated the ‘forgetting’ of the repetitions of denial from the ‘forgetting’ of the repetitions of overcoming with Simone de Beauvoir’s twentieth-century French feminist existentialist philosophy of freedom. The former is a ‘forgetting’ that flees the ambiguities of our human freedom, abandoning the traumatized self in its ruptured, fragmented, and alienated state in favor of the all-too-comforting gendered destinies of patriarchal ontology. The latter, however, sacrifices the comfort of patriarchy’s denial and gendered destinies. This includes the sacrifice of the calculating certainty of the future, a sacrifice of the “Just Do It” that refuses to recollect the past for fear doing so might mean “taking our eyes off the future” (Schill interview in Jacoby 2015). Beauvoir offers a philosophy of freedom as a repetitious repetition or constant conversion of possessing self-assurance of oneself, losing or forgetting oneself in one’s projects, and finding oneself thereby recognized by others for what one *does* in those projects. This is a constant process and we very likely might fail. But she also admits that one must first *find* or *recollect* one’s self in order to ‘forget’ or ‘lose’ oneself, and so her philosophy of freedom and overcoming entails both a sacrifice and the process of

recollection. From this sacrifice and recollection, we might begin to make new meaning in the present towards an open future.

While written in vastly different time periods, the philosophies of both Plato and Beauvoir both emerge in the aftermath of tremendous traumatic horror. Written in the aftermath of the horrors of the Peloponnesian War and World War II respectively, both observe the problem of the denial inherent to patriarchal ideals of manly victorious domination. They also both offer a philosophy of overcoming this patriarchal denial that entails a process of recollection and loving rebirth in order to best ‘forget’ ourselves in becoming who we are. It is also my hope that I have demonstrated the resonance of these philosophies not only with theories of trauma in the field of psychology, but also critiques of racialized patriarchy in operation within and without the contemporary academy as well as efforts of solidarity to overcome them.

So, what would it mean to sacrifice the comforts of *philonikian* racialized patriarchy and its denials? Well, it is for us to mindfully and imaginatively pursue this idea together as we go forward. But I do have a few thoughts, which I have organized along Judith Herman’s useful rubrics of trauma’s overcoming. The guiding principle as we go forward must be centering the agency of survivors; to be good, supportive midwives to a process that only the individual survive can undertake for themselves. Due to concerted efforts by campus feminist and decolonial thinkers along with ambivalent administrators, the University of Oregon implemented policies shifting from a “required reporting” policy that essentially compelled university faculty and employees to report disclosures of sexual and racist violence to administrators regardless of the disclosing survivors’ wishes to a “responsible reporting” policy making the majority of faculty and employees bound by the survivor’s decision-making (Holland, Cortina, Freyd 2018). But we have also witnessed the precarity of even the most well-intentioned policies in the repetition of the institutional denial of contemporary racialized patriarchy in the institutional response to the 2016 investigation of another University basketball player for sexual assault (see Jacoby 21 June 2017; Jacoby 25 Oct. 2017; and Jacoby 7 Dec. 2017).

It seems clear to me that in order to establish safety on our college campuses, we have to do our best to get out of the toxic co-dependent love relationship with Nike. Academia has become a shrine to the worship of Nike and her values of victorious

domination, resulting in a co-dependency between the academic institution and the corporate powers that bear her name. We must do our best to sever this dependency on the love of Nike and the denials inherent to its operation. This would include materially restructuring the academy to be properly funded through public investment rather than private, money-making donors. It might be easy to look to the contemporary European model that publicly funds academic institutions so they may be attended for little-to-no fee and places high-stakes athletic competition outside of the realms of academia, where players may be compensated and even unionized in their athletic labor. However, I fear that this suggestion is in danger of replicating coloniality. That sexual and racial violence continue to permeate the halls of academia and sports stadiums in Europe should give us pause as we consider possibilities in the American environment. Eliminating sports from academia, as the European model does, only places *philonikian* masculinity ‘out’ of step with academic pursuit rather than a phenomenon of values to be transcended ‘within’ it. And it may only have the material effect in the American context of eliminating possibilities of a kind of ‘Robin Hood’ effect whereby scholars and advocates utilize the monies of corporate global oppressors, such as Phil Knight, to advance critical curriculum on race, gender, and class as well as administer crucial social services to students and the community.

We need boundaries in our relationship with Nike and other top university donors to protect the overall *philosophical* value and mission of academia from the money-making, *philonikian* desires of white male oligarchs. Today, oligarchs beholden to racialized patriarchy rule in the city of academia as well as Washington, D.C. We must change this so that we might have more public funding in academia, so we need not be as dependent upon the private interests of top independent donors. In the meantime, we need to take pragmatic precautions in our relationship with Nike and top donors to protect the value and mission of academia, which is the voluntary pursuit in common with others of the good life through discerning and loving recollection of the past and the birthing of the good-spirit. Historically marginalized voices must be given the space, resources, and opportunity to take the lead in these discussion as we go forward.

We must also cultivate the ability to patiently listen to our corporal and social body. We must learn to endure listening to the conversations, fears, and questions raised

by traumatic events and their triggering, rather than hushing them in our rush to preserve the destinies of the future. We must take time building our strength to be able to listen to and recollect the parts of ourselves that remain terrorized by the past; to take time to narrativize our trauma rather than abandoning it so it may only haunt us. This includes taking the time to acknowledge the history of racist, decolonial, patriarchal, and ableist violence and placing these many traumas in history. This is why curriculum that teaches the history and lasting implications of racialized patriarchy is so important.

And finally, we must continue to reconnect with others through storytelling and creative communal action. We must “open up rather than close down discussions of rape culture” and critically approach the “systematic policies of disavowal and denial” that contribute to it (Oliver 2016, 156 and 150). Such discussion and approaches occurred in a tidal wave at the University of Oregon campus and elsewhere in the years 2014 and 2015. And the wave continues to surge with the continuation of the 2014 #BlackLivesMatter movement as well as the #MeToo, #TimesUp, and #MarchForOurLives movements newly emergent in the wake of the election of Donald J. Trump to the Presidency of the United States. As we continue to march forward in time across the Plains of Forgetting and the River of Uncaring, we would do best to remember these lessons of the entrapment of *philonike*'s repetitions of trauma's denial and the free possibilities of *philosophy*'s repetitions of overcoming.

APPENDIX
THE DRAMATIC DATES OF PLATO'S DIALOGUES WITHIN THE HISTORICAL
TIMELINE OF THE GREEKS AT WAR

This timeline contextualizes the dramatic actions of Plato's dialogues within the history of the ancient Greeks at war. I begin with the introduction of democracy in Athens, just prior to the Persian war so readers might better contextualize Plato's concerns about democracy and references to Aristides I 'The Just' as well as his underlying criticism of Aristophanes' conceptualization of peace. I continue through the periods of peace and the 'First' and 'Second' Peloponnesian Wars to Plato's founding of the Academy and the conclusion of the Corinthian War. In assembling this timeline, I have relied on the narrative of Thucydides with the historical scholarship of G.E.M. de Ste. Croix (1972) and Madeleine Henry (1997) as well as Debra Nails' important work situating the dramatic actions of Plato's dialogues within their historical setting. The reader will note that *Gorgias* is set throughout the Peloponnesian War, though there are a variety of date indicators as Nails observes. *Laws* and *Philebus* have no particular dramatic date within or without the Peloponnesian War. I have excluded works in which there is dispute about Plato's primary authorship. The timeline is by no means exhaustive, for example, not every battle during the wars is listed here as I have highlighted only those events I have found vital to understanding what memories Plato may be 'recollecting' in relation to his critique of traumatizing masculinity and his philosophy of becoming good, or overcoming, in the aftermath.

~510/507BC Athens transitions to democratic rule.

499BC Beginning of the Persian War: The Greek hegemonic city-states of Athens and Sparta form an alliance to protect Greece from the advancing imperial attacks of the Persians. The alliance between Athens and Sparta would splinter and devolve into the First Peloponnesian War before the end of the Greco-Persian conflict.

490BC Battle of Marathon: This legendary land battle demonstrated the triumph of the Greeks fighting in heavy hoplite armor (*hoplomachia*, ὀπλομαχία) against the artillery of the Persian archers. Stesilaus, the lover of political rivals Aristides I 'The Just' and Themistocles, dies in this battle.

While Themistocles was an embezzler and friend of oligarchs, Aristides I ‘The Just’ was known an honest, humble public servant, as some would say to a fault as his resulting independent poverty upon his death left his children dependent on the city-state of Athens, with the financial support of Alcibiades II.

In Plato’s *Laches*, set in the winter of 424BC, the mediocre son of Aristides I, Lysimachus, asks whether *hoplomachia* would help his own son, Aristides II, become a real man. The then-generals Nikias and Laches says yes and no respectively, and Laches invokes the image of one hoplite ‘Stesilaus’ struggling in actual warfare. Socrates transforms the question from whether *hoplomachia* will help young men become ‘manly’ to contemplating how to add virtue to the soul. Both the inquiry into the glory of *hoplomachia* as contributing to the virtues associated with ‘real men’ and the reference to Stesilaus might reasonably be interpreted as references to the Battle of Marathon.

- 472/1BC Themistocles, the navy-builder of Athens and political rival of Aristides ‘The Just,’ is ostracized for anti-Spartan activities.
- 470BC The midwife, Phaenarete, gives birth to Socrates of Alopece with her husband, Sophroniscus the sculptor.
- 463/2BC Cimon, the leader of Athens, is audited, prosecuted by the so-elected Pericles for bribery, and acquitted (Nails 2002, 225).
- 462BC Cimon continues to pursue a two-state hegemony between Athens and Sparta (Ste. Croix 1972, 172-178).
- 460BC Beginning of the First Peloponnesian War: The Spartan-allied city of Megara turns to Athens for aid defending itself from the aggression of fellow Sparta-allied Corinth. Corinth and Megara were located on opposite sides of the geographic land-bridge between Sparta and Athens respectively, with the sacred Eleusinian Fields separating Megara from Athens. This territorial and allegiant shift in the balance of power between the two hegemonic city-states was “one of the main immediate causes of the First Peloponnesian War” (Ste. Croix 1972, 100 and 181).
- 458BC Allegiance between Athens and the Sicilian city-state of Egesta is formed.
- 450s BC Aspasia, the beautiful and well-educated *heteara* from Miletus, travels from her home coast of now-Asia Minor to the city of Athens with her sister and her sister’s new Athenian husband, Alcibiades II.
- 450/1BC The Citizenship Law of Athens: The city of Athens breaks out in plague due to overcrowding as an influx of war refugees and new immigrants, such as Aspasia and her sister, seek safety with its city walls. In response,

Pericles limits Athenian citizenship to individuals whose parents were both Athenian citizens, barring from citizenship the children born between Athenian citizens out of wedlock (i.e., bastards) and the children of *metics* or foreigners, regardless of parental marital status.

- August 450BC Dramatic date of Plato's *Parmenides*, the earliest in dramatic dating of his dialogues, where a twenty-year old Socrates defends his theory of the forms against the then-well-established philosopher, Parmenides.
- 450/446BC Aspasia and Pericles I begin their intimate relationship.
- 449BC End of the Persian War.
- 447-438/2BC Construction of the Parthenon.
- 446BC End of the First Peloponnesian War and beginning of the Thirty Years' Peace: This included the stipulation that Megara be returned to Spartan allegiance. The Thirty Years Peace lasts 15 years.
- 445BC Aspasia gives birth to Pericles II with Pericles I.
- ~443BC or 430BC Cratinus, the Old Comedian, debuts *Cherions*, in which he satirizes Pericles I and Aspasia and begins the tradition of blaming the presence of *anandreia* (unmanliness) in public for the war (Henry, 1995, 20-21; also see Nicole Loraux, 1985).
- 441BC Production of Sophocles' *Antigone*.
- 440BC Samian Revolt: The island-city of Samos attacks the city of Miletus, home of Aspasia, over the territory of Priene. Despite its support from the Persians, the island-city of Samos appeals to Sparta for aid. This would constitute a breach of the peace, which was forestalled by the city of Corinth and its diplomacy rallying Spartan-allied rejection of the escalation of war.
- 433/432BC Megarian Decree: Pericles I issues the Megarian decree in response to the impious (*asebeia*, ἀσεβεία) cultivation of the Eleusinian Fields, land sacred to the goddesses Demeter and Persephone, located between Megara and Athens. Ste. Croix speculates the cultivation of the Eleusinian Fields was sponsored by oligarchical Spartan hawks and some Corinthians to provoke Athenian reaction and justification to escalate war. Nevertheless, the city of Corinth reminds Athens of its diplomacy internal to the Spartan alliance in de-escalating conflict during the Samian Revolt of 440BC. Considering the sacrilegious trespass, Pericles' Megarian Decree was a mild, defensive compromise erring on the side of preserving peace: Athens could not win a war, though it could hold its own if attacked (Ste.

Croix 1972, 207-210). Rather than military or economic sanction, Pericles' retribution was that of a symbolic political gesture barring Megarians from Athens' political activities in the *agora* (Ste. Croix 1972, 254-60).

- 432BC The Revolt of Potidaea: The former colony of Corinth, the city of Potidaea, threatens revolt against its allegiance to Athens. Pericles demands all Corinthian magistrates leave the city of Potidaea, fearing their influence. He sends Athenian troops to the city and revolt breaks out soon after. Pericles institutes a siege on the city, leaving its citizens to resort to cannibalism. The siege ends with the stipulation that the Potidaeans abandon their city and live in exile. Seizing the opportunity to regain its colony, the city of Corinth reverses its anti-war stance and convinces Sparta to launch an offensive. Sparta attacks the Athenian troops, including Socrates and Alcibiades III, on their way home from the concluded siege of Potidaea. It is here that the poor, middle-aged, and infamously ugly Socrates saves the young, rich, and famously handsome Alcibiades III along with his heavy hoplite armor. Despite this, Alcibiades rather than Socrates received recognition and Athenian military honor for his brave actions while under Spartan attack (Nails 2002, 265 and 13; see *Symposium* 219e-221b).
- ~433/432BC Dramatic date of Plato's *Protagoras*, where Socrates criticizes traditional kinship and inheritance arrangements and their unjust deficiencies in providing either recognition or material care for children and young adults. The dialogue ends with Plato's budding criticism of unwise and rash ancient norms of 'manliness' (*andreia*, ἀνδρεία; see *Protagoras* 349b-360e).
- 431BC Beginning of the Second Peloponnesian War: Sparta declares war after refusing to negotiate with Pericles I of Athens over the repeal of the Megarian Decree. Pericles I offered to repeal the Decree on the modest condition that Sparta ceased expelling Athenian citizens from the city of Sparta.
- August 3, 431BC Annular solar eclipse lasting roughly 1:05 minutes. Plutarch reports that Pericles I provided a scientific explanation of the eclipse to his fearful troops, instructing them not to interpret the passing of objects as a sign from the gods regarding the success of their military mission.
- 431/0BC Athens institutes semiannual attacks on Megara.
- Winter 430BC Pericles delivers his Funeral Oration in which he lauds bravery of the dead and urges Athenians to honor the courageous manliness (ἀνδρεία) of the dead with restrained grieving practices. This included the explicit articulation of gender norms for both men and women. To the women, he

urged that “the greatest glory of a woman is to be least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticizing you” (Thucydides II.45.2-II46.1).

- 429BC Socrates returns to Athens from Potidaea and the battle of Spartalos with Alcibiades and the remaining Athenian army.
- 429-427BC Spartan siege of Plataea.
- ~429BC With the debut of his first play, *Prospaltians*, the Old Comedian Eupolis continues, if not plagiarizes, the tradition of the comedian Cratinus in his criticism of Aspasia and the presence of *anandreia* in public for the war, referencing her mythological sexual allure (Henry 1995, 22-24).
- 429/8BC Athens enjoys military success in various campaigns.
- ~429/423BC Perictone gives birth to Plato with her husband, Ariston the aristocrat. Perictone was the sister of Charmides and the niece of Socrates’ student Critias, both Charmides and Critias would become leaders in the Thirty Tyrants.
- May
429BC Dramatic date of Plato’s *Charmides*. Socrates discusses the virtue of temperance or moderation with a beautiful young man.
- August
429BC Dramatic date of Plato’s *Timeaus* and *Critias*. Nails notes the difficulty of dating both dialogues, especially in relation to the assumed connection between *Timeaus* and *Republic*. *Timeaus* offers the metaphysical reincarnation mythology of the soul as descendent from the stars in heaven, being rebirthed through bodies in accordance with the virtue demonstrated in previous life. The concept of *hysteria* (ὑστέρᾳ) is also discussed (*Timeaus* 91b-c). *Critias* explores the story of Athens being able to withstand the attacks of Atlantis due to its well-ordered society.
- Autumn Pericles I Dies: After witnessing the horrible deaths by plague¹ of his own

¹ Thucydides details the symptoms and devastating contagiousness of the disease:

People in perfect health suddenly began to have burning feelings in the head; their eyes became red and inflamed; inside their mouths there was bleeding from the throat and tongue, and the breath became unnatural and unpleasant. The next symptoms were sneezing and hoarseness of voice, and before long the pain settled on the chest and was accompanied by coughing. Next the stomach was affected with stomach-aches and with vomitings of every kind of bile that has been given a name by the medical profession, all this being accompanied by great pain and difficulty. In most cases there were attacks of ineffectual retching, producing violent spasms; this sometimes ended with this stage of the disease, but sometimes continued long afterwards. Externally the body was not very hot to the touch, nor was there any pallor: the skin was rather reddish and livid, breaking out into small pustules and ulcers. But inside there was a feeling of burning, so that people could not bear the touch even of the lightest linen clothing, but wanted to be completely naked, and indeed most of all would have liked to plunge into cold water. Many of the sick who were uncared for actually did so, plunging into the water-tanks in an effort to relieve a thirst which

429BC legitimate children, Paralus and Xanthippus, Pericles I himself succumbed to the disease, but not before requesting and receiving special exemption from his own citizenship laws to naturalize and legitimate his son by Aspasia, Pericles II.

With the death of Pericles I, a power-vacuum between the aggressive Cleon, the pious Nicias, and the money-seeking Alcibiades III ensues while Aspasia loses her influence on political affairs. According to Thucydides, Cleon, Nicias, and Alcibiades III reverse Pericles' restrained foreign policy of "bid[ing] her time and [taking] care of her navy, and [doing] nothing to risk the safety of the city itself." Rather than exhibiting restraint and honest leadership, the three generals became demagogues driven by their own desires and fears (Thucydides II.65).

~429-428BC Aspasia engages in an intimate relationship with Lysicles, a sheep-dealer, who became a prominent Athenian statesman before his death in 428BC. Aspasia may have borne a second son, Poristes ('supplier'), with Lysicles (cf. Henry 1995, 43; and Nails 2002, 61). Henry comments that Lysicles

was unquenchable; for it was just the same with them whether they drank much or little. Then all the time they were afflicted with insomnia and the desperate feeling of not being able to keep still.

In the period when the disease was at its height, the body, so far from wasting away, showed surprising powers of resistance to all the agony, so that there was still some strength left on the seventh or eighth day, which was the time when, in most cases, death came from the internal fever. But if people survived this critical period, then the disease descended to the bowels, producing violent ulceration and uncontrollable diarrhea, so that most of them died later as a result of the weakness caused by this. For the disease, first settling in the head, when on to affect every part of the body in turn, and even when people escaped its worst effects, it still left its trace on them by fastening upon the extremities of the body. It affected the genitals, the fingers, and the toes, and many of those who recovered lost the use of these members; some, too, went blind. There were some also who, when they first began to get better, suffered from a total loss of memory, not knowing who they were themselves and being unable to recognize their friends.

[...] though there were many dead bodies lying about unburied, the birds and animals that eat human flesh either did not come near them or, if they did taste the flesh, died of it afterwards. [...]

[...] The most terrible thing of all was the despair into which people fell when they realized that they had caught the plague; for they would immediately adopt an attitude of utter hopelessness, and, by giving in in this way, would lose their powers of resistance. Terrible, too, was the sight of people dying like sheep through having caught the disease as a result of nursing others. This indeed caused more deaths than anything else. For when people were afraid to visit the sick, then they died with no one to look after them; indeed, there were many houses in which all the inhabitants perished through lack of any attention. When, on the other hand, they did visit the sick, they lost their own lives, and this was particularly true of those who made it a point of honour to act properly. Such people felt ashamed to think of their own safety and went into their friends' houses at times when even the members of the household were so overwhelmed by the weight of their calamities that they had actually given up the usual practice of making laments for the dead. Yet still the ones who felt most pity for the sick and dying were those who had had the plague themselves and had recovered from it. They knew what it was like and at the same time felt themselves to be safe, for no one caught the disease twice, or, if he did, the second attack was never fatal. Such people were congratulated on all sides, and they themselves were so elated at the time of their recovery that they fondly imagined that they could never die of any other disease in the future" (Thucydides II.49-51).

may have been taken as evidence for her ‘gift’ in making any man into a successful, ‘real’ man (Henry 1995, 43; see especially 43n48).

- 427BC Nikias captures the Megarian island of Minoa.
- Autumn
425BC Cleon Insults Nikias: Ashamed of his rash and unpopular decision to forego peace with Sparta in favor of his desire to capture Megara, leaving his troops destitute at Pylos, Cleon insults Nikias’ masculinity saying “if only the generals were real men [*andres*, ἄνδρες]” it would have been easy to capture the city and that he might be able to do it better himself. To this, Nikias calls Cleon’s bluff and hands the command over to him. And “[t]he result was that Cleon, finding that there was no longer any possibility of going back on what he had said, undertook to go on the voyage” (Thucydides IV.27-28). Despite his own internal shame and reluctance, the aggressive, ‘manly’ Cleon enjoyed some success.
- 425BC Athens Enjoys Continued Military Success: Under Cleon’s leadership, Athens defeats Sparta at Pylos. Athens enjoys some military success, including capturing the islands and city of Megara, but this success would be short-lived.
- 425BC Aristophanes debuts *The Archarnians* and continues the tradition of Old Comedy blaming Aspasia and *anandreia* for the war. He blames both the Megarian Decree and Aspasia for the war and, through the character Dikaeopolis, articulates his politics of resolving the war with a two-state hegemony. He calls Aspasia a prostitute and accuses her of ‘procuring’ others into the trade. Henry writes, “Once she is defined as the keeper of whores, Aspasia is a woman near the center of government who controls men’s access to women and whose displeasure could bring on war; at the end of the play, order is restored and Dikaeopolis revels with two whores (*Ach.* Lines 1199 to the end).” This trope of the comedic crisis of women at the center of Athenian Politics courses throughout work of Aristophanes as well as other ancient comedians (Ste. Croix 1972, 363-368; Henry 1995, 25-27).
- 424BC Aristophanes debuts *The Knights*.
- 424/423BC The comedian Eupolis debuts *Philoï*, in which he mentions Aspasia’s sexual allure and compares her to myth (Henry 1995, 24).
- March 21,
424BC Annular solar eclipse lasting 4:39 minutes (see Thucydides IV.52).
- Summer
424BC Athens’ Military Luck Turns: Though Nikias leads a successful expedition to Cythera, Athens begins to suffer a series of defeats at Megara and Boetia.

- Autumn
424BC The Battle of Delium: This battle featured the first deaths by ‘friendly fire’ recorded in human history. These deaths were caused by confusion among Athenian hoplites while marching. These deaths may have been prevented had Athenian troops trained communally, as the Spartans did, rather than furnishing its troops with independently trained citizens. It is at this battle that the middle-aged Socrates saves the general Laches by retreating from the chaotic bloodbath (*Symposium*, 221a). This loss would mark a turning point in the war: Athens had enjoyed some success under Pericles, Nikias, and Cleon until this point. Athens’ luck begins to end.
- Winter
424BC Dramatic dating of Plato’s *Laches*.
- ~424/3BC Thucydides (the historian) is exiled for twenty years for his failure to prevent the Spartan capture of the city of Amphipolis while a general of Athens with substantial political, military, and economic influence in the region. It is during this time that he wrote his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, generally regarded as one of the first written histories in human history (Thucydides IV. 118-120 and V.26-27).
- 424-422BC The Battle of Amphipolis: This battle experienced a period of armistice in 423BC, foolishly broken by Cleon. He dies.
- ~424/3BC Socrates marries Xanthippe (dates uncertain, though Nails gives reason to believe may have married and bore a son before Aristophanes’ *Clouds*). Xanthippe bears him Lamprocles II, perhaps after her own father bucking ancient custom. Lamprocles II is in late adolescence at Socrates’ death in 399BC. It is possible that either Xanthippe or Myrto, the grand/daughter of Aristides I rumored to have married Socrates, bore Socrates’ younger two children, Sophroniscus II and Menexenus, who is an infant or toddler at Socrates’ death. Nails rejects the marriage between Socrates and Myrto, accepting instead the possibility that Myrto was simply taken under Socrates’ guardianship. *Laches* may reference this bond when Lysimachus tells Socrates that he has a duty to the family of Aristides I. If the historical Socrates did either wed Myrto or simply take her into his home, this would have occurred after the dramatic date of *Laches* in Winter 424BC as Lysimachus would not have needed reminder of who Socrates was. In light of the decline in the male population due to war, a marriage decree may have been passed in the late fifth century and soon repealed that would have permitted a bigamous marital arrangement between Socrates, Xanthippe, and Myrto (Nails 2002, 209-210; and Woodbury 1973).
- 423BC Aristophanes debuts *Clouds*, a satire that brings Socrates infamy.

- ~ 422BC Dramatic dating of Plato's *Cratylus*.
- 422BC Aristophanes debuts *Wasps*, in which he echoes the claim of the poet Callias that Aspasia taught Pericles to speak (Henry 1995, 27-28).
- 421BC Aristophanes debuts *Peace*, which also echoes the poet Callias' claim that Aspasia taught Pericles to speak. He also returns to Pericles' Megarian Embargo.
 To great success, Eupolis debuts *Marikas*, in which he calls Aspasia the mother of a bastard, referencing her son, Pericles II. Henry notes that in his second version of *Clouds*, Aristophanes accuses Eupolis of plagiarism (Henry 1995, 27-28 and 23-24).
- 421BC The Peace of Nicias: With the death of the hawkish Cleon, the Athenian generals Nicias and Laches are able to negotiate a peace treaty with the Spartan King Pleistoanax. The Peace of Nicias stipulated that Athens and Sparta would refrain from armed conflict and instead submit important differences to arbitration (Ste. Croix 1972, 259). The city of Megara refused to sign the peace treaty after years of persistent Athenian attack (Ste. Croix 1972, 244). The peace was hardly successful. Thucydides writes, it "is hardly possible to use the word 'peace' of a situation in which neither side gave back or received what had been promised; and apart from this there were breaches of the treaty on both sides" (Thucydides V.25-26). Further, Alcibiades was upset that he wasn't included in the peace dealings, complaining that he was excluded because of his age and that he *ought* to have been included due to his family's monetary connections to Sparta (Thucydides V.43-45). As retribution, Alcibiades seized on the continued poor relations to drive a wedge between Sparta and Nicias.
- 420BC Alcibiades is elected to replace Nicias as lead general.
- 418BC The Battle of Mantinea: At Alcibiades' urging, the Athenian allies decided to "get on with the war" leading soon to the first battle between Sparta and Athens to officially break the Peace of Nicias (Thucydides V.61-68; Ste. Croix 1972, 180). The Battle of Mantinea was another hoplite-marching disaster for Athens, and, without Socrates there to rescue him in retreat, the general Laches lost his life. The Athenians became outflanked due to their failure to march as a coherent unit. Thucydides writes that the Athenians advanced "with great violence and fury," whereas the Spartans: ...came on slowly and to the music of many flute-players in their ranks. This custom of theirs has nothing to do with religion; it is designed to make them keep in step and move forward steadily without breaking their ranks, as large armies so often do when they are just about to join battle (Thucydides V.70-71).

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|---------------------------|---|
| 418-416BC | Dramatic date of Plato's <i>Phaedrus</i> . |
| February 416BC | Dramatic date of Plato's <i>Symposium</i> . |
| Summer Athens 416BC | The Melian Dialogue: In the aftermath of the devastating loss at Mantinea, laid siege to the island of Melos. Upon the Melians' eventual unconditional surrender, Thucydides writes that the Athenians "put to death all the men of military age whom they took, and sold the women and children as slaves. Melos itself they took over for themselves, sending out later a colony of 500 men" (Thucydides V.116). |
| Spring 415BC | The Sicilian Expedition and the Destruction of the Hermae: Nicias' plan to dissuade Athenians from the Sicilian Expedition by overstating the preparations needed backfires. The Athenians were so swept up with Alcibiades' enthusiasm to respond to the city of Egesta's appeal for aid in defense of the Megara-allied city of Selinus that Nicias' attempt at rhetorical irony was lost on them. Nicias was elected to lead the expedition alongside Alcibiades and Lamachus. The Sicilian Expedition became the largest Athenian military venture in the fifth century. One evening before the expedition was to embark, it was discovered that nearly all the statues of the messenger god, Hermes, in the city of Athens had been destroyed. This act of sacrilege was considered not only as a bad omen for the Sicilian Expedition, but also "as evidence of a revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the democracy." Alcibiades and his friends who practiced illegal, mocking "celebrations of the [Eleusinian] mysteries [...] in private houses" were accused and framed for the affair. Alcibiades denied the charges, demanding a trial before setting sail for Sicily. However, his enemies delayed the trial (Thucydides VI.27-28). |
| Summer/ Fall 415BC | Arrival to Sicily and the Recall of Alcibiades: Upon arriving to Sicily, the Athenians discovered that the city of Egesta had deceived them: the money they had promised to Athens did not exist. Nicias, Alcibiades, and Lamachus disputed about how to respond. Nicias suggested continuing with their previous plans and provide Egesta the opportunity to provide the money; if the money was not provided, then the Athenians would stay to oversee the settlement between Egesta and Selinus and then demonstrate the power of Athens to other cities along the route home. Lamachus suggested orchestrating a surprise attack on Syracuse, which historian Donald Kagan observes may have been the most successful strategy. Lamachus would eventually capitulate to the plan of Alcibiades to appeal and wait for the aid of allies, a plan motivated out of fear for returning to the city of Athens empty-handed despite assembling an extravagant naval force (Thucydides VI.47-52; see Kagan 2003). |

Alcibiades sets sail to build alliances with nearby cities. He successfully recruits the city of Catana.

Meanwhile, the city of Athens was besieged by dictatorship and the plots of a destructively dramatic homoerotic love triangle. Many Athenians thought such plots were connected to the sacrilegious destruction of the Hermae and private practice of the mysteries as “part of a plot aiming at setting up an oligarchy or a dictatorship.” Thus, the Athenians recalled Alcibiades back to Athens to stand trial. They did not arrest Alcibiades for fear of disrupting the Athenian troops and the alliance with the Mantineans and Argives, an alliance for which they thought Alcibiades responsible. So instead, Alcibiades set sail for Athens with his own ship while escorted by another, the *Salaminia*. But instead of continuing to Athens, Alcibiades parted with the *Salaminia* at Thurii and went into hiding for fear of the fomented prejudice he would meet in Athens. The Athenians sentenced Alcibiades to death in his absence, while the exiled Alcibiades made his way to Sparta (Thucydides VI.53-61).

Winter
415BC

The Battle of Syracuse: Nicias and Lamachus enjoy some success, eventually wintering at Catana. However, after Lamachus dies in a ditch in battle and with Alcibiades exiled in Sparta, the ill and increasingly reclusive Nicias is left as the sole commander of the Expedition. A force of Athenians take Epipolae, where Nicias had been left behind due to his failing health (Thucydides VI.62-72, VI.101-103).

At Sparta, Alcibiades III shares Athenian war secrets in an attempt to avenge himself against those Athenians who he felt had destroyed Athens from the inside, saying “The country that I am attacking does not seem to me to be mine any longer; it is rather that I am trying to recover a country that has ceased to be mine” (Thucydides VI.92). Sparta then sent Gylippus to attack the Athenians at Sicily.

414BC

Gylippus and Spartan forces arrive in Sicily and Syracuse. To the Athenians’ detriment, Nicias maintains a defensive position rather than launching a preemptory land and sea offensive that would have played to the Athenians’ strengths and then-superior positioning.

414BC

Aristophanes debuts *The Birds*.

414-413BC

Letter of Nicias: Desperate and untrusting of messengers, Nicias writes a letter to Athens beseeching the city to recall him and his troops or to send reinforcements along with “someone to relieve me of the command, as a disease of the kidneys has made me unfit for service.” The Athenians refused to either recall or relieve Nicias and delays sending reinforcements due to the immediate threat to the city of Athens posed by advancing Spartan forces (Thucydides VII.8-18)

413BC

Dramatic dating of Plato’s *Ion*.

Spring-Summer
413BC

Sparta Fortifies Decelea: With Alcibiades III's traitorous insight, Sparta invades Attica and fortifies Decelea, an area just miles from the city of Athens. Meanwhile in Sicily, the Spartan Gylippus helps build a Syracusan navy, which engages in a series of skirmishes with the Athenian navy. The Athenian Demosthenes builds a force to relieve the Athenians at Sicily, despite the advancement of the Spartans near Athens proper. Athens is greatly weakened financially and militarily.

Demosthenes faces a series of battles en route to Sicily, while the Syracusans force Nikias and the Athenians to retreat into anchored and worn naval and merchant ships in the harbor.

Summer
413BC

Athenian Defeat at Epipolae: Demosthenes arrives to the harbor of Epipolae and launches a moonlight offensive against the Syracusans. Thucydides notes that this was the only night battle between the Athenians and the Spartans in the entire war, and it was a disaster for the Athenians. The Syracusans, joined by their allies and Sparta's Gylippus contingent, caught onto the Athenian troops' call-and-response and began singing it themselves. This caused anxiety and confusion among the Athenians, leading to many deaths by friendly fire. Of the Athenians that lived, most had grown sick from anchoring in the marshy harbor. Demosthenes demands the Athenians should retreat immediately. Under the advisement of several Syracusans that the siege of Epipolae may be yet be successful, Nikias delivers a speech refusing to retreat and cites fears of the mortal disgrace they may be met with upon their return to the city of Athens. Despite Demosthenes' vocal disagreement, the Athenians remained in position, convinced that Nikias must have some special information to stick so firmly to his point. All the while, Nikias himself was undecided about the best course of action (Thucydides VII.42-49).

More Spartan reinforcements arrive and the Athenians, including Nikias, regret their decision not to retreat. The Athenians prepare for retreat in secret.

August 28,
413BC

Total Lunar Eclipse and Conclusion of the Athenian Defeat at Epipolae: Just as the Athenians were about to embark in retreat, the full moon turned blood red with a total lunar eclipse. The superstitious Athenians took this as a sign of impending doom in retreat and urged the generals to wait. Upon the advice of soothsayers, Nikias, "who was rather over-inclined to divination and such things," insisted the Athenian forces wait a moon cycle ("thrice nine days") before he was willing to entertain discussion on the matter of retreat. The Syracusans and Spartans took advantage of this decision motivated by superstitious fortune-telling and victoriously attacked the Athenians by sea (Thucydides VII.53-57). Nikias attempts to rouse the courageous spirits (*eupsuchia*, εὐψυχία) of the remaining Athenian troops for one last-ditch effort, who cried out for their gods and family in terror as the Syracusans captured the entirety of the Athenian

naval force. Thucydides writes, the Athenian “fears for the future were like nothing they had ever experienced” (Thucydides VII.64-71; cf. Herman 1992/1997/2015, 52).

Fall-
Winter
413BC

The Athenians Failed Retreat by Land and the Execution of Nikias: After suffering the crushing defeat at Epipolae and the loss of their ships, the Athenians attempt to retreat by land where they encounter the incredible, traumatizing, carnage of their brethren, enduring the cries of the living mortally wounded. Deeply ashamed, tearful, and hopeless, the Athenians feared what:

...awaited them in the dark future ahead. [...] No Hellenic army had ever suffered such a reverse. They had come to enslave others, and now they were going away frightened of being enslaved themselves; and instead of the prayers and paeans with which they had sailed out, the words to be heard now were directly contrary and boded evil as they started on their way back, sailors traveling on land, trusting in hoplites rather than in ships (Thucydides VII.72-75).

The ailing Nikias attempted to comfort the troops with religious optimism for the future:

I myself am physically no stronger than any one among you (in fact you see what my illness has done to me), nor, I think, can anyone be considered to have been more blessed by fortune than I have been in my private life and in other respects; but I am now plunged into the same perils as the meanest man here. Yet throughout my life I have worshipped the gods as I ought, and my conduct towards men as been just and without reproach. Because of this I still have a strong hope for the future, and these disasters do not terrify me as they well might do. [...] In a word, soldiers, you must make up your minds that to be brave now is a matter of necessity, since no place exists near at hand where a coward can take refuge, and that, if you escape the enemy now, you will all see again the homes for which you long, and the Athenians among you will build up again the great power of Athens, fallen though it is. It is men who make the city, and not walls or ships with no men inside them (Thucydides VII.77)

Soon after his speech, the Athenians were captured by the Syracusans. Nikias failed in his attempts to negotiate a peace agreement and surrendered to Gylippus, trusting that his own life would be spared. But mistrust among the Spartans and Syracusans pressured Gylippus into executing both the overly-pious Nikias and the mis-appreciated Demosthenes (after all, their lives may have been spared had the Athenians heeded Demosthenes insistence in immediate retreat). The remaining Athenian warriors were put into a pit for eight months, and those who survived such an ordeal were enslaved. Though the war would

rage on for another decade, the defeat of the Sicilian Expedition was one from which Athens would not recover (Thucydides VII.79-87).

Winter
413/412

Athenian Denial: Thucydides writes of the denial of people in Athens upon learning of the absolute devastation to their navy and the enormous death toll. When the Athenians did finally come to recognize the present absence of so many lives and their fleet, their absolute terror of the threat to their survival prompted them to rebuild a fleet. The war would continue for nearly another decade. It is worth quoting Thucydides at length:

When the news reached Athens, for a long time people would not believe it, even though they were given precise information from the very soldiers who had been present at the event and had escaped; still they thought that this total destruction was something that could not possibly be true. And when they did recognize the facts, they turned against the public speakers who had been in favour of the expedition, as though they themselves had not voted for it, and also became angry with the prophets and soothsayers and all who at the time had, by various methods of divination, encouraged them to believe that they would conquer Sicily. They were feeling the stress in every department and on every front, and now, after this last blow, great indeed was the fear that beset them and the consternation. Not only was the state as a whole and the mind of every man weighed down by the thought of the loss of so many hoplites, cavalry, and men of military age who, they saw, could not be replaced; they saw, too, that the numbers of ships in the docks were inadequate, as was the money in the treasury, and that there were no crews for the ships. So at the moment they had little hope of being able to survive; they thought that their enemies in Sicily, after their great victory, would set sail immediately with their fleet for Piraeus, that their enemies at home would now most certainly redouble their efforts and attack them with all their might by land and sea, and that their own allies would revolt and join in the attack. Nevertheless, with their limited resources, it was decided that they must not give in; they would equip a fleet, getting the timber from wherever they could; they would raise money, and see their allies, particularly Euboea, remained loyal; and in Athens itself they would take measures of economy and reform, appointing a body of older men to give their advice on the situation, whenever the occasion arose. In fact, like all democracies, now that they were terrified, they were ready to put everything in order. Their decisions were carried out at once, and so summer came to an end. (Thucydides 8.1)

Spring

Possible dramatic dating of Plato's *Republic*, set at the festival of Bendis.²

² There is dispute in the literature as to the entry of the worship of Bendis into Athens. Böckh 1874 places the dating at 411BC. Nails argues *Republic* is set over the duration of the Peloponnesian War. Planeaux

413/411BC

411BC Continuing the comedic trope of women in politics, Aristophanes debuts *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*, both parodies of Athenian gender norms. In *Lysistrata*, women stage a sex strike protesting the war. In *Thesmophoriazusae* features cross-dressing sexual role-reversals where the women attempt to hold Euripides accountable for his misogynistic plays.

Eupolis also debuts *Demes*, in which “Solon, Miltiades, Aristides, and Pericles are brought back from the dead in order to advise the city” and he outright calls Aspasia a whore (Henry 1995, 23-24).

Summer
411BC The Four-Hundred Oligarchical Coup of Athens: The reign of the Four-Hundred was a result of a deal negotiated by Alcibiades III between Persia and Sparta that took advantage of the Athenian fiscal crisis. This was a return to oligarchical rule of the ‘old days’ after a one-hundred-year democracy in Athens. It would implode through internal division within a year, descending into the Five-Thousand. Before its own dissolution, the Five-Thousand recalls Alcibiades to Athens.

410BC Democracy restored to Athens.

409BC Alcibiades III fights a series of battles on behalf of the Athenians.

409/408BC The city of Megara recaptures the island of Nisea and the Athenians retaliate. Plato’s brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus, may have died in this battle (Nails 2002, 245).

Spring
~409 Dramatic dating of Plato’s *Lysis*.

2000/2001 discusses the possibilities of dating the inauguration of the cult of Bendis in Athens in 429BC, 413BC, and 411BC. Under my interpretation, 429BC would be too early to set *Republic* in relation to *Symposium* (cf. Hobbs 2000). Moreover, Nicias’ son, Niceratus, is present in the dialogue. We know from *Laches*, set in 424BC, that Socrates refused to educate the son of Nicias prior to that moment, though the dialogue ends with Socrates willing to entertain future discussion. So 429BC likely does not do for at least two reasons of philosophical interpretation. Given the events within *Laches*, it is unlikely Nicias would have the academic courage to continue to dialogue with Socrates and he is notably absent from *Republic* while his son, Niceratus, is present. Both Planeaux 2000/2001 and Townsend 2017 admit that Plato’s creative license does not bind him to hard and fast dating in relation to the inauguration of Bendis, however, I think there is good reason to place *Republic* in relation to *Symposium*. If *Symposium* brings us to the precipice of the Sicilian Expedition, *Republic* may well follow the decline of Athens in the disasters of Nicias’ leadership in the Sicilian Expedition thinking through how Athenians might move on politically and ethically in the aftermath of the disaster. The absence of Nicias from the dialogue may be due to his absence from Athens in the failed Sicilian Expedition and/or his resulting death. More specifically, I think *Republic* may be placed in relation to the Athenian denial and decision to rebuild their allegiances and military in the aftermath of the Sicilian Expedition’s failure. That *Republic* may also be read as an anticipatory rebuttal to Aristophanes’ mockery of women in public in *Lysistrata*, performed in 411BC.

- May/
June
407BC Alcibiades III returns to Athens with a full naval garrison to a hero's welcome at the Piraeus on the day of the Plynteria, the festival day of washing the statue of Athena. Many, including Alcibiades III, took this as a bad omen as it was considered unlucky to celebrate anything of importance other than Athena on that day (Kagan 1987, 290). The Athenians dropped the charges of blasphemy against Alcibiades III, restored his land and finances, and permitted him to lead the first procession in the Eleusinian fields since the Spartan occupation of Decelea.
- ~407 Dramatic dating of Plato's *Euthydemus*.
- 406-404BC The Exile of Alcibiades III: After suffering military defeat, Alcibiades III imposes self-exile to take responsibility. He dies in exile by 404BC, though the details are disputed.
- 406BC Athenian Victory at Arginusae: The Athenian navy wins a celebrated victory after a series of crushing defeats; however, a storm prevents the Athenians from rescuing troops from damaged and sunken ships.
- October
406BC Socrates Serves in the *Boule*: Socrates of Alopece is elected by lot to preside over a trial and sentencing against six generals charged with "failing to collect the wounded and dead after the sea battle at Arginusae." Socrates disagreed with the methods of procedure, arguing that capital cases should be adjudicated on an individual basis and that, at minimum, the trial ought to last longer than the one day allotted for the trial and subsequent execution of the six generals. Socrates only won some additional time for the defense speech of Euryptolemus III. All six generals were executed (Nails 2002, 265).
- February
406BC Athenians regret failing to heed Socrates' objections in their haste to execute the six generals for their failure to collect the wounded and dead at the Athenian victory of Arginusae (Nails 2002, 265).
- 405BC Aristophanes debuts *The Frogs*, in which he continues his conservative position advocating for the 'good ole days' of Athens.
- 404BC End of the Second Peloponnesian War and reign of the pro-Spartan, oligarchical Thirty Tyrants lead by Critias, a former student of Socrates, and Theramenes. The Thirty Tyrants instituted a reign of terror over the Athenians, executing, murdering, and exiling hundreds if not thousands of pro-democratic Athenian citizens. This included the execution of the philosopher Polemarchus, memorialized in Plato's *Republic*.

In *Letter 7*, Plato indicates the reign of the Thirty was congruent with his own coming of age and possibilities of entering public affairs (Nails 2002, 245-46)

- 403BC Democracy restored in Athens.
- 402BC Dramatic date of Plato's *Meno*.
- 401-399BC March of the Ten Thousand: Hired Athenian mercenaries, including Socrates' student, Xenophon, embark on a failed campaign to seize the Persian throne for Cyrus the Younger (see Xenophon's *Anabasis*).
- Winter
401/0 Dramatic dating of Plato's *Menexenus*.
- Spring
399BC This is the dramatic date of a series of Plato's dialogues leading up to the trial and death of Socrates, beginning with *Theaetetus*. *Euthyphro* is set later that same day. *Sophist* follows next day with *Statesman* later that same day.
- May-June
399BC The Trial of Socrates and the dramatic date of Plato's *Apology*: Socrates is tried for crimes of impiety and corruption of the youth. He is found guilty and sentenced to death by hemlock.
- June-July
399BC Dramatic date of Plato's *Crito*, set twenty-eight or twenty-nine days after the trial of Socrates. Here, Socrates refuses the offer of escape from death into exile. The dramatic date of *Phaedo* is set a day or two later where Socrates drinks his lethal sentence of death by hemlock.
- ~399-396BC Plato studies with Cratylus, a Herclitean, and Hermogenes, a Parmenidean (Nails 2002, 105 and 247; cf. Diogenes).
- ~396BC Plato travels to Megara to study with other Socratics (Nails 2002, 247; cf. Diogenes).
- 395BC Sparta and Athens resume hostilities with the beginning of the Corinthian War.
- 392BC Aristophanes debuts *Ecclesiasuzae*, another satire of the idea of women in politics.
- 388BC Aristophanes debuts *Plutus*, a satire of wealth distribution.
- 386BC The Corinthian War ends.

- 384/3BC Plato goes to Syracuse where he tutors Dion until angering the tyrant Dionysus I by “speaking frankly.” Dionysus I sells him into slavery. He is set free by Anniceris and receives land upon which he creates the garden of the Academy (Nails 2002, 248).
- 383BC Plato founds the tuition-free and reportedly sex-inclusive Academy (Nails 2002, 248 argues for the 383 date over the conventionally accepted 387BC date).
- 367BC Aristotle attends Plato’s Academy, possibly in Plato’s absence (Nails 2002, 248).
- 367/366BC Plato travels to Sicily to reconcile Dionysus II, who had succeeded his father, with Dion, the counselor-fallen-out-of-favor to Dionysus II and the former-student of Plato (Nails 2002, 248).
- 361-360BC Plato returns to Sicily, but Dionysus II, now a despiser of philosophy, kept him “a virtual prisoner, putting his life in jeopardy outside the fortress, forcing Plato to appeal to friends in Tarentum to be rescued. He was able to return to Athens only with the intercession of Archytas” (Nails 2002, 248).
- 354BC Plato’s Sicilian student, Dion, is assassinated by Dionysus II (Nails 2002, 248-249).
- ~348/347BC Plato dies.

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