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The Ethics and Politics of Love in Postwar France: The Case of Beauvoir, Camus, and Sartre

Christian Wood

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**THE ETHICS AND POLITICS OF LOVE IN POST-WAR FRANCE: THE CASE OF
BEAUVOIR, CAMUS, AND SARTRE**

By

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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Dedication

The gratitude for helping to make this project what it is extends to several layers of support, care, and guidance.

To my parents, Hinano and Chris, for always believing in me. I love you.

To the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of New Mexico, for your wonderful community and culture. I already miss you dearly.

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ABSTRACT

The Ethics and Politics of Love focuses primarily upon Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre during the period 1935 to 1960, specifically the periods before and after the Second World War (1939 – 1945), and the Franco-Algerian War (1954 – 1962). I argue that inquiring into each thinker’s theory of love yields crucial and hitherto unexplored insights into their ethical and political theories: “love” thus represents my particular Ariadne’s thread to guide us into, and then back outside of their daunting oeuvres and singular lives. I use their documented thoughts on love as an analytical tool with which to interrogate the basic motivations for, and premises and conclusions of their ethics and politics. Their amorous theory thus essentially charts the main course of their engaged lives and works. This particular method of inquiry has been overlooked by both Anglophone and Francophone critics, and so my contribution yields new perspectives from which to critique the thought of three of the most influential authors and philosophers of twentieth-century France. The interpretive argument signposts the intellectual development of the three main

protagonists alongside key historical events such as: the rise and fall of European fascism, the Occupation, the historical problematic of French colonial practices, and finally, each thinker's respective interventions in the Franco-Algerian War. The results are significant, offering novel explanations of the grounds for their socio-economic policy, political solidarity, wartime interventions, and the key political changes in their lives and works generally construed.

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Introduction

*Tell me how you love and I shall tell you who you are.*¹

The Ethics and Politics of Love focuses primarily upon Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, and Jean-Paul Sartre during the period 1935 to 1960, specifically the periods before and after the Second World War (1939 – 1945), and the Franco-Algerian War (1954 – 1962). I argue that inquiring into each thinker’s theory of love yields crucial and hitherto unexplored insights into their ethical and political theories: “love” thus represents my particular Ariadne’s thread to guide us into, and then back outside of their daunting oeuvres. I use their documented thoughts on love as an analytical tool with which to interrogate the basic motivations for, and premises and conclusions of their ethics and politics. Their amorous theory thus essentially charts the main course of their engaged lives and works. This particular method of inquiry has been overlooked by both Anglophone and Francophone critics, and so my contribution yields new perspectives from which to critique the thought of three of the most influential authors and philosophers of twentieth-century France.

The interpretive argument signposts the intellectual development of the three main protagonists alongside key historical events such as: the rise and fall of European fascism, the Occupation, the historical problematic of French colonial practices, and finally, each thinker’s respective interventions in the Franco-Algerian War. With respect to Albert Camus, for instance, my method traces the evolution of his ethics and politics alongside his theory of love in each phase of his productive life. First, I show that in his early period (1935 – 1942), the curious ethical framework argued for in his first treatise, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, is most

¹ « *Dis-moi comment tu aimes, et je te dirai qui tu es.* » Aude Lancelin and Marie Lemonnier, *Les philosophes et l’amour* (2008), 11.

basically explained by the amorous theory developed in the overlooked “Donjuanism” chapter of the work, in his thoughts on love in such works as *A Happy Death*, *Caligula*, *The Stranger*, and finally in the biographical, autobiographical, and epistolary records of his love-life during the period. My conclusion is that his egocentric “ethics of quantity and repetition in an absurd world” fundamentally derives from his erotic theory. My conclusion is that his thoughts on Don Juan, and not Sisyphus, for example, best explain the ethics of the absurd.

My method also explains the curious shift in his ethico-political thought that scholars identify but typically do not try to explain. During the French Resistance and beyond, Camus militated for qualitative, enduring, and communitarian values. Whether at the underground newspaper *Combat* or in anti-fascist writings such as the *Letters to a German Friend*, he abandoned the egocentric ethics of quantity and repetition, in favor of the lasting, humanistic values he defended until his premature death in 1960. I argue that the evolution of his theory of love motivated the change in his ethics and politics. The egocentric, quantitative, and transient nature of “love” was overturned in favor of new conceptions of love and *philia*, which reflect the transformation from his egocentric ethics of the absurd to a communitarian, cosmopolitan platform espousing humanistic values. My argument then grafts the new forms of love Camus minted on to his politics in the Cold War era and the Franco-Algerian war. Whether in terms of his socio-economic policies, his political critique of the U.S.A. and the former U.S.S.R., and finally his Algerian politics, Camus’s theory of love explains both the basic motivations for and the precise targets of his interventions.

With respect to Beauvoir and Sartre—first, as a united and transparent couple, and second as distinct individuals in the post-World War Two era—a similar perspective unfolds. When I develop and analyze their theories of love, the purpose is to explain the motivations

for and substance of their ethical and political frameworks developed throughout their young and mature adulthood. Chapter Two dissects the ethical consequences of the joint intellectual venture and “love pact” undertaken by the couple, signposting the evolution of their individual amorous tendencies and then analyzing its culmination *qua* matriarch and patriarch of an engineered “family” (or simply what they referred to as “la famille” from approximately 1935-1945). The fourth chapter argues for a “divorce” in their joint project, highlighting instead the distinct paths each shaped in the politics of love, leading up to their critiques of French colonialism and Camus.

The key works by Beauvoir include: epistolary correspondences from 1935 to 1945, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947), *The Second Sex* (1949) and her public intervention on behalf of Djamilia Boupacha, an indigenous Algerian woman tortured in the Franco-Algerian War. I analyze the following of Sartre’s works in similar fashion: his epistolary correspondences from the 1930s and 1940s, *Being and Nothingness* (1942), his plays *The Devil and the Good Lord* (1951), and then his landmark social commentary *Saint Genet* (1952), alongside key interviews from the 1950s. My argument uses the theory of love developed therein to explain the broader motivations of his ethical and political theory, culminating in his pivotal critiques of French colonialism in the 1950s.

In Beauvoir’s case, I argue that the ethical and political theory presented in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* and *The Second Sex* are motivated by her theories of amorous passion and her theory of “the woman’s” possibilities in love. More specifically, her public interventions on behalf of tortured Algerians during the war of Independence also stem from the same motivations developed in her theory of love. In Sartre’s case, the critique of defective love types (reflected in works from *Being and Nothingness* to political plays in the

1950s such as *The Devil and the Good Lord*) extends to a broader critique of Albert Camus's Algerian politics, and it also offers crucial insight into Sartre's latent commitment to *Realpolitik*, and his endorsement of political violence.

The data I use to track Camus, Beauvoir, and Sartre's theories of love derive from several sources and types of discourse—letters, treatises, novels, newspapers, biographical and autobiographical data, and a broad survey of the secondary literature—all of which reveal a vast constellation of ethical and political significance. It has become clear from working on this project that writers of all sorts, including theoreticians, often use “love” in oblique fashion (which is perhaps inevitable because it formally resembles notions like “force” or “bond,” which often stand as placeholders for a further argument). My method distinguishes itself for its rigorous commitment to consistently interrogate each thinker's theory of love alongside their respective ethical and political ambitions, thereby using their thoughts on love to arrive at a clearer view of their motivations *for* engaging in a particular ethical or political argument, as well as for signposting the reasons for which their ethical or political theory evolved. In the third Appendix, I offer, moreover, an outline showing how my method extends to further debates on ethics and politics. The first two Appendices offer extra biographical data to the curious reader of chapters One and Two. The Appendices are not a part of my argument proper, merely helpful indications of biographical labors past, or anticipations of future research vectors to those who are interested in the course of their productive lives.

Lastly, I am deeply grateful for the support and guidance offered by my superiors and mentors, most especially my dissertation director, Dr. Raji Vallury; for the constant aid of the

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and for a generous award from Carol Raymond, all of whom have significantly shaped this project for the better.

Chapter One: Camus's Ladder: The Steps to a Politics of Love

If it sufficed to love, things would be too simple. The more one loves, the more the absurd reinforces itself [*se consolide*]. (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, completed in February 1941)

For order is itself an obscure notion. There are many kinds... There is furthermore that *superior order* of hearts and consciousness that is called love, and then that bloody order where humanity denies itself, deriving its strength from hatred. We must clearly distinguish the right order in this whole situation. (Camus at *Combat*, October 1944, my emphasis)

When in *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff prefers his love over God, and asks for Hell to be reunited with the woman he loves, it is not simply his humiliated youth speaking, but the burning experience of a whole life. The same movement lets Meister Eckhart declare, in a surprising moment of heresy, that he prefers Hell with Jesus over Heaven without him. It is *the very movement* of love... we cannot emphasize enough the passionate affirmation that runs through the *revolt's movement*. (*The Rebel*, 1951, my emphasis)

Camus articulated varying conceptions of love throughout his productive life, and scholars have made interesting contributions to aspects of love's importance in his *oeuvre*. Anthony Rizzuto's *Camus: Love and Sexuality* (1997), for instance, offers a provocative reading of the complicity between the erotic love depicted in Camus's works and its rapport with his sexuality and its limitations. Debra Kelly's "*Le Premier Homme* and the literature of loss" (2007) gives a compelling account of the importance of familial love in the last few years of his novelistic output. Scholars such as Ieme Van der Poel and Arnaud Corbic have argued, moreover, for the importance of the "love of life" or *biophilia* that inhabits some of his works. To varying degrees their accounts undeniably help to situate the thought of one of the 20th century's most original and enigmatic writers. The particular contribution that I wish to make, however, is to show that love is the guiding thread of Camus's conception of ethics and politics throughout the course of his creative life, ranging from approximately 1935 to 1960.

I shall argue that key changes in Camus's ethical and political thought directly correspond to key changes in his thinking about love. An explanatory pattern emerges when

one tracks the evolution of love alongside the evolution of his politics: the two domains are mutually interdependent, and their elaboration leads to a better understanding of Camus's definitive thought. It is a complex undertaking to explain how a thinker's notion of "X" evolves over the course of his life. I delimit the subject—love in Camus's thought—by analyzing it within the ethical and political contextual framework that emerges in his texts from 1936 to 1951. I analyze Camus's published texts, his notebooks [*Carnets*], biographical data, and a review of the relevant secondary literature.

The purpose of inquiring in this fashion is neither to argue whether his politics were right or wrong *per se*, nor is it to argue that his conceptions of love were, for example, immature, banal, or luminary—readers will have ample opportunity to make their own judgment. The purpose is simply to show how his theory of love impacts the development of his conception of ethics and politics. When we have seen the ways that love changes in Camus's life and works, we will thereby see corresponding changes in his ethico-political outlook.

Camus's love story begins like his authorial story: they were each nurtured in a critically contemptuous distance from "normal" life. As early as 1936, the 23-year-old was not only preoccupied with the alienating, proto-absurd status of the world, but also with the quotidian pitfalls that love represented (e.g., in *The Happy Death*). Enduring erotic love had an aesthetic appeal in certain respects, but more generally it was a trap that should be avoided by the clear-thinking person. When we recontextualize his early thoughts on love in the following section, it will show that enduring love is merely a normalizing, bourgeois imposition that impedes the individual's flourishing. In a word, enduring love is symptomatic

of *atrophy*, to which his notebooks, novels, plays and treatises attest in his early period—1936 to 1942.²

The analyses in the upcoming section accomplish two goals. First, they illustrate the moribund phenomenon of erotic love in his early life by way of his own ideas, as well as by way of a review of the literature. Second, this illustration will lead us to a curious *turn* in his thinking about love, which has been vastly ignored by the secondary literature. Beginning at approximately the same time that Camus becomes an anti-collaborationist editor for the underground newspaper *Combat* (1943 - 44), love increasingly assumes a more-and-more positive ethical and political value. The result is that “the very movement of love” becomes *the engine* of the ethics and politics of revolt in his last definitive philosophical treatise, *The Rebel* (1951) as well as beyond. This chapter’s endgame, then, is to first expose, and then fill in, this lacuna in the secondary literature, as well as to indicate a field of research of broader value: to show that *how one loves and understands love* influences how one conceives the world in ethical and political terms.

The significant stages of this development unfold in three chronological divisions. The first four sections detail his life and creative output from 1936 to 1941, during which time he wrote his “absurd triptych,” *Caligula*, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and *The Stranger*. The next four sections investigate his life and works from approximately 1941 to 1944, which to judge by the scholarship is the most obscure of his life. It is precisely during this time, however, that his understanding of love took a most significant turn. He abandoned the

² Camus is recruited into the Resistance no later than autumn, 1943. I argue, beginning with the “Decisive Step” section, below, that his conception of both ethics and politics takes a radical turn during this time, transitioning away from an egocentric conception of ethics and politics to a cosmopolitan and communitarian conception, grounded upon the change in his theory of love. The Third Chapter specifies the political policies and interventions that emerge during the last phase of his life, approximately 1950 – 1960.

solitary, quantitative understanding of love established in the first phase of his life, in favor of what I call a “communitarian” or collectivist theory of love. The last four sections chart the robust application of this newly minted love during his time as the editor, and later contributing writer, of *Combat*, 1944 to 1947. In each phase, I argue that to track his theory of love is to track his conception of and commitment to the ethical and political frameworks he established over the course of his life.

The Phenomenon of Love in Camus’s Early Life: Stability’s Shortcomings

It is well publicized that Camus was a so-called “ladies’ man” as well as a “man’s man,” that is, his affable good looks, his canny wit, and his Mediterranean swagger all contributed to his warm social reception. Whether it was in romance, at the workplace³ or the theatre, or even in friendship, the young Albert had a knack for being “a most likeable personality,” as Ronald Aronson highlights in his impressive *Camus and Sartre* (9). Camus was, in a word, a *charmer* to whom social life came easily.⁴

It is not well publicized, though, that from the age of seventeen Camus was stricken with tuberculosis, the chronic bouts of which would leave him spontaneously coughing up blood and convalescing for several weeks at a time. His affliction took away many of the things he desired most, including teaching jobs, the chance to enlist in the War, and his youth’s passion—soccer (he played goal-keeper) and the “moral solidarity” that it

³ George Roy (a typographer at *Combat*) retrospectively approves of « les longues heures passées » at work with Camus: « Il était au marbre comme chez lui, plein d’admiration et de gaieté, blagueur et “dans le coup”, bref, en plein dans la tradition » (*À Albert Camus, ses amis du Livre*, p. 7), in J. Lévi-Valensi (ed.) *Camus à Combat*, 70).

⁴ Camus’s biographer Olivier Todd succinctly situates one aspect of Camus’s social appeal in the following way, *circa* 1933: « Les jeunes filles résistent peu à Camus, charmant et charmeur aux yeux gris-vert » (*Camus: Une vie*, 59).

exemplified (Aronson 20 - 21).⁵ During his imposed exiles from society, he would often read Nietzsche and Dostoevsky or work on theoretical manuscripts while recovering; he also crammed his notebooks full of anything from seemingly random one-liners to snippets that would later be inserted into novels.

This important part of his life merits just as much attention as the myth that it interrupts, though, because it reflects an essential duality at the heart of his own life practice. On the one hand, Camus was an easy lover and a fast friend with “Bogartesque virility” (Aronson 20) and “such flash, such dazzle” to his presence, as Simone de Beauvoir recalls of her initial encounters with him (Bair 290). On the other hand, he was a chronically sick introvert who had the time to question the *value* of life while his body healed. Camus was hence a rare individual to the extent that he literally lived two kinds of life: the life with which most people are familiar—the hard-living writer, the engaged philosopher, the playboy—and the other, unheralded life, which was spent sick in bed for weeks at a time reading, writing, and reflecting upon how strange life can be.

His duality is an interesting phenomenon in general, but it is particularly important because it is from this alternating biological current that Camus was able to take a deeply reflective stance upon life’s most important practices, not least of which was love. Love represents, in fact, one of the more consistent threads in his notebooks, and when we look at his major works we see a similar preoccupation, for example in: *The Stranger* (1942), *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), *Letters to a German Friend* (1943-4) and especially, in his editorials at *Combat* (1944 – 1947). I shall argue that the intense preoccupation with love

⁵ <http://www.camus-society.com/camus-football.html> See this link for a lengthier discussion of soccer’s importance to Camus, and for more context on the “solidarity” it represented.

inhabiting these works leads to the claim that “love is the very movement of revolt” that guides the political ambition of *The Rebel* (1951). And it is highly significant that Camus “foresaw” writing a detailed work “on the theme of love” in the last decade of his life,⁶ which his untimely death in a car-crash cut short. His double life maps on to a deep ambiguity regarding the *value* of enduring love, which, as we see, had a transitory value in his youth, a more steady and positive value during his time as a war journalist, and a pivotal, enduring value in the post-War climate, upon which he grounded his mature politics.

There is perhaps no better way to get to the crux of his ambivalence about love than with the following entry from his September 1948 notebook. This entry is situated at the middle-point of Camus’s first steps toward a politics of love (1943) and his definitive theory of a politics of love in *The Rebel* (1951): « Il faut rencontrer l’amour avant d’avoir rencontré la morale. Ou sinon, le déchirement » (*Carnets II*, 252). This statement contains a crucial ambiguity in its suggested meaning while establishing both a hierarchy and a genealogy. On the one hand, it reads: “love” should not be *contaminated* by “morals,” because if love is infected with morals, something important is rent or sundered: in a word, it is not *genuine* love when “morals” play a part. On this reading, one’s initiation into, and understanding of “love” ought to be distinct from “la morale,” or else one is torn apart.

On the other hand, this same statement reads quite differently: a person must “encounter love” as a *precondition* to ethics or “morals,” that is, if someone does not encounter love before they reckon with morals, then something important is torn away from

⁶ As Camus states in a 1957 interview, as well as the prefaces to several of his works published in the late 1950s: « Je voulais d’abord exprimer la négation. Sous trois formes. Romanesque : ce fut *L’étranger*. Dramatique : *Caligula*, *Le malentendu*. Idéologique : *Le mythe de Sisyphe*. Je prévoyais le positif sous trois formes encore. Romanesque : *La peste*. Dramatique : *L’état de siège* et *Les justes*. Idéologique : *L’homme révolté*. J’entrevois déjà une troisième couche autour du thème de l’amour ».

them: in a word, love importantly helps to *access* morality. The ambivalence of this passage essentially maps on to Camus's own evolution regarding the worth of love and its relationship to morality. To state the contrast simply: in his younger life morality and enduring love were antithetical. In later life, however, a reminted form of enduring love became *indispensable* for an ethically responsible politics. The key to explaining this evolution begins with a close look at the first stage of his remarkable transformation, which requires an examination of the types of love with which he reckons.⁷

Certain scholars identify his conception of romantic love as a pseudo-value, that is, not really a value at all, but rather a type of societal delusion or bad faith. Anthony Rizzuto's *Camus: Love and Sexuality* (1998) takes decisive steps toward unraveling the intricate knot indicated in his title, and the scholarship is exemplary in that it patiently combs through the notebooks, prefaces, and a thorough survey of Camus's finished and unfinished works. The work offers keen insights, moreover, into the crucial link between Camus's life practice and how it relates to his *oeuvre*.

One such insight is that Camus lived in a kind of "terror" of succumbing to "morally stagnant bourgeois tendencies" (25, 30). Camus believed that a certain kind of moral outlook—a predominately "bourgeois," "stable", and "normal" morality contaminated love, because "love, marriage, and fidelity, as...concepts of stability preempted by the middle class, would be contributing factors in the mind or the heart's demise" (25). He situates this general fear within the context of a more particular phenomenon: Camus was always on his

⁷ In the following analysis we will ultimately situate the meaning of "morality" precisely by way of its exhibition in a Camusian contextualization of love. His conception of love will underlie his stated ethics at each distinct stage of his life. This conception will also underlie his politics at the point where he begins to systematically articulate them, arguably during 1943-45, as the latter half of this chapter shows.

guard against “stability” for the reason that it eroded his vitality and his life’s authentic possibilities.⁸

Rizzuto finds reflections of the anti-stability phenomenon in the majority of Camus’s male protagonists of the late 1930s and early 1940s, who are always presented as singular men, derisive of fidelity and marriage. His analyses make the further, intriguing connection that “Camus’s [male] characters, for the most part, have no biological destiny” (4). Rizzuto contends that these characters reflect Camus’s own understanding of erotic love and sexuality to the extent that they consistently echo key comments he made in his notebooks and marginalia, as well as because they correspond to documented biographical tendencies. A compelling case emerges when he examines this anti-stability motif in Camus’s early works, including: *The Right Side and the Wrong Side* (1936), *Nuptials* (1938), *The Happy Death* (1936-8, never published), *Caligula*, completed in 1939, and, lastly, *The Stranger* (1942).

In *The Happy Death*, the most obvious precursor to *The Stranger*, Rizzuto focuses upon Camus’s young hero, Patrice Mersault. Patrice’s statements, he argues, help “to explain the cynical attitude toward love and marriage” as well as toward “social commandments” and “stability” (30-1). One of Patrice Mersault’s seemingly absurd declarations cuts right to the point: “I feel like marrying, killing myself, or taking out a subscription to *L’Illustration*. You know, a desperate gesture” (31). In an earlier scene, Mersault mockingly reinforces the idea that love is antithetical to vitality: “Come on now, we don’t fall in love at our age. It’s later, when you’re old and impotent that you can fall in love” (31). Such statements in Camus’s

⁸ One wonders whether “stability” also represented convalescence and isolation, as opposed to health and freedom, for instance. That is, it may be that Camus’s biological duality could not help but associate motifs of stability with symptoms of decline, exile, or both. One important counter assertion is that in such states he was *healing*, which is a positive value, but I would argue that he was first very sick in such states, and only later was he healing *in order to* reassume his social freedoms.

early definitive works are not at all idiosyncratic—they set the trend, rather, for a sustained pattern that deflates the worth of normal and stable forms of love such as marriage, monogamy, and more generally *any* conception of lasting love.

Rizzuto’s analysis continues in this vein to two related passages in *The Stranger*, both of which emphasize the devaluation of amorous constancy. The passages are indicative, he adds, of Camus’s thinking “about the relationship between a man’s sexuality and his reaction to conventional assumptions about love and fidelity” (25). The argument focuses upon an important scene where Meursault is casually strolling through the streets of Algiers with Marie, whom he has just agreed to marry a few pages earlier:

We went for a walk and crossed the main streets to the other side of town. The women were beautiful and I asked Marie if she’d noticed. She said yes and that she understood me. For a while we didn’t say anything anymore. (25)

Marie’s “understanding” and the silence that follows it suggest a tacit understanding that “he has no intention of honoring the prescribed vows of marital fidelity” (26). The deeper argument for his conclusion draws upon an immediately preceding scene, wherein “Marie had remarked that ‘marriage is a serious matter,’ and Meursault’s quick response was a blunt, monosyllabic ‘no’” (26). The scene itself is key, both to the extent that his laconic ‘no’ serves as a curt dismissal of marriage as a serious matter, and especially because it echoes the Camusian theme of the deflation of lasting value *tout court*.

For context’s sake, the following two passages are based on Rizzuto’s critical analysis of *Caligula* (1939).⁹ Here as well, he argues that Camus’s rejection of love is anchored around a more general fear of “stability” and “normality,” which is reflected in his protagonist’s patterned response of distance and scorn. The motifs of deflation and derision

⁹ *Caligula* was first performed on stage in 1944, but it was written during 1938-9, and very slightly modified in 1941.

are arguably even more pronounced in a work that is to be performed on stage. Rizzuto furthers his argument with an analysis of two telling passages:

In social and in intimate terms the word [“stability”] could signify conformism as well as emotional atrophy. Caligula himself recoils from this threat: “Loving someone means growing old together. I am not made for that kind of love.” (25)

Mucius: But I love my wife.

Caligula: Of course you do my friend, of course you do. But it’s so common. (26)

Such statements about “that kind of love” in Camus’s male leads are typical in his early oeuvre, and they importantly map on to similar statements in his notebooks of the late-thirties and early-forties, the leading examples of which we examine below.¹⁰ I would add that the passages Rizzuto cites from *Caligula* are not the only leading examples of this deflation of stable love. If one looks carefully, it pervades the first act of the play, for example, and thus Rizzuto’s analysis is neither selective nor atypical.¹¹

We have seen a pattern wherein love in institutional, stable forms represents atrophy and decline; this is a scornfully “common” approach to love, and Camus’s absurdist heroes are simply “not made” for it. “That kind of love” is all the more ridiculed to the extent that the characters who condemn it are themselves the main protagonists, such as Patrice Mersault, Meursault, and Caligula. But his cynical authorial rejection of love *qua* stability also has a deeper import.

¹⁰ For instance, Rizzuto uses the following entry from the late-1930s as a prescient sketch of the complicity between absurdity and stability in life and love: “A man who sought the meaning life where one usually finds it (marriage, job, etc.) and who suddenly realizes, while reading a fashion magazine, how much he is a stranger to his own life” (31).

¹¹ In Act I, scene IV, for example, Caligula rhetorically asks: « Mais qu’est-ce que l’amour ? Peu de choses ». Or, when he declares : « Vivre, Caesonia, vivre c’est le contraire d’aimer » (Act I, XI). Furthermore : « Notez bien, le malheur c’est comme le mariage. On croit qu’on choisit et puis on est choisi » (Act I, I).

If the trend of rejecting love *qua* stability and lasting value is clearer, it is now important to inquire into the type of love that Camus endorsed, in order to better understand the spectrum of love in the young Camus. The next task is thus to examine Camus's positive views on erotic love during this same period. Erotic love did in fact have a positive value, unsurprisingly to the extent that it was *divorced* from convention, commitment, and considerations of *lasting* quality. The secondary literature situates Camusian erotic love as a kind of quantitative value whose essence consists of accumulation and varied repetition, which is clearly opposed to lasting amorous configurations like monogamy and faithful marriage. We will importantly see that this approach to love goes hand in hand with the basic notion of value reflected in works like *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Stranger*. I will argue, in the next section, that Camus's analysis of erotic love essentially informs the entire value system of *Sisyphus*. In the following notebook entries from 1936, Camus outlines a dilemma in which love and morals need to be radically separated, first by way of a Hamlet-like existential quandary, then by an utter deflation of the foundational value of love:

To create or not to create. In the first instance, everything is justified. Everything, no exceptions. In the second instance, life is a total absurdity. All that is left is the most aesthetic suicide: marriage and a 40-hour work week or a revolver. (89)

Nothing can be based on love: it is flight, anguish, wonderful moments or hasty fall. (91)

Camus *was* thoroughly creative around this same time, and indeed, nothing *could be* founded upon love, at least not in the sense of enduring love. The recent success of both the *Stranger* as well as *The Myth of Sisyphus* launched his star, and they represent the decade-long culmination of the undermining of stable love.

It is at this juncture, however, that I am departing from the climate of Rizzuto's helpful research in order to pursue my particular approach to Camusian love. Rizzuto's

Camus: Love and Sexuality focuses upon Camus's erotic life and its relationship to the sensual, the sexual, and the imaginary in his oeuvre. He uses these themes to drive an argument that essentially reduces most of Camus's male characters to a literary echo of his sexual life, that is, to Camus's sexuality broadly construed. Rizzuto situates the importance of *The Myth of Sisyphus* and works leading up to it as follows:

Sisyphus carries forward motifs of Camus' previous work because it reconciles the two terms of an antithesis: the need to satisfy promiscuity with sterility. This theme of sterile sexuality is one of Camus's contributions to the monastic vow of chastity he had described in his thesis for the Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures. (65)

His approach to Camusian love is undoubtedly interesting, yet I wish to explore the conceptual and epistemological implications of Camusian erotic love to the extent that they inform his conception of ethics and politics. My argument in the latter half of this chapter, by way of indication, reckons with types of love that are not sexual in nature, and to this extent, at least, Rizzuto's work lies outside the scope of my project.¹²

The analyses in the following section offer a close reading of *The Myth of Sisyphus*, which represents the most definitive theoretical text of Camus's early works. I contend that the 1936 – 1942 phase of Camusian love is theoretically encapsulated in the brief but crucial chapter entitled « Le Don Juanisme ». *I shall argue that to understand Donjuanism is to understand Camus's ethical ambition within the entire text*, and hence within the first phase of his oeuvre. This labor is also important because it will accentuate the contrast between his understanding of love, ethics, and politics with respect to the next phase of his life, which begins during the Second World War.

¹² We will return to Rizzuto's work at times throughout the chapter, however, to either clarify details of Camus's life, or in some cases to critique his reading of Camus.

The following section shows the case for how Camus's Donjuanism is most basically a sapient and palliative form of understanding, and that it is a sexual ethos only in a tangential sense. *Pace* Rizzuto and others, it is thus misleading to characterize Donjuanism as essentially sexual in nature, for the reason that it misses the conceptual ground upon which it is based.¹³

Donjuanism as a Lucid, Solitary Way of Understanding in an Absurd World

The Don Juan chapter is situated at the center of the *Myth of Sisyphus*, and although Sisyphus's name is on the marquee, I will argue that it is actually Don Juan who steals the show. That is, Camus's early conception of both love and ethics is housed within the Don Juan chapter, and a close reading of it reveals his definitive ethical framework precisely by way of love. I will argue, then, that "Don Juan" represents Camus's *modern* ethical champion in the arena of an essentially absurd world.

The manner in which Camus introduces Don Juan significantly denies any kind of lasting value to erotic love while concomitantly promoting the appeal of erotic love's *quantity* and existential potency. The opening salvo targets a certain kind of love while emphasizing both its relation to the absurd and the importance of a consistent emotive transport:

S'il suffisait d'aimer, les choses seraient trop simples. Plus on aime et plus l'absurde se consolide. *Ce n'est point* par manque d'amour que Don Juan va de femme en femme. Il est

¹³ Rizzuto situates Don Juan's general importance in *Sisyphus* as: "Don Juan, a central figure in *Myth of Sisyphus*, interests Camus because he offers a resolution to this conflict between love and sex" (54). By "this conflict," Rizzuto is referring to two sentences in the preceding paragraph: "Camus's denial [of love and intimacy], however, conflicted directly with his own often overwhelming sexual urges. The conflict was not with sexuality itself but with sex's potential to transform itself into love" (54). Without necessarily disagreeing with Rizzuto's analysis *in toto*, I will argue, however, that Don Juan "interests Camus" for more basic reasons than Rizzuto acknowledges. I will argue that Camus's interest in Don Juan is not based upon sexuality *per se*, but rather through transgression, sapience, and the elaboration of a distinct ethics.

ridicule de le représenter comme un illuminé en quête de l'amour total. Mais c'est bien parce qu'il les aime avec un égal emportement et chaque fois avec tout lui-même, qu'il lui faut répéter ce don et cet approfondissement. (99, my emphasis)

The project of finding “total” love with someone is insufficient in itself; it is ridiculous, even, and we can surmise that Don Juan, like Caligula and other Camusian heroes, are just *not made that way*. The positive upshot is that the gifted, lucid lover ought to love “them” all “equally,” and in a way that maximizes his potency.¹⁴ Don Juan is thus “not at all” lacking or defective when he refuses a perfect or total love; rather, he is distinguished precisely through varied repetition and an unvarying “*emportement*” or emotive transport.¹⁵

Camus importantly nuances the ethical implications of Donjuanism throughout the chapter, often praising Don Juan’s “ethic of quantity” at the expense of the “saint’s, which tends toward quality,” because the former reflects a genuine, lucid way of being when faced with the choices of an essentially absurd world (102). If qualitative value is immaterial, then why not consciously satisfy one’s desire in a way that fits with one’s way of being, that is, with one’s project as a “lover of them all”? One might question such an amorous project on the grounds that it is arbitrary—perhaps even reckless—yet Camus argues for a different conclusion: it is distinctly *wise* and *fulfilling*:

S’il quitte une femme, ce n’est pas absolument parce qu’il ne la désire plus. Une femme belle est toujours désirable. Mais c’est qu’il en *désire une autre* et, *non*, ce n’est pas la même chose. Cette vie *le comble*, rien n’est pire que de la perdre. Ce fou est un *grand sage*. (101, my emphasis)

¹⁴ « Tout être sain tend à se multiplier. Ainsi de Don Juan » (100).

¹⁵ While Camus rejects love as stability in institutional and bourgeois forms, it is intriguing to note the transformation of stability as a positive value in an *affective* sense. That is, stability has a positive value when it comes to maintaining a *steady* erotic *tenor* with respect to the gamut of multiple partners. At a distance, it is not difficult to see the similarities with a classical libertine conception of erotic love, with “conquests” or erotic triumphs needing to be tempered by the self’s control and restraint, as one sees in Laclos’ Valmont, or in Crébillon’s Versac, for instance. The very choice of “Don Juan” makes a likely case that Camus was basing his erotic theory, at least in part, upon a libertine doctrine whose vestiges had a strong hold on him.

His further investigation asks whether we must imagine Don Juan as first “sad” [*triste*], and then “egotistical,” which helps to contextualize a broader platform on which he bases ethical considerations (99, 103). After he poses the question of whether Don Juan is immoral in his love, Camus importantly shifts the terms of the debate in a way that reflects his views on the very idea of moral improvement. It would be an “error” to attribute either a “saintly” or an “immoralist” tag to Don Juan, because:

Il est à cet égard « comme tout le monde » : il a *la morale* de sa sympathie ou de son antipathie. On ne comprend pas bien Don Juan qu’en se référant toujours à ce qu’il symbolise vulgairement : le séducteur ordinaire et l’homme à femmes... A cette différence près qu’il est conscient et c’est par là qu’il est absurde. Un séducteur devenu lucide ne changera pas pour autant. Séduire *est son état*. Il n’y a que dans les romans qu’on change d’état et qu’on devient meilleur. (102, my emphasis)

The ethical implications of the passage are remarkable. He uses love to organize normative claims about the human condition, as well as to curtly dismiss the very idea of moral improvement. “Morality” itself is reduced to a nebulous, facile disjunction: it resides in one’s “sympathy or antipathy.” The positive appeal to Don Juan consists, however, in the description of his “state of being,” which is construed as *decisive*. That is, there is no chance to “become better,” there is simply the chance to optimize one’s live choices, given one’s way of being. “Becoming lucid” about one’s being importantly entails consciousness of the absurd, but “for all that” one does not change oneself.

There is a distinct wisdom to lucid self-optimization in love, which is based upon varied repetition and the steadfastness of one’s emotive attachments. Clear consciousness of the absurdity of lasting value, of one’s forlorn predicament in the world, and of the ethic of quantity—these three factors arguably make Don Juan Camus’s amorous archetype *par excellence*. That is, Camus has found in “Don Juan” a most faithful echo of a way of life (and a way of love) that can both maintain consciousness of the world’s absurdity as well as

flourish in this same world. His archetype is distinctly important because of the way he “clearly” sees the world in his way of loving. It is remarkable to note, moreover, that at this very juncture the line between author and subject begins to blur:

Il s’agit pour [Don Juan] de voir clair. Nous *n’appelons* amour ce qui nous lie à certains êtres *que* par référence à une façon de voir collective et dont les livres et les légendes sont responsables. Mais de l’amour, je *ne* connais *que* ce mélange de désir, de tendresse et d’intelligence qui me lie à *tel être*. (104, my emphasis)

The language is at once personal, ontological, as well as punctuated with “only” [*ne...que*]: it suggests that Camus wants to clearly specify love’s social nature. To this extent, a clear view of love reveals that our collective terminology about it “only” stems from literary and legendary sources, which have contributed to a vast popular vernacular. Camus’s first-person experience attests, however, to a radical simplification: he is “only” familiar with love as a blend of desire, tenderness, and intelligence that connects him to this or that “particular being” [*tel être*]. The potential discrepancy between the vague collective and the distinctly personal leads Camus to approach the nature of love in different terms:

Ce composé n’est pas le même pour tel autre. Je n’ai pas le droit de recouvrir toutes ces expériences du même nom. Cela dispense de les mener des mêmes gestes. L’homme absurde multiplie encore ici ce qu’il ne peut pas unifier. Ainsi découvre-t-il une nouvelle *façon d’être* qui le libère au moins autant qu’elle libère ceux qui l’approchent. Il *n’y* a d’amour *généreux que* celui qui se sait en même temps *passager et singulier*. (104, my emphasis)

The reflective man knows that people vary tremendously in their dispositions, and so it is fruitless to attempt to underlie everyone’s experience so as to find a common denominator of value. He needs, instead, to “multiply that which cannot be unified,” that is, to adopt an ethic of quantity that maximizes *his* felt preferences. Acting well in the world, at least in this phase of his life, seemed to have no further aim than his celebrated ethos of varied repetition and accumulation. « Ce que Don Juan met en acte, c’est une éthique de la quantité, au contraire du saint qui tend vers la qualité. Ne pas croire au sens profond des choses, c’est le propre de

l'homme absurde » (102). The further claim is that there is an existential “liberation” that comes from this “multiplication” ethic, both for him as well as for “those who approach him” as a lover. It is crucial to note that the *absence of attachment* to lasting value is essential to the existential liberation of his love ethic.

His final and decisive claim, then, is that the “only” noble or “generous” type of love is that which understands itself as “simultaneously fleeting and singular,” that is, as a kind of unique *token* in the social fabric of being, on the one side, and as a renewable *general type* of adventure, on the other. The multiplicity of singular encounters that represents Camusian love is the reason that Don Juan’s *modus operandi* is so fitting:

Ce sont toutes ces morts et toutes ces renaissances qui font pour Don Juan la gerbe de sa vie.
C’est la façon qu’il a de donner et de faire vivre. Je laisse à juger si l’on peut parler
d’égoïsme. (104)

The overall importance of “Don Juan” is becoming clearer: his distinctive appeal resides in the careful repetition of singular, but crucially perishable, moments. This is Don Juan’s “gift” or *don*, on which Camus has been punning the whole time. He *gives* all of himself in his activity—“each time and with his whole being”—*but* with the self-awareness that this same moment must soon expire: the gift as such is understood as transitory. The erotic moment’s necessary expiration or “death” and the need to re-create its type importantly reflect *the very image* of Sisyphus at work, moreover. Don Juan, like any absurd being, is condemned to a cycle of potentially meaningless repetition. Yet it is through action based upon a distinctly transgressive understanding that he makes that same cycle valuable.

The final sentence of the quotation needs to be qualified, however. The sentence itself is quite strange, especially in light of the features of his love ethic: “I leave it to be judged whether one can speak of egoism here.” It is strange because it is not at all difficult to attach

an egotistical or “selfish” label to the type of love that we have seen in the last few pages of analysis, Camus’s remarks about mutual erotic “liberation” notwithstanding. A survey of his love language readily shows that it is almost entirely a question of optimizing the agent’s felt preferences in a way that furthers his being, with no particular regard for his partner(s)’ specific nature(s). “Don Juan” seems to be merely, and momentarily, concerned with “*tel être*.” The guiding indication of this egocentric picture of love is perhaps best captured with the motto of « *chaque fois et avec tout lui-même* », which Rizzuto, for example, criticizes on moral grounds (54). The deeper concern that troubles Rizzuto (and other critics) is not what “Don Juan” or “Caligula” do *per se*, but rather how their egotistical and misogynist patterns echo Camus’s lifestyle in relevant ways:

Camus is well aware of how the Don Juan male, or *any other sexual athlete*, must appear to the women he seduces: “How unbearable for women,” he wrote in his notebook [*Carnets 1*, 57] “that tenderness without love that men offer them.” These unhappy women are not speaking the same language as the Camusian male. For him, the woman is a means, not an end. She has been instrumentalized, an important and all-consuming stopover, but still a stopover on a man’s journey to somewhere else. Camus’s male characters *are aliens to love*. (55, my emphasis)

This kind of critique cannot be ignored, for the reason that it exposes real ethical problems in Camus’s theory of love. Rizzuto thus rightly highlights the narcissistically encapsulated tendencies that are inherent in Camus’s erotic outlook. There is no question that this way of loving is problematic, especially when we seriously consider the points about instrumentality and the discrepancy of expectations between lover and beloved. It thus appears that Camus’s claim about how unattached erotic love “liberates him at least as much as it liberates those who approach him” is far more one-sided than he suggests, to potentially harmful effect.

At this juncture I wish to approach Camus's love ethic from a different angle, however. To be clear from the outset, my purpose is not to exculpate, nor even necessarily to mitigate, the egotistical and misogynistic implications of his erotic theory. Rather, the immediate purpose is to arrive at a view of *how* Camus came to endorse this type of erotic love, and to then circle back in order to explain how the way he loves affects his ethics in the early part of his life, and then his politics, which he systematically formulates from 1943 onward.

Second, my reading of *The Myth of Sisyphus* will reveal that Donjuanism is not essentially a question of "sexual athleticism," nor is it true to say that Camus's characters are "aliens to love." This love ethic can be construed as problematic for several reasons, yet my present purpose is to show the relationship between Camus's love ethic and his ethics of his early period *tout court*, whose broader purpose is to track the evolution of *his conception* of ethics and politics as functions of his theory of love. The task is thus to argue for both the negative as well as the positive ethical components of active love types in Camus's early oeuvre. To this extent, we have seen key features of the negative pole, which scornfully repudiates love's connection with institutional forms of stability: love *qua* lasting, total value—be it in marriage, in monogamy, or in normalizing bourgeois tendencies—represents decline and atrophy. Camusian love positively reflects, however, distinct and important features of an existentialist ethics, and so it warrants a closer look at his reasons for deflating "stable" erotic love.

The complete ethical picture he paints, upon closer inspection, presents the reader with a vast array of resources that are intended to *disabuse* harmful notions of love *in order to* justify an ethical insight. Camus's insight is that loving in this way leads to a "liberated"

state, both for oneself as well as for anyone in particular. It also reflects the insight that loving in this way is a palliative with respect to other, harmful ways to love, which mistakenly view erotic love as a lasting value in an essentially absurd world. To be clear, it may turn out that Camus is egotistical or narcissistic, for example, in this way of thinking about love—that is a further question that relates to a normative judgment about his love ethic in general. It is imperative, however, to fully understand that for which he argues in the first place. What he argues for is a way of seeing the world that allows for a clear comprehension of its structure, and a way to reconcile the transgression of norms within this same structure.

It is highly problematic to claim, as Rizzuto does, that “the Don Juan male” is “a sexual athlete,” or that “Camus’s male characters are aliens to love” (55). First, the appeal to sexuality misses the conceptual ground upon which Camus founds Don Juan’s singularity, which is based upon understanding *and* transgression in general. Second, Camus’s male characters are not “aliens” to love, rather, they adhere to a *very precise* love ethic that I argue is best exemplified by “Donjuanism” in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The remainder of this section seeks to vividly illustrate these very points.

Earlier in the chapter, Camus poses the question of egotism in Don Juan, and although his answer is initially cryptic, it will ultimately lead to decisive formulations about the ethics of his love—detachment leads to liberation:

Est-il pour autant égoïste? A sa façon sans doute. Mais là encore, il s’agit de s’entendre. Il y a ceux qui sont faits pour vivre et ceux qui sont faits pour aimer. Don Juan du moins le dirait volontiers. (103)

There is a concession to a measure of egotism in his way of being, yet the real appeal is to a curious distinction: some people are “made to live,” whereas some people are “made to love.”

We know that Camusian heroes are “not made that way,” and Camus will ultimately argue that a conflation of “loving” with “living” leads to a poorly optimized life. It is thus paramount to first understand the precise sense of love that he attacks, and then to situate the way of life that he promotes:

Car l’amour dont on parle ici est paré des *illusions de l’éternel*. Tous les spécialistes de la passion nous l’apprennent, et il n’y a d’amour éternel que contrarié. Il n’est guère de passion sans lutte. Un pareil amour ne trouve de fin que dans l’ultime contradiction qui est la mort. Il faut être Werther *ou rien*. (103, my emphasis)

The love under attack is clearly “eternal” love, which understands itself as enduringly inexhaustible, *i.e.*, as ‘always loving exactly this person.’ This love is illusory, however, as “passion experts” would corroborate, for the reason that this type of love leads to a contradiction *qua* passion. Passion generally requires struggle, but eternal love grasps its object *once and for all* and thus bypasses the moments of struggle that animate real passion, to poor effect.

Because this type of love bypasses the essential steps of real passion, it is just a matter of time, then, before its structure breaks down. To cement this point, Camus draws upon a most extreme literary thought experiment: when young Werther romantically chooses to make his love eternal by killing himself, the “ultimate” or decisive form of the contradiction is exposed. To make this kind of value truly last once it becomes unrequited, one must be willing to self-terminate, as Werther tragically exemplifies.

When Camus states the dilemma as “one must be Werther or nothing,” there is arguably more than mere rhetorical import, however. We will see that “choosing to be nothing” is in fact one of Don Juan’s distinctive moral traits, and it is thus important to specify the “nothingness” in this statement as well as in reference to Werther’s choice to be everything in his love, as it were (104). Camus makes the transition to “nothingness” and its

relation to love clearer by way of a detour through *The Myth of Sisyphus's* guiding motif (and Goethe's own narrative): suicide *via* misguided passion:

Là encore, il y a plusieurs façons de se suicider dont l'une est le don total et l'oubli de sa propre personne. Don Juan, autant qu'un autre, sait que cela peut être émouvant. Mais il est un des seuls à savoir que l'important n'est pas là. Il le sait aussi bien : ceux qu'un grand amour détourne de toute vie personnelle s'enrichissent peut-être, mais appauvrissent à coup sûr ceux que leur amour a choisis. (103)

When love is construed as “un grand amour” (that is, as “eternal” or uniquely lasting) it leads to undesirable consequences. The “grand” type of love “diverts” one from one's own life, and even if one is emotionally nourished by this way of loving, it nonetheless has the sure consequence of impoverishing love's interpersonal nature. The quintessentially romantic “total gift” of one's own life can be “moving,” yet sober reflection reveals that it cannot maintain its own structure. This grand or eternal way of loving is one-dimensional, to the detriment of the world's important contribution to passionate love. This eternal way of loving can also put the beloved in a harsh bind, “impoverishing” his or her freedom and sense of attachment. One might think that enough has been said to deflate grand ways of loving, but Camus seems to have an axe to grind:

Une mère, une femme passionnée, ont nécessairement le cœur sec, car il est *détourné du monde*. Un seul sentiment, un seul être, un seul visage, *mais* tout est dévoré. C'est un *autre* amour qui ébranle Don Juan, et celui-là est libérateur. Il apporte avec lui tous les visages du monde et son frémissement vient de *ce qu'il se connaît périssable*. Don Juan a choisi *d'être rien*. (103-4, my emphasis)

It is stunning when he claims that a loving mother, for instance, *necessarily* has a heart of stone. Yet it is at this very moment that we glimpse the measure of the young Camus's love ethic (as well as the lengths to which he goes to defend it). The love at issue is the eternal, grand or simply lasting kind, and he importantly qualifies his reasons for attacking these forms as well as for *championing* another form of love in their stead. Camus is cutting love's

umbilical chord in order to reinvent it in an originary state—his strategy is to undermine “stable” love as a type, in order to assert another type that “liberates” the “clear” person in an absurd world.¹⁶

“Eternal” or “grand” love is unmasked as “turned away from the world” and uniquely fixated upon its object, which is represented as fetishized. This way of loving “devours everything” in its “sole” object. And because it is so transfixed by one tree, it misses the amorous forest, as it were: this type of love is blind to the cornucopia of love in the world that exists beyond the unique beloved. Uniquely lasting love prefers, instead, a kind of amorous omphaloskepsis. The previous, related claim is that when someone “chooses to love” another in the “grand” way, the *beloved* suffers from a surfeit of affection. The beloved is overwhelmed by the “devouringly” amorous appetite of the lover, and in this way lasting love “impoverishes” the beloved as well.

A love that understands itself as unique and lasting is certainly not lacking in affect *qua* its “sole” object; yet it is precisely defective with regard to the global possibilities that it misses. It misses, first, the *panoply* of the self’s amorous chances “in the world” in general. Second, it misses the existentially “liberating” ethos that the “other” kind of love offers, which Don Juan wisely exemplifies—*ce fou est un grand sage*, if one takes Camus seriously. When he claims that “Don Juan carries with him all of the world’s faces,” the immediate inference is that he embraces the world’s complexity in his being’s manifold erotic possibilities, *contra* eternal love and its sole fixation. He knows the type of experience he wants, and with the help of his disposable disguises, he multiplies his chances of getting it. In

¹⁶ My claim is that Camus’s early theory undermines stable love as a type, that is, *any* love that is construed as stable or lasting.

Camus's optic, Don Juan's project is to exhaust his being within the tension of an absurd world, heedless of stability and convention. His thrill [*frémissement*] therefore has nothing to do with unique or lasting value, nor is it truly a carnal passion. It comes, first, from a basic understanding of the absurd, and then from a certain choice.

His thrill derives from that which *he himself knows* to be perishable [*se connaît périssable*]. This is exactly the kind of erotic love that was mentioned above, the "generous" or noble type, and we have seen that its distinctive trait is a question of self-understanding. « Il n'y a d'amour généreux que celui qui *se sait* en même temps passager et singulier » (104, my emphasis). He is essentially a multifaceted actor in pursuit of enjoyments that reflect either his immediate *connaissance* of passion and value, or his amorous *savoir*, in more general terms. When he puts on a mask for a dalliance or for a lark, he thereby understands himself to be momentary and fleeting, and this understanding is a mirror of absurd consciousness itself: « ne pas croire au sens profond des choses, c'est le propre de l'homme absurde » (102). He has chosen "to be nothing" in the sense that he embraces the moment with the lucidity of its imminent oblivion, and the uncertainty of the morrow.¹⁷ It is not at all surprising, then, when Camus privileges the theatre as the absurd site *par excellence* (109, 110, and elsewhere).

When Don Juan understands his love as "nothing," Camus's deeper argument is that he thereby truly sees *the world* as it really is: it is a question of *perishable* moments that should be optimized in a way that reflects one's being in the certain moment, as opposed to "illusory" love that aims for lasting value in the uncertainty of the future. His "crime" is to have "attained a science without illusions," which earns him opprobrium from the established

¹⁷ « Le temps marche avec lui. L'homme absurde est celui qui ne se sépare pas du temps » (102).

order (105). But for all that, his erotic “science” helps him to live well, and to conquer life. « Aimer et posséder, conquérir et épuiser, voilà sa façon de connaître. (Il y a du sens dans ce mot favori de l’Ecriture qui appelle « connaître » l’acte de l’amour) » (105). Don Juan exhausts his being in his art and therefore goes to his grave with irony—his understanding of love, and life, leaves nothing left to bury.

We are now in a preliminary position to formulate Camus’s ethics precisely as a function of his theory of love. The key to understanding Camus’s endorsement of certain ethical beliefs (to the important detriment of others) resides in a close examination of Donjuanism and its complicity with his own life practices of his early period. My claim is that the ethics of Donjaunism informs his values to the extent that *the ethics of the absurd* essentially reside in *Camus’s understanding of love*. To put the same point more provocatively: “Don Juan” best exemplifies the ethics of the work, and Camus is using Donjuanism as a mask for his own best response to the world’s absurdity.

The main reason Donjuanism is so compelling is not because of the celebration of heroic libertinage, nor necessarily because of the appeal, for instance, of ‘justified’ promiscuity. Donjuanism is compelling, rather, for two distinct reasons. First, Camus’s recreation of Don Juan is nothing less than the *modern* prototype of the best way of life in the absurd world that haunts the text. Second, Donjuanism is poorly understood when considered as a sexual ethic; it is instead a sapient, palliative way of understanding the world’s value structure. The following two sections respectively argue for these very claims.

“For Fear of Suffering Again”: The Ripples from Camus’s First Stable Love

I argue that Donjuanism is ultimately a key heuristic device with which to deflate a conception of love that *was harmful* to Albert Camus in his early adulthood. Donjuanism

thereby helped him to supersede this harmful conception with an understanding of a “liberating” alternative, which also reflects the quantitative ethics of *The Myth of Sisyphus*. We will see a deeper case for the complicity between Camus’s love ethic and his ethics in general in the following section. For now, however, a brief turn to biographical accounts of Camus’s first, and perhaps only stable erotic love, is warranted: his marriage (1934 – 1936) with Simone Hié.

To state the point bluntly, Camus’s derisive outlook on love as a grand, stable or simply lasting value was certainly nourished (and perhaps catalyzed) by his tumultuous first marriage. I draw upon his retrospective commentary as well as biographical data to make this point clearer. A brief return to Camus’s notebooks is helpful to chart the extent to which his first marriage impacted his outlook on love’s value, moreover. Looking backward, in 1936, for instance, Camus had called marriage a “pretext for betrayal and lies” (*Carnets 1*, 106).

Looking forward, Rizzuto importantly points out an entry from the 1950s that is particularly telling, wherein Camus retrospectively analyses his own first marriage and the way it marked him. For context’s sake, Rizzuto is arguing for the complicity between certain experiences in Camus’s early life and how they relate to his “contempt for” and “condemnation of marriage”:

One devastating experience that no doubt contributed to this condemnation was his marriage to his first wife, Simone Hié, which he analyzed at the end of his life: “The first woman I loved and to whom I was faithful escaped me through drugs, through betrayal [Hié was a morphine addict]. Many things in my life were perhaps caused by this, out of vanity, for fear of suffering again...But I in turn escaped from everyone else since and, in a certain sense, I wanted everyone to escape from me.” (26-7) [*Carnets 3*, 279]

My purpose of drawing upon remarks like these, as well as certain biographical details in the next few paragraphs, is to offer an argument that bridges important parts of Camus’s life with the evaluative claims about love and ethics that inhabit his works from this period and

beyond. To this extent, the contrast between “the woman to whom I was faithful” in love and “escaped me through betrayal” suggests a deeply harmful rift in his (or anyone’s) life. In this particular case it is significantly related to the theme of detachment: he “in turn escaped from everyone else since.”

This contrast is also related to a form of perceived emancipation or liberation: instead of “suffering again” in terms of a grand or total way of loving, Camus suggests that mutual “escape” from lasting attachment seemed like the best option, even if twenty years later he sees a measure of vanity and defensiveness in this same stance. The purpose of my analysis, however, is not to proffer a judgment about whether Camus was mature or puerile, for instance, in his response to amorous betrayal. Rather, the point is offer resources that suggest a relationship between one important part of his life with works that originated within the same period.

Olivier Todd devotes a chapter of his biography to situate the importance of Camus’s rupture with Hié and its arguable impact upon his works of the late 1930s and beyond.¹⁸ The chapter is entitled “La Lettre de Salzburg” for the reason that Camus first became aware of Hié’s infidelity when he opened a strange looking letter addressed to “Madame Camus” on a lengthy trip throughout Europe in 1936 (Todd 113). To cut to the chase, Hié was apparently the lover of two doctors, one in Algeria and one in France, for the reason, at least, that they maintained her opiate habit. Camus eventually put the pieces together, and the general results

¹⁸ On his reading, Simone Hié stood apart from the women in Camus’s milieu. She was well-read and from a bourgeois family (as opposed to Camus’s very humble working class origins) and unlike the “filles” that would throw themselves at Camus, Hié quickly established her independence by asserting her intellect through her own literary tastes and music, for example, in stark contrast to Camus’s (Todd 59-60, 63). Theirs was a “tumultuous” courtship, and Camus had to overcome social obstacles like his “low” birth and relative poverty, but for all that they finally married in 1934.

are as one might imagine—he was devastated, and decided to effectively break off their marriage.

Todd's analysis extends this sense of devastation and rupture to the impact that it had on Camus, by way of his analysis of works begun that same year. Similar to Rizzuto's analysis, Todd finds transpositions of « la trahison, l'échec et la complicité brisée » that Camus underwent with Hié in *The Happy Death's* (1936) main protagonist, Mersault. In addition to passages that we analyzed above, Todd describes telling passages that describe both the devastation of adultery as well as the contempt that Mersault has for marriage (118-9). He also indicates that Camus will importantly formulate the first sketches of his “absurd trilogy” very soon thereafter: *The Stranger*, *Caligula*, and *The Myth of Sisyphus*. A case can thus be made that Camus's first marriage scotched his belief in the value of lasting erotic love, for the simple reason that he was deeply hurt and did not want to experience that again: he “escaped” from this amorous structure, and he perhaps also thought that things would turn out better if his future lovers escaped *from him* in this way as well.

One way to accomplish this evasion—for anyone in particular—is to steadily change one's evaluative system in a way that liberates one from that which may again be harmful, on the one hand. On the other hand, one way to make this evasion meaningful is to undermine the worth of “lasting” love *tout court*, while also pursuing other alternatives. My suggestion is that Camus did both to varying degrees, and that the love ethic of Donjuanism represents the culmination of this way of negotiating value in a world that reflects only quantitative options and multiplications of its structure: « ne croire pas au sens profond des choses, c'est le propre de l'homme absurde » (102).

The next section's task is to solidify my interpretation of love and its complicity with Camus's ethics within the general framework of *The Myth of Sisyphus* as a whole. There are two important reasons for pursuing this last tack. First, this chapter's broader purpose is to examine the evolving phenomenon of love in Camus's oeuvre, especially to the degree that it informs his conception of ethics and politics. *The Myth of Sisyphus* represents Camus's most definitive statement on love and value in his early period, and so it is important to grasp the relationship of love to Camus's general evaluative framework, in order to better make the contrast with later periods.

Second, the attribution of a robust "ethics" to the *Myth of Sisyphus* is (at first glance) an ambivalent undertaking, for the reason that Camus seems to deny that his work has ethical implications.¹⁹ I draw upon Avi Sagi's brilliant *Albert Camus and the Philosophy of the Absurd* (2002) in order to situate the relevant senses in which Camus does, however, specify an ethics to the work.

The Decisive Lesson of Camus's First Love: Detachment Leads to Liberation

Camus's early oeuvre argues for an ethic of detachment, for the reason that it leads to an existential liberation. "Detachment" is construed as a detachment *from* stability, lasting value, and a surfeit of amorous affection. Camus importantly organizes this notion around numerous considerations of romantic love, be it in his earliest works of this period, or in his most definitively worked-out formulations in *The Myth of Sisyphus*.

¹⁹ "On trouvera *seulement* ici la description, à l'état pur, d'un mal d'esprit. Aucune métaphysique, aucune croyance, n'y sont mêlées pour le moment. Ce sont les limites et le seul parti pris de *ce livre* » (16, my emphasis). What Camus arguably means is that there is no attempt in his work to outline an ethics in the sense of morally binding prescriptions (which he did not believe in, at any rate, at this point in his life, for the reason that the absurd world had no intrinsic value).

We have seen a case for the more entrenched relationship between Camus's general fear of stability and its expression in the vast majority of his male protagonists, as well as in many notebook entries of this period. These works show that erotic love that understands itself as a stable and lasting configuration is symptomatic of decline and atrophy. I would call this the negative character of Camusian love, and its exposition was important because its devaluation is for the sake of championing an alternative, positive, formulation of erotic love.

I call this the "positive" formulation of Camusian love precisely by virtue of the way that Camus *describes it*. A lucid practice of detached erotic love allegedly leads to "being liberated," the outline of which we indicated above, and to which we will soon return in order to grasp its monumental significance in his early period. This positive dimension of love finds its most detailed and mature outlet in "Donjuanism," so it is worthwhile to linger on the manner in which Camus describes this archetypical existential possibility.

To recapitulate the positive description of Don Juan: he is "fulfilling," "potent" and capable of "generous" love, to speak to one level of praise. At a different register, the Don Juan type sees "clearly," that is, he is both in tune with the world's structure, as well as capable of seeing through "illusions." It was stressed several times, moreover, that his real gift or *don* is a feature of his understanding, which is not just an understanding of his own being, but also a virtue of his keen insight into the world's structure. Insights such as these lead Camus to describe Donjuanism as singularly "wise." Lastly, this wisdom importantly leads to an unequivocal acknowledgment of "being liberated," both with respect to this type, as well as to those who "approach him."

One can approach the question of "Don Juan's" overall importance to Camus from a different tack, moreover—how does he characterize the *contrast* between the Don Juan

archetype and other relevantly similar responses to loving and living well? The scales are overwhelmingly tipped in favor of the former. The latter were characterized as flawed, whether it was in the description of Werther's hypertrophic love, the appeal to "passion experts," the deflation of "grand" or "total" love types, etc. In all such cases, their common flaw resides in believing that love's *value* is *stable* and *lasting*. Don Juan's (read, the young Camus's) love seeks and values, rather, the "nothingness" or anticipatorily perishable quality of erotic experience.

Another way to approach the question of Don Juan's worth is to identify the negative ways in which he is described. This method leads to an interesting pattern: *as soon as* Camus raises the question of whether he is, *e.g.*, "egotistical," "sad," "worthy of punishment," he will then *defer* this negative characterization to the benefit of a positive reinterpretation. For Camus, Don Juan is "selfish in his own way," *but* the real question is "how to live"—and he lives quite well. If he is guilty of a "crime," moreover, it is *only* in the nominal sense of standing apart from those who live an "illusory" life. He is thus a 'criminal' because of his relative sapience: his "science" is luminary, and for that reason people envy it. One can clearly see that in Camus's eyes, Don Juan is not defective in any meaningful way, and conversely, he represents clear vision, decision, and action.

At this point, then, I want to introduce an important question. *What else* is "Don Juan" other than Camus's *modern ethical champion*? We will see a theoretical case for how one can extract a distinct form of ethics from *The Myth of Sisyphus*, but the practical case is quite compelling at this juncture: Don Juan certainly appears to be his undisputed ethical champion

period.²⁰ He is wise, fulfilled, artistic, potent, liberated, and liberating. And when one tries to attach a negative value to him or to punish him, Camus deftly moves on to a different, positive aspect of his prowess and keen vision. Like Camus's recreation of the mythical Sisyphus, one can *try* to punish Don Juan, but his uncommon, transgressive understanding trumps the powers that be.

It is most crucial to keep in mind that Camus organizes his agent's powers, perspicuity, and creativity precisely through considerations of *love and its relation to value*. We will now inquire further into this existential "liberation" that we have only touched upon, in order to cement the deeper relation of love to the overall ethical argument of the text. That is, what *value* does this liberation have, first, with respect to erotic love, and then in the general philosophical context of *Sisyphus*? Answering this textual question will respond to the question of how Camus arguably came to privilege a liberated, detached love as a pivotal value. The key to appreciating the value of this liberation resides in a nuanced appreciation of the "absurd" that haunts the text and challenges its readers, on the one hand, and the deeper importance of "clarity" in the work, on the other.

There are many formulations of the absurd in *Sisyphus*. Its pithy preface informs us that the absurd is considered as « un point de départ » and that we will find only « la description, à l'état pur, d'un mal d'esprit » (16). From the macro-perspective Camus then subtly introduces its paradoxically uncanny, yet regular, expression in everyday human life:

Quel est donc cet incalculable sentiment qui prive l'esprit du sommeil nécessaire à la vie ?
Un monde qu'on peut expliquer même avec de mauvaises raisons est toujours un monde

²⁰ Sisyphus's name is on the cover, and he gets the final chapter of the book, but when one compares (quantitatively and qualitatively) the amount of positive attributes given to Don Juan compared to Sisyphus, a case can be made that the former steals the show. This is perhaps the reason that Donjuanism occupies the center of the work, in addition to the fact that his legacy is far more contemporary than Sisyphus's.

familier. Mais au contraire, dans un univers soudain privé d'illusions et de lumières, l'homme se sent un étranger...Ce divorce entre l'homme de sa vie, l'acteur et son décor, c'est proprement le sentiment de l'absurdité. (20)

When the rug is pulled out from underneath, when the reasons for which our daily activities cease to connect to the world as we thought they did, this “incalculable” sentiment threatens the very fabric of intelligibility. The *mal d'esprit* opens a chasm that divorces one from one's role in life, and life is thereby threatened.

It is not surprising, then, when Camus immediately raises the possibility of suicide and declares that his work is “precisely” the rapport between it and the absurd. If the absurd represents the possibility of an originary, anarchic beginning, the project of dying represents a decisive ending. Utterly unreflective or delusional people notwithstanding,²¹ *The Myth of Sisyphus* essentially responds to one basic human question:

Il est aisé d'être logique. Il est presque impossible d'être logique jusqu'au bout. Les hommes qui meurent de leurs propres mains suivent ainsi jusqu'à sa fin la pente de leur sentiment. La réflexion sur le suicide me donne alors l'occasion de poser le seul problème qui m'intéresse : y a-t-il une logique jusqu'à la mort ? (24)

Because it is both incalculable as well as ubiquitous in its impact on life, Camus importantly refines the sentiment of the absurd into a particular *passion*. The decisive question now becomes whether one can harness it all the way to the end, as the following, and rather unheralded, characterization of the absurd reveals:

A partir du moment où elle est reconnue, l'absurdité est une passion, la plus *déchirante* de toutes. Mais savoir si l'on peut vivre avec ses passions, savoir si l'on peut accepter leur loi profonde qui est de *brûler le cœur* que dans le même temps *elles exaltent*, voilà *toute la question*. Ce n'est pas cependant celle que nous poserons encore. Elle est *au centre* de cette expérience. (40, my emphasis)

The “Don Juan” chapter is at the center of the work, and of all of the types mentioned in the text—including Sisyphus—it is Don Juan who most profoundly reflects the right attitude to

²¹ « Je parle ici, bien entendu, des hommes disposés à se mettre d'accord avec eux mêmes » (21).

emotive transport, creativity, and self-understanding with respect to this “burning passion” that marks the absurd. To return to the previous quotation, he “follows his logic to the end,” and more importantly, he harnesses his passion into this same logic that leaves nothing left of him in his *activity*, but which leaves his *being* intact. He is unlike Romantic Werther, whose grip cannot let go of the “all or nothing” characterization of value. Werther follows his logic to the end, undoubtedly, but this response “burns his heart” forever more. Don Juan’s understanding allows, by contrast, for the careful repetition of crucially perishable moments that are optimized within a discrete horizon. He keeps his heart intact, and ready for the next occasion.

Don Juan is liberated, then, to the precise extent that his evaluative system can thrive with this passion—he knows that he is a “stranger,” and he knows that there is an abyss between “himself and his life.” With this knowledge, he finds the only form of freedom that Camus acknowledges as real in a world without qualitative value: the freedom to *feel* in the right way, based upon understanding. He calls this freedom “the only reasonable” type that “a human heart can experience and live”:

S’abîmer dans cette certitude sans fond, se sentir désormais assez étranger à sa propre vie pour l’accroître et la parcourir *sans la myopie de l’amant*, il y a là le principe d’une libération... Elle ne tire pas de chèque sur l’éternité. Mais elle remplace les illusions de la *liberté*, qui toutes s’arrêtaient à la mort. La divine disponibilité du condamné à mort devant qui s’ouvrent les portes de la prison par une certaine petite aube... la mort et l’absurde sont ici, on le sent bien, les principes de la seule liberté raisonnable : *celle qu’un cœur humain peut éprouver et vivre*. (85, emphasis in the original on « liberté »)

From consciousness of the absurd comes the possibility of clarity, and from clarity comes the freedom to reasonably feel well, to be sapient in this sense. On my reading, Don Juan best exemplifies this process, and as I have argued, Camus frequently situates his considerations of coping responses to the absurd by way of notions like passion and love. There certainly

seems to be an ethos that he is recommending, and it appears indisputable that certain archetypes are better, simply put, than others in the gamut of the absurd. But is there a precise ethics in all of this?

Agi Savi's lapidary *Albert Camus and the Philosophy of the Absurd* (2002) conducts a thorough analysis of two generations of Camus scholarship in order to establish his own reading of the question of an "ethics of the absurd." His argument begins with the first generation of Camus scholarship, who struggled with the question of whether Camus is arguing for a normative-based ethics. Sagi's analysis samples key figures like John Cruickshank (1960), Herbert Hochberg (1965), as well as Duff and Marshall (1982), all of whom show (in one way or another) that it is problematic to assert that Camus is seeking to infer a moral justification for choosing the absurd (Sagi, Cf. 67-73). Briefly stated, given that Camus's work is descriptive and not prescriptive, it seems like a non-starter to attempt to generate "an ethics of obligation" from his text.²²

Rather than offer a "moral justification" for embracing the absurd, Sagi contends that Camus is instead seeking to express a fundamental yearning for, and realization of the basic datum of human existence: "clarity" (73, and elsewhere). The overall purpose of this clarity is to accept the world as it is, as absurdly "immanent," as well as to attain a form of "happiness," which after all is how one must imagine Sisyphus, as Camus concludes. Sagi argues that this happiness is a function of the actualization of a distinctly human activity, which is grounded in an immanent understanding:

²² Camus, at any rate, is quite contemptuous of this approach to ethics in *Sisyphus*: « Il ne peut être question de disserter sur la morale. J'ai vu des gens mal agir avec beaucoup de morale, et je constate tous les jours que l'honnêteté n'a pas besoin de règles » (96). Furthermore : « Une fois pour toutes, les jugements de valeur sont écarté ici au profit des jugement de fait » (86).

The acknowledgment of the absurd is the concretization of human consciousness. The absurd person does not conclude an “obligation” from this state of affairs, but embraces whatever emerges within human existence itself. Camus’s approach combines Aristotelian elements stating that values reflect a natural human passion with a phenomenological-existential method. . . Camus’s innovation lies in the renewed characterization of human reality as absurd, and in the application of Aristotelian and phenomenological elements to these circumstances. (73)

He explains that in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, a human being’s “basic immanent drive” reflects “a deep immanent passion for clarity and transparency in consciousness” (73). He qualifies this sense of “immanence” as “phenomenological” to the extent that Camus himself uses Husserl’s formulations for “dismantling the transcendent dimensions and perceiving consciousness as a kind of relationship to a complex set of experiences, [which] releases the world from the shallowness and uniformity impressed upon it by traditional rationalism” (76).

Sagi’s strategy connects Husserl’s and Heidegger’s “method of enabling the transition of consciousness from potential to actuality” to the reason for choosing to “adopt the absurd” (77-78). The choice is not a duty of some sort, rather, it is the “readiness to convey, in explicit terms, the meaning of basic human existence.”

The dynamic of the conscious immanent process generates a self-awareness that compels the individual to make a decision on whether to endorse or reject the absurd. The decision to endorse the absurd reflects the immanent disposition toward clarity, as well as the readiness to express this disposition at all times. Paradoxically, the decision to endorse the absurd implies a harmony between the individual and his/her basic given data. (78)

Sagi’s next, and crucial, move is to introduce the importance of “Aristotelian elements” in Camus’s framework, in order to show the relationship between self-actualization and a distinct form of happiness. He guides the analysis to Aristotle’s insistence upon the relationship between doing something excellently and being happy *qua* this function: Aristotle “links happiness to perfection, and happiness is associated with the *full* realization of the individual’s unique endeavor” (80).

Happiness in this sense is “not a situation of quiescent acknowledgment, but a constant endorsement of reality, as represented by Sisyphus” (80). This kind of happiness “is a situation of harmony within: the absurd person liberates...his/her inner tendency to will clarity, and brings it to full realization” (81). The absurd situation is essentially in a constant tension, however. It is not as if the goal of endorsing the absurd amounts to the pinnacle of a lucid moment, only to be lost forever after. Rather, Sagi argues that this point of departure is the very reason for why Camus so often stresses the theme of “repetition” as well as the famous ethics of quantity.

To recapitulate, we have seen a case wherein one can extract an ethical structure from *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The person who endorses the absurd does not do so for the sake of a moral obligation, but rather because it expresses the flourishing of a distinctly human capacity. A further implication is that Camus conceives of the world as essentially immanent, and that experience reveals that it is only through repetition and diversity of experience that value accrues. « La morale d’un homme, son échelle de valeurs n’ont de sens que par *la quantité et la variété* d’expériences qu’il lui a été donné d’accumuler » (87, my emphasis).

A part of my argument is that it is in fact Donjuanism, and not Sisyphus, that best reflects the ethics and the overall structure of the *Myth of Sisyphus*. We saw arguments above for how Camus privileges Don Juan more than any other type, and, further, that Camus tends to organize the practical examples of ways of living with the absurd *via* amorous themes and ways of loving. At this point, and given Sagi’s analysis of the ethical structure of the text, there is a further reason for why Camus really champions Don Juan over Sisyphus.

It is perhaps true that “we must imagine Sisyphus happy,” as Camus states it. But a closer look at Sisyphus’s life actually makes it pale compared to Don Juan’s, especially by

virtue of Camus's ethics. The ethic of quantity does not only recommend repetition, it also recommends *variety*. Sisyphus lives ethically by Camus's standards to the extent that he does, in fact, repeat his cycle with clarity and self-realization. He recreates the worth of his life in an absurd world with every roll of the boulder. He patently lacks variety, however, and to this extent Sisyphus is *defective*.

Don Juan, on the other hand, combines repetition *with* variety in the best way. Like Sisyphus, it is through his understanding that he lives happily. But the Don Juan archetype embodies the theatricality of the absurd, its protean sense of responding to any situation whatsoever. The many examples of Donjuanism described above have all shown a premium of variety and lucid anticipation thereof. To this precise extent, Don Juan is more "free" than Sisyphus to feel the "passion" that represents the sentiment of the absurd. He is crucially *more* ethical than Sisyphus, at least by Camus's very own standards. Quantity, when read alongside variety, makes for a qualitative difference between Don Juan and Sisyphus. "Don Juan" is the fluent master of both accumulation and variety, and his type, on my reading, is best suited to Camus's absurd arena.

It is worth noting, though, that someone could, in fact, use the general outline of Camus's ethics to justify a narcissistic and misogynist erotic ethic. One could just as well use this same ethical outline, however, to drive a 'free-love' ethic, for example, wherein each lover is 'liberated' from possession, lasting attachment, and the concomitant pain that often comes from these. One could go even further in this direction, claiming for example that such a 'free' love is the most enlightened, because it subtends a more communal approach to sociality and relationships, and so forth. My purpose in tarrying with Camus's thought is not

blind to these possibilities, yet in a general sense such approaches miss the conceptual ground upon which Camus situates love and its relationship to ethics.

“Don Juan” is a fictional character at the end of the day. I have referred to “him” as alternately a key “heuristic device,” an “archetype,” or simply an existential possibility, to name the more prominent examples. It is true that I have argued for the complicity between Donjuanism and Camus’s ethical outlook on life, and to this extent there is something real about Donjuanism in Camus’s life, at least his early life. I wish to add a final remark, however, on the general thrust of Camus’s ethics.

Another way to respond to the question of whether someone advocates a particular ethics is to answer ‘yes’ to the following: does he or she promote a certain lifestyle in general, for the reason that it is a better way for everyone to live? Camus, on my reading, clearly promotes Donjuanism as *his* best response to the tensions inherent in an absurd world. But he also suggests a very basic ethical possibility that is presumably open to anyone in particular.

In addition to the chapter on Donjuanism, *The Myth of Sisyphus* devotes a chapter to “le comédien” and “l’aventurier,” respectively, as candidates for the best archetypal responses to the absurd. The Don Juan archetype represents all of these, and we have seen characterizations above that show the essential connection of Donjuanism to theatricality, to his ability to conquer life, and, of course, to love in the best way. When considered in a general sense, however, Camus’s ethics (in the precise sense that has been argued for) are pitched to any particular person whosoever:

Encore une fois ce ne sont pas des morales que ces images proposent et elles n’engagent pas de jugements : ce sont des dessins. Ils figurent seulement un style de vie. L’amant, le comédien ou l’aventurier jouent l’absurde. Mais *aussi bien, s’ils le veulent*, le chaste, le

fonctionnaire ou le président de la république. *Il suffit de savoir et de ne rien masquer.* (125, my emphasis)

It suffices to have a certain understanding and to yearn for clarity, if one so wishes to. (In this sense, Camus is quite close to Descartes.) The chaste person, the bureaucrat, etc., like Don Juan, cannot “become better, as in stories.” Yet quite like Sisyphus, people may have limited roles in life, at least in Camus’s optic, but the essential question is that of understanding and of a certain will to transgress the given. It is a certain desire or “passion” that drives the person, not so much a question of their factual state. In this sense, the ethical import of *The Myth of Sisyphus* is quite general.

In another sense, though, I have argued that *qua* variety, one can extract an ethical difference between those who are able to “multiply” their possibilities and those who are more limited. Camus, on this reading, unequivocally privileges Donjuanism in this case. Lastly, and most crucially, he uses numerous considerations of love to organize this very difference (and these same considerations likely reflect a sharp turn within his own life). My particular reading of the text argues for Donjuanism’s primacy—and not Sisyphus’s—in his first definitive philosophical treatise.

The Don Juan image left to us at this period of his production, which is amplified in the speech and actions of his leading male characters, moreover, is that of the solitary individual who stands apart from others, and whose ethics reside in an equally solitary, quantity-of-experience driven optic. Outside of the particular lover’s needs, erotic love that understands itself as lasting is insufficient in itself, and misguided in general, as Caligula and Meursault indicate, and as *The Myth of Sisyphus* elaborates.

It is at the departure of this notion of love that Camus’s turn to the robust notion of love developed in the next phase of his life is all the more striking, especially once we have

appreciated the political and ethical stakes that are riding on this same notion of love. Love will thus interestingly and radically change form in this next, decisive part of Camus's life. Lasting love was seen as derisive for the solitary, absurd individual who needed to negotiate value and meaning in the moment's lucidity. In this early phase of his life, *detachment* led to liberation, and value resided in the moment's quantitative and transitory appeal. In the next phase of his life, however, his worldview changes, and with it *his way of loving*. The absurd individual's ethics (and system of values) cannot adequately respond to the socially devastating reality of the Second World War, let alone its ethical and political aftermath. What he needed was a certain way of valuing humanity and justice, which for Albert Camus meant a distinct way of loving it.²³

The Decisive Step: Solidarity, Liberation, and Love

To briefly resume Camus's biographical situation at this point, in August 1942 he had to return to France in order to treat a severe bout of tuberculosis, and he was literally blocked from returning to Algeria by the looming Allied invasion of Italy. At the request of his mentor Pascal Pia and others, a physically recovered Camus arrived on the Parisian scene to work for Gallimard and to showcase his literary and theatrical talent. It is here that he formulated the ideas leading to what Ronald Aronson calls his first "direct wartime intervention" in *Letters to a German Friend* (Aronson 32).

Aronson helpfully offers a narrative that I wish to first examine and then critically appropriate. In his *Camus and Sartre* (2004) he analyzes the guiding motifs of the first two of Camus's *Letters to a German Friend*, which he wrote in July 1943 and published

²³ For a more thorough analysis of Camus's life immediately preceding and then during the first few years of the Occupation, please consult the first Appendix.

anonymously (the latter two Letters were published post-liberation).²⁴ The *Letters* are dedicated to the poet René Leynaud, whom Camus deeply admired for his engagement in the Resistance as well as his first-rate talent.²⁵

Aronson suggests a telling complicity between the thematic progression of the *Letters* and Camus's retroactive explanation for why he did not engage in the Resistance earlier in the War. France, like Camus, was effectively sucker-punched and emotionally unprepared, on the one hand, and unwilling to "dirty its hands" until it sensed its cause was morally just, on the other. Aronson is certainly heavy-handed with the way he manages Camus's excerpts, but for all that his analysis makes a provocative case for Camus's personal narrative as well as the "national myth he constructed":

The first letter reflects *a major change in Camus* and, as he described it, in France. Holding war at arm's length because of the "loathing we had for all war," the French people took the "time to find out if we had the right to kill men, if we were allowed to add to the frightful misery of this world." We paid dearly for this detour—"with prison sentences and executions at dawn, with desertions and separations. . . and above all, with humiliation of our human dignity." . . . Our moral strength was rooted in the fact that we were fighting for justice, with spirit and the sword both on our side: accordingly, "your defeat is inevitable." (32, my emphasis)

Contextualized in this fashion, the rhetoric is indeed remarkable: it is only because the French (who were presumably fed-up with war after 1918) suffered sustained injustice at the hands of a belligerent invader that they were able to truly fight. That is, because of the atrocious character and bellicosity of the enemy, a resolutely non-aggressive France could thereby muster a countervailing moral strength, which would be decisive. That this strength

²⁴ "In these articles Camus ostensibly explained to a German friend he had not seen for five years why the French were defeated; why they had slowly, painfully taken up arms against their occupiers; and why they would win. In the process, he constructed a national myth" (32). This is arguably a specious presentation of "Camus's" role in the text itself. As we see below, it is misguided to insinuate that Albert Camus represents the narrator of the *Letters*.

²⁵ "Leynaud was chief of the Paris sector of the CNR [*Conseil National de la Résistance*] whom the Gestapo executed in 1944. Camus admired Leynaud enormously for his modesty and bravery," as Bronner aptly describes it (59).

took much time to cultivate simply reflects the preparation and severity of the German invasion.

Aronson's analysis highlights, first, that which is rhetorically dazzling in Camus's "mythmaking," as well as the extent to which it houses his apparent indecision to actively resist prior to 1943:

Letters to a German Friend showed Camus the political moralist at work. He sought to promote Resistance morale by an interesting sleight of hand—rejecting nationalism while reaffirming French national superiority...He even turned the fall of France to his country's moral advantage...These bits of Resistance mythmaking contained Camus's *self-justification* for making, as he suggested the French had done, "a long detour" before going into action. (33, my emphasis)

Aronson rightly dissects some unintended, politically troubling implications in this same rhetoric. For my part, I will argue that these implications reflect a kind of cognitive dissonance in Camus's narrative, which he rectifies later during the War in his editorials at

Combat. As Aronson notes:

After all, what was he implying about all those who had not waited, who began the Resistance on the first day of the Occupation, many of them rallying to de Gaulle? And those who, like the Communists, were ready to resist violently and with great heroism as soon as the order was given? ...They had dirty hands. Defeated France, nonviolent France, the France that was ambivalent about making war was now slowly rising, propelled by the right reasons. (33)

Aronson argues that the act of writing the *Letters to a German Friend* initiated Camus's active resistance as well as implicitly enabled him to give a retroactive narrative of his own "long detour" (with respect to actively resisting). On his view, Camus's rhetoric "promotes Resistance morale" while being blind, however, to some disturbing, unintended implications of such a stance.

His argument is important in that it actually reckons with a part of Camus's intellectual and moral life, prior to *Combat* and after the completion of his trilogy, which

other accounts simply gloss over. The idea that Camus used the *Letters*, wittingly or unwittingly, as a foil for his own ambivalence is a highly interesting suggestion. Lastly, the tension or cognitive dissonance that he highlights (between Camus's mythical narrative and its dismissal of the pre-1943 Resistance) draws attention to a blind spot in the *Letters'* narrative, which is largely overlooked in the critical literature. Yet Aronson's analysis falls short of offering a clear explanation of Camus's relationship to the *Letters*, for several reasons.

First, Aronson's contextualization of the *Letters to a German Friend* is selective and atypical. For a reader who has not recently, or ever, encountered the *Letters*, the following point is helpful given the way that Aronson frames the argument about "Camus's" role within the text itself. *Letters to a German Friend* represents a fictional story that Camus wrote, in which the nameless narrator "corresponds" in epistolary form with "a German friend."²⁶ In this sense, the *Letters* closely resembles Montesquieu's or Graffigny's "Letters," rather than the misleading way that Aronson frames it, namely that "*Camus* ostensibly explained to a German friend that..."

At approximately six pages each, the *Letters* offer a brief story of a generic intellectual Frenchman who gives a moralizing narrative that reconciles years of trauma with an emerging sense of the moral duty to expel rapacious invaders. This is a very general narrative, which when considered *per se*, may or may not apply to Camus's practical decisions to join the Resistance—although establishing that would take a further argument, which Aronson does not offer (but which I do, below).

²⁶ If this "friend" has a direct, personal referent, there is no mention of it in any account of the *Letters* that I have read. At any rate, a close reading of the *Letters* is given in the next section, which will argue more precisely against Aronson's characterization of them.

Second, and as Aronson would presumably recognize, Camus is intentionally putting out a piece of *propaganda*—call it a myth, so be it—that reflects tactics used by those who have far less factual power than their enemies. If it is true that “they” have the troops, the weapons, and the land, and “we” only have words and ideas, then one important tactic is to use what “we” have to the best possible effect. In this case, Camus’s literary tactics are clever to the extent that, instead of supposing millions of Germans reading it (in French for that matter), he probably supposed that it could only boost morale by means of a favorable counter-narrative to a fractured national identity. That it would become a myth in some sense will only confirm the *Letters*’ efficacy.

Lastly, and most decisively for our purposes, Aronson’s analysis of the *Letters* effectively *defers* the question of what led Camus to actively resist (or, to hesitate). His argument asserts that the moral evolution outlined therein corresponds to Albert Camus’s actual life and motivation, yet it does not go any further than this suggestion. Are we to believe, then, that the best narrative for explaining Camus’s transformation resides in his exact similarity with his literary character, the anonymous French narrator who speaks in humanistic, pedagogical tones with his nameless German pal of yesteryear? To do so without any further argument is tantamount to saying that Montesquieu “is” Usbek, for example.

In order to give a more than superficial explanation, Aronson cannot coherently maintain that claim, and hence the question becomes: what led *Camus* to actively resist in the form of *promulgating* the *Letters* and then *joining* the Resistance? That is, what led him from solitude to solidarity in this sense? An important key to this puzzle does reside in Camus’s “moralizing” as well as his “long detour,” but not in the way that Aronson describes

it. The key to this particular puzzle will also reveal the manner in which Camus formulated an unprecedented type of love, pivotal for his emerging sense of politics.

I wish to provide insight into this question by examining the evolution of Camus's understanding of love, and its integral relationship to solidarity and morality. The next section examines key passages from *Letters to a German Friend* in order to indicate his initially curious uses of the "heart" and "love" in his editorial output at *Combat*, written within five months after he began the *Letters*. Its chief purpose is to formally indicate his novel love language, and to anticipate its significance with respect to his evolving sense of morality and politics.

To be clear: I argue that *this change* or evolution in Camus's understanding of love represents a fruitful way to chart his departure from "the plight of the individual" to his "preoccupation with solidarity." My general argument, then, is that the younger Camus's ethics (which, I argued, are contained in Donjuanism) gave way to a new understanding of love's purpose and abilities. His creative *ethical* impulse turned away from erotic love *toward a humanistic love that is configured on a cosmopolitan and international level.*

Ways in which *Letters to a German Friend* Leads to *Combat*: Love's Rebirth

My strategy is to connect one period of Camus's life with another precisely through an examination of the ways that love informs his writing. The common denominators are his budding uses of "love" and "the heart." They are budding because they are new to Camus's register when compared to the kind of love that preoccupied him up until the completion of his absurd trilogy (February 1941), and because the *Letters to a German Friend* are very

brief texts. (His copious editorials at *Combat*, which begin in March 1944, will invigorate this same language.)²⁷

The first *Letter* begins with a nameless Frenchman ostensibly responding to a young German's letter: « Vous me disiez: « La grandeur de mon pays n'a pas de prix. Tout est bon qui la consomme » (16). The German responds by situating his "national destiny" in terms that crucially resemble absurdity and the importance of overcoming it, which of course were capital themes in *The Myth of Sisyphus*: « Et dans un monde où plus rien n'a de sens, ceux qui, comme nous, jeunes Allemands, ont la chance d'en trouver un au destin de leur nation doivent tout lui sacrifier » (16). The Frenchman's response introduces the importance of love as well as the pitfalls of believing that the world has no intrinsic value: « *Je vous aimais* alors, mais c'est là que, déjà, *je me séparais de vous* » (16, my emphasis). The shift *away from* an embrace of the absurd and toward the importance of love cannot be ignored—the Frenchman was speaking to himself on some important level in this sentence, that is, he was turning away from his previous evaluative framework and towards a love for the well being of the community, and more importantly, for his budding conception of that which is not morally permissible. In other words, the pronominal interplay between the "je" and "me" are arguably telling, as well as the imperfect verb *me séparais*: each suggests a transformation based upon a choice.

The Frenchman continues, importantly outlining the genuine nature of love (and its relationship to justice and dignity) to his misguided friend:

²⁷ By way of a preliminary indication, the heart refers to one's moral character and one's capacity to love one's fellows, as well as to stay true to what Camus's calls "the revolt." The heart also importantly has a collective meaning, which refers to a political group's capacity to love and to remain constant to the revolt. Because his emerging conception of love is singular, however, the change can only be appreciated in a thorough and patient elucidation of these terms, which represents the remainder of this chapter.

Non, vous disais-je, je ne puis croire qu'il faille tout asservir au but que l'on poursuit. Il est *des moyens qui ne s'excusent pas*. Et je voudrais *pouvoir aimer mon pays tout en aimant la justice*. Je ne veux pas pour lui de n'importe quelle grandeur, fût-ce celle du sang et du mensonge. C'est en faisant vivre la justice que je veux le faire vivre. Vous m'avez dit: « Allons, vous n'aimez pas votre pays. » Il y a cinq ans de cela... *il n'est pas un jour de ces longues années* (si brèves, si fulgurantes pour vous !) où je n'aie eu votre phrase à l'esprit, « Vous n'aimez pas votre pays ! » (16, my emphasis)

The first two paragraphs of the *Letters* are saturated with various uses of love: it is used as a bridge to identity and justice, on the one side, and as a means of separation, on the other. In this precise instance his use of love connotes 'love of country,' but the application of love in this and the following phases of his political life connotes a broad love of humanity *coupled with a love of justice*.²⁸ The "Germans" misunderstand what this kind of love is (presumably because they are caught up in the *absurdity* of "le monde qui n'a plus rien de sens,") and so the moralizing Frenchman will, first, make further distinctions about love, and then connect it to the political climate of the day:

Non, je ne l'aimais pas, si c'est ne pas aimer que de *dénoncer* ce qui n'est pas juste dans ce que nous aimons, si c'est ne pas aimer que d'exiger que l'être aimé s'égalise à la plus belle image que nous avons de lui. Il y a cinq ans de cela, *beaucoup d'hommes pensaient comme moi* en France...Et ces hommes, qui selon vous n'aimaient pas leur pays, ont plus fait pour lui que vous ne ferez jamais pour le vôtre...Car ils ont eu à se vaincre d'abord et c'est leur héroïsme. Mais je parle ici de *deux sortes de grandeur* et d'une contradiction sur laquelle je vous dois de vous éclairer. (16-17, my emphasis)

The narrator continues in this style, explaining that the "courage" of the French differs in kind from those who spent years preparing invasions, who underprivilege "civilization," and so forth (19). What interests me in particular, though, is the identification of defective ways

²⁸ Love is used in this passage to connote patriotism or "love of country," although Camus will abandon this precise sense of love toward the end of '44, in favor of a political love for humanity without borders, if you will. Guiding examples include when he defends global rights and the rights of (native) Algerians, for instance. His preface to the Italian edition (published in 1946) makes the following important precision, which represents a big step in his evolving thoughts on love's political worth: « Lorsque l'auteur des ces lettres dit « vous », il ne veut pas dire vous autres Allemands », mais « vous autres nazis ». Quand il dit « nous, » cela ne signifie pas toujours « nous autres Français » mais « nous autres, Européens libres » (14).

of love, and then the appeal to the “heart” that Camus developed through his narrator. The subtle shift from *courage* to *cœur* marks an important moment in his lexicon, at least for the reason that it will saturate his output at *Combat* during the next three years (in which there are at least 40 mentions of *le cœur* in this sense).

The narrator informs the German that « vous n’avez rien eu à vaincre dans vos cœurs » whereas the French needed to « définir en nos cœurs si le bon droit était pour nous » (17, 18). The heart, then, is importantly used as a moral space, in this case as a metaphor to gauge righteousness. It is from this precise point, moreover, that he frames the “long detour” and then the “clean hands” that preoccupy Aronson’s account:

Maintenant cela est accompli. Il nous a fallu un long détour, nous avons beaucoup de retard. C’est le détour que le scrupule de vérité fait faire à l’intelligence, *le scrupule d’amitié au cœur*. C’est le détour qui a sauvé la justice, mis la vérité du côté de ceux qui s’interrogeaient... Et c’est ce temps perdu et retrouvé... ces scrupules payés par le sang, qui nous donnent le droit de penser aujourd’hui, que nous étions entrés dans cette guerre les mains pures—de la pureté *des victimes* et des convaincus... de la pureté, cette fois, d’une grande victoire *contre l’injustice* et contre nous-mêmes. (18-19, my emphasis)

Aronson is arguably right to claim that the “long detour” has some direct bearing on both France’s and Camus’s life at this point, yet not for the reason that he merely asserts (i.e., that Camus *is* the narrator *tout court*). It is my contention that Camus’s long detour, rather, reflects the “scruples” that come from his creation of a new kind of *love*, which resides in this notion of the heart that he consistently reinforces in the *Letters*.

The metaphor of the heart, which he developed from considerations of “courage” (France’s, and likely his own) helped him to organize considerations of injustice and victimization in this case, as well as the moral duty to “safeguard” justice and liberty. From *courage* to *cœur* comes the remarkable *dénouement* of the First Letter: the path to true victory stems from the right kind of love:

Ce pays vaut que *je l'aime du difficile et exigeant amour qui est le mien*. Et je crois qu'il vaut bien maintenant qu'on lutte pour lui puisqu'il est digne d'un *amour supérieur*. Et je dis qu'au contraire votre nation n'a eu de ses fils que *l'amour qu'elle méritait*, et qui était aveugle. On n'est pas justifié *par n'importe quel amour*. C'est cela qui vous perd. (20, my emphasis)

The narrator's love might have once faltered, but it is now "tough and demanding," that is, it has high standards and a direct relationship with justice. Reciprocally, the harrowing process that France underwent has made it "worthy of a superior" kind of love.²⁹ Simply stated at this juncture, this kind of love is moral and binding, as opposed to German love, as it were, that reaps what it sows, or that is "blind" to its consequences. The final claim, then, is that there are different ways to love, and it is through the *right kind of love* that real (i.e. moral) victory is achieved. At this point a certain typology of love emerges, which Camus's language is struggling to formulate. Seemingly a love of country at first glance, it assumed more and more specificity throughout Camus's life. This sense of love subtends his notions of justice, and it formed the grounds for his mature politics of love, for which I argue in chapter Three.

We can gather from the preceding passages that love is "superior" when it has justice and morality on its side, and that the Germans, by extension, have neither on theirs—their love reflects distorted values and the lack of a moral foundation. This way of framing love's importance is clearly moralizing, and it is also simply strange, at least initially. What would motivate Camus to have his narrator consistently drive home the importance of "the right kind of love" in the midst of a bloody, sustained war?

The second *Letter* briefly resumes the first *Letter's* emphasis on the affective component of France's initial defeat: « Depuis trois ans, il est une nuit que vous avez faite sur nos villes et dans nos cœurs » (22). Its broader purpose, though, is to explain the

²⁹ This exact distinction reemerges in September 1944, and beyond, as we see below. Camus will importantly clarify its importance in the emerging French identity during the War, as well as in post-War politics.

relationship between the heart, love, and “intelligence,” broadly construed. Intelligence in this case extends to the application of morality and political policy, and when it is not guided by the right kind of love, it falters. The narrator distinguishes the “us” and “them” in this very fashion, for instance when he signals both the fatal decision to adopt “political realism” as well as pre-War France’s “confused idea of a politics of honor”:

Je veux seulement répondre aujourd’hui au sourire impatient dont vous saluiez le mot intelligence... Nous voulions seulement *aimer notre pays dans la justice*, comme nous voulions l’aimer dans la vérité et dans l’espoir. C’est en cela que nous nous séparions de vous... Vous vous suffisiez de *servir la politique de la réalité*, et nous, dans nos pires égarements, nous gardions confusément l’idée d’une politique de l’honneur que nous retrouvons aujourd’hui. Quand je dis « nous », je ne dis pas nos gouvernants. Mais un gouvernant *est peu de chose*. (23, my emphasis)³⁰

The passage arguably reflects his utter dissatisfaction with the Third Republic and the politics of 1940. When he states that a leader is “hardly anything,” I would argue that beyond the curt dismissal of the likes of Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini, there is the emerging sense of a need for politics to be regulated by both moral principle as well as an international arbitration tribunal. Both of these concerns inform his emerging political agenda in the remainder of his life. Both are also importantly motivated by this novel (and curious) sense of love that he instantiated in the *Letters*. Camus developed this love as “moral” to the exact extent that it must reckon with an inviolable sense of “justice” that extends beyond particular borders and national (or personal) agendas. I call this type of love a communitarian love of justice, at least in a provisional sense.

³⁰ The passage contains, in microcosmic form, the gist of Camus’s political ambition during his tenure at *Combat* and beyond. He steadily bolstered this curious connection between love and justice, while concomitantly undermining the foundations of “political realism.” Broadly stated, this is the view that agents ought to (or simply do) pursue their own interest by force, cost what it may to supposedly higher moral principles like “international justice,” “rights,” “human dignity,” etc. Camus’s editorials militated for the primacy of moral principle in political decisions and policy (be they infra- or inter-national), and his ambivalence with respect to the Communist, Socialist, and Gaullist parties came from their adoption of some form of political realism.

It is highly plausible to speculate, as Aronson does, that Camus's ambivalence about joining the active Resistance corresponds to the "long detour" that his moralizing narrator outlines in *Letters to a German Friend*. The contribution I wish to make, however, is that such claims become more compelling, and lexically precise, when we attach them to the way that *his conception of love* changes. This same change becomes more interesting when his new theory of love informed his political platform at *Combat* and beyond.

When he was recruited into the Resistance proper and assigned the important task of running a clandestine, anti-fascist newspaper, his ability to "*faire quelque chose*" accrued substantially. More importantly, it fomented in a collective milieu that had to reckon with the world in terms of qualitative distinctions, concrete questions of injustice, and the means to overcome it. But with what weapon did he contribute to this collective moral and political battle? We have already caught a glimpse—it is initially and for the most part his theory of a humanistic love of justice and "the heart" (of both the individual and the collectivity). When Camus's narrator claimed that "loving in the right way" leads to victory, it was not an isolated flash of the pen. Rather, it symbolized the guiding beacon of the next period of his life.

The remainder of this chapter attempts to shed light on Camus's new form of love and its relationship to justice in the politics of post-liberation France. His conception of morality is synchronized within his concerns for justice (or, injustice), whose principles he articulates during his tenure at *Combat*.³¹ His basic notion of politics, moreover, has this

³¹ By way of a glimpse, the following is just one instance of his new formulation of love at *Combat*: « A des temps nouveaux, il faut sinon des mots nouveaux, du moins des dispositions nouvelles de mots. Ces arrangements, *il n'y a que le cœur pour les dicter, et le respect que donne le véritable amour. C'est à ce prix seulement* que nous contribuerons, pour notre faible part, à *donner au pays le langage qui le fera écouter* » (September 8, 1944, my emphasis).

moral ground as its inviolable foundation. Simply stated, this new way of loving—which can be resumed as loving justly within a community—came to saturate the latter half of his literary output, including key works such as *The Rebel* (1951) and his political interventions of the 1950s more generally.

The Importance of *Combat*: Love Leads to Victory

The bridge to *The Rebel* and “the very movement of love” that “guides the revolt,” is paved with both the *Letters to a German Friend* as well as his writings at *Combat* (1944 – 1947). My argument patiently combs through the latter text in order to show its relationship to the former, but more importantly, to specify Camus’s moral and political platform *via* considerations of love.³²

Camus scholars have convincingly argued that many important themes and problematics of both *The Plague* (1947) and *The Rebel* (1951) come directly from select articles and editorials that Camus wrote for *Combat* (for example, J. Lévi-Valensi, *Cahiers Albert Camus* 8). Love’s relationship to politics is not a theme that has been developed in this manner, however. I wish to situate the idea that the type of love for which he advocates in *The Rebel* comes directly from his brief *Letters to a German Friend* and then from his engagement as a journalist at *Combat*.

We have preliminarily indicated this “just” type of love, and we have also seen a brief outline that indicates ways in which this love is ethical and political in Camus’s formulations. The task at hand is to explain the pathmarks that lead from this period to his 1951 declaration

³² The following section specifies this type of love in more detail, and then offers indications of its import in the last decade of Camus’s life. The Third chapter, by way of anticipatory indication, gathers together the most important kernels of his communitarian love of justice, showing how they informed his political writings up to his untimely death in January 1960.

in *The Rebel* that love “is the very movement of revolt,” that is, the guiding ethical light in his mature political framework and beyond.

What was *Combat*?

Combat's story, like so many during this period, was fragmented into a vast repository of personal accounts, letters, and oftentimes conflicting narratives that made it difficult to corroborate many details of its genesis and dissemination. A further complication arises when one considers the retroactive will to make oneself “more” of an anti-collaborationist than one might have been. There is also the converse challenge of pacifistic resisters who, like Camus, tended to downplay their own role in the Resistance even though they did, in fact, risk torture and death for being anti-Nazi propagandists.

Camus has reflected this ambiguous sentiment at several moments of his life, for instance in his repeated claim that the people “who had the right to speak” about the Resistance were “only those who took the most risk and paid for it with their lives.” In the case of *Combat*, Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi has drawn upon her own decades of research as well as such key scholars as Roger Quilliot and Yves-Marc Ajchenbaum in order to outline a definitive chronology and genesis of the texts, which comprise the 750-page *Cahiers Albert Camus 8: Camus à Combat* (2002).

As early as August 1940, a disillusioned French Captain, Henri Frenay, and his life-long friend Bertie Albrecht foresaw the need for a secret army. They trekked first to Vichy, and then to Lyon, in order to gauge the French political situation, as well as to get a pulse on the possibilities of organized resistance in general. Along the way, Frenay was decommissioned in early '41, and the two met up with the pivotal Jacqueline Bernard and her brother, Jean-Guy Bernard, in Lyon. Together they would create one of the first resistance

movements under the guise of the « Mouvement de Libération nationale, » which was distributed in typed pamphlets entitled *Bulletin d'informations*.

In April '41, the *Bulletin* fused with other smallish newspapers, most notably *Les Petites Ailes du Nord* and *Pas-de-Calais*, and, three months later, with *Vérités*. Lévi-Valensi tersely summarizes the five-month transformation of a few pamphlets into a humming, underground newspaper, which begins in July 1941:

C'est dès lors un véritable journal, imprimé, qui atteint rapidement un tirage de 6 000 exemplaires. La rencontre entre Frenay et François de Menthon, qui a, lui aussi, avec Pierre-Henri Teitgen, René Capitant, Alfred et Paul Coste-Floret, fondé un journal clandestin, *Liberté*, et un mouvement de résistance du même nom, est un moment important dans l'histoire de la Résistance et des publications clandestines : en novembre 1941, le « Mouvement de Libération nationale » et « Liberté » s'unissent pour devenir le « Mouvement de Libération française » ; en décembre, sort le premier numéro de leur journal commun, sous le titre *Combat*, qui désormais désignera également leur organisation... Sur le choix de cette dénomination, le témoignage de Jacqueline Bernard est précieux : « Le titre nous fut inspiré par le *Mein Kampf* de Hitler. On a d'abord pensé à *Notre Combat*, cela faisait bizarre, on a opté pour *Combat*. » (21)

Camus at *Combat*

Camus held the official position of editor-in-chief at *Combat* beginning with the liberation of Paris in August, 1944, until November, 1945, when he resigned in order to give international lectures concerning the dangers of “the legitimacy of murder” and the “reign of terror” toward which the policies of the post-War nations tended, at least in his analysis. He gave lectures at both New York and Sao Paolo, for example, entitled « Nous autres meurtriers » and « Le temps des meurtriers, » respectively (Lévi-Valensi 606-7). In mid-1946 he returns to *Combat* as an op-ed writer, during which time he contributed eight lengthy articles collectively entitled « Ni victimes ni bourreaux » or “Neither Victims nor Executioners,” to which we will return at the end of this section to solidify love’s essential

role in his emerging politics as well as the transition between his time at *Combat* and his last definitive philosophical treatise, *The Rebel* (1951).

He was recruited into the Resistance proper no later than autumn 1943 by Pascal Pia, who once again is responsible for significantly altering Camus's life. Claude Bournet, who had become the leader of *Combat* after Henri Frenay was forced into hiding, was arrested and sent to Buchenwald, and Jacqueline Bernard was picked up by the S.S and sent to Ravensbrück: both remarkably survived. Bournet has confirmed that he introduced Camus to *Combat* in January (Aronson 34). Pia became the *de facto* editor, but he was soon called to more important tasks in the Resistance. With Pia's vouchsafe, however, Camus became the editor of clandestine *Combat*. Ronald Aronson helpfully summarizes his new life and responsibilities as follows:

Working for Gallimard by day, Camus was also writing *The Plague*. The *Combat* organization gave him false papers, a sign of the risks he was running but also a badge of honor and importance. To his comrades he assumed the name of Beauchard—it was a security rule that no one in the same group should know the others' real names. Together they wrote, edited, and laid out each edition of *Combat*, and made sure that the plates got to the printers. (34)

It is clear that the first of his articles as clandestine editor appeared in March 1944: « À guerre totale résistance totale ». ³³ The resistance consists of a defiant appeal for collective French subversion: Camus urges his readers to “take action” against Nazi “factories” and “communication lines” as much as to undermine Goebbel's psychological warfare and the

³³ Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi (chief editor, *Cahiers Albert Camus 8: Camus à Combat*) notes that for the clandestine publications from March to August 1944, it is difficult to verify to what extent Camus contributed to the articles. For one reason, some articles were penned by multiple authors, including Camus. No articles were signed with the author's real name (for obvious reasons) and Camus's *noms de plume*—“Beauchard,” and “Bauchard”—were not always attached to his own. Lévi-Valensi and others (for instance, Yves-Marc Ajchenbaum) have done amazing work to verify which articles are “probablement ou certainement” Camus's, by way of biographical testimony and consultation with survivors, and surviving documents, of the *Combat* staff. For the record, all of the editorials used below are noted by Lévi-Valensi as either very probably Camus's, or definitively his. This article, above, is listed as “plus que probablement” Camus's (121).

neo-French militia that has formed in Vichy France. At roughly 2,000 words, the article drives home a clear message: a France divided is a France defeated, unity and solidarity are needed. Unanimously concerted action against the enemy is the only vehicle for genuine liberation, which Camus takes pains to qualify as a moral and not simply pragmatic form of emancipation.

Camus's political strategy for uniting a fractured France was to tap into emotional and moral discourses in order to lay the ground for the emerging political community, whose foundation is layered with considerations of love and justice. An important part of my argument, then, is that Camus focused his political appeal for the right kind of solidarity through *affective* channels, not least of which is a humane, communitarian kind of love. The result is remarkable: his previous, entrenched fear of love as a harmfully stabilizing value became *overturned* in favor of a disposition to love in lasting ways—for the reason that it bred (the right kind of) stability. This type of love anchored the political and ethical solidarity that he endorsed as an emerging post-war intellectual and journalistic voice of a dishonored, disoriented France.

Camus's Quickened Heart: Lessons from 1944 - 1946

Heart: the emotional or moral as distinguished from the intellectual nature: as (a) a generous disposition, compassion < a leader with ~ >; (b) love, affections: < won her ~ >; (c) courage, ardor: < never lost ~ >; (d) one's innermost character, feelings, or inclinations < knew it in my ~ > < a man after my own ~ >. ³⁴

My reconstruction of his theory of love examines his prolific appeals to the individual's as well as the community's "heart." We briefly analyzed the heart and its relationship to his theory of love in his anonymously published *Letters to a German Friend*, yet its inscription is far more robust at Combat, with no fewer than forty distinct appeals to

³⁴ Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2011).

“the heart” [*le cœur*] in the first year of Camus’s tenure as the leading editorialist. Each mention refers to an affective, interpersonal space that reflects either one’s integrity, one’s solidarity with one’s fellows, or in most cases, both senses of the term. Considerations of the individual and collective heart led him to a conceptually novel understanding of “love,” which was significantly different than love’s ethical purpose just a few years earlier in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, for example. His budding political theory of love opens a collective, political dimension, and it oddly anticipates Erich Fromm’s 1956 definition of love elaborated in the Appendix: both Camus’s and Fromm’s “genuine” love preserve one’s integrity while concomitantly promoting morally acceptable forms of interpersonal union. This form of love relevantly resembles a fraternal or humanitarian love, and our goal is to elaborate its ethical and political capital in Camus’s formulations.

The March 1944 « A guerre totale résistance totale » initiated his affective strategy and its connection to “the heart’s” importance. The initial address to the reader consists of a brief meditation on the power of lies and propaganda, such as the infamous Nazi tactic of constantly assuring the French public that: « Nous tuons et nous détruisons des bandits qui vous tueraient si nous n’étions pas là. Vous n’avez rien de commun avec eux » (March 1944, *Combat clandestin* # 55). To drive a wedge between what the enemy desires and what he desires, Camus repeatedly punctuates his article with the following appeal: « ne dites pas que cela ne vous concerne pas » (*Ibid.*). To reify the salience of his exhortation, he details the recent burning of a village (Malleval, January 29th) for the putatively erroneous suspicion of harboring escaped prisoners, which led to eleven deaths and fifteen arrests.

His next move underscores the importance of solidarity and the need to fight potential complacency within his readers, many of whom see themselves as at a safe remove from the

need to actively resist. To this effect, his emotive and collectivist rhetoric is remarkable.

« Car tous les Français aujourd’hui sont liés par l’ennemi dans de tels liens que le geste de l’un crée l’élan de tous les autres et que la distraction ou l’indifférence d’un seul fait la mort de dix autres » (*Ibid.*).³⁵ His argument turns to the first use of what will become the guiding thread in this next phase of his production—the importance of resisting with *a well-ordered heart*:

Ne dites pas : « Je sympathise, cela suffit bien, et le reste ne me concerne pas. » Car vous serez tué, déporté, ou torturé aussi bien comme sympathisant que comme militant. Agissez, vous ne risquerez pas plus et *vous aurez au moins* ce cœur tranquille *que les meilleurs des nôtres emportent jusque dans les prisons*. La France *ainsi* ne sera pas divisée. L’effort de l’ennemi est en réalité de faire hésiter les Français devant ce devoir national qui est la résistance au S.T.O. [Service du travail obligatoire] et l’appui des maquis. (124, my emphasis)

His very first use of “the heart” as a war journalist cannot be underestimated in terms of its ethical significance, nor can the way that he frames the imperative to resist. The initial set-up no doubt targets ‘on the fence’ agents with a daunting pathos—if you sympathize with the Resistance you might get burned, period. Yet he offers a ready palliative: act, and at least your conscience will be clean. Act, and that same conscience will last you even through your worst fear, as “the best of us” have exemplified. Act, and you will be united with your fellows and your country.

The metaphor with which he drives his ethico-political resistance is precisely the heart, which connotes individual integrity as well as responsible collective identity. His use of the heart in this case is restricted to an “at least you will have...” In different terms, at this stage Camus simply means something like: “Don’t give up heart!” and “Know it in your

³⁵ A distinct appeal for moral solidarity emerges even at this early juncture of his production, which will slowly evolve into a detailed strategy that seeks to give France a new political identity that is founded on moral principles like “justice,” a well-ordered “heart” and “true love.”

heart!” In the months to come, however, the heart takes on a life of its own—he essentially gives “the heart” applications that do not conform to canonical usage, anticipating Erich Fromm’s seminal *The Art of Loving*.

Combat was only able to publish three more clandestine issues between April and the liberation of Paris in late August, at which time it saw the light of day and established itself as one of the leading avant-garde newspapers of France.³⁶ Camus’s editorial output became a prolific, daily affair (at least until his T.B. reemerged in January ’45) and his strategy distinctly blossomed. He diagnosed an illness while simultaneously offering a basic remedy. Treat the heart, individually and collectively, and France would find its ethical and political integrity:

De durs combats nous attendent encore. Mais la paix reviendra sur cette terre éventrée et dans ces cœurs torturés d’espérances et de souvenirs. On ne peut pas toujours vivre de meurtres et de violence...Et pour certains d’entre nous, le visage de nos frères défigurés par les balles, la grande fraternité virile de ces années ne nous quitterons jamais. (August 25th, 153)³⁷

By the end of August, the prospect of a truly liberated Paris becomes more than just hopes and memories, and the chief concern is on the *fraternité* and *égalité* aspects of the 1789 *devise nationale*. Like many public intellectuals, Camus threw his weight into the investigation of war crimes and administrative justice, initially siding with the *épuration* or “purge,” that is, those who wanted to see drastic and immediate punishment inflicted upon

³⁶ Guerin notes that, “it was the intellectual newspaper of the period 1944-7,” which “saw itself as the voice of resistance.” Its initial readership, “young, made up of teachers, students and trade unionists” was at “a circulation of 200,000” in late ’44. In order to give a pulse of the times, he cites respectively Georges Hénein and Raymond Aron: ‘the newspaper for Saint-Germain-des-Prés’ and ‘the most highly regarded paper in the capital’s literary and political milieu’ (84). Pia persuaded the likes of André Gide, Georges Bernanos, and André Breton to occasional contributions, and both Sartre and Beauvoir contributed in the first weeks of the Liberation.

³⁷ Camus adopts the key phrase about a “virile fraternity” from André Malraux (1900 - 1976), who was leading the “Alsace-Lorraine” brigade in Eastern France at this same time, as Lévi-Valensi neatly notes (153).

collaborators, batteners (such as Louis Renault), and ‘turn a blind eye’ administrators who effectively did nothing to hinder Germany or the Vichy regime.

One can readily see that the purge was a temptingly direct way to unite the country in the aftermath of liberation, especially when the demand for answers—and swift punishment—was at a fever pitch. One can just as well see, however, what an administrative and socially divisive mess such justice would be to enact with a modicum of fairness, especially at a time when France’s infrastructure was crippled and so-called “vrai-faux papiers” were at many people’s unscrupulous disposal. At any rate, the sentiment of “purifying” France in this way was quite strong, and it produced many public Gallic feuds, including a long-standing debate between Camus and François Mauriac (1885 – 1970), who used the highly respected *Le Figaro* to spearhead a political appeal for “*charité*.” Mauriac’s faction emphasized a Christian ethic of forgiveness and redemption rather than swift punishment or *ad hoc* trials as the best means of re-uniting the country.

By the end of the War, and in light of many different considerations, Mauriac’s camp essentially won this debate, and Camus conscientiously backed off from the hard-line *épuration* stance.³⁸ It is important to track the alternatives that he was pursuing in its stead, however, because justice in its largest sense is intimately connected to Camus’s notion of the “heart” and the love ethic upon which he grounded his politics of collectivity. If Camus eventually came to reject the purge as such, it is nonetheless interesting to see how he focused his moral analyses on the question of *purifying the heart*, both individually and collectively.

³⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the Camus-Mauriac debate, see Lévi-Valensi 320, 371-2, and elsewhere.

The heart emphasized the virtue of having “le coeur tranquille” through taking action during the Occupation, as well as its capacity to suffer from nostalgia and false hope. The following mention brings in further dimensions, namely the capacity to know whether one is true to oneself. For context’s sake, earlier in the article Camus is discussing Himmler’s torture tactics during the War, as well as meditating upon the moral consequences of the recent discovery of thirty-four tortured French bodies in Vincennes:

Qui oserait parler ici de pardon ? [...] Ce n’est pas la haine qui parlera demain, mais la justice elle-même, fondée sur la mémoire. Et c’est la justice la plus éternelle et la plus sacrée, que de pardonner peut-être pour tous ceux d’entre nous qui sont morts sans avoir parlé, avec la *paix supérieure* d’un cœur *qui n’a jamais trahi*, mais de frapper terriblement pour les plus courageux d’entre nous dont on a fait des lâches en dégradant leur âme, et qui sont morts désespérés, emportant *dans* un cœur *pour toujours ravagé* leur haine des autres et leur mépris d’eux-mêmes. (August 30, my emphasis)

Early passages such as these pave the way for an increasingly robust moral space in which he uses the heart to sometimes critique the state of affairs, and to sometimes foster a sense of moral superiority and solidarity. At this precise juncture, Camus’s use of the heart is relevantly similar to what one might call *conscience*. It developed, however, into a multifaceted tool with which he interrogated the moral and political fabric of a rattled France.

The next few months of his editorial production question the varied uses of political “order” to which so many were appealing, as well as employ “the heart” as a corrective to dubious conceptions of order. The first instance of his interrogation of the ethico-political order occurs when Paris itself has finally been secured, and the resulting power-vacuum brings out activists, intellectuals, and people from all sides to jockey for the chance to have their particular position triumph. It is clear to Camus at this crucial point in history that the

France that was cannot merely re-commence. Rather, an essentially new order must supersede it, and it must have integrity.³⁹

The decisive political question for Camus became: how to “consolidate” a *just* new order? That the order be “just” is not lip-service on his part; rather, it thematically dominates his output in the next decade of his production. Fearful of “*réalisme politique*” and its amoral stance, as much as of a reincarnation of the cowardliness or “*veulerie*” of 1940, Camus’s editorials consistently demanded that the emerging politics be “moral” in the precise sense that “*la justice pour chacun et pour tous*” reigns supreme in micro as well as macro-political decisions.

Ronald Aronson rightly specifies Camus’s political strategy as the cultivation of a “moral compass” upon which to base “political judgment.” While Aronson does not mention the importance of the “heart” or “love” in this same strategy, his remarks help us to situate the general tenor of Camus’s op-ed production in broad political and moral terms:

As a journalist, he rarely made or supported specific programmatic proposals but wrote mostly of broad themes such as justice, truth, order, morality...Notwithstanding the revolutionary slogan on its masthead and its general commitment to a democratic and socialist transformation of France, *Combat* advocated rather limited change, introducing the language of morality into the exercise of politics...reconciling individual freedom with collective needs—that is, recognizing freedom with justice in such a way that life can “be free for the individual, but just for all.” Camus always acknowledged the practical difficulties in realizing such goals, but his purpose was to set them before his readers as *touchstones for political behavior*. He sought *to create*, and make use of, a *moral compass* for political judgment. (61, my emphasis)

The concluding sentences of Camus’s September 4 “Morale et politique” succinctly expresses his budding political desire, as well as his distinction between the Resistance and

³⁹ “La France, pour elle-même que comme pour ses amis, a besoin d’être mise en ordre. Mais il faut s’entendre sur cet ordre. Un ordre qui ne marquerait pas un retour à des personnes et à un régime qui n’ont pas pu résister au choc d’une guerre, à un Parlement qui, dans son immense majorité, a démissionné devant Pétain, un ordre qui consacrerait les puissances d’argent, les combinaisons de couloirs et les ambitions personnelles, cet ordre-là ne serait qu’un désordre puisqu’il consoliderait l’injustice. » (*Combat*, September 2nd)

the additional “revolution” that needs to take place: « Cela revient à dire que nous sommes décidés à supprimer la politique pour la remplacer par la morale. C’est ce que nous appelons une révolution » (170-1).

His language of “replacing” a “suppressed” politics with “morality” is initially strange, but one aspect of what he means is that the ideals and representatives of the 1940 political scene (many of whom reemerge in August 1944) need to be “suppressed” in favor of those who actually remained true during the Resistance, that is, with those who had the right heart in this sense. In another sense, what he means is that any brand of politics that consents to favor its own interest to the detriment of justice for all (such as political realism) ought to be “suppressed.” Lévi-Valensi qualifies these same remarks as emblematic of his thought during this period, moreover. « Ces dernières phrases résument deux points sur lesquels Camus ne cessera de revenir : La France doit être gouvernée par des hommes de la Résistance ; la morale doit être introduite en politique et y régner » (171).⁴⁰

It was common in post-liberation Paris to vent one’s spleen upon the failed regime and to point out the myriad flaws that, in hindsight at least, confirmed the “Phony War” moniker and France’s political failure in general. The far more difficult political task of the day, however, was to unite the country in a way that preserved dignity, united disparate factions, and that looked to the future. To this exact extent, Camus was striving for a *new language* with which to encourage speculation about the very meaning of *la patrie* and a just,

⁴⁰ Aronson gives this strong tendency in Camus’s thought a broader importance in the following remark, which caps his analysis of Camus’s purpose at *Combat*. “Camus’s unstated purposes were to educate an intellectual readership, primarily a young one, in rejecting political realism, whether the Left, Right, or Center; to insist on applying principles to politics; to counter cynicism. By demonstrating that political thinking need not abandon the terrain of values, his editorials were serious efforts at political journalism” (63).

dignified order of society. *Letters to a German Friend* arguably initiated this very language, but now Camus has a powerful outlet with which to articulate this language of “true love.”

It is crucially at this very juncture, then, that he anchors the heart with a newly minted form of love. That is, *it is through considerations of the heart and love* that he begins to *articulate* a new moral and political order, as the following passage from the September 8 piece “Le journalisme critique” confirms:

A vouloir reprendre les clichés et les phrases patriotiques d’une époque où l’on est arrivé à irriter les Français avec le mot même de patrie, on n’apporte rien à la définition cherchée. Mais on lui retire beaucoup. A des temps nouveaux, il faut sinon des mots nouveaux, du moins des dispositions nouvelles de mots. Ces arrangements, *il n’y a que le cœur pour les dicter, et le respect que donne le véritable amour. C’est à ce prix seulement que nous contribuerons, pour notre faible part, à donner au pays le langage qui le fera écouter.* (182, my emphasis)

Both the heart and “true” love merit close attention because they give more insight into Camus’s budding political tactics, and because the claims themselves are initially strange. The heart now has a kind of legislative function through which it conscientiously “dictates” novel political possibilities through language, and “true love” conjointly confers respect upon the heart’s dictates. Their singularity is strongly emphasized, moreover, in the sense that “only the heart” can dictate, and “only at this price” can a language be founded that will “make the country listen.” Camus’s new political language is indeed surprising, and in the next few pages the immediate task is to understand its foundation and its essential connection to both justice and “true love.”

The path to a respectable political foundation resides in a complete overhaul of the country’s moral tenor, in such a way that « une révolution dans les mœurs » (September 10th) ought to lead the way (anticipating Erich Fromm’s definition of genuine love) to « la fusion harmonieuse et féconde des individus différents » (September 17th). Camus takes pains to

distinguish “revolution” from “revolt,” noting that the former is a matter of lucid, collective vigilance with respect to procedural justice and policy, whereas the latter is an “internal” force that motivates absolute defiance in the face of injustice.⁴¹ The distinction is important because it is in the affective space of revolt that he anchors the heart’s proper disposition, which provides a moral ground upon which to keep procedural justice and policy true to its impetus:⁴²

La révolution n’est pas la révolte. Ce qui a porté la Résistance pendant quatre ans, c’est la révolte. C’est-à-dire le refus entier, obstiné, presque aveugle au début, d’un ordre qui voulait mettre les hommes à genoux. *La révolte, c’est d’abord le cœur.* Mais il vient un temps où elle passe dans l’esprit, où le sentiment devient idée, où *l’élan spontané se termine en action concertée.* C’est le moment de la révolution... Et si le souffle de cette révolte ne tourne pas court, elle fera cette révolution *en lui donnant la théorie originale* et précise que ce pays attend. (198-9, September 19th, my emphasis)

His editorial from September 8 introduced this intriguing “language” that the “heart will dictate” and upon which “true love” will confer respect in order “to make the country listen.” Here we see an ideational progression that amplifies the political, as well as philosophical stakes of these notions. Revolt is mostly affective and reactive in nature—it senses injustice, it *defies it*, and its motivation comes from *the heart*, that is, it comes from one’s moral compass in this case. The heart is not entirely conceptually blind, because it needs to reckon with distinct targets, but neither is it clear in its forward looking, communal formulations. In order to harness the heart’s sentiment into lasting ideas and concerted action, the revolt needs to accede to “the revolution,” which represents a collective agency with moral integrity, that is, with the kind of heart that is conscientious and constant with respect to the revolt.

⁴¹ A comparison between Thoreau’s notion of the primacy of “conscience” in his *Civil Disobedience* (1849) and Camus’s notion of “the heart,” while falling outside the scope of this project, merits at least a cursory elaboration in the literature.

⁴² Nearly seven years later, Camus will adopt this exact thematic in his introduction to *The Rebel*.

It is tempting to reduce Camus's notions to the classical division of form/concepts (revolution) and intuition/content (revolt), yet a close reading nuances this possibility. The heart of the revolt is what motivates the resistance to injustice, and although it initially represents an intuitive response, it is not entirely blind. It also has an important *posterior* function that keeps the course of the revolution in check, presumably in order to keep a movement's function true to its founding nature. Against cynical meta-claims such as 'political movements always turn 180 degrees upon themselves,' the "heart" of the revolt recalls the "original theory" or blueprint of the right kind of response to moral transgressions, whose particular details will change contingently over time.

In the same editorial, he specified the essence of revolt as determining one's will, as well as being mutable in its revolutionary application. The particular revolution itself is "relative," yet the key is to have the right way to determine volition, whatever the precise form of injustice in question. Camus transformed the contingency and relativity of the revolution into an ethical foundation for his politics:

Pour le moment, et malgré les sceptiques, nous nous satisfaisons déjà, avec les réserves de forme qui conviennent, de cette *volonté affirmée*. Nous ne croyons pas ici aux révolutions définitives. Tout effort humain est relatif. L'injuste loi de l'histoire est qu'il faut à l'homme d'immenses sacrifices pour des résultats souvent dérisoires. Mais si mince que soit le progrès de l'homme vers *sa propre vérité*, nous pensons qu'il *justifie toujours ces sacrifices*. Nous croyons justement aux révolutions relatives. (198, my emphasis)

The revolution is the means by which clear ideas and concerted political action are promoted, and in this sense it is "relative" because, briefly stated, needs and causes are always changing, and hence all human political endeavor is relative in this sense—no one cause will exactly resemble another, and the means to fight will constantly change.

The *revolt*, however, has an archetypal function: its "heart" provides the moral reaction toward injustice—defiance—as well as a kind of originary idea about how to

respond to any particular injustice: attack the unjust order in question through the organization of “relative revolutions” within a collective organization. The further claim is that the sacrifices entailed (by the will to ensure the revolt’s original *raison d’être*) reveal something fundamental about the human condition. Both the human being’s progress toward an individual truth as well as humanity’s slim chances of moral progress paradoxically stem from the resolution that the heart actuates. The heart’s movement is transformed into a will to a truth that justifies an action.

We began this section with uses of the heart that symbolized an appeal to conscience and to constancy, and we have seen a brief indication of the power that “true love” has to confer respect upon the heart’s dictates. The well-ordered heart “begins” [*est d’abord*] the revolt, and if the revolt is to maintain its integrity, it must constantly resound with the “original theory” that began the revolt, or else it becomes either stillborn, or unscrupulously co-opted into other channels. His further claim is that “only” veritable love that can confer this type of “respect” for the revolt’s impetus, however, and so it is clear that this love connotes integrity and perseverance, as well as the articulation of a moral cause that unites people. Even with these distinctions, however, there is much to be explained regarding this curious “new language” of love.

Love’s power is described at two distinct registers, moreover, the individual and the collective. At the individual level, it has the ability to attach moral traits like dignity and integrity to one’s lot in life, whatever the actual outcome of one’s defiant actions. It is in this exact sense that Camus made the following claim: « [A]ucun homme jamais ne peut être plus fort que son destin, *sinon* dans le silence de son cœur ou par *les pouvoirs* de l’amour » (September 20, my emphasis, 200). This individual type of moral appeal clearly refers to a

clean conscience as well as a kind of stoic wisdom that trumps one's actual fate with a way of seeing things from an evaluative perspective. Yet there is a further, and more decisive appeal to love's power that resides in the *collective* sphere. It is a way of ordering people's concerted actions that stands out as politically "superior," echoing the type of love he minted in the *Letters to a German Friend*, tying this love type into a viable political platform in liberated France:

Car l'ordre est aussi une notion obscure. Il en est de plusieurs sortes. Il y a celui qui continue de régner à Varsovie, il y a celui qui cache le désordre et celui, cher à Goethe, qui s'oppose à la justice. Il y a encore *cet ordre supérieur des cœurs et des consciences* qui s'appelle *l'amour* et cet ordre sanglant où l'homme se nie lui-même et qui prend ses pouvoirs dans la haine. Nous voudrions bien dans tout cela *distinguer* le *bon ordre*. (October 11th, my emphasis)

Camus's political appeal to "love" is becoming somewhat clearer with these distinctions. The claim is that love, a "superior ordering of hearts and minds," will help to distinguish the right order in difficult times, especially against the contrasting cases mentioned. Love, by way of the right heart or moral disposition, shows a way to connect to others in a self-affirming manner that is motivated neither by hatred, nor by fascism, nor by a phobia of a lack of order (as when Goethe, normally one of Camus's heroes, famously claimed that an injustice is to be preferred over disorder).⁴³ Such passages further my contention that this type of love is relevantly similar to Fromm's definition of "genuine" love in society: Camus advocates a type of love that seeks interpersonal union while maintaining personal integrity.⁴⁴

⁴³ There is also a reference to the 1831 declaration of "L'ordre règne à Varsovie" made by Sébastiani in the Chamber of Deputies. For more on this reference as well as the Goethe comment, see Lévi-Valensi, 248.

⁴⁴ A further qualification is that Camus's love has an agenda. That is, he uses his journalism (and later, his lectures and texts) alongside considerations of the heart and love, to unmask perceived injustice. The greater purpose is to experience union with integrity, but Camus's love, to put it provocatively, looks for injustice and seeks to expose it publicly, much like his early journalistic days.

The continuation of his October 11 editorial arguably displays the first steps of his thinking about the relationship between the heart, the “superior order called love,” and their relation to justice in present-day France:

L’insurgé qui, dans le désordre de la passion, meurt pour une idée qu’il a fait sienne, est en réalité un homme d’ordre parce qu’il a ordonné toute sa conduite à un principe qui lui paraît évident. Mais on ne pourra jamais nous faire considérer comme un homme d’ordre ce privilégié qui fait ses trois repas par jour pendant toute une vie, qui a sa fortune en valeurs sûres, mais qui rentre chez lui quand il y a du bruit dans la rue. Il est seulement un homme de peur et d’épargne. Et si l’ordre français devait être celui de la prudence et de la sécheresse de cœur, nous serions tentés d’y voir le pire désordre, puisque, par indifférence, il autoriserait toutes les injustices. (249)

The insurgent rebel, whose country has been invaded and who carries out the revolutionary application of inner revolt, has a primacy in Camus’s hierarchy of the heart—he or she acted from the clear awareness of oppression and or self-defense, and then executed his or her will to its fullest measure. Reciprocally, Camus has contempt for the heart of both the belligerent invader and the purely prudent man who, having reaped the benefits of civilization his entire life, does nothing for it once threatened.

These considerations of types of individual character lead him to ponder a “superior” principle that would found the right order and relationship between governed and government in general. This order is founded on justice, and given the previous analyses, it is fair to say that it is founded on a love of justice:

De tout cela, nous pouvons tirer qu’il n’y a pas d’ordre sans équilibre et sans accord. Pour l’ordre social, ce sera un équilibre entre le gouvernement unique et ses gouvernés. Et cet accord doit se faire au nom d’un principe supérieur. Ce principe, pour nous, est la justice. Il n’y a pas d’ordre sans justice et l’ordre idéal des peuples réside dans leur bonheur. (249)

His budding political thought involves an equilibrium between subject and government such that the ideal order comprises both justice and happiness, with the former representing the “superior” principle, and the latter the indispensable affective element for social harmony. He

has already asserted “love” as the “superior order of hearts and minds [*consciences*],” and now the task is to connect this language with practical life and political policy. Wary of the ravages of totalitarianism (and wary of deterministic theories of history)⁴⁵ Camus distinguishes this ideal state by virtue of its moral foundations: justice (the superior principle) *by way of love* (the superior order):

Le résultat, c'est qu'on ne peut invoquer la nécessité de l'ordre pour imposer des volontés. Car on prend ainsi le problème à l'envers. Il ne faut pas seulement exiger l'ordre pour bien gouverner, il faut bien gouverner pour réaliser le seul ordre qui ait du sens. Ce n'est pas l'ordre qui renforce la justice, c'est la justice qui donne certitude à l'ordre. Personne autant que nous ne peut désirer *cet ordre supérieur* où, dans une nation en paix avec elle-même et avec son destin, chacun aura sa part de travail et de loisirs, où l'ouvrier pourra œuvrer sans amertume et sans envie, où l'artiste pourra créer sans être tourmenté...où chaque être enfin pourra réfléchir, dans *le silence du cœur*, à sa propre condition. (250, my emphasis)

He thus established a necessary connection between justice and the kind of love that he is minting, and so it is crucial to look more carefully at what he means by “justice.” The immediate (and far more difficult) task thereafter is to return to his evolving notion of love and argue for how, exactly, it comprises justice and political order. The following section outlines the basic elements of the Camusian rapport between love, justice and political communities.

A Just, Communitarian Love

At the very point where he abandoned the dominant political parties of the day for being inseparable from political realism, Camus's focus shifted to the elaboration of

⁴⁵ Camus's (eventual) definitive rift with the Communist Party is a complicated matter, to which we will attend in the final chapter when we compare his political evolution with Beauvoir's, and then Sartre's. Simply stated, Camus's ideological reason for rejecting Communism comes from his utter rejection of both the deterministic role of History, as well as any party that endorses “political realism,” analyzed in more detail below. His break with Communism (and Sartre, for that matter) is deepened by the troubling accounts he heard from Arthur Koestler, who witnessed first-hand the Gulags, and the political repression in Soviet bloc states (see Aronson 85 - 89 for example). Camus also “helped to prevent a Communist Party takeover of the national Resistance movement,” in 1944, as Jeanyves Guerin describes it (87).

humanistic concerns of justice without borders. He also punctuated these concerns with the humane or “just” love that inaugurated the next decade of this production. His extra-national concerns with not merely Europe in general but also with colonized peoples in North-Africa, Madagascar and Indo-China were all the more remarkable to the extent that in December of 1944, the Second World War was still raging and France itself hardly secure, martial optimism notwithstanding.

His December 18 editorial, for instance, brings together the need for an international institutional structure resembling the modern day European Union. Camus used the recent pact (of mutual aid and assistance) between France and the U.S.S.R. to organize claims about international justice, while simultaneously (and subtly) touching upon love’s importance:

L’alliance franco-russe est la première étape. Mais c’est une marque de grande sagesse politique que d’avoir souligné qu’elle n’était pas exclusive. Elle doit, en effet, s’appuyer sur des alliances complémentaires qui mêleront les nations unies dans un système à la fois solide et souple. Ce sera la deuxième étape. Mais il serait vain d’ignorer que *l’étape définitive*, autant que le mot définitif puisse être prononcé dans ce qui touche à la haine ou à l’amour des hommes, ne pourra être qu’une organisation mondiale où les nationalismes disparaîtront pour que vivent les nations. (398, my emphasis).

Camus also made crucial distinctions about what kind of love is *not* acceptable to his political agenda, whose distinctions crucially informed his works of the 1950s and his chief political rupture with Sartre. He dismissed the dominant Socialist Party because « il s’autorise de l’amour de l’humanité pour se dispenser de servir les hommes, du progrès inévitable pour esquiver les questions de salaires, et de la paix universelle pour éviter les sacrifices nécessaires » (350). He curtly took Mauriac to task, moreover, because the latter « me jette le Christ à la face » (January 11). Since Mauriac’s Christian love knows no boundaries, Camus argued, it is naively open to loving even those people who are unjust, to undesirable political effect:

En tant qu'homme, j'admirais peut-être M. Mauriac de savoir aimer des traîtres, mais en tant que citoyen, je le déplorerai, parce que cet amour nous amènera justement une nation de traîtres et de médiocres et une société dont nous ne voulons plus. (441)

It is clear from this passage that his love is not universal, at least for the reason that it does not embrace known traitors (i.e. “unjust people” in a general sense) as Mauriac’s ethics of Catholic charity argued for, at least in theory. This demand that “superior” love be selective reaches back to his “conversation” with a German in the *Letters*, in which the narrator stresses the relationship between amoral forms of love and political defeat. The *Letters*’ narrator argued that only on condition of a “superior love” could victory be achieved, and conversely: « on ne se justifie pas par n’importe quel amour » (20).

Camus’s political form of love at *Combat* clearly resembles the general outline of this love, as we saw in his appeals to a “superior order” in previous passages, and which he elaborates in key moments such as the December 22 editorial, dedicated to « La Semaine de l’Absent ».⁴⁶ This particular editorial is among his lengthiest, and either *aimer* or *amour* appears in every paragraph. The dénouement drives home the relationship between moral loss and separation, the need for more than material repair, and the importance of love in the nation’s healing process:

Mais que personne ne se croie quitte et que l’argent donné ne fasse pas les consciences tranquilles, *il est des dettes inépuisables*. Ceux et celles qui sont là-bas, cette immense *foule mystérieuse et fraternelle*, nous lui donnons le visage de ceux que nous connaissions et qui nous ont été arrachés. Mais nous savons bien, alors, que nous les avons *pas assez aimés, et pas même leur patrie*, puisqu’ils sont aujourd’hui là où ils sont. Que du moins cette semaine, que « notre » semaine, ne nous fasse pas oublier « leurs » années. Qu’elle nous *enseigne de ne pas aimer d’un amour médiocre*, qu’elle nous donne la mémoire et l’imagination qui seules peuvent *nous rendre dignes d’eux*. (404-5)

⁴⁶ Lévi-Valensi glosses the importance of this week in the last year of the War, as follows: « La Semaine de l’Absent, qui donnera lieu à des quêtes sur la voie publique, et sera signalée par de nombreuses affiches et encarts dans les journaux, se déroulera du 24 décembre au 1^{er} janvier. La libération des camps de prisonniers n’aura lieu qu’à partir d’avril 1945 » (404).

His communitarian love looks both within and beyond borders. This passage is dedicated to the commemoration of loss and the hope of reunion, and the emphasis is primarily on the nation and its displaced (or deceased) loved ones. This form of love is also extra-national, however, and in a way that differs from the proto-European Union described above. According to this elaboration, love emerges as profoundly humanistic, even humanitarian through its concern for victimization and (avoidable) deprivation.

Camus underwent a serious bout of T.B. from roughly mid-January to late February, and his production understandably slowed to a crawl. By March 1945, however, his rebooted editorials once again resumed their politically maverick streak and tendency to take the lid off things. His editorial with respect to Indochina, for instance, made a prescient, if horribly ignored, appeal for extra-national justice. The following passage represents a faithful microcosm of Camus's interventionist, journalistic sense of humane justice that is motivated by his understanding of love. Its call for immediate rectification and its dismissal of calculative political concessions argue for a "superior" ordering, on my reading:

Et nous dirons, et contre tout, que nos réformes en Indochine ne seront rien si elles apparaissent comme des concessions arrachées par l'événement, et non comme les signes formels d'une politique d'émancipation. Nous dirons que c'est en cela qu'on nous juge et que chacune de nos hésitations *devient une arme contre nous*. La justice, *toute* la justice, voilà notre *victoire*. L'Indochine sera *avec nous* si la France est la première à lui donner en même temps la démocratie et la liberté. (467, my emphasis)

Calls such as these for international justice also served to distance Camus from the mainstream political parties, however, and they are not at all uncommon in his output for *Combat* in the last few months of his tenure as editor-in-chief. His (loving) call for justice is especially pronounced in the six articles dedicated to perceived injustices in Algeria (May,

1945), as the third chapter will elucidate in detail.⁴⁷ Jill Capstick succinctly resumes the general ground of Camus's ethics throughout the course of his life as follows:

The key term of Camusian ethics is the given value of human life. Consequently, any act of authentic revolt must simultaneously reject all that violates human dignity and affirm the worth of all human beings. (453-4)

My contribution to her formulation (of the humanitarian ethics that underlie Camus's political ambition) is to stress the influence that love plays in Camus's mature thought. The love we analyzed thus far is not simply a rhetorical flourish, say, nor is it a cloying ploy to sell more papers. Rather, it inhabits Camus's highest ambitions and concerns for justice, and it points toward the intriguing 1951 claim that "love *is* the very movement of revolt." To use Camus's words, one "cannot do without it," as one of his last editorials for *Combat* (in his November 1946 « Ni Victimes ni Bourreaux ») states:

Mais je ne voudrais pas, pour finir, laisser croire que l'avenir du monde peut se passer de nos *forces* d'indignation *et* d'amour. Je sais bien qu'il faut aux hommes de grands mobiles pour se mettre en marche et qu'il est difficile de s'ébranler soi-même pour un combat dont les objectifs sont si limités et où l'espoir n'a qu'une part à peine raisonnable. (640, my emphasis)

Conclusion: Love's Future Promise

That which I am calling the just, communitarian love reflected in *Letters to a German Friend*, *Camus à Combat*, and *The Rebel*, is severely underappreciated and arguably misdiagnosed by its critics. Very few works on Camus accentuate love, and even fewer attempt to highlight its foundational importance during particular phases of his intellectual life. Anthony Rizzuto's work importantly does attempt to reckon with love as a *force motrice*

⁴⁷ « Calmer la plus cruelle de faims et *guérir ces cœurs exaspérés*, voilà la tâche qui s'impose à nous aujourd'hui. Des centaines de bateaux de céréales et deux ou trois mesures d'égalité rigoureuse, c'est ce que nous demandent immédiatement des millions d'hommes dont on comprendra peut-être maintenant qu'il faut essayer de comprendre avant de les juger » (510, my emphasis) [May 16, 1945]. This is the conclusion of one of Camus's several editorials of "Crise en Algérie," and in the final chapter we will interrogate further the complicity between Camus's humanitarian love and its affect on his global ethics and politics.

in Camus's production, but because it focuses exclusively on love *and* sexuality, his work misses the richer alluvia that shape the course of Camus's political and moral life.⁴⁸ The general problem, on my interpretation, is that *critics are not looking* for "love" as a guiding force in Camus's ethics and politics. The overwhelming emphasis on this period of Camus's production, including the last decade of his life, is on either this "fraternity" that Rizzuto (and Lévi-Valensi, for instance) highlights, or on the "love of life" or *biophilia* that Van der Poel diagnoses, for example, especially in works such as *The Plague* (1947).

My particular contribution to the literature, in this chapter and in the third chapter, is to let Camus's love speak for itself, through a patient tracking of the multifaceted ways in which he deploys it. More precisely, I chart the ways love informs his conception of ethics and politics. There are undeniably elements of fraternity in some of his uses of love, and reciprocally it is sometimes erotic, biophilic, and so forth. But Camus's understanding of love cannot be pigeonholed as one distinct type to the detriment of others, or else one is confronted with misleading claims like Rizzuto's, for instance.

I have delimited his sense of moral and political love as "humanitarian" and "communitarian," as well as formally distinct from the Donjuanism that consumed his early life. I have offered various reasons for why this shift occurred, and I will offer further narratives for the way that Camus summons this love in works like *The Rebel* and beyond. This is not the only sense of his emerging political and ethical love, however, and *even*

⁴⁸ Because Rizzuto does not consider love outside of its erotic dimension, he makes errant remarks like the following about Camus's relationship between love and politics: "Politics and the fraternity of men, so often invoked by the adjective "virile," counterbalance love. In contrast to the novels of André Malraux, they exclude each other" (102). It is ironical that Camus borrows this quote *from* Malraux (see for instance Lévi-Valensi 153) and that Rizzuto does not cite one example of this expression (it shows up twice in *Combat*, to wit). He then makes the further, and ultimately erroneous claim that "Camus was sufficiently aware of the irreconcilable dualism between love and politics in his works that he once again attempted to write a love scene in [1949] *The Just Assassins*" (103).

Camus seems to see something of a mystery in it. In *The Rebel's* conclusion, he notes that « on comprend alors que la révolte ne peut se passer d'un étrange amour » (379).

My argument acknowledges that his theory of love is a strange, but for all that, a decisive organizing principle in Camus's life and works. Tracking the changes in his theory of love tracks significant choices and tactics of his ethical and political development. In the next chapter, I will employ a similar strategy with respect to Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir's thought, albeit with different results. The third chapter anchors Camus's emerging politics of love in his mature writings and interventions of the last decade of his life.

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Chapter Two: Beauvoir and Sartre—Love as a Normative Principle

The ways in which Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) lived and theorized love are highly original. Their relationship was seen as a liberating deviation from the norm, and its longevity argued for its success and emulation. Perhaps no other couple received as much attention, respect, and criticism in the 20th-century international arena. Recent accounts have recast the terms and consequences of their “essential but contingent” relationship, however, painting the couple as more libertine than liberating, and more deviant than deviational. Scholarly critiques of their posthumously published materials, in conjunction with a wave of critical biographies, have called the couple’s legacy into question.⁴⁹

The prospect of combining both love *and* freedom is certainly intriguing. Beauvoir and Sartre legislated the foundation for a lifelong mutual commitment, providing an alternative to marriage while fostering each other’s intellectual fulfillment. Their life-long pact flourished in 1930s France, where it contrasted heavily with conventional love paradigms. The unconventional practices of their love pact interestingly preceded their theoretical accounts of erotic love by more than ten years (in works such as *Being and Nothingness*, *L’invitée (She Came to Stay)*, *No Exit*, and *The Second Sex*, all published in the 1940s). Beauvoir and Sartre apparently tested their erotic assumptions in their personal lives before they were transcribed into theoretical, novelistic, or theatrical forms.

Scholars have assessed their “essential but contingent” relationship in many ways, exploring it in relation to: erotic pedagogy (M. Hawthorne, 2000), “triangular” relationships

⁴⁹ For a thorough account of the recent biographical critiques of Beauvoir and Sartre’s amorous practices and lives preceding and during the Occupation, see the Second Appendix.

(S. Julienne-Caffié, 2000), the “nature of jealousy” (I. McMullin, 2011), and “authentic” versus “inauthentic” forms of love (G. Rae, 2012), to name the more prominent examples. My argument in this chapter explains a more basic phenomenon, however. Instead of focusing upon particular facets of Sartre and Beauvoir’s erotic theories, I wish to establish a strict connection between their conception of love and their works. *Their theory and practice of love informed their respective ethical ambitions as reflected by their lives and texts.* The better one understands Beauvoir and Sartre’s amorous trajectory, the better one also understands their conceptions of intersubjectivity (i.e., “being-for-others”), ethics, and ultimately, political engagement.

Their conception of love was thus a normative element of their work and its development. By “normative” I mean that love was a primary motivation that regulated their ideas and behavior—love was a standard. This chapter contends with their loves and lives from approximately 1926 to 1946. It situates key biographical ambiguities and scholarly omissions with respect to their oeuvre, and then it explains these variances through a particular focus: erotic love, which provided them with a singular way of coping with a strange world and the means to achieve their intellectual goals. The focus is, first, upon Sartre and Beauvoir as individual young adults, and then as a couple whose lives dovetailed. In 1926, Beauvoir was eighteen, and Sartre twenty-one years old, and in 1929, two of the most promising students of a formidable generation became acquainted for life. My particular insight is to explain significant moments of Beauvoir and Sartre’s intellectual life by tracking its development in strict proportion to their understanding and application of erotic love (in its practice and theory).

I argue that their love-lives informed their mature theories of not only erotic love, but also “being-for-others,” their conception of ethics, and ultimately their political involvement. The first section explains the connection between their amorous and ethical development as independent young adults (i.e., prior to meeting one another). The second section explains the shared, co-authored life they created, and its rapport with their intellectual trajectory. The third section examines Beauvoir and Sartre’s eccentric love life, arguing for the complicity between it and their published works of the 1940s. The fourth section argues that their ethical theory evolved in step with their erotic practices. Lastly, my conclusion summarizes their theory and practice of love with respect to their ethics, anticipating its role in their political interventions after the Second World War.

The purpose is to develop love’s primacy in Sartre and Beauvoir’s conception of ethics and intersubjectivity. The following works are examined, in conjunction with select journal entries and epistolary correspondences: *Being and Nothingness* (1943), *L’invitée* [*She Came to Stay*] (1943), *No Exit* (1944), *Essays in Existentialism* (1946) and the *Second Sex* (1949). Love for both Sartre and Beauvoir was a means of achieving their dreams, coping with life, and lastly, the catalyst for intellectual creation. The means employed to reach their goals were in some cases unethical, though, and love’s primacy sometimes blurred their judgment in the political arena, arguably to poor effect. That is to say that the principles by which they guided their conduct were detrimental to themselves and others, especially during the period 1935 – 1945. My analysis presents a critique of their conception of ethics in the final section, withholding my critical judgment until their ethics have been presented in the terms by which they understood them. In each case, the questions of how, whom, and why

they loved—in direct connection to their letters and works — represent my particular Ariadne’s thread to track Beauvoir and Sartre’s intellectual trajectories.⁵⁰

Examining their oeuvre in this way, which is in principle similar to my analysis of Camus’s oeuvre, will set the stage for the fourth chapter: a detailed analysis of their respective theories of love, and the impact on their stated ethics and politics of the post-Second World War period. The following section begins with an analysis of love in young Jean-Paul Sartre. I argue that his early correspondences (i.e., prior to his relationship with Beauvoir) reveal crucial cognitive pathways that informed his life and works. As early as 1926 – 27, Sartre had a nascent understanding of his mature erotic theory and its relationship to his conception of ethics. He also had a budding grasp of “authenticity” and the existential imperative to be “for-oneself.” The latter half of the section examines Beauvoir’s formative years, and love’s key role in her ethical and intellectual development. In the second section, we see a case for how Sartre and Beauvoir’s intellectual foundations commingled and matured in step with their theory of love.

2.1: A Portrait of Two Young Lovers: Latent Tendencies

Jean-Paul Sartre

Sartre was three years older than Beauvoir. Prior to their relationship, he had many lovers to whom he displayed an interest ranging from passing fancy to serious attachment. His erotic loves were diverse: married women who were much older, “professionals” frequented with his cadre of *normaliens*, and bourgeois women his own age, to name the

⁵⁰ My approach to tracking their lives is similar, at least in principal, to my approach to Camus. Beauvoir and Sartre were brilliant writers and thinkers who left many valuable contributions to posterity. My analysis intends neither to dance on their graves, nor to contribute to hagiography: the purpose, rather, is to broaden one’s understanding of their works through its complicity with their way of love, and its relationship to their ethics.

guiding examples. Hazel Rowley's biography (*Tête-à-Tête*, 2005) offers the following sample of Sartre's activity from 1923 to 1928:

Sartre lost his virginity at age eighteen, with a married woman who was thirty... After that there were prostitutes picked up in the Luxembourg Gardens. In his Ecole Normale years, Sartre and his friends regularly visited brothels... When Sartre was twenty-one, he courted a young woman [Germaine Marron] who lived in Lyon... They became engaged. At twenty-three, Sartre... asked his mother and stepfather to formally request the girl's hand in marriage. When Sartre failed his *agrégation* in the summer of 1928, the Marron family called off the engagement. (18)

Sartre excelled at the philosophy *agrégation* the following year, during which time he and Beauvoir's "essential but contingent" relationship flourished. It is meaningful to tarry with one of Sartre's earlier (and regrettably overlooked) erotic relationships, however, because his expression of love therein anticipated *Being and Nothingness's* theory of love, as well as the existentialist ethics that emerged after the Second World War.

Simone Jollivet and Sartre met at the funeral of Annie Lannes, a distant mutual cousin, in 1925. Sartre's attraction to Simone was immediate, and their on-and-off erotic relationship flourished in the following year. Simone Jollivet was a unique woman at many levels, and Beauvoir frequently mentions Jollivet in her memoirs (under the pseudonym "Camille" in *The Prime of Life*).⁵¹ Rowley's account, like Beauvoir's, emphasizes the intriguing mixture of bold sexuality and a cultured mind that attracted young Sartre:

[She was] a theatrical blonde, who since the age of eighteen had worked as a courtesan... in Toulouse. Her clients would find her standing in front of a fireplace reading—entirely naked except for her Rapunzel-like hair... Jollivet was three years older than Sartre and had grand ambitions to be a writer. Sartre drew her up a reading list, encouraged her, lectured her. He saw his role as preventing her from botching her life. (19)

⁵¹ Jollivet became a famous actress, as well as the courtesan of the actor, writer, and director Charles Dullin (who directed *The Flies* in 1943) after whose death she suffered a complete nervous breakdown in 1949. Sartre and Beauvoir remained quite close to Jollivet throughout and assumed many of her financial responsibilities toward the end of her life.

At twenty-one years old, Sartre's formal education was well underway at the *École normale supérieure*, and only two years away from his philosophy *agrégation*. His erotic education was also underway, and his infatuation with Jollivet marks a distinctive moment in his conception of love. It is perhaps true that "the more experienced" Jollivet made Sartre's "sexual fantasies come gloriously alive," yet I wish to approach their relationship in different terms (Seymour-Jones 47). Their amorous correspondence offers insight into Sartre's *formative intellectual drive*, which foregrounds his mature understanding of love and its relationship to his ethics.

Sartre's letter to Jollivet ostensibly responds to her "reproach" that he is "not genuine" [*Vous m'avez reproché d'être ni simple ni vrai*].⁵² The lengthy letter essentially expresses two distinct ideas: Sartre is fundamentally driven by the need to create as well as to transcend a past he did not choose. He is "extremely ambitious," yet it is not so much for the "image of glory" as it is for establishing his social superiority: « [L'image] ne me tente pas et pourtant la gloire me tente car je voudrais être au-dessus *des autres, que je méprise* » (LAC 9, my emphasis). Sartre elaborates:

Mais surtout j'ai l'ambition de créer : *il me faut construire*, construire n'importe quoi mais construire ; *j'ai fait de tout*, depuis des systèmes philosophiques (idiots bien entendu, j'avais 16 ans) jusqu'à des symphonies... Je ne peux pas voir une feuille de papier blanc sans avoir envie d'écrire quelque chose dessus. Je ressens ce sentiment, par ailleurs ridicule, l'enthousiasme, *qu'au contact* de certaines œuvres, parce que je me figure que *je pourrais les refaire*, les produire à mon tour. (9, my emphasis).

The manner in which he describes his need to create is distinctive. Many people justify this need for its result (be it a book, a bridge, or a child), for the artistic process itself, or in more modest terms, as a job or pass-time. Sartre suggests that in his case, though, creation is

⁵² *Lettres au Castor et à quelques autres*. Vol. I (1926 – 1939), Gallimard, Paris, 9. Hereafter referred to as "LAC." Jollivet's letters to him were apparently lost or destroyed in the 1940s.

compulsory. Whether in the past or the present, he “must” create, “whatever it be.” His need to create also conveys a sense of artistic inspiration: he is positively enthusiastic only when “contacting” inspiring works. The “blank sheet of paper” (i.e., *tabula rasa*) represents the negative end of this spectrum—its glaring lack of content compels him to supply something, anything, to its emptiness. Lastly, and crucially, when Sartre is positively inspired by great works, he could reproduce them in his own way.

This portrait of the artist as a young man is even more remarkable when contrasted with its subsequent self-deprecation. As soon as he explains the ambition to create virtually anything and to surpass “others,” whom he despises, he turns inward:

Seulement je n’aime rien de ce que je fais, je n’écris pas dans mon genre, si vous voulez, je change continuellement de style sans arriver à me plaire. D’ailleurs *je plais assez peu aux autres de ce point de vue*... Malheureusement il se greffe là-dessus que le fond de ma nature est en outre un caractère de petite vieille fille : je suis—dont vous ne vous étiez peut-être pas doutée—né avec le caractère qui convient à ma figure : follement, stupidement sentimental, couard et douillet...J’ai eu des accès de pitié injustifiés...des accès de lâcheté aussi, de faiblesse de caractère qui m’ont fait placer à une certaine époque *au dernier rang des ratés* par mes parents et mes amis. Voilà mes deux tendances fondamentales. La primordiale et l’ambition. (9-10, my emphasis)

Sartre has framed his thesis and antithesis, as it were, and his synthesis importantly leads to positive statements about his conception of freedom and ethics. That is, after establishing his latent creative talent as well as his factual shortcomings, he offers Jollivet a prescient image of freedom’s ability to change things for the better:

Je me suis déplu très vite et la première vraie construction que j’ai faite *a été mon propre caractère*. J’ai travaillé à deux choses : me donner de la volonté et refouler en moi la seconde tendance dont j’avais une honte profonde. Pour me donner de la volonté j’ai employé *la méthode des actes gratuits*...Mais ne croyez pas que j’aie étouffé toutes ces tendances grotesques en moi : elles existent toujours. Ainsi j’étais lâche et douillet, je le suis encore : quand un chien aboie près de moi il m’arrive de tressaillir de peur. Et pourtant je crois que *quand je décide fermement une chose*, aucune peur ne pourrait me faire reculer. (10, my emphasis)

This letter's dénouement is remarkable, especially to the extent that it anticipates the guiding motifs of such works as *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and *Essays on Existentialism* (1946).⁵³ The importance of decision, of assuming factual limits that one cannot deny, of assuming a past that one did not choose, and lastly, of transcending one's immanent situation, all of these notions prefigure the existentialist ethics that emerged nearly twenty years later in works such as *Being and Nothingness* and *Essays in Existentialism*.

His letter shows a keen awareness of the broader intersubjective potential of his ideas, moreover. Directly responding to Jollivet's reproach that he is "neither simple nor genuine," Sartre informs her that his overall ambition is distinctly ethical:

Je vous ai à peu près tout dit : j'ajoute que j'ai un certain idéal de caractère à atteindre : *la santé morale, c'est-à-dire le parfait équilibre*. J'en suis encore très loin. Seulement j'en suis arrivé au point de ne plus jamais faire transparaître au-dehors que ce que je veux. J'exagère. Pour être absolument sincère je dirai : la plupart du temps... Quant à vous, si vous êtes plus naturelle que moi, c'est parce que vous avez *de naissance* un caractère beaucoup supérieur à *ce qu'était le mien*. Mais il est peut-être injuste de me reprocher ce qui fait—à mes yeux au moins—mon *mérite*. (11, emphasis in the original upon « de naissance »)

The need to recreate stands out as the guiding motif of his love letters—be it to overcome undesirable past tendencies, to justify his "true" character, or to guide his future with moral goals.⁵⁴ His worth resides in his ability to recreate himself, that is, to transcend what he will

⁵³ The letter's pedigree is arguably interesting as well. It resembles *Dangerous Liaisons*' famous "81st Letter," in which the Marquise de Merteuil describes herself as uniquely self-constructed (based upon her own explicit "principles") and as contrasting with contemptuous "others." « Je dis mes principes, et je le dis à dessein : car ils ne sont pas comme ceux d'autres femmes... ils sont les fruits de mes profondes réflexions ; je les ai créés, et je puis dire que *je suis mon propre ouvrage* » (*Liaisons Dangereuses*, 188, my emphasis). The letter also echoes Descartes, who concedes that while he can never master his brute reactions to powerful "passions," he can nonetheless "exercise his volition" in the right way. Sartre cites Descartes' epistolary correspondence in a subsequent letter to Jollivet, which is examined below. It is also unquestionable that he not only read, but highly esteemed, Laclos' *Liaisons Dangereuses*. See for example Henri-Lévy's *Sartre: The Philosopher of the 20th Century*, 13.

⁵⁴ The conclusion seems to embrace the form of Merteuil and Descartes' respective ambitions as much as it transforms their content. One of Merteuil's self-accomplished powers is her ability to read others, which "almost never fails," yet for Sartre it is his ability to *show himself* only when he wants to, which works "almost always." « Ce travail sur moi-même avait fixé mon attention sur l'expression

later call his “facticity,” using his freedom to achieve “la santé morale” or the perfect ethical equilibrium. Sartre focuses his drive alongside both his contempt for others as well as for himself, that is, for what he used to be. It is at this juncture that I wish to identify a dominating tendency in his life and works: *Sartre translates his ethical self-understanding onto the creative process itself*. In this letter, he is simply referring to himself and to distinctive “works.” His further correspondences to Jollivet distinctly *refine* this understanding, however. The guiding creative tendency is attenuated into *the imperative to transform or to recreate his lover*.⁵⁵

Sartre’s next several letters to Jollivet indicate the change from recreating “certain works” to the need to recreate his *beloved*—for her own good, and based upon his self-understanding. He establishes his love for her as a function of his uniquely privileged solicitude. « *Qui vous a fait ce que vous êtes, qui essaie de vous empêcher de tourner à la bourgeoise, à l’esthète ou à la grue ? Qui s’occupe de votre intelligence ? Moi seul* » (*LAC*, 15, my emphasis). It is one thing to want to be the unique beloved in a relationship, but this is not Sartre’s true desire in this and other letters to Jollivet. His desire is, rather, to direct her life in a singular manner.

It is tempting to describe Sartre’s way of love as pedagogical and perfectionist, and to this extent he occasionally uses such language to frame love’s importance:

des figures et le caractère des physionomies ; et j’y gagnai ce coup d’œil pénétrant, auquel l’expérience m’a pourtant appris à ne pas me fier entièrement ; mais qui, en tout, m’a rarement trompée » (*Liaisons Dangereuses*, 188). With Descartes, the purpose of harnessing the will is *to refrain* from making epistemological errors and *to anchor* an inviolable self, yet for Sartre it is *to embrace* gratuitous acts and *to transcend* the self. Sartre’s need to recreate great works appears to be well underway.

⁵⁵ This pattern accrued substantially throughout his life, and I argue, below, that its theoretical exposition is contained in *Being and Nothingness*.

Je félicite mon élève d'avoir repris le piano...Je veux vous donner *une attitude d'esprit* qui au sein de la vie la plus médiocre fera que *votre vie ne sera pas ratée*, que vous ne serez pas une Madame Bovary *mais une artiste*, sans regret et sans mélancolie. Et vous dites, *ingrate*, que je ne peux pas trouver de débouché à votre activité. Trouvez-en donc beaucoup parmi les gens qui vous ont approchée qui aient fait pour vous autant que ce que j'ai fait, *ce que je ferai* surtout. (20, my emphasis)

There is a pedagogical aspect to his love, but the crux of love's importance is fundamentally deeper than the teacher-pupil structure. Love's importance for Sartre is most basically a solicitude that reflects the anxious need to recreate or re-form his beloved. This need is attached to an ethical impulse, moreover. To follow his privileged lead is to avoid becoming a "failure" (*raté*, as he once was) and to avoid "regret and melancholy" (as he once deeply suffered). In a positive sense, though, to follow *his* direction is to "become an artist," whose authenticity is contrasted against the stagnant roles of « la bourgeoise, l'esthète, ou la grue. »

His attentive, anxious care for his lover's projects works in tandem with his need to recreate things "in his own way." His solicitude thus has a double function, which is essentially phenomenological. To the extent that he recreates his beloved, he thereby transforms *his* world:

Je domine mon amour pour vous et *je le fais rentrer en moi* comme un élément constitutif de ma personne...Comprenez-moi : je vous aime en faisant attention aux choses extérieures. A Toulouse je vous aimais, simplement. Ce soir je vous aime *par une nuit de printemps*, je vous aime, la fenêtre ouverte. *Vous êtes à moi, et les choses sont à moi*, et mon amour modifie les choses qui m'entourent et les choses qui m'entourent modifient mon amour. (22, emphasis in the original upon *par une nuit de printemps*).

Sartre's conception of love privileges its transcendent possibilities. It "modifies" his very being in essential ways, to the effect that the world continually recreates itself around his love. This aspect of love's power is partially expressed in 'seeing the world through rose-tinted lenses,' for instance, but it is important to emphasize the manner in which Sartre promotes this idea. Love has a phenomenological structure that organizes the meaning of the

world. Reciprocally, it adapts to accommodate novelty and circumstance. The “things around it” inform its structure, although in every configuration love is essentially *his*. His love does not seek fusion, but rather a distinct *appropriation*.

The key appropriation operates through a privileged solicitude—bordering on megalomania—which recreates the “constituent element” of Sartre’s love. In a subsequent letter, Jollivet informs him that she is “sad” [*triste*] about life in general, as well as “displeased” with a partial draft of his novel he sent to her (*LAC*, 24). The first theme motivates as much as the second theme undercuts Sartre’s privileged role in her life, and his response reestablishes the latter while furthering the former. First, he undermines that which is inauthentic in Jollivet’s low spirits: « A présent je hais et je méprise ceux qui, comme vous, s’offrent de temps à autres une petite heure de tristesse » (24). His next move samples one of Descartes’ letters to Princess Elizabeth, which he quotes at length.⁵⁶ Sartre reroutes Descartes’ key point (about the importance of releasing the senses and relaxing the mind) into a microcosm of love’s transformative ability:

Appliquez-vous à cela, avec cette restriction qu’il faut que cet oiseau soit *votre* oiseau, ce bois *votre* bois et pour cela il faut non le sentir mais le transformer légèrement... Si on vous avait contrainte, le soir de votre mélancolie, à scier du bois, elle aurait disparu en 5 minutes. Sciez-en, moralement s’entend. Redressez votre corps, cessez la petite comédie, occupez-vous, *écrivez* : c’est le grand remède pour un tempérament littéraire comme le vôtre, continuez votre roman, changez votre tristesse, faites-la passer en émotion dans ce que vous écrivez. (25, emphasis in the original)

⁵⁶ Descartes, who is ostensibly giving the Princess a moral lecture, as quoted by Sartre: « Je puis dire avec vérité que la principale règle que j’aie toujours observée... a été que je n’ai jamais employé que *fort peu d’heures par jour aux pensées qui occupent l’imagination* et fort peu d’heures par an à celles qui occupent l’entendement seul, et que j’ai donné tout le reste de mon temps au relâche des sens et repos de l’esprit, m’occupant par là à imiter ceux qui en regardant la verdure d’un bois ou le vol de l’oiseau, se persuadent qu’ils ne pensent à rien » (Sartre’s emphasis, *LAC* 25).

This passage crystallizes the importance of catalyzed transformation in his conception of love. It is saturated with imperatives for Jollivet to recreate her projects, which are motivated by his privileged direction. The ethical impulses cannot be overlooked: each imperative aims at improving her life, and to follow his loving counsel presumably leads to a “great remedy” for her. At a phenomenological register, furthermore, the goal is not to calmly observe “the bird” or “the grove,” but rather to “slightly transform” them so as to make them a part of *her* world.

Further correspondences suggest that Jollivet accused him of using his love to promote a dubious pedagogy. One might argue that his response reflects anxiety about her seeing through his own strategy. The wry manner in which he assumes her accusation indicates, however, that his ambition is fundamentally deeper than the teacher-pupil structure:

N'appellez plus mes lettres des « petits cours ». Vous savez que je ne peux passer ni pour élève ni pour professeur. Pourquoi auriez-vous moins que moi la possibilité de voir ? Il suffit de regarder, l'endroit importe peu... *Encore un petit cours sur la santé morale*. C'est—vu de l'extérieur—l'affranchissement absolu de toutes les contraintes sociales : de la morale d'abord ; si vous êtes moral vous obéissez à la société. Si vous êtes immoral vous vous révoltez contre elle mais sur son terrain, où l'on est sûr d'être battu. Il faut être ni l'un ni l'autre : *au-dessus*. (28, my emphasis)

The purpose of tarrying with Sartre's correspondence with Jollivet is to explore his nascent intellect, to the degree that it foregrounds his mature understanding of love and love's relationship to his conception of ethics. To this extent, passages such as these reveal that Sartre understood love as a function of privileged solicitude and catalyzed transformation. Sartre attempted to be the guiding *normative* influence upon Jollivet, and his conception of love was the medium of influence. I have argued that his solicitude was motivated by his self-understanding, and that his manic “need to create” was sublimated into the desire to recreate his beloved, presumably for “her own good.” The guiding thread of Sartre's

solicitude, then, passed *from* his own conception of “la santé morale” *to* his desire for the beloved.

The further purpose is to argue that Sartre’s early conception of love heralded the theory of love in such works as *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and elsewhere. It is now essential to return to key passages of *Being and Nothingness* in order to identify strict similarities between the love described therein and the love shown in his correspondence with Simone Jollivet sixteen years earlier. More work will be necessary to fill-in the chronological gaps, but the parallels between Jean-Paul Sartre’s expression of love in 1927 and his 1943 *magnum opus* merit disclosure at this point.

In the section of *Being and Nothingness* entitled “Concrete Relations with Others,” Sartre uses love to guide his analysis of one of two basic attitudes that one can adopt toward other people, that is, the “first modification” of our “being-for-others.” After deflating specious accounts of the lover’s desire for the beloved, he describes its “true essence” as follows:

Dans l’amour, au contraire, l’amant veut être « tout au monde » pour l’aimé : cela signifie qu’il se range du côté du monde ; il est ce qui résume et symbolise le monde, il est un *ceci* qui enveloppe tous les autres *ceci*...il veut être l’objet dans lequel la liberté d’autrui accepte de se perdre, l’objet dans lequel l’autre accepte de trouver comme sa facticité seconde, son être et sa raison d’être...Ceci nous permet de saisir au fond ce que l’amant exige de l’aimé : il ne veut pas *agir* sur la liberté de l’autre mais exister *a priori* comme la limite objective de cette liberté. (407 - 408, emphasis in the original)

Sartre’s language is far more technical than in his correspondences with Jollivet, yet it essentially reproduces his earlier vision. The lover desires a uniquely privileged place in the beloved’s life to the extent that she depends upon him for “her being and her *raison*

d'être."⁵⁷ When the lover symbolizes "the whole world," his aim is not so much to be idolized as it is to be the originary point of reference, the *standard* by which the beloved evaluates her own life, and through which she must pass in order to become anew. The lover does not strictly want "to have an effect upon" [*agir sur*] her freedom, because that is too limited and arbitrary. Rather, he desires a crucial, and paradoxical, transformation in the beloved: she needs to *freely surrender* her autonomy to the lover's privileged guidance. In this way he becomes the "objective limit" of her freedom:

Ce n'est pas le déterminisme passionnel que nous désirons chez autrui, dans l'amour, ni une liberté hors d'atteinte : mais c'est une liberté qui *joue* le déterminisme passionnel et qui se prend à son jeu. Et, pour lui-même, l'amant ne réclame pas d'être *cause* de cette modification radicale de la liberté, mais d'en être l'occasion unique et privilégiée. (407, emphasis in the original)

The lover desires neither a robot nor an angel. What he really wants is for the beloved to creatively modify her own freedom, to choose to live a sustained *role* and to thereby *act* through that role. Because no one can be the sufficient cause of someone else's choice, however, the lover's task is to become the "unique and privileged occasion" of this transformation (i.e., the "objective limit" or catalyst of her freedom). It is helpful to linger upon both the desires and the mechanisms of this paradoxical state:

Il veut à la fois que la liberté de l'autre se détermine elle-même à devenir amour—et cela, non point seulement au commencement de l'aventure mais à chaque instant—et, à la fois, que cette liberté soit captivée *par elle-même*, qu'elle se retourne sur elle-même, comme dans la folie, comme dans le rêve, pour vouloir sa captivité. (407, emphasis in the original)

To be in this state resembles a dream, perhaps even insanity, yet the deeper point concerns the dialectic of freedom in the beloved's attitude. She must of course choose to be in love, but more crucially, she must become captivated by the role she has chosen. The result is

⁵⁷ I have chosen to make the lover male and the beloved female, so that it resembles the relation in Sartre's letters to Jollivet. This is otherwise an arbitrary decision.

remarkable, not merely for the beloved's choice to paradoxically will her own captivation, but also for the lover's unique ability *to mediate the beloved's world*. The line between author and subject interestingly begins to blur:

Je ne dois plus être vu sur fond de monde comme un *ceci* parmi d'autres *ceci*, mais *le monde doit se révéler à partir de moi*. Dans la mesure, en effet, où le surgissement de la liberté fait qu'un monde existe, je dois être, comme condition-limite de ce surgissement, la condition même du surgissement d'un monde. *Je dois être* celui dont la fonction est de faire exister *les arbres* et l'eau, les villes et les champs et les autres hommes pour les donner ensuite à l'autre que les dispose en monde, *tout de même que la mère*, dans les sociétés matronymiques, *reçoit les titres et le nom*, non pour les garder, mais *pour les transmettre immédiatement à ses enfants*. (409, my emphasis after the second « *ceci* »)

There are troubling (and possibly megalomaniacal) overtones in this passage, and the love valence described in the relationship is certainly not reciprocal, which is also problematic. It is thus worthwhile to analyze Sartre's remarks in light of his previous argument, as well as in light of his correspondence with Jollivet. Once the beloved chooses captivation, her world appears through the lover's privileged *matrix*: he "makes things exist" in the precise sense that she views them through his projects and vision. Irene McMullin succinctly explains one implication of "the Sartrian love model" when she argues that the beloved "outsources self-esteem" to the lover's evaluation (102). I would go further with this insight, however, especially with respect to the previous passage. The lover would have the beloved "outsource" *her projects and self-understanding* in relevant ways.

The lover's purpose is neither to possess the beloved's way of seeing, nor is it to attempt fusion with her. Rather, it is to mediate what she becomes, to recreate her possibilities and to endow her with an archetypal nobility. The key point is that the lover *bequeaths* privileges "just as in matriarchal societies," that is, not to possess the beloved outright, but rather to protect her with status and distinction. The lover's distinct role is thus patterned upon solicitude, which guides a radical transformation. On Sartre's model, whether

in his 1943 *magnum opus* or in correspondence with Simone Jollivet, love must occur through a space of singular privilege: it requires the beloved's paradoxically free choice to surrender her autonomy to his 'aristocratic' guidance or a type of amorous patronage. The beloved's choice to follow the lover's direction is comprehensive—he "symbolizes the whole world" as the primary "this" in it, organizing the beloved's possibilities. The lover's purpose in *Being and Nothingness* thus has a normative function: he becomes *the* standard through which the beloved evaluates her (or his) possibilities. The lover chooses the normative project of directing the beloved's life.

It is hence important to specify the transformation in the lover's world, that is, that which would motivate a Sartrean agent to assume this type of project. In his "Sartre on Authentic and Inauthentic Love," Gavin Rae correctly argues that Sartrean love is not primarily a question of sexual desire. "Rather than desiring a physical relation with his beloved, Sartre holds that the lover desires his beloved's free spontaneity; it is this that forms the object of his love" (75-6). Rae contends that once the beloved consents, the lover thereby senses that his existence is justified:

If the beloved gives herself to him, the lover experiences a profound alteration in his being: his life gains meaning. By gaining a sense of existential importance, love makes the lover happy and is one of the main reasons why he, and we in general, seek the experience of love on a continuous basis. In love, we are not lost in existence devoid of an anchor but suddenly become that anchor for another; suddenly we matter. (76)

I agree with Rae's analysis, but only to a cautious extent. It is accurate that the Sartrean lover "becomes an anchor for another," and thus gains "a sense of existential importance" that likely makes him happy. It is also accurate that at least some people pursue love to gain this importance. Yet I am critical of Rae's formulation to the extent that it truly *understates* the case presented in *Being and Nothingness*. The lover wants to be "the whole world" in the

beloved's eyes, and in the most radical ways, as we have seen.⁵⁸ It is selective, then, to describe Sartre's lover as merely an "anchor" for the beloved, or as simply desiring "a sense" of existential importance. Rather, the Sartrean lover desires captivation and the temporary surrender of the beloved's *raison d'être*. What Sartre's lover receives from the beloved is the occasion to project his normative understanding, that is, to stamp the beloved with his type. Put differently, what the lover gets from the beloved's captivation is a chance *to direct* another for-itself. This is the basic meaning of the lover's project on my interpretation, and one can find its traces years before *Being and Nothingness*.

The conceptual picture of the lover's desire and the beloved's captivation is becoming somewhat clearer, but there is a further question of how one enters this amorous "play" [*jeu*] in the first place, as well as which structures allow for its facilitation. Dreams and madness notwithstanding, *Being and Nothingness* does not appear to go any further into the mechanisms of love's facilitation. I would maintain, however, that Sartre is describing a phenomenon similar to the relationship between an *auteur* director and an ambitious actress or actor.⁵⁹ It is in this sense that I call his love "directorial," and my further claim is that Sartre attaches an ethical impulse to it: he believes that the beloved will thereby become a better person, which for Sartre means a more authentic person. When understood as an individual's project, Sartrean love aims at a total—and arrogant—remodeling of the beloved, for his or her own good.

⁵⁸ « Il est ce qui résume et symbolise le monde, il est un *ceci* qui enveloppe tous les autres *ceci*...il veut être l'objet dans lequel *la liberté d'autrui accepte de se perdre*, l'objet dans lequel l'autre accepte de trouver comme sa facticité seconde, son être et *sa raison d'être* » (408, my emphasis). Furthermore : « Et cette captivité doit être démission libre *et* enchaînée à la fois *entre nos mains* » (407, my emphasis).

⁵⁹ The sections "To Engineer a Family" and "The Ethics of Their Love" will argue for the decisive importance of "directorial" love in both Sartre and Beauvoir's crucial decisions of the 1930s and 1940s.

Sartre's letters to Jollivet nonetheless offer a preliminary indication of the mechanisms by which one could choose to freely surrender one's autonomy, especially in the context of his amorous solicitude: « Qui vous a fait ce que vous êtes ? ... Moi seul » (*LAC*, 15). For all of his efforts, however, Sartre's place in her life was not sufficiently privileged. Jollivet arguably appropriated *his* thoughts on love and freedom, and then she ran with them. She pursued, against Sartre's wishes, both her acting career and her distant infatuation with the famous thespian Charles Dullin, whom she no doubt captivated. Their love affair lasted until Dullin's death in 1949.

The way in which young Sartre contextualized Jollivet's ambition is nonetheless telling. If she were to succeed without his privileged direction, it would not be because of her initiative, but instead because of *chance*:

Ensuite il ne faut garder comme idéal que celui que vous pouvez atteindre vous-même : votre idéal actuel est d'être aimée par un homme intelligent et laid dans le genre de Charles Dullin. Si, ce dont je doute, cela arrive, ce ne sera pas grâce à vous, mais grâce au hasard qui vous fera rencontrer cet homme-là. (29-30)

It seems that Sartre struck out with Jollivet, at least in terms of his desire to fully direct her life in a privileged way, and with her necessary consent as his beloved.⁶⁰ The patterns within his amorous correspondence strongly resemble, however, the guiding motifs of "concrete relations with others" in *Being and Nothingness*, and so it is important to track more of the pathmarks whereby his way of love in 1927 approached the theory of love in 1943. This particular labor occurs in the second and third sections, below.

⁶⁰ In one sense, it is accurate to claim of Sartre's relationship with Jollivet that "he saw his role as preventing her from botching her life," as Rowley puts it (19). In another sense, this characterization misses the mark, however, because it ignores the multifaceted meaning of his solicitude, as well as its strict rapport with his conception of love.

Jean-Paul Sartre did advance his directorial love with a host of other people. Many of them were erotic lovers, yet some of them were devoted “family” members, that is, the *literal* echoes of the “children” to whom “the matriarch” bequeaths distinction, as I argue in the section “To Engineer a Family.” The love bonds he and Beauvoir created were used to orchestrate an intricate social network through which the couple navigated the most difficult of times, including the Occupation. Yet Sartre’s latent understanding of love, the individual’s ethics and “being-for-others” were most distinctly refined in explicit conjunction with *the* love of his life.

Simone de Beauvoir

Beauvoir’s massive accomplishments during the last half of her life can needlessly eclipse the first. Her youth was probably even more important, because its tendencies spread throughout her remarkable life. The de Beauvoir family lost their wealth in a series of misfortunes from 1909 to 1919 (in large part because of her father Georges’ reckless investing and gambling) resulting in ostracism and relative hardship in the Parisian society to which they settled. Simone’s upbringing with her sister, H el ene, was marked by a crisp awareness of their fallen class, as well as prolific bickering between Georges and Simone’s mother, Fran oise (*n ee* Brasseur). Numerous biographical accounts highlight Georges’ philandering and misogynistic tendencies, as well as Francoise’s distressed complacency. Both factors very likely encouraged Simone de Beauvoir’s life-long revolt against the rigidity of bourgeois morals.

Beauvoir perhaps grew up with a chip on her shoulder, and she certainly made the most of her intellectual opportunities. Seymour-Jones offers a window into her formative drive and the way in which she stood out from her peers:

Poverty sharpened academic ambition. Simone began arriving at the school gates half an hour early, only to be teased for being a swot. In the classroom, she studied obsessively, covering every inch of paper in minute script until her teachers asked Françoise if her daughter had a 'mean streak.' The lesson that 'one must make use of everything, and of one's self, to the utmost' remained indelibly imprinted on her personality. She took extra courses in English, piano and catechism. Victory exalted, failure terrified. (14)

True prodigality took flight between 1926 and 1929. Beauvoir wrote her graduate *diplôme* on Leibniz for Léon Brunschvig, and then pursued her doctorate in philosophy at the Sorbonne, eventually taking second place in the highly competitive philosophy *agrégation* (Sartre took first place, although it was his second and last chance at the exam). In contrast to her peers Paul Nizan, Jean Hippolyte, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre, who came from privileged backgrounds and attended the prestigious *khâgne* preparatory classes, Beauvoir's humbler origins redound even more to her credit: she essentially had half of their formal philosophical training.⁶¹ At twenty-one years old, Simone de Beauvoir was the youngest person to ever pass this exam, and only the eighth philosophy *agrégée*.⁶²

Love's importance was pivotal during Beauvoir's teenage years and young adulthood. When her head was not buried in books, her desires were expressed in three general ways. The first desire was negative, channeled through contempt for her parents' "unnatural" middle-class marriage and its patent unhappiness. The second was positive, which she expressed through intense affection for her best friend, "Zaza" (Elisabeth Lacoïn, 1907 -

⁶¹ For a more detailed account of Beauvoir's formal education and its stark contrast with her peers, see Seymour-Jones, 32-3, the Fullbrooks, 10-11, and especially Bair, 144-6.

⁶² The *agrégation* committee apparently debated for some time before awarding Sartre first place overall and Beauvoir second in this highly competitive exam. According to Maurice Gandillac, Sartre had shown "extraordinary self-possession" and the "entire jury, including the president, Lalande, were captivated" (Bair 145). Gandillac importantly continues: "As two members of the jury, Davy and Wahl, told me later, it had not been easy to decide whether to give the first place to Sartre or to her. If Sartre had showed great intelligence and a solid, if at times inexact, culture, everybody agreed that, of the two, she was the real philosopher... The examiners were so impressed by the precision of her philosophical expression that they wanted to give her first place. Finally, they decided it had to be given to Sartre, because he was the *normalien* and he was taking it for the second time" (145-6).

1929). Third, her erotic desire developed *ambiguously*, passing through forceful yearnings that initially disturbed her in an ethical sense (perhaps owing to her Catholic bourgeois upbringing, she would confess feelings of shame and revulsion in her memoirs). Zaza's untimely death affected her so much that she concluded *Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée*, her first autobiography, with a tragic narrative. Beauvoir suggested that « la fièvre » from which Zaza died stemmed from the moral « fatigue et angoisse » in which her bourgeois confines had trapped her, essentially stifling her transcendent possibilities as a young woman and lover (473).

During this time Beauvoir chose to rebel against the type of relationship represented by her parents' unhappiness and the bourgeois codification of gender and sex roles. To surpass what she regarded as stagnation, she gravitated toward a liberating approach to erotic love, which reckoned with its dangers while also providing personal as well as intellectual fulfillment. In what follows, I offer signposts indicating that her way of thinking about love was essentially connected to her conception of intersubjectivity and ethics. Beauvoir's nascent interrogation of love was of the utmost intellectual seriousness, as Margaret Simons argues in her patient study of Beauvoir's journals. "In a 1927 diary entry dated May 28 comparing the love of others with the love of God, Beauvoir makes clear her intention that love, and the problem of setting limits to love, should be the subject of her graduate thesis in philosophy" (216). Beauvoir ultimately followed Brunschvig's counsel that she write on Leibniz, yet the following entry (July 7, 1927) further reinforces love's importance. Love represented a serious philosophical method of interrogating both self and other:

Il y a ce sujet de 'l'amour' qui est si passionnant et dont j'ai tracé les grandes lignes ; il *faudrait partir de là*...et puis comme sujet plus facile et s'y rattachant pourtant l'amitié—ses dangers, la nature de l'éducation qu'elle donne, bref comment *les âmes peuvent interagir les unes sur les autres*... Il faudrait avoir *le courage* d'écrire non pour exposer les idées mais

pour les découvrir, non pour les habiller artistiquement mais pour les animer. *Le courage d'y croire.* (in Simons 240, my emphasis) ⁶³

At nineteen years of age, Beauvoir's estimation of love was apparently sufficient to warrant a thesis. Love was a way of pursuing philosophical topics, offering insight into friendship and education, intersubjectivity, and a "courageous" form of empirical inquiry. Its worth resided in the ability to access "related problems," including the mechanisms of interpersonal reality. Margaret Simons makes the further connection that Beauvoir's entries interrogated problematic aspects of love in the feeling of "being dominated" by the Other.⁶⁴ As early as 1927, then, love stood out as a powerful philosophical tool.

Beauvoir's autobiographical accounts of the late 1920s utilize considerations of love to narrativize her agency. One of the most important threads concerns love's ethical pitfalls, and the subsequent need to overcome them. *The Prime of Life (La force de l'âge)* expresses her concern for two distinct ambiguities or "contradictions" in love's structure, which marked her emergence into adulthood. The first regards erotic love's physical manifestations and the self's need to harness them responsibly. The second concerns the will to preserve her autonomy within enduring love relationships, which arguably catalyzed Beauvoir's understanding of the individual's ethics.

First, Beauvoir specifies that her sexual urges represented at once a powerful and disturbing event. Erotic impulses and their fulfillment came at a high cost to her self-understanding and freedom, simply stated. She characterized her struggle to harness her

⁶³ Simons uses this entry as a step in her argument that Beauvoir identified "the philosophical theme of the opposition of self and Other before her first meeting with Sartre" (217).

⁶⁴ "The identification with the Other in love can be especially problematic when it entails complete self-abdication as it does in 1927 for Beauvoir, who defines love as 'feeling oneself dominated'" (225).

desires as a “humiliation” that did not stem from her « rapport avec autrui » but rather from « une intime discordance » within herself:

J’avais cessé avec enthousiasme d’être un pur esprit ; quand le cœur, la tête et la chair sont à l’unisson, *prendre corps est une grande fête*. Je ne connus d’abord que la joie : c’était conforme à mon optimisme, et commode pour mon orgueil. *Mais, bientôt*, les circonstances m’infligèrent la révélation dont j’avais eu, à vingt ans, un pressentiment inquiet : *le besoin*. Je l’ignorais : je n’avais connu ni la faim, ni la soif, ni le sommeil ; soudain, *je fus sa proie*... Mon corps avait ses humeurs et j’étais incapable de les contenir ; leur *violence* submergeait toutes mes défenses... Dans le métro... je regardais les gens et je me demandais : « *Connaissent-ils cette torture ?* » (75-6, my emphasis)

The description highlights the liberating as well as enslaving tendencies of her yearnings.

Beauvoir trumpets erotic love’s highest accomplishments: the coexistence of desire, union and pleasure, and the intrinsic validation resulting when it is consummated in the right way.

Yet there is also something painfully binding within the erotic drive: it can dominate her with an originary “violence” and an overwhelming “need” to be satisfied. Her final remark is probably the most important: Beauvoir redirects her personal meditation onto the local community, transposing her own interrogation of love’s ambivalences onto the broader social domain. She conceived of erotic love as fraught with an essential tension at the individual level, which could presumably affect anybody. Her way of using the text and tension of an individual’s life to question the larger stakes of social existence became a touchstone of her political thought.

Second, the ethical tensions inherent in *enduring* love relationships occupy an important place in *La Force de l’âge*. Her initial concern with love as a lasting project had neither a political nor feminist inspiration, rather, it was a personal meditation on autonomy and self-responsibility. The “contradiction” inherent in enduring love is thus crucial for my argument, because it concerns the ground upon which she conceived of the individual’s ethics. For context’s sake, the following passage stems from Beauvoir’s interrogation of her

“remorse” and “fears” [*terreurs*] with respect to depending upon others in intimate ways, including long-term love relationships:

Je n'étais certes pas une militante du féminisme, je n'avais aucune théorie touchant les droits et les devoirs de la femme ; de même que je refusais autrefois d'être définie comme « une enfant », à présent je ne me pensais pas comme « une femme » : j'étais moi. C'est à ce titre que *je me sentais en faute*. L'idée de *salut* avait survécu en moi à la disparition de Dieu, et *la première de mes convictions*, c'était que chacun devait assurer personnellement le sien. *La contradiction* dont je souffrais était d'ordre non pas social, *mais moral* et presque religieux. Accepter de vivre en être *secondaire*, en être « relatif », *c'eût été m'abaisser* en tant que créature humaine. (74-5, my emphasis)

It is worth lingering upon the “moral and almost religious” stakes of enduring relationships, especially when coupled with the notions of personal “blame” and “salvation.” The implication is that the ethical pitfalls of long-term relationships are paramount. Were she to become attached in a loving union, for instance, she would thereby gamble with her autonomy, that is, potentially “abase” herself by becoming a “secondary” or dependent being. In different terms, to subordinate her life to another—in marriage, or simply in a long-term relationship—could undermine her project as the source of her own “salvation.” Beauvoir’s point is that her initial concern with erotic love—either with its physical manifestations, or as an enduring phenomenon—was originally for the ethical responsibility *to care* for her *self*. This way of framing love’s importance was not at all a puerile preoccupation. Rather, it was a guiding thread in Beauvoir’s conception of the ethical, and later political, stakes of the modern woman’s reality.

The Second Sex (1949) most basically challenges its readers to interrogate the title’s implications. In which particular ways are women secondary beings? How does this relate to sex and gender? And, most importantly, how is this state of affairs maintained? At this stage of Beauvoir’s life as well, love’s possibilities reflected the ambivalent tendencies of salvation

and subordination. For the former, *The Second Sex* argues for an authentic type of love that would obviate the pitfalls that are particularly salient to women:

Genuine love ought to be founded on the mutual recognition of two liberties; the lovers would then experience themselves as both self and other; neither would give up transcendence, neither would be mutilated; together they would manifest values and aims in the world. (667)

The “ought to” reflects her ethical concern, as does the respect for autonomy entailed by “the mutual recognition of two liberties.” Genuine lovers avoid being “mutilated” to the extent that their freedom is respected, and the proof is that their goals are in fact conjointly achieved.⁶⁵

When love is construed in this way, the implication is that Beauvoir could be in love as well as remain the source of her own salvation, because this type of love union is consistent with her conception of authenticity, simply stated. On the other hand, she was not blind to the practical difficulties that *blocked* “genuine” love’s possibilities, especially with respect to patriarchal tendencies of subordination. *The Second Sex*’s analyses of love’s economic, political, and social obstacles reinforce claims such as the following, suggestive of future hope while realistically asserting love’s present dangers:

On the day when it will be possible for woman to love not in her weakness, but in her strength, not to escape herself but *to find* herself, not to abase herself but to *assert* herself—on *that day* love will become for her, as for man, a source of life and not of mortal danger. *In the meantime*, love represents in its most touching form *the curse* that lies heavily upon *woman confined* in the feminine universe, woman mutilated, *insufficient unto herself*. (669, my emphasis)

The language emphasizes the singularity within the collective. It extends to any particular woman’s possibilities as a lover, and the temporal horizons are useful for assessing love’s ethical stakes. First, she indicates a future wherein self-discovery and empowerment are

⁶⁵ The following two sections argue for this very understanding of love in Beauvoir and Sartre, which was patterned upon the first twenty years of their lives as a couple.

needed to *love well*, that is, for the individual woman to love *self-assertively*. “The meantime” represents, however, a most serious impediment to the woman in love, since her “secondary” status routinely undermines her choices in the individual, socio-economic, and political spheres.

Lori Jo Marso and Patricia Moynagh argue in *Simone de Beauvoir’s Political Thinking* (2006) that Beauvoir’s radical contribution as a political thinker comes from her “dynamic method that begins with *individual lives* and acknowledges them *as the very text* for understanding and transforming our collective existences.”⁶⁶ In addition to “unsettling universal categories,” Beauvoir’s “situational” thought “directs our attention to the potential effects that any individual’s action might have on political and historical dynamics” (3). Lastly, they situate Beauvoir in a powerful theoretical tradition, anticipating thinkers such as Foucault and Wittig, who question “the meaning of lived sexuality and how any of us might redefine our sexual existence in more liberating and meaningful ways” (3). I would add that the meaning of Beauvoir’s lived sexuality, including its contribution to her intellectual and ethical self-discovery, was paramount throughout the course of her life—be it in her early, middle, or later years.

During a famous interview at Beauvoir’s apartment in 1972, the German journalist Alice Schwarzer asked a standard question whose response carried extraordinary implications: “Is there anything you did not write in your memoirs which you would say now, if you had to write them again?” Beauvoir replied directly:

I would have liked to have given a frank and balanced account of my own sexuality. A truly sincere one, from a feminist point of view; I would like to tell women about my life in terms

⁶⁶ *Simone de Beauvoir’s Political Thinking*. Marso and Moynagh (eds.), University of Illinois Press, (2006). “Introduction: A Radical Approach to Political Thinking” (1-10), 1, my emphasis.

of my own sexuality because it is not just a personal matter but a political one too. (*After the Second Sex*, 84)

The last half of Beauvoir's life was unquestionably dedicated to the politicization of sexuality and gender roles in mainstream culture. She was a pioneer in significant ways, whether with her pen or with her presence in myriad interviews and protests from approximately 1949 (*The Second Sex*) to her funeral procession in Paris, 1986.⁶⁷ The first half of her life was just as meaningful, however, and with the right focus it represents an important aspect of her response. When we look at the biographical data by focusing on love's importance, and when we look at the posthumously published letters and journals with the same focus, they offer a revealing account of her love life and its intersection with key intellectual touchstones.

My interpretive argument contends that Simone de Beauvoir's erotic development was essentially a means of empirical discovery, both with respect to her self, as well as with intersubjective life, that is, "being-for-others." The significant features of her erotic empiricism were: risk, clandestineness, promiscuity, and most importantly, *post facto* analysis, both for self-knowledge as well as knowledge of "others" in real-life situations. The inception of her erotic life situated the guiding patterns of her adult life. In what follows I outline the prominent patterns, and subsequently argue for their deeper complicity in Beauvoir's intellectual formation.

Risk—and subsequently its management—represented a crucial aspect of Beauvoir's erotic identity. Riskiness formed a scission in her identity, at least in terms of her public image and its contrast with her private life. In the late 1920s, Beauvoir was becoming one of

⁶⁷ For a vivid account of Beauvoir's remarkable *services funèbres*, see Bair, 605-18. Bair deftly accentuates the capital importance of Beauvoir's death and the significance of her work in philosophy, literature, politics and feminism.

the most remarkable intellectuals of her generation. She was concurrently exploring her and others' sexuality at the margins of society, frequenting some of Paris' seedier establishments and associating with a bohemian cohort. This risqué lifestyle—which, as we see, informed the next twenty years of her life—was a dangerous enterprise in many respects, and hence a question emerges: *why would she have undertaken it?* My contention is that Beauvoir used this way of life as a catalyst for self-discovery and intellectual empowerment. Her goals were to harness the ambivalent force of her sexual impulses, to avoid the fate of a “dependent” or subordinate being, and hence to remain the autonomous source of her “salvation,” that is, to direct her life according to her conception of ethics.⁶⁸

Recent biographical accounts—guided by Beauvoir's posthumously published materials—offer indications of her essential drive for independence as well as the riskier side of her youth, both of which began years before she met Sartre. Hazel Rowley's analysis of Beauvoir's, as well as “Zaza” Lecoin's journals of the late 1920s, importantly questions the standard narrative of the couple's life:

People tend to assume that it was Jean-Paul Sartre who transformed Simone de Beauvoir from a dutiful daughter of the French bourgeoisie into the independent freethinker who did more than any woman in twentieth-century France to shock that bourgeoisie. It was not so. Sartre merely encouraged Beauvoir to continue down the path on which she had already embarked. (16)

⁶⁸ Early accounts of Beauvoir's young adulthood—including her autobiographies—merely scratch the surface of a phenomenon that more recent accounts (based upon the posthumous letters, published in 1990) make profound. Deirdre Bair's landmark biography (completed in 1989) glosses the riskier implications of Beauvoir's libertine associations as either a *tangential* or a *passive* aspect of her formative years (see Bair 188, 189, and elsewhere). This prolific narrative acknowledges that Beauvoir had such associations, but they either offended her sensibilities or simply did not appeal to her. To the extent that Beauvoir's attitudes toward sexuality deviated from the norm, so this story goes, it was because of Sartre's libertine eccentricities, and Beauvoir's apparent need to dutifully bend her will to his. His letters to her—published in 1983—do indeed display his libertinage, and hence they became a tool to motivate this narrative. As we see, however, the narrative is false to the precise extent that *it elides Beauvoir's autonomy* in general, as well as neglects her documented deeds of the 1930s and 1940s.

This path began early. “Already at fifteen—the same age she set her heart on becoming a writer—she had realized she no longer believed in God” (Rowley 16). Beauvoir’s literary appetite sought out risqué works of the preceding generation, “borrowing armfuls of books from Shakespeare & Co., as well as from La Maison des Amis des Livres,” including Gide, Valéry, Barrès, Jacques Rivière, and the Surrealist generation in general (Seymour-Jones 54 - 55). She made the following connection in her journal: “‘Live Dangerously. Refuse Nothing,’ said Gide, Rivière, and the Surrealists” (55). As early as May 1927, her journals were “already questioning marriage on ethical grounds,” (Rowley 17). The following entry (May 6, 1927) arguably indicates a latent intellectual trend, anticipating the existential ethics of the late 1940s:

Oui, c’est par la décision libre *seulement*, grâce au jeu des circonstances que le moi vrai *se découvre*. . . L’horreur du choix définitif, c’est qu’on engage non seulement le moi d’aujourd’hui, mais *celui du demain* et c’est pourquoi au fond le mariage est *immoral*. . . *Un instant j’ai été libre* et j’ai vécu cela. (in Simons 234, my emphasis)

At approximately the same time that Sartre was exploring the importance of one’s limitations and the need to transcend them, Simone de Beauvoir was at the dawn of her own existential awakening. She was making something of herself, refusing to accept a fixed destiny in mainstream 1920s France, and thereby exploring her own limits. Her future projects focused on two distinct paths that shared the common bond of audacity. The prodigal daughter would soon break the mold through her intellectual prowess, for instance as the *sorbonnarde* who outstripped her more privileged peers. When Beauvoir was not obsessively studying, though, she sought out the thrills about which she had only read. This other pattern of audacious behavior began as early as 1925, as the Fullbrooks observe:

Looking for alternatives to the life she knew, Beauvoir, whose reckless streak sometimes outbalanced her caution, sought out adventures. In a spirit of somewhat foolhardy desperation, she and her sister, who in some ways was an earlier and even more formal rebel than Simone,

played sexual games in cafés and bars, picking up men and then escaping when matters looked like they were turning serious. Beauvoir developed a taste for alcohol, and went drinking when she claimed to be teaching in Belleville [i.e., a part-time tutoring job]. (6)

At seventeen, these “games” did not consume Beauvoir’s life, yet key friendships over the next few years offered more avenues through which she surveyed alternative lifestyles and the spectrum of erotic possibility. At twenty years of age,⁶⁹ she developed an integral connection with Stépha Awdykovicz—a young émigrée who worked as the caregiver of Zaza’s family, and whose liberated ways Beauvoir found refreshing.⁷⁰ Stépha played a pivotal role in shaping Beauvoir’s attitudes toward the body as well as toward sexual possibilities in general, as the Fullbrooks carefully summarize:

Stépha was outlandish, exotic, lively, and daring: further, she had a keen sense of her own sexuality, and dared to talk about sexual matters which Beauvoir’s own prudish upbringing had excluded almost from thought... Certainly, when the young women returned to Paris and kept up the connection... (indeed Stépha was to be Beauvoir’s lifelong friend)... Beauvoir was both delighted and appalled at the new bohemian set to which Stépha introduced her... Stépha simply accepted the facts of bodily life and refused to be shocked when the two young women caught sight of a pimp being arrested by police in the street. ‘But Simone, that’s life!’... Stépha explained men’s sexuality to Beauvoir; she talked to her about clothes; she introduced Beauvoir to her bohemian political and artistic friends. She brought, in short, not only daring but pleasure into Beauvoir’s life. (7)

Beauvoir used this bohemian milieu to find her counter-cultural cohort and to take bolder steps. She began to frequent Paris’s ‘less than proper’ areas in order to know more about society, but also for the pleasure of it. In 1929, there was a personally significant and unheralded step in her personal discovery. Beauvoir initiated an erotic relationship with René

⁶⁹ Bair offers the following portrait of Beauvoir’s inner life during the winter of 1928: “A harassed Simone de Beauvoir decided that she was “confined to home and library” like “a rat on a treadmill” and had to do something to break free of the demoralizing circumstances of her life. Everything seemed beyond her control; she chafed at the arbitrary rules and requirements of institutions, the capriciousness of people in authority, and the whims of polite society from which she found herself increasingly alienated” (121).

⁷⁰ Stépha married the painter Fernando Gerassi in 1929. The Gerassis—known as “Boubou” and “Baba” in Beauvoir and Sartre’s letters—remained close friends throughout. Their son, John, was one of Sartre’s most influential biographers.

Maheu (nicknamed the “Llama” for his height and blond hair, he was one of Sartre’s closest friends at the time) before she and Sartre became acquainted.⁷¹

A standard—and false—assumption is that the stereotypically prudish Beauvoir proverbially ‘lost’ her virginity to Sartre, so it is important to set the record straight on such assumptions regarding her agency. Beauvoir was, on my interpretation, an *active* lover who made autonomous decisions, pursuing the options she thought best *for herself* in particular. My argument situates her decisions as a means of empirical discovery (of self and others), and so it is important to dispel the image that she was simply under Sartre’s influence, or a bystander to the erotic possibilities surrounding her. Simone de Beauvoir purposefully sought out her erotic relationships when she saw fit.

Within a few months of her affair with Maheu, Beauvoir pursued Sartre, infiltrating his close-knit circle of *normaliens*. Over the years, they created a most remarkable team, fostering mutual fulfillment approximately until the last decade of Sartre’s life. The following section elucidates the first decade of their union, and the subsequent section specifies the guiding ethical patterns that emerged from it. I wish to conclude this section with one of Beauvoir’s letters of the late 1930s. The letters to Sartre reveal her mature agency as well as Sartre’s essential role as “the witness” to her life, at least during this phase.

This particular letter begins, and ends, as does virtually each of her thousands of letters to him: there is a salutation emphasizing Sartre’s diminutive stature, and a concluding paragraph replete with loving sentiments and hopes for the future. For context’s sake, Beauvoir was on a backpacking trip with Sartre’s former student and eventual “family”

⁷¹ See for example Rowley 23-4, the Fullbrooks, 9-10, and especially Seymour-Jones, 59-67, for a documented account of Beauvoir’s affair with Maheu.

member, Jacques-Laurent Bost (nicknamed “petit Bost” because he was the younger brother of Pierre Bost, the writer) in Albertville:

Cher petit être,

Je ne vais pas vous en écrire bien long, quoique j’aie des foules de choses à vous dire, parce que j’aime mieux vous raconter samedi de vive voix. Sachez cependant :

- 1) D’abord que je vous aime tout fort...
- 2) Vous avez été si doux de m’écrire de si longues lettres...
- 3) Il m’est arrivé quelque chose d’extrêmement très plaisant et à quoi je ne m’attendais pas du tout en partant—c’est que j’ai couché avec le petit Bost voici trois jours—naturellement c’est moi qui le lui ai proposé—l’envie nous en était venue à tous deux.
(*Lettres à Sartre* 62)

Beauvoir continues to describe the seduction in detail, positioning herself as the initiator, and Bost as timid. She apparently broke the ice as follows: « Et j’ai dit: je me demande la tête que vous feriez si je vous proposais de coucher avec moi » (*LAS* 62):

Ensuite nous avons encore pataugé un quart d’heure, avant qu’il se décidât de m’embrasser. Il a été prodigieusement étonné quand je lui ai dit que j’avais toujours eu de la tendresse pour lui—et il a fini par me dire hier soir qu’il m’aimait depuis longtemps. Je tiens fort à lui. Nous passons des journées d’idylle et des nuits passionnées...ça me fait une chose précieuse, et forte, mais légère aussi et facile, et bien à sa place dans ma vie, juste un épanouissement heureux de rapports qui m’avaient toujours été bien plaisants. Ça me fait drôle de penser que je vais aller passer deux jours maintenant avec Védrine. Au revoir, cher petit être...J’ai envie de passer de longues semaines seule avec vous. Je vous embrasse tout fort
Votre Castor (62 – 63)

The letter offers microcosmic insight into the mechanisms of their erotic epistolary correspondences. It shows an anticipatory sense of that which is respectively essential and contingent in their love discourse. Sartre’s implicit presence as her equal and witness is essential, and her letter offers him time to ruminate before they communicate « de vive voix ». His epistolary role was, in general terms, to offer guidance, analysis, and usually encouragement in her enterprises. When he would write to her with erotic news, the roles were importantly reversed, and thus she would analyze and guide his experiences.

Beauvoir’s passion for Bost appeared to be genuine and caring, and it lasted for years, moreover. Bost became not just an integral “family” member, but a founding member (with

Beauvoir and Sartre's help) of *Les temps modernes*, as well as a distinguished individual in his own right. Yet her feelings for Bost were clearly compartmentalized, as the letter suggests. This way of putting erotic relations in their 'proper place' was one relevant feature of the contingency upon which their love pact was grounded. Another important feature was *the analysis* of the relationship, which would take place over the course of many letters, and in some cases, many years. Beauvoir and Sartre extracted what they regarded as the most important parts of the experience in order to understand how they function. It was out of this strange sort of empirical project, I will argue, that they refined their understanding of erotic love's possibilities, and to a cautious extent, "concrete relations with others."

The elements of risk and clandestineness also represent distinguishing marks of their correspondence. "Védrine" was a code name used to indicate Bianca Bienenfeld, Beauvoir's former student and current lover,⁷² who was also Sartre's lover. In order to block their "contingent" lovers from intercepting the message of the "essential" core of their love, as well as from realizing that their lovers were being used as data, Beauvoir and Sartre sometimes employed codes. In general, however, they simply stressed the need for discretion. Hence the reason for which many of their surviving pre-War letters—ironically—were prefaced with instructions such as: « *Déchirez ces lettres—celles d'hier aussi* » (77).

In this section I have offered an outline of Sartre and Beauvoir's erotic development and its relationship to their conception of ethics. The main focus has been upon their nascent adult lives, exploring the degree to which their early conception of love established intellectual tendencies. The following section contends with their lives not so much as

⁷² Margaret Simons' *Beauvoir and the Second Sex* (1999) offers a well-documented account of Beauvoir's lesbian relations (and the resulting tensions with respect to the dominant narrative of her life). See especially her chapter "Lesbian Connections," 115 – 43. Also compare Hawthorne (2000), 56 - 65.

individuals, but rather as a couple whose pact bound them together in singular ways. Their love pact authorized a shared life premised upon transparency, mutual assistance, and the subordination of jealousy, very broadly construed. In what follows, then, I interpret the manner in which Beauvoir and Sartre's latent tendencies *commingled*. This decade was a period of committed exploration that shaped their conceptions of ethics and "being for others."

2.2: What Is a Love Pact? Beauvoir and Sartre in Practice

A pact (or compact) is a covenant, an agreement. The *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology* indicates a learned borrowing from the Latin *pactum*, related to the verb *pangere*, to fix or fasten, cognate with the Sanskrit *pasa-s*, a noose or cord, for instance.⁷³ A pact is meant to bind all parties concerned until its end. The literature is lacking on the notion of a love pact, however. There exists significant research dedicated to pacts with the devil, to suicide pacts, and of course to political pacts, yet it is curious that outside of the occasional film, the notion has not received thorough attention as such.⁷⁴ We can nonetheless assert that a "love pact" binds the lovers to a clearly specified agreement, which is what occurred in October 1929. My argument situates their pact as a means of coauthoring their selves through a process of teaching and learning based upon empirical transparency. Founded when Beauvoir was twenty-one, and Sartre twenty-four, their pact created lasting ripples in their lives.

⁷³ *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology*. R.K. Barnhardt (ed.), (2008), 746.

⁷⁴ One can find relevant analogies to a love pact in the notion of marriage vows, although these vows involve a mediating official, witnesses, and legal obligations, for instance, which are not directly pertinent to our subject. One can also find historical examples of pacts that involve a certain conception of love—most notably Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, in which the Athenian women pledge to withhold conjugal love from their spouses in order to end the Peloponnesian War, effectively 'splitting' (*lysis*) the 'army' (*strata*). *Tristan and Isolde* deserves mention to the extent that it combines a love "potion" with a suicide pact, although here too it is difficult to generate a relevant analogy to Beauvoir and Sartre's love pact.

This section approaches their love pact in terms of the couple's documented tendencies. The purpose is, first, to extract its distinct features. Second, I present select biographical details that illustrate deep patterns of care, support, and a shared intellectual foundation that guided their productivity throughout the 1930s and 40s. The goal is to establish the *tandem* aspect of their lives, and its deeper relationship to their minds. The couple was famously known for finishing each other's sentences in public, and I wish to take this insight and run with it. Beauvoir and Sartre formed a way of marrying their minds, and my deeper suggestion is that this "marriage" extended to a personal stake in each other's projects of the early 1940s. Each brought his and her own past to the table, and both moved forward, transformed. Beauvoir brought her audacity and empiricism, and Sartre brought his way of directing others' lives.

Many biographical accounts focus upon marriage to situate the genesis of the couple's "essential but contingent" relationship. For instance, why did they not simply get married?⁷⁵ Was their pact constructed in explicit opposition to marriage? Was Sartre, in retrospect, an inauthentic lover when he proposed to Beauvoir?⁷⁶ My contention is that

⁷⁵ Soon after Beauvoir and Sartre became lovers, he was called up for his obligatory military duty, and hence the next phase of their life together was uncertain. To add to the fire, Beauvoir's parents were outraged at the idea of their daughter living in some nebulous union with the "strange" *normalien*. Marriage at that time and place looked like an attractive option for the young lovers, and commentators such as Deirdre Bair have found it odd that they treated marriage as a non-starter (154).

⁷⁶ It seems that Sartre proposed the idea of marriage to Beauvoir, which she refused (as opposed to her family refusing on her behalf). Seymour-Jones claims that he proposed marriage to Beauvoir "three times" (87) while Bair's account simply mentions he first "hinted" at marriage, and then gradually became more serious about its "validity" (155). Rowley's biography states, however, that "Sartre did not suggest marriage" (27). At any rate, most accounts agree that Beauvoir would not have accepted marriage, and for his part, Sartre was only pragmatically interested: it would increase his salary, keep Beauvoir's family off their backs, and likely keep the couple closer together within France. Sartre stated in 1929 that he was "not inclined to be monogamous by nature," and he believed that "his real aim," as Beauvoir tells it, "was to define himself, not by marriage, nor prizes, but through his art" (in Seymour-Jones 87).

marriage—construed as an institutional practice— simply represented an obstacle to genuine love, especially for Beauvoir. Sartre reportedly said he wanted to be defined through his art, and not through marriage, for instance. Yet she was more systematic, arguing throughout her life against its primacy.

For Beauvoir, then, marriage was a bourgeois trap that should be avoided by the clear thinker. For Albert Camus, as we saw in the previous chapter, marriage represented existential atrophy, the arbitrary erosion of one’s live options in a world with no qualitative core. By contrast, for Beauvoir it represented *regression*, the undesirable return to a closely regulated world in which the woman, especially, was complacently dissatisfied. Many accounts of her life—most vehemently her own—have stressed the equation of marriage with “revulsion” and being “unnatural.” At several different moments Beauvoir derided it as “the most bourgeois of institutions” (Bair 156).

When construed as the institutional practice that ‘one’ does or that ‘people’ do, marriage never appealed to the couple, because they saw it as inauthentic and potentially harmful. To merely ‘get’ married would be to subordinate each lover’s possibilities to a pre-fabricated model, that is, to surrender their autonomy to what others have done, which would “relativize” the lovers’ desire.⁷⁷ As we saw in the previous section, Beauvoir’s interrogation of enduring love applies equally to marriage: she would thereby *subordinate* her life to another, and potentially undermine her autonomous foundation as the source of personal “salvation.”

⁷⁷ One of the reasons for love’s “demise” in *Being and Nothingness* is because “it is perpetually *made relative* by others” (353, emphasis in the original). Also consider one of the few entries on love in Sartre’s *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1946): “Communication: *Love*, to have the other in oneself... But do not forget that the relationship with another person is always in the presence of the third observer and under the sign of oppression. Poisoned” (9).

Yet “marriage” in a different sense explains the first two decades of their lives very well. When we consider the definition, “an intimate or close union,” and when we add the relevant vows of transparency, unconditional intellectual support, and the subordination of jealousy, Beauvoir and Sartre were indeed married. Their pact also drove them through periods of intellectual stagnation and severe illness. In what follows I offer a picture of Beauvoir and Sartre’s post-*agrégation* life as a couple in 1930s France, with an eye for the distinct ways in which the lovers cared for each other in trying times.

Beauvoir’s early teaching career extended to lycées in Marseille, Rouen, and then Paris. For his part, Sartre spent approximately the first two years of their relationship at Saint-Symphorien for his obligatory military service, after which he began his teaching career at a lycée in Le Havre (apparently the inspiration for “Bouville” of *La Nausée*). Their early years were thus marked by physical separation and the need to overcome it. Lengthy and almost daily letters were a crucial step in building their foundation. Their correspondence became the privileged means of communicating the “essential” aspects of their union, which they later used to analyze the contingent implications of their loves.⁷⁸

It is significant that Beauvoir’s account of their early years employs a language of sensuous *exploration* to describe the world they created:

Pourquoi craindre de mettre entre nous des distances qui ne pouvaient jamais nous séparer ? Un seul projet nos animait : *tout embrasser*, et témoigner de tout ; il nous commandait de suivre, à l’occasion, des chemins divergents, *sans nous dérober* l’un à l’autre *la moindre de nos trouvailles* ; ensemble, *nous nous pliions* à ses exigences, si bien qu’au moment même où nous nous divisions, *nos volontés se confondaient*. C’est ce qui nous liait qui nous déliait ; et par ce déliement *nous nous retrouvions liés au plus profond* de nous. (*La Force de l’âge*, 34, my emphasis)

⁷⁸ There are regrettably only a few surviving letters of their correspondence from 1930 to 1934.

Her tableau incorporates elements of scientific discovery, voluptuousness, and a type of intellectual coupling. The couple's project was to unflinchingly embrace distinct paths of exploration, for the sake of sharing "their findings" and thereby learning from each other. In one sense, this was an empirical project, but the goal was also to better understand their own *union*, that is, its constructive activity. Their shared project was what made them more profound *as* a couple. Provided that they returned to the nexus of essential transparency, their individual paths were never truly separated by ambition or distance. The point is that when one of them learned something new, it thereby reinforced their twinship.

Complete transparency was one distinct feature of their love pact, which meant, in negative terms, that they would "never lie to one another," and "neither would conceal anything from the other" (Bair 158). Bair's analysis of the positive component of transparency is accurate as far as it goes, but it offers only a select consideration of the couple's essential union:

What mattered, finally, was that they thought alike and, independently or together, came to the same opinions and conclusions about everything. More and more, they were becoming "we two," allied in ironic mockery of the world before them. Their pact became a sacred contract, founded "on truth, not on passion," as she told Colette Audry, her only friend at the lycée. (182)

Commentators tend to focus upon their intellectual union in terms of similarity: on this type of reading, Beauvoir and Sartre steadily assimilated to "the same opinions and conclusions about everything," they "thought alike," and so forth. What this focus misses, however, is the element of individual contribution that they used to *teach*, and *learn from* the other by sharing their *findings*: only at this threshold would they find themselves more connected than before. To judge their union by similarity, then, is to look at the long-term result and not the

process. Rather, their process of discovery—as distinct individuals united by the will to teach, and learn from each other—was the positive component of their transparency.

I now wish to turn to two capital moments that cemented their essential trust in one another. It is not well known that in early adulthood, both Sartre and Beauvoir suffered crises that left them psychologically debilitated and in need of the other’s full support to recover. Their respective recuperations passed through the medium of care, which was motivated by their conceptions of love. In what follows, I explain their respective existential breakdowns as well as the ways in which they cared for each other. This analysis will lead to a clearer formulation of their conception of love and its complicity with their intellectual ambitions.

Beauvoir’s transition from the isolated student lifestyle to her post-*agrégation* career as a teacher was marked by a disturbing crisis, to the extent that her closest friends saw her as well on the path “to self-betrayal and self-destruction,” as she describes it in the *Prime of Life*. Deeply saddened because of her best friend’s death, and unsure of her identity as an independent adult, Beauvoir reached for something strong. She immersed herself in an intoxicated lifestyle with the bohemian cohort she found through Stépha, and its extravagances resulted in a serious breakdown.⁷⁹ Her individual projects were paralyzed, and without Sartre’s help, it “seems unlikely” that she would become the great thinker she was, as the Fullbrooks argue:⁸⁰

In fact, the manner in which Sartre responded actively to Beauvoir’s existential breakdown was thoroughly admirable. Both he and Beauvoir realized that she was in great danger. It was

⁷⁹ *La force de l’âge* nuances this period of her life in very broad terms: « Je traversais des semaines d’euphorie; et puis, pendant quelques heures, une tornade me dévastait, elle saccageait tout. Pour mieux mériter mon désespoir, je roulais dans les abîmes de la mort, de l’infini, du néant. Je n’ai jamais su, quand le ciel redevenait calme, si je m’éveillais d’un cauchemar ou si je retombais dans un long rêve bleu » (79).

⁸⁰ For a fuller picture of the Fullbrooks’ intriguing thesis regarding the extent to which Beauvoir may have significantly contributed to Sartre’s works, see the second Appendix.

not only that she was losing sight of her goal of becoming a writer, she was also becoming intellectually passive...It was Beauvoir's good fortune—and, without it, it seems unlikely that she would be of interest today—that in Sartre she had found perhaps the only male intellectual of his generation in all of France who was not pleased to see his lover lapse into her traditional gender role. Increasingly, Sartre threw his energies into reviving Beauvoir's ambition, her appetite for ideas, and her habit of saying what *she thought* about things. (35, emphasis in the original)

Their deeper implication is that it was truly *Sartre's* good fortune that Beauvoir recovered because, they argue, she would write “the core analyses” of ‘Sartrean’ existentialism” (66). When we nuance the Fullbrooks' reading, however, it shows an instance of an overlooked pattern: Beauvoir and Sartre depended upon each other in radical ways. Their dependency extended to the deepest regions of their minds, touching the core of the other's “ambition” and “appetite for ideas,” on the one hand, and jolting the other out of “intellectual passivity” on the other.

The Fullbrooks explain Sartre's solicitude in terms of his exceptional lack of chauvinism and, elsewhere, his “fear of being abandoned.”⁸¹ Their explanation is questionable, however. I would argue that the manner in which Sartre responded to Simone de Beauvoir's breakdown represents *a more refined* version of his amorous solicitude for Simone Jollivet. Sartre's singularity resides neither in his fear of abandonment nor a superlative lack of chauvinism, but rather in his conception of *love's* power. To recall the previous section, we saw that Sartre's privileged role was to be the guiding normative influence upon Jollivet's life: he tried to direct her life according to his standards. Under his wing, Jollivet would presumably shun her inauthentic projects and thereby thrive in distinct ways. To follow Sartre's loving counsel was to avoid becoming “a failure,” in negative terms,

⁸¹ When they analyze Sartre's alleged “fear of female desertion,” they claim that it stems from “Sartre's deep seated attitudes toward his mother, which heightened his fear of being abandoned for a more potent, less ugly and more adult lover [i.e. Sartre's step-father, J. Mancy]” (57).

and positively it was “to become an artist” (i.e., Sartre’s highest form of praise). Similarly, when Simone de Beauvoir broke down intellectually, Sartre acted out of his conception of love, that is, his care for her passed through this precise medium.

It is not accurate, then, to offer strictly negative reasons for Sartre’s solicitude with respect to Beauvoir’s existential breakdown. His response to her plight was exceptional, but not in the hyperbolic way the Fullbrooks describe it. Instead, it was exceptional to the extent that it reveals one of his potent tendencies. Sartre’s understanding of love was the means of resuscitating Beauvoir, occurring in the same manner in which he attempted to direct Jollivet’s life.⁸² Similar to his love for Jollivet, the purpose was not to possess Beauvoir’s freedom outright, but rather to direct it according to his conception of ethics. Sartre used his love to guide her projects in his vision of authenticity. On my reading, this is the normative meaning of “directorial” love.

One might object that Sartre “directing” Beauvoir’s life (especially during an intense personal breakdown) argues *for* the unilateral interpretation of their intellectual relationship. The key to understanding the “essential” component of their love, however, is to track its sustained patterns. As is the case with many committed couples, their love relationship was punctuated with distinctive moments of give and take, that is, a dialectic of dependency and assistance. At times it was Beauvoir who collapsed decisively, and hence she needed the most sustained care and direction. Yet, crucially, sometimes it was Sartre who broke down completely. In what follows I present Sartre’s most devastating collapse, and then explain

⁸² As Sartre attempted to direct Jollivet years earlier: « Redressez votre corps, cessez la petite comédie, occupez-vous, *écrivez* : c’est le grand remède pour un tempérament littéraire comme le vôtre, continuez votre roman, changez votre tristesse, faites-la passer en émotion dans ce que vous écrivez » (*LAC* 25, emphasis in the original).

Beauvoir's distinct way of rehabilitating him. This section's final analysis then explains the result of their respective rehabilitations.

Sartre suffered from a lasting type of depression, which began around the time he turned thirty. He was working on several critiques of psychology,⁸³ and through a chance encounter he decided to experiment with mescaline, the psychoactive ingredient in peyote.⁸⁴ Sartre's mescaline trip perhaps offered creative insight into the phenomenology of *Nausea*, as some commentators suggest, but I wish to focus upon a deeply personal implication. Sartre underwent a process that left him severely debilitated, stemming from his manic "need to create" and "to surpass others," which he confessed years earlier to Simone Jollivet.

His dependence as a writer upon amphetamine stimulants was something he candidly acknowledged later in life—in *Les mots* (1964)—yet this trend began early. During the period 1934 - 35, "he was coming to depend on stimulants to screw himself into optimum productivity," usually beginning at "eight or nine in the morning with pep pills, which made it impossible for him to sleep at night without a sedative," as his biographer Ronald Hayman

⁸³ Most notably *La transcendance de l'égo* and *L'esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*.

⁸⁴ Bair summarizes the key features of Sartre's mescaline experience, which occurred in February 1935: "Dr. Daniel Lagache, one of his colleagues at the Ecole Normale, had become a medical doctor specializing in psychiatric disorders...where he conducted research in drug therapy. Sartre's general dissatisfaction with his life had resulted in what Beauvoir thought was "just a little unhappiness," but what she later came to believe was "probably a serious depression."...So, when his old friend Lagache described the visual hallucinations sometimes induced by his experiments with mescaline, Sartre decided to take the drug because he was working on a study of the imagination...They expected that at most the drug would cause several days of hallucinations, but the residual effects were so powerful that Sartre spent varying periods of time during the next *several years* imagining himself at the mercy of giant crabs, dung beetles, vultures and lobsters" (Bair 191 – 92, my emphasis). At Sartre's funeral, his most irreverent detractors made sure to disperse crabs and lobsters throughout the grounds, a perverse testament to how seriously his hallucinations affected him.

concludes (107).⁸⁵ Sartre was thoroughly exhausting himself, working on several projects, and teaching full time. He was increasingly dissatisfied with being “merely” a civil servant (and thus not a famous writer by thirty, the goal he had set in his early twenties). When we consider the patterns of depression alongside his artificially enhanced work pace, his ill-advised mescaline injection set him over the edge.

The purpose of dwelling upon this moment is to indicate two important consequences. First, Sartre’s world imploded, and it had to be rebuilt. Second, the process of rebuilding passed through the medium of love, both through Beauvoir’s conception of love, as well as through her creative redeployment of his directorial love. When Beauvoir’s world broke down, Sartre helped to rebuild it through the medium of his peculiar love. When Sartre’s world collapsed, Beauvoir repeated the process on her terms, and thus with a difference.

After weeks of severe paranoid hallucinations, it was clear that matters were serious. His doctors informed Beauvoir that mescaline alone could not be the sufficient cause, and hence the problem was more systemic, albeit unclear in terms of a solution (Bair 192). It was now Beauvoir’s turn to care for the patient, and her particular remedy was exceptional. At this exact moment in their lives, Beauvoir organized the now-famous love triangle with Olga Kosakiewicz (the ostensible inspiration for “Xavière” in *L’invitée*, an impetuous young woman whom a French couple, Françoise and Pierre, invite into a ménage à trois relationship).

Olga Kosakiewicz (1915 - 1983) was Simone de Beauvoir’s student in 1933, at Rouen. By 1935, she and Beauvoir had formed an intense personal relationship.

⁸⁵ The stimulant was usually Corydrane (Orthodrine), a combination of amphetamine and aspirin (legal in France until 1971). For a detailed account of Sartre’s dependence and the extent to which it alarmed his friends, see Bair, 319, 666n, and elsewhere.

The standard narrative states that Olga was Sartre's lover, whom Beauvoir tolerated as a contingent love. On this reading, Beauvoir had merely self-interested motivations for pairing her former student, and current friend, with Sartre. Olga would keep him occupied as he worked through his bizarre problems, and thus Beauvoir had the added benefit of a helper, leaving her free to write her biography of Zaza (entitled "Lisa"). This is the narrative Beauvoir recounts in *The Prime of Life*, and it has misled her shrewdest biographer.⁸⁶ The biographical accounts based upon the posthumously published materials reveal a very different picture. I draw upon them to argue that in her relationship with Kosakiewicz, Beauvoir's audacity took an unheralded but decisive step.

Olga Kosakiewicz was first Beauvoir's lover, and she only became Sartre's lover at Beauvoir's insistence. The two women's mutual attraction began at an intellectual register, when Beauvoir noticed marked improvement in her previously listless philosophy student, and then decided to take Olga under her wing.⁸⁷ It is not entirely certain when their erotic relationship began, although it was clearly underway by the end of 1934.⁸⁸ It is also clear that from this time forward, both Beauvoir and Sartre began to "recruit" their contingent loves (and future "children") from the ranks of their former students, the structure of which is analyzed in detail in the following section.

⁸⁶ Bair contextualizes Kosakiewicz's role in their lives in the following terms, which stems from Beauvoir's careful manipulation of the record in *The Prime of Life* and in interviews. "Once again Sartre required her complicity in his affairs and she had to rationalize her response: 'We spent hours thrashing out such problems. I did not mind this; I much preferred the idea of Sartre angling for Olga's emotional favors to his slow collapse from some hallucinatory psychosis'" (193).

⁸⁷ See Rowley, 53-54, 57-61 for a clearer picture of Olga Kosakiewicz's origins and ambitions.

⁸⁸ For a fuller account of Beauvoir's sapphic relations with Olga Kosakiewicz (and other former students), see Hawthorne (2000), 64, 69; and especially Simons (1999), 129-36. For a fuller biographical picture of the couple's relationship with Olga, see Seymour-Jones, 151 – 168.

It is important to explain Beauvoir's formative impact upon Sartre during his crisis, and then to contextualize the remarkable dialectic of their love relationship. Beauvoir brought her bold tendencies to their essential union when she introduced Olga Kosakiewicz to Sartre. There are at least two reasons for which she did this. First, her decision to incorporate another—and subordinate—lover in the relationship follows from her ethical tendencies. We saw in the previous section that as early as 1927, Beauvoir's interest in love was significant. One of her impulses was to use love as a means to apply her individual ethics, that is, to govern her conduct in keeping with her sense of dignity and the proper use of freedom. Her chief concern with being in a relationship was that it might undermine her self as the source of "salvation" and "autonomy." Autonomy had a "moral, and almost religious significance" in her life, and the *key purpose* was to position herself such that she would never be "abased" as a secondary or "subordinate" being. Another salient feature of her development was to use "love" to better comprehend others, that is, "to understand how souls can act one upon the other." It is of further significance, then, that Olga Kosakiewicz was a key inspiration for the analyses of intersubjectivity in Beauvoir's works of the 1940s, as numerous commentators have argued.⁸⁹

Beauvoir's daring decision to recruit Olga into a risqué relationship thus follows from her conception of love and its relationship to her ethics. First with Olga, and then with many other young women and men ("petit Bost," for instance), Beauvoir made sure that she was never a "secondary" being, and, in broader terms, she used her experiences with them as data for her projects. The meaning of "contingency" in Beauvoir's erotic love, on my reading,

⁸⁹ Scholars such as Serge Julien-Caffié (2000), Hawthorne (2000), and Simons (1999) have argued that Olga Kosakiewicz was the key inspiration. I argue, below, that O. Kosakiewicz was just one inspiration among many for *L'invitée*.

simply reflects her ethical self-understanding. Provided that the couple had their essential nexus as transparent equals, Beauvoir would always be in an autonomous position with respect to her contingent loves. She placed herself in the role of model, teacher, or analyst, thereby experiencing the younger lovers as subordinates in need of guidance. For his part, Sartre's contingent loves had a similar function to the extent that they reflected his ethical understanding—he also aimed to “direct” their lives in a normative sense.

The second reason Beauvoir introduced Olga to Sartre was indeed to give him the means to recover from his collapse, but not in the whitewashed sense one finds in *The Prime of Life*. By 1935, Beauvoir understood Sartre's directorial love very well. Not only had they been together for six years, she had also undergone its implications in a profound sense, namely when Sartre directed her out of an existential breakdown. The roles were now importantly reversed, however, and Beauvoir seized the moment to establish her share of control in the couple's “essential” union. Beauvoir used this moment to assert herself as the matriarch of the “family” they would create during the next few years.

She also used this moment to help Sartre as he had helped her. In one sense, what Sartre needed to recover was what *he desired most*—the means to love someone whom he would recreate in his vision, presumably for her own good. This is the normative meaning of his love, and his relationship with Olga Kosakiewicz was borne to fruition. Sartre launched her career as an actress in his, and others' plays, and the couple supported her financially for decades. Generally speaking, both Sartre and Beauvoir would support their “children” until the end of their lives, a concrete testament to their importance in the couple's eyes.

The erotic structure that Beauvoir introduced to Sartre was her decisive contribution to their union, which followed from her own ethical tendencies. She thereby used her

conception of love to help Sartre recover, which galvanized the next phase of their shared life. The couple's intimate union was thus arguably a product of their latent tendencies, which were catalyzed by their respective collapses. During moments of intense breakdown, Sartre taught Beauvoir a particular means of directing others' lives, and reciprocally, Beauvoir stamped their relationship with her particular ethical concerns. The couple's dominant impulses combined to form the essential "transparency" and "subordination of jealousy" for which they were famous, yet the way it transpired was rooted in concrete practices of intrepid, if not reckless, decisions.

Their particular liaison with Olga was the catalyst for the union of their audacious and "directorial" love, as the following correspondence (March 25, 1935) preliminarily indicates. For context's sake, "Toulouse" was one of Beauvoir's names for Simone Jollivet, with whom she and Sartre remained close friends. Jollivet was currently living in an intimate union with the thespian Charles Dullin (who directed *Les Mouches* in 1943). The "adopted daughter" referred to is clearly Olga Kosakiewicz,⁹⁰ who became the first "family" member:

Chère Toulouse,
Etes-vous libre dimanche après-midi ? et si oui puis-je m'amener avec Sartre et notre enfant adoptive, fille légèrement démoniaque d'un couple marqué du signe d'Abel ? Sartre a été fou, d'une façon assez inquiétante, mais il ne l'est plus. Moi je prospère. (21)

Simone de Beauvoir was prospering, and Jean-Paul Sartre was on the way to a full recovery. Over the course of the next few years they formed an intricate network of contingent lovers upon whom they experimented with their conception of ethics and "being-for-others." Severe crises had first tested, and then refined the meaning of their pact during this phase of their life. The next phase further propelled their union, which was united in the will « de tout

⁹⁰ Sylvie le Bon de Beauvoir provides the following footnote next to "enfant adoptive": « Olga, dont il est question dans *F.A. [La Force de l'âge]* à partir de la p. 171, N.R.F.; p. 189, « Folio ». Elève de Castor à Rouen, 1933 » (21).

embrasser » and to share even « la moindre de [leurs] trouvailles ». It was here that they applied and tested their conception of ethics upon others, refining their process in what one might call an “existential” laboratory.

2.3: To Engineer a Family (1938 – 1943): Cells, and The Intersubjective Circle

Construed as the institutional practice that ‘others’ do, marriage never appealed to Beauvoir and Sartre. Instead, their thrill came from a life premised upon transparency and the subordination of jealousy, fostering fulfillment in very broad senses. Similarly, the conventional notion of *family* never appealed to the couple. Later in life, they curiously bequeathed their respective estates to younger adults whom they had legally adopted, whereas they could have passed them on to “natural” kin relations.⁹¹ I would argue that their gestures of adoption reflect patterns cultivated earlier in life. Their union was thoroughly unconventional, and so too was their conception of family. Beauvoir and Sartre engineered their own family through a hierarchy of erotic relations, which were generally binding. They chose the project of directing their ‘children’s’ lives, standing as patriarch and matriarch in *la famille*.

This period represents the fusion of Sartre’s “directorial” love and Beauvoir’s audacious empiricism. It yielded a bizarre form of existential analysis, whose results can be seen in the couple’s letters and projects. Beauvoir and Sartre’s contingent lovers included Olga Kosakiewicz, Olga’s sister Wanda (1917 – 1989), Nathalie Sorokine (1920 - 2010), Bianca Bienenfeld (1921 – 2011), and Jacques-Laurent Bost (1916 – 1990), to name the most

⁹¹ In 1964, Sartre adopted Arlette Elkaïm(-Sartre), (1935 -), and in 1980, Beauvoir adopted Sylvie le Bon (de Beauvoir), (1941 -). Elkaïm was unquestionably Sartre’s lover prior to the formal adoption. In Sylvie le Bon’s case, the literature is ambivalent as to whether she and Beauvoir were lovers.

prominent persons. Beauvoir and Sartre's dominant tendencies combined to extend their union into a most unconventional family structure.

One significant tendency was to care for their lovers materially as well as existentially, including financial aid and career support. Another strong tendency was for Sartre and Beauvoir *to analyze* their lover's situations, and thereby to learn from their subordinates' existential situations. I argue to this effect that they used "cells" to regulate their contingent lovers. So, similar to the way clandestine organizations either intentionally lie to, or withhold crucial information from lesser members (i.e., "cells") for a supposedly higher purpose, so too did Beauvoir and Sartre keep their lovers ignorant of the complete picture. Only they knew who, exactly, was with whom, and only they had the blueprint of the motivating structures of desire, jealousy, sadism, masochism, etc.: that is, the guiding intersubjective themes of *L'invitée* and *L'Être et le néant*.

The result of their experimentation was an eccentric form of erotic geometry. That is to say that the notions of an erotic "couple" and a "love triangle" have been clearly theorized in the literature, yet Sartre and Beauvoir formed numerous contingent relationships with several possible configurations, which in Beauvoir's case were both hetero- and homosexual.⁹² In each case, though, Beauvoir and Sartre stood at the top of the pyramid(s), positioning themselves so that only they partook of the "essential" transparency. They were thus highly manipulative with their 'subordinates', arguably for 'a greater good,' at least as they saw it. The *intellectual* purpose of this enterprise was multifaceted, on my interpretation. First, it was to test their philosophical assumptions of intersubjectivity, and ultimately to

⁹² "Heterosexual" and "homosexual" are approximate terms. For a more sophisticated analysis of Beauvoir's sexuality (and its discrepancies with her own accounts) see Hawthorne (2000) and Simons (1999).

refine their existential ethics. Second, their strange family project followed from their peculiar conceptions of ethics.

This section offers a window into select epistolary correspondences that reveal the architecture of the couple's family project and its rapport with their early works. The first stage of my analysis establishes the following four motifs with respect to Beauvoir and Sartre's letters: 1) an emboldened "directorial" love; 2) their solicitude, that is, their attentive and anxious care for their lovers; 3) the importance of "cells"; and lastly: 4) a synthetic form of existential analysis. The second stage confronts select interpretations of their "contingent love" in the literature. I present a nuanced critique of these interpretations, in order to advance my particular argument. First, there is an arguable connection between these four motifs and works such as *L'invitée* and *Being and Nothingness*, both published in 1943 (yet begun earlier). Second, there is a reciprocal relationship between the ambiguous ethical theory they crafted during this period and the ambiguous ethics of their family project. This section's endgame is to establish that the couple based their intersubjective analyses and ethical considerations, at least to a significant extent, upon the shared project of erotic experimentation. Lastly, there is a prevailing tendency to focus upon Sartre's posthumous letters, and then to look at Beauvoir's to corroborate Sartre's agency and direction. To counter-balance this trend, my analysis is initially guided by Beauvoir's letters, and I occasionally draw upon Sartre's in order to reinforce the notion of a couple united in transparency.

"Directorial" love aims at a normative transformation of the beloved. It empowers the lovers to the extent that they understand their project as *superiors* guiding their subordinates' freedom. It requires the beloved's paradoxical surrender of autonomy, which amounts to his

or her consent to be radically guided. Similar to the way the ambitious actor agrees to be guided in the *auteur* director's vision, so too does directorial love require the beloved's assent, akin to the way a "star" is born.⁹³ Beauvoir and Sartre needed this basic consent in order to accomplish their direction, as well as to justify it according to their conception of ethics. The following section presents a critique of the ethics of this admittedly strange project, as well as the ethical theory that emerged out of it. I wish in this section, however, to present the normative implications of directorial love in the terms by which Sartre and Beauvoir understood it.

There is thus a presumption of superiority in their love. Sartre expressed his inherent superiority with respect to "others" whom "he despises" as early as 1926, whereas Beauvoir's stemmed from her precociousness, as well as her refusal to become a "secondary" being: her goal was to ensure that her amorous projects always entailed a superior and autonomous position. Beauvoir's letter to Sartre (October 7, 1939) preliminarily indicates this sense of superiority alongside the couple's ethical understanding of their project:

Je ne m'ennuie pas vous voyez... et je me remettrai à mon roman [*L'invitée*] sous peu. Je ne suis pas non plus sinistre ; quand je vois tous ces déchets, et toutes ces petites personnes *aimables et faibles* comme Védrine [Bienenfeld], Kos., *etc.*, ça me fait plaisir de penser comme *nous sommes solides* vous et moi. Je trouve que jusqu'ici c'est *un succès* pour notre *morale* et notre *manière de vivre*. (168, my emphasis)⁹⁴

⁹³ It is not surprising, then, that the couple's first "family" member, Olga Kosakiewicz, became an actress in Sartre's and others' plays. Her sister, Wanda, also starred in four of Sartre's plays, including *Huis clos*. Jacques-Laurent Bost stood as Beauvoir and Sartre's wingman at *Les Temps Modernes* until 1978, moreover. As Rowley notes: "on one of the rare occasions Olga Kosakiewicz consented to an interview, she commented that she, her sister Wanda, and Jacques-Laurent Bost were submerged by their two larger-than-life mentors. "We were all like snakes, mesmerized," she said. "We did what they wanted because no matter what, we were so thrilled by their attention, so privileged to have it" (61).

⁹⁴ Five days earlier, writing from his post at the dawn of the War, Sartre emphasized the tandem aspect of their project: « S'il y avait eu besoin de sentir à quel point nous sommes unis, cette guerre fantôme aurait eu du moins ceci de bon qu'elle l'aurait fait sentir... mon amour, vous n'êtes pas « une chose dans ma vie »--même pas la plus importante—puisque ma vie ne tient plus à moi, que je ne la

The excerpt gives insight into the bigger picture of their project. The “etc.” and the “toutes ces petites personnes” encompass the entire spectrum of their contingent lovers, and the association of their being *both* lovable *and* weak is striking. The contrasting manner in which Beauvoir nuances her and Sartre’s “solidity” is also remarkable: their essential strength comes from their shared endeavor [*notre morale et notre manière de vivre*].

In the passage above, the couple’s foundation seems to contrast absolutely with their contingent lovers’ weakness. This disparaging view of the “children” is only one tendency of the couple’s love for them, however. The other tendency is for a *solicitude* based upon concern for their subordinates’ existence. The following four excerpts are from Beauvoir to Sartre. I wish, first, to specify the strong degree of solicitude in the couple’s love for their “children.” The broader aim is to respond to the question: why did Beauvoir and Sartre *care for* their “contingent” loves *in the following ways*?

J’avais plus de tendresse qu’hier pour V. [Bienenfeld], elle était si emmerdée *et* si touchante, mais elle me fait étrangère à ma vie, complètement étrangère—*je l’engage de toutes mes forces de venir vivre à Paris, c’est minable son existence*. (132, my emphasis)

Ce matin je me suis levée à 7h et j’ai été au « Mahieu » [café]...A la sortie m’attendait Sorokine...l’air d’une toute petite fille *trop vite poussée*...elle avait les yeux pleins de larmes...elle avait eu des scènes horribles avec sa mère qui lui avait quasi cassé une brosse sur la tête—avec son père qui l’avait terrorisée de cris...elle ne voulait plus rester dans *sa* famille...*ils sont infâmes*...or elle fait à pied tous ses trajets dans Paris pour mettre de côté pour ses études de chimie—*je lui ai promis de payer ces études, 200 f. par trimestre*. (241, my emphasis)

J’en ai trouvé deux [apartments] très bien, *côte à côte*, dans la rue Vavin...l’un à 250 f. tout compris...l’autre à 300 tout compris, les chambres un peu plus minables mais grandes et à mon goût plus plaisantes ; c’est ça que je choisis pour moi, les Kos. [Olga and Wanda] verront, mais dans les grandes chambres *Wanda pourra peindre* ; d’autres l’ont fait il paraît. (164, my emphasis)

regrette même pas et que vous, vous êtes toujours *moi*. Vous êtes bien plus, c’est vous qui me permettez d’envisager n’importe quel avenir et n’importe quelle vie. On ne peut pas être plus unis que nous le sommes » (*LAC*, 329-330, emphasis in the original).

Kos. a payé 400 f. son inscription. Si je dois lui rembourser, je finirai juste le mois. Sinon et si je vis avec 50 f. le jour, avec 300 f. pour le voyage [de] Védrine il restera 400 f. Mais 5 f. par jour, c'est juste car quand je sors les Kos. c'est moi qui paie. Je touche en fin de trimestre les heures supplémentaires ; c'est bien car je paierai mes impôts avec. Voilà mon amour.
(242)

The attentive care for their lovers' wellbeing is remarkable for its gratuity as well as its coordination. For context's sake, Beauvoir and Sartre were living on a modest income, and both were presumably quite busy. In these and many other letters, however, *the crucial point* is to manage their disposable income in order to visit, to shelter, and to support their lovers.⁹⁵ The ostensible purpose was to care for their "children" in decisive terms, aiming to improve their lives in an existential sense: Bienenfeld's "existence is wretched," and so she needs to be brought back to the fold. Sorokine's parents are scoundrels, and so Sartre and Beauvoir must support her. The Kosakiewicz sisters need close guidance (and a room in which to paint) and therefore they need to be lodged *côte à côte* with Beauvoir. This degree of support—both material and "parental"—is uncanny. That both Beauvoir and Sartre were also having erotic relationships with these young adults is even stranger.

Yet it is not strange, given the couple's dominant tendencies. To tersely recapitulate, the first two sections offered guiding indications of Sartre and Beauvoir's intellectual development alongside their understanding of love, as well as its relationship to their conception of the ethics. To this extent, we have seen their portraits, first, prior to meeting one another, and then as a distinct couple united in a co-authored project. From early adulthood onward, they used love as a means to project their ethical self-understanding. Beauvoir's project passed through her audacity, and her goals were to avoid the concrete fate

⁹⁵ See for instance Beauvoir's letters to Sartre from: 12/02/39; 11/15/39; 11/07/39; 10/03/39, 10/01/39, and elsewhere. Sartre was equally preoccupied with transporting and sheltering their contingent lovers—see *LAC*, 236-7, 317 and elsewhere.

of a subordinate being, as well as to use “love” to access the mechanisms of intersubjectivity. Her project was chiefly empirical. Sartre’s project passed by contrast through his solicitude, and his goal was to recreate his beloved in terms that reflect his own ethical understanding. The purpose was to transform out of an undesirable state, *based upon* a radical choice. His project was chiefly conceptual. During the course of ten committed years, as well as two markedly devastating collapses, their projects fused. The result was that each shaped the other, and that which followed reflects this fusion. The couple embraced a « morale et manière de vivre » that combined their latent tendencies.

My analysis of the previous two motifs outlined the broader stakes of their directorial love and its particular manifestations of solicitude. Their conception was premised upon their sense of superiority *as well as* patterns of lasting material and existential support for their lovers. Beauvoir and Sartre stood in relation to their contingent lovers as parents to children, and my argument situates this relation as following from their ethical self-understanding. Both of their conceptions of love required subordinates, and when their tendencies combined, they audaciously engineered their own “family,” that is, their own network of subordinate lovers. Much more needs to be said about the overall worth of this endeavor, however, as well as what would motivate the couple to maintain it in such an intricate manner.

Beauvoir and Sartre did not adopt this project for disinterested reasons; rather, they received something in return. I wish to concentrate upon the way their project related to their intellectual development, turning to the importance of “cells” in their endeavor. Beauvoir and Sartre carefully orchestrated erotic hierarchies upon which they had the clearest view of their subordinates’ desires and frustrations. Tactical epistolary correspondence was the way they shared their findings with each other, as well as deceived their subordinates in unscrupulous

ways. Their contingent lovers typically had erotic relations with other lovers in the family, and Beauvoir and Sartre positioned themselves to manipulate these relations, both with respect to their own affairs with them, as well as the latter's affairs with each other.

The following four excerpts convey a sense of their cells, as well as what the couple received from them. My specific analysis immediately follows:

A 2h. ½ Sorokine s'est amenée, l'air boudeur, courroucé même. C'est que la veille elle avait chipé dans mon sac sans que je le voie mon petit carnet noir, et puis en bas de l'escalier elle s'était dégonflée et me l'avait rendu. Alors pour lui faire peur j'ai dit d'un air terrible : « Vous avez bien fait, je ne vous aurez pas revue de ma vie. » ...J'ai tâché de lui expliquer que je tenais bien à elle mais elle m'a dit avec désespoir : « Mais c'est tellement inégal ! *J'ai la cinquième place dans votre vie !* » et avec un sûr instinct elle m'a dit que vous, Bost (dont je ne lui ai quasi rien dit), Kosakiewicz, elle me les passerait encore, mais *qu'elle haïssait* mon amie rousse [Bienenfeld]. J'ai été aussi tendre que j'ai pu sans pourtant faire des promesses, et *elle a fini par se rasséréner*. (180, my emphasis)

Védrine [Bienenfeld] a eu la grâce charmante de m'envoyer la lettre que vous lui avez écrite sur nos rapports...et ça m'a touchée que vous lui parliez de moi comme ça ; et du coup ça a revêtu vos rapports avec elle-même et elle-même à mes yeux *d'une espèce d'authenticité* qui était perdue depuis longtemps ; d'ailleurs elle a joint ça à une lettre toute sage et banale que je vous envoie ; *somme toute*, mensonge et vérité se corrigent *admirablement*, nous avons fait *vous et moi du bon travail et il suffira d'un peu d'application* pour que cette petite personne puisse être heureuse sans trop gêner—*ne croyez-vous pas ?* (300 – 301, my emphasis)

[Bost] s'indigne de la conduite de Kos., qui lui ai écrit tout au long qu'elle l'avait haï comme la première année pendant cette longue semaine de silence, qu'elle avait voulu suspendre leurs rapports ; il trouvait ça vache et me demandait mon avis et je ne me suis pas retenue de le lui donner. Du coup il m'écrivait une lettre presque passionnée, en tout cas tendre et charmante. (288)

Je suis venue au [café] « Mahieu » où j'ai écrit pendant 2 h. ...Sorokine *travaillait sagement* dans un coin du « Mahieu » mais je l'ai juste saluée, *ce n'est pas son jour*. Je vais encore travailler un petit coup ; à 7 h. vient Kos et nous irons aux « Ursulines » voir *La Forêt pétrifiée* avec Bette Davis. (287, my emphasis)

The couple seemed to understand their project as “admirably” dispensing controlled doses of “truth and lies” in order to secure a *place of transparent privilege*. Their purpose was to establish hierarchical superiority over their “children's” wayward lives, as well as to monitor their motivations and choices. When Sorokine threatened to breach the couple's essential transparency, Beauvoir not only put her in her place, she also documented Sorokine's

emotive responses. In general, she and Sartre would go back and forth over the “contingent” situation’s meaning, as well as discuss the “best” course of action through further correspondences.⁹⁶ Similarly, Beauvoir’s response to Bost’s plight was purposefully duplicitous. Beauvoir knew that Olga Kosakiewicz was having various affairs (namely, with Sartre and herself), and she also knew that Bost did not know their full extent. Her response was to offer him “advice,” but also to receive sincere letters that she and Sartre would later scrutinize.

The fourth excerpt reflects another sense of the “cells” they created. The couple was famously known for keeping a tight schedule in which they would parcel individual appointments with the “family” members—each had their “day and time,” as many biographers have documented. The standard narrative attributes this tendency to how busy Sartre and Beauvoir were with their respective projects: they could thereby only afford so much time for each person. They were doubtless quite busy with their projects, but my further suggestion is that these individual appointments were used to divide, and then analyze their subordinates’ situations in existentially revealing terms. One purpose of these “appointments” was thus to generate an understanding of “concrete relations” with others.

The following three excerpts (from Beauvoir to Sartre) yield a sense of the interpersonal analyses that emerged during the period 1939 – 1941, the approximate time

⁹⁶ « Mon petit, je suis *absolument* convaincue par ce que vous me dites ; je ne vous reproche plus que d’avoir exécuté Védrine un peu trop à la grosse—mais c’est sans importance. D’autant elle est fort bien en train de reprendre du poil à la bête...C’est marrant, cette fille s’affole à mort sur des mots, s’enchante et se console de même. Construction, rupture, ça la jette dans des états d’extase ou de désespoir, comme les folles...Ce qui m’agace et me gêne, c’est *son entêtement à me confondre avec elle* ; elle me demande des confidences, si je vous aime encore, pourquoi je vous écris, etc. Je crains qu’elle ne veuille continuer à vous écrire, parce que je vous écris...*Conseillez-moi*. En tout cas ça ne la scandalise pas l’idée que j’aie vous voir et si je vais voir Bost, j’ai bien envie de dire que c’est avec vous que je vais. *Que pensez-vous ?* » (97, Vol. II, January 1940, Beauvoir’s emphasis upon « absolument »).

L'invitée was completed, as well as the time *Being and Nothingness* was being formulated.

These three passages show a *more refined version* of Beauvoir's tendency to use love, and related notions, to understand the mechanisms of intersubjectivity:

Dans l'ensemble, la guerre ne m'a pas encore changé l'âme. Mon roman m'intéresse toujours, et tout mon passé *demeure exactement valable*—même le passionnel, les jalousies touchant B. [Bienenfeld] ; je me suis interrogée dessus hier et je trouve que ça tient, même devant des perspectives tragiques, les rapports avec une conscience d'autrui—*et tout ce que ça comporte*. (113, my emphasis)

Ce que Védrine ne comprend pas, *je crois que je vous l'ai déjà écrit*, c'est qu'on doit tenir compte de l'autre personne même dans une expansion passionnée, on ne doit pas lui assener la passion comme une gifle ; ça doit rester un don qu'on fait pour qu'il soit reçu, une expression de sentiment, un don consenti... les Kos. au contraire refusent le don, c'est aussi un égoïsme peu plaisant ; Sorokine est tout juste comme il faut, et c'est un des trucs qui m'attachent chez elle. (271, my emphasis)

Ça faisait une atmosphère très forte [at a risqué party], d'une sexualité grossière et déchaînée... J'ai senti bien fort comment ça pouvait faire aux Kos. toutes ces bonnes femmes et ce genre de gens ; parce qu'elles se mettent quand même sur le plan féminin et sexuel... et cependant ce genre de féminité et sexualité les écœure... elles sont dedans en un sens tout en dominant intellectuellement et moralement—et leur mépris est agressif parce qu'en un sens elles sont en danger (pas en danger d'être touchées, mais de se compromettre à leurs propres yeux). C'est une impression que *je voudrais développer en détail avec vous*, mais il faudrait causer. *Je vais essayer de faire parler* Kos. là-dessus. (185, my emphasis)

Each letter reveals a synthetic form of analysis that combines intimate observations with the will to arrive at a deeper truth. They indicate a relationship between these observations and *L'invitée*, as well as the extent to which Beauvoir and Sartre *were thinking* in this manner *about these exact people*. The analysis of Bienenfeld's contextual emotive responses (especially vis-à-vis the Kosakiewicz sisters and Sorokine) conveys a sense of detached empirical observation with respect to Beauvoir's "subjects." The will to "make Kosakiewicz talk" in order "to develop" the phenomenon "in detail" is striking in its analytical aspect, as well as its detachment. Lastly, and in more general terms, the collaborative nature of the enterprise cannot be overlooked—Beauvoir and Sartre worked upon these types of analyses as transparent equals. The « *conseillez-moi* », and the « *voudrais développer... avec vous* »

stand as recurring signposts in their endeavor. Whether it was in their letters or in the fusion of their ethical tendencies, *transparency*—in the precise sense argued for in the previous section—stood at the heart of their relationship in the 1930s and 40s.

Because they were released seven years earlier than Beauvoir's letters, Sartre's posthumous letters got all of the press, as it were. That is to say that the first wave of scholarship regarding the couple's promiscuity, the "family," and their erotic manipulation was guided by his letters to Beauvoir and others. The biographical result was to read the couple's family project as his distinct endeavor (or, as a bizarre feature of his sexuality). In this optic, Sartre was the innovator or puppet-master, as it were, and Beauvoir was more of a bystander than an active participant. I have chosen to guide the motifs of the couple's project primarily through Beauvoir's letters, however, to show that her intellectual tendencies *were just as significant* as Sartre's in their will to engineer a family. Together, their erotic proclivities created a living, existential theatre in which they directed *and* observed. They stood as patriarch and matriarch, that is, the literal echoes of *Being and Nothingness's* love paradigm.⁹⁷

My deeper suggestion is that both Sartre and Beauvoir used the four motifs analyzed to inform their works. "Directorial" love, existential solicitude, "cells," and a form of intersubjective analysis were the guiding themes of their project. These motifs can be traced through their dominant tendencies as young adults, as well as their mature epistolary correspondence. At the end of this section, I indicate a formal connection between these four motifs and their impact upon *Being and Nothingness*, *L'invitée* and *No Exit*. I wish first to

⁹⁷ « *Je dois être celui dont la fonction est de faire exister les arbres et l'eau, les villes et les champs et les autres hommes pour les donner ensuite à l'autre que les dispose en monde, tout de même que la mère, dans les sociétés matronymiques, reçoit les titres et le nom, non pour les garder, mais pour les transmettre immédiatement à ses enfants.* » (409, my emphasis)

turn to two distinct scholarly assessments of the couple's lives during this period. The purpose is to arrive at a clearer picture of the ethical stakes of the family project.

Kate and Edward Fullbrook's analysis of the family project is astute in very many respects, yet it is unfortunately misleading in other respects. They rightfully argue for Beauvoir's importance in the endeavor, and they hint at a complicity between it and works of the 1940s (without, however, specifying the patterns that led from the "family" structure to the works themselves). They also argue, as we saw in the second section, that Beauvoir was the only true intellect of the two, thereby relegating Sartre to a minimal function in all of their intellectual projects. Their conclusions thus offer only a partial view of the couple's project.

In more specific terms, they misunderstand Sartre's conception of love and its contribution to the family project. The Fullbrooks explain Sartre's erotic drive in the following terms, arguably to poor effect, and as a result they misconstrue the impetus of Beauvoir and Sartre's desire to build their own family:

There is, in general, *little difficulty understanding the rudiments* of Sartre's promiscuity. It follows familiar patterns of male desires regarding the formations of harems of attendant women. When one adds to this Sartre's deep-seated attitudes toward his mother, which heightened his fear of being abandoned for a more potent, less ugly and more adult lover, Sartre's desire to protect himself from female desertion by acquiring a range of women becomes *all too understandable*. Beauvoir's sexual adventurism and her acceptance of Sartre's in the most open way, as well as Sartre's willingness to share his lovers with Beauvoir, *are all less typical* (if consistent with common generalized variants of modern bohemianism through the last two centuries). (57, my emphasis)

Their analysis of Sartre's erotic behavior is sophisticated in its form, yet it is simply implausible in its effect. First, they paint him as expressing a type of sultan complex: Sartre's desire to have "harems of attendant women" would make his desire akin to a fantasized sultan's. Second, they contend that Sartre was otherwise determined to acquire a "range of

women” because of his deep-seated “fear of female desertion,” purportedly stemming from childhood. These two claims are interesting, but their plausibility disintegrates when we consider their next remark (which reflects the crux of Sartre and Beauvoir’s relationship, moreover). Beauvoir *was* in fact sexually *adventurous*, and so were the majority of Sartre’s lovers (from Jollivet to his “contingent” loves). They thereby resemble neither harem members nor anchoring “motherly” figures. Sartre was furthermore not typically possessive with Beauvoir, or his other lovers. Therefore, both the ‘sultan’ argument and the “fear of desertion” argument prove specious as explanations of “the rudiments of Sartre’s promiscuity.” The Fullbrooks’ reading of Sartre’s erotic inclination is dismissive and simplistic, which is similar to their reading of his intellectual worth in general.

When the Fullbrooks discount Sartre’s formative role in the couple’s relationship, their conclusions suffer from an obsessive one-sidedness. They discount that which Sartre brought to the couple’s project—his directorial love, for instance. Their analysis of the “family” thus offers a blend of alternately insightful *and* errant interpretation regarding the intellectual worth of Beauvoir and Sartre’s contingent lovers. So, they correctly maintain that the couple justified their lifestyle “by working out a shared life in terms of authenticity which was to remain primary, no matter what number of lovers they acquired” (56). When they explain the purpose of having these lovers in particular, however, it goes increasingly astray. They claim, first, that “Sartre and Beauvoir’s ‘confessions’ robbed their contingent lovers of their sexual privacy, and thus, much of their potential power, which was very much to the point” (56). The claim is plausible as far as it goes, yet “the point” in question is crucial. The Fullbrooks argue that the point was to exercise “a highly ambiguous desire for joint sexual

imperialism,” and as a result, “many of the lovers were treated as semi-disposable, but, when possible, retained as valued friends” (56).

There are two misleading ambiguities, however, in the claim that “many of their lovers were treated as semi-disposable.” The contextually vague “many,” as well as the modifying adjective “semi-disposable,” imply a pattern of contemptuous disregard. Furthermore, claiming that “when possible, [they were] retained as valued friends” makes it seem as if it was *an afterthought* that Beauvoir and Sartre’s contingent lovers were esteemed beyond the desire for “joint sexual imperialism.” With respect to their “family” members during this period, however, there is exactly one person who was arguably treated as “semi-disposable,” and that person is Bianca Bienenfeld, the author of *Mémoires d’une jeune fille dérangée* (1993).⁹⁸ The Kosakiewicz sisters, Sorokine, and Bost were arguably treated as *irreplaceable* companions, and the concrete proof resides in the lasting bonds formed with them, as well as the decades of career and financial support extended to them. It is undoubtedly strange given the erotic component, but in this sense Sartre and Beauvoir truly seemed to care for them in the way that many parents care for their children.

When the Fullbrooks (and others) focus exclusively upon “sexual imperialism,” they thereby miss the broader meaning of Sartre and Beauvoir’s project. A certain kind of “imperialism” or superiority was undoubtedly a factor, but the sexual aspect only peels back one layer. That which more deeply motivated Beauvoir and Sartre’s project was the desire for *ethical* superiority, which was reflected by their “directorial” love as well as their need to observe and monitor their lovers. This type of motivation explains why the couple immersed

⁹⁸ The conclusion of Sartre and Beauvoir’s relationship with Bianca Bienenfeld is analyzed in more detail below.

themselves in their contingent lovers' lives to the extravagant extent that they did. It also explains the decades of support and guidance extended to the vast majority of *la famille*. To recall Sartre and Beauvoir's solicitude: in material terms, and although they were living on modest means, they paid for years of tuition, housing, and daily expenses. In existential terms, Sartre and Beauvoir were exceedingly busy, yet they fretted over their 'children's' paths in life, spending years attempting to direct their lives, that is, to "make something" of their "weak" lives.

To this effect, it must be admitted that the Kosakiewicz sisters became accomplished actresses (and lifelong companions), Bost became a founding member of *Les Temps Modernes* (and a lifelong companion), and Sorokine remained a valuable companion (and proofreader of Beauvoir's work) for decades. In decisive terms, then, the attribution of "sexual imperialism" by way of "semi-disposable" lovers does not adequately respond to Beauvoir and Sartre's project to engineer a family.

To move in a different explanatory direction, it is tempting to describe Beauvoir and Sartre's relationship to their "children" as essentially *pedagogical*. Commentators such as Melanie Hawthorne have used this strategy to analyze the deeper implications of the "family" structure's purpose. Her "Leçon de philo—Lesson in Love" (2000) focuses in particular upon Beauvoir's sapphic relations with her former students, namely Sorokine, Olga Kosakiewicz, and Bienenfeld.⁹⁹ Hawthorne argues that a close reading of Beauvoir's letters to Sartre, as well as her daily journals, reveals "the mobilization of desire through pedagogical encounters"

⁹⁹ "Beauvoir's relationships were not with just any women, but with younger women who subsequently became members of what the group called "the family." Sartre and Beauvoir were the parents and their protégé(e)s were implicitly their children" (77).

(64). Her purpose is to identify a “pattern of interaction, the erotic juxtaposition of tender conversation with the discipline of philosophy” (57).

Beauvoir’s entry of 2 December 1939, arguably summarizes a longstanding tendency with respect to her relationship with Bienenfeld: « Comme chaque fois, baisers, petite conversation tendre, baisers; puis on fait un peu de philo » (57). There are many letters from Beauvoir (to Sartre) that express this pattern with Sorokine as well, revealing “various paradigmatic substitutions,” for instance: “now Kant, now Descartes, first « étreintes » then « baisers »” (64).¹⁰⁰ Hawthorne’s broader ambition is to use these types of juxtaposition to show how Beauvoir’s posthumous materials fit into the larger context of “same-sex pedagogical writing,” focusing upon “the way difference is frequently eroticized (differences of generation, social status, or power, for example)” (65).¹⁰¹

Hawthorne’s argument is admittedly speculative, however, intending to “read the diaries and letters as constructing narratives that borrow from fictional genres” which themselves have not been well theorized, largely because of the taboo nature of same-sex, as well as intergenerational, erotic pedagogy (61). Her ambition is thus not to offer a definitive statement about what “might have influenced Beauvoir, shaping the way she perceived herself as both a pupil and a teacher,” but instead to outline the recurring motifs in Beauvoir’s relations with her former female pupils (71). Hawthorne concludes by emphasizing the importance of “discipline” in Beauvoir’s relations with her former students:

¹⁰⁰ For instance, Beauvoir writes: « On doit travailler mais on commence par des étreintes, et quand je veux travailler elle [Sorokine] me retient dans ses bras ; ... On finit, très tard, par prendre Kant, mais sans quitter le lit où on est étendues » (Hawthorne 64 ; *LAS*, 172)

¹⁰¹ In more specific terms, Hawthorne situates Beauvoir’s relations with her former female students, and then “family” members, as part of a poorly understood discourse concerning the “gynaeceum” and its “long and noble history in France,” especially as theorized by such critics as Elaine Marks (65).

In the instances I have alluded to in Beauvoir's [posthumous materials], discipline in its many forms causes different people to learn different things, and who is learning what becomes an important distinction. The students—Olga, Natasha, Bianca—may go off and write about Descartes, but *Beauvoir goes off and writes about them*. Beauvoir's summary of the typical encounter—"on fait un peu de philo"—captures the complicated relationship between pedagogy and desire now being theorized more explicitly. (78, my emphasis)

There is undeniably a pedagogical aspect to Beauvoir's erotic relationship with these particular individuals, which was closely connected to her having been their teacher (Jacques-Laurent Bost is a notable exception in this case, however). Hawthorne's conclusion about the importance of "discipline" is also important, because as we have seen, Beauvoir and Sartre engineered this project to direct their ersatz children's lives, arguably for the latter's "own good." It is clear that both Beauvoir and Sartre's functions as teachers shaped this desire to an extent, yet I wish to argue for a more fundamental motive upon which the teacher-pupil structure was parasitic.

Beauvoir and Sartre desired a total existential transformation in their younger lovers, aiming to be their decisive normative guides. Their sphere of influence extended to years of deep material support and 'parental' guidance, and hence they saw themselves as superiors who arrogated the right to direct their 'children's' lives. We have also seen preliminary indications of what Sartre and Beauvoir received in return, which has revealed patterns of deceit, unscrupulous manipulation, and in general, a deep-seated arrogance in their enterprise. All of these documented tendencies indicate, then, a relationship that exceeds conventional notions of pedagogical influence. The following section critiques the ethical ambitions of their works and their love-lives. I wish to conclude this section, however, with a formal indication of the way their relationship with their contingent lovers potentially informed the guiding themes of certain works.

Being and Nothingness outlines the structure of “Concrete Relations with Others” in “Being-for-others,” the third of its four chapters. It begins with a brief introduction, arguing for exactly two basic or “primary” attitudes that a for-itself can adopt with respect to its possibilities with “others.” The “first” attitude consists of “love, language, and masochism,” and the “second” attitude, “indifference, desire, hatred and sadism.” The attribution of “first” and “second” is arbitrary, though, because the two attitudes “form an inevitable circle” and are thus immune to dialectical resolution (339).

It is significant that *Being and Nothingness* introduces *both* attitudes through various considerations of love. Love as a two-person, ideal project is doomed to inherent “conflict” (e.g., sadomasochism, unavoidable power struggles, and so forth) and thus failure. We have seen some of the implications of the first attitude (in the first section of this chapter), when we saw love’s worth as the *lover’s* project to direct the beloved’s life. I now wish to turn to the second attitude in order to indicate some of the key ethical and political stakes of *Being and Nothingness*.

The second attitude deepens the hermeneutic circle of our being-for-others with an analysis of Kantian morality and “liberal politics,” which are construed in the same ontological terms used to describe “ideal love’s” conflicting intersubjective tendencies.¹⁰² All three ontic configurations are simply modifications, or shades, of the circular structure of being-for-others (384). In this attitude, the work attributes the failures of “ideal” love to its inability to maintain a coherent structure with regard to “respecting the other’s freedom.”

¹⁰² That is, “love” as a two-person project that would respect the freedom of each for-itself, which *Being and Nothingness* deflates most rigorously. “Love” as one person’s project is, however, possible on this account: « Cet idéal irréalisable [i.e., two freedoms actually loving each other without sadomasochistic conflict], en tant qu’il hante mon projet de moi même en présence d’autrui, *n’est pas assimilable à l’amour en tant que l’amour est une entreprise, c’est-à-dire un ensemble organique de projets vers mes possibilités propres* » (406).

This leads to a discussion of the “on principle inapprehensible” character of the Other’s freedom, where traditional accounts of transcendental freedom are analyzed. First, it is argued that Kant’s idea of “taking the Other’s freedom as an unconditioned end” still commits the for-itself to an appropriation of the other’s freedom, “by the mere fact that I make it my goal” (385). Second, the same optic is applied to “liberal” attempts at situating collective freedom, where we arrive at the “inevitable tension” between force *and* freedom that is “always implicated” in the circuit of being-for-others:

Ainsi suis-je conduit à ce paradoxe qui est l’écueil de *toute politique libérale* et que Rousseau a défini en un mot : *je dois* « contraindre » *l’autre à être libre*. Cette contrainte, pour ne pas s’exercer toujours, ni le plus fréquemment, sous forme de violence, *n’en règle pas moins les rapports des hommes* entre eux. (449, my emphasis)

It is simply unavoidable, on this analysis, that we force the Other to be free. Even “an ethics of *laissez-faire* and tolerance would not respect the Other’s freedom any better,” because to “realize tolerance with respect to the Other is to *cause* the Other to be *thrown forcefully* into a tolerant world” (385, my emphasis). There are two critical implications, then, in both “attitudes” with respect to our “being for others”: first, the impossibility of respecting the Other’s freedom *as such*. Second, there is the inevitability of the vicious circle we are thrown into with respect to our own freedom’s desires, and limitations, in a world necessarily inhabited—or haunted—by others’ “ungraspable” freedom.

The ethical and political types of being-for-others—liberal politics, Kantian morality, and tolerance—are patterned on the same rubric used to evaluate love’s possibilities. All forms of “being-for-others” mutually interpenetrate in the hermeneutic circle that is immune to dialectical resolution, moreover. But what, then, is left in this picture of inescapable tension and appropriative violence with respect to the self’s projects and the Other’s freedom? The ultimate answer is not surprising—freedom itself.

The final chapter of *Being and Nothingness* outlines a provocative, yet infamously ambiguous apparatus for resolving intersubjective tension. The resulting existential imperative has been summarized as: ‘one must choose and then take responsibility.’ That is, the “authentic” possibility of the for-itself’s coordination with the world and others, is to understand that one is free *at all times* to choose one’s projects and interpret any situation’s meaning (given the requisite understanding of one’s limitations or “facticity”). These same choices will inevitably conflict with others’ freedom, given time. In one way or another, then, the authentic for-itself must “force the other to be free,” that is, he or she must make and then affirm an existential choice that will necessarily extend to the sphere of others’ freedoms and projects. In this same struggle, those who choose to throw themselves upon their past, their emotions, or, simply stated, their immanent being, are contrastingly inauthentic. They ignore what they essentially *are*—namely, a freedom responsible for itself—and to this extent they live in “bad faith.”

My distinct speculation is that Sartre and Beauvoir engineered their strange family project in parallel function with the intersubjective apparatus of *Being and Nothingness*, published in 1943 but begun years earlier. In the same way that *Being and Nothingness* uses “love” to enter the hermeneutic circle of “concrete relations with others,” Sartre and Beauvoir drew upon their understanding of love to test their budding assumptions of freedom’s intersubjective limitations. To the extent that it concludes that “we must force the other to be free,” Sartre and Beauvoir similarly forced their ‘children’ to be free, in explicit conjunction with their own projects. To the degree that interpersonal relations entail conflictual forms of “love,” “language,” “masochism,” “indifference,” “desire,” and “sadism,”

the epistolary documentation of the couple's project offers revealing windows into the existential laboratory they created to test their ideas.

I have argued that Beauvoir and Sartre thought of themselves as ethically superior to their ersatz children, to the precise extent that they believed they could literally direct their lives in the most significant sense. It was from this stance that they assumed a position of authenticity in contradistinction to their inauthentic (but perfectible) lovers. They presumed to understand the nature of intersubjective reality at such a level that they could dispense with 'conventional' connotations of deception and manipulation, *provided that* they conceived of the project as 'for the greater good,' both for their own authentic projects, as well as a corrective to their children's wayward use of freedom. Their conceptions of love—both before they met, as well as when they joined together—were the primary motivations out of which they arrived at a most effective kind of "force": directorial love *and* the will to understand "how souls can act the one upon the other." It was through their conception of love that they constructed their own family, as well as explored the intersubjective constellation of significance in such works as *Being and Nothingness*. Each apparatus, I would argue, directly relates to the other.

Similarly, the structure of *L'invitée* echoes the couple's intellectual lives, and their uses of love. The plot revolves around a French couple's desire to experiment with their relationship by courting the younger, foreign-born and impetuous "Xavière" into an ambivalent love triangle. Guided by the themes of discovery (of self and other) as well as intersubjective conflict, the work is becoming increasingly read as a 400-page meditation

upon “being-for-others.”¹⁰³ Its Hegelian incipit—“each consciousness pursues the Other’s death”—can be seen working throughout the novel’s structure, informing not just the work’s fatal resolution, but more centrally, the dialectic of empowerment and subordination that “inviting” another person into a love relationship implies.

Scholars have argued that Beauvoir based the Xavière character upon Olga Kosakiewicz, the first “family” member, and it must be admitted that the work was uniquely dedicated to her (“*A Olga Kosakiewicz*”).¹⁰⁴ I wish to suggest that the dedication does not tell the whole story, however. Olga Kosakiewicz was undoubtedly a major inspiration for the work, yet I would add that her sister Wanda, Natasha Sorokine, Jacques-Laurent Bost and Bianca Bienenfeld were also “inspirational” for the work, especially considering that *L’invitée* was virtually completed by 1941. In other words, a close reading of *L’invitée* alongside Beauvoir and Sartre’s letters (especially with respect to their family project) would yield patterns showing elements of their relationship with all of these individuals. One could thereby establish a clearer idea of the work’s intersubjective analyses by tracing its guiding motifs alongside Beauvoir and Sartre’s epistolary correspondences, with this precise focus in mind. The four motifs analyzed above could be used to generate further inquiry in this direction.

I wish to conclude this section with another step of my argument proper, which concerns the impact of Beauvoir and Sartre’s conception of love upon their ethics and theory of intersubjectivity. This step will situate the transition *from* Beauvoir and Sartre’s family

¹⁰³ Commentators such as Hazel Barnes, Margaret Simons, and Fullbrook and Fullbrook make this claim, for instance. The notion that *L’invitée* stands as a statement of existential philosophy has found its way into contemporary philosophical encyclopedias. See the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, for instance, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/beauvoir/#SheCamStaFreVio>

¹⁰⁴ See for instance Serge Julienne-Caffié (2000), Hawthorne (2000), and Simons (1999).

project as they construed it *to* a critique of their project in more general terms, which is the next section's task.

We have seen epistolary correspondences that indicate a rapport between their analysis of their contingent lovers, on the one hand, and using these same people to project their conception of ethics, on the other. The following letter leaps ahead into the future, as it were. It reveals a pathetic glimpse into their family project's eventual *dissolution*. It also yields an important insight into Beauvoir and Sartre's conception of ethics. The purpose of examining the following two excerpts is to scaffold the family project's failure onto the broader architecture of the works of the late 1940s and beyond. On December 13 1945, Beauvoir writes to Sartre:

Je suis secouée à cause de Louise Védrine [Bienenfeld]. Je l'ai emmenée au « Golfe Juan » [restaurant]...on est restées causer là jusqu'à minuit. Elle m'a remuée et pétrie de *remords* parce qu'elle est dans *une terrible et profonde* crise de neurasthénie—et que *c'est notre faute*, je crois, c'est le contrecoup très détourné mais profond *de notre histoire* avec elle. Elle est la seule personne à qui nous ayons vraiment fait du mal, mais *nous lui en avons fait*. (258, my emphasis)

The language is incriminating at an ethical register. The implication is that their project has gone horribly wrong with respect to Bienenfeld, to the extent that her life has been damaged thereby. Their distinct history with her presumably resulted in serious harm, and they are to blame for it. By their own terms, then, they seem to have utterly failed with Bienenfeld, especially to the extent that they saw themselves as superiors directing their 'child's' wayward life. It is important to pursue in more detail the terms by which the couple understood the implications of Bienenfeld's breakdown:

Ce qui est très intéressant, c'est que sa crise a une multiplicité de significations : c'est le drame métaphysique de *L'Etre et le Néant* : la profonde conscience du néant, le mirage du pour-autrui, la fascination de l'objectif et la connaissance de la subjectivité et de sa gratuité—et puis c'est psychologiquement la réflexion de Védrine sur ce qu'on peut appeler son

caractère : son masochisme (*qu'elle a découvert avec horreur en lisant L'Être et le Néant*).
(258, my emphasis)

By September 1939 at the latest, they had been using young Bienenfeld's life for their projects.¹⁰⁵ Six years later, at the same time that they became one of the most influential intellectual couples of the 20th century, they saw a telling complicity between their works, their love lives, and their ethics. Beauvoir's way of situating their failure is remarkable both for its admission of guilt as well as the immediate segue to *Being and Nothingness's* "metaphysical drama," in which Bienenfeld apparently "discovered" her own pathology. Bienenfeld has recounted her own version of the experience in *Mémoires d'une jeune fille dérangée* (1993). Scholars such as Ingrid Galster (2001, 2007) and Gilbert Joseph (1993) have argued for the highly unethical character of Beauvoir and Sartre's designs with respect to Bienenfeld, whereas Bernard Henri-Lévy (2000) has offered arguments that purport to expiate the couple in this regard. At an objective psychological register, moreover, Jacques Lacan, Bienenfeld's analyst, described her ordeal as resulting from "a quasi-parental relationship, in which Bienenfeld's traumatized reaction was partly because they had broken the incest taboo by sleeping with her" (Rowley 157).

My approach with respect to Bianca Bienenfeld is to outline the ways in which the couple's failure with her was *indicative of* a broader ethical failure in their loves and works of this precise period. Their normative relationship with her, and other family members, was motivated by their conception of love. They used love as a means to "direct" their children's lives in their vision of authenticity, as well as to use them as data for their shared projects.

¹⁰⁵ « Dans l'ensemble, la guerre ne m'a pas encore changé l'âme. Mon roman m'intéresse toujours, et tout mon passé *demeure exactement valable*—même le passionnel, les jalousies touchant B. [Bienenfeld] ; je me suis interrogée dessus hier et je trouve que ça tient, même devant des perspectives tragiques, les rapports avec une conscience d'autrui—*et tout ce que ça comporte* » (*LAS*, 113, my emphasis, Sept. 15 1939).

The couple believed that their authentic vision of intersubjectivity (in its practice and theory) was sufficient to guide their own lives as well as others' lives—they “forced them to be free,” and they saw themselves as the freest of all. They failed with Bienenfeld according to their own terms, however, and my contention is that this failure represents a deeper fissure in the couple's projects.

The next section summarizes distinct critiques of the ethical framework in the couple's works of the early 1940s, which by all accounts was minimal. The works of the late 1940s, and 1950s represent, by contrast, *a serious and lasting* preoccupation with the embodied subject's ethical and political possibilities in the intersubjective arena. *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1946), *Notebook for an Ethics* (1947), *The Second Sex* (1949), *The Devil and the Good Lord* (1951), *Saint Genet* (1952), and their respective interventions in the Franco-Algerian War all represent distinct attempts to generate more grounded, and more philosophically respectable ethical and political paradigms. With the exception of the *Notebooks*, these works scaffold their central arguments around love, moreover. In the fourth chapter, I examine the more robust political and ethically responsible paradigms Beauvoir and Sartre respectively explored in the post War period. The following section argues that the reason for which their works proceeded in a more ethical direction *derived from* the failures within their own family project, which catalyzed an evolution in their conceptions of love.

2.4: The Ethics of Their Love: 1943 - 1945

The ethics of “existentialism” have been criticized for generations. Sartre intended (by way of an anticipatory footnote at the end of *Being and Nothingness*) to deliver a

systematic ethical framework shortly thereafter, but the work itself was never published.¹⁰⁶

The lack of a robust ethical apparatus has prompted critical responses ranging from serious *ad hoc* debate regarding the ethical value of existentialism, to treating it simply as a reflection of the ambivalent times. More crucially, and as the Fullbrooks helpfully summarize, philosophers have been highly suspicious of extracting an ethics from *Being and Nothingness*, based simply upon its own ontological assumptions:

This ontological position has, as Mary Warnock and others pointed out, dire and obvious consequences for the construction of an ethics. If one person's freedom is the other's obstacle, and if we are ontologically caught in this circle of conflict, then *it makes no sense to argue that one should make the freedom of others one's own goal.* (135, my emphasis)

The broader problem concerns how to extract an ethics from a thoroughly subjectivist framework, especially one in which “conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others” (*Being and Nothingness*, 340). The Fullbrooks correctly argue that the evaluative framework within *Being and Nothingness* (and *L'invitée*, I would add) “seems to make ethical values purely a matter of personal preference, thereby destroying the very notion of ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ and making any appeal to generalized value self-contradictory” (135 - 36). The existentialist imperative to “choose and take responsibility” can thereby wax prophetically hollow:

Peter Caws echoes the general disappointment of Sartre scholars when he notes that Sartre's attempt at a ‘moral generalization is a matter more of evangelistic rhetoric than philosophical reasoning.’ (Caws 1984, 120; in Fullbrook and Fullbrook, 136)

Kate and Edward Fullbrook draw upon these types of observations to identify an ethical lacuna in Sartre's works, arguing that close readings of Beauvoir's works of the late 1940s

¹⁰⁶ The closest approximation was Sartre's *Notebooks for an Ethics* (posthumously published, but written during 1945 - 47). Scholars have attempted to generate more cogent accounts of “authenticity” as well as politically important species of “being-for-others” from the materials therein, to mixed results. See Gavin Rae (2012) for a speculative account of the process of “conversion” in the Sartrian agent and its ramifications for authenticity and love.

would presumably supply existential philosophy with a more robust ethical framework.¹⁰⁷ I wish to part ways with their analysis, however, in order to advance my particular interpretation of the ethics, or lack thereof, of *Being and Nothingness* and *L'invitée*. My contention is that Beauvoir and Sartre's projects of the early 1940s—with respect to their works, their lives, and *la famille*—resulted in significant degrees of *remorse*, in ethical terms, and then *frustration* and impotence, in political terms. These negative reactions arguably catalyzed the radical shift *away from* arbitrary subjectivist positions *toward* increasingly robust ethical and political frameworks. My analysis documents instances of their remorse and political frustrations to chart their lives during this period.

Two of the best students of a remarkable generation found themselves working out highly ambiguous projects leading up to, and then during, the Occupation. To a large extent, they saw themselves as superior types, and I have argued that love was the principle means through which they expressed their sense of superiority. Their understanding of love was also a focal lens by which they *criticized themselves*, however. When I argue that love was a normative feature of their development, the implication is that it regulated their lives in this way too. We have seen a glimpse of the couple's remorse with respect to Bienenfeld's plight, as well as the remarkable manner in which Beauvoir contextualized its implications (as part of the "metaphysical drama" of *Being & Nothingness*, in which Bienenfeld "discovered" her own pathology). I wish to transpose the implications of this particular failure onto a broader register of the questionable ethics of the couple's actions during the period.

¹⁰⁷ Their argument is both provocative and well-supported, and in my opinion their chapters "Whose Ethics?" and "The Absence of Beauvoir" stand as landmark achievements in their generally impressive treatment of Beauvoir's intellectual impact during the 1940s.

Bienenfeld was supposed to be their *protégée* in the strongest sense of the term, deriving existential solidity and the wherewithal to build an authentic life under Beauvoir and Sartre's direction. The couple went out of their way to "recruit" their next "star," and numerous correspondences (some of which we saw above) describe how they saw her biological parents as obstacles to her becoming authentic. During the Occupation, Bienenfeld (who was Jewish, importantly) floundered, however, needing to find refuge yet receiving *very little* substantial help from her ersatz parents. Of all of their ersatz children, she was indeed treated as "semi-disposable," and Beauvoir and Sartre thus failed with her *on their own terms*. They gratuitously promised her a better life, but did not secure the means to achieve this. They used her life for their own projects and satisfaction, on the assumption that she would thereby flourish as well. Their family project yielded an existentially crippled life, however, at least in the last analysis (and in Lacan's analysis). By 1945 at the latest, the matriarch and patriarch had serious regrets about the ambiguity of their ethics.

The regrets associated with their « morale et manière de vivre » surfaced several years before, however, sending lasting ripples that only became salient when France itself returned to a modicum of political stability. October 8, 1939, Beauvoir writes to Sartre:

Je sais bien qu'on n'y pouvait rien, mais *nous sommes quand même de la génération qui aura laissé faire*—ça me semble bien correct *notre attitude* qui est de refuser de bouger, en politique, à condition de tout accepter aussi sans râler comme un cataclysme auquel on n'a pas pris part—*c'est correct et satisfaisant* quand on pense à soi, mais *des types jeunes*, qui n'ont pas eu le temps de lever un doigt, c'est tellement injuste. On ne pouvait rien faire, je n'ai pas de remords de n'avoir rien fait, mais *j'ai du remords* pour *notre impuissance*. (170, my emphasis)

The excerpt offers insight into the couple's political attitude at the outbreak of the Second World War. Their stance, which was apparently "correct" *for the two of them*, nonetheless opened the door to undesirable implications. A most serious consequence was that an entire

generation of “young people” might become politically deficient if they were to adopt this type of stance, which entailed refusing to take action while accepting the consequences without “bad faith” types of complaint. The subjectivist nature of their political attitude was arguably exposed on a meaningful level. It was “correct for them,” yet deeply troubling with respect to the question: what if everyone did this?

My particular suggestion is that the excerpt represents another aspect in which Sartre and Beauvoir justified their behavior on the grounds that they saw themselves as ethically superior. They realized that their stance was not “correct” for the entire “younger generation,” but the couple believed they themselves were tellingly exempt. The concrete echoes of this sense of superiority passed through their amorous projects, carefully orchestrated from approximately 1935 to 1945. Beauvoir and Sartre expressed their superiority in their project to direct at least *some* members of the “younger generation” in the guise of their *children*. The family project began in the arrogant vein that they could, in fact, direct others’ lives in this way. It ended in a candid admission of failure and remorse. In what follows, I outline the process in between these two periods. The purpose is to read the couple’s *descent* into ethical and political ambiguity alongside the “family” project and *its* increasingly ambiguous worth.

When Sartre returned from Stalag XII D in March 1941, several accounts stress that he was “morally indignant” with respect to the Occupation, and thereby actuated to resist on some meaningful level. Aronson, Hayman, Bair, and Henri-Lévy all respectively argue that Sartre’s experience of internment had left him with no tolerance for compromise. Let us assume, then, that this is an accurate representation of Sartre’s moral compass. The manner in which he (and Beauvoir) attempted to organize resistance is particularly telling, however: the initial as well as recurring political impulse was to assemble several meetings with *la*

famille over the course of three months, in which the fledgling attempt at organized resistance, “Socialisme et Liberté,” was formed (Bair 253 - 54). Sartre and Beauvoir no doubt assumed a sense of directorial purpose during these months, and by some accounts they took serious risks in this enterprise, doing more than typing out leaflets and lecturing each other from a makeshift podium.¹⁰⁸

By the summer of 1941, Beauvoir and Sartre undertook the famous “bicycle trip” to the unoccupied zone (which was illegal), in an attempt to merge with established resistance cells. Whether fairly or unfairly, they were rebuffed from entry into the cells they attempted to contact, for the reasons that they were perceived as either politically compromised or simply ineffectual. One of the reasons for their perceived ineffectiveness came from their eccentric *lifestyle*, moreover. Bair notes that key Resistance figures such as the “Etoile” cell (led by Alfred Péron), the writer Samuel Beckett, the painter Francis Picabia, “as well as others” saw Sartre as “someone whom no one took seriously, neither the *résistants* nor the Gestapo” (254). According to Péron’s widow, whom Bair interviewed, Alfred Péron believed “Sartre would be an unlikely candidate for espionage because he was such an undisciplined person, his behavior so *scandalously* public” (254, my emphasis). *La famille* was what Sartre and Beauvoir used to organize the first step of resistance, but in many important people’s eyes, the couple’s eccentric lifestyle deterred actual resisters from taking “Socialisme et Liberté” seriously.

The next few years of their life resulted in an increasingly ambiguous relationship with respect to finding *the means* to resist, on the one hand, and falling into step with the vast majority of *non-resistors*, on the other hand. Sartre published at least three pieces in the

¹⁰⁸ See Henri-Lévy, 289 – 293.

leading collaborationist journal *Comoedia*, while *also* developing *Being and Nothingness*, which had a significant effect upon key members of the Resistance. Sartre wrote and produced plays such as *The Flies* (which contained a message of revolt to those who had the ears to hear it) while concurrently producing them in the *Théâtre de la cité* (formerly the *Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt*, renamed to elide her “Jewishness”). According to Ingrid Galster, moreover, Sartre could not have ignored the fact that he was replacing an expelled Jew—Dreyfus-le-Foyer (one of only four *khâgne* philosophy professors in all of Paris)—at the *lycée Condorcet* (120).

In the same year, Beauvoir was sacked as a teacher for the allegation that she “corrupted” Nathalie Sorokine and because, more generally, her character as a pedagogue allegedly reflected “indecent morals,” which under the Vichy regime was sufficient to dismiss her without due process. Very soon thereafter, René Delange (one of the directors of *Comoedia*) took her under his wing, providing financial support throughout the Occupation’s duration (Bair 259 - 260). Beauvoir accepted the controversial job with *Radio Vichy*, and then published *L’invitée* during that same year, 1943. When she was not working as the *metteuse en ondes*, she found the time to write *Le Sang des autres*, a work that deservedly earned her many accolades. The novel uses a love story to scaffold the importance of resisting the Occupation, justifying organized violence against the German and Vichy regime. Its experimental literary techniques are both intriguing and forward looking, and Beauvoir’s novel carefully accentuates the material hardships and tough choices that “everyday” French women underwent during the Occupation. In this last sense it stands as an arguable precursor to *The Second Sex*.

At the end of the day, however, and despite their uncanny productivity in difficult times, both Beauvoir and Sartre were inextricably linked to a highly ambiguous ethical and political apparatus. Their existence essentially revolved around *both* resisting in occasional (but important) intellectual ways *and* mingling with the likes of René Delange, *Comoedia*, and *Radio Vichy*. The positive constant in their lives, however, was *la famille*. In this structure, Sartre and Beauvoir had a sense of affective, ethical, and even political purpose. To the extent that they could guide and shape their children (and receive affection and stimulation in return), they were neither arbitrary nor insignificant. Rather, they were *standards*.

During 1943 – 44, the Kosakiewicz sisters vaulted to theatrical acclaim, starring in not just Sartre’s but others’ plays, often to high praise. The parents must have been quite proud, making something authentic out of the “younger generation.” Bost would become a founding member of *Les temps modernes* approximately two years later, moreover. Hazel Rowley’s biographical research reveals a telling portrait of the children’s perspective of their parents’ value:

Years later, on one of the rare occasions Olga Kosakiewicz consented to an interview, she commented that she, her sister Wanda, and Jacques-Laurent Bost were submerged by their two larger-than-life mentors. “We were all like snakes, mesmerized,” she said. “We did what they wanted because no matter what, we were so thrilled by their attention, so privileged to have it” (61).

The family was thus a source of solidity, both in terms of directing others’ lives, as well as in the parents’ contrasting nature with the “weak” but perfectible children. The parents (generally speaking) stood up for their children in return, moreover. For instance, Sartre was taken to task by the famous actor and director Jean-Louis Barrault for unscrupulously “promoting his mistress (Olga Kosakiewicz)” in *The Flies*. Barrault would have been *The*

Flies' first director (he apparently adored the manuscript), yet he was severely disappointed with Sartre's "stipulation" that Olga play the role of "Elektra" (Rowley 135 - 36). To cut to the chase, Barrault and Sartre had a falling out, resulting in Charles Dullin directing *The Flies*. In a lengthy letter to Barrault, Sartre tellingly went out on a limb to protect his child:

Vous avez dit et répété, devant moi, par allusions, et devant d'autres gens clairement, qu'Olga était ma maîtresse et que je voulais la « pousser »...je n'aime guère, en général, parler de ma vie privée et mon silence a favorisé ce malentendu. Je tiens à vous dire, aujourd'hui, qu'Olga n'a jamais été ni ne sera jamais ma maîtresse ; c'est son talent seul que je voudrais servir. (in Galster (2001), 43, emphasis in the original)

The bonds created with the vast majority of the children extended to lasting career support. It is accurate to claim, on the one hand, that Beauvoir and Sartre "admirably" dispensed doses of "truth and lies" to manipulate their subordinates and to monitor their behavior; yet in crucial cases they were willing to lie on their behalf, even at the risk of their career, as Sartre did for Olga Kosakiewicz, for instance.

The family's worth was becoming increasingly ambivalent in its public aspect, however, which impacted all parties concerned. Even during the risqué times of the French Occupation, the manner in which Beauvoir and Sartre flouted their *ménage à sept*, as it were, redounded to their disrepute in the eyes of serious resisters in particular, and serious people in general. The accusations of cronyism, or nepotism, with respect to Olga and Wanda Kosakiewicz could no longer be ignored. Sartre and Beauvoir had the family structure they meticulously engineered over the course of ten years, yet both it and their public lives were shrouded in a steady descent toward ethical ambivalence and trivial political relevance. When the liberation of Paris occurred in August 1944, the couple had little political capital. They were in the vast and nebulous class of people who were neither documented *résistants* nor rampant collaborators. The family structure's value must have stood out even more

starkly as France itself was struggling to regain its integrity and identity. The matriarch and patriarch likely saw their project as increasingly difficult to justify at this precise historical moment.

Each was importantly a talented writer, however, attracting the attention of *résistants* who were writers themselves. It was largely thanks to Albert Camus and the friendship formed with him that they found traction. Camus had admired Sartre's writings for years, and he invited both Sartre and Beauvoir to contribute articles for *Combat* in August and September (in which Sartre and Beauvoir wrote the famous "we were never more free than during the Occupation..."). The couple was thereby able to attain a standard of political credibility, forging their identities in the post-War climate.¹⁰⁹ In the previous chapter, I argued for Camus's ethical and political transformation and the way it reflected the evolution of love's worth in his life and writings. I wish to indicate, in the remainder of this chapter, a similar transformation with respect to Beauvoir and Sartre.

The year 1945 marked a new beginning for the couple. Having established a modicum of political influence through Camus, as well as their own writings, they emerged as a most remarkable team. Riding the ever-increasing success of works like *Nausea*, *The Blood of Others*, and *Being and Nothingness*, they lectured extensively on the merits of *Being and Nothingness's* suitability for the post War climate, earning the names of "High Priest" and "High Priestess" of existentialism. They were criticized as much as revered, but for all that, their industriousness would soon catch the western world by storm. In October, they founded (along with Jacques-Laurent Bost) *Les temps modernes*, one of the most influential

¹⁰⁹ Charles Forsdick importantly notes: "Camus and Sartre's friendship had been overshadowed from the outset by politics, in which it is likely that Sartre initially considered Camus to be his superior" (123).

French journals of the 20th century. Sartre published several of his public lectures in the collection “Essays in Existentialism,” thereby cementing his reputation as an influential, and international philosopher. Beauvoir would soon become equally famous (or infamous) with the publication of *The Second Sex* later in the decade.

The year 1945 also marked a certain ending, however. Bianca Bienenfeld emerged from the ashes of a most disgraceful affair, certainly as a result of the War’s persecution of Jews, and very probably as a result of her treatment (between 1939 and 1941) in Beauvoir and Sartre’s existential workshop. The couple’s contract with their children promised direction and support, yet it seems as if they abandoned Bienenfeld when she needed them most.¹¹⁰ The “morale et manière de vivre” of the family project engendered patterns that young Bienenfeld’s system could not support, and to this extent they seemed to have truly harmed her life. My distinct speculation is that Beauvoir’s, and later Sartre’s face-to-face meetings with Bienenfeld (in December 1945 and January 1946) vividly confronted the couple with the arrogance and ethical arbitrariness of their enterprise: « Elle est la seule personne à qui nous ayons vraiment fait du mal, mais *nous lui en avons fait* » (*LAS*, 258, my emphasis).

The family structure would remain in place—the bonds were lasting—but the couple steadily broke away from the pattern of trying to “direct” others’ lives. The most important implication for my argument is that *in the absence* of directorial love, *new forms* of love took its place, arguably motivated by the couple’s regrets and frustrations during the past phase of their lives. These new forms of love were crucially attached to ethical and political impulses.

¹¹⁰ For an insightful picture of Bienenfeld’s brief reentry into Beauvoir and Sartre’s life in 1946, in addition to *Mémoires d’une jeune fille dérangée*, also see Seymour-Jones, 305-6, 374-6.

By way of anticipatory indication, there was a transfer from love as directorial superiority to love as solidarity and engagement. This shift passed through the rejection of the ethical arbitrariness of their amorous projects, in favor of new and more collectively responsible trajectories.

Conclusion: Redemption?

It has been famously said by Vladimir Jankélévitch, on his deathbed apparently, that “the entire philosophy of commitment was merely a kind of unhealthy compensation, a remorse, a quest for the danger they hadn’t wanted to run during the war” (Henri-Levy 269). Broad statements such as Jankélévitch’s are difficult to corroborate in absolute terms, and they have served to polarize Beauvoir and Sartre’s critics into starkly oppositional camps. In light of my analysis, however, the post-World War Two period represents Beauvoir and Sartre’s “remorse” for the dangerous and highly ambiguous ethical practices that they *did* undertake.

Directorial love proceeds from a presumption of superiority, and it reckons with the “inevitable” structure of “forcing the Other to be free,” which is supported in theory (*Being and Nothingness*) as well as practice (in the couple’s desire to be patriarch and matriarch). Sartre and Beauvoir saw themselves as ethically and politically superior to “others,” and for years they believed that their « morale et manière de vivre » were sufficient to navigate through life, both with respect to themselves, as well as with their “children.” Careful scrutiny of their lives, letters, and works during the period 1935 to 1945 in particular reveals that it is *almost certain* that the couple intentionally carried out ethically ambiguous, reckless, and potentially disastrous projects *in this same light*. I have argued that their nascent

intellectual tendencies, as well as years of committed exploration, meaningfully contributed to these patterns. More centrally, their conception of love was the guiding thread.

The following two chapters develop this project further, tracking their intellectual development in strict proportion with their understanding of love, beginning with Camus's understanding of love's political worth in the post War climate. There is a striking *formal* similarity between Albert Camus's turn away from one type of love toward another and Beauvoir and Sartre's respective turns. To recapitulate, Camus's conception of love changed from an ethically problematic quantitative and egocentric conception *to* a communitarian and ethically humanitarian conception of love. During this transformation, Camus was able to depart from the solitary climate of Don Juan and Sisyphus, leading him to embrace the question of *injustice within the collectivity*—both infra- and extra-national. His transformation began at approximately the same time he became a *de facto* resistant, and my argument tracked his evolution through the manner in which his writings used “love” in novel ethical and political contexts.

Sartre and Beauvoir's collective amorous projects resulted in admissions of regret and failure with respect to their ethics and politics. The next period of their lives arguably atoned for them. Love was the inspiration for, as well as medium of, their regrets and failures, and their new applications of love aimed to rectify their ambiguities. Each argued for increasingly “genuine” forms of engaged political love, which the fourth chapter specifies. I have argued that Beauvoir and Sartre's intellectual development commingled during decades of committed exploration and intense breakdown. The next phase of their lives reflects patterns of divorce, however. Simply stated, the erotic structures that bound them together dissolved (directorial love, for instance, as well as “recruiting” their lovers from the ranks of former

students). Each forged new paths of increasingly engaged politics, which stemmed from their theories of love forged after the Second World War.

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Chapter Three: The Politics of Love: Camus, Algeria

By August 1944, each of our three protagonists began to carve out his or her distinct agenda in postwar politics. This chapter and the subsequent, final chapter focus upon how their theories of love informed and guided their political craft leading up to the Franco-Algerian war (1954 – 1962). I analyze each thinker’s argument for the right means of achieving political unity, as well as his or her motivations guiding particular policies and interventions. My argument responds to such questions as: to what extent were their theories of love used as a means either to enrich or delimit their social and economic policies? In which particular debates did they engage, and how did their theories of love contribute thereto? These questions will guide my elucidation of the political strategies that Camus, Beauvoir and Sartre adopted in postwar France.

This historical period was particularly significant interpersonally as well as internationally. It represented the steady erosion of shared political commitments as well as strong bonds of friendship. Beauvoir, Camus, and Sartre were thick as thieves during, and then immediately following the Second World War. The trio’s intellectual confidence was boldly summarized when Beauvoir claimed they “were to provide the postwar era with its ideology,” which to a cautious extent they did.¹¹¹ Yet their trajectories led first to intellectual estrangement and, ultimately, to irreparable antagonism. Camus and Sartre waged a nasty feud over such important questions as the limits of political violence and democratic reform, the value of political realism, and finally the right solution to the “Franco-Algerian” question

¹¹¹ Ronald Aronson summarizes the enthusiasm, and perhaps arrogance, of Beauvoir, Camus, and Sartre’s political outlook as follows: “They agreed on so much, they knew their ideas to be sufficiently fresh and distinct, and they were so congenial with one another that together they could dream of becoming postwar France’s intellectual guides. Now that France could breathe, and more to the point, read freely, they would be at the center of things. As Beauvoir put it, ‘We were to provide the postwar era with its ideology.’ And so they did” (42).

during the 1950s, whose guiding motifs and political implications are documented below. Similarly, Beauvoir and Camus's initially shared commitments took a sharp turn for the worse, leading to her harsh criticisms of his politics in her autobiographies and interviews.¹¹²

With respect to the couple, Beauvoir and Sartre began to drift apart as lovers and transparent confidants, forming independent bonds with engaged artists and influential persons. Simone de Beauvoir forged a romantic relationship with the American writer Nelson Algren (who wrote, for instance, *The Man with the Golden Arm* and *Never Come Morning*) in the late 1940s, and then in the 1950s, with the writer, director, and decorated *résistant* Claude Lanzmann (who made *Shoah*, the landmark documentary of the Holocaust). Some of Beauvoir's most significant public political interventions were catalyzed in step with her lovers' politics, which established interventionist patterns in her life. Beauvoir acceded to more socially responsible and effective political tactics by drawing, at least initially, upon her new lovers' particular commitments and passions.

Jean-Paul Sartre had a significant affair with the Algerian Arlette Elkaïm, whom he later adopted as his legal and literary heir. Sartre's intellectual politics during the 1950s and beyond were informed by Beauvoir's steady movement away from him as her "necessary" love (and, reciprocally, by his measured movement away from her), as well as by his decisive political row with Camus in 1951. It is significant that in a 1975 interview with *Les temps modernes*, Sartre claimed Camus was "probably the last good friend [he] had." It is also important that by the late 1950s, Sartre and Beauvoir, formerly attached at the hip, had divergent views of the basic meaning of existential politics. Sartre's latent infatuation with

¹¹² See for instance *La Force des choses*, 279 - 80.

Communism in the 1960's was partly motivated, moreover, by his love affair with the Russian interpreter, literary critic, and K.G.B. agent Lena Zonina.¹¹³

Internationally, the world was being reshaped by the ambiguous reality of decolonization, the dawn of the Cold War, and especially by the belief in the teleological power of ideologies: communist, capitalist, religious, or otherwise. This chapter and the final chapter's broader purpose is to stage their theories of love and politics in various concrete political settings, including, but not limited to such issues as: decolonization; intellectual responses to Stalinist Russia and the United States' questionable roles in global politics; and, most centrally, the Algerian war of independence (1954 – 1962).

The previous two chapters argued that their respective theories of love had a profound complicity with their understanding and application of their ethics, that is, their normative principles and *post hoc* justifications as reflected by their textual and biographical records. This chapter and the fourth and final chapter apply a similar method with respect to their intellectual engagement with interventionist policy, with the dominant ideologies of the day, and with more enduring notions such as collective freedom and emancipation.

3.1: Camus's Political Legacy, Algeria, and the Anticipated Argument

The scholarly reception of Camus's politics reveals a hotly contested space. It ranges from more or less hagiographical accounts that portray his politics as the most sane and just in an era of rapacious political violence, at one extreme, to exemplifying the cultural and political domination of the Other, even to the point of "altericide," as one recent

¹¹³ See Rowley pp. 263 - 78, and Seymour-Jones, pp. 439 - 442. This period of Sartre's life exceeds the scope of the present project, but commentators have made interesting connections between Sartre's love affair with Zonina and his support of Communism in the 1960s.

commentator provocatively puts the point, at another extreme.¹¹⁴ Early scholars in the 1960s such as Germaine Brée and Roger Quilliot interpreted Camus's works in the former vein, although they were heavily criticized by postcolonial critics in such notable works as Conor Cruise O'Brien's *Albert Camus of Europe and Africa* (1970), Edward Saïd's "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors" (1989), followed by his now canonical *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

It is also noteworthy that Camus's reception in his native land of Algeria underwent a dramatic turn. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, seminal writers of the Algerian novel such as Mohammed Dib, Kateb Yacine, Mouloud Feraoun and Rachid Boudjedra were in direct literary dialogue with Camus's works,¹¹⁵ yet thereafter his value in the Algerian canon has been repudiated, as Alice Kaplan illustrates in her introduction to Camus's recently translated *Algerian Chronicles*.¹¹⁶ The postcolonial critiques have cast a long shadow over his oeuvre. One can see the effects by way of recent vigorous defenses of his politics in Eve Morisi's *Albert Camus, le souci des autres* (2013), David Carroll's *Albert Camus the Algerian* (2007), and Neil Foxlee's impressive "Mediterranean Humanism or Colonialism with a Human Face?" (2006), which offers an incisive overview of the roots of the postcolonial critiques.

When I draw upon critical assessments of Camus's political writings in the Anglophone and Francophone literature, my purpose is to promote two distinct readings. The

¹¹⁴ For an account of the allegedly "altericidal" or 'other-killing' implications of Camus's oeuvre, see Colin Davis's "Violence and ethics in Camus," (2007), 106 - 117.

¹¹⁵ In her "Portraits of women, visions of Algeria," (2007) Danielle Marx-Scouras analyzes the intriguing multicultural potential represented by the short-lived *Terrasses*. "Launched by [Camus's protégé Jean] Sénac in June 1953, the literary magazine *Terrasses* advocated a pluralistic Algeria that no longer distinguished between French and Arab and Berber writers. The sole issue ever to appear contained texts by such writers as Emmanuel Roblès, Jean Daniel, Mohammed Dib, Kateb Yacine, Mouloud Feraoun and Camus." (139).

¹¹⁶ Kaplan, Alice. "New Perspectives on Camus's *Algerian Chronicles*." In Albert Camus, *Algerian Chronicles*, Alice Kaplan (ed.), Cambridge: Harvard UP (2013), 1-18.

first reading is supplementary, responding to the question: “What significant but overlooked role does love play in Camus’s politics?” I thereby interpret the primary and secondary literature to argue that *considerations of love* (in Camus’s explicit thoughts about love, as well as key instances of “love” in his lexicon) *help us to better understand the basic motivations* of his politics, whether in his original texts or in recent scholarly assessments.

My second reading draws its inspiration from a controversial narrative offered by the Algerian writer Assia Djebar (1936 - 2015) in her *Le blanc de l’Algérie* or *Algerian White: A Narrative* (1995/2000). Djebar offers a provocative reading of the merits of Camus’s political agenda, focusing on one of the most aporetic moments in 20th-century Mediterranean history, namely Camus’s and others’ call for a civilian truce in January 1956, a key turning point of the French-Algerian War (1954 – 1962). Camus’s position was excoriated as either politically indecisive or simply wrong by many critics (including Beauvoir and Sartre), yet Djebar interprets the potential of the civilian truce as *the* hypothetical moment in which “there was a possible way out...Utopia? It is so easy to judge it that way after the fact” (108–109). Her narrative warrants a rereading of that moment as pivotal rather than utopian, urging us to imagine a solution that did not entail the massive violence and caustic political turmoil that continues to haunt Franco-Algerian, French, and Algerian relations to this day. Boldly comparing Camus’s political potential to Nelson Mandela’s in the 1990s, Djebar lingers on January 1956 as potentially saving in its overlooked possibilities.

My second reading returns to this same moment, then, in order to imagine things differently. I draw upon Camus’s theory and politics of love elaborated in the second through the sixth sections in order to reinterpret his Algerian politics. I attempt a modest outline of what his politics of love could have offered to the central debates, assuming his voice had

been heard better, or perhaps that other voices were not heard so loudly. My purpose in doing so is to explain Camus's motivations, and works, in a new critical light.

3.2: Situating Camus's Politics in Form and Content

"I was born into a family, the Left, in which I will die." (Camus, *Essais*, p. 1740)

There are several elements guiding Camus's political agenda from approximately 1943 until his untimely death in January 1960. My first task is to outline, briefly, the less controversial aspects of his political platform, and then to survey the literature to better understand the difficulties of reducing his (or anyone's) politics to simple formulations. The broader purpose, reflected in the subsequent four sections, is to show the extent to which considerations of love and the heart are helpful to understand the way his politics were shaped, as well as how these considerations help to critique contemporary accounts.

It is uncontroversial that a transparent concern for social justice and direct representation ("one man, one vote") informed Camus's political base in one sense. His syndicalist tendencies, including a moderate program for the redistribution of wealth alongside the cultivation of workers' creative capacity, reflect his politics in a socio-economic sense.¹¹⁷ At a broader purview, there was a strong extranational character to his theory, exemplified in prescient demands for international arbitration committees as early as 1944, as well as calls for political reform in Algeria, the former Indochina, Madagascar, Spain, the former Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Ranging from his fledgling criticisms of

¹¹⁷ Jeffrey Isaac helpfully glosses the socio-economic dimension of Camusian politics as follows: "Consistent with his anarcho-syndicalist leanings, Camus opposed concentrations of wealth and privilege and the bureaucratic work hierarchies characteristic of corporate enterprise. He thus supported currency reform, enterprise committees, and a redistribution of wealth. These reforms, which promised to empower ordinary citizens with bread and freedom, were seen by him as ways to alleviate much of the injustice of capitalism without producing the injustices of bureaucratic communism" (*Arendt, Camus, and Modern Rebellion*, 180).

Franco-Algerian policy in 1939 (which largely fell on deaf ears), to increasingly tactical interventions throughout the remainder of his life (including last-minute letters and desperate phone calls that effectively halted political executions), Camus kept his eye on many people presumably in need of political assistance.

His vision was guided by what the scholarship broadly refers to as “morals,” “nobility of sentiment,” or simply a “moral feeling,” by which is meant the normative criteria such as principles and binding limits, or in some cases the felt preferences and moral compass informing Camus’s decisions.¹¹⁸ The scholarly elaboration of his core political stance takes many forms, moreover, leading either to reductive critiques among his postcolonial detractors, or to a type of theoretical impasse among supporters and detractors more generally.

Many critics take a reductive stance on Camus’s politics when they claim that whatever pious sentiments he may have had, his principled decisions allegedly betray a Eurocentric, or simply French-colonial mindset that blocked him from reaching political wisdom.¹¹⁹ This type of critique argues that Albert Camus was ideally situated to deliver a radical leftist politics of the European encounter with the Other, yet at the same time fundamentally incapable of surpassing his “Frenchness,” to poor political effect. Perhaps the

¹¹⁸ Daniell Marx-Scouras notes that many commentators situate Camus’s politics of the Algerian war in the “moral sentimental” direction as well: “Comparing the political stances of Camus with those of his disciple, Jean Sénac, during the Algerian war, Hamid Nacer-Khodja claims—as many critics before him have done—that with respect to such concepts as justice and violence, Camus always places himself on a strictly moral, even sentimental level” (132).

¹¹⁹ For one of the most consistent and interesting versions of this type of argument, see C. C. O’Brien’s *Albert Camus of Europe and Africa* (1970). For more unapologetically reductive versions of this type of critique, see Pierre Nora’s *Les Français d’Algérie* (1961), or especially Henri Kréa’s scathing “Le Malentendu Algérien” (1961).

clearest formulation of this critique lies in Conor O'Brien's influential *Albert Camus of Europe and Africa* (1970):

Camus was *a creation of* French history, French culture, and French education, all the more intensely French because of the insecurity of the frontier. He liked to express himself in universal terms; that too was a French tradition. He could not divest himself of his Frenchness; he could not betray his mother; if France in Algeria was unjust, then it was justice that had to go, yielding place to irony. (104, my emphasis)

Many of Camus's supporters either resist in nuanced ways,¹²⁰ or simply deflate this reductive political critique (i.e., it was France that made him do it, as it were),¹²¹ yet their own essential formulations of the core of Camusian politics can lead to an impasse regarding its conceptual character. Simply stated, scholars have reduced the essence of his politics to a "moral feeling" (Carroll 2007), a "nobility of sentiment" (Bronner 1999) or a "progressive and well-meaning" attitude (Foxlee 2006). These ways of reading Camus's political trajectory have certain advantages to them, yet the claim that the ground of his politics is a moral feeling or sentiment can lead to conceptual ambiguity, or in some cases to skepticism. The following two pages illustrate aspects of this problem among some of Camus's staunchest supporters and detractors.

In his generally insightful *Albert Camus the Algerian* (2007), David Carroll preliminarily identifies the ground of Camus's politics, focusing on what many scholars take to be his moral principle par excellence: the opposition to state-sanctioned homicide. The

¹²⁰ See for example David Carroll's *Camus the Algerian* (2007), especially his chapter "Colonial Borders," 39 – 61, in which Carroll accepts the basic premises of, but draws sharply different conclusions than, critics like O'Brien, Nora, and Kréa.

¹²¹ For a comprehensive re-reading of the terms of the debate regarding Camus's ambiguous political relationship to both "Europe" and "Africa," see Neil Foxlee's impressive "Mediterranean Humanism or Colonialism with a Human Face? Contextualizing Albert Camus' 'The New Mediterranean Culture'," in *Mediterranean Historical Review*, (June 2006), 77-97. Foxlee's historical signposting is lapidary, serving to illustrate many of the salient decisions Camus and many other Algerian writers and policy makers faced in their own time, as well as the anachronistic and often arbitrary judgments thereof in the secondary literature formulated during or after the Algerian war of independence.

relevant criteria include the death penalty, the atom bomb, and political executions broadly construed, that which he called “organized murder” in lectures given during the 1940s and 1950s. Carroll thus considers the following robust candidate for the ground of the moral dimension to Camus’s politics:

Camus’ opposition to allegedly “legal” or “justifiable” murder in general could in fact be considered the founding principle of his perspective on politics in general—and thus the basis for his condemnation of the injustices and crimes against both sides during the Algerian War. It is above all a principle that indicates the limits that he repeatedly argued judicial systems, nations at war, and revolutionary political movements needed to respect, no matter how formally democratic and fair the legal system, how just the war being fought, or how legitimate the cause being pursued. (85)

Carroll initially seems to identify the political ground or principle associated with Camus’s reasons for choosing to intervene in the Algerian War in 1956, for instance, and in many other causes more generally. He diligently traces Camus’s “founding political perspective” back to a long tradition within the latter’s intellectual economy, identifying key works that support this reading, while responsibly nuancing moments that resist it.¹²² Yet in the last analysis, Carroll supplants the idea of any founding Camusian political principle(s) in favor of a curious “moral feeling”:

In fact, his rejection of capital punishment and political assassination predates World War II and is thus not just an important part of his attack on Nazism and Stalinist Russia in particular and revolution in general. It also informs his political perspective on how most effectively to resist colonial oppression in Algeria and radically change colonial society, even before the Algerian War began. . . . Camus’ stance is *not rooted in a political principle as such*; rather, it is an expression of what could be called a “moral feeling,” *an innate sense* of the limits of what human beings individually or collectively have the right to do to other human beings, whatever the legitimacy of the cause being pursued might be—or perhaps especially when a cause is in fact legitimate. (86, my emphasis)

¹²² Camus’s brief support of the “épuration” or purge in 1944 was glaringly at odds with the moral rejection of capital punishment and “organized” murder for which he campaigned throughout the majority of his life. For a thoughtful discussion of this moment of cognitive moral dissonance in Camus’s thought, see Carroll’s chapter “Justice or Death” (89-105), *Op.Cit.*

The claim that Camus's political stance is not rooted in any principle as such, but rather in an "innate sense" or "moral feeling" is attractive at one level, yet it is also worrisome in its implications. It is attractive because Camus was never a systematic political philosopher, and he privileged terms having strong emotive connotations. For example, we saw in chapter One that from 1943 onward, he consistently described the affective character of "revolt" with such notions as the "heart," "courage" and "love." As Martin Crowley observes in his analysis of Camusian political values, moreover, certain affective senses of "desire" and "man" [*l'homme*] stand out as dominant tropes in Camus's rhetoric.¹²³ Given such considerations, it is tempting to contextualize his politics in an affective or sentimental dimension. Hence Stephen Bronner, another sympathetic critic of Camus's politics, broadly states that "a nobility of sentiment informed his political writings" (*Camus: Portrait of a Moralist*, 145). Both Bronner's and Carroll's readings of Camusian politics yield interesting interpretations, yet situating the core of his politics in the moral "sentiment" or "feeling" dimension plays into the hands of a simple critique.

For one can admit that Camus had 'the best' of sentiments while concomitantly denying their political worth. Some of his harshest critics have conceded that he had good intentions, if one insists, but when it came to *being politically responsible*, he was inept. Hence Edward Saïd calls him "a moral man in an immoral situation," only to immediately make his central (and lasting) point, namely that "Camus was simply wrong" historically and politically for the alleged inability to think past his support of French colonialism in Africa

¹²³ In his article "Camus and Social Justice" (2007) Crowley reads the origin of Camus's political agenda in the latter's writings at *Combat*. He cites examples such as the following to situate the affective component at work in Camus's politics. "A properly moral politics will answer 'ce désir simple et ardent, ressenti par la majorité laborieuse du pays, de voir l'homme réuni à sa place' ('this simple, burning desire, felt by the country's working-class majority, to see man restored to his rightful place')" (97).

(*Culture and Imperialism*, 174, 175). Conor O'Brien employs a similar tactic, suggesting that the value of "Camus's message" lies in certain sentimental connotations. He thereby acknowledges that Camus "offered hope *without* reason to an entire generation," but then his segue cannily underscores the message's puerile ground: "and if I scrutinize this message now with the *wary* eyes of middle age, I am no less grateful for having received it in my youth" (*Albert Camus of Europe and Africa*, 34, my emphasis). O'Brien's rhetoric thereby acknowledges a certain sentimental worth to Camus's writings, yet the crucial point, as we saw above, is that Camus's politics were flawed. Saïd and O'Brien respectively concede that Camus was a "moral man in an immoral situation," even inspiring "hope without reason," but in the last analysis these sentiments are either irrelevant or highly ambiguous as critical political criteria.

Given certain problematic issues in situating the core of Camus's politics in its conceptual character and in its moral sentiments, Eve Morisi's impressive *Albert Camus, le souci des autres* (*Albert Camus, the Care for Others*, 2013) crucially offers new possibilities for nuancing the terms of the debate. Morisi's central thesis asks us to reconsider certain binaries (such as feeling/reason, care/justice and culture/nature) in order to traverse a nexus in which to rethink the relation between, and implications of these binaries. She sometimes refers to this Camusian nexus as "emotional intelligence," but more generally a principled "care or concern" (*le souci*) for others, by which she means politically marginalized others. In a brilliant display of cross-disciplinary breadth informed by her scholarship on Camus's opposition to sanctioned homicide (including, but not limited to the death penalty, political assassination and political realism), Morisi draws upon such diverse figures as Carol Gilligan, Martha Nussbaum, and Primo Levi in order to show how "*le souci des autres*" animating

Camus's politics operates at a fusion of emotive and conceptual registers. Her argument is simultaneously attentive to the sentiments informing Camus's activism and the intentional political targets to which they are attached. Morisi's work ultimately defines a multifaceted sense of "care" [*le souci*] as the base of his politics:

Ce souci des autres qui anime Camus prend des formes multiples : la critique (de dispositions légales, de configurations politiques, de pratiques et discours vecteurs d'iniquité et d'oppression) qui appelle au changement de manière pressante, l'intervention directe auprès d'autorités compétentes et de toutes les consciences, la représentation par la fiction d'une complexité historique (telle celle de la tension et de l'intimité qui peuvent déchirer et souder les peuples cohabitant sur une même terre), la restitution d'une visibilité à ceux que l'on ignore ou qui s'effacent d'eux-mêmes. (145)

One important component of Morisi's argument, then, is to show the way in which specific senses of "care for others" re-explores the relationship between Camus's particular moral feelings and their political targets. Another component of her work recontextualizes his thought by questioning the often simplistic, but politically controversial, tags such as "humanistic," "heroic," "virile," and "colonialist," for instance, in order to privilege a taxonomy of Camus's affective drives alongside their relationship with marginalized persons and communities:

« L'intelligence émotionnelle » et le souci des autres que ce volume tente de mettre en exergue ne se veulent ni héroïques, ni humanitaristes, en somme. Ils émanent plutôt d'une détermination à la fois modeste et résolue qui consiste à faire ce que l'on peut pour ne pas tourner le dos aux autres, et, plus particulièrement, à ceux que l'Histoire et la politique placent dans le rôle de communautés peu audibles, peu visibles, ou peu estimées... Loin de tout simplisme, mais aussi marqué du sceau d'une fidélité active entre ceux qui se taisent ou que l'on fait taire, le souci des autres qui innerve l'œuvre de Camus se trouve bien à la jonction des deux versants du terme... Il est, d'une part, inquiétude, anxiété, trouble, et, de l'autre, attention, sollicitude, soin. (34-5)

Eve Morisi's pioneer approach controversially, yet rightly I believe, places a premium on the very notion of "care" or "concern" and its relationship to political justice in Camus's oeuvre. Her work is cutting edge in terms of grounding the basic motivations of his politics,

moreover, because it offers new criteria and methodological insight for helping us to listen, again, to one of the most influential, and most decried voices of 20th-century politics.

In subsequent sections I draw upon Morisi's insight in a very general way. Her work focuses upon a multifaceted sense of "care" as a fundamental formal element or category through which Camus organized his politics, and I wish to formally indicate another fundamental form. I will indicate Camusian love as both a conceptual and affective ground of his politics, which reveals an overlooked but for all that guiding thread of his political trajectory. My argument focuses on key notions like the "heart" and "true love" indicated in chapter Three, where we surveyed the terms primarily in their ethical specificity. The following three sections develop the further political importance of the heart and love in Camus's interventions in matters of state, criticisms of public policy, and especially in their relationship to Camusian revolt. *Both the heart and true love inform the affective as well as formal dimensions to Camus's mature political platform, and this insight has been ignored by the literature.*¹²⁴ Eve Morisi's work shows that the manner in which he cared mattered politically and ethically. He also theorized love in novel and deliberate senses, and my aim is to show how the way he loved was important politically. The following section marks a transition from the ethical importance of Camus's theory of love to its broader political significance.

¹²⁴ There is only one direct consideration of "love" as such in Morisi's analysis, which entails a rejection of the importance of "l'amour du prochain dans la tradition chrétienne" ("the love of one's neighbor in the Christian tradition") as an element of Camusian politics (27). I agree that the Christian love of one's neighbor *per se* is not a guiding element in his politics, yet I wish to offer a particular contribution that her work (and others') neglects to consider.

3.3: Rereading the Heart and Love Politically

Chapter One argued that one can trace key changes in Camus's ethical paradigm by tracking his notions of "the heart" and "genuine love" as they appear in such works as the first two *Letters to a German Friend* (1943) and then in his tenure at *Combat* (1943 – 1946). Many commentators point out that during this period his ethics turned away from the solitary plight of the individual wherein only *quantitative* values matter (approximately 1935 – 1942), toward a concern for solidarity within the collective wherein qualitative distinctions mattered. To better appreciate this change, I argued that his first ethical system was most faithfully grounded in the Don Juan archetype, and not Sisyphus, for example. I then argued that the novel way in which he theorized love (from 1943 onward) is useful for explaining the shift in his ethical framework that certain commentators mention but do not attempt to explain.

When we analyzed notions like the "heart" and "true love", the goal was to show their relationship to normative notions such as conscience, as well as the moral duty to safeguard justice amidst oppression. We began with an analysis of the premium Camus placed upon a "superior" kind of love in the *Letters*, in juxtaposition to the "political realism" and the "wrong" type of love inherent in fascism. Strange though it may initially seem, the second *Letter's* thesis argued that loving in the right way leads to victory over Nazi Germany:

Ce pays vaut que je l'aime *du difficile et exigeant amour* qui est le mien. Et je crois qu'il vaut bien maintenant qu'on lutte pour lui puisqu'il est digne d'un *amour supérieur*. Et je dis qu'au contraire votre nation n'a eu de ses fils *que l'amour qu'elle méritait*, et qui était aveugle. On n'est pas justifié *par n'importe quel amour*. C'est *cela* qui vous perd. (20, my emphasis)

During the Occupation in 1943, the superior love in question was connected to a more or less uncritical type of patriotism. By the liberation of August 25 1944, however, Camus's writings at *Combat* amplified the character and scope of the "heart" and "superior" love, while also indicating their relationship to "the revolt" and a curious "new language that will

make the country listen.” His September 8 piece (“Le journalisme critique”) drew heavily upon his amorous language to reinvent the national character at the dawn of a free France:

A vouloir reprendre les clichés et les phrases patriotiques d’une époque où l’on est arrivé à irriter les Français avec le mot même de patrie, on n’apporte rien à la définition cherchée. Mais on lui retire beaucoup. A des temps nouveaux, il faut sinon des mots nouveaux, du moins des dispositions nouvelles de mots. Ces arrangements, *il n’y a que le cœur pour les dicter, et le respect que donne le véritable amour. C’est à ce prix seulement que nous contribuerons, pour notre faible part, à donner au pays le langage qui le fera écouter.* (182, my emphasis)

At this precise point Camus began to see the political worth in the heart and true love, exemplified in unheralded aspects of his works during the final sixteen years of his life. His September 19 editorial introduced his public to “la révolte,” his political theme par excellence, as well as its relationship to the heart: « la révolte c’est d’abord le cœur », which yields « la théorie originale » of the political revolution he expected to come in postwar France (*Camus à Combat*, 198–199). Subsequent editorials lent increasing weight upon his new language. On October 12, for instance, he contended that the right political order ought to pass through considerations of the heart and love:

Car l’ordre est aussi une notion obscure. Il en est de plusieurs sortes... Il y a encore *cet ordre supérieur des cœurs et des consciences* qui s’appelle l’amour et cet ordre sanglant où l’homme se nie lui-même et qui prend ses pouvoirs dans la haine. Nous voudrions bien dans tout cela *distinguer* le bon ordre. (248, my emphasis)

The right order was a question of a certain moral discipline drawing upon the individual’s heart or innermost standard of integrity, which intriguingly anticipated Erich Fromm’s definition of “genuine” love in his seminal *The Art of Loving* (1956): union under the condition of preserving individual integrity.¹²⁵ Camus made a productive distinction,

¹²⁵ His piece from September 17 1944, echoing his thesis of the *Letters to a German Friend*, critiques the ideology of the German *Reich* while importantly anticipating Fromm’s definition of love as “union under the condition of preserving one’s integrity”: « C’est qu’en vérité, ce peuple suit sa vocation profonde, celle d’un pays qui n’a pas voulu penser et qui pendant des années n’a pas eu d’autre souci que d’éviter les charges de la pensée. L’unité qui a commencé avec Bismarck n’était pas

furthermore, between the individual's "heart" and the collective's, using the latter notion to anchor a basic sense of social justice, as his October 25 piece suggests:

[C]'est le langage d'une génération d'hommes élevés dans le spectacle de l'injustice, étrangère à Dieu, *amoureuse de l'homme* et résolue à le servir contre un destin si souvent déraisonnable. C'est le langage *de cœurs décidés* à prendre en charge tous leurs devoirs, à vivre avec la tragédie de leur siècle et à servir la grandeur de l'homme au milieu d'un *monde de sottises et de crimes*. (289-90, emphasis mine).

The first step to political organization involved a collective of "resolute hearts" in service of a dutiful, communitarian love. Camus's message is moralizing in its contrast with "a world of stupidity and crime" amidst a "generation raised in injustice," but for all that the *civic appeal* is clear. He urged his readers to "take charge of all of their duties" by reflecting on their heart or innermost convictions, while drawing upon their love for humanity to guide their actions in a torn world. I argued that the ethical character of this type of love came from Camus's role in the French resistance, and that it entails loving justly, which essentially means loving humanely or conscientiously. The heart perceives injustice with a primal negation (an originary "No!"), and then it combats the injustice in question with a "superior ordering of hearts and minds," or a collective of conscientious people who propel the heart's momentum into concrete tactics of civil resistance.

Camus's ethical blueprint of rebellion consists in attacking the unjust order in question through the organization of "relative revolutions" within a collective. The collective maintains solidarity through ever-renewing struggles and goals, as opposed to justifying the revolution with a unifying teleology. The further claim is that the sacrifices entailed (by the will to ensure the revolt's original *raison d'être*) reveal something about the human condition. Both humanity's progress toward an individual truth and its slim chances of moral progress

la fusion harmonieuse et féconde d'individus différents » (195, my emphasis). We will return to the important connection in Camus between unity and genuine love in *The Rebel*, below.

paradoxically stem from the heart's resolution: its movement is transformed into a will to a truth that justifies an action. The acts in question are discursive and non-violent in nature, typically drawing upon the free press, debates, and public lectures meant to galvanize a larger base to collectively resist the threat in democratic forums. Whether in terms of opposing capital punishment, relying too heavily on either the United States or the U.S.S.R., or in neglecting obligations to people in Indochina, Madagascar, France or Algeria, Camus used his language of hearts and superior love to non-violently resist perceived oppression.

The idea of a “love for humanity” is both vague and problematic, however, and I believe that it took Camus at least until the completion of *The Rebel* to grasp its political capital. One could think that this type of love is universal, yet as early as 1944 he made certain restrictions about its scope. In his public feud with François Mauriac and *Le Figaro*, we saw that Camus argued for a politics of *exclusion* among known traitors and criminals, for the reason that they had poor hearts, that is, they were simply unjust *qua* traitor or criminal.¹²⁶ At a broader purview, he dismissed the ideology of the dominant Socialist party because it allegedly *profaned* “the love of humanity,” which could make it even worse than “tyranny.”¹²⁷

The shift from 1944 to 1945 brought political optimism, and Camus began to theorize love and the heart outside of the hexagon. He was one of the first to align his base with the demand for international arbitration committees, and he was one of the few voices

¹²⁶ « En tant qu'homme, j'admiraient peut-être M. Mauriac de savoir aimer des traîtres, mais en tant que citoyen, je le déplore, parce que cet amour nous amènera justement une nation de traîtres et de médiocres et une société dont nous ne voulons plus » (441).

¹²⁷ « Il y a une certaine forme de cette doctrine que nous détestons plus encore que les politiques de tyrannie. C'est celle qui se repose dans l'optimisme, qui s'autorise de l'amour de l'humanité pour se dispenser de servir les hommes, du progrès inévitable pour esquiver les questions de salaires, et de la paix universelle pour éviter les sacrifices nécessaires » (351).

denouncing colonial injustice in Madagascar, the former Indochina, and Algeria. Nearly a decade before the French Left took an interventionist stance upon Franco-Algerian relations, Camus was using his language of the heart to expose injustice while establishing a politics of loving respect for the “millions of people” in Algeria who needed to be at once “understood” and “reassured” prior to being “judged.”¹²⁸ The way in which Camus framed this particular editorial in his 1945 series “Crise en Algérie” is significant: one of the main political tasks was to combat the *amertume* or “bitterness” felt by native Algerians as a result of France’s unjust double standards. In the following case, it was a matter of ensuring grain supply for its French citizens while possibly starving millions of Arabs and Berbers. Camus’s sleuthing revealed matters to be even worse than one might have thought:

Enfin, et c’est le point le plus douloureux, dans toute l’Algérie la ration attribuée à l’indigène est inférieure à celle qui est consentie à l’Européen. Elle est dans le principe, puisque le Français a droit à 300 grammes par jour et l’Arabe à 250 grammes. Elle l’est encore plus dans les faits, puisque, *nous l’avons dit*, l’Arabe touche 100 à 150 grammes... Cette inégalité de traitement *s’ajoute à quelques autres* pour créer une malaise politique... Mais à l’intérieur du problème économique qui m’intéresse ici, elle *envenime* encore une situation déjà assez grave par elle-même, et elle *ajoute* aux souffrances des indigènes une amertume *qu’il était possible d’éviter*. Calmer la plus cruelle des faims *et guérir ces cœurs exaspérés*, voilà *la tâche* qui *s’impose à nous* aujourd’hui. (*Camus à Combat*, 509-10, my emphasis)

The injustice in question and the means to remedy it are both empirical *and* formal. There is a big problem when millions of peoples’ food ration is half of what it should be, yet the argument calls for more than material repair and attention to the letter of the law. On the empirical side of the issue, then, the problem for indigenous Algerians derived from the practical consequences of unjust food policies, which presumably could have been corrected (or at least more seriously addressed) in 1945. In addition to attacking the problem’s content,

¹²⁸ « Calmer la plus cruelle de faims *et guérir ces cœurs exaspérés*, voilà la tâche qui s’impose à nous aujourd’hui. Des centaines de bateaux de céréales et deux ou trois mesures d’égalité rigoureuse, c’est ce que nous demandent immédiatement des millions d’hommes dont on comprendra peut-être maintenant qu’il faut essayer de comprendre avant de les juger » (510, my emphasis) [May 16, 1945].

Camus outlined a formal concern for affective consequences such as “bitterness” and “venom” at the problem’s “interior.” In this vein the French venom infiltrating “exasperated Algerian hearts” is significant. It matters in *this sense* that the French were acting poorly, that is, their actions showed poor heart and a deficient love for humanity, leading to a type of harm formally distinct from hunger. This aspect of the problem concerns betrayal, disrespect and rancor, which Camus situated at the problem’s core. He of course underlined the duty to combat the empirical content of the injustice (i.e., grain supply), but he also importantly suggested that the form of both *the injury* and *the redress* matters, with respect to the hearts of native Algerians as well as the political base he was mobilizing. When he insisted upon such formal considerations, I argue he was drawing upon the political respect that only “true love” confers.¹²⁹

The appeal on behalf of indigenous Algerians significantly resembles his editorial during the Week of Remembrance six months earlier, pitched to a primarily French audience having lost loved ones in the war. Here too the strategy is to remedy the hearts broken by the war’s implications, insisting upon the importance of a superior type of love over and beyond the nominal recompense issued to the relatives of casualties:

Mais que personne ne se croie quitte et que l’argent donné ne fasse pas les consciences tranquilles, *il est des dettes inépuisables*. Ceux et celles qui sont là-bas, cette immense *foule mystérieuse et fraternelle*, nous lui donnons le visage de ceux que nous connaissions et qui nous ont été arrachés. Mais nous savons bien, alors, que nous les avons *pas assez aimés, et pas même leur patrie*, puisqu’ils sont aujourd’hui là où ils sont. Que du moins cette semaine, que « notre » semaine, ne nous fasse pas oublier « leurs » années. Qu’elle nous *enseigne de*

¹²⁹ When I claim that the form matters, or that Camus’s concern is “formal,” I mean that it concerns the agent’s disposition, or that it concerns the possible ways to articulate his or her dispositions. We often make formal distinctions with regard to a sincere versus an insincere apology, for example. So, one can say “I’m sorry” as cant or lip-service. One can also say “I’m sorry” as a lie, moreover. Lastly, one can apologize with sincerity. In each case, no one doubts that the form of the apology matters, even when it is difficult to judge the form in question. My aim is to show that the Camusian heart and love operate as formal outlets of his politics.

ne pas aimer d'un amour médiocre, qu'elle nous donne la mémoire et l'imagination qui seules peuvent nous rendre dignes d'eux. (404-5)

The passage repeats the thesis of *Letters to a German Friend* with an important difference.

The *Letters* surprisingly argued that loving in the right way leads to victory over Nazi Germany, whose members allegedly loved in unworthy fashion and so reaped what they had sown. Here, however, France's healing process and future were the central issue, and Camus indicated an intangible but indispensable element of his political platform. The idea is that France must pay not merely the nominal monetary compensation to the families of casualties, it must also attempt to repay its *amorous* debt to all those who were lost. He thus exhorted his readers to show exemplary (and so not "mediocre") love to "an immense, mysterious and fraternal crowd," that is, an intangible number of people who suffered, almost all of whom he and his readers do not know, and presumably never will.

Whether in his editorials from "Crise en Algérie" in May 1945 or in the Week of Remembrance in December 1944, it was pivotal to love in the right way and heal the hearts of those who suffered, be they indigenous Algerian or French nationals. My argument is that Camusian love matters in its *formal dimension*, that is, that this "mysterious fraternal crowd," "true love" and these "broken hearts" to which he appealed contributed to his political theory throughout his life, including the Algerian war of independence. Camusian love matters because it represents an overlooked but for all that an essential condition of his politics (and so not simply a condition of the ethical duty to act with integrity, and to rebuff oppression, for example).

Political love was a criterion of his appeal for political *unity*, which is relevantly similar to Erich Fromm's definition of genuine love: union under the condition of preserving integrity. Camus was theorizing *love* as a means of *unifying disparate people under the*

condition of maintaining a basic sense of justice and moral integrity, whose potential was not realized until his political treatise *L'homme révolté* or *The Rebel* (1951). His politics of unification through love represents one of the most original, and perhaps most tragic, attempts at postwar reconciliation. The implications led not only to Camus's intellectual divorce with Beauvoir and Sartre, but also to his self-effacement from public politics when he was one of the most influential voices of the day (and the winner of the 1957 Nobel Prize). The secondary literature has neglected to contextualize love's importance in his politics, however, to the detriment of both expository clarity and the motivations behind his practical policies. In light of all of these considerations, the elaboration of Camus's politics of unifying love merits closer attention.

3.4: *The Rebel's Critique of Modern Revolutions*

Révolte. 1^{er} chap. sur la peine de mort *Id. fin.* Ainsi, parti de l'absurde, il n'est pas possible de vivre la révolte sans aboutir en quelque point que ce soit à une expérience de l'amour qui reste à définir. (Camus, *Carnets II* (1946), 177)

Camus claimed that of all of his works, *The Rebel* represents at once the most personal and the most divisive.¹³⁰ It is also significant that in a 1957 speech he envisioned a further "layer" of his *oeuvre* devoted to "the theme of love," although his premature death in 1960 leaves open the question of what it might have entailed.¹³¹ I have so far offered only a minimal indication of love's importance in Camus's 350-page political treatise, which he

¹³⁰ « C'est un livre qui a fait beaucoup de bruit mais qui m'a valu plus d'ennemis que d'amis (du moins les premiers ont crié plus fort que les derniers). (...) Parmi mes livres, c'est celui auquel je tiens le plus. » In <http://www.etudes-camusiennes.fr/wordpress>, 05/01/2015.

¹³¹ « Je voulais d'abord exprimer la négation. Sous trois formes. Romanesque : ce fut *L'étranger*. Dramatique : *Caligula*, *Le malentendu*. Idéologique : *Le mythe de Sisyphe*. Je prévoyais le positif sous trois formes encore. Romanesque : *La peste*. Dramatique : *L'état de siège* et *Les justes*. Idéologique : *L'homme révolté*. J'entrevois déjà une troisième couche autour du thème de l'amour », in *Essais*, Roger Quilliot (ed.), 1610.

began to write as early as 1946.¹³² The positive identification of “revolt” as “the very movement of love” was formally indicated in my introduction. Closer attention to the *The Rebel’s* architecture reveals two distinct senses of love.¹³³ In one sense it is meant as the “love of life” or *biophilia* that scholars such as Arnaud Corbic, Sophie Bourgault,¹³⁴ Ieme Van Der Poel, and Danielle Marx-Scouras, drawing upon works such as *The Rebel*, *The Just Assassins*, and *The Plague*, have analyzed.¹³⁵ The love of life serves as a critical limit to the Thanatotic forces inherent in the 20th century’s wars and use of technology, as well as its brutally repressive methods for achieving political dominance. In his introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Camus* (2007), Edward Hughes describes salient aspects of the “death instinct” in and against which Camus struggled:

He and his contemporaries reached adulthood as Hitler obtained power and as the first of the revolutionary trials got underway in the Soviet Union. And just to round off the education of his generation, a string of confrontations follow—with civil war in Spain, the Second World War and the concentration camps. Meanwhile the children of this generation face the specter of nuclear destruction. Camus’s conclusion is that a death instinct is at work in the collective history of his times as tyranny’s “grand inquisitors” hold sway. (1)

The Rebel draws upon the love of life as a bulwark against the bleak legacy Camus’s generation struggled to ameliorate. Its conclusion offers two remarks to this effect, first, when it sardonically notes that « le secret de l’Europe est qu’elle n’aime plus la vie »

¹³² A case can be made that Camus began the work as early as September 1944. See Aronson’s *Camus and Sartre* (2004), 118.

¹³³ There is only one significant mention of romantic love in *The Rebel*, analyzed below.

¹³⁴ For the genealogy of this type of love, see especially *Camus: L’absurde, la révolte, l’amour*. Paris, Les Editions de l’Atelier, (2003). The Franciscan theologian and philosopher Arnaud Corbic offers a very interesting and sustained account of the “love of life” and the “love of the earth” [*amour de la terre*] in Camus’s thought. Also see Bourgault, Sophie, “Affliction, Revolt, and Love: a Conversation with Camus and Weil,” (2012). It is worth noting that “love of mother” is a theme Bourgault finds particularly important in works such as *The Plague* and *The First Man*.

¹³⁵ Van Der Poel: “Camus, a life lived in critical times,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Camus*, Edward J. Hughes (ed.), Cambridge UP (2007), 13 - 25. Also see Danielle Marx-Scouras, “Portraits of women, visions of Algeria,” (2007) for a discussion of the “love of life” in Camus.

[‘Europe’s secret is that it no longer loves life’], followed by a significant nod to the importance of « l’amour de cette terre » or the love of the Earth, wherein « le monde reste notre premier et notre dernier amour » [‘the world remains our first and our last love’] (381, 382). To perform the notion, in addition to concluding with this sense of love, Camus prefaced *The Rebel* with a telling poem from Hölderlin, which draws upon the heart’s constancy and a love for the Earth.¹³⁶

My particular argument concerns, however, *The Rebel’s* second and more prolific sense of love, which permeates Camus’s mature politics broadly conceived. We analyzed its roots in the previous section, and now we see the case for its significance in *The Rebel’s* economy and beyond. Love in this second sense is a distinct type of love for humanity, representing an overlooked, but significant guiding thread of his central political argument: how to achieve unity with integrity.

The Rebel focuses upon a panoply of diverse thinkers including Saint-Just, Sade, Hegel, Nietzsche, Max Scheler, André Breton, Russian nihilism and Bolshevism, and contemporary strains of political realism. It subtly but consistently uses considerations of love to critique political figures and platforms that allegedly betray a lack of integrity. The work’s first, and then final two chapters reveal Camus’s positive vision of the basic means to mobilize and unify the political community. I shall argue that the revolt’s political *raison d’être* was patterned upon his theory of love for humanity in a precise sense that can only be elaborated with his precise feelings and intentional targets: unity under the condition of preserving social integrity.

¹³⁶ « Et ouvertement je vouai mon cœur à la terre grave et souffrante, et souvent, dans la nuit sacrée, je lui promis de l’aimer fidèlement jusqu’à la mort, sans peur, avec son lourd fardeau de fatalité, et de ne mépriser aucune de ses énigmes. Ainsi, je me liai à elle d’un lien mortel. » Hölderlin, *La Mort d’Empédocle* (*The Death of Empedocles*).

Camus's political treatise reveals an archeology of political oppression and the means to fight it, from the "first" slaves to Cold War politics, critically nuancing the modern revolution's tendency to find its *raison d'être* in purely resentful and isolationist methodologies. Camus sought a non-violent means to bind the "reasonable" political community as well as to give this same community a real sense of "human and metaphysical solidarity" (*L'homme révolté*, 30, 31). The form in which he presents "the positive side" of his method is structured by a nuanced sense of love, which he took pains to qualify. To reveal, ultimately, the life-affirming values inherent in the revolt and love, Camus first needed to dispel the canonical Schelerian and Nietzschean equation of revolt with *ressentiment*. To this effect he used their critical weapon—a certain idea of love—against them.

Max Scheler (1874 – 1928) critically appropriated Nietzsche's account of *ressentiment* in the "slave revolt in morals" (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1887) to show that the "love for humanity" in such political forms as humanitarianism, utilitarianism, and egalitarianism in fact betrays emotional hypocrisy, at best, and a venomous will to detract from the character of others, at worst. That is, if we are all equal, then certainly no one is better than I, both Scheler and Nietzsche would drolly say. On the other side of this equation lies Scheler's utter dismissal of revolt or rebellion. This is because for Scheler, revolt signals merely the unleashed will to negativity, *i.e.*, an essentially spiteful and destructive movement that refuses its own downtrodden identity while seeking external targets to bring down, or seeking people from whom to detract value. Scheler cites, as resentful types, the arriviste (*e.g.*, Julien Sorel), the religious zealot (*e.g.*, Tertullian), the misogynist *per se*, and the rebel

as such.¹³⁷ The philosopher Manfred Frings explains the essence of Schelerian *ressentiment* as follows:

All feelings of resentment are accompanied by acts of “comparison” with others...In true resentment there is no emotive satisfaction, but only life-long anger and anguish in feelings that are compared with others...ressentiment is thus always prone to occur in a comparing society...Ressentiment, therefore, is a contradictory feeling: its relentless strength and occasional violence wells up in a weakness of the human being that cannot be overcome. Ressentiment is the prototype of a disordered heart, “*un désordre du cœur*”.¹³⁸

Camus did not dispute the identification of *ressentiment* with bigotry or religious fanaticism, but the revolt’s heart, he argued as early as 1944, connotes integrity and conscience when harnessed in the right way. In his 1951 treatise he sought a viable principle of revolt having a positive, communitarian, and inclusively equal value to all of its members.¹³⁹ Put differently, Camus established a standard of communitarian rebellion having a well-ordered heart, thereby turning the tables on Scheler’s critique:

Il y a, par exemple, cette logique, incarnée par Dostoïevski dans Ivan Karamazov, qui va du mouvement de révolte à l’insurrection métaphysique. Scheler, qui le sait, résume ainsi cette conception : « il n’y a pas au monde assez d’amour pour qu’on le gaspille sur un autre que sur l’être humain. » Même si cette proposition était vraie, le désespoir vertigineux qu’elle suppose mériterait autre chose que le dédain. En fait, elle méconnaît le caractère déchiré de la révolte de Karamazov. Le drame d’Ivan, au contraire, naît de ce qu’il y a *trop d’amour sans objet*. Cet amour est devenu *sans emploi*. (33-4, my italics)

This linkage between misunderstanding the character of revolt and misunderstanding the character of love is crucial for at least two reasons. First, it seeks to undermine Scheler’s critique of revolt as necessarily entailing *ressentiment*, since Camusian revolt entails a positive use of love. Second, this linkage yields preliminary indications for how to properly harness love for humanity within the revolt, so as not to apply its form in vain, that is, neither

¹³⁷ Scheler, Max. *Ressentiment*. William Holdheim (trans.), Marquette UP, (1994).

¹³⁸ Frings, Manfred. *The Mind of Max Scheler*. Marquette UP, Milwaukee (1997), 147-9.

¹³⁹ « Dans la révolte, l’homme se dépasse en autrui et, de ce point de vue, la solidarité humaine est métaphysique. » « Nous serons donc en droit de dire que toute révolte qui s’autorise à nier ou à détruire cette solidarité perd du même coup le nom de révolte et coïncide en réalité avec un consentement meurtrier. » Ibid., 31, 37.

“without an object” nor “without use,” critical themes that appear frequently in the work’s economy.

The Rebel thus shows a specific way out of the negative character of revolt that Scheler and others present as resentful *tout court*, drawing upon the “passionate” impetus and « *la part chaleureuse* » that certain works of literature reveal about the human condition. In an oddly staged but effectively acted production, after having punctured Scheler’s critique with Dostoevsky, Camus deflated it by way of Emily Bronte and Meister Eckhart:

Lorsque, dans *Les Hauts de Hurlevent*, Heathcliff préfère son amour à Dieu et demande l’enfer pour être réuni à celle qu’il aime, ce n’est pas seulement sa jeunesse humiliée qui parle, mais *l’expérience brûlante de toute une vie*. Le même mouvement fait dire à Maître Eckhart, dans un accès surprenant d’hérésie, qu’il préfère l’enfer avec Jésus que le ciel sans lui. *C’est le mouvement même de l’amour*. Contre Scheler, on ne saurait trop insister sur *l’affirmation passionnée qui court dans le mouvement de révolte* et ce qui le distingue du ressentiment. (34, my emphasis)

The equation of “the very movement of” *love* with the “passionate affirmation that runs within the movement of” *revolt*, is truly remarkable. To return to Scheler, the kind of love reflected in such cases yields a type of revolt with positive emotive content, that is, with a will to rebel for the sake of something that is not driven by *ressentiment*. Whether in Heathcliff’s youthful rebellion, or Meister Eckhart’s preference of a wise heresy over moral bankruptcy, the revolt wills and creates its own positive value.

The identification of love within the revolt’s nucleus led Camus to bridge a positive conception of revolt with a positive notion of the community, and to thereby politically surpass the egocentric perspective that he adopted in earlier works (1935 – 1942), whose guiding motifs were outlined in the first part of chapter Three. The conclusion to his analysis (in which he compares love’s “movement” to that of revolt’s) ends on the following note: “Apparently negative... the revolt is profoundly positive because it reveals that part of man

that is always to be defended.”¹⁴⁰ I wish now to read *The Rebel* as a defense and critique of love as representing the part of humanity to be defended.

One of the work’s central claims is that “revolution” has been privileged to the detriment of “revolt.” By the former Camus understood a teleological understanding of politics that justifies immoral means—the sanctioning of homicide and mass deception, most centrally—by appealing to an envisioned end in which such action would no longer be necessary, be it Marxist, libertarian capitalist, theocratic or totalitarian. By “revolt” or “rebellion” (depending upon the translation of *la révolte*), he contrastingly understood a constant state of vigilance denouncing perceived injustice through the affirmation of certain values within the organization of collective resistance. It is of significant and yet still overlooked importance that the heart and love inform the revolution, negatively, and the revolt, positively. *The Rebel* identifies allegedly defective types of love for humanity to critique the revolution, while simultaneously affirming the revolt’s unifying capacity *qua* that which Camus termed “genuine” and “superior” types of love for humanity.

When he criticized Scheler’s reading of Ivan Karamazov, we glimpsed the opening salvo aimed at defective understandings of love for humanity. Scheler concluded that Ivan’s “drama” derived from there being “not enough love in the world to share it with others,” against which Camus argued that he misunderstood the basic issue: Ivan represents a tragic surfeit rather than a deficit of love. His true drama was thus that he lacked the formal outlets to apply his otherwise generous share of love, which resulted in his “torn soul” and his ultimate sterility. Camus’s general point is that Ivan Karamazov represents “too much love

¹⁴⁰ « Apparemment négative... la révolte est profondément positive puisqu’elle révèle ce qui, en l’homme, est toujours à défendre » (34).

without an object,” and so his problematic concerns frustration within the capacity to love; the love type is idle and thereby defective. This distinction is important in *The Rebel’s* economy, because he conceived of the value of love for humanity in terms of the formal application of the human being’s potential and creative capacity. *Pace* Scheler, presumably anyone recognizes, and importantly has a sufficient share of this type of love, at least in a dormant sense. The further and politically troublesome matter for Camus was to give it outlets.

Camus sometimes defined the positive sense of love for humanity by what it is not, and *The Rebel* contains a host of sweeping generalizations of failed or profaned love types. In each case, there is a misapplication of love’s nature that blocks true or “genuine” love’s emergence, thereby rendering it “impossible,” “empty” or “sterile,” as he described it. His indication of the types of passion animating the revolt thus led him to assess love’s social and political outlets. Camus found a precursor of sorts in André Breton (1896 – 1966),¹⁴¹ whom he admired for the supreme value he placed upon love, even if Breton could not ultimately reconcile his conception of love and politics:

André Breton voulait, en même temps, la révolution et l’amour, qui sont incompatibles. *La révolution consiste à aimer un homme qui n’existe pas encore. Mais pour lui* qui aime un être vivant, *s’il l’aime vraiment*, il ne peut accepter de mourir que pour celui-là. En réalité la révolution n’était pour André Breton qu’un cas particulier de la révolte alors que pour les marxistes et, en général, pour toute pensée politique, seul le contraire est vrai. (126-7, my emphasis)

This way of framing the “revolution” is significant. One of the revolution’s shortcomings, hyperbolically exemplified in “all political thought” of the time, consists in loving the idea of

¹⁴¹ Breton’s grasp of the political importance of love was exceptional in Camus’s estimation: « Après tout, faute de pouvoir se donner la morale et les valeurs dont il a clairement senti la nécessité, on sait assez que Breton a choisi l’amour. Dans la chiennerie de son temps, et ceci ne peut pas s’oublier, il est le seul à avoir parlé profondément de l’amour. L’amour est la morale en transes qui a servi de patrie à cet exilé » (130).

what humanity *could become*, to the detriment of loving humanity in the present, concrete moment. The revolt thus insists upon the relativity of any particular revolution, using its “very movement of love” to affirm the present moment alongside the particular community in question. By contrast, to love the idea of what society could become leads not only to a devaluation of the present, Camus argued, but to a disregard for morals in politics more generally. His simplistic way of framing the issue was that the revolution wills whatever means are necessary to ultimately reach the future thus loved, that is, it loves an idealized society that will justify the present means. The revolt maintains certain ethical limits, by contrast, most notably the rejection of “organized murder” and lying to the masses, because of its love for humanity in the present and ever-renewing struggle.

Writing for *Combat* in 1944, Camus criticized France’s Socialist party because he thought it deferred the value of the present in favor of that of a distant future: it “exploits [s’*autorise de*] the love of humanity” to shirk present duties, sidestepping practical questions to “avoid necessary sacrifices” of the hour (350). *The Rebel* raises the stakes of the temporal distinction between the type of love in the revolution and that of revolt. The latter renews itself each day in a constant state of vigilance for perceived injustice, akin to a conscientious newspaper. The revolution, however, latches on to a fixed idea of a distant promise, doggedly pursuing this value at high moral cost, whether historically or contemporarily. Analyzing Saint-Just’s call for a revolutionary “new religion” in the aftermath of 1789, for example, Camus situated his failure by way of a defective love that was out of sync with the times:

Ses principes ne peuvent pas s’accorder à ce qui est, les choses ne sont pas qu’elles devraient être ; les principes sont donc seuls, muets et fixes. S’abandonner à eux, c’est mourir, en vérité, et c’est mourir d’un amour impossible qui est le contraire de l’amour. Saint-Just meurt, et avec lui, l’espérance d’une nouvelle religion. (168)

Once again it is an “impossible” type of love being undermined, for the reason that it lacks the proper vents. Saint-Just’s fatal flaw resided in the inability to adapt his way of loving humanity to his principles, the latter being too rigid and the former having no traction in 1790s France. Similar to his readings of André Breton and Ivan Karamazov, Camus’s reading of Saint-Just is likely partial and certainly sweeping, but the important point concerns the manner in which he contextualized their political possibilities. Breton was “the only one of his time” to recognize love’s supreme importance, yet his particular conception of love could not adapt politically (130). The failures of Karamazov and Saint-Just, moreover, did not concern any particular principal; rather, they were tragic figures because their love for humanity was idle and could not adapt.

The Rebel critiques the modern revolution as such because it stifles the basic conditions for true love and friendship. Attacking doctrines inspired by Hegelian or quasi-Hegelian teleological justifications, including the mantra that “the end justifies the means,” Camus critiqued their value through formal considerations. The Russian nihilist tradition of the 19th century purportedly represents the moment when political considerations of love and friendship were falsely sublimated into the “passion for the revolution.” Devoting several pages of analysis to leading figures such as Mikhaïl Bakounine (1814 – 1876) and Serge Netchaïev (1847 – 1882),¹⁴² he drew the conclusion that for the “first time” in modern

¹⁴² Camus cites Netchaïev as follows: « Le révolutionnaire est un homme condamné d’avance. Il ne doit avoir ni relations passionnelles, ni choses ou êtres aimés. Il devrait se dépouiller même de son nom. Tout en lui doit se concentrer dans une seule passion : la révolution » (207). Because Netchaïev was inspired by Hegel, Camus finds fault with the latter as well, commenting upon the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as follows: « On aperçoit chez lui les conséquences de la psychologie arbitraire véhiculée par la pensée de Hegel...[qui a] refusé à mettre au premier plan de son analyse ce « phénomène » [l’amour] qui, selon lui, « n’avait pas la force, la patience et le travail du négatif ». Il avait choisit de montrer les consciences dans un combat de crabes aveugles, tâtonnant obscurément sur le sable des mers pour s’agripper enfin dans une lutte à mort » (*Ibid*).

history, the “revolution separates itself from love and friendship [*de l’amour et de l’amitié*]” (207). The consequences of his interpretation are remarkable, because henceforth the revolution either excludes love and friendship as viable principles, or it imposes hindering formal constraints upon them. Echoing the allegorical criticisms of mandatory friendship and love of country in George Orwell’s influential *1984* (1949), Camus critiqued Stalinist Russia because its politics killed genuine friendship and love in favor of an imposed abstraction:

Le système concentrationnaire russe a réalisé, en effet, le passage dialectique du gouvernement des personnes à l’administration des choses, mais en confondant la personne et la chose... Hors de l’Empire, point de salut. Cet Empire est ou sera celui de l’amitié. Mais cette amitié est celle des choses, car l’ami ne peut être préféré à l’Empire... L’amitié des choses est l’amitié en général, l’amitié avec tous, qui suppose, quand elle doit se préserver, la dénonciation de chacun. Celui qui aime son amie ou son ami l’aime dans le présent et la révolution ne veut aimer *qu’un homme qui n’est pas encore là*. Aimer, *d’une certaine manière*, c’est tuer l’homme accompli qui doit naître par la révolution. (298 – 99, my emphasis)

Friendship and love cannot thrive in this form because they are reduced to an abstract type of love of the State or “the Empire,” in which all members are equally replaceable, and ‘denounceable,’ as it were, *qua* the State. His further argument is that genuine love and friendship entail specificity and particularity in the moment, whereas the revolutionary brand of love does not seek a lasting value in the present; rather, the value is deferred to a teleological ideal or a fraternity to come. Camus’s broader purpose was to critique the system from within its heart, that is, to undermine such revolutionary paradigms by exposing their link to types of love and friendship lacking integrity.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Camus targeted not simply Russia but also “Europe” as defective in its interpersonal outlets: « Ces transformations progressives caractérisent le monde de la terreur rationnelle où vit... l’Europe. Le dialogue, relation des personnes, a été remplacé par la propagande ou la polémique... L’abstraction, propre au monde des forces et des calculs, a remplacé les vraies passions qui sont du domaine de la chair et de l’irrationnel. Le ticket substitué au pain, l’amour et l’amitié soumis à la doctrine » (300).

The revolt's heart reflects, then, a different understanding of the politics of love and friendship, privileging the present as an ever-renewing struggle or affirmation of these values. Writing at *Combat*, the revolt connoted integrity and perseverance in its ethical imperative to resist perceived oppression. The revolt's heart in *The Rebel* retains these elements while accruing more specificity in its relation to love and *philia*. Camus understood that in addition to defective love types, formal emotive outlets such as hatred and resentment could heavily influence politics. We considered the prescient example of the "venom" infecting "exasperated hearts" in his "Crise en Algérie" series in 1945. *The Rebel* furthers this lead, grounding his politics in the following unifying outlets:

Ceux qui s'aiment, les amis, les amants, savent que l'amour *n'est pas seulement* une fulguration, mais aussi une longue et douloureuse lutte dans les ténèbres pour la *reconnaissance et la réconciliation définitives*. Après tout, si la vertu historique se reconnaît à ce qu'elle fait preuve de patience, le véritable amour est aussi patient que la haine. (207-08, my emphasis)

The love type is patterned on the "tough and demanding love" heralded in the *Letters to a German Friend*. The goal in this case is to reach a definitive "recognition and reconciliation" in society, and only after a "long and mournful struggle," if at all. Similar to a meaningful conception of romantic love, Camusian political love not only values the initial "fulguration" or *coup de foudre* entailed by a movement's solidarity, it also enriches it through renewed efforts of struggle with and appreciation of the community. The heart latches on to the movement's impetus in order to propel it with the "respect" that "only true love can confer," as he argued at *Combat*. Camusian love in friendship serves as a bulwark in the revolt's heart, yielding a sense of collective identity and a means for judging a movement's integrity:

L'amitié des personnes, il n'en est pas d'autre définition, est la solidarité particulière, jusqu'à la mort, contre ce qui n'est pas du règne de l'amitié... Dans le règne des personnes, les hommes se lient d'affection ; dans l'Empire des choses, les hommes s'unissent par la délation. La cité qui se voulait fraternelle devient une fourmilière d'hommes seuls. (299)

His rhetoric is alarming because of the hasty dilemma it implicates (i.e., either genuine bonds of affection through friendship, *or* a society of snitches climbing over each other), but the conclusion is important when nuanced in light of *The Rebel's* argument for the right means of unifying the community. There is a complicity, Camus argued, between a society that dehumanizes its citizens and that promotes love in abstract forms. Love in this guise thereby becomes a trivial commodity or simply a rhetorical tool, another cog in the “Empire of things.” *Philia* or love in friendship, by contrast, offers a model of identity and resistance upon which everyday people can pattern their loyalty and communitarian bonds. Its social outlets can provide the moral support and sense of solidarity needed to coexist through daily struggles, especially when one denies metaphysically absolute forms of justice and love:

Si l'homme est le reflet de Dieu, alors il n'importe pas qu'il soit privé de l'amour humain, un jour viendra où il sera rassasié. Mais s'il est créature aveugle, errant dans les ténèbres d'une condition cruelle et limitée, il a besoin de ses pareils et de leur amour périssable. (201)

The movement from the individual's plight to collective assistance is significant. Camus pitched his politics to a secular, leftist base, using passages such as this to show the individual's limitations within “the cruel and limited condition” he or she may face, as well as to show the countervailing support in communitarian bonds actuated by loving friendship. This kind of loving support supposes a group struggle in which the individual's frailty is overcome by the finite efforts of his or her peers [*pareils*]. Theorizing love in this way allowed Camus to construe people as similar by virtue of their limitations as individuals, and their strength when actuated by solidarity.

He thereby used considerations of love to conceive of society at very basic levels. For instance, when he critiqued the Marquis de Sade's “*folie*” of an apology for wanton violence and murder, the criticism was based upon a deformed sense of love:

On sent bien qu'il s'agit de l'amour sans objet qui est celui des âmes déchirées. Mais cet amour vide et avide, cette folie de possession est celle que précisément la société entrave inévitablement. (124)

This critique repeats that of Ivan Karamazov with a key difference. The love type at issue is formally defective (“without an object,” “empty,” and leading to a “torn soul”), but then his analysis extends to a universal social problem: *desire* and its checks and balances.

Presumably all societies must hinder reckless and wanton desires *per se*, and then delicately balance excessive desires more generally.

Camus offered an original interpretation of this basic problem, then, when he resumed excessive desires as types of love gone wrong, simply stated. His seemingly hasty transition (from Sade's lustful vision of unifying nature and crime, to the folly of excessive desires and society's need to brake them) actually reveals one of the work's overlooked threads: the nuanced interplay of the phenomena of love, desire, and possession in Camusian politics. The identification of an empty and greedy love within the social nature of possession leads to one of the most revealing sections of the work, which he used to connect love's mechanism of desire with the revolt's.

3.5: The Romantic Character of Camusian Politics

The Rebel's dénouement synthesizes the vexed relationship between the desire to possess, the burden of loving others, and both the desire and the burden's essential relationship to the revolt as such. Camus deployed a daunting pathos underlining humanity's tragic character and the subsequent need *to create* a protective horizon of redemptive values. His conclusion led to the unifying form he sought all along, thereby serving as the indispensable premise for the right means of mobilizing the political community. I divide his argument into four steps, and then analyze the conclusion.

The first step makes an interesting comparison between human psychology and the basic conditions of the novel, punning upon the French *romance*, *roman* and *romanesque*. Camus argued that the novelistic form—whether as a reader or writer, and whether in a sophisticated or a pedestrian way—reveals the human necessity for coping with life through creative fictions:

Ici naît cette malheureuse envie que tant d'hommes portent à la vie des autres. Apercevant ces existences du dehors, on leur prête une cohérence et une unité qu'elles ne peuvent avoir, en vérité, mais qui paraissent évidentes à l'observateur. Il ne voit que la ligne de façade de ces vies, sans prendre conscience du détail qui les ronge. Nous faisons alors de l'art sur ces existences. De façon élémentaire, nous les romançons. (326)

Our access to the lives of others, and vice-versa, is frequently restricted to caricatures and projections: to a certain extent, all of us resemble Madame Bovary. The mind needs to convey unity to our impressions, as does the novel. Unlike the novel, though, we lack the essential inner details of others' lives. Yet we supply them in artistic fashion, to better or worse effect. Camus championed luminaries such as Madame de Lafayette and Honoré de Balzac because they could faithfully translate the lives of others, as it were, but *without a guiding vision* the human capacity for novelizing self and other leads to “sterile” romantic forms, and to frustration more generally:

Chacun, dans ce sens, cherche à faire de sa vie une œuvre d'art. Nous désirons que l'amour dure et nous savons qu'il ne dure pas... Peut-être, dans cet insatiable besoin de durer, comprendrions-nous mieux la souffrance terrestre, si nous la savions éternelle... Le goût de la possession n'est qu'une autre forme du désir de durer ; c'est lui qui fait le délire impuissant de l'amour. *Aucun être*, même le plus aimé, et qui nous le rend le mieux, *n'est jamais* en notre possession. Sur la terre cruelle, où les amants meurent parfois séparés, naissent toujours divisés, la possession totale d'un être, *la communion absolue* dans le temps entier de la vie est *une impossible exigence*. Le goût de la possession est à ce point insatiable qu'il peut survivre à l'amour même. Aimer, alors, c'est stériliser l'aimé. (326-27, my emphasis)

People give a romantic form to their lives and others', crucially wanting this form to endure. The mechanism of possession hits a rebarbative limit in love, however, leading to an abyss between the “insatiable” desire for possession and “impossible demand” of absolute,

enduring communion with the beloved. Repeating his amorous critique from *Caligula*, *The Stranger* and *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the inevitable failure of loving someone in a total, enduring way leads to the absurdity of the human condition. Yet the anguish entailed by the contradiction of willing one's romantic form of life eternally, but knowing that it cannot be so, interestingly leads to the revolt's *inner drama*:

La honteuse souffrance de l'amant, désormais solitaire, n'est point tant de ne plus être aimé que de savoir que l'autre peut et doit aimer encore. A la limite, tout homme *dévoré par le désir éperdu* de durer et de posséder souhaite aux êtres qu'il a aimés la stérilité ou la mort. *Ceci est la vraie révolte*. Ce qui n'ont pas exigé, un jour au moins, la virginité absolue des êtres et du monde, tremblé de nostalgie et d'impuissance devant son impossibilité, ceux qui, alors, sans cesse renvoyés à leur nostalgie d'absolu, ne se sont pas détruits à essayer d'aimer à mi-hauteur, *ceux-là ne peuvent comprendre la réalité de la révolte et sa fureur de destruction*. Mais les êtres s'échappent toujours et nous leur échappons aussi ; ils sont sans contours fermes.¹⁴⁴ (327, my emphasis)

Especially when “the boundless desire to last and to possess” grips us, life interrupts our novels to pathetically harsh effect. When this excessive desire is unchecked by other values, such as the stoicism implied in the final sentence, it leads to a megalomaniacal negation. The revolt's primal “No!” is never louder, Camus argued, than when someone thus possessed cannot let go of the romantic form that gave life meaning. When one's amorous world collapses, it generates the fullest measure of scorn as well as the need to seek redemption. Romantic love's dissolution, and the lover's subsequent desire to hold on, both represent a vivid model of the subject's revolt against a tyrannical power, one to which most people can relate. The revolt's fury thus importantly gauges a person's depth: those who have merely

¹⁴⁴ There is a very interesting comparison between his romantic theory of human nature and a life experience upon which he commented: “The first woman I loved and to whom I was faithful escaped me through drugs, through betrayal. Many things in my life were perhaps caused by this, out of vanity, for fear of suffering again...But I in turn escaped from everyone else since and, in a certain sense, I wanted everyone to escape from me.” (*Carnets* 3, 279]

loved with half-measure never experience the “true” revolt’s full potential, nor entirely grasp the conditions that subtend it.

The originary destructive fury at the revolt’s bedrock can seem to imply that Camus was arguing against himself, because it goes against the grain of *The Rebel*’s first chapter. He construed the revolt in positive evaluative terms, yet now we glimpse the resentful and vindictive potential that Nietzsche and Scheler had foreseen. By Camus’s admission, furthermore, to love in a certain way is to “sterilize” the beloved, and at least one aspect of the “true revolt” consists of a deeply problematic pathology. In one sense, a love that understands itself as eternal represents yet another failed love type, certainly in terms of its destructive potential. But it also represents a critical or symbolic limit to one’s passion, offering an heuristic model for understanding the revolt’s “movement.”

Both the failure and the potential of romantic forms of love are significant because Camus theorized love as a mechanism for gauging the will to desire, and then overcome the loss of, the romantic forms that give life meaning. Love and the revolt reinforce each other along their path of unification *and* dissolution in cycles aiming for a better life with each death and reincarnation. This step in his argument situates the revolt’s temporal paradox, suggesting we must embrace the tension inherent in romanticizing today’s goal while managing to cope with its potential change, or even dissolution, in days to come. Opposed to the “revolutionary” ideal of deferring value to a distant end, the revolt throws its whole weight into the movement and moment, as one falls in love. Opposed to a type of love that understands itself as enduring, moreover, to harness the revolt is to brace oneself for new possibilities and encounters in the struggle.

To recapitulate, the first three steps of his argument described people as tragically creative agents desiring a unifying artistic form to their own and others' lives, driven by possessive impulses whose symbolic limit is romantic love. Similar to the theoretical stakes of the absurd in his earlier works, the revolt's stakes reveal a non-rational and ambivalent ground of desire, out of which a new type of question emerges in *The Rebel*. How to harness these passions and desires in socially and ultimately politically responsible senses? The fourth step underlines the primal need for unifying outlets in society, whoever the person and whatever the form it be:

Il n'est pas d'être enfin qui, à partir d'un niveau élémentaire de la conscience, ne s'épuise à chercher les formules ou les attitudes qui donneraient à son existence l'unité qui lui manque. Paraître ou faire, le dandy ou le révolutionnaire *exigent l'unité*, pour être, et pour être dans ce monde... Il est donc juste de dire que l'homme a l'idée d'un monde meilleur que celui-ci. Mais meilleur ne veut pas dire alors différent, *meilleur veut dire unifié*. *Cette fièvre qui soulève le cœur* au-dessus d'un monde éparpillé, dont il ne peut cependant se dépendre, est *la fièvre de l'unité*... Religion ou crime, *tout effort humain* obéit, finalement, à *ce désir déraisonnable* et prétend donner à la vie une forme qu'elle n'a pas. (327 – 328, my emphasis)

His final premise indicates an ordinary social matrix having multiple configurations desiring a unifying form. The desire is not rational at least because it is an illusion or a coping mechanism, and the form embraced can be arbitrary (e.g., “religion or crime”). The creative impulse itself is thus tragic, because whatever form one embraces, “life” and the unforeseeable as such eventually rupture it, the harshest example of which is enduring love. His analysis of the underlying “fever” or intense desire for a unified form of social life reveals an important datum of human experience, however. Camus recognized that the desire aims for a better life, and so he accentuated the point that “better” entails not simply a different form, rather, “better” entails integrity and unification in society.

Given this theory of social psychology and desire, then, he made the further argument that society's highest task is *to make the best* of our fundamental creative impulses, the desire

for possession, and the coping mechanisms embedded therein. Defective love types poorly channel, or are consumed by this basic desire for unity, whereas salubrious love types harness this passion into group solidarity with a nuanced understanding of the movement's temporality. Defective love types such as those embraced by Karamazov, Saint-Just, Stalinist Russia, and so forth, poorly mobilize the passion in the revolt because their way of loving is maladaptive and out of sync. They either cannot embrace inevitable change (Saint-Just and Karamazov, for instance), or they defer the positive value of love for humanity to a distant and abstract end. Healthy love types, by contrast, focus the revolt's passion with a renewed purpose each day, adapting to change and thereby privileging neither yesterday's goal nor a distant future's prophecy. "Nous désirons que l'amour dure et nous savons qu'il ne dure pas... Mais les êtres s'échappent toujours et nous leur échappons aussi ; ils sont sans contours fermes" (326 – 27). The forms we embrace, Camus argued, must check our will to endure without losing sight of the importance of throwing our whole might into today.

Camusian revolt thus repeats, with a key difference, the model of *erotic* love in works such as *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Stranger*. In chapter One I argued that these works yield an egocentric and quantitative justification for his ethics, which were patterned upon erotic love. Using Don Juan as his champion, Camus theorized that one must understand love itself as cyclically transitory, or else it will "burn out the heart" [*brûler le cœur*] of the lover. In contrast to understanding love as enduring or eternal, then, Don Juan's understanding allows for the careful *repetition* of crucially *perishable* moments that are optimized within a discrete horizon. Loving in this way keeps his heart intact, and ready to optimize the next occasion.

At approximately the same time he joined the Resistance and the underground newspaper *Combat* in 1943, however, Camus's began to reconfigure his theory of love on a communitarian and cosmopolitan level. *Letters to a German Friend*, *Combat*, and *The Rebel* all argue for "superior" or "genuine" types of love for humanity as the model upon which to pattern the struggle's solidarity (and, negatively, movements that embrace defective love types are thereby flawed). To love in this way is to not burn out one's heart, that is, this way of love does not cling to either an enduring or a teleological form, rather, it repeats its cycle with a constancy that embraces renewing movements and manifestations therein. Camus's romantic politics are thereby fickle in a sense, but not arbitrarily so. The rebel's heart must always gauge the righteousness of the movement in all of its permutations, and only then throw his or her whole weight into its solidarity: the heart represents the revolt's ethical standard, judging the movement's integrity at each (re)incarnation.

The revolt thus reflects an irrational drive that needs to be harnessed at its most primal level and given forms that allow its mechanism of desire to be expressed, and so it requires a language and a poetics to supply its outlets. "When the most piercing scream finds its firmest language the revolt attains its true calling, and being faithful to itself produces a creative force" (*L'homme révolté*, 338).¹⁴⁵ His conclusion asserts we must choose unifying forms entailing the most integrity,¹⁴⁶ with the understanding that they need to be constantly recreated to adapt to harm and change. Camusian politics are thus *romantic* in a very basic sense. No particular cause or movement remains the same over time, and yet each day we

¹⁴⁵ « Lorsque le cri le plus déchirant trouve son langage le plus ferme, la révolte satisfait à sa vraie exigence et tire de cette fidélité à elle-même une force de création » (338).

¹⁴⁶ « Peut-on, éternellement, refuser l'injustice sans cesser de saluer la nature de l'homme et la beauté du monde ? Notre réponse est oui. Cette morale, en même temps insoumise et fidèle, est en tout cas la seule à éclairer le chemin d'une révolution vraiment réaliste » (345).

must throw our whole weight into what we believe to be right. Salubrious love types indicate how to embrace this way of life, whereas defective love types either devalue the present or become too possessive and cannot maintain their impulse.

He structured the possibilities of unification into two mutually reinforcing options, each providing politically creative outlets. The first option entails an intriguing sketch of a politics of the “world of fiction” [*le monde romanesque*].¹⁴⁷ He nuanced this option by appealing to art’s (and especially the novel’s) ability to “correct the world” by providing forms to channel the individual’s most profound desires, allowing them to play out in representations of the past, present and future. Citing exemplary writers such as Madame de Lafayette, Stendhal, and Dostoevsky, Camus argued that because they “go to their passion’s extreme,” and because they “finish what we could never achieve,” their worlds offer allegorical and historical narratives for reinterpreting the political world (329). This unifying option is restricted to the individual’s revolt and how to properly harness it, whereas the second option represents *The Rebel’s* chief ambition, namely how to unify the collective with integrity:

Aujourd’hui où les passions collectives ont pris le pas sur les passions individuelles, il est toujours possible de *dominer*, par l’art, *la fureur de l’amour*. Mais le problème inéluctable est aussi de *dominer les passions collectives* et la lutte historique... Pour dominer les passions collectives, il faut, en effet, *les vivre et les éprouver*, au moins relativement. (342, my emphasis)

¹⁴⁷ « *Le même mouvement*, qui peut porter à l’adoration du ciel ou à la destruction de l’homme, mène aussi bien à *la création romanesque*, qui en reçoit alors son sérieux. Qu’est-ce que le roman, en effet, sinon cet univers où l’action trouve sa forme, où les mots de la fin sont prononcés, les êtres livrés aux êtres, où toute vie prend le visage du destin. *Le monde romanesque n’est que la correction de ce monde-ci*, suivant *le désir profond de l’homme*. Car il s’agit bien du même monde. La souffrance est la même, le mensonge et l’amour » (328, my emphasis). He appended the following footnote: « Si même le roman ne dit que la nostalgie, le désespoir, l’inachevé, il crée encore *la forme et le salut*. Nommer le désespoir, c’est le dépasser. La littérature désespérée est une contradiction dans les termes » (ff. 328, my emphasis).

His argument situates the political problem in terms of controlling collective passions and the interpretation of history. Art and fiction could presumably respond to the individual's passion, but the revolutionary world, Camus contended, was ill suited to respond to art at the collective level. He perhaps had in mind the artistic stagnation during, and then following the Reign of Terror, the Russian purges, and National Socialism, to name prominent examples, but at any rate he curtly dismissed the possibility of unifying art "during wars and revolutions," because unlike the revolt, they poorly harness the human creative capacity at social levels, focusing instead on a deferred value of "man" (342). He thereby drew the conclusion that his epoch was suited "more so to journalism [*le reportage*] than to the work of art" in terms of its political reality (342). This point is significant because engaged journalism's *renewing and adapting* commitment to attacking daily injustice echoes the "heart" of the revolt's "very movement," and it provides a means "to live and to experience" the collective passions of the times.

We have considered many cases arguing that the proper form of the revolt entails genuine types of love for humanity, and in some cases a social love in friendship, which we can provisionally resume as Camusian *philia*.¹⁴⁸ I wish to conclude this section by formally recapitulating the overlooked but significant role that his theory of love contributes to *The Rebel's* political ambitions.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ I will argue in the conclusion that both Camus's love for humanity and his sense of *philia* significantly resemble Erich Fromm's definition of "genuine love," suggesting a crucially overlooked subterranean affinity between disparate thinkers actuated by social criticism and political reform.

¹⁴⁹ (By way of anticipatory indication, the following section draws upon the Camusian theory of love indicated thus far, in order to critique analyses of his politics in the secondary literature.)

The Rebel's concluding chapter offers a delimitation of the love for humanity informing the work's argument. For context's sake, the "source of life" refers to a possible world in which "moral values" would inform the "true revolution" (345):

Loin de cette source de vie, en tous cas, l'Europe et la révolution se consomment dans une convulsion spectaculaire. Au siècle dernier, l'homme abat les contraintes religieuses. A peine délivré pourtant, il s'en invente à nouveau, et d'intolérables. La vertu meurt, mais renaît plus farouche encore. Elle crie à tout venant une fracassante charité, et cet amour du lointain qui fait une dérision de l'humanisme contemporain. A ce point de vue, elle ne peut opérer que des ravages. (349)

At a time when the Cold War's implications menaced the Earth, when French colonies such as Indochina, Madagascar and Algeria were politically volatile, and when the world was devastated by the previous decade, Camus consistently accentuated one of the core problems in terms of defective love types and misguided creative impulses. This passage discloses two related points, first, the paucity of love represented in ostentatious showings of random charity, and then in the "revolutionary" way of loving what society could become. Second, and in light of the previous analysis, the passage implicitly reinforces the importance of loving humanity with an engaged, conscientious integrity that seeks "to live and to experience" the solidarity implied by love as *philia*.

Genuine friendship and love were clearly not Camus's only political concerns in *The Rebel*, and one can criticize him for interpreting the world in this amorous way to the detriment of others. As things stand, however, close attention reveals a *constellation* of both the negative and positive types of love for humanity that inform his argument, as well as the parallel between his theory of love and the way he theorized social nature and desire. His political theory consists of harnessing our romantic creative tendencies into forms that embrace the *cycle* of a movement's solidarity, eventual dissolution, and rebirth. No particular cause or movement remains the same, strictly speaking, yet every day one must throw one's

whole weight into what the heart believes to be right. To cling to one movement's form in an absolute way is to experience devastation and "the fury of destruction" when it changes or dissolves. Whereas to have a tragic, romantic understanding is to embrace the movement's relativity and adapting character, keeping one's heart intact and immediately ready for the next struggle.

Given the basic need to embrace forms of social unification, Camus argued that society must choose, and perhaps impose, the forms that maintain the most integrity. All of the examples considered thus far have patterned integrity and unity upon types of love for humanity, or in some cases, Camusian *philia*. He criticized the kind of love that understands itself as eternal or enduring *per se*, but even this type of love inexorably informs the revolt as a critical limit. His theory of *erotic* love in works such as *Caligula*, *The Stranger*, and *The Myth of Sisyphus*, suggested that enduring love types inevitably fail, whereas types that understand themselves as crucially perishable *and* renewing reflect the best way of life for the solitary individual. At the same time he joined the Resistance and the underground newspaper *Combat*, however, he began to reconfigure his theory of love, embracing love in solidarity and thereby surpassing the first phase of his work, which was concerned with solitary individuals such as Meursault, Caligula and Don Juan. The shift in his thought from the egocentric love types embraced in these works, to the love for humanity embraced in his post 1942 works, is thus significant.

To return full circle to *The Rebel*, I have analyzed virtually each of its chapters to argue that "the very movement" of revolt is patterned upon distinct types of love for humanity, each representing a formal aspect of Camus's politics of unification. When he drew upon such diverse figures as Ivan Karamazov, Hegel, Scheler and Nietzsche, Saint-Just,

Sade, André Breton, Russian nihilism and Stalinist Russia, he used his theory of love to contextualize their political strengths and weaknesses.¹⁵⁰ When he promoted his own agenda, moreover, he sought to keep destructive love types in check while endorsing types that valued the community in its particularity and its actuality. Camus's endgame was to *give integral shape to collective passions through unifying outlets* modeled upon salubrious love types. It is significant, then, that he punctuated his tenure at *Combat* in November 1946, as well as *The Rebel's* conclusion, with the importance of his theory of love. In the latter he concluded: "one understands then that the revolt cannot go without a strange form of love" (379).¹⁵¹ Five years earlier, he made a similar argument:

Mais je ne voudrais pas, pour finir, laisser croire que l'avenir du monde peut se passer de nos *forces* d'indignation *et* d'amour. Je sais bien qu'il faut aux hommes de grands mobiles pour se mettre en marche *et qu'il est difficile de s'ébranler soi-même* pour un combat dont les objectifs sont si limités et où l'espoir n'a qu'une part à peine raisonnable. (640, my emphasis)

In both cases, the strange form of love upon which the future turned played a significant role in his political thought. In *The Rebel*, *Letters to a German Friend*, and at *Combat*, Camus emphasized the relationship between solidarity and integrity alongside the importance of loving humanity. This type of love guides the individual's indignation so that he or she find a language, a structured form, and ultimately a community with which to anchor action and criticism in non-violent democratic forums. The precise elaboration of this type of love remains something of a mystery, however, whether in Camus's writings or in the secondary literature. It is thus noteworthy that he himself referred to it as "strange." One can plausibly

¹⁵⁰ It is possible to go even further in this direction. *The Rebel* uses mythological or legendary figures such as Prometheus (Cf. 305), and Spartacus (Cf. 144) to reinforce the importance of loving in the right way, as well as a host of alleged "nihilists" and Jacobinists who represent further examples of defective love for humanity, Cf. 201, 211, and elsewhere.

¹⁵¹ « On comprend alors que la révolte ne peut pas se passer d'un étrange amour » (379).

argue that the envisioned “third layer” of his œuvre, devoted to “the theme of love,” would have been more forthcoming, but that particular speculation is ultimately idle.

We have nevertheless seen a blueprint for the significance of his theory of love in his political and psychological theory. Yet even with the distinctions made above, the various senses of love for humanity indicated in *The Rebel* were pitched at abstract levels. The following section augments the analysis, arguing that his theory of love informs his political policies, as well as the revolt’s scope.

3.6: Critiquing the Scholarship *via* Camus’s Theory of Love

Commentators interpret Camus’s concern for justice and humanistic values as motivating his socio-economic policies in general, including his support of the social redistribution of wealth. In his “Camus and social justice” (2007), Martin Crowley argues that by 1944 Camus had formulated the basic values on which his politics would turn. He analyzes an unheralded piece entitled “Au service de l’homme,” offering microcosmic insight into the motivation behind Camus’s economic policies:

A properly moral politics will answer ‘ce désir simple et ardent, ressenti par la majorité laborieuse du pays, de voir l’homme réuni à sa place’ (‘this simple, burning desire, felt by the country’s working-class majority, to see man restored to his rightful place’). The aim cannot be human happiness, wrote Camus in October of that year: the misery of the human condition would make that a vain aspiration. ‘Il s’agit seulement de ne pas ajouter aux misères profondes de notre condition une injustice qui soit purement humaine’ (‘It is simply a matter of not adding human injustice to all the other profound miseries of our condition’). *The metaphysical appeal here serves to motivate the economic argument*: here, at least, we can minimize the unhappiness that is our lot. And it is, *as ever in Camus*, the metaphysical invocation of ‘man’ that gives the demand for social justice, expressed in proposals for economic redistribution, its moral validity. (97, my emphasis)

Crowley argues that the motivation for the redistribution of wealth does not derive from a utilitarian concern for happiness *per se*. Rather, it responds to the desire for justice and the intrinsic value of humanity. By avoiding policies that harm the working-class majority, the

economic policy aims to elevate “man,” especially the proletariat, to higher dignity. Crowley importantly draws a parallel between a sense of dignity and the concern for justice, and he argues for a basic relationship between Camusian desire and morality.

Crowley’s way of explaining the motivation behind Camusian economics is not atypical. A similar perspective unfolds in the political scientist Jeffrey Isaac’s explanation of Camus’s economics, in his *Arendt, Camus, and Modern Rebellion* (1992):

Consistent with his anarcho-syndicalist leanings, Camus opposed concentrations of wealth and privilege and the bureaucratic work hierarchies characteristic of corporate enterprise. He thus supported currency reform, enterprise committees, and a redistribution of wealth. These reforms, which promised to empower ordinary citizens with bread and freedom, were seen by him as ways to alleviate much of the injustice of capitalism without producing the injustices of bureaucratic communism. (180)

Similar to Crowley, Isaac argues that Camusian economic reform was motivated by the concern for justice alongside humanistic empowerment. These reforms favored the proletariat by decentralizing wealth and power in the hands of the few, allowing more freedom for the working class majority. Both Crowley’s and Isaac’s reading of the economic argument is accurate as far as it goes, yet I wish to supplement their accounts by analyzing overlooked considerations informing Camus’s sense of justice, humanism, and economic policies.

Close attention to the manner in which *The Rebel* criticizes economic systems reveals significant parallels between Camus’s theory of love and his basic assumptions of justice and dignity. For context’s sake, Camus was inspired by Simone Weil’s account of the exploitation of workers in her influential *La Condition ouvrière* (1951), drawing upon her conclusions to critique the type of socialism to which he was opposed:

Simone Weil a raison de dire que la condition ouvrière est deux fois inhumaine, privée d’argent, d’abord, et de dignité ensuite. Un travail auquel on peut s’intéresser, un travail créateur, même mal payé, ne dégrade pas la vie. *Le socialisme industriel* n’a rien fait

d'essentiel pour la condition ouvrière parce qu'il n'a pas touché au principe même de la production et de l'organisation du travail, qu'il a exalté au contraire. Il a pu proposer au travailleur *une justification historique* de même valeur que celle qui consiste à promettre *les joies célestes à celui qui meurt à la peine* ; il ne lui a jamais rendu *la joie du créateur*. (273, my emphasis)

Camus was criticizing a revolutionary type of socialism because it allegedly degrades life for two reasons. It ignores the workers' creative capacity and it *defers their value* to a utopian yonder, to the detriment of the actual workers who suffer for their production. At *Combat* he argued that dominant socialist ideology "exploits the love of humanity" to shirk present duties, sidestepping practical questions to "avoid necessary sacrifices" of the hour (350). We have also seen that *The Rebel* furthers this argument, underscoring the complicity between revolutionary socialism and a defective love type:

Celui qui aime son amie ou son ami l'aime *dans le présent* et la révolution ne veut aimer *qu'un homme qui n'est pas encore là*. Aimer, *d'une certaine manière*, c'est *tuer* l'homme *accompli* qui doit naître par la révolution. (298 – 99, my emphasis)

La révolution consiste à *aimer un homme qui n'existe pas encore*. Mais pour lui qui aime un être vivant, s'il l'aime vraiment, il ne peut accepter de mourir que pour celui-là » (127, my emphasis).

Camus undermined this rival view of socialism because it kills the conditions for genuine love and friendship. Genuine types authentically occur only in the present moment with fellows united in renewed struggle against exploitation, yet the socialism to which he was opposed idolizes a future abstraction of the "ideal" man. Reciprocally, he criticized the socialist *economic* policy because it harmfully defers, and thereby degrades, the worker's value. Camus's *arguments thus dovetail*: economically, this type of socialism is wrong because it uses a "historical justification" that "promises celestial joys to the person who dies in toil." Formally, it is wrong because it does not "love man in the present" but rather the revolutionary *ideal* of the man to come. Both arguments undermine a defective type of

socialism for similar reasons, and so each reinforces the other in Camus's logic. In addition to considerations of justice and humanistic dignity, then, we see a way in which Camusian economics are intertwined with his theory of love. When we interpret the motivation behind his economic policy in this way, it adds to the factors of "justice" and "humanism" that commentators normally invoke in such cases.

Camus criticized economic policies for a different kind of reason, arguing that the worker's dignity also suffers when deprived of the "joy of being the creator." Even when "poorly paid," however, the worker's life is not degraded if given such joy.¹⁵² *The Rebel* extends this critique to modern society at large, socialist or capitalist, bridging the relationship between workers' "real wealth" and their creative drives:

Qui, malgré les prétentions de cette société, peut y dormir en paix, sachant désormais qu'elle tire ses jouissances médiocres du travail de millions d'âmes mortes ? Exigeant pour le travailleur la vraie richesse, qui n'est pas celle de l'argent, mais celle du loisir ou de la création, il a réclamé, malgré les apparences, la qualité de l'homme. (264)

The contrast between "the quality of humanity" and the exploitation of "a million dead souls" supports a humanistic reading that is sensitive to considerations of social justice. One can, however, and arguably should pose a further question, namely, *what is motivating* Camus's humanism and sense of justice in this context? My previous argument referenced faulty love types inherent in the kind of socialism he opposed, economically and formally. Here, Camus targeted the structure of industrialized labor in general. Close analysis of the distinctions he made regarding "productivity" and "accumulation," on the one hand, and then "creativity" on

¹⁵² Analyzing Camus's appropriation of Weil's thought, Sophie Bourgault aptly notes that the argument is not to ignore the importance of wages: "This is not to suggest that Weil and Camus were hostile or indifferent to union demands for increased wages and better security. If both authors speak of the certain beauty and "poetry" of poverty, they never suggested that the proletariat's hunger or low wages were legitimate" (128).

the other, will show how his theory of love motivated his critique of the structure of European society.

Millions of workers suffer from within when they lack leisure and creative expression, Camus argued, and money alone cannot remedy this particular illness. Industrialized capitalism and socialism consider the modern worker as a producer (that is, as a mimetic fabricator) and not a creator. The Cold War's impetus to stockpile serves as the guiding example of how "the struggle for accumulation" deferred considerations of the worker's value, and just treatment, to a distant and abstract end:

Toute collectivité en lutte a besoin d'accumuler au lieu de distribuer ses revenus. Elle accumule pour accroître et accroître sa puissance. Bourgeoisie ou socialiste, *elle renvoie la justice à plus tard*, au profit de la seule puissance. Mais la puissance s'oppose à d'autres puissances. Elle s'équipe, elle s'arme, parce que les autres s'arment et s'équipent. (276, my emphasis)

The economic structure of the Cold War was wrong because it did not do justice to the worker's present condition. It thereby treated the worker as a mere step in the race, and not as a creative being requiring the pursuit of his or her desires proper. Instead of valuing workers as beings with flesh and passions, Cold War economic structures valued teleological calculations in the service of standing reserves of wealth and biopower. The basic problem on Camus's diagnosis was that the workforce was becoming depersonalized *because* true passion, friendship and love were under attack:

L'abstraction, propre au monde des forces et des calculs, *a remplacé les vraies passions* qui sont du domaine *de la chair et de l'irrationnel*. Le ticket substitué au pain, *l'amour et l'amitié soumis à la doctrine*, le destin au plan, le châtement appelé norme, et *la production substituée* à la création vivante, décrivent assez bien cette Europe décharnée, peuplée des fantômes. (300, my emphasis)

This way of framing European society's dehumanization is significant. The modernized economy, and Europe's self-understanding in general, *fail to consider* the "domain of the

flesh and the irrational,” genuine love types, and the “living” creative force that a worker ought to represent. On one side of Camus’s critique, then, lies European society’s steady embrace of technocratic rationality, of production as an end in itself, and more generally of a calculative logic that elides the importance of everyday passions. Thus exsanguinated, Europe’s socio-economic structure was unjust and inhumane because it was molding “a population of haggard phantoms,” that is, a collective whose basic desires and authentic forms of love were ignored. It is significant, then, that Camus’s basic motivation *for* the injustice and inhumanity thereby entailed was importantly conditioned *by* considerations of genuine passions, salubrious love types, and the human creative capacity that feeds them. When we factor Camus’s theory of love into such considerations, it yields a deeper interpretive argument than simply invoking his “humanism” or his sense of “justice.” The way in which he theorized love motivated his humanistic tendencies as well as his understanding of socio-economic justice.

The other side of his sweeping critique of European society deepens the connection between the “metaphysical” impulse to revolt, the manner in which society is organized, and love’s importance in both cases. The originary impulse to revolt does not derive from any particular policy or law; rather, Camus argued that rebellion is warranted as soon as the dominant structure of society neglects its subject’s basic *desires*:

La révolte métaphysique est *le mouvement* par lequel un homme se dresse contre sa condition et la création tout entière. Elle est métaphysique parce qu’elle *conteste les fins* de l’homme... L’esclave proteste contre la condition qui lui est faite à l’intérieur de son état ; la révolte métaphysique contre la condition qui lui est faite en tant qu’homme... Dans les deux cas, en effet, nous trouvons *un jugement de valeur* au nom duquel la révolte refuse son approbation à la condition qui est la sienne... Le maître est déchu dans la mesure même où *il ne répond pas à une exigence qu’il néglige*. (41)

Whether as a slave or a member of society, the revolt's movement begins within the subject's economy of desire. The rebel perceives a disconnect between his values and "the master's" system, which motivates a critique of his own situation in the world. The critique is based neither upon a breach of contract, nor an understanding of rights or duties, for instance; it is instead based upon "a value judgment." As soon as the dominant structure neglects that which the subject truly values, the revolt is justified.

Camus recognized, however, that the aggregate of individual revolts must eventually be harmonized at a basic level of society, allowing for democratic forums to express reform and new policy. His analysis thus led, first, to the common value upon which all members could agree, and then to the question of which type of order best reflects the value:

Si les hommes ne peuvent pas se référer à une valeur commune, reconnue par tous en chacun, alors l'homme est incompréhensible à l'homme. Le rebelle exige que cette valeur soit clairement reconnue en lui-même parce qu'il soupçonne ou sait que, sans ce principe, le désordre et le crime régénéraient sur le monde...La rébellion la plus élémentaire exprime, paradoxalement, l'aspiration à un ordre. (41-42)

The common value is unity in justice, based upon an understanding of the social world's structure.¹⁵³ It is of course important that a modicum of humanistic dignity subtend the revolt, but here as well it is imperative to inquire further in this direction: which *type* of order leads to justice and integrity? Put differently, how can society be organized such that its structure does not entail the disconnect warranting rebellion?

Camus's sweeping critique of "Europe" thus served as a foil in this regard. Its socio-economic tendencies allegedly led to a "phantom population" because its members' true desires were neglected or exploited. Europe, and the postwar industrialized world as such, thus lacked integrity for the reason that its organizational structure neglected the flesh,

¹⁵³ « [Le révolté] se dresse sur un monde brisé pour en réclamer l'unité. Il oppose le principe de justice qui est en lui au principe d'injustice qu'il voit à l'œuvre dans le monde » (42).

passion, and love types that promote integrity. He analyzed the European world in this way not simply to criticize it as a defective type, but also to promote his own remedy.

To have integrity in Camusian theory, there need to be outlets that responsibly harness passion and genuine love types, at both the individual and collective level of society. In terms of policy, Camus argued that socio-economic reform must adhere to this standard. He also theorized society and the importance of the revolt at far more basic registers, moreover. The previous two sections argued that the revolt's essential movement is patterned upon passions, creativity, and genuine love types. These unheralded foundations of the revolt disclose the relationship between the revolt's "very movement" and his theory of love.

In a work devoted to exposing the roots of revolutionary violence and mass politics, it can seem odd that Camus drew upon Heathcliff and Meister Eckhart in *The Rebel's* first chapter, and then "true" and "genuine" types of love and friendship throughout the entire work. One might have the same impression, moreover, with respect to the manner in which he analyzed Ivan Karamazov, Breton, Sade, Saint-Just, and more centrally, the faulty love types inherent in bourgeois and socialist ideology. One might wonder, further, why in the work's conclusion Camus theorized love as a symbolic measure of his romantic theory of social nature. In all of these seemingly idiosyncratic cases, however, Camus was developing the revolt's positive and negative movement, which yields an Ariadne's thread within the *Rebel's* labyrinthine architecture.

Camus's basic social premise is that individuals desire unifying outlets that reflect their basic passions. His basic conclusion is that responsible societies must provide the forms or outlets that harness passion in ways that maintain integrity. To be clear, my argument is *not* that love represents his *only* concern in this regard, because his theory also comprised

justice, dignity, creativity and passion in general. Rather, my claim is that the genuine and faulty love types he examined throughout the work, and elsewhere, represent a foundational element of his political theory. This element is political not only because it informs socio-economic policies, but also because it analyzes the way in which societies understand and thereby organize the worth of their workers and citizens.

It is undeniable that Camus's concern for justice and humanistic values shaped his vision. His theory of love amplifies these same concerns, however, and in many cases it helps to better understand the *target* of, and *the feelings* motivating, his critiques. His theory of love thereby responds to questions such as: why it is wrong to value "productivity" as an end; why certain types of socialist and capitalist structures are flawed; why wealth should be redistributed in certain ways; why the worker is essentially a being with flesh and desire; why the present, and not a distant future, should be valued in terms of justice, and so on. In all such cases, his thoughts on love amplify his arguments *for* justice and dignity.

The secondary literature does not, however, register the connection between his theory of love and his conception of politics in general, and the same can be said for the connection between love and the revolt in particular. Commentators have certainly analyzed the importance of the "love of life," and "love of the earth" as tropes in his works. The Franciscan theologian Arnaud Corbic has traced the genealogy of a "disinterested earthly love" [*l'amour terrestre désintéressé*] in Camus's oeuvre, analyzing its pivotal role as a remedy to the world's Thanatotic forces.¹⁵⁴ The scholar Anthony Rizzuto has conducted

¹⁵⁴ Corbic argues that «*l'amour des êtres et de la terre*» lies at the revolt's heart, which represents «*ce consentement originaire et ultime à la vie, qui l'empêche de sombre dans le nihilisme, cette haine de la vie au nom de l'absurde*» (30, 31, *Op. Cit.*). Corbic's work on Camus (2003) is both original and comprehensive, and so it is thereby curious that his insights are almost never referenced in the scholarship.

much research on the connection between Camus's esthetics and his conception of sexuality. The secondary literature does not contextualize his politics in terms of his theory of love,¹⁵⁵ however, and the problem lies in the way commentators interpret the revolt, as well as the basic motivations informing Camusian justice and humanism. A problem thus emerges when commentators reduce his politics to abstract terms that ignore the premium he placed upon desire, passion and love.

In "*L'homme révolté*": *cinquante ans après* (2001), nine Camus scholars situate the work's legacy, drawing upon themes such as politics, literature, ethics, epistolary correspondence, and Camus's relationship to his contemporaries. It is significant that there is not one analysis of "love" or his theory of love in the entire collection. One reason for this methodological omission concerns the manner in which commentators frame both the politics of the revolt and his motivations for reform. In one of the sections devoted to Camus's politics, "*L'homme révolté: vers une justification éthique de la justice*," Mark Orme characterizes the revolt as follows:

La politique de la révolte selon Camus se manifeste sous forme d'un réformisme socialiste qui maintient le devoir moral de la justice d'éliminer la misère grâce à une distribution plus équitable des ressources. Ce faisant, le réformisme camusien tient à maintenir ouvertes les lignes de communication que revendique la liberté humaine. De nature distributive et inclusive, la justice camusienne repousse donc la justice absolue et exclusive. Elle est le support principal d'une démocratie pluraliste qui s'inspire de valeurs morales à l'échelle humaine réglées par des pouvoirs constitutionnels. (119)

¹⁵⁵ Sophie Bourgault's article "Affliction, Revolt, and Love: A Conversation with Weil and Camus" (2012) represents a notable exception. Bourgault offers an interesting outline of a "politics of love" in Weil and Camus. She conceives of political love as the artist, or intellectual's "duty" to remedy apathy especially to those who have been "silenced" (132). Love in this sense is linked to responsibility and compassion. "For Weil as much as for Camus, it is love that can make us pay attention to those invisible or voiceless downtrodden; it is love that can make one find satisfaction or pride at work. It is love, perhaps, that will make artists and writers remember the silence of the humiliated, the persecuted, and the oppressed" (135).

My purpose in analyzing Orme's formulation of the politics of the revolt is not to critique any particular claim. Rather, it is to outline a lacuna in this type of interpretation. We have seen a reading of the revolt structured at several layers of meaning informed by Camus's theory of desire, passion, and especially of love. Throughout Orme's entire argument (and the vast majority of commentators in general), there is no engagement with Camus's political theory at this level of inquiry. And yet we have seen a case for the basic importance of certain types of love, and more centrally of the passion, simply stated, that motivates *The Rebel's* argument for rebellion. When commentators do not engage Camus's political theory at this level, they do not fully uncover and reflect its impetus and logic.

A related problem emerges when commentators conceive of the revolt with too broad of a scope. Stephen Bronner, a sympathetic and influential critic of Camus's politics, offers the following nuanced definition of revolt:

Rebellion is, for Camus, a product of human nature. It is the practical expression of outrage at injustice by anyone who has experienced the transgression of a certain limit by a master. The precise definition of this limit is never given; it vacillates between what is established by custom and what is a matter of natural right. (82)

Bronner's definition first relegates the revolt to conceptual vagueness, and then draws upon canonical political terms to contextualize the vagueness. It is accurate to claim that Camusian revolt is human, transgressive, and affectively motivated by injustice, yet the manner in which Bronner defines the revolt's spectrum is too abstract. He stipulates that the revolt is never precisely defined, and then he frames its conceptual limits in terms of "custom" and "natural right." I would argue, perhaps controversially, that Camus did offer certain limitations of and within the revolt, for instance when he characterized its "very movement" and its "true" nature as functions of love types. More crucially, however, Bronner's way of situating the revolt's spectrum is similar in its result to Orme's: in both cases the premium

Camus placed on passion, and thereby his theory of love in particular, is elided because of their way of inquiring into the revolt's expression. Their way of interpreting Camus's concern for justice does not reckon with the "burning fever," as it were, underlying his basic motivations for social justice.

My interpretation of Camusian politics traces the importance of his theory of love and desire from approximately 1943 to *The Rebel* and beyond. During this time Camus subtly but consistently argued for the importance of love and "the heart" in the revolt in particular, and in political organization in general. When scholars analyze this same period but do not reckon with this trope in Camusian politics, it presents an incomplete picture of his motivations for rebellion, as well as the precise targets at which he aimed.

We saw in section 3.1 that commentators contextualize the motivation behind Camusian politics as a "moral feeling," a "moral compass," or a "nobility of sentiment." There are advantages to this type of interpretation, especially given his emphasis on humanism and justice, yet there is arguably something important missing as well. In each case, the inclusion of Camus's theory of love and passion would bolster the vague "inner" sense or feeling that scholars attribute to his political motivations, because it would offer a taxonomy of Camus's "inner" drive and its relationship to his intentional targets. Eve Morisi's pioneering *Albert Camus, le souci des autres* gives a well-supported argument for how a nuanced theory of "care" motivates Camusian ethics and politics, and I believe that a strong case can be made for Camus's theory of love as well.

The following section furthers this insight, reconfiguring Camus's complex feelings and targets during the Franco-Algerian struggle by drawing upon his theory of love. In the

following chapter, we shall consider Beauvoir, and then Sartre's politics of the Franco-Algerian crisis alongside their respective theories of love.

3.7: Rethinking Algeria: Romantic Tragedy

The year 1956 really opens in January with Albert Camus's lecture at the *Cercle du progrès*. In the *Place du gouvernement* just around the corner, thousands of European extremists—the *ultras*—shout slogans: “Mendès-France au Poteau!” [“Mendès-France to the gallows!”], and “Camus au Poteau!” Inside the hall... Albert Camus, pale and tense, but determined, reads the text of a speech calling for a truce. On the platform, Ferhat Abbas, the moderate Nationalist leader (who will only join the F.L.N. a few months later) listens to the writer. Nationalist Muslims and liberal Frenchmen mingle and fraternize. Later on, this scene would seem to belong to another epoch. And yet, this dialogue might have led to an Algeria which, like its neighbors, claimed independence without too bloody a price. All Franco-Algerian links would not have been smashed in a single blow: a solution like the one Mandela found in South Africa could have been reached. But instead the law of arms prevailed. (Assia Djebar, *Algerian White: a Narrative*, 109)

[Frantz] Fanon's highly romanticized praise of violence and his faith that by means of absolute violence a new “total man” could be created could not of course stand the test of reality. It has never been clear to me why Camus's view of the birth of a democratic multicultural Algeria has been generally considered naively idealistic, at best the musings of a “beautiful soul” and at worst the cynical vision of a neo-colonialist, while Fanon's cult of total violence and the birth of a new “total man” on the contrary has been taken so seriously by so many. (David Carroll, *Albert Camus the Algerian*, 117)

Metropolitan France has apparently been unable to come up with any political situation other than to say to the French of Algeria, “Die, you have it coming to you!” or “Kill them all, they've asked for it!” Which makes for two different policies but one single surrender, because the real question is not how to die separately but how to live together. (Albert Camus, preface to the *Algerian Chronicles* (1958), 29)

It is difficult to frame Camus's place in the politics of the French-Algerian war. These three citations are at once thoughtful and provocative in their speculations about what was and what might have been. And yet Algeria was not like its neighbors (whether in the Maghreb, or to the south of the continent), Camus and Fanon had very different romantic assumptions of “man,” and “the real question” is almost always a matter of perspective. The implicit question behind each quotation is, however, probably the political question *par excellence*: how to live together without killing each other. My modest response to this question is to critique Camus's Algerian politics by arguing for the way his theory of love,

including his romantic conception of politics, situates his place in the Algerian war and beyond. The purpose is to explain Camus's political *problems* in these terms, alongside his various responses to how nominally different peoples can live together.

I offer a genetic reading for how, in January 1956, Camus's heart was broken and it hurt him politically, that is, how the form and content of his politics of love dissolved, resulting in his temporary inability to accede to new discourses and tactics. I will argue that the form of his politics of love was inscribed primarily in engaged journalism, letters to influential newspapers, and in his call for a civilian truce. The content of his politics of love concerned integrity, or what amounts to the same thing, his vigilant efforts to quash political disrespect, racism, and hatred more generally. His guiding metaphor for integrity was the heart, and the form he drew upon was the respect that true love and *philia* confer. Camus's politics were romantic in the sense argued for in section 3.5, where I argued that his theory of love expresses the revolt's "very movement."

My reading of Camus's politics of love is tragic in the precise sense that he understood tragedy in *The Rebel*: the inability both to let go of, and surpass, the forms that give social life its vigor and structure. It is a political story in the sense that Camus understood the basic forms of postwar politics: engaged journalism aimed at exposing injustice; the means of unifying society while offering forums for dissent; and the demand for integrity in social difference, that is, the question of how to find the right outlets to express "collective passions" in general, and love and *philia* in particular.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ My interpretation situates Camus's political legacy in the moderate tradition, neither in the (more or less) scathing postcolonial vein represented by such critics as O'Brien, Nora, Saïd, and Haddour, nor in the (more or less) hagiographical vein exemplified by such critics as Brée, Bronner and Lévi-Valensi. I rely instead on the "moderate" interpretation of his legacy, namely that from approximately 1937 to 1954, his Algerian politics were among "the most progressive discourses" of the era, as

I briefly draw upon the secondary literature to situate Camus's Algerian legacy, and then unfold my argument in two parts. The first part frames the affective nature of his politics leading up to January 1956, most notably his concern for friendship, the heart, and love. The second part explains the relative strengths and weaknesses of Camus's Algerian politics from his first political writings, to January 1956 and beyond. On my reading, the strengths and the shortcomings of Camus's Algerian politics do not derive from his inability to think past Franco-Algerian colonialism *per se*. Rather, I trace his highly progressive but eventually maladaptive politics alongside the dissolution of the amorous and romantic forms that gave his Algerian political life meaning.

As early as 1936 - 37, the 23 year-old Camus campaigned with vigorous optimism for the birth of a democratic multicultural Algeria. Working as a secretary for the *Maison de la Culture*, he fully supported progressive ideas such as the *Projet Violette*, which attempted to integrate Algerian Muslims into French society. Named for the reformist ex-governor Maurice Violette, the project would have enfranchised 22,000 Muslims with voting rights and full French citizenship, aiming at the eventual inclusion of the broader population. It is significant that only one of the major indigenous factions rejected the plan (the *Etoile Nord-Africaine*, led by Messali Hadj), suggesting that the Project's impetus and future implications were reasonably well received by the indigenous communities.

The Project's manifesto (almost certainly written by Camus) purported to "lay the foundations of a Mediterranean—and in particular a native [*indigène*] culture" that would catalyze a "civilized" plan for broad political integration (« L'Engagement Culturel », 95).

scholars such as Ronald Aronson, Alice Kaplan, Neil Foxlee, David Carroll and others have convincingly argued in their respective ways. The moderate interpretation reciprocally acknowledges that by 1956 Camus was, in the last analysis, incapable of thinking through the key political issues of the Franco-Algerian question.

Neil Foxlee convincingly argues that for all of its paternalistic resonances, Camus's manifesto was nonetheless "one of the most progressive" discourses of the time, denouncing French colonial practices while encouraging a modicum of respect for the indigenous cultures of Algeria:

[The manifesto] demanded that France should cease to apply double standards in Algeria and live up to its own republican ideals. The only role of the intellectual, it declared, was to defend culture, but culture could not live where dignity was dying, and a civilization could not prosper under laws that crushed it: 'one cannot, for example, talk of culture in a country where 900,000 inhabitants [i.e. Muslim children] are deprived of schools, or of civilization, when one is talking of a people weakened [*diminué*—literally "diminished"] by unprecedented poverty and bullied by special laws and inhuman regulations'... [Camus] shows that he was under no illusion as to the inferior economic, legal, and political status of native Algerians. (88-89)

Camus did not formally mint his language of "hearts" and "true love" until his decision to join the Resistance in 1943, but his unheralded political demand in the Manifesto offers a prescient indication of the form his politics would embrace. The means to achieve political unity must begin with a modicum of integrity, in which France was sorely lacking.

Indigenous civilizations were suffering as a direct result of colonial policies, and henceforth Camus stood out as one of the very few intellectuals to *name* the real disparities between the French and the indigenous populations. The manner in which he codified the problem unfolded in two related ways: he documented the material (i.e. socio-economic) injustices alongside the formal wrongs implied (i.e. hypocrisy, betrayal, and the rancor entailed). His endgame was to address the desires of all parties concerned.

In early 1939, the Kabylia region of Algeria suffered from a severe famine ("cruel," Camus called it). He was dispatched to report by the socialist daily newspaper *Alger républicain*, his first stint as a professional writer. With a guide he embarked upon a course of engaged journalism, aiming to calm exasperated hearts while giving form to both his own

and the collective's passions. His series of articles entitled « Misère de la Kabylie » (or “Destitution in the Kabylia Region”) outlined the wretched living conditions of the region and the unjust French colonial practices subtending them. His sleuthing disclosed widespread starvation and unemployment alongside a crippled educational structure, including virtually every layer of the socio-economic strata in Arab and Berber communities. Ieme Van Der Poel argues that Camus's motivations for writing “*Misère de la Kabylie*” connect, importantly, to a broader political critique of the French response to Algerian nationalism:

Camus was very critical of the way in which the French-Algerian government handled the rise of nationalism. In the summer of 1939, several leading members of the PPA were arrested and died of ill treatment in Algerian prisons.¹⁵⁷ In an article published in *Alger républicain*, Camus commented: ‘La montée du nationalisme algérien s’accomplit sur les persécutions dont on le poursuit’ (‘The rise of Algerian nationalism is brought about by the persecution directed against it’). In Camus's view, the repressive measures taken by the French authorities against nationalist political leaders were not the only reason for the growing discontent among native Algerians...[In *Misère de la Kabylie*] he accused his fellow citizens of systematically exploiting the local population, by refusing them equal pay and by providing them with insufficient schools and medical care. (17)

Camus's ten reports in *Misère de la Kabylie* offer voluminous statistical data concerning grain supply, unemployment figures, along with school and medical supplies, to name the main examples. He conceded that in a sense statistics are arbitrary, but in another sense, the destitution revealed a politics of ignorance veiling over harsh colonial realities:

Some of my readers may be thinking, “But these are special cases...It's the Depression, etc. And in any event the figures are *meaningless*.” I confess that I cannot understand this way of looking at the matter...When grain was distributed in Fort-National, I questioned a child who was carrying a small sack of barley on his back. “How many days is that supposed to last?” “Two weeks.” “How many people in your family?” “Five.” “Is that all you have to eat?” “Yes.” “You have no figs?” “No.” “Do you have olive oil to put on your flatcakes?” “No.” And with a suspicious look he proceeded on his way. Is that not enough? When I look at my notes, I see twice as many equally revolting realities, and I despair of ever being able to

¹⁵⁷ The PPA (Algerian Popular Party), led by Messali Hadj, “advocated for certain traditional values,” as opposed to a type of cosmopolitan modernization, “in order to reinforce the notion of an Algerian identity,” notes Van der Poel (16). Reformed into the *Mouvement National Algérien*, Hadj's group was the only main Socialist party to resist the F.L.N. at the war's outbreak, leading to their being eradicated by the F.L.N.

convey them all. It must be done, however, and the whole truth must be told. (*Algerian Chronicles*, 45-46).

His political critique is based upon a glaring inequity that points to a deeper problem, calling for more than material repair. Camus was aiming to change the way that the French and *peïds noirs* conceived of their fellow Algerians. He thereby deflated a facile rhetoric of ‘statistical accuracy’ by presenting his readers with a child who speaks, evoking the child’s family in the process. This way of critiquing French policy bypasses a calculative response while implicitly gauging the heart of his readers. Camus’s method was not pity or blind charity, but rather the presentation of a living, embodied portrait of one’s countrymen. Anticipating his first clandestine editorial at underground *Combat* nearly four years later, he demanded that people on the fence should “take action.” He thereby gave his readers a choice, asking them whether they were politically hypocritical (and racist), or whether they had a modicum of integrity and *philia* for their Algerian fellows:

I would like to dispose of certain arguments often heard in Algeria, arguments that use the supposed Kabyle “mentality” to excuse the current situation. These arguments are beneath contempt. It is despicable, for example, to say that these people can adapt to anything. Mr. Albert Lebrun himself [the President of France from 1932 – 1940], if he had to live on 200 francs a month, would adapt to living under bridges and surviving on garbage and crusts of bread...It is despicable to say that these people don’t have the same needs we do...It is curious to note how the alleged qualities of a people are used to justify the debased condition in which they are kept...This is not the right way to look at things, and it is not the way we will look at things. (51-52)

The right way to look at things was predicated upon a feeling of unity and *philia*, and not upon supposed divisions entailed by ethnic idiosyncrasy. Camus’s opposition to a socio-economically divided Algeria based upon ethnicity was especially clear in the last few reports he wrote. On the one hand, he urged his readers to see “Algerian” problems as not politically divisive: “when the interests of Algeria and France coincide, then you can be sure that hearts and minds will soon follow” (80). Second, the very last lines of his report stressed

that distinct cultures had much to offer to each other, which implies that the cultural Other is sometimes *superior* in certain respects: “Let us learn, at least, to beg pardon of our feverish need of power, the natural bent of mediocre people, by taking upon ourselves the burdens and needs of a wiser people, so as to deliver it unto its profound grandeur” (83). One can of course critique the paternalistic tone, but that critique must reckon with the greed and mediocrity he aimed at the French, as well as the claim of a superior wisdom of a people with longstanding roots. It is of further significance that Camus detailed the socio-economic aspects of his colonial criticism, gave voice to indigenous persons, and used Lebrun as a vivid example.

The tenor of Camus’s report may seem politically mild today, yet at the time his attempt to “tell the whole truth” was indeed shocking. It was not shocking because of any particular problem outlined, but because of the colonial forces he was opposing. Jeanyves Guerin notes that Camus’s investigation was to have an impact “far beyond the usual readership of the [Alger] *Républicain*. Significantly, it immediately provoked a reassuring counter-report in the politically conservative *La Dépêche algérienne*” (Guerin 83). Alongside the veil of reassurance cast by conservative French newspapers, it is also significant that Camus suffered the counter-measures imposed by powerful government agents.¹⁵⁸

Three years before *The Stranger* was published, and one year before France suffered unexpected military defeat, Camus was interrogating Algeria’s heart. He concluded that

¹⁵⁸ Jules Roy, who wrote a scathing critique of the French role in the Algerian war, was one of the first critics to argue that Camus’s “cry of indignation” in the *Misère* and elsewhere led to his being “suspect in the eyes of the authorities,” causing his forced “exile” from Algeria later that year. See Roy’s *The War in Algeria*, (122). Alice Kaplan summarizes both the unique effort of, and the personal cost to Camus in her introduction to his *Algerian Chronicles*: “The Misery of Kabylia” may seem gently humanitarian today, but in 1939 it contributed to the shutting down of Camus’s newspaper and to his blacklisting by the French government in Algeria. He was unable to find a job with any newspaper and was forced to leave the country” (13-14).

France was defective in its disposition to indigenous Algerians (whom it was supposed to be uplifting in its “civilizing mission”). The journalistic form through which he channeled his critique is significant, anticipating the form he theorized in *The Rebel* and beyond. « Pour dominer les passions collectives, il faut, en effet, les vivre et les éprouver, au moins relativement (342) ». Relatively speaking, his weeks spent in the Kabylia region gave him a platform upon which to evoke certain feelings in his readership, feelings that sought to establish a baseline of integrity in the French community, and solidarity in general.

On May 8 1945, the very day Germany formally surrendered, there were protests and demonstrations in the Sétif region of Algeria, which were met with brutally repressive measures by the French government. Referred to as the “Sétif massacre,” commentators view this moment as a microcosmic index of the Algerian war one decade later. Camus was, again, one of the very few public intellectuals to declare that France was at fault, aiming his criticisms at both French ineptitude and a formal concern for the resentment entailed by Algerians. His “Crise en Algérie” series repeats with renewed urgency the key issues outlined in his writings from 1936 to 1939. In addition to documenting the famine caused by unjust grain distribution policies, he framed the political problem’s “interior” in terms of the disrespect and rancor caused by years of double standards and false promises. « Quand on a longtemps vécu d’une espérance et que cette espérance a été démentie, on s’en détourne et *l’on perd jusqu’au désir*. C’est ce qui est arrivé avec les indigènes algériens, et nous sommes les *premiers responsables* » (*Camus à Combat*, 514, my emphasis).

At this historical moment Camus knew, as many people did, that the very idea of a peaceful Franco-Algerian political assimilation was tenuous at best: « l’opinion arabe, si j’en crois mon enquête, est dans sa majorité indifférente ou hostile à la politique d’assimilation »

(518). If there was a robust chance, he argued, it was in the previous decade, reflected in the *Projet Violette* for instance: « Tout cela fait qu'un projet qui aurait été accueilli avec enthousiasme en 1936...ne rencontre plus aujourd'hui que méfiance. Nous sommes encore en retard » (518). Lacking a clear solution, Camus (whose family had been living in Algeria for three generations) attempted to change the terms of the question of how to live together. His basic response was at once interesting and tragic. To truly rethink the political situation, he argued in a May 18 1945 article, there needed to be a revolution in the social situation:

Les peuples aspirent généralement au droit politique que pour commencer et achever leurs conquêtes sociales...Mais ce peuple [arabe] semble avoir perdu sa foi dans la démocratie dont on lui a présenté une caricature. Il espère atteindre autrement un but qui n'a jamais changé et qui est le relèvement de sa condition. (518)

There is a strain of commentary that situates Camus's ignorance of the question of political assimilation as a by-product of the French Algerian war. Such passages show, however, that he had fewer illusions than one might think, and that his tenacity in 1954 and beyond reflected instead his inability to let go of the form that fueled his Algerian writings. In May of 1945, after the brutal repressions at Sétif and Guelma, Camus was trying to reconfigure a slim chance at political reconciliation, not through "legal proceedings," but rather through imagination and *philia*:

Ni la politique ni les susceptibilités nationales *n'ont plus rien à faire* au milieu de cette angoisse. Ce n'est pas le moment en tout cas de faire des procès, car le procès serait général. C'est le moment de faire vite et *de remuer brutalement les imaginations paresseuses et les cœurs insouciantes* qui nous coûtent aujourd'hui *si cher*. Il faut agir et agir vite, et si notre voix peut provoquer les *remous nécessaires*, nous l'emploierons sans épargner personne. (520, my emphasis)

Many of his writings were aimed at the exasperated hearts of indigenous peoples caused by double standards and colonial lip-service, yet his language of the respect that only true love can confer was often aimed at the *pièdes noirs*, and metropolitan France more generally.

Camus's engaged journalism attempted to kindle bonds of loving respect in this community by uplifting their integrity. On the one hand, integrity was actuated by *acknowledging*, in the slim hopes of reconciliation, the systematic malpractice and ethnocentrism in generations of colonial practices. On the other side of the equation was to find ways to stop hating the Other, simply stated. In June of 1945, he reinforced the connection between hatred and social justice: « Tout ce que nous pouvons faire pour la vérité, française et humaine, nous avons à le faire contre la haine... Pour nous, au moins, tâchons de ne rien ajouter aux rancœurs algériennes » (552).¹⁵⁹

As Michael Walzer observes in his “Albert Camus’s Algerian War” (1988), Camus understood himself as contributing to the political integrity of the *pieds noirs* community, even if his efforts were ultimately in vain:

Camus is as much a man of honor as a man of principle, and honor begins with personal loyalty, not with ideological commitment. Hence his Algerian politics, which can be understood as a long, and ultimately a failed, struggle against the degradation of the *piéd noir* community. The threat came from within as much as from without: that is why he condemned French racism long before FLN terrorism... What he could not accept was the claim that the *pieds noirs* were already degraded, condemned beyond hope of redemption, by their colonial history... On that view, as on Fanon’s, there is nothing to do but abandon ship. But Camus conceived the critic as one of the crew, who can’t leave before the passengers. (150)

The degradation of the *piéd noir* community raises an interesting question of cause and effect. It is undeniable that by 1956, this same community (generally speaking) was politically organized to reflect a hateful and xenophobic ethos. It is also undeniable that when Camus gave his ill-fated “Appeal for a Civilian Truce” this same community’s *ultra* faction was shouting “Camus to the gallows!” To inquire as to whether this community could have been

¹⁵⁹ Overcoming hatred was a guiding theme in Camus’s Algerian writings, leading up to his call for a truce in 1956: “The country is dying, poisoned by hatred and injustice. It can save itself only by overcoming its hatred with a surfeit of creative energy” (“A Truce for Civilians”, in *Algerian Chronicles*, 143)

politically organized to have integrity in Camus's sense of the term in the 1930s or 1940s is, however, a different question.

Critics like Walzer and O'Brien, and especially Pierre Nora and Henri Kr ea, argue that the *pi eds noirs* were flawed from within, at least by 1954.¹⁶⁰ That is to say that the community's colonial history had overdetermined it to be politically degraded, period. I wish to suggest that if Camus's voice had been heard louder and taken more seriously by this same community, or had his voice been less marginalized by institutional forces, then the community might very well have had a different ethos and political base. Namely, one that was organized by a politics of love and respect that accepted French colonial injustice as a *fact*, and that looked forward to the political possibility of the birth of a multicultural, democratic Algeria. In this sense it would be a community that disavowed the 'universalism' of 'Frenchness,' while maintaining real dialogue with leaders like Ferhat Abbas (1899 – 1985) for instance, to whom Camus devoted an article in his "Crise en Alg erie" series (1945), applauding that which was both "Algerian" and "French" in his admiration for the man.

The unifying form entailing integrity that preoccupied him in the 1930s and 40s remained constant until January 1956. Camus's public call for a civilian truce highlights his efforts at maintaining that community while reinforcing the importance of love in the process of reconciliation:

For twenty years I have used the feeble means available to me to help bring harmony between our two peoples. To my preaching in favor of *reconciliation*, history has responded in cruel fashion: *the two peoples* I love are *today* locked in mortal combat...But at least one thing unites us all: namely, love of the land we share, and distress. (*Algerian Chronicles*, 150, 151)

¹⁶⁰ For a succinct overview of their arguments, see Carroll's *Albert Camus the Algerian*, 21-26.

To return to Djébar's suggestion (regarding Camus's anticipation of Nelson Mandela's South African politics) one can speculate upon a type of "truth and reconciliation" process that Algeria might have undergone. Drawing upon Camus's journalistic writings from the 1930s and 1940s, during which time many commentators concede that a pacifistic solution could have been reached, it is interesting to consider that his discourse of loving unity amidst difference would have offered a platform upon which to create a "new" Algeria; one in which Arab and Berber leaders saw a galvanized part of the French community giving voice to disrespect, hypocrisy and ethnocentric hatred. It is admittedly speculative, but one can convincingly argue that such formal pledges of allegiance in *philia*, alongside a conscientious admission of historical guilt, would have gone much further than any other leftist strategy on the table.¹⁶¹

Commenting upon Camus's experience of the days leading up to the *Cercle du progrès* on January 22 1956, the French Algerian writer Emmanuel Roblès (1914 – 1995) offers first-hand testimony of the harrowing process in his *Albert Camus et la Trêve Civile* (1978). At several instances leading up to the meeting, he, Camus and many leading indigenous voices met at quickly arranged séances in order to escape the militant reprisals of the *ultras*. His account gives a voice to the indigenous representatives, highlighting the rancor endured by so many years of betrayal and disrespect. At a three-hour meeting the day before Camus's speech, Roblès noted the following interjection by a certain "Mr. Amrani,"

¹⁶¹ Camus's call for truce significantly described the culmination of Franco-Algerian tensions as akin to a longstanding and harsh "family struggle": "Little by little we become caught in a web of old and new accusations, acts of vengeance, and endless bitterness, as in an ancient family quarrel in which grievances accumulate generation after generation to the point where not even the most upright and humane judge can sort things out" (153-154).

perhaps the author and revolutionary who would be tortured just a year later by the French military:

Les Français, dit-il, n'ont pas su ou voulu nous donner une patrie. Quand je vais dans un hôtel, que je dois remplir ma fiche, j'indique Français...mais je sais que c'est faux, je sais que je ne suis pas un Français...J'ai fait la guerre en Italie et en Allemagne, j'ai été blessé (il montre des cicatrices à la gorge). Au retour, j'ai cru que d'avoir combattu pour la France me donnerait ces droits. On m'a vite répliqué que je n'avais qu'un seul droit : de me taire. Si un jour la France était encore en danger, j'irais de nouveau me battre pour elle mais dans une armée algérienne, sous l'uniforme algérien. (10)

In 1945 and before the war, Camus's discourse would have likely spoken to Mr. Amrani where other discourses utterly failed. His politics of unity and integrity amidst difference arguably represented a form that could be embraced by a plurality. His insistence upon sincerely welcoming, and thereby politically congratulating, those who fought for France, whether in Algeria or Madagascar, would certainly have appealed to people such as Amrani. His further insistence upon salubrious love types that need to subtend a movement may have offered a model for recruiting conscientious people on all sides, moreover. In very general terms, the adoption and massification of Camus's efforts at political reconciliation would have offered one of the most progressive discourses possible, rendering 1930s, and possibly 1940s France positively remarkable.

As it stood, though, by February 1956 all French-Algerian newspapers and free press were shut down by martial order, and at that very moment the structures that had given Camus meaning and purpose collapsed. His person was repeatedly threatened by the *ultra* faction, resulting in imposed exile, and then self-imposed silence on the "Algerian" question.¹⁶² There are three basic ways to contextualize Camus's relative silence on the Algerian War in the aftermath of January 1956. First, and to draw upon the preface to his

¹⁶² Critics such as Djebar have noted that the war's tactics of torture and bombings gravely escalated virtually immediately after Camus's failed call for a civilian truce.

Algerian Chronicles, he felt like he could do no more good: he thereby did not want to exacerbate the tensions on both sides, especially since the dissolution of a middle ground.¹⁶³ Second, it is possible that his politics *were* “simply wrong” historically as many critics argue, and so he recognized this on some level and thereby internalized the critique (although one should remember that “simply wrong historically” very often amounts to “might makes right,” which is a highly problematic criterion).¹⁶⁴

The third possibility is the most interesting on my reading, namely that Camus was both deeply wounded and attempting to find new forms with which to renew a struggle ignited twenty years earlier. That is to say that on the one hand, he was recovering from the existential fury and heartbreak at the revolt’s inner sanctum, in the manner argued for earlier. Camus thereby suffered from his own inability to let go of the engaged journalism and the demand for social integrity that mirrored *who he was* politically. His romantic form dissolved and he could not, or would not, throw his whole weight into a radically new form, whatever that novel form might have been. For twenty years, the journalistic democratic forum had allowed him to be “one of the crew” and to promote a politics of love and *philia* from the ground up. He was thereby devastated in 1956 and in search of new outlets for his politics, a “spurned lover” in this sense.

In what follows I reinterpret his unfinished and posthumously published novel *Le Premier homme*, suggesting that Camus had found a new form for expressing his politics of love. *The First Man* (1994) is his final novel, published 34 years after his death in a car crash

¹⁶³ “I have decided to stop participating in the endless polemics whose only effect has been to make the contending factions in Algeria even more intransigent and to deepen the divisions in a France already poisoned by hatred and factionalism” (24).

¹⁶⁴ As Foxlee provocatively inquires, was the Messalite Algerian faction (led by Messali Hadj), wiped out by the F.L.N. during the war, “simply wrong historically?” (Op. cit., 90). To answer in the affirmative would lead to implications many Camusian critics would not accept.

along with the driver, his friend the publishing heir Michel Gallimard. The 320-page work (which contains two lengthy parts, as well as 50 pages of notes and marginalia) was mostly written from 1958 to 1960, which corresponds chronologically to Camus's self-imposed silence on the Algerian question. The autobiographical story unfolds through Jacques Cormery and his ancestors, offering a vision of Algerian life as seen by the lower socio-economic strata, to which Camus's family belonged.¹⁶⁵

A strong case can be made that *The First Man* is a self-consciously political work, because it unfolds through a mythologized "reconciliation" of Muslim and French relations and a "bracketing" of some of the worst violent practices in recent Algerian history, as Peter Dunwoodie argues in his "Re-writing settlement" (1998), (36). He suggests that *The First Man* critically appropriates existing Franco-Mediterranean discourses in order to "ground a new claim based not merely on sacrifice (the past) but on justice (a shared future)" within an emerging multicultural Algeria (38). Camus's final novel thus "counters previous European Algerian discourses," such as the pro-French Latinity doctrine inspired by Louis Bertrand and others, seeking instead to romantically bolster an "ineradicable faith in the shared future...of both the European and Berber/Arab Algerians" (39).

The novel consistently structures itself through various love tropes, including the love of family (especially the love of mother, and a recurring type of avuncular love), romantic love, *philia* with classmates, teachers, and workers, and then a type of unconditional love of the Algerian land (or *l'amour terrestre*, as Arnaud Corbic names it). Many scholars have

¹⁶⁵ Camus's father was a wine merchant who died as a soldier in WWI (as did Sartre's father), and his mother was an illiterate charwoman who could only hear in one ear, raising Albert and his brother (with the help of her brothers and her Spanish mother) in a small flat in the Belcourt district of Algiers. Camus was able to ascend the *cursus* through government scholarships, his marriage into Simone Hié's bourgeois family, and especially through influential teachers to whom he would remain indebted for life.

argued for the capital importance of various types of love in the work, including J.S.T. Garfitt's "Le Premier homm(ag)e: Grounding history in love" (1998), and Debra Kelly's "*Le Premier homme* and the literature of loss" (2007).

Both Garfitt and Kelly seize upon a key fragment of the work written in the first person: "In sum, I will speak of all those whom I loved. And only of that. Profound joy." [« En somme, je vais parler de ceux que j'aimais. Et de cela seulement. Joie profonde » (*Le premier homme*, 312)]. Camus's use of the past tense is significant, suggesting that the novel represents a kind of "homage" representing "confession and forgiveness," on Garfitt's reading (6), as well as a "work of mourning" that deploys "a poetics that is at once love and loss," on Kelly's analysis (197, 198). Garfitt's and (especially) Kelly's reading of *The First Man* yield interesting interpretations of Camus's vision of the Algerian past.

Kelly situates *The First Man* as both fitting into and pushing the limits of a broader topos of North African writers ranging from Albert Memmi to Abdelkébir Khatabi and Assia Djebar, who draw upon the past as a means of reconstituting political memory. She argues that the work "embodies other knowledge than solely history" by its use of love tropes that offer a creative space in which to think of reconciliation and healing:

From the very beginning of the text, the main character is presented as belonging to both Europe and Africa, born into the world in a narrative of Biblical dimensions. Read alongside texts by other North African writers, this recourse to a set of what I have termed 'preferred myths' in order to elaborate an individual selfhood is a recurrent feature of those who have endured the multiple effects of colonization and then tried to come to terms with these in writing. Camus writes of the impact of colonization, resulting in loss for all those involved, even if subsequently some retrieval and reconciliation within fractured identities is possible. (197)

Kelly's analysis of "preferred myth" importantly draws upon love's importance in the healing process of both individual and collective identity, focusing primarily upon the love of mother, love of land, and love of community to reinscribe the past. I wish now to offer a

modest sketch of some overlooked themes of love within the work as representing a possible encounter with the present and the future of Camus's political trajectory.

His unfinished masterpiece arguably signifies a new romantic form out of which the next phase of his life might have flourished. In this section's remainder I wish to develop the lead of critics such as Garfitt and Kelly. *The First Man* theorizes love in ways that draw upon and exceed love types promoted in the previous phases of his life. A consistent but overlooked thread in the work concerns love's rapport with overcoming loss, not merely to confess and to mourn, but more crucially to adapt and to become wiser, simply stated. Camus theorized love in the work as a catalyst for transformation and novel perspective:

Jeune, je demandais aux êtres plus qu'ils ne pouvaient donner : une amitié continuelle, une émotion permanente. Je sais leur demander maintenant moins qu'ils peuvent donner : une compagnie sans phrases. Et leurs émotions, leur amitié, leurs gestes nobles gardent à mes yeux leur valeur entière de miracle : un entier effet de la grâce. (*Feuillet IV*)

Camus structured maturation through three distinct layers in this pregnant passage, which offer microcosmic insight into the work. From youthful naïveté to pragmatic simplicity to metaphysical gratitude, the fragment outlines a *process* leading to a wiser way of seeing things, which we might call a phenomenology of *philia* and affection.

It is significant then that *The First Man* is structured as a genetic story, tracing Jacques Cormery's (Camus's) life through the various types of love that made him who he was. The introduction describes his mother and father's conjugal love and the birth of his brother, and thereafter the work traces each significant step in Jacques' life in tandem with those who loved him, including his uncles and two influential teachers, his quest for the details of his father's death, and a detailed description of the community he loves and will love. Tracing himself and his community through love relationships offers a way of seeing life as a series of intertwined amorous stories, each yielding new ways to inscribe the

significance of the community. Typical historical descriptions use death, wars, and revolutions as their chief milestones, yet *The First Man* establishes a rigorous type of amorous historicity, drawing upon positive familial love types (for those fortunate enough to have them) and those rare, felicitous moments wherein one experiences genuine *philia* and gratuitous acts of love from institutional figures and community pillars (*pieds noirs* and Arab), altering the future in unexpected ways. Rather than seeing these moments as puerile or arbitrary, Camus was configuring a novel way of narrativizing Algerian community.

The love types that permeate the work are typically non-erotic, although there is one capital moment of erotic love that I now wish to analyze as a Camusian political metaphor, reflecting a process of personal and political reconciliation. For context's sake, the following two passages are the last words of the edited manuscript, situated immediately after the narrator's recapitulation of three generations of Algerian life (including a street-view of the repressions and bombings occurring in Algiers in the late 1950s). The first passage is quite lengthy, arguably reflecting a movement from love's personal stakes to its political stakes:

Dans cette obscurité en lui [Jacques], *prenait naissance cette ardeur affamée, cette folie de vivre qui l'avait toujours habité et même aujourd'hui gardait son être intact, rendant simplement plus amer—au milieu de sa famille retrouvée et devant les images de son enfance—le sentiment soudain terrible* que le temps de la jeunesse s'enfuyait, *telle cette femme qu'il avait aimée, oh oui, il l'avait aimée d'un grand amour de tout le cœur et le corps aussi, oui, le désir était royal avec elle, et le monde quand il se retirait d'elle avec un grand cri muet au moment de la jouissance retrouvait son ordre brûlant, et il l'avait aimée à cause de sa beauté et de cette folie de vivre, généreuse et désespérée, qui était la sienne et qui lui faisait refuser, refuser que le temps puisse passer, bien qu'elle sût qu'il passât à ce moment même, ne voulant pas qu'on puisse dire d'elle un jour qu'elle était encore jeune, mais rester jeune au contraire, toujours jeune, éclatant en sanglots un jour où il lui avait dit en riant que la jeunesse passait et que les jours déclinaient : « oh non, oh non, disait-elle dans des larmes, j'aime tant l'amour », et intelligente et supérieure à tant d'égards, peut-être justement parce qu'elle était vraiment intelligente et supérieure, elle refusait le monde tel qu'il était.* (260, my emphasis)

The passage affirms transformation and maturity in terms of love, unfolding a rhythmic cascade of the resistance to change alongside change's necessity. It is significant that love's

power is described as a “refusal” or bulwark against chronology and history, even if in the last analysis tragedy is unavoidable. Camus’s prose both edifies and pathetically underscores the woman he loved, eulogizing the past through love and its milestones. On the one hand, the woman he loves is likely his wife Francine, yet the generality of the “telle cette femme” is significant on my reading, as it connects his conception of erotic love to a metonymized *Algérie*. The passage thereby speaks to his multifaceted senses of love for Algeria throughout his life, and then the “sudden terrible feeling” that so much was changing beyond his control: he and his beloved were crying for what was, knowing that even the strongest bonds cannot endure forever.

Camus’s immediate transition to the final paragraph of the manuscript makes explicit his personal connection to Algeria as well as a return to *The Rebel’s* bulwark against the revolt’s originary fury: « Mais les êtres s’échappent toujours et nous leur échappons aussi; ils sont sans contours fermes » (327):

Et lui aussi...né sur une terre sans aïeux et sans mémoire, où l’anéantissement de ceux qui l’avaient précédé avait été plus total encore et où la vieillesse ne trouvait aucun des secours de la mélancolie qu’elle reçoit dans les pays de civilisation...lui comme une lame solitaire et toujours vibrante destinée à être brisée d’un coup et à jamais, une pure passion de vivre affrontée à une mort totale, sentait aujourd’hui la vie, la jeunesse, *les êtres lui échapper, sans pouvoir* les sauver en rien, et abandonné seulement à l’espoir aveugle que cette *force obscure* pendant tant d’années l’avait soulevé au-dessus des jours, nourri sans mesure, égale aux plus dures des circonstances, lui *fournirait* aussi, de la même générosité inlassable qu’elle lui avait donné ses raisons de vivre, des raisons de vieillir et de mourir sans révolte. (261, final page of the edited manuscript)

The passage acknowledges love lost in order to find a new form of life, one that embraces the dissolution of the past. The guiding thread is crucial, moreover, as this “obscure force” might subtend another layer of life, up to and including a dignified death (Camus’s first and unpublished novel was *A Happy Death* after all). Because the passage follows immediately from the previous citation, it leaves little question that love is the “obscure force” fueling the

transition from an anarchic “land with neither ancestors nor memories” to a stoic wisdom describing love as not simply palliative but also generative: it gives “reasons to live and to grow old” *even if* one has been destined to be “broken once and for all.” I believe that Camus was speaking of himself, his family, and most importantly a poeticized Algeria in this passage, indicative of a new form upon which to ground reconciliation and future possibilities.

Conclusion

The multifaceted amorous narration, here as ever in Camus’s Algerian writings, subtends a communal vision of unheralded but nonetheless daily moments of *philia* and salubrious love types that traverse families, institutions and ethnic communities. *The First Man*’s various uses of love to negotiate history were perhaps indicative of the way Camus would have developed his oeuvre’s “third layer,” offering actual as well as heuristic models upon which to interpret his homeland, past, present and future.

In a less speculative vein, *The First Man*’s démarche furthers the importance of his theory of love and its relationship to his oeuvre. The work also punctuates the simultaneously crucial, but *refractive*, character of the love types that preoccupied his writings. From *The First Man*’s “obscure force” to the “strange” love subtending the revolt, to the mysterious “powers of indignation and love” upon which the future turned at *Combat*, Camus theorized love not so much as an analytical concept but rather as his *star*, guiding his ethical and political vision of the world. The types of love analyzed throughout this chapter thereby chart his development and motivations, yielding distinct courses navigated during the last twenty years of his engaged life. I have offered an interpretation of his political life focusing upon

the amorous themes that arguably structured this same life, seeking to explain Albert Camus's political sentiments and the targets to which they are attached in a new light.

In the next and final chapter, the analysis extends to Beauvoir and then Sartre's politics of the Algerian war, as well as the grounds for Sartre and Camus's definitive political row in 1952. The task is to explain Sartre and Beauvoir's particular interventionist motivations by tracing these back to their theories of love elaborated in the previous decade of their works. The analysis begins with Beauvoir, whose *Ethics of Ambiguity* inaugurated a sharp transition away from her earlier ethical framework, steering her political path in a new direction of her own.

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Chapter Four: Algerian Interruptions; Camusian Critiques: Beauvoir, Sartre

Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre's respective interventions in the Algerian War of Independence (1954 – 1962) represent their most engaged politics, which significantly derived from their theories of love elaborated after the Second World War. Beauvoir's interventionist politics stem from such works as *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947) and *The Second Sex* (1949), developing a generally overlooked political critique of defective and genuine love types. The theory of love in Sartre's theatrical works *The Devil and the Good Lord* (1951) and *Les séquestrés d'Altona* (1959), as well as his massive existential psychobiography and social commentary *Saint Genet* (1952), significantly inform his criticisms of Camus's politics during their famous row in 1952 and beyond, crystallized during the Algerian War. From the death threats to Beauvoir immediately following her support of incarcerated Algerians such as Djamila Boupacha, to the bombing of Sartre's apartment by the ultra right-wing O.A.S. [*Organisation de l'Armée Secrète*], the couple placed themselves at serious risk. They heavily critiqued mainstream French society (while not sparing themselves *qua* belonging to that same society) in order to undermine the practices of colonialism and sanctioned torture.

At the end of chapter Two, the couple was reeling from their ethically suspect amorous practices, spinning aimlessly in a political sense. Tucked under Camus's wing in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, they then forged their own paths, however, steadily building one of the most impressive political edifices of the 1950s and 1960s. When Camus's star was clearly waning in 1956, Beauvoir and Sartre were acceding to a high level of political respectability, certainly in terms of informed interventions and geo-political engagement. My argument begins with a recapitulation of key political stances that Beauvoir

and Sartre respectively adopted during the Franco-Algerian War. I then show how their theories of love elaborated prior to the War informed their respective political stances therein.

4.1: “Djamila” and Algeria: Oppression and the Feminine Other

Certain commentators contextualize Beauvoir’s public intervention on behalf of Djamila Boupacha as *the* moment in which Beauvoir hit her distinctive political stride, marking the transition from “Sartre and Beauvoir’s” existential politics to “Beauvoir’s” politics, simply stated.¹⁶⁶ Her defense of Boupacha importantly connects to a broader critique of French politics, moreover, as it rallied public opinion to expose, and ultimately disrupt France’s colonial tactics in the Algerian war and elsewhere. In this section, first, I briefly contextualize the historical and political stakes of Beauvoir’s intervention, as well as a feminist critique of violent practices in the Franco-Algerian war. The contextual argument draws upon the impressive work of recent scholars such as Julien Murphy (2012), Judith Surkis (2010), Mary Caputi (2006), as well as Boupacha’s attorney Gisèle Hamili, who along with Beauvoir authored *Djamila Boupacha* in 1962.¹⁶⁷ Second, my argument traces Beauvoir’s motivations and arguments in defense of Boupacha as deriving from her theory of love.

¹⁶⁶ Julien Murphy, for instance, argues that “[t]he Boupacha case allowed Beauvoir a chance to carve out her own political response to the conflict, apart from Sartre and others” (267). For a bolder account of Beauvoir’s political divergence from Sartre, see Mary Caputi’s “Beauvoir and the case of Djamila Boupacha,” (109 - 126) esp. 110 – 117.

¹⁶⁷ Beauvoir wrote a lengthy preface to the work, as well as its forerunner, a scathing article published in *Le Monde* on June 3rd, 1960 (“Pour Djamila Boupacha”). Gisèle Hamili wrote the vast majority of *Djamila Boupacha*, drawing upon previous contributions by Beauvoir, Françoise Sagan and others. For a fuller picture of the work’s genesis, see for instance Julien Murphy’s “Preface to *Djamila Boupacha*” (261 – 271), in *Simone de Beauvoir: Political Writings* (2012). “Hamili uncovered, through a meticulous examination of Boupacha’s treatment, a system of torture, lies, deception, disregard for law, and abuse of power rampant in the French army. The book is an extraordinary document of this system” (262).

In May 1960, Djamila Boupacha was 21 years old when imprisoned by the French military for 33 days, facing grave charges of terrorism. She was ultimately absolved as a result of the due process for which her legal team fought, led by the pivotal Tunisian-born attorney Gisèle Hamili (*née* 1927). Boupacha's personal process was nothing less than horrible, however, as she was accused of planting a bomb at a café in the European quarter of Algiers along with aiding the FLN's fight against France.¹⁶⁸ She was in fact an unabashed supporter of the FLN's cause, although the charge of planting a bomb was revealed to be false due to key eye-witness testimony that emerged in step with Beauvoir and Hamili's tactics of publicity and legal contestation.

During her incarceration, Djamila Boupacha was tortured numerous times by French military personnel, which included the use of electrodes, cigarette burns, and rape with a bottle. Boupacha was one of a great many Algerian women and men to be euphemistically 'put to the question,' or rather violated by a host of French soldiers and the bureaucrats who intentionally masked their activities. It is all the more significant that French authorities—up to De Gaulle himself—publically *denied* the practice of torture by 1958, yet numerous scholarly accounts based on documents and testimony from key military personnel have exposed the glaring historical lie.¹⁶⁹

In a very narrow sense the military's tactics were effective: in Boupacha's case, and doubtless many other cases, the result was a forced confession that circularly 'justified' the

¹⁶⁸ Caputi notes that Boupacha's motivations for joining the FLN derived from a feminist Algerian cause: "Boupacha had joined the FLN in Algeria after learning that Muslim girls had been debarred from taking their certificates, which would deny them further education. To protest this debarring, Boupacha became involved in a number of seditious activities including stealing medical supplies, collecting intelligence, and hiding a fellow FLN member in her home" (109).

¹⁶⁹ For a succinct and illuminating account of the glaring discrepancies between the French denial of torture and its daily practice from 1958 to 1962, see J. Surkis's "Ethics and Violence," in *French Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No.2, *Summer* (2010), 38 – 55.

means used to obtain it. In the largest sense, however, her treatment was indicative of the sadistic, hypocritical, and misogynistic system against which Simone de Beauvoir and others militated. Judith Surkis argues that what makes Boupacha's case particularly exceptional was the means by which she and her team fought back. First, by "Boupacha's decision to bring a suit against her torturers," second, by "the skilled and dogged determination of her lawyer, Gisèle Hamili," who urged that Beauvoir in particular take the case; and finally, through Beauvoir's tactics: "she focused on indifference, rather than ignorance, as a locus of a scandal" (41, 42). Beauvoir effectively politicized Djamila Boupacha's particular case of torture and rape as a microcosmic index of France's tyrannical, misogynistic colonial ideology.

"Djamila" was an evocative name during the Algerian war, which could not have escaped Beauvoir's attention. In 1957, there was Jacques Vergès and George Arnaud's "For Djamila Bouhired," a vigorous defense of an FLN *militante* who had been arrested and tortured, as well as a scathing indictment of the juridical errors and military cover-up perpetrated by high-ranking officials. Surkis importantly notes that Djamila Bouhired (who famously laughed out loud when her sentence was declared after a forced confession) "became an iconic heroine of the Algerian national liberation struggle, as the title character in Youssef Chahine's 1958 *Djamila the Algerian* and as a model for the woman who planted bombs in the European quarter in Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*" (39).

When Beauvoir took the case there was already a detailed history of torture and rape perpetrated by the French military in the Algerian War, leading her to make the provocative claim that such abuse was "ordinary" in her preface to *Djamila Boupacha*, and simply "banal" in her 1960 letter to *Le Monde* (which perhaps anticipated Hannah Arendt's analysis of Nazi

war criminals in her 1963 *Eichmann in Jerusalem*). Indeed, *Djamila Boupacha* argues that the “most scandalous part of scandal is that one gets used to it [*on s’y habitue*]” (220), and commentators have generally lauded Beauvoir and Halimi’s intellectual aim “to reach beyond the Left to the French middle-class in order to raise awareness of the government’s illegal methods in Algeria” (Murphy 263). Beauvoir’s concluding remarks in her “Préface” to *Djamila Boupacha*” drive this point further, undermining the type of excuses offered by the German, Vichy, and French public in the aftermath of World War II:

You can either take sides with the torturers of those who are suffering today and passively consent to the martyrdom they endured in your name, almost under your noses—thousands of Djamilas and Ahmeds—or you can refuse not only certain practices, but the end that authorizes and demands them... You are being confronted with the truth from all directions; you can no longer continue to stammer, “We didn’t know...” And knowing, will you be able to feign ignorance or content yourselves with a few token [*inertes*] laments? I hope not. (281)

Beauvoir’s committed support of Boupacha, and by extension the thousands of others who faced torture, marked a key moment in her political identity because she took sides against her own culture and its political mandate. When Beauvoir threw her whole weight to assist a young Algerian woman whom she never knew personally, I suggest that it was because Boupacha’s case reflected a basic problem shrouding the lives of the feminine Other in general: species of the maniacal, and typically masculine desire to possess and to dominate feminine subjects, which found its most potent expression in French colonial tactics in general, and in Djamila Boupacha’s tortures in particular.

My contribution is that Beauvoir’s theory of love is crucial in explaining the existence of tyranny and oppression as functions of “maniacal” passions that she thereby juxtaposed alongside “genuine” forms of love. I draw upon her amorous theory to situate her motivations for supporting Boupacha in particular, as well as for attacking mainstream French politics during the Algerian War. Key works such as *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947)

and *The Second Sex* (1949) are not generally contextualized by the theory of love therein, yet examining the texts with this method helps us to track the development of Beauvoir's political cursus, leading ultimately to her 1960 public intervention on behalf of Djamilia Boupacha.

4.2: From Ambiguity to Oppression's Complicity with Defective Love Types

The Ethics of Ambiguity (or, *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté*) is Beauvoir's first philosophical treatise on the nature of freedom and oppression in societies. The work's main argument is twofold, first, that no rational decision-making procedure can totally advocate for individual or societal well being in terms of *a priori* principles or public legislation. Rather, the perpetual disclosure of new truths and individual choices always entails a fundamental *ambiguity* to ethical deliberation because the world is without a static foundation: our very being's movement constantly assumes new foundations throughout the course of life, whether or not we embrace life's existential potential with "good faith."¹⁷⁰ Second, Beauvoir's positive aim is to account for human praxis in ways that support simultaneously the self's and the Other's radical freedom in all of one's practical decisions, cost what it may to consistency and harmony with the past:

The good of an individual or a group requires that it be taken as an absolute end of our action; but we are not authorized to decide upon this end *a priori*. The fact is that *no behavior is ever authorized to begin with*, and one of the concrete consequences of existentialist ethics is the rejection of all the previous justifications which might be drawn from civilization, the age, and the culture; it is the rejection of every principle of authority. To put it positively, the precept will be to treat the other (to the extent that he is the only one concerned, which is the moment that we are considering at present) as a freedom *so that* his end may be freedom; in using this conducting-wire one will have to incur the *risk*, in each case, *of inventing an original solution*. (142, my emphasis)

¹⁷⁰ Hence the work's incipit citation, borrowed from Montaigne: "Life in itself is neither good nor evil, it is the place of good and evil, according to what you make of it" (7).

The existential claim that “no behavior is ever authorized to begin with” can be construed to imply a certain nihilism regarding ethical deliberation, yet it must be understood in tandem with Beauvoir’s ultimate goal of “treating the other as a freedom so that his or her end may be freedom.” This is to say that on the one hand, there is not, and presumably never will be a moral calculus through which a specific decision is absolutely warranted once and for all. Yet in every single case of practical action ontologically construed, Beauvoir argues that the ethical *fil conducteur* ought to be understood in terms of the for-itself’s *raison d’être*, that is, the freedom to choose, to project onto the world, and to “disclose being” or truths of the world that can be shared with others to further their projects as well as our own. When communities are subtended by this formal aim, it enables the perpetual regeneration of values and reasons that motivate our projects, thus representing “the original condition” for judging the *worth* of existence.¹⁷¹

Tyrannical or politically oppressive regimes clearly fail, however, to keep the Other’s freedom as a guiding end, relying instead upon either (or both) a system of propaganda and censorship or brutal tactics of police and military repression. *The Ethics of Ambiguity* suggests that a balance must be struck that optimizes all individuals’ ability to disclose new truths, while simultaneously blocking the possibility of a certain few imposing the tyrannical project of radically impeding others. At the individual level, the problem arises when one recognizes that the implications of one’s own projects are either enabling or hindering others’

¹⁷¹ “Now, we have seen that the original scheme of man is ambiguous: he wants to be, and to the extent that he coincides with this wish, he fails...But man also wills himself to be a disclosure of being, and if he coincides with this wish, he wins, for the fact is that *the world becomes present by his presence in it*. But the disclosure implies *a perpetual tension* to keep being at a certain distance, to tear oneself from the world, and to assert oneself as a freedom. To wish for the disclosure of the world and to assert oneself as freedom are one and the same movement. *Freedom is the source from which all significations and all values spring. It is the original condition of all justification of existence*” (23-24, my emphasis).

projects. The basic premise of Beauvoir's ethical project thus lies in a nuanced sense of "assuming" the fundamental tension at the heart of our ambiguous condition:

In spite of so many stubborn lies, at every moment, at every opportunity, the truth comes to light, the truth of life and death, of my solitude *and* my bond with the world, of *my freedom* and *my servitude*, of *the insignificance* and *the sovereign importance of each man and all men*. There was Stalingrad and there was Buchenwald, and neither of the two wipes the other out. Since we do not succeed in fleeing it, let us...try to assume our fundamental ambiguity. It is in the knowledge of genuine conditions of our life that we must draw our strength to live and our reason for acting. (9, my emphasis)

So, even our most genuine individual decisions sometimes promote, and sometimes hinder our own and others' freedom in relevant ways. Absent omniscience, the individual must simply assume the more or less desirable consequences and perpetually choose as best as he or she can. This existential dilemma has been pedestrianly rendered as "one must choose and take responsibility" in Beauvoir and Sartre's ethics of the early 1940s. Yet, in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Beauvoir makes a key transition from an individual's ethics to a politics of ambiguity, arguing that societies, and in particular the repressed elements therein, need to preserve "the original condition of all justification of existence" as a means of mitigating the harsher effects of our original situation (24). It is especially when this original condition is politically *suppressed* that the wellspring of engaged politics is revealed:

It is the needs of people, the revolt of a class, *which define* aims and goals. It is from *within* a rejected situation, in the light of this rejection, that a new state appears as desirable; only the will of men decides, and it is on the basis of a certain individual act of rooting itself in the historical and economic world that *this will thrusts itself* toward the future and then *chooses* a *perspective* where such words as goal, progress, efficacy, success, failure, action, adversaries, instruments, and obstacles *have a meaning*. Then certain acts can be regarded as good and others bad. (18-19, my emphasis)

The rejection of a group's collective freedom entails perhaps the deepest political ambiguity, if not irony: to the extent that a repressed group understands itself *as* repressed, "good" and "bad" take on thick significance with respect to the outcome of the group's struggle for autonomous momentum. Reciprocally, the tyrannical or oppressive group's understanding of

their own project unfolds in step with their repressive politics. Beauvoir cites the French colonial situation in Algeria as emblematic of the latter:

All oppressive regimes become stronger *through the degradation* of the repressed. In Algeria I have seen any number of colonists appease their conscience by the contempt in which they held the Arabs who were crushed with misery: the more miserable the latter were, the more contemptible they seemed, so much so that there was *never any room* for remorse. (101, my emphasis)

In 1947, Beauvoir's fledgling critique of the injustices of French colonialism was framed more as a series of observations than the meticulously documented argument employed on behalf of Djamilia Boupacha. I wish now, however, to demarcate a distinct hermeneutical space that bridges her colonial critiques, tracing the critique's evolution alongside the evolution of her theory of love. Beauvoir slowly distanced herself from the egocentric ethical stance that she and Sartre adopted in the 1930s and early 1940s. In 1947 she began to articulate a political theory of "tyranny" and oppression, in particular with respect to marginalized groups. Most importantly, when she criticized colonialism's tendency toward the degradation of the Other, and in particular the feminine Other, her argument unfolded by way of defective love types.

The Ethics of Ambiguity theorizes the drive to oppression and tyranny alongside types of love that underpin the *desires* found in oppressive politics. Defective love types thereby serve as heuristic models for understanding the oppressor or colonizer's desire, whereas salubrious or "genuine" love types enact relations with the Other that preserve his or her autonomy and "original condition for judging the worth of existence." It is thereby significant that only two years after the *Ethics of Ambiguity*, *The Second Sex* argues that the "erotic experience is one that most poignantly *discloses* to human beings the ambiguity of their condition; in it they are aware of themselves as flesh and as spirit, as the other and as

subject” (402, my emphasis). When I exposit the theory of love *cum* oppression in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, the purpose is to show the way it anticipates Beauvoir’s theory of love in the *Second Sex*, and, ultimately, her methodical intervention on behalf of Boupacha and against the colonial torture machine in 1960.

The Ethics of Ambiguity assimilates ways of love and ways of oppression through their affinities within their mechanisms of desire. It thus inquires into the various ways in which “passion is mobilized” in amorous relationships, seeking to identify both defective and healthy love types. The grounds for better and worse types simply reflect the basic problematic of the text: the extent to which amorous passion treats the other as a freedom so that his or her end may be freedom. Beauvoir contends that similar to an individual’s ethics, passion *per se* is essentially ambiguous, and so her first task is to critique passion in terms of its implications *qua* self and other’s freedom. The first task leads to a broader critique of the domination of the other as such, the guiding analysis of which Beauvoir amplified two years later through her critique of the domination of the feminine Other (*The Second Sex*).

To characterize the worthiest end of passion’s “mobilization,” *The Ethics of Ambiguity* argues for a basic kind of “genuine” passion, which when chosen for its own sake leads to world disclosure, mutual respect, and increased freedom in the dynamic of self and other:

Real passion asserts the subjectivity of its involvement. *In amorous passion particularly*, one does not want the beloved being to be admired objectively; one prefers to think her unknown, unrecognized. The lover thinks that his appropriation of her is greater if he is alone in revealing her worth. *That is the genuine thing offered by all passion*. The moment of subjectivity therein vividly asserts itself, in its positive form, in a movement toward the object...as long as it remains alive it is because *subjectivity is animating it*...*At the same time that it is an assumption of this subjectivity, it is also a disclosure of being. It helps populate the world with desirable objects, with exciting meanings.* (64, my emphasis)

Genuine passion reveals a simultaneous movement of self-assertion *and* respectful *distance* with regard to the object of desire, that which Emmanuel Lévinas terms the other person's "alterity," that is, the capacity to "overflow the self" with new meanings that resist a purely auto-poetical configuration of the object.¹⁷² Beauvoir's argument surpasses Lévinas's by opening a further ontological dimension, however, extending the implications of genuine passion to a shared disclosure of being in which "the world," and not simply the lovers, benefits from the mobilization of our originally ambiguous desire. Genuine passion's activity, "especially amorous passion" Beauvoir argues, thus interestingly reflects the Platonic ideal of encouraging the beloved to "give birth to beautiful ideas and works" that have lasting value as social and intellectual goods.¹⁷³ Her claim that "passion is converted to genuine freedom" thus implies that passion is harnessed to respect self and other while also contributing to the disclosure of new truths in society (67).

At the harmful extreme of her analysis lies "maniacal" passion, whose tendencies lead to the "domination" and "tyranny" of the Other.¹⁷⁴ This type of person or group chooses to uniquely fixate passion upon external objects, thereby viewing the world as a repository of possessions, wealth, and domination. This form of desire does not reckon with other freedoms as such, perceiving other people instead as either tools or obstacles. At one extreme, then, "genuine" passion respects the autonomous goals of others by using one's passion to disclose new and sharable truths in the world without the desire for unique possession. At the other extreme, however, the maniacally passionate person forecloses meaningful

¹⁷² See for instance *Totality and Infinity*, "Ethics and the Face," 194 – 219.

¹⁷³ Cf. Plato's *Republic*, 206 b – 209 e.

¹⁷⁴ A different type of extreme is represented by "the sub-man," who interestingly is characterized as "without love and without desire," implying that the capacity to love genuinely is a criterion for genuine humanity on Beauvoir's account (42).

interpersonal relationships through his desire for possession and unwillingness to see others as ends.¹⁷⁵ Beauvoir importantly links this type of passion to a political category, arguing that the man or group exhibiting “maniacal” passion “is on the way to tyranny” (65). When the maniacal desire for possession is not impeded, its effects can lead to the desires expressed in violently oppressive regimes that treat others simply as instruments:

He knows that his will emanates only from him, but he can nevertheless attempt to do that by a partial nihilism. Only the object of his passion appears real and full to him. Why not betray, kill, grow violent?...The whole universe is perceived as an ensemble of means and obstacles through which it is a matter of attaining the thing in which one has engaged his being. (65 - 66)

There is thus a crucial phenomenological aspect to passion’s complicity with oppression: tyrannical passion filters the world as purely instrumental and relative to the fixated object or goal.¹⁷⁶ Beauvoir’s analysis of “tyranny” is not arbitrary, then, when we consider the scope of the *Ethics of Ambiguity*. Maniacal passions, the most extreme example of which is tyrannical passion, are as far as possible from treating the Other as a “freedom so that his or her end may be freedom.” Instead, they impose their type upon the world in order to fulfill a universalized objective wherein the freedom of others is simply not salient. Beauvoir’s conclusion is thus that their passion *prevents them* from responsibly using their freedom in socially and politically responsible ways.

¹⁷⁵ “However, in the passions which we shall call maniacal, to distinguish them from the generous passions, freedom does not find its genuine form. The passionate man [i.e. “he who sets up his object of desire as an absolute”] seeks *possession*; he seeks to attain being...Having withdrawn into an unusual region of the world, seeking not to communicate with other men, this freedom is realized only as separation. Any conversation, any relationship with the passionate man is impossible...The passionate man is not only an inert facticity. He too is on the way to *tyranny*” (65, my emphasis).

¹⁷⁶ It is therefore not surprising that Beauvoir characterizes the will to “fanaticism” along the same lines as tyranny (66).

Given the elucidation of the extreme forms of passion gone wrong, if you will, her argument importantly draws upon *genuine love* as a radically alternative model with which to channel “ambiguous passion” into “genuine freedom,” *without* which the world itself suffers:

It is *only* as something strange, forbidden, as something free, that the other is revealed as other. And to love him genuinely is to love him in his otherness and in that freedom by which he escapes. Love is then renunciation of all possession, of all confusion. One renounces being *in order that* there may be that being *which one is not*. Such generosity, moreover, cannot be exercised on behalf of any object whatsoever. One cannot love a thing in its independence and its separation, for the thing does not have positive independence...Passion is converted to genuine freedom *only if* one destines his existence *to* other existences through the being—whether thing or man—at which he aims, *without hoping to entrap it* in the destiny of the in-itself. Thus, we see that no existence can be validly fulfilled if it is limited to itself. (67, my emphasis)

Genuine love’s guiding ethical thread consists in an existential “generosity” that subordinates the desire for possession and domination *so that* certain others flourish in light of their own autonomous projects. The worth of such generosity shines all the more brightly when the “strange, forbidden,” and radically “free” nature of the other is at issue. Passion is responsibly mobilized “only when” the for-itself chooses to throw his or her whole weight into the project of curtailing one’s own freedom while using it to support another—simply so that they might better exist and thereby transcend their condition—without hoping for anything in return.

The Ethics of Ambiguity’s theory of love serves as a largely overlooked bridge to the political critique of the feminine Other in *The Second Sex*. Beauvoir’s 1949 *magnum opus* critiques the ethical and political implications of patriarchal oppression in western societies, while also arguing for alternative paradigms of love, and ethically responsible desires, which seek to disrupt these oppressive cycles. A key guiding thread from *The Ethics of Ambiguity* to *The Second Sex* thus concerns the possibility of “responsibly mobilizing passion,” at one register, and then of construing ways of liberating the feminine Other so that she might not

remain simply “the prey of the in-itself” in which patriarchal passion has “mutilated” her (669).

It is noteworthy that Beauvoir entitled her critique of patriarchal love types and its concomitant complicity with institutional feminine oppression as simply “The Woman in Love.” Rather than, say, ‘Theoretical Observations on Gender Inequality and Love Relationships,’ which would consistently summarize the chapter, Beauvoir instead situates the feminine Other as the multifaceted repetition of ambiguous individual women ensnared by a universalized problem. *The Second Sex* thus argues that whether as a virgin, a “respectable” wife, a mistress, a prostitute, or a nun, the particular woman in love finds her values of “transcendence” or agency outsourced to the male in the relationship. In general terms, then, she finds her genuine possibilities subordinated to her partner, husband, pimp, priest, or more simply through her putatively natural gender role, in which even “the lesbian” is caught in a vicious cycle. The woman’s typical possibilities to love, and “the conditions under which woman’s sexual life unfolds” in particular, are thereby revealed in “her social and economic situation as a whole” (402). The feminine Other, simply stated, is trapped in cycles of patriarchal tyranny, as *The Second Sex* teaches, and trapped by the tyranny of “maniacal passions,” as the *Ethics of Ambiguity* explores.

The Second Sex also carves out a theoretical space in which to interrogate “genuine” forms of love, or ways of being that generously promote equality and reciprocity while avoiding tyrannical relations that “mutilate” the beloved:

Genuine love ought to be founded on the mutual recognition of two liberties; the lovers would then experience themselves *as both self and other*; neither would give up transcendence, *neither would be mutilated*; together they would manifest values and aims in the world. For one and the other, love would be revelation of self *by the gift of self* and enrichment *of the world*. (667, my emphasis)

I will argue that when Beauvoir threw her weight into defending an unknown, young Algerian woman, she thereby extended her political critique of both maniacal passion and patriarchal oppression to the most dangerous and specific inscription of their nexus: the institutionalized incarceration and tortures of Djamila Boupacha. In doing so, Beauvoir *reciprocally* embodied the very movement of existential “generosity” and “genuine love” when she intervened on behalf of this particular feminine Other, critiquing her own political identity and risking her own freedom in order that “there may be the being that one is not,” as she argued in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*.¹⁷⁷ Beauvoir’s existential engagement also reflects the act of love that would be “revelation of self by the gift of self and enrichment of the world,” as *The Second Sex* argues.¹⁷⁸

Simone de Beauvoir’s commitment to take sides against her culture and its institutional mechanisms of domination was informed by two convergent factors. At the first level of analysis, Beauvoir was motivated by the maniacal passion exemplified by the French military machine, on the one hand, and the perverse, obverse enactment of amorous passion represented by Boupacha’s real, as well as symbolic, rape. Second, Beauvoir inscribed her nascent theory through her public enactment of genuine love on behalf of another. In her total existential engagement in Boupacha’s particular case, Beauvoir interrogated, and helped to undermine the French torture machine by way of its defective passions, its perverse manipulation of the erotic experience, and the patriarchal sexual privilege inscribed in colonial practice. In so doing, Beauvoir transformed her political identity, converting her

¹⁷⁷ “Passion is converted to genuine freedom *only if* one destines his existence to other existences through the being—whether thing or man—at which he aims, without hoping to entrap it in the destiny of the in-itself” (65, my emphasis).

¹⁷⁸ Commentators such as Murphy argue that “Beauvoir risked her reputation on the Boupacha book” (Murphy, 1995), in Caputi, “Beauvoir and the Case of Djamila Boupacha,” 120 *op. cit.*

own passion into genuine freedom in a sustained act on behalf of Boupacha's freedom, simply so that the latter might *be* and live for-herself. Djamila Boupacha's existential choice to fight back against her torturers and their maniacal system of desire offered Beauvoir a chance to practice what she preached.

4.3: Boupacha's Interruption of the Torture-Machine's Desire

The existential "generosity" inherent in genuine love aims to interrupt tyranny and its maniacal passions, whether in a socio-political context or in individual cases. I wish now to extend Beauvoir's critique to what one may call the "colonial torture-machine," or the intersection of maniacal, typically masculine passion and the patriarchal repression of the feminine Other as exemplified in concrete practices of the Franco-Algerian War. I return briefly to *The Second Sex* to then critique Djamila Boupacha's harrowing ordeal in 1960, offering a bridge between two formally distinct acts of engaged political writing. When Beauvoir critiqued the extreme implications of the typical male's amorous passion in 1947 and 1949, she thereby elaborated a prototypical rubric with which to expose the perverse or "maniacal" desires in the vicious practices of the colonial torture-machine. For context's sake, the following passages importantly come from the "Sexual Initiation" chapter of *The Second Sex*, which analyzes the disturbing tendencies for sadistic oppression inherent in typically masculine amorous passion:

"Was it enough? You want more? Was it good?"—the very fact of asking such questions emphasizes the separation, *changes the act of love into a mechanical operation* directed by the male. And that is, indeed, why he asks them. *He really seeks domination* much more than fusion and reciprocity; when the unity of the pair is broken, he is once more sole subject: *to renounce this privileged position requires a great deal of love or of generosity. He likes to have the woman feel humiliated, possessed, in spite of herself.* (397, my emphasis)

There is a troubling connection between the interrogative act and sexual domination, Beauvoir argued, in which the common act of love is transformed into yet another instance of

feminine oppression. Passion and desire are importantly the guiding threads of her analysis: within a patriarchal structure, the male's typical desire can readily extend to domination, humiliation, and possession. Conversely, the means with which to break this cycle necessitates "a great deal of love or generosity," where the typical desire is checked or interrupted by the *renunciation* of possession, by the *recognition* of another liberty, thereby seeing the other as not merely an object to manipulate. Beauvoir's analysis in 1949 presciently anticipated, then, her colonial critiques of 1960. When the typical masculine desire is left unchecked by countervailing forces, it closely resembles *the torturer's* passion and desire:

For a man...erotic pleasure is objectified, desire being directed toward another person instead of being realized within the bounds of self...he himself remains at the center of this activity, being, on the whole, the *subject* as opposed to *objects* that he perceives and *instruments* that he manipulates; he projects himself toward the other without losing his independence, *the feminine flesh is for him a prey*, and *through it* he gains access to the qualities *he desires*, as with any object. (371)

The Second Sex shows that patriarchal sexual desire seeks the feminine Other as an object of possession, thereby rendering her originally transcendent being as immanent, as mere "flesh" to be predatorily manipulated according to maniacal desires. As she argued two years earlier in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, moreover, when such tyrannical desires are left unchecked, then "[o]nly the object of his passion appears real and full to him. Why not betray, kill, grow violent?" (65). The analogous pairing of unchecked masculine sexual desire and political domination of the feminine Other finds its most potent expression in the desire for *martial* conquest in general. *The Second Sex* draws upon the controversial French philosopher and novelist Julien Benda's *Le Rapport d'Uriel* (1928), making explicit the connection between conquest, war, and humiliation in typically masculine amorous desire:

The generative act consisting in the occupation of one being by another, imposes on the one hand the idea of a conqueror, on the other of something conquered. Indeed, when referring to their love relations, *the most civilized* speak of conquest, attack, assault, siege, and of defense, defeat, surrender, clearly shaping *the idea of love upon that of war*. The act, involving the pollution of one person by another, *confers a certain pride upon the polluter, and some humiliation upon the polluted*, even when she consents. (375, my emphasis).

From tyrannical, maniacal amorous passions that objectify and seek to possess, to the systematic socio-political trap represented by patriarchal institutions, Beauvoir's analysis importantly extended to *war's* complicity with humiliating and dominating the feminine other. Beauvoir's amorous critique thereby anticipated contemporary critical theory, describing the dubious "universal civilizing mission" of French colonialism, for instance, as a kind of symbolic rape of "virgin lands," alongside the numerous indigenous female populations who were actually violated by soldiers and colonizers alike.

Beauvoir's methodical analyses of defective love types and their complicity with feminine oppression offer, furthermore, key insights into the mechanism of martial practices. Her theory of love is thus a multifaceted tool with which to expose many different political problems: the abusive male lover *per se*, the 'normal' sexual abuse in the structure of most societies, and ultimately the colonial war-machine, whose unchecked passions led to a dehumanizing locus of domination, humiliation, and possession, as evinced by Djamilia Boupacha's ordeal in particular. Beauvoir thus argued that "the erotic experience is the one that *most poignantly* discloses the ambiguity" of self and other, and that "love represents in its most touching form *the curse that lies heavily* upon woman confined...mutilated, insufficient unto herself" (402, 669, my emphasis). These conclusions are not arbitrary flashes of her pen; rather, they represent a guiding thread of her political theory of colonial masculine oppression.

At each stage of Beauvoir's critique there are also the countervailing forces of existential generosity as channeled in genuine love types, whose desires aim at the existential liberation of the other, for the other's sake and without expectation of anything in return. *The Ethics of Ambiguity* and *The Second Sex* both theorize a model of genuine or generous love in which there is "a renunciation," "a conversion," or simply an interruption of the caustic patriarchal model. I now wish to read both Djamila Boupacha's resistance to the colonial war-machine and the efforts of Gisèle Hamili and Beauvoir as enacting various modes of interrupting the colonial mechanisms of desire.

At the most basic level of interruption, then, Boupacha chose to fight back against her torturers and the system empowering them.¹⁷⁹ In her bold transition from another victim to a determined pursuer of justice, Boupacha's interruption accrued momentum when she joined forces with Gisèle Hamili, whose determination to take and then to follow through with the case was remarkable, especially since French laws enacted in February 1960 made it nearly impossible to fairly represent a suspected member of the F.L.N.¹⁸⁰ Hamili's insistence that Beauvoir take the case reflected her desire to push the matter to "the court of public opinion" if necessary: she "enlisted Beauvoir's help from the first moment" to publicize the case in novel ways that would enlist both "domestic and international support" (Murphy 264).

Beauvoir's first fight was over semantics, which she used to expose maniacal passions and the layers of bad faith in the popular discourse about such "banal" acts of torture during the war. At *Le Monde* in June 1960, the editors insisted that "vagina" and

¹⁷⁹ Surkis notes that: "Boupacha registered her legal complaint of torture immediately and demanded to see a doctor" (43).

¹⁸⁰ See for instance Murphy, 264, and then Surkis, 42, for a deeper account of the difficulties Hamili (and many other lawyers) endured to preserve a modicum of due process. Beauvoir faced similar editorial pressures in her "Préface" to *Djamila Boupacha*.

“rape” be omitted in favor of the euphemistic “womb” and “defloration,” demanding, moreover, to remove entirely the claim that “Djamila was a virgin.”¹⁸¹ Yet Beauvoir tactically preserved the language as she saw best, thereby raising the political stakes of her intervention in two distinct ways. First, and as Murphy argues, “Beauvoir understood the significance of this for a young unmarried Muslim woman and held her ground” (265). Second, on my reading Beauvoir was also publically documenting the flaws of the French machine *from the inside*, that is, by drawing upon her earlier critiques to expose a *sanctuary* of maniacal passions, perverse erotic desires, and their hypocritical complicity with oppression more generally.

When Beauvoir brought the fight to this level of description, her purpose was arguably to disclose a layer of perversion and reckless desire hitherto ignored by the general public, challenging both mainstream metropolitan France and indigenous Algerians to condemn a system flawed from within as well as without. In addition to fanning indignation within the Muslim population of Algeria and elsewhere, then, Beauvoir sought to implode the image of France’s “civilizing” and “universalized” mandate of a superior culture. To support the French colonial machine’s *desires*, knowing that its victims were sexually tortured young women, implied that “such an abdication of responsibility would be a betrayal of France as a whole, of you, of me, of each and every one of us” (“Pour Djamila Boupacha,” *Le Monde*, June 2 1960). It is perhaps unsurprising that the French government immediately ordered all copies of the June 3 *Le Monde* to be seized and destroyed in Algiers (Murphy 265).

¹⁸¹ See for instance Murphy, 264–265.

I have suggested that Beauvoir's argument unfolded as an immanent critique of defective mechanisms of desire—in particular, maniacal desires for domination and oppressive sexual desires—in the inscription of the most prominent figure of masculine privilege and domination, the colonial torture machine. The evolution of her critiques from *The Ethics of Ambiguity* to *The Second Sex* illustrate the manipulative tendencies toward humiliation, domination and predatory behavior when maniacal desires are left unchecked.¹⁸² We have also seen a case arguing that Beauvoir's critique of patriarchal oppression consistently reinforces the existential generosity in genuine love as the basic means of checking or interrupting typically maniacal masculine desires. I now wish to turn to the scholarly question of what motivated Beauvoir to wholly support Djamila Boupacha *in particular*, which remained something of a mystery even to Gisèle Hamili, who later characterized Beauvoir's involvement in the case as “lacking emotional investment,” expressing her dissatisfaction over Beauvoir never wanting to actually meet Boupacha, for instance.¹⁸³

Julien Murphy acknowledges that Beauvoir's “support of Boupacha [was] rather abstract,” yet he characterizes Beauvoir's motivation to intervene on “Boupacha's behalf in particular” as resulting from Beauvoir and Sartre's face-to-face meeting with male FLN prisoners at the camp in Fresnes, 1958: “it is hard to account for [the abstraction] save for

¹⁸² Beauvoir notes that in early 1958, when De Gaulle was challenged on the question of torture's existence, “he arrogantly replied that ‘it was inherent in the System’ and would be abolished later in 1958” (280).

¹⁸³ See Caputi, *Op. cit.*, for a more detailed account of Hamili's dissatisfaction with Beauvoir's emotional investment in the case.

one remark made about her visit with Sartre” (268).¹⁸⁴ Murphy thus argues that by “supporting Boupacha she defended her own integrity as a French citizen and her belief in France as a civilized nation...and while she supported the violent tactics of the FLN... she could not condone the use of torture” (268). His reading is certainly plausible as far as it goes, yet I wish to analyze a further dimension of significance at work.

Djamila Boupacha, the young, tortured and colonized woman, represented a most disturbing, yet for all that a “logical” or systematic instance of a patriarchal mechanism of maniacal desire. At another level of analysis, Djamila Boupacha represented the woman willing to fight back and to throw the right wrenches into the mechanisms of desire that Beauvoir theorized as harmful to women *per se*. At a third level, the chance to significantly help Boupacha represented the enactment of Beauvoir’s conception of *genuine* love. Her refusal to show “emotional investment” in the case, to not *want* to meet face-to-face with Boupacha, and to downplay the significance of the whole affair in her memoirs was thus not a reflection of absolute detachment, but rather a very specific form of detachment: the existential generosity she theorized in previous works.

Genuine love’s generosity entails acting “for the other’s sake, so that [s]he might be free,” “renouncing being in order that there may be the being that one is not,” and the “revelation of self by the gift of self and enrichment of the world” (*The Ethics of Ambiguity*, 67). Recognizing her own political self, and France’s undeserved political superiority: “To *renounce* this privileged position *requires* a great deal of *love* or of *generosity*” (*The Second Sex*, 397, my emphasis). In at least one precise historical moment, Beauvoir arguably

¹⁸⁴ Beauvoir reportedly said afterward that “They said they like Sartre and myself...but in spite of that I don’t feel proud when I speak with these men. We killed more than one million Algerians (men, women and children)” (in Murphy 268).

converted her own passion to genuine freedom when she aided Boupacha, drawing upon nearly fifteen years of her thoughts on love, desire and their intentional targets. Her conclusion to *The Ethics of Ambiguity* offers a strong foreboding of the eventual outcome of France's colonial practices many years later:

Let men attach value to words, forms, colors, mathematical theorems, physical laws, and athletic prowess; *let them accord value to one another in love and friendship*, and the objects, the events, and the men immediately *have* this value; they have it absolutely. It is possible that a man may refuse to love anything on earth; he will prove this refusal and *he will carry it out by suicide*.

Genuine types of love, akin to Camus's theory, reify a formal dimension that often gets overlooked in ethical and political discourses. Beauvoir's conclusion resonates prophetically with respect to the maniacal desires of the French colonial practices in Algeria, and Djamila Boupacha's case in particular.

4.4: Sartre's First Critique of The Politics of Love: 1951

In chapter Two, we observed that recent critics such as Irene McMullin, Gavin Rae, and John Wyatt have analyzed Sartre's theory of love from the 1940s—*Being and Nothingness* (1942), and the unpublished *Notebook for an Ethics* (1947), for instance—in order to better understand the broader ethical implications therein. My contribution to the literature specified the relationship between Sartre's ethics and his amorous theory, arguing that its roots stem from epistolary correspondences and documented biographical practices originating many years before, culminating in a problematic “directorial” type of love wherein the beloved is existentially shaped through the lover's privileged guidance. This current section explores two related, and generally overlooked themes in Sartre's writings from approximately 1950 to 1960, arguing that the political theory of love developed therein

significantly shaped his critique of Camus's politics, as well as Sartre's own critique of the Franco-Algerian War.

When I analyze the highly acclaimed *The Devil and the Good Lord* [*Le diable et le bon dieu*] (1951), the first purpose is to motivate the political dimensions of his theory of love: at which precise targets was Sartre aiming, for instance? And, how did his critique of certain love types inform geo-political strategies of the Cold War and colonialism? Second, when I juxtapose Sartre's theory of love alongside Camus's post World War II writings, the purpose is to critically recontextualize the grounds for their famous "break-up" in 1952, while also extending Sartre's critique to political questions that emerged later in the decade, analyzed in the subsequent section.

Commentators typically situate Sartre and Camus's political row during their public feud in 1952 as concerning Communism and the limits of political violence, yet my reading locates the rupture earlier, and in more nuanced terms: a key motivating factor of their divorce concerned the politics of love. The arguments housed in *The Devil and the Good Lord* most poignantly represent the moment of confrontation and rupture between Sartre and Camus, housing a point-by-point response to the theory of love in Camus's recent works.¹⁸⁵ Anachronistically set during the German Peasant Wars of the sixteenth century—an analogue to the Cold War's ambiguous geo-political situation—the play uses multifaceted considerations of love in all three of its acts to either unmask dubious political strategies or to

¹⁸⁵ When explaining the definitive political rift between Camus and Sartre in the 1950s, commentators do not focus upon "love" as an essential factor therein. Whether in Peter Royle's *The Sartre-Camus Controversy* (1982), David Sprintzen's and Adrian van den Hoven's *Sartre and Camus* (2004), or Charles Forsdick's generally impressive "Camus and Sartre: the Great Quarrel" (2007), the ethics and politics of love are not analyzed as a key motivating factor in their arguments. This section aims to recover a hermeneutic space that has been lost in the fabric of their quarrel over the limits of violence and the best means of social liberation.

sharpen Sartre's emerging commitment to *Realpolitik*. My reading analyzes the play's love types as a kind of *code* or amorous discourse between Sartre and Camus, one that was meant of course as a critique and an admonition, but also meant to enlist and *to convert* the other man, if possible.

The central love types of the play include: Christian love or *agapé* ("love of all men" and "the love of God") personified by the fallen priest, Heinrich; the type of "Communist" love that Camus critiqued in *The Rebel* (1951), which as we saw in the previous chapter "defers the love of man" to a distant, abstract end; an agnostic, unconditional love of "those who suffer" represented by the wise woman Hilda; and finally, a nuanced *unmasking* or *debunking* of love's political value by the main protagonist, the "noble" yet singular "maternal bastard" Goetz, whose ruses and seemingly capricious acts drive the entire play to a crescendo-like endorsement of engaged violence on behalf of the exploited classes.

Love is depicted throughout the first two acts as a guiding political principle, demarcating two basic means of justifying the revolt against the ruling castes. The first argument relies upon Heinrich's justification that "all men are equal under God" and that "all Christians are united by love" (36). The second love type is a terrestrial, fraternal love, guided by the syndicalist leader Nasty, who uses a deferred idea of love to sanctify the principle that the end justifies the means. For instance, responding to a peasant woman pleading for the return of her missing daughter, Nasty assures her that the future will be better, not "in heaven" as she thinks, but "on Earth": "our dead will return to us, everyone will love one another [*tout le monde aimera tout le monde*] and no one will be hungry!" (25). Nasty is clear, moreover, about how this world will be achieved:

NASTY: Je ne connais qu'une Eglise : c'est la société des hommes.

HEINRICH: De tous les hommes, alors, de tous les chrétiens liés par l'amour. Mais toi, tu inaugures ta société par un massacre.

NASTY: Il est trop tôt pour aimer. Nous en achèterons le droit en versant du sang. (36)

Heinrich is initially shocked by Nasty's commitment to using lies and violence to establish his future world, whose "law will be Love" (104). Yet after being mobbed by angry peasants, he slowly accedes to Nasty's "realist" perspective: « Ils m'ont frappé! Et pourtant je les aimais. Dieu ! Comme je les aimais. Je les aimais, mais je leur mentais...ils crevaient comme des mouches et je me taisais » (39). Of all of the powerful agents in *The Devil and the Good Lord*, however, it is the singular General Goetz who fully explores the gamut of love's possibilities: it represents apparent salvation to the likes of Heinrich, Nasty, and to the sheep-like masses more generally, but love is more basically a toolkit that Goetz arbitrarily tinkers with, trying to "do good" but inevitably imbricating himself in arbitrary acts of violence.

Goetz's apparently whimsical character is subtly anchored in terms of his curious uses of "love." Early in the first act, he informs his concubine Catherine (the name of Camus's wife, incidentally) that « ce que j'aime en toi, c'est l'horreur que tu inspire, » and « il faut bien tuer ceux qu'on aime » (47). Later in the act, he tells her that « l'angoisse porte à l'amour, » and finally, justifying to Heinrich the necessity of the upcoming siege: « Va ! Va ! l'angoisse est bonne. Comme ton visage est doux : je le regarde et je sens que vingt mille hommes vont mourir. Je t'aime (*Il l'embrasse sur la bouche.*) Allons, frère ! » (83, 102). There is thus a method to Goetz's madness: his reckless desire to transform "Evil into Good at once" (announced at the end of the first act in defiance to Heinrich's claim that "Love" and "Justice" only exist in God), in fact represents the culmination of a prolonged meditation on love's *instrumental* value. When played according to the right notes, Goetz realizes he can justify virtually any arbitrary deed by glossing it "in the name of love." Reminiscent of

Caligula, Camus's first successful play, the first act explores the relationship between love and arbitrary violence.

The second act reveals Goetz's plot to mercurially transform "evil into good," whose method he confides to a steadily disapproving Nasty:

Avant de faire le Bien je me suis dit qu'il fallait le connaître et j'ai réfléchi longtemps. Eh bien ! Nasty, je le connais. Le Bien, c'est l'amour, *bon* : mais *le fait est* que les hommes *ne s'aiment pas* ; et qu'est-ce qui les empêche ? L'inégalité des conditions, la servitude et la misère. Il faut donc les supprimer. Jusqu'ici nous sommes d'accord, n'est-ce pas ?
... Seulement toi, tu veux remettre le à plus tard la règne... moi, je suis plus malin : j'ai trouvé un moyen *pour qu'il commence tout de suite*, au moins *dans un coin de la terre*, ici. (119, my emphasis)

On my reading, Sartre was crafting a thought experiment to undermine Camus's argument for fraternal love's intrinsic value in politics. Here, love is hypothetically conceded as "the Good, fine [i.e., "if you insist"]," but the fact remains that "people do not love each other" in a meaningful sense. Nasty recognizes this fact, which is why he insists that true fraternal love only exists as a kind of future anterior: when "sufficient blood will have been spilled" for the Communist cause, then there will be "the law of Love" (104). This futural, utopic type of love is of course Camus's precise target in *The Rebel*, as well as in writings from *Combat* (including "Neither Victims nor Executioners"), with which Sartre was quite familiar. Through Goetz, though, Sartre effectively concedes Camus's point about the harm of deferring love's value to a utopian future. Goetz's plan to enact the reign of love and goodness *at once*, and his factual ability *to do so* in a "corner of the Earth at least," engages the very fabric of Camus's political argument for love. Sharply opposed to Camus's vision, though, the second and third acts show that *even when* fraternal or humanitarian love is achieved as the highest value of a political community, it is grossly insufficient to respond to

the needs of the suppressed classes, serving instead only to augment—hypocritically, moreover—the ruling classes’ wealth and propaganda.

Of the many ways Sartre drives his critique home, two are particularly poignant and probing. First, Sartre literally spells out his dig at Camus. The final act thereby opens with Goetz having converted the city of Heidenstamm into his “Republic,” guided by “fraternal love [*l’amour du prochain*]” as the city’s “highest law.” For context’s sake, one of the city’s Instructors is “educating” the peasants accordingly:

L’INSTRUCTEUR: Quelle est cette lettre ? UN PAYSAN : « C’est un A. »
Et celle-ci ? « C’est un M. » Et ces trois-là ? « O S R » Non ! « O U R »
Et le mot entier ? « Amour. » TOUS LES PAYSANS: « Amour, Amour... »
Courage, mes frères, bientôt vous saurez lire. Vous distinguerez le bien du mal et le vrai du faux... Comment créer en nous une seconde nature ? UNE PAYSANNE : « En apprenant au corps les gestes de l’amour. » (176 – 77)

Goetz’s *Philadelphia*, if you will, has indeed placed love as the highest value, to ostensibly good effect: no one has struck anyone in anger since its foundation, everyone is well fed, and “all men are equal,” at least within the walls of Goetz’s city. Yet the artificial and isolationist “lesson” exemplified in the Instructor’s “teaching” sets the stage for Sartre’s first critique of Camus: preach love as you may, but the political and martial forces subtending the *broader* community’s oppression need to be reckoned with as well. That is, unless all of “Germany” is on the same political and socio-economic plane, Goetz’s city of love is only a makeshift refuge, as the shrewd Karl argues.

If Nasty represents the grizzled lieutenant enforcing proletariat discipline throughout the lands, Karl would be its critical theoretician. Karl, and later Hilda, are the only characters in a position to check Goetz’s arbitrary ambitions, attempting to give a voice to all of the exploited classes in their own way. Interrogating the peasants and the instructors, Karl immanently critiques the very principle of Goetz’s city:

KARL: Les paysans et les barons vont se battre. L'INSTRUCTEUR : « Sur les terres de Heidenstamm ? » Non, mais tout autour d'elles. « En ce cas, cela ne nous regarde pas. Nous ne voulons du mal à personne et notre tâche est de faire régner l'amour. » Bravo ! Laissez-les donc s'entre-tuer, la haine, le sang, les massacres sont les aliments nécessaires de votre bonheur. UN PAYSAN : « Qu'est-ce que tu dis ? Tu es fou ? » Ma foi, je répète ce qui se dit partout. (180 – 81)

Karl attempts to motivate the peasants from within the city itself, reinforcing the complicity between their ethic of isolationist love and the misery everywhere as a result of the oppressive class system. The contented peasants reply that “Goetz has assured us we deserve our happiness,” and at any rate, love is sufficient to endure the war:

L'INSTRUCTEUR: « Toutes les guerres sont impies. Nous demeurerons les gardiens de l'amour et les martyrs de la paix. » KARL : Les Seigneurs pillent, violent, et tuent vos frères à vos portes et vous ne les haïssez pas ? UNE PAYSANNE : « Nous les plaignons d'être méchants. » TOUS LES PAYSANS : « Nous les plaignons. » KARL : S'ils sont méchants, n'est-il pas juste que leurs victimes *se révoltent* ? (182, my emphasis)

Camus's *L'homme révolté* was not published until December of 1951, five months after the opening of *The Devil and the Good Lord*, yet Camus and Sartre had been in dialogue over the work for years, and according to Olivier Todd's biography, definitive versions of the manuscript were in circulation earlier in the year (Todd 544). At this very moment the play critiques the *city's* interest in preserving “love” as the highest political value, while also *defending* the use of violence to achieve the revolt, both of which stand in opposition to Camus's central arguments. Through Karl's methodical interrogation, Sartre was targeting a critical relationship between love and self-interest, and love's ambivalent relationship to necessary violence. One can see a prescient glimpse of Sartre's critical distance from Camus during the Algerian War (just three years later) in Karl's unmasking of the politics of love:

KARL: Si vous condamnez les violences de vos frères, vous approuvez donc celle des barons ? L'INSTRUCTEUR : « Non, certes. » Il le faut bien, puisque vous ne voulez pas qu'elles cessent. L'INSTRUCTEUR : « Nous voulons qu'elles cessent par la volonté des barons *eux-mêmes*. » Et qui leur donnera cette volonté ? TOUS LES PAYSANS : « Nous ! Nous ! » Et d'ici-là, qu'est-ce que les paysans doivent faire ? L'INSTRUCTEUR : « Se soumettre, attendre, et prier. » Traîtres ! Vous voilà démasqués : vous *n'avez* d'amour *que*

pour vous mêmes. Mais prenez garde : *si cette guerre s'éclate*, on vous demandera des comptes et *l'on n'admettra point* que vous soyez restés neutres pendant que vos frères se faisaient égorger. (182 – 83, my emphasis)

From one prong of Sartre's critique, it is Karl who inaugurates the dissolution of the city of love, contemptuously critiquing it from the endgame of the total liberation of all exploited classes and persons. Within, however, resides Hilda,¹⁸⁶ who has lived in the city long before Goetz's transformation, bearing witness to and aiding the casualties of war. Introduced in the first scene of the final act, she takes an independent and critical distance from the love preached by the Instructors:

L'INSTRUCTEUR: « Tu ne dis rien, mais tu nous regardes et nous savons que tu ne nous approuves pas. » HILDA : Ne puis-je pas penser ce que je veux ? « Non, Hilda. Ici on pense au grand jour et tout haut. Les pensées de chacun appartiennent à tous. Veux-tu te joindre à nous ? » Non ! « Tu ne nous aimes donc pas ? » Si, mais à ma manière. (177)

Hilda thus represents a reluctant ally to Karl's critique, while also crucially elaborating a type of compassionate love for "only those who suffer." When the city's peasants discuss hanging Karl for his seditious language, Hilda critically takes their love ethic to task:

Eh bien, gentils moutons, vous voilà donc enragés ? Karl est un chien, car il vous pousse à la guerre. Mais il dit vrai et je ne vous permettrai pas de frapper celui qui dit la vérité, d'où qu'il vienne. Il est vrai, mes frères, que votre Cité du Soleil est bâtie sur la misère des autres. UN PAYSAN : « Va ! Tu n'aimes que la misère, Goetz veut construire, lui ! » Votre Goetz est un imposteur. (184 - 185)

Through Karl's external and Hilda's internal critiques, then, Goetz's city begins to unravel. Yet rather than admit a fatal flaw in his politics, Goetz obsessively promotes fraternal love *at all costs*. As war against the barons becomes inevitable, Nasty implores the rogue general

¹⁸⁶ It is significant that Hilda was played by the brilliant Maria Casarès (of *Les enfants du paradis*, for instance) with whom Camus had a strong love affair since 1942, and who starred in his play on love and politics *Les justes* (whose political stakes he theorized in *The Rebel*). Given Sartre's initial attraction to Casarès, his "directorial" love analyzed in chapter Two, and given further that Casarès's persona was used to undermine Camus's arguments for love and politics in *The Devil and the Good Lord*, Sartre was likely targeting Camus in ways that commentators do not typically recognize.

(“the best remaining general in all of Germany”) to aid the class struggle, perhaps just as Sartre was imploring Camus to “get nasty” politically:

NASTY: Et tu laisseras le monde entier s’entr’égorgé pourvu que tu puisses construire ta Cité joujou, ta ville modèle ? GOETZ: Ce village est une arche, j’y ai mis l’amour à l’abri, qu’importe le déluge si j’ai sauvé l’amour ? NASTY: Es-tu fou ? Tu n’échapperas pas à la guerre, elle viendra te chercher jusqu’ici. (193)

Reckoning that he has at least a “one in one-thousand chance” of success to prevent the war, Goetz embarks on a mission to disarm the revolt, imploring his subjects not to worry in his absence: “Remember, my brothers, love will make the war go away! [*l’amour fera reculer la guerre!*]” (197). Goetz’s mission brings him instead into grim contact with the peasant revolt, where Karl initiates him into the rites of love’s chief political value—love’s ability to harness and focus *hatred* upon a common enemy. After accusing Karl of being a mere “prophet of hate,” Karl calmly retorts: “It’s the only way that leads to love [*C’est le seul chemin qui mène à l’amour*]” (202). Goetz justifies his actions to Karl as stemming from his love of the people, whether in gifting all of his land to the peasantry to found his ideal city, or in denouncing the nobles’ causes more generally. Yet first Karl, and later Nasty, strip away his illusions while reconstructing a positive account of love’s political worth.

Karl vehemently argues that such ‘gifts of love’ *cannot* be *reciprocated*, and therefore either only reinforce the status quo, or represent an arbitrary decision based on inequality.¹⁸⁷

Tottering, Goetz muses: “Is there only hate, then? My love...”—to which Karl immediately replies—“Your love comes from the Devil, it pollutes everything it touches,” leaving Goetz

¹⁸⁷ “Tu mens, Goetz, tu mens à ton Dieu. Et vous, mes fils, écoutez ! Quoi que fasse un Seigneur, il ne sera jamais votre égal. Et voilà pourquoi *je vous demande de les tuer tous*. Celui-ci [Goetz] vous a donné ses terres. Mais vous, pouviez-vous lui donner les vôtres ? Il pouvait *choisir* de donner ou de garder. Mais vous, pouviez-vous refuser ? A celui qui donne *sans que* vous puissiez rendre : *Offrez toute la haine de votre cœur*. Car vous étiez esclaves et il vous asservit. Car vous étiez humiliés et il vous humilie davantage. Cadeau du matin, chagrin ! Cadeau du midi, souci ! Cadeau du soir, désespoir ! » (231, my emphasis)

incapacitated: “Nasty! Help me!” (207). Nasty replies: “The case is judged. God is with [Karl]”; yet because Goetz is in fact a useful and skilled general, Nasty still hopes to enlist him into the imminent war’s cause. The fallen Goetz cannot yet comprehend the meaning of Karl’s message, however: “Nasty, these men are wolves. How can you be with them?”— “All of the love in the world is with them [*Tout l’amour de la terre est avec eux*],” Nasty replies, whereupon Goetz retreats back to his city (208).

It is only after interrogating his past beliefs about love through a confrontation with Heinrich, and then listening carefully to Hilda’s message that “those who suffer” are the “only ones” worthy of love, that Goetz sees his past clearly: a series of bad faith. As Beauvoir remarked in her memoir *The Force of Circumstances*, reminiscent of Orestes at the end of *The Flies*, Goetz defiantly throws his whole weight into opposing the enemy.¹⁸⁸ The key difference being, however, that Goetz sees the struggle as a question of *solidarity*, as simply “one among many” united by a curious love *cum* hatred:

NASTY: Tu veux te battre dans nos rangs ? GOETZ: Oui. NASTY: Pourquoi ? GOETZ: J’ai besoin de vous. (*Un temps.*) Je veux être un homme parmi les hommes. NASTY : Rien que ça ? GOETZ: Je sais : c’est le plus difficile. C’est pour cela que je dois commencer par le commencement. NASTY: Quel est le commencement ? GOETZ: *Le crime*. Les hommes aujourd’hui naissent criminels, *il faut que* je revendique ma part de leurs crimes *si* je veux leur amour *et* leurs vertus. Je *voulais* l’amour pur : niaiserie ; *s’aimer*, c’est *haïr* le même ennemi : *j’épouserai* donc votre haine...j’accepte d’être mauvais pour devenir bon. (245, my emphasis)

Goetz’s transformation sinks like a dart into the fabric of Camus’s positive political arguments in both “Neither Victims nor Executioners [*Bourreaux*]” and *The Rebel*, whose introduction argues that our historical lot is essentially a “world of crime” in which the best political response is to *resist* the tendency toward “organized murder,” drawing upon “love”

¹⁸⁸ “In 1944, Sartre thought that any situation could be transcended by subjective effort; in 1951, he knew that circumstances can sometimes steal our transcendence from us; in that case, no individual salvation is possible, only a collective struggle” (242).

to critique the world's "new murderers."¹⁸⁹ Whether Sartre anticipated Camus, or whether Camus hastily added his introduction to the *Rebel*, in either case the two thinkers were fighting in significant part over the politics of love. Goetz's language is unequivocal: "purely" or formally loving each other is "foolishly" insufficient.

The world being the way it is, to become one with those who struggle is to embrace that part of us connected to the world's arbitrary violence, Goetz tells us, crucially focusing the struggle through a peculiar lens. "To love" is thus *to unite* those who struggle *so that* they may better unleash their hatred *to dismantle* those oppressing them. Embracing certain types of "organized" murder guided by this optic, and endorsing political nastiness more generally, is merely a logical conclusion of this view. Perhaps to be consistent with the message, and perhaps to whisper in Camus's ear one last time, Sartre's theory transfers to practice with Goetz's decision to kill a man who questions his loyalty and thereby implicitly refuses to serve Goetz's cause. Wiping the blood off of his sword, he is galvanized to deliver the play's final message:

Voilà le règne de l'homme qui commence. Beau début. Allons, Nasty, je serai *bourreau* et boucher. NASTY: Goetz... (*lui mettant la main sur l'épaule*). GOETZ: N'aie pas peur, je ne flancherai pas. Je leur *ferai horreur* puisque *je n'ai pas d'autre manière de les aimer*, je leur donnerai des ordres, puisque je n'ai pas d'autre manière d'obéir, je resterai seul avec ce ciel vide au-dessus de ma tête, puisque je n'ai pas d'autre manière d'être avec tous. Il y a cette guerre à faire *et je la ferai*. [RIDEAU] (252, my emphasis)

As the curtain closes, the final words of *The Devil and the Good Lord* return to critique the themes of love and violence in the first act, where a Caligula-like Goetz understood love and

¹⁸⁹ The opening of *L'homme révolté* reads: « Il y a des crimes de passion et des crimes de logique. Notre code pénal les distingue assez commodément, par la préméditation. Nous sommes au temps de la préméditation et du crime parfait...c'est la philosophie qui peut servir à tout, même à changer les meurtriers en juges. Heathcliff, dans *Les Hauts de Hurlevent*, tuerait la terre entière pour posséder Catherine, mais il n'aurait pas l'idée de dire que ce meurtre est raisonnable ou justifié par un système. Il l'accomplirait, là s'arrête toute sa croyance. Cela suppose la force de l'amour, et le caractère. La force d'amour étant rare, le meurtre reste exceptionnel » (15).

violence only in an arbitrary or “mad” way. The second act paved the way for the Camusian love utopia, whose failure was from within as well as without, yet the third act’s finale offers a key endorsement of a very specific type of political love and violence, which informed Sartre’s politics in the 1950s when he was labeled a “fellow traveler” of Communism.

The two love types endorsed are as telling in their names as much as their content: a blend of “Nasty” with “Karl,” if you will, which entails using love to *unite* politically exploited groups into a common hatred *of* their oppressors. This prophetic “future anterior” type of love unifies those exploited with a common purpose or solidarity (and hatred *of*...), while also promising a kind of social paradise where everyone *can* love everyone else, because the political relations *will have* been changed to equal. As Karl and Nasty explain, “hate is the only road that leads to love,” and one will only have the equality to promote true love after unleashing a kind of Fanonian violence upon the oppressors. As Nasty foretold, “it is too soon to love. We shall earn the right by spilling blood [*Nous en achèterons le droit en versant du sang*] » (36).

Sartre and Camus’s definitive political breakup is normally contextualized over the former’s acceptance of Communism and sanctioned violence, and the latter’s rejection of Communism and sanctioned violence; yet on my reading, the *grounds* for accepting or rejecting *these two political structures* clearly relate to the politics of love. The year before tons of ink were spilled in the major western presses, Sartre and Camus were engaged in a very personal argument over love’s defective and salubrious political possibilities in the Cold War’s geopolitical situation. In describing Goetz’s conversion through a “Nasty-Karl” Communist sympathy, Sartre was at once arguing for “love” as a unifying force to focus the

oppressed class's hatred, as well as speculating upon a future in which people *would have the right* to love each other in an egalitarian, fraternal sense.

Ronald Aronson argues that, beginning with *The Devil and the Good Lord*, “for Sartre, ethics became indistinguishable from history and politics” (112). Unlike the vast majority of Camus and Sartre’s political commentators, moreover, Aronson identifies love as a trope therein:

Giving up the hope of being and doing good in a pure form—which leads to widespread disaster—Goetz accepts the demands of a prolonged struggle. As long as he and his fellow human beings are unfree, he comes to realize, the only way to love them is to agree to struggle alongside them, as their leader. Solidarity is the only possible love at a time of social struggle. (112)

My contribution further situates Sartre’s theory of love as not merely an isolated pattern in Sartre’s political development, but a guiding thread thereof; at this historical juncture, moreover, it clarifies the grounds for the divorce between his politics and Camus’s. Robert Gallimard, one of the very few people who remained friends with both Camus and Sartre in the aftermath, situated their rupture as “the end of a love story” (Todd 316). Their very close friendship of ten years certainly dissolved to the point of refusing to speak to one another directly, yet I have argued for a reading of their *political* rupture as residing *within* their love stories, existing prior to their very public Gallic feud in which “love” received little to no press at all.

4.5: Love to the Future: “The Right to Love all Men”

My further contribution to the literature extends the politics of love in *The Devil and The Good Lord* to later works and interventions of the 1950s. I draw upon the nexus of the love types embodied in “Nasty” and “Karl” to indicate key developments in Sartre’s ethics, his emerging commitment to Marxist political realism, and then ultimately to a reading of his

critique of the Franco-Algerian War. *The Devil and the Good Lord* is thereby an arguable precursor to the theory of love sketched in his massive biography and social commentary *Saint Genet* (1952). The scholar Juliette Simont has importantly analyzed Sartre's later theory of love in her impressive "Sartrian Ethics" (in *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, 1992), identifying significant connections therein with the theory of love in both earlier works (*Being and Nothingness* and the *Notebooks for an Ethics*) and later works (*The Critique of Dialectical Reason*) and interviews.

Simont explores a 1965 interview conducted by Francis Jeanson where Sartre elaborated upon the "negative" and "positive" spectrum of his theory of love:

In the Hell described in *Being and Nothingness* love was only the desire to be loved...But I have never had the occasion to describe positive love...except in *Saint Genet* where, on the contrary, I explained that it was not at all a fact of death, but a fact of life and that love was the acceptance of the total person—including his viscera. (194)

To contextualize Sartre's retrospective thoughts on love, Simont employs a dazzling argument connecting the ontology of *Being and Nothingness*, which lacks a robust ethics, with the ethical turn in Sartre's thought of the 1950s. She thereby focuses upon two of *Saint Genet's* most intriguing claims, the first of which is an intriguing moral limit: "Any ethic which does not explicitly consider itself to be impossible *today* contributes to the alienation and mystification of man" (195). The second claim infuses his argument about love with a similar ethical imperative: "We are not angels and we do not have the right to understand our enemies, we do not *yet* have the right to love all men" (195, my emphasis). Exploring the notion of the "total" person as both a question of "totality" in the "ontological mode," and then "totality" in the "imperative mode," Simont argues that "all men" and "the whole of man" are not co-extensive, and thus "it is *today* that ethics are mystification and alienation in the insurmountable framework of Manichaeism" (195 – 196). I take Simont's meaning to be

that given a black and white world of ‘us’ versus ‘them,’ then “‘all men’ represents an “impossible totality” (196). Sartrean love and ethics therefore have a temporal incompatibility that is underscored by an insurmountable political incompatibility (“Manichaeism”), which *Saint Genet* brings to the foreground with intriguing, but ultimately quite isolated, claims.

Simont’s analysis primarily concerns Sartre’s ethics, yet in light of my previous section, such analyses would benefit from the political implications of love in *The Devil and the Good Lord*, in particular through the arguments represented by both Nasty and Karl. Written at approximately the same time as *Saint Genet*, its main characters explore the very two claims Simont analyzes. Nasty makes the temporal and the political argument in his own way: “it is too soon to love: we shall earn *the right* by spilling blood” (my emphasis). Karl’s arguments address, moreover, the “total man” as well as the potential “alienation” that emerges in love’s temporal aspects: at present, “hatred is the only path to love,” and so hatred is ironically love’s positive possibility in the emerging class struggle. Similar to Nasty, then, Karl sees the “sole road to love” through a Communist ethic (as do Erich Fromm and Alain Badiou, each in his own way, as I argue in the third Appendix), wherein equal socio-economic relations subtend love’s end. Once the world’s Manichean structure “will have been” eliminated in this future-perfect (or perfect future) sense, both Karl’s argument in *The Devil and the Good Lord* and Simont’s recontextualization of *Saint Genet* would satisfy the same criteria: the abolition of the Manichean premise preventing the “ontological” from being inscribed in the “imperative.”

Goetz’s transformation away from “foolish” and arbitrary conceptions of love (and foolish and arbitrary politics) was motivated in his adoption of Nasty and Karl’s perspectives.

Given a world of “crime” and exploitation, love’s true purpose is to unite solidarity through a common hatred. We have seen that the love Goetz embraces importantly has an “if...then” logic to it, along with a futural moral imperative: “*il faut que je revendique ma part de leurs crimes si je veux leur amour et leurs vertus...j’accepte d’être mauvais pour devenir bon* » (245, my emphasis). Ethics must be understood as impossible today, Sartre was arguing, although we may indeed have the right to love in a fraternal sense when society will have been changed.

The political perspectives offered by Nasty, Karl and Goetz also help to nuance Sartre’s political endorsement of Fanon’s method of violence as a form of total liberation, and anti-colonial violence in general. Just five days after Camus gave his historically unsuccessful “Call for a Civilian Truce” in 1956, Sartre gave a quite successful—and politically radical—speech at the Salle Wagram in Paris (eventually published in *Les temps modernes*, March-April 1956). When the French Communist Party was still ambivalent about fully supporting the Algerian cause at this moment, Sartre boldly threw his weight into the debate, targeting his former good friend with whom he had not spoken in four years, an unnamed “realist with a *soft heart*” who “still believes we can better manage the colonial system” (in Aronson 191, my emphasis).

Whereas Camus argued for coexistence and pacification through a robust sense of love and *philia* enacted in political dialogue and socio-economic reforms, Sartre argued that “intermediate” solutions were simply “reformist *mystification*” (191, my emphasis). His vivid description of colonialism as a “pitiless system” that essentially “dehumanizes” the native Algerian, maintaining the structure through “the force of a minority of settlers,” led to his unequivocal conclusion: the only real ethical and political option for the French was “to

make it *die*,” because “there are no good colonists and bad colonists, a colonist is a colonist” (192, my emphasis). Sartre’s aim in endorsing violence on behalf of the Algerian cause was of course a projected sense of political liberation: “to deliver both the Algerians and the French from the tyranny of colonialism” (191).

I read Sartre’s intervention as igniting a common hatred of the oppressor on behalf of exploited people in order to motivate solidarity within the resistance. Unlike “the realist with a soft heart,” however, Sartre “has a war to fight and he will fight it,” as Goetz boldly proclaimed. To read between the lines, the argument is that loving in a politically genuine sense is to hate the same enemy, and one must be reconciled to do or to endorse bad things in order to become good, to have the “right” to eventually love one another in a society without oppression. Channeling Nasty and having the “goetz” to do what is right, Sartre argued for the death of a system that impeded the future-perfect tense of love. That he acted well before the French Communist left suggests that he understood Karl better than they did. With the right contextualization we can see a case where politics of love imitates art, and surpasses the stagnation of simply walking the party line.

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Conclusion: The Ethics and Politics of Love in Post-War France

Beauvoir, Camus, and Sartre's ethical and political theories were formed from their conceptions of love at an early age, and reformed and refined throughout their lives. Their stories passed through various stages of failure and redemption, of trial and error, and of patent hostility to the other's amorous discourse in some case. In some cases their theory and their practice of love serve to highlight their weaknesses and failures, and in other cases they serve to showcase their uniquely powerful focus and efforts at a time when the French left was ambivalent or unresponsive to what history judged as critically urgent. I have attempted to present and then to explain several key historical moments of their lives and works as patterned around their conception of love. In my dissertation prospectus, "love" was an "organizing principle" of their *oeuvre*, by which I meant that their thoughts on love guided their conception of ethics and politics, in the way that certain stars guide sailors during hostile weather, or that muses motivate artists when inspiration is lacking.

To varying degrees that quasi-metaphorical formulation rings true now as much as ever. In Camus's case, each significant stage of his life can be charted by his theory of love, by his insistence upon affirming love as an ethical and political antidote to the 20th century's Thanatotic tendencies and abstract moral calculations. To better and worse political effect, love was indeed his star, steering him through a lonely "middle path" of a steadily disintegrating "moderate" Left. Of the three, Beauvoir was arguably the most cerebral in the way she used her thoughts on love, crafting theoretical ways of better understanding intersubjective desires and relations by the age of nineteen, and then later in life, crafting bold arguments against her own culture's desires on behalf of another whom she would never meet. And if Sartre was mostly reluctant to theorize love in a "positive" sense, his path was

for all that certainly formed in significant part through recognizing love's pitfalls and moments of implosion. In a sentence, my contribution to the literature is to show how love helps to see what was "really" motivating the three main protagonists, in the intellectually cautious sense of offering another *layer* of semantic, historical, and psychological motivations undergirding their projects.

Appendices

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Appendix 1: A Contextualization of Camus's Intellectual Evolution, 1938 - 1943

The purpose of this Appendix is to offer further historical and biographical insight into a certain scholarly lacuna, namely, the question of the literary practices and relationships bridging Camus's life in two distinct periods, that of "solitude" (in works such as the *Myth of Sisyphus*) and "solidarity" (in writings at *Combat* and beyond), as the literature glosses it. The following ten pages lie outside of the purview of my argument proper, yet they offer interpretive explanations for the importance of engaged journalism, the Occupation, and the key, although generally unheralded people who motivated Camus to focus his theory of love.

The Stranger and *Sisyphus* were published by Gallimard in May and October 1942, respectively, yet the works themselves were fully completed no later than early 1941, as Camus indicated in his notebook entry of February 21st, and as Olivier Todd has corroborated (267). The 30 months between the completion of these texts and his emergence as an active resistant represent something of a lapse in the scholarship, in terms of Camus's intellectual and moral development. In his *Camus: Portrait of a Moralist* (1999) S.E. Bronner summarizes the essential details of Camus's life from January '41 to July '43 as follows:

During this time Camus met the antifascist writer Nicola Chiaromonte, who would become one of his best friends. Basically, however, Camus's existence was relatively uneventful at this time. Then, in August 1942, an attack of tuberculosis led him to convalesce at a sanatorium in Le Panelier, about 35 miles south of Lyons, where he began work on *The Plague*. There he was caught unawares and separated from his wife by the Allied forces landing in North Africa, the first stage of the invasion of Northern Italy. Much time passed before he joined the Resistance toward the end of 1943. (58)

It is perfectly understandable, in one sense, that Bronner would resume Camus's existence as basically "relatively uneventful" during this time of his life. The period in question follows the completion of the works that will vault him to international acclaim, and it precedes his entry into the Resistance and *Combat*. Yet Bronner's summary leaves us with a question.

Just three pages earlier, he introduces this period of Camus's life in a manner that suggests that his existence was *quite* eventful:

World War II changed Camus. Or, better, it shifted his focus. He experienced something new during this time, in which each, employing a phrase from the play *State of Siege*, "was in the same boat." The earlier concern with the plight of the individual in a meaningless world gave way to a preoccupation with solidarity and the ethics of resistance. (55)

Bronner clearly sees Camus's formal entry into the Resistance as decisive for his transformation *from* the primacy of the individual's plight, *to* the preoccupation with solidarity. In one sense his claim is quite clear, echoing many other accounts of Camus's intellectual life during the period in question, some of which we examine below. Albert Camus was not comatose during those 30 months, however, nor was it the case that he woke up one day in July 1943 and decided to "give 'em hell," if you will.

What is missing in this picture, then, is a plausible narrative that bridges this period in a way that incorporates biographical data. In what follows, I attempt a modest outline of such a bridge by connecting Camus's experience as a pre-War journalist (which arguably actuated his concern for social justice) with his sobering reflections of the emotional and moral climate of the early War period. It is arguably during this time that Camus's heart turns away from love's powers as represented by the individual's quantitative ethics, and turns toward the possibility of a new love, and with it, an ethics of collectivity and political solidarity.

Camus as a Civilian Journalist: Algeria 1938 – 1940, Paris 1940

There are at least 150 attributable articles written by Camus during his period as a reporter for the *Alger Républicain* (1938 - 9) and editor-in-chief of the *Soir Républicain* (1939 – 40). Both his training as a journalist as well as its abrupt ending merit attention, because they help to situate his politically maverick disposition on the one hand, and his budding, life-long commitment to social justice, on the other. His first stint as a journalist also helped

him to “discover the power of the pen,” as Jeanyves Guerin puts it in his “Camus and Journalism” (in *The Cambridge Companion to Camus*).

It was “not by choice” that Camus “became a journalist,” rather, it was really due to his tuberculosis, his latent talent as a first-rate writer, and his connection to the influential Pascal Pia (*né* Pierre Durand), who admired Camus’s writing as much as he deplored his relative poverty and inactivity (Guerin 79 – 80). T.B. officially prevented Camus from taking an official teaching position, and although he had no formal training in journalism whatsoever, Pia, a sympathetic, fraternal figure in his life, enlisted him as a fledgling journalist for the *Alger républicain*, and one year later, as editor-in-chief of the *Soir républicain*.

When the two first met, Camus saw in Pia “a former Surrealist and anti-conformist who was close to André Malraux [Camus’s contemporary literary hero]” (Guerin 80). He and Camus had a certain immediate affinity for each other: both had lost their father in the first War, both were anti-establishment in their tendencies (and certainly anti-Daladier), and Pia, ten years Camus’s elder, saw an uncommon maturity in him (Todd 177). In essence, Pia gave the 26 year-old Camus *carte blanche* as editor in chief of the faltering *Soir républicain* (its circulation had fallen from 20,000 to 7,000 copies), and encouraged him to carry on “a guerilla war against censorship, using tactics not unlike those of the French satirical weekly *Le Canard enchainé*” (Guerin 80). The results were interesting.

Within four months of Camus at the helm, the *Soir républicain* is banned and liquidated, to serious effect. Camus was literally forced to leave Algeria for mainland France, the first of his imposed political exiles. Todd puts the blame squarely on Camus’s individualism and utter disregard for consequences, whereas Guerin offers a more nuanced

suggestion: “[t]he shareholders thought it was all his fault and he had to leave Algeria, his homeland” (80). To add to the moment’s political significance, Camus spent two weeks as a journalist in the Kabylia region of Algeria, an autochthonous area largely populated by Berbers. He wrote a lengthy investigative report on the glaring ineptitudes of the French management of the region entitled “Misère de la Kabylie” or “The Misery of Kabylia.” As Alice Kaplan notes in her incisive introduction to Camus’s collection of political writings on the subject, *The Algerian Chronicles*:

[In “The Misery of Kabylia”] Camus reviews statistics on food supplies, nutrition, famine and education...he is deeply informed and angry at a time when other journalists in France took any complaint about Algerian poverty as an attack on French values...“The Misery of Kabylia” may seem gently humanitarian today, but in 1939 it contributed to the shutting down of Camus’s newspaper and to his blacklisting by the French government in Algeria. He was unable to find a job with any newspaper and was forced to leave the country. (13-14)

The political significance of Camus’s Algerian journalism is analyzed in detail in the third chapter. His journalistic episode from 1938 – 1940 is nonetheless interesting because it shows two distinct things about Camus at this time. One, he had a maverick, anti-establishment streak that lasted until his death, which in this case manifested itself in the form of reckless editorial gambits, perhaps heedless of the lives impacted (several people lost their jobs to a young man with little true experience, when a more conventional approach to running the paper would have likely changed this outcome).

Second, Camus’s initiation into journalism opened his mind to a way of seeing, and especially of *describing* the world with an eye for perceived *injustice*. When Guerin introduces Camus’s work at *Combat* four years later, he contextualizes its importance with François Mauriac’s description of “journalism as the perfect form of *littérature engagée*” (84). I would add that there are key traces of this formation in Camus’s pre-war journalism, moreover. On the one hand, it is true that he often saw his assignments as banal and even

contemptuous, for example in 1938, when he complained to his former teacher, Jean Grenier, about how disappointing it was: “nothing but dogs being run over, and bits of reporting” (Geurin 80). Yet it is also true that the author who depicted the absurdity of the legal system in *The Stranger* used his experience as a court reporter to “take the lid off things”:

He always made the event his starting point, even if it was just some minor news item, before trying to explain its social and political implications. For example, he wrote several reports about a gas-explosion in a working class district before accusing the Mayor of Algiers of not caring about the misfortunes of his fellow citizens... at times it was as a moralist rather than a citizen that Camus wrote editorials about what he had witnessed. (80-1)

His editorials at *Combat* made the event itself a platform on which to harness its socio-political consequences, and if he was “at times” a moralist in 1938 - 40, this tendency certainly comes to dominate his editorial output during the end of the War.¹⁹⁰ By 1939, however, the rookie who had initially seen his job as dead dogs with a touch of reporting becomes quite the effective champion for social justice:

Camus followed the pro-Dreyfus tradition, taking a passionate interest in a number of causes. He devoted eleven articles to the trial of Michel Hodent, an overscrupulous employee, the victim of a plot by powerful colonial interests. He then took up the case of Sheikh Okbi (a Muslim dignitary accused of having instigated the murder of a high-ranking religious official), and subsequently that of a number of locals accused of setting fire to shacks. In all three cases, Camus was attacking an administration primarily in thrall to important colonial interests. He had no hesitation about saying ‘I...’ and was discovering the power of the pen: thanks to him, both Michel Hodent and the sheikh were acquitted. (81)¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ The analyses in the following section seek to clarify the precise relationship between his conception of morality and the way it influences his emerging concern with a distinct type of political love, which will become explicit in autumn 1944.

¹⁹¹ Ieme Van der Poel also comments on the importance of the early journalistic period in Camus’s life to the extent that it informs his prescient concern with the misguided French responses to the question of Algerian nationalism. “Camus was very critical of the way in which the French-Algerian government handled the rise of nationalism. In the summer of 1939, several leading members of the PPA [Partie Populaire de l’Algérie] were arrested and died of ill treatment in Algerian prisons. In an article published in *Alger républicain*, Camus commented: ‘La montée du nationalisme algérien s’accomplit sur les persécutions dont on le poursuit’” (“Camus: a life lived in critical times”, 16-7). Van der Poel continues in this vein by citing the importance of Camus’s ten-article installment of *Misère de la Kabylie*, to which we will return in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Guerin's analysis offers rich resources for better understanding Camus's journalistic formation, yet similar to Bronner's account, he does not give any detailed account of Camus's life from June 1940, to 1944. The analysis jumps from Camus's brief stint as a "secdac" or lowly secretary at *Paris Soir* in 1940, straight to "The Liberation of 1944" and Camus's emergence as editor-in-chief of *Combat* (84). It is curious, to me at least, that neither critic attempts to give any indication of the pathmarks that may have guided Camus to the remarkable next phase of his life, especially when their stated purpose is to explain the significant change (from solitude to solidarity, simply stated) of Camus's time at *Combat*.

We have seen an outline of the importance of Camus's training as a journalist in the final two years before the War. We will see in close detail the next remarkable journalistic phase of his life ('44 – '47), in terms that situate the emerging importance of love and its relationship to his conception of politics. In the following section, however, I would like to offer a sketch of his intellectual and moral life that bridges these two periods. I focus on Todd's biographical account, and my emphasis is primarily on Camus's letters themselves: what do they show about his heart and mind, at least in a preliminary sense? The purpose is to connect the dots of some documented biographical data with an eye for how Camus *felt* during this dark time, and what his feelings were *about*. An essential component of his strategy at *Combat* is, on my reading, to use an affective, moralizing strategy to re-unite France and to galvanize his political base. I offer some insight into his own affective life from June 1940 to July 1943 in terms that accentuate its intentionality and potential, before proceeding with a detailed analysis of the next phase of his life.

A Sketch of Camus's Life During the War: 1940 to 1943

Camus's experience as a journalist in Algeria helped define a method for describing and framing events in terms of their moral and political significance: for example, was Michel Hodent persecuted for being a conscientious whistleblower? Was the French response to Algerian nationalism repressively brutal? Was Sheikh Okbi the victim of an internecine religious conspiracy? Camus publicly asked such questions, and more importantly, followed up on them in his articles, often to the dismay of powerful and unscrupulous people. His journalism also ignited a kind of solidarity, both through his bond with Pia (which will become decisive for his entry into the Resistance) as well as through the journalistic possibilities of "taking the lid off things" and finding "the power of the pen" to expose perceived injustice, as Guerin nicely puts it.

After he was effectively forced out of Algeria for the strange accusation of promoting "Communist" ideas at *Soir républicain*, he once again piggy-backs on Pia's kindness when the latter connects him to a "secdac" job at *Paris-Soir*, on the condition, issued by the editor, that « on ne fait pas de politique ici » [*one does not do any politics here.*]¹⁹² His work as a secretary for *Paris-Soir* involved no writing whatsoever, but at 25 hours per week it left him time to nearly complete *The Stranger* and *Sisyphus*.

When the German advance on Paris became immanent in June, Camus headed south (along with approximately 2 million people, both French civilian and military, and Dutch and Belgian refugees) with the team of *Paris-Soir*, looking for any means of refuge, or in his own case a passage back to Algeria to be with his fiancée Francine, whom he marries in

¹⁹² Todd, 236. Todd also explains the curious allegation of "spreading Communist ideas" as simply a common attribution of the time that labeled anti-establishment writing (like Camus's at *Soir républicain*) under the vague rubric of either "anarchism" or "Communism."

December. Like so many other people, Camus's exodus from the capital and entry into another life was an adventure in itself. He was marked by the material and moral impoverishment that he experienced during this period. With the telephone lines cut and the *Stukas* blowing up the surrounding power stations, the directors of *Paris-Soir* heeded a general public appeal from Pierre Laval, stating that displaced Parisian newspapers were welcome to use his press (*Le Moniteur*) at Clermont-Ferrand: some cars and trucks were hastily assembled, and Camus found himself driving a proofreader in a beat up truck throughout the night, to avoid bombardments (Todd 253).

From Clermont there was a new directive that they regroup, and Camus and (most of) the crew of *Paris-Soir* eventually found a measure of stability at Bordeaux, although the town underwent artillery fire until the armistice of June 22. Three days later, Camus's letters express both grim reality and naïve optimism. On the one hand, « la vie en France est un enfer pour l'esprit maintenant, » and on the other, he succumbed to the quasi-delusional hope that « son équipe [*Paris Soir*]...va remonter à Paris faire un journal au milieu des troupes d'occupation » (Todd 254). Camus's epistolary output in the following months consistently underscores both his (unfulfilled) urge to « *faire quelque chose* » as well as the « *lâcheté* » that he witnesses in his fellows, and perhaps within himself on some level.

Here too, stability in his early life represents atrophy and decline. He is restless even in his letters, which deplore his actual living situation and express his dream of getting to a Mediterranean port to steal a boat for Algeria. And when he finally arrived at Oran (through conventional means) to live with his wife Francine and her family, he was soon eager to leave. Whether because of “in-law” frustration, or his general fear of stability and need for

detachment, Camus spent most of the next few months either alone, finishing *The Stranger* and *Sisyphus*, or sometimes traveling the twelve hours to Algiers to get away from things.

In early 1941 he frequented an “originally intellectual” resistance group, comprising many Jews, which effectively mobilized in 1942, and he discussed organizing “*quelque chose*” with sympathetic listeners, but to no direct avail (Todd 266). As Todd describes it, the bulk of ’41 and much of ’42 was spent trying to avoid his new family and to publish his “absurd trilogy” through a respectable press. His constant correspondence with the likes of André Malraux, Francis Ponge, and Gaston Gallimard eventually eased his conscience that the works themselves are not just good, but highly exceptional. Camus importantly expressed his disgust, in numerous letters, for the omission of the chapter on Kafka from *The Myth of Sisyphus* (the ban on Jewish writers made no exceptions), but for all that he allowed Gallimard to publish it sans Kafka.

At this point in his life, it is tempting to describe Camus as prudently self-concerned, even self-preoccupied in terms of his activity and his feelings. Aside from corresponding with literary figures regarding his soon to be published works, it is unclear what else truly motivated him. In 1941-2 he earned his living at Oran thanks to private teaching sessions afforded him by his friend André Bénichou, and he wrote about the joys of coaching soccer, for example (Todd 270, 273).

As commentators have pointed out, by 1942 (at the latest) there were certain outlets, in both Algeria as well as France, for him to join the Resistance in some active form, yet by all accounts he did not (see for instance S.E. Bronner 59). My purpose in describing his life in this way is not to pass a type of anachronistic moral judgment, however (as Ronald Aronson does, for example, 33). Rather, the purpose is to offer the outline of a narrative for

why Camus disengaged from his love for detachment, and fear of stability, in favor of an ethics of solidarity and a politics of unity that were founded on a new form of love.

To briefly resume his biographical situation at this point, in August 1942 he had to return to France in order to treat a severe bout of T.B., and he was literally blocked from returning to Algeria by the looming Allied invasion of Italy. At the request of Pia and others, a physically recovered Camus arrived on the Parisian scene to work for Gallimard and to showcase his literary and theatrical talent. It is here that he met Beauvoir and Sartre, but more importantly a *group* of people *like* Pia—respected intellectuals who lived the double-life of civilian/resistant. It is in *this* milieu that he formulated the ideas that lead to what Ronald Aronson calls his first “direct wartime intervention,” in *Letters to a German Friend* (32), analyzed in the second half of the first chapter.

Appendix 2: Key Biographical and Authorial Considerations of Beauvoir and Sartre, 1930 to 1945.

First, I offer a select overview of numerous biographies. The purpose is to indicate the remarkable degree of biographical ambiguity with respect to Sartre and Beauvoir's trajectories during the period 1930 to 1945. Second, my analysis turns to a crucial, albeit scholarly undervalued question of *co*-authorship in their published works. The second section thus draws upon recent scholarship that argues for the unacknowledged primacy of Beauvoir's influence upon Sartre's works of the 1940s. I offer a nuanced critique of this scholarship, in order to restore a modicum of intellectual balance in the Sartre-Beauvoir relationship, which is neither obsessively pro-Sartre nor pro-Beauvoir, simply stated. I argue in chapter Two that Beauvoir and Sartre's understanding of love helps to explain the biographical ambiguities and to nuance the question of authorship in the couple's lives, and to a cautious extent, their works, of the 1930s and 1940s.

Biographical Questions

It is difficult to pinpoint Beauvoir and Sartre's lives, that is, their important deeds that can be verified with historical certainty or verisimilitude, especially during the 1930s and 1940s. My own research in the biographical and autobiographical accounts has tended toward the onion far more than the artichoke: every layer peeled reveals another layer, often to strong effect. It is my contention that the *biographical* heart of their lives *remains elusive* in numerous cases, as well as ethically controversial. My strategy in this section is, first, to outline the biographical impasse at which Beauvoir and Sartre scholarship has arrived, surveying thirty years of research conducted by their supporters as well as detractors. Second, I offer a preliminary indication of my method for tracking Beauvoir and Sartre's intellectual

trajectory, which identifies a lasting complicity between their intellectual lives and their conceptions of erotic love. The overall purpose of my research is to establish a guiding thread that draws upon clear documentation to connect pivotal periods of their adult lives with other pivotal periods, thereby showing a dominant pattern of their ethical assumptions and its complicity with their erotic practices.

Consider the question of the Resistance years, 1940 to 1944, to name the most prominent biographically disputed period. The autobiographies reveal nothing that was ethically or politically incriminating in Beauvoir or Sartre's wartime activities. Their early biographers largely corroborated the couple's own narratives, moreover. Ronald Hayman's *Writing Against: A Biography of Sartre* (1986), John Gerassi's *Jean-Paul Sartre* (1989) and Deirdre Bair's *Simone de Beauvoir* (1990), all tend to exonerate the couple's respective actions during the Occupation. Several years after Beauvoir's death, however, there emerged many critical reexaminations of their lives. To name the guiding examples, the French scholar Gilbert Joseph, and the German scholar Ingrid Galster critically revived damning charges levied against Beauvoir and Sartre, especially during the 1940s. Sartre and Beauvoir's legacy in the new millennium has been scotched as a result, particularly in Europe.

Bernard-Henri Lévy's *Sartre: The Philosopher of the 20th Century* (2000) offers a comprehensive analysis of Sartre's, and to a lesser extent Beauvoir's intellectual life during the period 1938-1945. His work reopened the question of "the incarnation of dishonour" with respect to their intellectual legacy, contending with their most serious detractors in an attempt to set the record straight. Henri-Lévy seeks to dispel the spirit of castigation haunting the

couple's legacy,¹⁹³ while also combating specific allegations of unethical behavior. The most prominent allegations are delineated in his provocative chapter, "A Note on the Vichy Question," concerning the extent to which Sartre and Beauvoir purposefully advanced their careers in the following ways: 1) in the endorsement of fascism; 2) in 'tit for tat' collaboration with the Germans and the Vichy regime; 3) at the expense of expelled Jews; and lastly, 4) when they could have pursued non-collaborationist alternatives.

Henri-Lévy's study concludes that it is simply false to view Sartre (or Beauvoir, for that matter) as intellectually pro-fascist. He is thus critical of would-be "historians" who rely on "gossip" to insinuate a collaborationist agenda in the couple's writings and deeds (285). Careful scrutiny of the record, he contends, reveals that Sartre's writings unambiguously do not condone or promote fascism. If anything, the message in such works as *The Flies*, *No Exit*, *Being and Nothingness*, "The Wall," and even in "assignments that he gave to his students"¹⁹⁴ are arguably anti-fascist in their conception. In more decisive terms, he concludes that Sartre, unlike many writers who published under the Occupation, "would not need, either at the Liberation or later, to change a word" of what he wrote (282). The allegation of "pro-fascism" thus truly seems like a most unfair tainting of the biographical record. The other three allegations are not so clearly resolved, however, even despite Henri-

¹⁹³ Henri-Lévy has in mind the prominent Bergson scholar and influential French philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch (1903 – 1985), the son of Russian Jewish emigrants. His remarks (apparently spoken on his deathbed, and regarding the French "philosophy of commitment" including, but not limited to, Beauvoir, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty) are at the forefront of the "spirit" that Henri-Lévy's work combats. On June 10th 1985, Jankélévitch is reported to have said: "the entire philosophy of commitment was merely a kind of unhealthy compensation, a remorse, a quest for the danger they hadn't wanted to run during the war" (269).

¹⁹⁴ Sartre's first assignment to his students (upon his return in 1941) was to write an essay on the topic: "On Remorse." Henri-Lévy argues that this subject in particular was a means to critically interrogate Vichy ideology and to foment dissatisfaction in the youth, which also echoes *The Flies*' message of combating the "illness of remorse" (282).

Lévy's staunch defense of Sartre and Beauvoir's decisions under the Occupation. The following four pages represent a broad survey of the biographical arguments that seek to either exonerate or vilify Sartre and Beauvoir's wartime activities.

Henri-Lévy argues that if Sartre and Beauvoir were not "heroes," they were certainly neither collaborators nor unscrupulous careerists (289, 294). Only in a trivial sense, moreover, could they be described as indifferent to the plight of Jews (285). He also suggests the interesting possibility that by writing and publishing under the Occupation, Sartre may have actually done *more* good, "in absolute terms," than by "remaining silent" and "going underground" (286-7). In the final analysis, a careful examination of the historical record would exonerate Sartre and Beauvoir from critics who have sought "to tarnish" them:

One day, I hope, a historian will put paid to this libel. One day—but when? ...I personally am neither historian nor judge. But after all, there are the facts. All the facts. Which are at the disposal of anyone who wants to examine them. And which, taken one by one, serenely, compose a face which is doubtless not that of a hero but which all the same is not in the least dishonourable. (270)

Perhaps a definitive historical work will emerge, which would settle the matter once and for all. This is an ambiguous claim, however, at least because it begs the question. For now, the extant biographical accounts are the best material at one's disposal with respect to the allegations listed above. To judge by the works of Henri-Lévy, Deirdre Bair, John Gerassi, and Ronald Hayman, for example, Beauvoir and Sartre had a relatively clean record during the Occupation. On the other hand, there are rival scholarly and testimonial accounts on the table, and while they too purport to serenely examine the facts, their conclusions are decidedly different.

Accounts such as Gerhard Heller's *Un Allemand à Paris 1940-1944* (1981) suggest that Sartre and Beauvoir (among other intellectuals) knowingly advanced their careers at the

expense of expelled Jews, and that their relationship with the German occupiers was friendly and careerist, as opposed to oppositional and indignant. One might be suspicious of a former Nazi censor's account of life in occupied Paris, yet testimonials such as Bianca Bienenfeld Lamblin's *Mémoires d'une jeune fille dérangée* (1993), as well as the scholarly work done by Galster (2001, 2007) and Joseph (1991), have argued that the couple willingly advanced their careers through patterns of collaboration and ethical indifference, and so they were not the "intellectual resisters" they claimed to be. In what follows I trace the key biographical events at issue in their ethically questionable decisions of this period.

It is unquestionable that Sartre was a soldier during 1940 - 41 (he served as the unit's meteorologist) and that he spent nearly nine months in Stalag XII D, a German prisoner camp in Trier, with approximately 7,000 other soldiers. He was apparently released from the camp for a medical discharge in March 1941, which is a controversial subject in the scholarship.¹⁹⁵ When he repatriated to Paris, it is clear that he, Beauvoir and others (most notably Merleau-Ponty) attempted to start a Resistance movement called "Socialisme et Liberté," although it never gained traction, and it was abandoned.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ The accounts range from escape, 'tit for tat' collaboration, honest medical discharge, and falsified papers. According to Ronald Hayman, his departure from the Stalag was a clever "escape" and it was "the French Communists" who spread the lie that Sartre had collaborated with his captors, because of Sartre's deep friendship with Paul Nizan, who conscientiously abandoned the French Communist Party before the War (169-171, and elsewhere). Other accounts state that Sartre's strabismus would have been sufficient to discharge him under the German directive to "liberate incurables" in the camp, yet one of Sartre's fellow prisoners at the Stalag, Corporal Jean Pierre, claims that such a narrative is "a childish falsification that would not deceive anyone" (see Seymour-Jones, 252, or G. Joseph, 101, for example.) Henri-Lévy radically simplifies the situation, arguing the release was due to a priest (Marius Perrin) falsifying papers on Sartre's behalf (272). Also compare Aronson, who describes Sartre as a "determined non-collaborator" during his internment (29-30). For a balanced discussion of the subject, see Bair, 250 – 261.

¹⁹⁶ Bair notes that Sartre met with key Resistance leaders in the unoccupied zone (Gide, Malraux, and Mayer, for instance), who refused to incorporate him into their cells, for the reasons that he was perceived as either ineffectual, untrustworthy, or unfairly blacklisted by rumors that he was politically

Upon his return from the Stalag, Sartre reportedly insisted that neither he nor Beauvoir would sign the ominous loyalty oath demanding of a teacher that one was neither a Jew nor a Freemason. Beauvoir explained why she signed the oath, however: “I found putting my name to this most repugnant, but no one refused to do so; the majority of my colleagues, like myself, had no possible alternative” (*The Prime of Life*, 369). In an interview with his biographer John Gerassi, Sartre’s experience of internment had left him with no tolerance for compromise, and so his decision to not sign the oath was “moral” and not political, as he explained in 1971:

Castor and I argued about it. She said that my dogmatism was stupid, didn’t serve anything, that I should sign so that I could have a job and money and do what I wanted to do, which was to set up a Resistance group...Anyway, she was right of course, but I refused to sign. I was too full of the camp, of my decision not to compromise. But that wasn’t a political decision, it was moral. Fortunately, the inspector-general of education was a secret Resistant, and he gave me my job back anyway. (175)

The various biographical assessments of this narrative are inconsistent, however. Ronald Aronson argues that Sartre did not sign the oath, for the reason that it was an “empty gesture,” that is, because Sartre *knew* that the inspector general of education [Georges Davy]¹⁹⁷ was a secret Resistant who would give him his job back anyway (Aronson 29). Carol Seymour-Jones argues for a different conclusion altogether, discrediting Sartre’s account: “it is probable that he signed” and hence “likely that Sartre lied to his biographer that Davy was a ‘secret Resistant’ who waved him through with a nod and a wink” (Seymour-Jones 261). In support of this argument, Gilbert Joseph’s research concludes that « L’inspecteur général Davy...n’était pas résistant du tout » (188).

compromised (Bair, 258-9, 274-5). For an account of the risks that Sartre took in his endeavor to form a Resistance group, see Henri-Lévy, 290-1.

¹⁹⁷ Davy was also on Sartre’s *agrégation* jury in 1929, awarding him first place.

At any rate, in 1941 Sartre was able to transfer from the Lycée Pasteur at Neuilly to take the more prestigious *khâgne* teaching job at the Lycée Condorcet—which is itself a controversial issue.¹⁹⁸ In 1942 he published at least three pieces in the collaborationist journal *Comoedia*,¹⁹⁹ while also producing some of his most brilliant plays at the *Théâtre de la cité* (formerly the *Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt*). In 1943, the landmark *Being and Nothingness* emerged to mixed, but sometimes glowing reviews.²⁰⁰ All accounts confirm that 1940 to 1944 was the most productive period of his life. Shortly after the liberation of Paris, Sartre had truly established himself as a first-rate talent. His philosophical message of freedom’s essential role within the contingencies of a topsy-turvy world earned him a place in the Pantheon of engaged French thinkers (second perhaps only to Camus in this regard).

Simone de Beauvoir’s productivity had its ups and downs during the Occupation, as Deirdre Bair carefully documents, yet by 1941 she had mostly finished her first full novel, *L’invitée* (*She Came to Stay*), the alluring and ultimately fatal story of a young couple’s attempt to cultivate an enduring *ménage à trois* relationship. In 1944 Beauvoir completed *Le*

¹⁹⁸ It is perhaps a historical irony that the author of *Anti-Semite and Jew* would replace the great-nephew of Alfred Dreyfus, Henri Dreyfus-le-Foyer, at the Lycée Condorcet in 1941. Dreyfus-le-Foyer was dismissed according to the Vichy racial laws, in March 1941. After a brief interim in which there was a substitute, Sartre formally took over in the fall semester. Ingrid Galster argues for the unethical character of Sartre’s motivation for, and acceptance of this position (Galster, (2001), 95 – 121). Furthermore, she paints Sartre as a hypocrite for criticizing German intellectuals at a 1948 UNESCO conference, when he claimed that German professors should have acted by “resigning” during WWII (91). For a strong defense of Sartre in the Dreyfus-le-Foyer affair, however, see Henri-Lévy, 284-6.

¹⁹⁹ Led by René Delange and Jean Delannoy, *Comoedia* was the literary showcase of the collaboration, “an important instrument of German propaganda,” notes Bair (259). “It was the extreme right-wing paper which wanted to continue, at least in appearance, to be writing and thinking,” adds Henri-Lévy (280). Even he—one of Sartre’s staunchest supporters—expresses relative disgust over the affair: “[O]ne is free to feel—as I do—that there is something profoundly shocking about the fact that the author of *Nausea* allowed his name to appear in the company of the collaborators in the review” (281).

²⁰⁰ *Being and Nothingness* had a profoundly positive impact upon the Resistance hero and intellectual Jean Cavallès (1903 – 1944), who recommended it to young recruits such as Jean-Toussaint Desanti. See BHL, 289, for a concise account of the work’s influence from ’43 –’45.

sang des autres (*The Blood of Others*), a more concise and experimentally written novel whose emphasis on the War, love, and engaged political violence earned her many accolades. She also worked on several manuscripts that would not be published until decades later, in addition to maintaining a most voluminous epistolary correspondence. Beauvoir may have significantly contributed to some of Sartre's most famous works of the period—without receiving due credit, however—but I defer this particular question to the next section, “Authorial Questions.”

Beauvoir's accounts of Occupied Paris accentuate the material and moral hardship that nearly everybody endured, from the food and power shortages, to the inability to discern the War's duration, let alone who would win it. To complicate matters, her career fluttered when she was dismissed as a teacher in 1943 for “indecent morals” as well as the accusation that she “corrupted” a female student, Nathalie Sorokine.²⁰¹ Beauvoir later accepted a well-paying job for *Radio Vichy* as the “metteuse en ondes” or producer of weekly broadcasts, which is also a controversial matter in the literature.²⁰²

To illustrate a different type of biographical ambiguity, Beauvoir stood for nearly 40 years as a mediator between the public and their lives. Such mediation is neither good nor bad when considered in itself, and today many couples in the public eye do the same thing, either by themselves or “P.R.” experts. The way Simone de Beauvoir produced her

²⁰¹ For a brief analysis of the affair and its implications regarding Beauvoir's sexuality, see Melanie Hawthorne, “Leçon de Philo/Lesson in Love,” (2000), 56, 58.

²⁰² Beauvoir's radio job was largely due to René Delange, who “fostered her career and came to her financial rescue later during the war” (Bair, 259). Beauvoir heavily downplays—even dismisses—both her and Sartre's affiliation with Delange in *The Prime of Life* [*La Force de l'âge*] yet Bair importantly critiques this account, calling it “offhanded and disrespectful.” She adds that the journalist Pierre Assouline “notes that throughout the war Delange remained the “benefactor” of Sartre and Beauvoir” (260). For the most detailed (and critical) account of the “Radio Vichy” controversy, see Ingrid Galster (2007), 111-127.

unquestionably brilliant memoirs gave the public a creative image—and then a standard—of how the couple really was. She also volunteered, in countless interviews and correspondences with magazines, to proliferate this image in a consistent way. The dominant result was the iconographic portrayal of a consonant, philosophically engineered relationship that flouted convention while spanning half of a century.

Yet the manner in which Beauvoir managed her own private correspondences has been shown to suppress important, and sometimes disturbing features of their erotic lives. When Deirdre Bair was interviewing her in the 1980s, the question of the then-missing correspondence from herself to Sartre was something that troubled Bair enough to mention it several times in her biography (published after Beauvoir's death). For after Sartre's death, Beauvoir had his letters published by Gallimard in September 1983.²⁰³ These letters illuminate Sartre's "contingent" love life and its importance in their essential relationship. They depict a man who flouts his affairs with bravado, and they even encourage Beauvoir to "recruit" women with whom he would have an affair. So Bair's recurring question to Beauvoir was: where are your letters to him?

The reason for the suppression of her letters to him remained unclear, and throughout the three years she was asked this question her responses varied greatly. At first she said she didn't publish them because she couldn't: that her letters were lost when Sartre was in the Stalag; then that they were lost more than twenty years later when the apartment on the Rue Bonaparte was bombed. At various times she mentioned having given them at Sartre's request...to various people...and that these people were responsible for the loss. In interviews and conversations during September 1983, and from then on, this is what she said: "Look, my letters just are not interesting! Sartre is the one who wrote the interesting letters." (601)²⁰⁴

²⁰³ The correspondence dates from 1927 to 1963, although the letters from 1933-34 were left out of the definitive *Lettres au Castor* [i.e., Beauvoir] *et à quelques autres*, and many letters were left out for the reason that "she selected only those of his which protected the privacy of those still living" (Bair, 153). For other discrepancies in the correspondences, Beauvoir blames Sartre's adopted daughter, literary heir, and former lover, Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, for the "suppression of certain passages" (Bair 601).

²⁰⁴ Beauvoir's interview continues as follows: "His are long and full of news and gossip, and he talks about his work and his life, about the Army, and his women, and he goes on and on about what he

Beauvoir's letters to Sartre eventually emerged, and they are highly interesting. The key to their dissemination resides in Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir, Simone's adopted daughter, legal heir, and favorite companion during the last 25 years of her life. When Seymour-Jones interviewed Le Bon de Beauvoir, the latter told her that seven months after Simone's death in 1986, she "opened a cupboard in Beauvoir's studio at rue Schoelcher and stumbled upon a 'massive packet' of letters in Beauvoir's handwriting...addressed to 'Monsieur Sartre'" (Seymour-Jones xiv).

The letters to Sartre took nearly three years to emerge in published form, and then they opened Pandora's box. Le Bon de Beauvoir's preface offers a candid explanation for presenting them in unexpurgated form. « N'est-il pas souhaitable désormais de tout dire pour dire vrai ? D'écarter, par la puissance indiscutable du témoignage direct, les clichés, les mythes, les images, tous ces mensonges, afin que surgisse la personne réelle, telle qu'en elle-même ? » (*Letters à Sartre*, 10). If her intention was to provoke new readings, it certainly worked. The contents reveal, for instance, an erotic orchestration that vastly exceeds the spectrum that Beauvoir publically acknowledged during her life. They shed a revelatory light on both her and Sartre's promiscuity, and they chronicle the coordinated manipulation of others in unethical ways. In this vein, it is unsurprising that Seymour-Jones named her revelatory biography after Laclos' famous 1782 work,²⁰⁵ to dramatic effect:

feels for me. Now, mine, on the other hand, are all shorter. I just tell him what he needs to know, or I write the answers to questions he asked me about his writing. Or the arrangements I have to meet him, or to plan a rendezvous. I'm not the emotional one in this exchange—he is. So people don't need to know what I wrote, that's all."

²⁰⁵ The provocative narrative of *A Dangerous Liaison* (2008) gains more traction when we consider the extent to which Beauvoir and Sartre's erotic orchestration was primarily epistolary, and it involved lovers who were both younger and more fragile than they were. I am somewhat sympathetic to Seymour-Jones's characterization, at least in a formal way, yet Beauvoir and Sartre's love story diverges significantly from a "Merteuil-Valmont relationship," for many reasons. Simply stated,

For the first time, shocked readers saw the rose-tinted veil which protected Beauvoir's union with Sartre ripped away to reveal the truth of their sexual exploitation of their pupils. For their vulnerable partners, these liaisons were as dangerous as those of Valmont and Mme de Merteuil. Reinventing the rules had been a bolder, more anarchic and amoral enterprise than Beauvoir's readers had ever dreamed. (xiv)

Jean-Paul Sartre played an equally important role in shaping the couple's public image, although his methods were different. He wrote the autobiography *Les mots* in 1964, yet in general his part was sometimes to direct, and sometimes to follow Beauvoir in shaping their public persona. At least until the last decade of Sartre's life—fraught with debilitating health problems, as well as political associations repugnant to Beauvoir—the biographical accounts and epistolary correspondences suggest that they seldom, if ever, truly strayed from the essence of their love pact, founded in 1929.

We have seen the outline of a remarkable story whose progression intersects with important decisions that the couple may have made. The biographical record is, however, not at all harmonious. Simply stated, there is a wide range of conclusions that come from differing explanatory stances on the ethics of Beauvoir and Sartre's decisions. There is nonetheless a lot riding on the question of how Beauvoir and Sartre understood their decisions, and to what extent they reflect *distinctive patterns of their lives*. In other words, the ethics of their actions, and the ethical tendencies that informed them, are indisputably pivotal and hence worthy of sustained attention.

Biographical documentation and interpretation is one means of assessing the ethics of their choices and patterns. To look at their works and letters in close detail is another method. To look at a phenomenon that stands in mediation to their lives and their works is, however,

Seymour-Jones's description is provocatively hyperbolic. The third, fourth, and fifth sections (below) specify the essential coordinates of Sartre and Beauvoir's love lives and its complicity with their ethics.

the particular method that I have chosen to examine Beauvoir and Sartre's ethical trajectory. My answer to the biographical question is that we are dealing with two powerful lovers, in pre- and post-World War Two France. Explaining their lives and minds by way of love yields a well-supported pattern of their ethical assumptions. My interpretive argument unfolds through the ways in which they understood love, on the one hand as a couple, and on the other as an intersubjective feature of reality (i.e., "being-for-others").

In the following section, I outline another important tension in the Sartre and Beauvoir scholarship, namely the question of originality and authorship in the couple's works of the 1940s. A longstanding tradition of scholarship suggests that of the two, Sartre was the unilateral source of originality in their intellectual relationship, thereby implying that Beauvoir was merely Sartre's philosophical parrot, as it were. Recent scholarly trends have turned this thesis on its head, arguing that Sartre was the imitator in the couple's intellectual relationship. My contribution to this important question is to respond in terms of the couple's understanding of love. I draw upon this understanding to explain the shared intellectual contribution within Beauvoir and Sartre's intellectual lives during the 1930s and 1940s. To track their lives in terms of love reveals new ways of tracking their ethics as well as their intellectual partnership.

Authorial Questions

The particular question I wish to reopen concerns *the extent* to which Beauvoir and Sartre meaningfully contributed to each other's projects and published works of the 1940s. The broad purpose of reexamining this question is to better demarcate the intellectual labor that went into the production of their works, especially to the degree that this labor is a scholarly contested issue. My particular aim is to establish a strong degree of mutual

dependence in the couple's intellectual projects, at least prior to 1945, whose reciprocity was motivated by their understanding of love.

There are many received interpretations of authorship and originality in Beauvoir and Sartre's works of the 1940s, whose pedigree dates back to 1961 while still remaining important. Recent scholarship conducted by Toril Moi and Melanie Hawthorne, respectively, has shown that Beauvoir is often unfairly painted as being under Sartre's philosophical shadow, as Moi demonstrates, or at most his "amanuensis," as Hawthorne argues.²⁰⁶ They contend that in this type of caricature, Beauvoir's intellectual worth and originality are simply parasitic upon Sartre's brilliance. It is not difficult to see that patriarchal prejudices concerning the "male" versus the "female" intellect have informed such facile conceptions of two of the most influential authors of the past century. This tradition negligently views Sartre as the unilateral source from which ideas and originality flowed in their relationship.

From a very different trajectory, Hazel Barnes' *The Literature of Possibility* (1961) opened the fecund question of the extent to which Beauvoir's early work resembled key notions of *Being and Nothingness*. In a remarkable footnote, Barnes suggested telling similarities with respect to *L'invitée* (*She Came to Stay*) and *L'Être et le néant*, both published in 1943:

I do not at all preclude the possibility that de Beauvoir has contributed to the formation of Sartre's philosophy. I suspect that his debt to her is considerable. All I mean in the present instance is that the novel [*L'Invitée*] serves as documentation for his theory, regardless of who had which idea first. (122)

For the most part, the canon has ignored Barnes' suggestion, no doubt because it was 'inconceivable' that Beauvoir might have done much of the heavy lifting in Sartre's

²⁰⁶ For a deeper account of the reasons motivating this caricature of Beauvoir, see in particular Moi's chapter, "Politics and the Intellectual Woman," in her *Simone de Beauvoir*, 73 – 92.

philosophical work. Recent scholarship conducted by Kate and Edward Fullbrook has vigorously re-opened the question of Beauvoir's pivotal influence upon Sartre's philosophy, however. Their impressive *Sex and Philosophy* (2008) offers a provocative, and often compelling argument that reverses the canonical thesis regarding originality and authorship with respect to Beauvoir and Sartre. Their research samples fifteen years of work while also drawing upon the rare scholarship that has explored the suggestion in Hazel Barnes' footnote.²⁰⁷

The Fullbrooks argue that when *L'invitée* is read not simply as a novel, but a philosophical novel (i.e., as one reads Sartre's novels), its structure, narration and dialogue all exemplify the central notions of being-for-others as expounded in *Being and Nothingness*. Their further, and decisive claims address the question of innovation in the genesis of the couple's ideas. First, they argue that Beauvoir finished the novel well before the completion of *Being and Nothingness*. Second, a close look at Sartre's journals and letters (1939 - 41, posthumously published) arguably reveals that it was in fact *he* who was taking lessons from Beauvoir about the proper way to conceive of being-for-others in the general framework of his ontology. Given that the analyses of intersubjectivity occupy one-third of *Being and Nothingness*'s argument, the stakes of their thesis are very high. If the Fullbrooks are correct to a significant extent, Beauvoir ought to be credited at the very least as a co-author. At the most, their stronger thesis argues that she ought to be credited as single-handedly providing the intellectual substance for that which made Sartre most famous: the brilliant framework for analyzing concrete, interpersonal situations, that is, "being-for-others" in general.

²⁰⁷ The Fullbrooks graciously acknowledge the influence of Margaret Simons' pioneer work on Beauvoir, which I examine below. Beauvoir (and Sartre) scholarship truly owes a debt to Simons' many years of work, including sorting, translating, as well as critically assessing Beauvoir's posthumously released journals.

I more thoroughly confront the chief arguments of *Sex and Philosophy* in the analysis in chapter Two, particularly when it arrives at the late 1930s and early 1940s. The purpose of this confrontation is to accomplish two goals: the first consists of a complimentary appropriation of their work, and the second a critical appropriation. First, the Fullbrooks' argument (and Hazel Barnes' 1961 suggestion, for that matter), when properly nuanced, deserves to prevail. *Sex And Philosophy* patiently documents the extent to which Beauvoir likely, and meaningfully contributed to Sartre's most famous analyses, and it does so in a way that radically outstrips the occasional scraps that the tradition has thrown to Beauvoir.

I would critique, however, the Fullbrooks' *stronger* thesis, namely that Sartre unscrupulously lifted Beauvoir's ideas, in particular the core analyses of intersubjectivity in *Being and Nothingness*. Their stronger thesis thus asserts that of the two, it was Beauvoir who single-handedly developed the key ideas of "being-for-others," for instance, in 'Sartre's' philosophy. Their analysis overextends itself when they argue that Beauvoir is the only true intellectual of the two, that is, when they contend that Sartre was merely a second-rate philosopher, and a canny plagiarist to boot. So, I am in accord with their general argument when nuanced in the right way, but I am highly critical of key arguments, such as the following, that support their stronger thesis.

For context's sake, the Fullbrooks are arguing for Sartre's appropriation of the "structure of desire" in early drafts of *L'invitée* (*She Came to Stay*). They claim that Sartre had previously "exhausted his stock of Beauvoirian wisdom" on such topics as "temporality," and then he had to go back to the well, as it were:

In a fuzzy way, he has identified the nature of the subject-object duality that underpins Beauvoir's work. But, in going on for pages [in his 1940 journal], and despite repeated fresh starts, he fails to reproduce Beauvoir's concepts of the Look and of the Third. His discussion of concrete relations is desultory and mainly limited to love and sadism, and, astonishingly,

for someone who thought of himself as a philosopher, he makes no mention of solipsism. Clearly, Sartre needed more reading time with *She Came to Stay* and more tutorials with Beauvoir before being able to write the brilliant exposition of her theory of being-for-others that would appear in *Being and Nothingness*. (89-90)

Their argument regrettably betrays hostile overreactions. The subject—35 year-old Jean-Paul Sartre—resembles a bungling hack. The backhanded compliments and the suggestions of ineptitude reinforce the condescending optic that they decried earlier, only to substitute “Sartre” in place of “Beauvoir.”²⁰⁸ One can, and should, debate Sartre’s worth as a distinguished student, theorist, and writer, but their analysis surely has an axe to grind, to say the least.

In more decisive terms, their stronger thesis suffers from an internal incoherence. The Fullbrooks maintain that Beauvoir created the core of ‘Sartrean’ existentialism by 1940, essentially casting Sartre as a hack philosopher *and* a plagiarist (66, and elsewhere). Even if one were to accept their boldest argument—that a close philosophical reading of *L’invitée* houses all of the intellectual kernels in the structure of “being-for-others” attributed to Sartre—I argue that their stronger thesis breaks down with respect to Sartre and Beauvoir’s well-documented patterns of transparently sharing each other’s ideas. Their stronger thesis thus unwittingly maintains *both* that the couple intellectually collaborated on key existential ideas for years *and* that only Beauvoir was the true intellect of the two.

To specify this incoherence, it is crucial to see a tension in two of their central claims. On the one hand, they argue—convincingly—that Beauvoir and Sartre exchanged ideas, drafts, and works throughout the 1930s and 1940s, diligently serving as a sounding board, an editor, and a moral support when the other was struggling. They illustrate Sartre’s

²⁰⁸ Importantly for my purposes, the “desultory limitation” of Sartre’s choice to concern himself with “love and sadism” shows a lack of attention concerning love’s essential importance in both Sartre and Beauvoir’s formation.

dependence upon Beauvoir, *and* hers for him, particularly well in moments when the other is intellectually stagnant (35, 46-7, 52, and elsewhere). Their biographical analysis covers many instances, moreover, of the shared intellectual life that Simone and Jean-Paul constructed during the period preceding both *L'invitée* and *L'Être et le néant*. On the other hand, and in light of this well-documented intellectual exchange, and continuous critique of the other's work, it is curious when their analysis forcefully inserts the argument that Beauvoir is *the* author and innovator in the couple, thereby turning Sartre into the 'amanuensis,' as it were.²⁰⁹

They argue that Beauvoir is the unique author and philosopher by documenting that, prior to formally writing *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre had read "over half" of the final version of *L'invitée*. The point regarding chronology is so important that they use boldface in several cases, for instance: "Beauvoir wrote *She Came to Stay* **before** Sartre wrote *Being and Nothingness*" (65, emphasis in the original). For further evidence, they draw upon "over 30 letters to Sartre" from 1940 that show "he had previously read *and discussed* a draft of what was to be approximately the first 40 percent of her novel" (65, my emphasis). These data are admittedly revealing in a general sense, because they rightfully question generations of scholarship that have unfairly dismissed the possibility of Beauvoir's capital influence upon Sartre's ideas.

²⁰⁹ "Some may wish to argue that Beauvoir (as she herself once thought) could have steeled herself and got on successfully without her ideal union, *but* the psychological intensity with which she engaged with Sartre for half a century shows beyond any reasonable doubt that *her need* for such a relationship was no less integral than her unilateral commitments [i.e., of long-term happiness and aspirations to be a writer]" (21-2, my emphasis). The Fullbrooks' argument tellingly continues with the assertion that Beauvoir "set up Sartre in her mind as her superior from without so that she would not see him as her inferior from within. Even for someone as intelligent as Beauvoir, this could not have been an easy task" (22). Here as well, my critique of their argument is that it over-extends itself. After identifying years of shared intellectual commerce and mutual need, why draw the conclusion that Beauvoir was *the only* true intellect of the couple?

But to claim that the data point to Beauvoir as *the* unique author of ideas in their intellectual relationship is misguided as an approach, and incoherent with respect to the well-documented intellectual reciprocity in the couple's life. Therefore, my counter-argument is that the data more likely indicate a *shared fund* or *commerce* of intellectual interpenetration, and thus *not* a binary logic of either Beauvoir *or* Sartre. The better conclusion to draw is that it is probable that *Beauvoir and Sartre's love pact* during this period led to intense collaboration, and hence it is a question of degree of influence, and not a question of asserting, for instance, that "Beauvoir had already produced a full statement of 'Sartrean' existentialism by 1940" (66). Claims such as these vastly overstate the case in the opposite direction.

When I critically appropriate the Fullbrooks' work in chapter Two, the purpose is to restore a modicum of intellectual balance in two of the most powerful minds of the previous century. Neither was the other's amanuensis, neither was an intellectual kleptomaniac, and *each* was pivotally influential upon the other's activity during this time. Whether Beauvoir's intellectual contribution to the relationship was 51%, or 50%, as it were, is a question that might never be resolved. But the truly dangerous claim is to relegate either thinker to a negligible approximation of value, as both the patriarchal tradition and the Fullbrooks respectively do.

My particular strategy for striking the right balance within Beauvoir and Sartre's intellectual rapport is to track its development in strict proportion to their understanding and application of love, both as independent young adults as well as a couple who chose to base their lives upon an intellectually transparent foundation. With respect to the authorial question, then, my answer is that we are dealing with a union of two powerful lovers, at least

initially and for the most part. My argument in chapter Two unfolds with an examination of their journals, letters and texts, and it identifies the sources—which stem from both Sartre and Beauvoir—that informed their shared and mutually reinforcing intellectual productivity.

**Appendix 3: A Further Review of Contemporary Amorous Discourse in Terms of Its
Ethical and Political Capital: Fromm, hooks, Badiou, and Lévinas**

There is hardly any activity, any enterprise, which is started with such tremendous hopes and expectations, and yet, which fails so regularly, as love. If this were the case with any other activity, people would be eager to know the reasons for the failure, and to learn how one could do better—or they would give up the activity.

Erich Fromm (1956)

When I travel around the nation giving lectures about ending racism and sexism, audiences, especially young listeners, become agitated when I speak about the place of love in any movement for social justice. Indeed, all the great movements for social justice in our society have strongly emphasized a love ethic. Yet young listeners remain reluctant to embrace the idea of love as a transformative force. To them, love is for the naïve, the weak, the hopelessly romantic.

bell hooks (2000)

Love as we know it faces threats from all sides.

Alain Badiou (2009)

Recasting love’s story in terms that condition its ethical and political capital—an inquiry into alienation, authenticity, and difference.

This Appendix’s purpose is to indicate further avenues of research in which an exploration of the intersection of love, ethics and politics is fruitful. There is a review of select texts that account for love’s modern predicament in contemporary discourses. All of the texts are used to extrapolate their theory of love onto their political and or ethical discourses.²¹⁰

The insights gained in this Appendix are useful to highlight the historical and conceptual wake out of which Camus, Sartre, and Beauvoir used love within their own

²¹⁰ By way of anticipation, the following are the main texts analyzed below: Aude Lancelin and Marie Lemonnier’s *Les philosophes et l’amour* (hitherto untranslated); Erich Fromm’s *The Art of Loving*; Emmanuel Lévinas’s *Time and the Other* and *Totality and Infinity*; bell hooks’ *All about Love*, and Alain Badiou and Nicolas Truong’s *In Praise of Love*.

frameworks. In the analyses that follow, my interpretation of the love theories of key Occidental 20th and 21st-century thinkers is hermeneutically tailored to help one to approach the triadic nexus of my dissertation: love, ethics, and politics.

Recent scholarship by Aude Lancelin and Marie Lemonnier has reawakened the importance of love in contemporary philosophical as well as literary discourses. In *Les philosophes et l'amour* (2008) they indicate several reasons for why the overwhelming majority of contemporary philosophers “turn their backs” on love. In the first place, there is a prevailing caricature that love as an ethical force in life belongs to a kind of antiquated philosophy, in which it was still important to “heal the soul” and to respond to the question of “the good life” (8-9). Second, because love “seems to resist rationalization,” whether because it is a “pathos” or part of the dark machinery of the unconscious, it is thereby not an “object for philosophers”, and generally no more than an “entertaining motif” for contemporary novelists (9). Third, and to state a fact: it is extremely rare that “grands philosophes” think seriously today about love (9).²¹¹ Lastly, to the large extent that philosophers tend to be male, there can be a certain prejudice when it comes to proposing readings of love that do not walk the party line, as it were.

Aussi stéréotypée et facétieuse que soit cette piste, elle est loin d'être égarante. Il ne faut jamais oublier que le discours philosophique sur l'amour est un discours tenu par les hommes. Nul ne sait ce qu'il en sera à l'avenir, et l'on se gardera bien de spéculer sur ce point...Hormis Hannah Arendt et Simone de Beauvoir, qui du reste ne prétendirent jamais s'illustrer en philosophie pure, on ne s'étonnera donc pas de n'entendre dans ce livre que la version d'une moitié de l'humanité. (9)

Another strain of thought seeks to pigeonhole the ethical stakes of love into the domain of “literary” truth alone. Are not the most profound implications of love best expressed in the

²¹¹ Alain Badiou is the one “grand philosophe” whom they note as a leading exception to this tendency.

hands of such luminary writers as Laclos, Tolstoy, and Proust, for example? Lancelin and Lemonnier essentially deflate this reasoning with a survey of the same period and authors in question, which leads them to find, instead, the consistent mutual *interconnection* of “literature” and “philosophy” regarding love. Whether it was Laclos being heavily influenced by Rousseau, or Proust by Schopenhauer, for instance, or Rousseau, Kierkegaard, and Beauvoir doing just as much or more for “love” through their novels than their philosophical tomes; in either way the idea of a pure literary domain of love is misguided (10). (I would also add Plato’s dialogues to this pattern—the line between amorous literature and philosophy was arguably fated to be blurred from the inception of the written Western philosophical tradition.)

Against these specious portraits and dilemmas, Lancelin and Lemonnier offer a close reading of 12 philosophers, from Socrates to Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, in order to accomplish three broad goals.²¹² First, they argue that “philosophy” does not have *one* pat and eternal response to the question of “what is love?” (11). Rather, the divergent responses that philosophers offer correspond to, and are helpful to better anticipate, the complex circumstances that perplex anyone’s responsible reaction to love’s possibilities. Second, they argue that love’s conceptual ground has become so fallow that “we would almost find more depth on the subject in popular songs than in contemporary thought” (7). The relative absence of philosophical and critical theory about love has left a power vacuum that has been filled with questionable newcomers:

Abordant un sujet si central dans la vie humaine, ce n’est d’ailleurs pas une mince surprise que de constater qu’il est presque une friche tombée en déshérence, abandonnée aux

²¹² The philosophers whom they analyze are as follows: Plato; Lucretius; Montaigne; Rousseau; Kant; Schopenhauer; Kierkegaard; Nietzsche; Heidegger and Arendt; Sartre and Beauvoir.

romanciers du nihilisme sexuel, aux sociologues d'une nouvelle « confusion amoureuse », ou à une religiosité de pacotille. (7)

Les philosophes et l'amour also helps us to understand a broader social problem—which is also the main concern of Badiou's *In Praise of Love* (2009)—namely that the “trivial and disabused face of love seems to have triumphed” in contemporary society (11). Whether because of the increasing tendency to de-sublimate love to the sexual act, or because of its modern caricature as “mass hedonism” from which the institution of marriage no longer provides refuge, or, finally, because of love's putatively inextricable connection to crass consumer culture, the deck is stacked, as it were, to deal love either a trivial or disabused hand (12).

This picture of love's predicament is perhaps disturbing, yet it is certainly interesting. All the more reason, they argue, to rally to philosophy in order to at least clarify the picture, if not also to offer guidance and alternate possibilities within the modern paradigm. Lancelin (an *agrégée* of philosophy) and Lemonnier (*philosophe de formation*) specify an ethical and political need for more philosophical analysis of love in a comprehensive and forward-looking appeal to the reader. The philosophy of love is thus “a territory to be reinvested,” and even “urgently defended,” because:

Il y va d'une résistance possible au nihilisme ambiant, qui, avec la flétrissure de l'acte sexuel, sa réduction à un libertinage morbide pour le dire vite, semble avoir trouvé son arme de destruction massive. Il y va d'un enjeu politique aussi, tant il est vrai que la logique propre de l'amour s'oppose à la rationalité apparente du marché où chacun se voit réduit à une particule élémentaire indifférenciée mue par la seule loi du calcul égoïste. Irresponsable et violent, l'amour implique un autre rapport au monde. (13)

My work responds directly to this appeal in the sense that we will see ethical and political conclusions focused by the question of love and its contemporary predicament, in such thinkers as Fromm, Lévinas, and Badiou, and then Camus, Beauvoir and Sartre in my

dissertation. The three former critics share the same general concerns as Lancelot and Lemonnier, namely that genuine love has undergone an ideational progression that has demoted it to an alienating, quasi-nihilistic, or merely hedonistically *consumer* phenomenon. Against such caricatures, we will see the case for love as central to ethical and political practices. There will also be an examination of other ethical and political considerations, including (broadly speaking) the problems of sadomasochism as well as narcissism in love, and then the further problem of love's rapport with patriarchy and gender politics, which represent a major concern for the authors of *Les philosophes et l'amour*.

Lemonnier and Lancelin continue their appeal in a way that proposes serious inquiry about the ethics and politics of love and gender, which also relates to the analyses of Beauvoir's arguments in chapters Two and Four:

Il n'est pas interdit non plus d'en attendre un tout autre regard sur la « différence des sexes », plus pertinent que ceux qu'un certain féminisme a voulu imposer. Les femmes ne sont pas des hommes comme les autres dans la guerre érotique, et réciproquement. Jusque dans les embarras respectifs et les préjugés d'époque des philosophes, jusque dans la profonde anxiété que nombre d'entre eux trahissent même souvent face à l'effraction féminine, tous ceux que nous croiserons dans ce livre ont contribué à leur façon à éclaircir cet enjeu. (13)

The stakes of clarifying love alongside considerations of gender, authoritative voice, and prejudice cannot be overestimated, and to this extent the infusion of biography with theory upon which Lancelin and Lemonnier draw is a helpful indication of how to re-read texts whose authors are no longer present. They pose, as it were, the question of whether the philosopher in question walked the walk, or just talked the talk.

Les philosophes et l'amour is unquestionably a timely, landmark contribution to the philosophy of love, at least for the reasons that have been outlined. If there is a certain methodological lacuna in the work, however, I would argue that the relative absence of definition with respect to "love" represents just such a lacuna (that many contemporary

works on love display, moreover). It is helpful on the individual as well as social level to have a common understanding of what we mean when we intend “love” in whatever context it be. Bell hooks, for instance, makes just this point in her *All about Love: New Visions* (2000).

Hooks surveys a wide sample of (primarily occidental, 20th-century) “love literature” to find sound definitions and key distinctions about love; the result, however, is an unfortunate confession that “the vast majority of books on the subject of love work hard to avoid giving clear definitions,” which includes not merely trite “self-help” accounts, but even scientific accounts of love such as Diane Ackerman’s *Natural History of Love*, as well as canonical dictionary entries (Hooks, 3-4). There are a few key exceptions to this trend, most notably Erich Fromm’s *The Art of Loving* (which we will examine in detail below); yet the relative paucity of clear definition leads to two distinct but related problems. On the one hand, the absence of common conceptuality is the root of not just a definitional problem, but also a practical one—the catchall quality of “love” needlessly complicates things:

Our confusion about what we mean when we use the word “love” is the source of our difficulty in loving. If our society had a commonly held understanding of the meaning of love, the act of loving would not be so mystifying. (3)

On the other hand, hooks describes an unheralded but all too common coping strategy when it comes to understanding love. On her account, “genuine love” (a definition that she borrows, with modifications, from M. Scott Peck and Erich Fromm) is “the will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth” (4).

Genuine love requires, she argues, the courage to move beyond what we are merely comfortable with (e.g., to move beyond the default paradigms of simple affection, sex, and casual friendship). At a societal level, it also takes “the courage to confront gender roles and

cultural changes” (e.g., socio-political considerations of patriarchy, and the normalizing social paradigms that relegate “love” responses to immature gestures and stereotypes), and for these reasons we are often faced with a truly difficult ethical challenge (*xxiv-xxv*). To love in the full sense that she intends is *prima facie* difficult, and a common cultural coping mechanism is to be either relatively ignorant or intentionally vague about love:

Undoubtedly, many of us are more comfortable with the notion that love can mean anything to anybody precisely because when we define it with precision and clarity it brings us face to face with our lacks—with terrible alienation. The truth is, far too many people in our culture do not know what love is. And this not knowing feels like a terrible secret, a lack that we have to cover up. (11)

Hooks’ point in this and similar passages is neither to declare that her definition of love trumps all others *tout court*, nor is it to say that she hovers angelically enlightened above the masses, condescending to account for the *status quo*. Her point, rather, is that for many of us (and hooks includes herself in this list) our tongues are tied and we are afraid when it comes to both articulating *and* living up to a robust notion of love. For one reason, there seems to be precious little common cultural currency upon which we can reliably draw. For the other reason, either not knowing what love is, or perhaps worse, knowing but being unable to act upon it may lead to this “terrible alienation.”

“Alienation” in its broadest sense is crucial to many of the 20th and 21st-century responses to the question of love and its deeper societal significance. From Erich Fromm and the Frankfurt School to bell hooks and Alain Badiou, one of the primary motivations for “defending” or “praising” love (Badiou, Fromm, and hooks), on the one hand, or for apologizing for the *status quo* of love’s lamentable, capitalistically-impelled demise (Horkheimer and Adorno, Marcuse), on the other, stems from a confrontation with the way that the organization of contemporary society has estranged or alienated the individual in one

form or another. When we consider terms like “alienation” and existential “separateness” in the sense that these thinkers give them, an ethical and political landscape emerges wherein love plays a central role.

The teleology of my dissertation aims at showing how the multifaceted phenomenon of love informs the ethical and political thought of Camus, Beauvoir and Sartre approximately during the period of 1935 to 1960. I am drawing upon a relevant sample of political and ethical considerations of love in this present chapter to better situate our three protagonists’ respective (and often competing) perspectives on love, ethics, and politics. When we look at the topic in this way, the love theories of Erich Fromm, Alain Badiou, and Emmanuel Lévinas are helpful for a host of reasons.

Fromm and Lévinas both offer potent responses to ethical questions raised by the historical period to which Camus, Sartre, and Beauvoir belong, and they both show that the way in which someone loves also profoundly affects one’s ethical responses to social relations. They argue, each in his distinct way, for interpersonal standards and perspectives in the ethical gamut that is love. They contend that these standards represent a valid response to the alienating (Fromm) or totalizing (Lévinas) predicament represented by modernity. Fromm’s analyses yield, for instance, a version of interpersonal authenticity in love (“integrity”), which is similar to the criteria of authenticity found in Camus’s notion of “the heart.” Lévinas’s phenomenological analyses of love reveal, moreover, a rival perspective on the pervasive and patently bleak ethical picture of contemporary love; his erotic phenomenology serves as a critique to Sartre’s phenomenology of love, elaborated in chapter Two, because Lévinas arguably exposes an overlooked conclusion in Sartre’s

phenomenology of *erôs*: love's paradox of "two in one" is not a contradiction to be egotistically overcome, but rather a structural truth of love's transcendent possibilities.

Alain Badiou's analyses of love's relation to ethics and politics are helpful for this project, moreover, for two reasons. First, he describes love's "threats" as distinct types of ethical threats to society, and his work insightfully shows the entrenched complicity between how one thinks of love and its relation to political agendas. Second, contemporary scholars like Badiou, Lancelin and Lemonnier, and Martha Nussbaum,²¹³ for example, remind us that love (still) matters in the political sphere and in terms of how we treat each other in our daily praxis.

My dissertation situates not only the pre- and post-World War II climate, but also this climate's wake. The former undoubtedly represents the lion's share of the work, yet our interaction with Badiou's theory of love, for example, helps to remind us that the problems confronted by Camus, Sartre, and Beauvoir are generally very much alive, and that they stem from shared sources and historical problematics. When one confronts the theories of Fromm, Badiou, and Lévinas, it should be with an eye to both love's general connection to ethical and political registers of meaning, as well as to the contemporary predicament in which love discourse finds itself.

A Theoretical Consideration of Love's Modern Ethical and Political Predicament: Fromm, Badiou, Lévinas

Erich Fromm (1900-1980) compellingly argues that love is a viable ethical antidote to the diagnosis of humanity's alienation in the modern world. He also argues that a proper

²¹³ Cf. Nussbaum's *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*, Belknap Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2013.

understanding of love is at the heart of our optimal political and social praxis. Fromm based much of *The Art of Loving* (1956) upon his training and life-long practice in psychotherapy, as well as his numerous scholarly works on cultural criticism, sociology and comparative history. Unlike most of the psychoanalysts of his generation, he was not interested in pursuing a medical formation, preferring instead to base his theories upon the philosophical counter-alienation strategies found in such eclectic thinkers as Spinoza, Marx, Freud, and in his own collaboration with the Frankfurt School.

His work up to and including *The Art of Loving* develops a philosophical outlook in which “the universal human problem”—alienation—is taken as a universal problem of social being or self-actualization with others, which he often dubs “the problem of existence.”

Man—of all ages and cultures—is confronted with the solution of one and the same question: the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one’s individual life and find at-onement. (9)

Historical human cultural practice, “to the extent that we can have knowledge of it,” has expressed its response to this basic problem for millennia, most notably in the primeval drive for frenzied or “orgiastic states,” which include ritualized Dionysian “states of exaltation” wherein “the world outside disappears, and with it the feeling of separateness from it” (11). This fundamental drive also finds its expression in prescribed social functions such as revelatory religious experiences, ritual drug use and sexual fusion. The overall existential purpose of such rituals was clearly palliative, albeit temporarily so:

It seems that after the orgiastic experience, man can go on for a time without suffering too much from his separateness. Slowly the tension of anxiety mounts, and then is reduced again by the repeated performance of the ritual. (11)

The primeval social response to the problem of existential alienation clearly has some traces (for better or worse) in the modern world, yet it is no longer compatible with

contemporary industrialized society as such. To begin with, the primeval response comprises a relatively small group of people, “united by kinship, blood, and soil” who “feel neither shame nor anxiety” when they perform these orgiastic rites; conversely, “to act in this way is right, even virtuous, since it is a way shared by all, approved and demanded by the priests” (11).

There is furthermore the modern tendency to see oneself as part of a massive “*polis*...state, and church,” and hence to seek the answer to the problem of existence either in the trend for unscrupulous conformity (in democratic societies) or in totalitarian compulsion, depending upon where one lives. Whichever is the case, the existential problem is at the root:

One can only understand the power of the fear to be different, the fear to be only a few steps away from the herd, if one understands the depths of the need not to be separated. Sometimes this fear of non-conformity is rationalized as fear of practical dangers which could threaten the non-conformist. But actually, people *want* to conform to a much higher degree than they are *forced* to conform, at least in the Western democracies. Most people are not even aware of their need to conform...The consensus of all serves as a proof for the correctness of “their” ideas. (13)

An ethical as well as a political problem begins to emerge from this existential narrative which, according to Fromm, is nothing less than “the whole of human history,” that is, the human drive to transcend a default, alienated state through interpersonal union. The ethical problem has its roots in the appropriate individual response to this diagnosis, and the political problem has its roots in the management of society *qua* its response to the same diagnosis.

Both problems are importantly addressed and potentially resolved, however, by Fromm’s *analysis of love*. Genuine, “mature love” is “*union under the condition of preserving one’s integrity, one’s individuality*” (19, emphasis in the original). By way of anticipation, Fromm will use a historical as well as contemporary application of love to ground the appropriate ethical and political responses to the problem of existence. The result,

then, is a well-defined account of love that is intimately associated with ethical and political registers. This account is of further importance because it sets the stage for the ways that bell hooks, Badiou, and Lévinas, will recast love as directly related to either ethics, politics, or both. The final goal, of course, is to then situate the conclusions of these analyses to better understand the related constellation in Camus, Beauvoir and Sartre. This goal will be accomplished when we analyze the question of authenticity and authentic love, which, it turns out, is *virtually identical* to Fromm's formal criterion of "love as interpersonal union that preserves one's integrity."

Erich Fromm's ethical existential problem can be recast in terms of the modern individual's response to a *threat* to his or her integrity. "Integrity," that is, someone's unshakeable moral code "to simply be himself," as he puts it, is potentially threatened for three general reasons (19). First, there is the "increasing tendency to eliminate differences" in contemporary society's conformist responses to the problem of existence. This coercive trend (for example, through consumer "propaganda," work and play "routines," and the inculcated promise, "which begins at three or four years of age" of temporary release of alienation through consumption and imitation) merely attenuates the vital impulse necessary for personal integrity without providing a satisfactory existential answer. Fromm calls this answer "a form of pseudo-unity" (12, 14, 15, 17).

Second, the modern individual is the unfortunate heir, as it were, to the vestiges of the primeval *orgiastic* responses. This is unfortunate because *without* the concomitant societal structure that sanctions these activities as necessary and virtuous, this kind of interpersonal coping strategy, especially when it is primarily through drugs, alcohol or sex, often leads to shame, anxiety and neurosis. At best, these are feeble coping responses to the question of

preserving one's integrity in interpersonal fusion. Fromm calls this type of answer a "momentary escape" from the anxiety of alienation (12).

The third and final type of threat to one's integrity comes from patterns of "symbiotic fusion," which represent potentially vicious, albeit regrettably common coping strategies to the existential problem. Similar to unscrupulous conformism, the patterns are inculcated at early stages of development and arrest the integral development of the potentially mature individual. Fromm calls them "symbiotic" patterns because their *biological* manifestation is the interdependent relationship of fetus to mother, but one knows them better in their more developmentally important forms: the "passive" and "active" *psychological* manifestations: masochism and sadism (18-19).

The masochistic adaptation to the existential problem surrenders one's integrity to another (or to others, or even "to God"). We can better understand the dearth of integrity precisely through this coping submission: "the masochistic person does not have to make decisions, does not have to take any risks; he is never alone—but he is not independent" (18). This maladaptive response can even seek impersonal outlets: "[t]here can be submission to fate, to sickness...to the orgiastic state produced by drugs...in all these instances a person renounces his integrity" (18).

The sadistic adaptation reveals the other extreme of a lack of one's interpersonal integrity—the will to dominate others in order to "escape from his aloneness and his sense of imprisonment by making another person part and parcel of himself" (19). The sadist uses tactics of interpersonal domination to hurt or to humiliate in order to graft another person onto him or her, as it were.

There is undoubtedly a clear difference between sadism and masochism in a social sense, yet in a psychological sense the result is the same *qua* the existential response: both the masochist and the sadist represent “fusion without integrity,” and in both cases, “neither can live without the other,” hence Fromm’s choice of the word “symbiosis” (19). They lack the ability to “simply be themselves” in a moral sense with others, that is, they lack integrity in their interpersonal union. It is thus not surprising that a lack of interpersonal integrity can foster either a masochistic or a sadistic attitude in one and the same person, usually toward different objects, and in either the most banal or extraordinary of circumstances:

Hitler reacted primarily in a sadistic fashion toward people, but masochistically toward fate, history, the “higher power” of nature. His end—suicide among general destruction—is as characteristic as was his dream of success—total domination. (19)

To recapitulate, whether it is through the “pseudo-union” of conformity or compulsion, “momentary escapism” through addictive behaviors, or the maladaptive “symbiotic” union represented by sadomasochism, the modern individual is surrounded by potential threats to his or her existential choices. The problem is thus posed with respect to re-connecting to the social world in a way that preserves integrity. An ethical question now emerges in its urgency: given these types of socially pervasive, institutionalized threat to integrity, how can the modern individual coherently maintain an ethical response to the existential problem? Fromm’s answer is that this response is accomplished (and always has been accomplished, moreover) through choosing the *right forms* of interpersonal union.

A semantic question arises at this point, however. What does he intend by “the right forms” of interpersonal union? The general answer to this type of question is, unsurprisingly, that right forms of interpersonal union are those that preserve one’s integrity—this is “right” in the exact sense that it directly answers the existential question, and it does so in a way that

leaves the individual whole and intact, able to “simply be himself.”²¹⁴ I would argue, however, that the *specific* answer to the above question—and the reason for which Fromm titled his book *The Art of Loving* and not, say, “The Art of Preserving Integrity in Interpersonal Union”—is that *the best archetypal patterns* for such union *correspond to types of love*, which Fromm carefully enumerates in the subsequent sections of his book.

To explain this crucial methodological point in different terms, a survey of the types of interpersonal union (in general) reveals that it is certain types of love that most faithfully and distinctly reflect this “union” on the one hand, and this “preservation of individual integrity” on the other. This is why Fromm endorses, in the last analysis, active types of love such as: filial love, brotherly love, love-in-friendship, love of humanity, and (to a lesser extent) erotic love.²¹⁵ In these active forms of love people can and often do unite with others (and hence respond to the existential problem) *as well as* preserve their *integrity* in this union (and hence satisfy the ethical problem).²¹⁶

The account of active types of love (as essential interpersonal unions that preserve integrity) is quite thorough, especially to the extent that he uses love to respond to a much broader existential ethical problem—moral alienation. It is helpful to scrutinize the notions of “authenticity” and authentic love in Camus, Beauvoir, and Sartre, because Fromm’s amorous

²¹⁴ Fromm does not seem concerned to give an *a priori* argument for why *only* types of love satisfactorily answer the existential problem. He makes the concession that “semantic difficulties” will arise but that it is sufficient that “we know what forms of union we are talking about when we talk about love,” *viz.* “a specific kind of union... which has been the ideal virtue in all great humanistic religions and philosophical systems of the last four thousand years of Western and Eastern history” (17).

²¹⁵ Briefly stated, erotic love certainly *can be* principled upon fusion that preserves integrity; yet among the types of love that can do so, erotic love is also the most susceptible to passions, desires, and neuroses that can undermine one’s integrity. Cf. 49-51, 53.

²¹⁶ Briefly stated, Fromm qualifies mature love as “active” because the consideration of love as an activity (instead of passively “wanting to be loved”) reinforces his key notions of *choice* and *care* in the ways that we love with integrity. Cf. 20-25, *et passim*.

theory is essentially based upon ethical authenticity—he calls it “integrity,” but we will establish a clear link between “integrity” and “authenticity” in subsequent chapters when we look at our main protagonists’ accounts of the ethics of love. Camus’s theory of the “heart” of the revolt, and true love, seems to anticipate this crucial aspect of Fromm’s theory, although there is relatively no scholarship on the issue.

I am critical, however, of at least one methodological omission in Fromm’s argument, namely that for all of the profundity of his conceptual existential analysis, one is still left with the question of *how* this “interpersonal union” actually works, where “in love the paradox occurs where two beings become one yet remain two” (19). For instance, what is the loving agent’s perspective like? And, how does one formally indicate the structure of two people in a loving “union,” who simultaneously “preserve their integrity”? These kinds of question can be posed for each “active” type of love that he indicates, yet there is an absence of such analysis in a work that is otherwise lapidary in its treatment of interpersonal love and ethics. In a word, what is the *phenomenology* “of love as interpersonal union that preserves integrity”?

In some fairness to Fromm’s overall method, he may not have seen the need for phenomenological or experiential description, whether because it was not a salient consideration, or because his own formation and discipline did not tend in that direction (although it *is* curious that a life-long practitioner of psychoanalysis did not include more description of “active love’s” interpersonal mechanisms as they are lived.) He does, however, give a general theoretical account of “paradoxical logic” in which he describes the basic assumptions of the aforementioned “paradox of love” (Cf. 68-74) but this still leaves the question of how love is enacted in real experience and practice.

It thus seems that in order to better anchor his account of love and its relationship to ethical experience, one would need to delve into the experiential structures that account for how it works, and for what it is like to *be* in this union. It is thus important for our purposes that Badiou to an extent, and Lévinas in a more thorough way, do *exactly this*; namely, they give an experiential or phenomenological account of “two in one” in love, and this is a further reason for which we will turn to their accounts, below, in order to reinforce the essential relationship between love and ethics. Their phenomenological descriptions arguably flesh-out the skeleton of Fromm’s remarkable account of ethics *via* love, and both Badiou and Lévinas display remarkable similarity (as well as a few key differences) in their own accounts of ethical love.

If I am critical of this experiential or phenomenological omission in Fromm’s defense of love, there is nonetheless an unqualified admiration for the love *ethos* that he cultivates. His defense of love accentuates the demanding, hard work that is required for love to meaningfully flourish in the modern “9-to-5” world. Far from being a momentary *coup de foudre* or the proverbially pathetic ‘falling’ in love, active love is the ethical task of forming unions while maintaining personal integrity.

Genuine forms of love that respond ethically to the existential problem hence require *patient discipline and experience*, and this is why “actively loving others” is an “art.” The active choice to love *via* friendship, family, *erôs*, humanity—and even to love oneself—are all construed as a kind of artisanal activity that presupposes the kind of effort that one puts

into one's job. Fromm's broader, quasi-Aristotelian ethical task is one of actualizing love with interpersonal integrity throughout the craft of one's life.²¹⁷

Fromm is reciprocally quite *skeptical* about love's proliferation in modern society. The reason for his skepticism has everything to do with the current political structure of the modern state and the cultural and economic conditions that comprise it. It is interesting to note, moreover, that his choice to actively engage in the public political sphere corresponds almost exactly to the time that he finished *The Art of Loving*.²¹⁸

The political reasons for which love is under threat come from two related sources. On the one hand, there is the controlling or reactionary tendency to elide interpersonal *differences*—the *sine qua non* of true interpersonal union—under the dubious political rubric of “equality equals sameness,” which Fromm argues is importantly distinct from “genuine political equality,” or “oneness” as he puts it (13, 14). On the other hand, his argument is socio-economically political in the sense that institutionally (i.e., in schools, in laws, and in the media) as well as through consumer culture, the active, ethical types of love he identifies throughout history are “disintegrating” (77).

Difference is one of the essential factors in a loving union with another person, whether one considers the union of two people in erotic love, brotherly love, friendly love, or simply the requisite metaphysical fact that an integral part of each person *is* to have integrity, that is, the ability to uniquely be ourselves without moral compromise (13, 14). The

²¹⁷ In this sense, one might refer to Fromm's application of conventional love paradigms as “love-craft,” that is, as an existential response that requires “concentration, discipline, patience, supreme concern, and of course, practice”—all of which he formally indicates in the third section of his work: “The Practice of Love.”

²¹⁸ In a letter dated May of 1962, he declares to his friend, the Polish Socialist Adam Schaff: “I have been a socialist since my student days 40 years ago, but have never been active politically until the last five years, when I have been very active in helping to form an American peace movement, on the left wing of which I find myself.” *Post-Script to The Art of Loving*, 29.

elimination of difference in this sense not only has the consequence of alienating one's moral core through conformity or compulsion, but also of blocking the requisite polarity needed to accomplish the "paradox of love," wherein "two beings become one and yet remain two" by virtue of the mutual preservation of integrity (19).

Equality, he argues, is being significantly modified in a historical sense that corresponds to the "most advanced industrial" and "contemporary capitalist" societies (13, 14). This contemporary political modification stems from a kind of contemporary pun on what Fromm regards as the ordinary sense of "equality." The concept had originally preserved individual differences while concomitantly accentuating that which we have in common in moral or metaphysical senses. (This dynamic blend of difference and similarity is also why he prefers "oneness" over "equality," because the former captures the senses of one unique person as well as one unique kind: human being.)

The political and moral transformation of "equality" is succinctly summarized in a historical account that spans 2,000 years. Once we have enumerated the kernels of his argument for this transformation, we will then specify the particular reasons for which love is politically threatened through the elimination of difference. (This labor will also be of value when we compare Badiou's account, which argues for structurally similar points.)

The first prong of Fromm's argument locates the genesis of this dynamic blend of difference within unity mentioned above. For context's sake, in subsequent passages he stresses the important infusion of "love for humanity" that underlies the human relation expressed in the following passage (*Cf.* 59, 76, 98):

Equality had meant, in a religious context, that we are all God's children, that we all share in the same human-divine substance, that we are all one. It meant also that the very differences between individuals must be respected, that while it is true that *we are all one*, it is *also true* that each one of us is a unique entity, *a cosmos by itself*. (14, my emphasis)

The second prong taps into the political notion of equality that culminated in the late-Enlightenment, which fostered what one could call a sense of human dignity and solidarity in a non-religious context:

Equality as a condition for the development of individuality was also the meaning of the concept in...the Western Enlightenment. It meant (most clearly formulated by Kant) that no man must be the means for the ends of another man. That all men are equal inasmuch as they are ends, and only ends, and never means to each other. (14)

The third and final prong summarizes the contemporary modification of “equality.”

Whatever divine inner unity or rational dignity we may have had in a metaphysical sense is now largely eradicated in a political and economic sense, and there can be little doubt that people often understand themselves as simply “means” in the new Western polity. “In contemporary capitalistic society,” Fromm argues:

The meaning of equality has been transformed. By equality one refers to the equality of automatons; of men who have lost their individuality. *Equality today means “sameness” rather than “oneness.”* It is the sameness of abstractions...Contemporary society preaches this ideal of unindividualized equality because it needs human atoms, each one the same, to make them function in a mass aggregation, smoothly, without friction...yet everybody being convinced that he is following his own desires. (14-15)

The notion of “equality” in the moral and political sense of individuality in “oneness,” be it in divine love for humanity [*agapé*] as “God’s children,” or the unity of rationality heralded in late-Enlightenment metaphysical thinking, has been significantly modified by economically political impulses that yield two important results for our purposes. First, if the average tendency of contemporary capitalist society is to trivialize individuality in order to mobilize herd-like consumer culture, then by Fromm’s definition, “integrity” itself must share this same tendency to suffer—the aforementioned “cosmos” unto itself of individuality gets washed-out to a generic standard. Second, when personal integrity, “the ability to simply be ourselves” suffers, so too does love.

The political problem *qua* love emerges as a kind of dilemma. If Fromm is correct in a general sense, the best type of response to the existential problem is the life-long commitment to freely engage in loving unions—be they in loving friendship, familial love, and erotic relations (17). These unions must, if they are to hit the mark, preserve individual integrity, and hence it is important that people preserve *their* essential differences while seeking the right kinds of union. Yet the dominant socio-political tendency does *the reverse*. Contemporary persons tend to be lulled into a distinctly different type of response to the problem—the pacifying union of capitalist consumer conformity alluded to in the above passage, wherein people “lose their individuality.” This type of union is not a viable choice on his analysis, because as far as the overall structure of society is concerned, it only leads to a “pseudo-unity” with notably undesirable consequences:

Union by conformity is not intense and violent; it is calm, dictated by routine, and for this very reason often is insufficient to pacify the anxiety of separateness. The incidence of alcoholism, drug addiction, compulsive sexualism, and suicide in contemporary Western society are symptoms of this relative failure of herd conformity. (17)

Consumer culture is thus one of the major impediments to genuine love’s proliferation (and hence an impediment to the success of the best historical response to the problem of existence). In particular, it is the way that it socializes the individual into construing “love” as a commodity and a service that is governed by market forces (3, 120-3, and elsewhere).²¹⁹ The further part of his argument is that the “anonymously authoritarian” efforts of the market and public opinion exert a kind of political submission on the individual (76). If “love” is construed as an exchange of commodity or service, then *why not* maximize it through hoping

²¹⁹ “Our character is geared to exchange and to receive, to barter and to consume; everything, spiritual as well as material objects, becomes an object of exchange and consumption” (81).

for “fair bargains,” “*égoïsme à deux*,” “frictionless, idealized couples,” “sexual satisfactions” and “sentimental exchanges” that can be bartered for and negotiated (78-9, 81, 93)?

“Love” is thus “disintegrating” in the sense that “modern capitalist culture” and its institutions tend to exert an influence on the “character of the average person” such that one tends to be alienated from “himself, each other, and from nature” (76, 79). His post-Marxist critique of the 1950s paints a bleak picture of the possibility of lasting interpersonal union with others, let alone a way to reconnect to “love,” “the ideal virtue in all great humanistic religions and philosophical systems of the last four thousand years of Western and Eastern history” (17). Given the dystopian image of love in modern culture, one wonders why Fromm did not title his work “The Autopsy of Love”? That is, why did he not follow his intellectual companions Marcuse, Adorno and Horkheimer, for example, who from similar premises unequivocally sound the regrettable but inexorable death knell of love?

The reason for Fromm’s defense of love (as the best possible response to the problem of existence) resides in both the *unsaid* of the above analyses as well as in the political possibilities of changing the structure of society, at least in non-totalitarian states. By “the unsaid,” I mean that these analyses aim toward simple *tendencies* among the positive data and theories with which he is operating. Tendencies and simple generalizations, however, are not necessarily the way things are *tout simplement*. This discrepancy between the general pattern and its exceptions allow for some political room for maneuver, that is, for political changes in the structure of society and its effects on the character of the modern individual. This is why Fromm points out exceptions to the alienating trends of modern culture (i.e., the exception of genuine, albeit marginal, forms of love), as well as why he remains a reluctant

optimist about love's ethical possibilities—provided that decisive political changes can be made about love's societal impediments.

Such changes would include re-conceiving of notions like equality, the outline of which we discussed above, as well as “fairness,” in order to imbue these political notions with an appropriate ethical response to the question of interpersonal union. “Fairness,” similar to “equality,” he argues, has been co-opted by contemporary consumer logic in a way that distorts its historical significance.

While a great deal of lip service is paid to the religious ideal of love of one's neighbor, our relations are actually determined, at their best, by the principle of fairness... meaning not to use fraud and trickery in the exchange of commodities and services, and in the exchange of feelings. “I give you as much as you give me,” *in material goods as well as in love*, is the prevalent ethical maxim in capitalist society. It may even be said that the development of fairness ethics is the particular ethical contribution of capitalist society. (119, my emphasis)

“Fairness” in the above sense no doubt *can* be traced back to ancient maxims like the so called “Golden Rule”—do unto others as you would like them to do unto you—although he importantly argues that this contemporary interpretation is a specious (and convenient) revision of a much broader form of loving interpersonal union. In a move that resonates with Emmanuel Lévinas's thought during the same period, Fromm locates ethical notions like responsibility and willingness to sacrifice in the deeper sense of the Golden Rule, which was “formulated originally as a more popular version of the Biblical ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’” (120):

Indeed, the Jewish-Christian norm of brotherly love is entirely different from fairness ethics. It means to love your neighbor, that is, to feel responsible for and one with him, while fairness ethics means *not* to feel responsible, and one, but distant and separate; it means to respect the rights of your neighbor, but not to love him. (120)

One strategic political response to the basic problem of existence is to imbue arguably hijacked notions like “equality” and “fairness” with the types of love that they could evince,

and have evinced. “Fairness,” then, ought to be a question of the interpersonal union that preserves integrity so as to “feel responsible” for and humanly united with the person with whom one interacts, and not to merely cling to the contemporary catechism of ‘well, it’s not *my* responsibility...hardly know the guy...it’s only fair after all...’ Fromm’s suggestion here is that by reviving the originary sense of human love-in-solidarity in our “fair” relations with others—that is, of an interpersonal union that preserves integrity in this type of loving relation—we could supersede an ethically inferior notion of “fairness.” (It is essential to note, moreover, that the strategy is thoroughly motivated by considerations of love, and that Camus’s central political argument in *The Rebel* is to mobilize this sense of human solidarity that he identifies in love, the stakes of which we examined in chapter Three.)

The room for political maneuver in a different sense comes from the complexity and mutability of Western democratic socio-political organization itself. In the passage below, Fromm has in mind Frankfurt School critics like Marcuse, who argue for the “basic incompatibility between love and normal secular life within our society” (121).

Even if one recognizes the principle of capitalism as being incompatible with the principle of love, one must admit that “capitalism” is in itself a complex and constantly changing structure which still permits of a good deal of non-conformity and of personal latitude. (121-2)

The room for maneuvering love’s possibilities in a grass-roots way resides in this sense of “non-conformity and personal latitude.” The sheer fact of being a thorough non-conformist is consistent with acknowledging the conformist *tendencies* of capitalism, albeit reluctantly, on some meaningful political level while also importantly preserving a love ethic toward others. He concedes that one can be a “farmer, a worker, a teacher, and many a type of businessman” who can “all try to practice love without ceasing to function economically” (121). Fromm also gives a sketch of the socio-political importance of role models who display a consistent

love ethic, and he underscores the crucial component of love in our developmental education so as to be receptive to forms of love that resist disintegration into “pseudo-unions” (108).

Of course, such possibilities cannot proliferate without intense political and social changes to society. He emphatically stamps *The Art of Loving* with an astonishing appeal to a Marxism that is infused with love!

Those who are seriously concerned with love as the only rational answer to the problem of human existence must, then, arrive at the conclusion that important and radical changes in our social structure are necessary, if love is to become a social and not a highly individualistic, marginal phenomenon. Society must be organized in such a way that *man's social, loving nature* is not separated from his social existence, but becomes one with it...[A]ny society which excludes, relatively, the development of love, must *in the long run perish of its own contradiction* with the basic necessities of human nature. (122-3, my emphasis)

If the broader theoretical implications of Fromm's defense of love and its relationship to ethics and politics are now clearer, it is important at this juncture to recall the purpose of tarrying with them in the ways that we have. The purpose is strictly speaking neither to defend nor critique his existential theory of love and alienation *in toto*, nor is it to critique or defend mid-20th-century Western society as such. The purpose, rather, is to show key instances of how ethical and political questions can be better understood *via* considerations of love, on the one hand, and how love can be better understood through its intimate connection with ethical and political registers, on the other.

Fromm's *The Art of Loving* (1956) represents the precipitate of two decades of thinking about pervasive, distinct 20th-century social problems and the most logical response to them: his theory of love thus responds to ethical and political considerations during the post-war climate. It also importantly gives a sustained analysis of “integrity” and its relationship with love. Because with only trivial modifications, what Fromm means by “integrity” is relevantly coextensive with the way they use “authenticity” (Beauvoir and

Sartre) and “integrity” (Camus). That is, Fromm’s existential imperative to “simply *be* myself” without bad-faith or compulsion is at the heart of each thinker’s notion of authenticity.

The Art of Loving is also helpful to the extent that his basic existential assumption is that of “alienation” and “separateness,” and this is similar to Sartre’s and Camus’s basic existential assumption of alienation *via* “forlornment” and “absurdity,” respectively. The stakes of Fromm’s theory of love are important, furthermore, to critique Camus’s amorous conversion from his younger (1936 -1942) love ethic to his mature political ethic, the outline of which was indicated in the first chapter). The main reason for why Fromm’s ideas are capital, by way of anticipation, is that both he and Camus anchor humanitarian love at the heart of an ethics and politics of solidarity and mobilization, which were analyzed in chapter Three.

As we depart from the early Cold War climate of Fromm’s analysis to the contemporary landscape of Alain Badiou’s *In Praise of Love*, we find a concern with similar themes and problems (unsurprisingly similar, according to Fromm’s analysis): the alienation of the modern individual in the grip of consumer culture; the conservative or reactionary tendency to eliminate interpersonal difference under specious political rubrics; and finally, the problem of practicing a genuine love ethic in the wake of the first two points. Badiou’s concisely argued and provocative response to love’s ethical and political predicament is importantly divergent from Fromm’s in key respects, however. His “praise of love” will take distinctly different formulations, including an apparent *rejection* of love’s place in the political arena proper.

Badiou indicates personal existential structures within his positive account of interpersonal love, the lack of which we noticed in the argumentative structure of *The Art of Loving*. An analysis of the formal criteria of love's mechanisms—for instance, of “the production of truth,” “the declaration,” and “the construction that lasts”—will help to better understand this key notion of *difference* that is essential for genuine love. We will subsequently examine Lévinas's interpersonal phenomenology of love in the section following Badiou's, also to better interrogate the notion of “difference” in interpersonal love. This particular labor is important both for specifying love's intersubjective mechanisms as they unfold over time, and for when we confront Sartre's phenomenology of love (in chapter Two), because it offers rival perspectives on the phenomenon of erotic love as an interpersonal structure.

In Praise of Love [*Eloge de l'amour*] offers a brilliantly candid and somewhat spontaneous take on love and social practice. It represents a “more rounded and incisive” transcription of Badiou's responses to questions posed by the journalist Nicolas Truong at the 2008 Avignon Festival on Bastille Day (3). Badiou opens the first salvo of his critique with a broad description of love's possibilities; of course, the author of *The Meaning of Sarkozy* cannot refrain from also throwing a political barb:

[The festival] was going to be held on 14 July and I was excited by the idea of celebrating love, a cosmopolitan, subversive, sexual energy that transgresses frontiers and social status at a time normally devoted to the Army, the Nation, and the State. (2)

In Praise of Love's argumentative structure culminates in a positive account of “genuine” two-person erotic love, which is established in such domains as “the construction of love,” “love and truth,” and “love and art.” The implicit strategy is, first, to give an account of what love is not. The *via negativa* functions to the extent that he identifies

political and ethical threats to love, out of which the positive account emerges. These kinds of threat comprise the reason for which *In Praise of Love* appropriates a key expression from Arthur Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell* (July, 1873): "As we know, love needs re-inventing".²²⁰

The institutional threats he identifies are either consumer trivializations of love, or specious marginalizations that are intertwined with dominant strains of ethical and political logic. Nicolas Truong poses questions that concern how "the arranged marriages of yesteryear" have been re-packaged today, as well as whether there is a connection between contemporary "zero death" war tactics and "zero-risk" dating mantras, which then lead him to pose the more decisive question of "whether there is a pact between liberal and libertarian ideas on love" (5, 7, 10). Badiou's responses illuminate a cultural constellation that underscores love's relationship to many important socio-political practices.

First, he notes the current proliferation of "on-line dating sites," "wide-scale advertising campaigns" offering "love," and even "personal trainers" who claim to prepare customers for the emotional gamut encountered on the dating market (5, 6, 8). The approach to love that underlies this "finance capitalism" strategy betrays a "safety-first approach," which intends to eliminate "chance encounters," "risk" and "in the end any existential poetry" under the auspices of an "insurance policy" logic (8). It would be one thing if such a strategy really could do what it claims, yet Badiou argues that in the first place, it never could, and in the second place, it presupposes a logic that leads to a diagnosis of the first of two threats to love—the "safety threat."

²²⁰ The French poem reads: "L'amour est à réinventer, on le sait." This could interestingly mean, "One knows [that] love is to be reinvented." This translation better confirms the importance of seeing the *nature* of love itself as constantly under threat.

The elimination of risk and chance in love is dubious, he argues, for two reasons. The intuitive reason is that “love is a pleasure that almost everyone is looking for, the thing that gives meaning and intensity to almost everyone’s life.” Given such massive stakes, then, Badiou is “convinced that love cannot be a gift given on the basis of a complete lack of risk” (7). The conceptual reason is that instead of eliminating (*per impossible*) chance and risk in a real sense, the logic of the safety-first approach eliminates *undesirable* partners according to the logic of “the risk will be everyone else’s” but not yours!

If you have been well trained for love, following the canons of modern safety, you won’t find it difficult to dispatch the other person if they do not suit. If he suffers, that’s his problem, right? He’s not part of modernity. (9)

The amorous “training” and the precautionary “safety” that accompanies it correspond to consumer techniques of precomprehension. He or she can casually use a database for all sorts of details—photos, biography, preparatory “chats”—and come to the desired conclusion that “this is a risk free option” in the sense that one has acquired the compatible object of love (6). The same logic suggests, moreover, the “insurance policy” of (literally) deleting the partner if the real-life union turns out to be lacking in the desired outcome—one simply moves on to the next “love match.” And if the other is emotionally hurt as a result, it is because he or she does not understand the game—they too should have “insurance,” and if they do not, “it’s their problem” for not getting with the times, that is, for not being a “part of modernity.”

The further argument is that this type of consumer love-logic is analogous to modern ethico-political notions of “safer warfare,” especially if one substitutes the notion of antiquated consumer with non-first-world denizen, and the notion of emotional suffering with belligerent suffering:

[It is] in the same way that “zero deaths” apply only to the Western military. The bombs they drop kill a lot of people who are to blame for living underneath. But these casualties... don’t belong to modernity either. Safety-first love, like everything governed by the norms of safety, implies the absence of risks for people who have a good insurance policy, a good army... a good psychological take on personal hedonism, and all risks for those on the opposite side. (9)

The second threat love faces—the “denial that it is all important”—is the “counterpoint to the safety threat” in the sense that “love is only a variant of rampant hedonism and the wide range of possible enjoyment” (8). Because the first threat essentially characterizes “love” as anticipated erotic fun with insurance, then it is not difficult to see that love, on this view, is merely one way to have interpersonal fun among other options. Love’s importance, according to this caricature, is deflated and controlled by the dictates of modern liberal culture. That is, love is socio-politically caught in a bind that essentially says: “safety guaranteed by an insurance policy and the comfort zone limited by regulated pleasures” (10).

This deflation of love’s importance has the further implication of avoiding “challenges” as well as “any deep and genuine *experience of otherness* from which *love is woven*” (8, my emphasis). If the above tendency is accurate (*i.e.*, that the modern consumer sees “love” as a function of precomprehended hedonism with “safety”) then it follows that the experience of otherness is not procedurally salient. The other person is solely accessed through one’s own lucid anticipation of certain qualities, and the standard for acceptance or exclusion is modeled on the same paradigm. To love, according to this pattern, is to merely pursue one’s own interest as “a mutual exchange of favors” or “as a profitable investment” (17), the outline of which Fromm anticipated above.

This particular narcissistic tendency of modern consumer love is especially problematic because the experience of interpersonal “difference” (which Badiou also calls “otherness”) is the constituent element of “love’s truth procedure,” that is, “the experience

whereby a certain kind of truth is produced in love” (38). “Otherness” essentially contributes to the both the “universality” of love as well as to its significance as an interpersonal “construction that lasts” (32, 38, and elsewhere). Similar to Fromm’s analysis of love, to look backward, and similar to Lévinas’s analysis of love, to look forward, the key component of interpersonal difference is both essential to genuine love as well as under massive threat. The deeper issue for Badiou in particular is that if one is thoroughly inculcated into this modern procedure (*i.e.* the precomprehension of love partners with a parachute-policy if they do not satisfy) then why would meaningful intersubjective difference ever be salient to the contemporary lover?

Badiou responds to this cultural threat with an interventionist and interdisciplinary exhortation, the performance of which comprises the stakes of *In Praise of Love*: “I think it is the task of philosophy, and other fields, to rally to [love’s] defence” (11). His positive account of love indicates the experiential structures through which an apparent paradox is accomplished: the way in which uniquely different individuals can become “two in love” over time in a way that reveals fundamental truths about the world.²²¹ The task is to show how love *can* function as an event of the highest importance: therefore, against the threatening caricature of love as self-interested “rampant hedonism,” he argues that genuine love actually taps into our shared fund of ontology, ethics, epistemology, and aesthetics.

His reconstruction of love consists of a classical repetition with a difference. Plato argued that genuine love’s activity ultimately gives one insight into the universal form of Beauty, and this insight is inseparable from the True and the Good, simply stated. The more

²²¹ Badiou’s and Lévinas’s phenomenological construction of love as a positive event, by way of anticipation, will be of especial importance when we confront Sartre’s bleak picture of love as a vicious sadomasochistic circle, in Chapter Two.

or less chance encounters with beautiful bodies that anyone experiences in erotic activity can be harnessed (with the proper teacher/lover) to access a glimpse of universal, ideal nature. Our biological erotic impulses randomly reflect this truth through lust and sexual procreation, but the rational aspect of a person can see that biological procreation is just one, and limited, path toward immortality. The further and decisive implication, then, is to harness the erotic drive toward more and more lasting intellectual “offspring” (theories, history, political constitutions and laws, etc.) that eventually lead to that which is unlimited—eternal, universal truths.

It probably goes without saying that Badiou’s intention is not to revive platonic idealism *per se*. Rather, he appropriates a model of love that “encompasses the experience of the possible transition from the pure randomness of chance to a state that has universal value” (16). His further platonic appropriation is that love is a *procedure* that leads to a certain kind of truth—just as the platonic lover must ascend the ladder of love (or, must escape from the cave) to experience the difference of the universal *versus* the particular, so too Badiou argues that “love is a quest for truth” in difference:

What kind of truth? you will ask. I mean truth in relation to something quite precise: what kind of world does one see when one experiences it *from the point of view of two and not one*? What is the world like when it is experienced, developed and lived from the point of view of difference and not identity? ...[Love] is the project, naturally including sexual desire in all its facets. ...including also a thousand other things, in fact, anything from the moment our lives are challenged by the *perspective* of difference. (22-3, my emphasis)

It is now important to indicate the mechanisms of “difference” that allow for love to be an “event,” that is, to be a mutually constructed phenomenon that is universally realizable in general, as well as singular with respect to the erotic couple in question. His terminology is

not consistent,²²² but Badiou does insist that genuine love is “not an experience” (25, and elsewhere). His choice to qualify love as either “an event” or “an encounter,” but not “an experience” is curious, yet *what he means* is that love is not reducible to “an experience” in the sense of the agent’s “mere impulse to survive or re-affirm [his] own identity” (25). This point, which is similar to Lévinas’s and Fromm’s point about the importance of interpersonal otherness, is that love essentially unfolds from the “perspective of difference” and not merely from the agent’s impulse to assert his own type; in love, the “existential project is to construct a world from a de-centered point of view” in which “truth derives from difference as such” (25, 38).

We catch a glimpse of this (paradoxically de-centering yet affirming) project in the most poetical of his descriptions of the “Two scene,” that is, the perspective of difference, of “Two and not One” that love can yield:

When I lean on the shoulder of the woman I love, and can see, let’s say, the peace of twilight over a mountain landscape, gold-green fields, the shadow of trees, black-nosed sheep motionless behind hedges and the sun about to disappear behind craggy peaks, and know—not from the expression on her face, but from within the world as it is—that the woman I love is seeing the same world, and that this convergence is part of the world and that love constitutes precisely, at that very moment, the paradox of an identical difference, then love exists, and promises to continue to exist. (25-6)

The intended meaning is clear enough: two people in love can produce an independent perspective through which each lover’s point of view converges. The truth of this moment resides neither in Badiou, for example, seeing “the expression on her face” nor in either person’s expectation of identity confirmation, but rather in “identical difference,” that is, in two distinct takes on the world that nonetheless form “the world as it is” at that instant. One needs to better elucidate the process by which love is constructed in order to appreciate the

²²² Cf. p. 8: “The aim [of the safety-threat logic] is to avoid any immediate challenges, any deep and genuine experience of otherness from which love is woven.” Cf. pp. 22-3, 38, as well.

full implications of the existential love project, which we will shortly do, but at this point it is important to emphasize Badiou's characterization of difference in love. The above quotation continues as follows:

The fact is she and I are incorporated into this unique Subject, the Subject of love that views the panorama of the world through the prism of our difference, so this world can be conceived, be born, and not simply represent what fills my own individual gaze. Love is always the possibility of being present at the birth of the world. (26)

Difference is intended to be the moment of rupture for the truth that is produced in love, and difference, of course, breaks one out of the egocentric structure of experience ("not simply...my own individual gaze"). It is for this reason, moreover, that he vehemently opposes any characterization of love that relegates it to a "meltdown" or a "communion," because this represents the "ultimate revenge of One over Two," that is, a fusion rather than a real event of difference (24, 30, and elsewhere). Love is nonetheless situated as a "Subject" with its own viewpoint, which opens the door to the seeming paradox of two distinct people who nevertheless converge in a distinct and unified "prism" through which to see the world anew.

Badiou indicates a tangential response to the paradox of love's nature to the extent that he offers an intersubjective construction of the "truth" that emerges from difference in love, as well as the reinterpretation (and confirmation) of this truth over time. The last sentence of the previous quotation takes us to the heart of this procedure: "Love is always the possibility of being present at the birth of a world." His temporal analyses of love's need to be born and re-born, as it were, offer us insight into ways that love can be a shared project, even if in the last analysis he, and Fromm (and a host of others) do not try to resolve the paradox of "two in one" that they themselves propose. Love as it unfolds over time, however,

importantly steers Badiou's argument into ethical and political registers of meaning, to which we now turn.

In erotic love the initial encounter is clearly essential as well as importantly unpredictable, online dating ads to the contrary. The formal indication of the encounter of the birth of love involves "a separation or disjuncture based on the simple difference between two people and their infinite subjectivities," with the further implication that this disjuncture is usually "sexual difference" (26). When sexual difference is not the primary basis for separation, "love still ensures that two figures, two different interpretive stances are set in opposition" (26).

The encounter *qua* its necessarily oppositional structure has the remarkable ability to carve out a new order within the fabric of existence, to which "innumerable examples in art and literature" attest:

Romeo and Juliet is clearly the outstanding allegory for this particular disjuncture because this Two belong to enemy camps. We shouldn't underestimate the *power* love possesses to *slice diagonally through the most powerful oppositions and radical separations*...On the basis of this event love can start and flourish. (29, my emphasis)

The encounter is of course indispensable, yet Badiou is wary of falling into a certain kind of trap inspired by "the Romantic" tradition—namely, when one confuses the initial, chance encounter for love itself. This confusion is a trap in the sense that it ignores the importance of construction over time which, along with difference, *propel* what he calls the necessary fact "that you have *Two*" after the initial encounter (27).

The initial chance encounter is propelled to the extent that the lovers are "tenacious" and "adventurous." The tenacity to hold on to the encounter's reality, and the will to triumph "lastingly, sometimes painfully, over the hurdles erected by time, space and the world" are

what links the propulsion of the encounter to the deeper import of “love’s truth procedure” (32, 45).

Truth is produced in “real” love as a function of the initial difference and the subsequent perspective that unfolds from it. It is enacted by two lovers who maintain the requisite tenacity to cling to the first encounter, and then will to venture it forth. “In this sense, all love that accepts the challenge, commits to enduring, and embraces this experience of the world from the perspective of difference produces in its way a new truth about difference” (39). The truth produced by love can seem trivial at first glance, but that it is only when one considers the token and not the type, as it were. Badiou’s further analyses drive this seemingly marginal truth procedure right into the very core of humanity’s universal yearning for the perspective of Two and not just One:

We know how people get carried away by love stories! A philosopher must ask why that happens. Why are there so many films, novels, and songs that are entirely given over to love stories? There must be something universal about love for these stories to interest such an enormous audience. What is universal is that *all love suggests* a new experience of truth about two and not one. That we can encounter and experience the world other than through a solitary consciousness: *any love whatsoever gives* us new evidence of this. (39, my emphasis).

His language is categorical: love discloses the truth of *what it is like to be two*, and this is a universal phenomenon. Love—the ad-venture that propels the chance encounter of difference toward new truths about difference—reveals the truth of what it is like to disengage from being merely “one,” that is, to encounter, instead, “the world other than through a solitary consciousness.” This description is a formal repetition of an ancient (Plato) as well as modern (Fromm) gesture, but Badiou’s analysis importantly links “real love” with an interpersonal existential structure that can create truths as well as renew them *over time*. If Plato laid the foundation for this kind of loving activity, and Fromm laid the

foundation for the modern problem of existence *qua* love, Badiou gives us the *vehicle* in which two lovers can navigate time in the world opened up by Two.

The world of Two has the ability to assemble its own time, and in one sense (a forward-looking sense) it is the possibility of “always being present at the birth of a world.” This sense of time corresponds ontically to, say, marriage vows or the birth of a child, but the structure *in itself* is simply that a new truth is to be produced, a truth about difference *in duo*. Love assembles its own time in a different sense, moreover, to the extent that it gives precise definition to clichéd notions like “fidelity” and “the declaration” of love, which are “usually thought to be meaningless and banal” (44).

So, *contra* the consumer-love bumper-sticker of ‘if it doesn’t immediately work out, just bail out,’ Badiou argues that genuine love is a question of being existentially committed to both “fidelity” and “the declaration” of one’s love in which resides the implication that “I will always love you” (32, 44-5). Love has the ability, in this sense, to work backwards in time so as to reinterpret the past and to reinvest the present with an affirmation: the “declaration of love is to move on from the event-encounter to embark on a construction of truth. The chance nature of the encounter *morphs into the assumption of a beginning*” (42, my emphasis). It is this notion of re-commencement in which Badiou’s analyses shine brightest: he welds both Plato’s and Mallarmé’s metaphysics of love and poetry, respectively, into a method of reinvesting “chance with necessity.”

One of Stéphane Mallarmé’s (1842 -1898) insights into the nature of modern poetry is that the artisanal crafting of language has the power to enact a poem wherein “chance is defeated word by word” (45). The relevant temporal analogy for Badiou is that instead of the chance being defeated by surgical diction, chance in love is “defeated” (or “curbed”) by the

day-by-day rebirths of that first encounter. That is, chance is curbed by the renewed mutual construction of the initial encounter so as to imbue what *seemed* like chance with the artisanal work of “extracting” truths about Two that unfold over the time of the committed relationship (44). Love as a project “curbs chance” because “the absolute contingency of the encounter with someone I didn’t know takes on the *appearance of destiny*” (43, my emphasis). This retrospective investment in love is too often glossed over with indifference, yet Badiou argues that when curbing chance is seen as a universal indication of what the perspective of Two can accomplish over time, it is actually love’s wellspring:

People will say, why talk about great truth in respect of the quite banal fact that So and So met his or her colleague at work? That’s exactly what we much emphasize: an apparently insignificant act, but one that is a really radical event in life at the micro-level, bears universal meaning in the way it persists and endures. (41)

The platonic component of his analogy resides in just this sense of finding a way to harness the meaning of the chance encounter with another person (*i.e.* of a seemingly fleeting “micro-level” event) into an enduring and universal truth procedure about difference. The existential stakes of such a chance, then, tap into far more than the “rampant hedonism” and the “trivial, disabused face” of love signaled above; rather, genuine love’s procedure offers insight into related species of platonic procedures toward lasting universal truths:

Love, the essence of which is fidelity in the meaning I give to this word, demonstrates how eternity can exist within the time span of life itself. Happiness, in a word! ... And you can also find proof in the political enthusiasm you feel when participating in a revolutionary act, in the pleasure given by works of art and the almost supernatural joy you experience when you at last grasp in depth the meaning of a scientific theory. (49)

To recapitulate, the analyses above indicate a decisive and structured existential response to the “threats from all sides” that love faces. The first part of the analysis showed the most obvious political threat that love faces, namely the reactionary tendency to “eliminate difference” in love. We then saw the compatibility of the “safety-first” love approach with

the “zero-death” tactics of contemporary Western warfare, which points to a more entrenched complicity between how one thinks of love and politics; namely, the implications of Western “modernity” and its relationship to the “safety-first,” insurance-policy, and “hedonistic” modes of relating to the world.

We have also seen the case for love as a (uniquely two-person) vehicle for discovering certain kinds of truth about the world. When we consider love in this positive sense, to *block* genuine love’s possibilities is to close our eyes to features of the world revealed by difference. To impede love would be tantamount to trivializing or repressing any legitimate ontic domain of inquiry. “Genuine” love has the ability, moreover, to “slice through oppositions” and “radical separations,” which invests love with a kind of transformative social energy. Indeed, the whole tenor of Badiou’s “praise” aims to re-appropriate love (*i.e.* a universal existential procedure that perpetually discloses new truths) precisely from the clutches of dubious political and institutional practices.

So, when he argues that “love can lead to a kind of ethics,” this seems to simply follow from his analyses about the importance of defending love from the various threats it faces, and from reinvesting its life-affirming and truth-producing tendencies (57). It is initially stunning, however, especially given the above analyses, when he declares that love and politics *are mutually exclusive*:

I don’t think you can mix up love and politics. In my opinion, the “politics of love” is a meaningless expression. I think that when you begin to say “Love one another,” that can lead to a kind of ethics, but not to any kind of politics. Principally because there are people in politics one doesn’t love...That’s undeniable. Nobody can expect us to love them. (57)

Love and politics are indeed similar in the sense that they “are processes involving the search of truth,” yet beyond that Badiou denies any positive sense of the connection of love and politics. We can resume Badiou’s rejection of love (as a positive component in the political

sphere) for two basic reasons. Love and politics have a unilateral relationship, on the one hand, and that which makes love “genuine” is different from that which makes politics “genuine.”

The first reason for which love and politics do not mix is that politics only seem to *hinder* genuine love, as in the cases considered above (*e.g.*, the reactionary tendency to “eliminate” difference; the alienating lapse into the capital finance hedonism of liberal culture “limited by regulated pleasures,” etc.) The description of love’s relationship to politics in this sense is loosely analogous to modern slogans of ‘get your politics out of my body’, that is, “politics” ought not to encroach upon certain domains of personal space or liberty. Love and politics are also antithetical for the reason that love involves “two,” whereas politics aims toward the “collective,” and considerations about the collective begin with quite different assumptions, he argues (54).

The basic political assumption is quite removed from love—it is a question of identifying one’s real *enemies*. To be clear, by “real” political enemies Badiou does not intend the all too common conflation of “an opposing party” with the genuine enemy: “a real enemy is not someone you are resigned to see because lots of people voted for him. This is a person you are annoyed to see as head of State” (58). He intends, rather, something like the opposite of love: a real enemy is “an individual you won’t tolerate taking decisions on anything that impacts yourself” (58). The political picture begins to emerge: the central issue in politics is hatred, that is, the “control of hatred, not of love” (58).

And hatred is a passion that almost inevitably poses the question of the enemy. In other words, in politics, where enemies do exist, one role of the organization...is to control, indeed to destroy, the consequences of hatred. That doesn’t mean it must “preach love,” but a major intellectual challenge it faces is to provide the most limited, precise definition possible of the political enemy. (71-2)

The notion of controlling passions is paramount. The “passion” in genuine love concerns a two-person domain in which “enemies” are not salient, and it is important for love’s procedure that it not be “controlled.” Given that politics concerns the collective, however, a conflation of love with politics in contemporary society makes for a dog’s dinner. In this vein, he scorns the very idea of political passions that draw upon the “cult of personality” type of misplaced love that has seduced many intelligent people (Badiou cites Eluard and Aragon as prime examples of this misplaced type of passion in politics, 70).

For similar reasons, he also rejects the notions of “Fraternity” and humanitarian love modeled upon Christianity, because the former is too politically vague in its formulation (63), and the latter is patterned upon a dubious model of propagandist transcendence that relegates love’s purpose to the hereafter, while concomitantly justifying misery in the immanence of real life. “Very basic but very potent propaganda” (69). Nicolas Truong seems to sense that something has not been clarified, however, because the questions about “love and politics” keep coming at Badiou with more and more precision. He had been posing his questions at general topical registers, but now a certain specification yields a crucial caveat in Badiou’s way of thinking about the connection between love and politics. Truong poses a political version of the decisive Rimbauldian question of *In Praise of Love*: in what ways might we re-invent love? Truong’s precise questions are:

The wish to bring love down to earth, to move from transcendence to immanence, was central to historical communism. In what way might the reactivating of the Communist hypothesis be a way to re-invent love? Would it be better to separate love from politics? (70, 72)

Badiou’s answer is initially, and unsurprisingly, that *yes*, we must separate love and politics, or else it leads to the aforementioned dog’s dinner:

In the same way that the definition of the enemy must be controlled, limited, reduced to a minimum, love, as a singular adventure in the quest for the truth about difference, must also be rigorously separated from politics. (72)

The answer is given, however, with a certain temporal and political specificity. That is to say, given the current political state of affairs and the basic understanding of human relations that underlies it, Badiou is convinced that love and politics are proverbial oil and water. Close attention to the temporal and the cultural implications of Truong's question, however, indicate another type of response. For context's sake, Badiou is crucially clarifying the broader meaning of "the Communist hypothesis," and hence the quotation is quite lengthy:

I simply want to suggest that *future* forms of the *politics of emancipation* must be inscribed in a resurrection, a re-affirmation of the...idea of a world that isn't given over to the avarice of private property, a world of free association and equality. To that end, we can draw on *new* philosophical tools and a good number of localized political experiences...In *such a framework*, it will be *easier* to re-invent love than if surrounded by capitalist frenzy. Because we can be sure that nothing disinterested can be at ease amid such frenzy. And love...is essentially disinterested: its value resides in itself alone *and* goes beyond the immediate interests of the two individuals involved. The meaning of the word "communism" doesn't immediately relate to love. *Nonetheless*, the word brings with it new possibilities. (72-3, my emphasis)

This answer to Truong's question about the whether it would be "better to separate love and politics" is *not at all* a categorical 'yes'. It is rather a hypothetical argument for the distinct possibility of: 'no', there *is* a situation in which a certain kind of politics importantly relates to love, one for which Sartre argued in chapter Four. When he claims, for instance, that "in such a framework" it will be *easier* to re-invent love, this is clearly a way in which love relates to politics. Furthermore, the *absence* of "capitalist frenzy" would ameliorate love's situation in society. Love's very description in this passage—the important and disinterested value that "goes beyond the immediate interest of two individuals"—is itself politically telling. Lastly, although the meaning of "communism" does not "immediately" relate to love, it "nonetheless brings with it new possibilities," that is, it *would* serve as a guiding light for

the general concern of Badiou's topic. This type of response, however hypothetical or future-looking it may be, nonetheless reopens the question of the connection between love and politics in the broadest of senses.

It is comparatively noteworthy that Badiou's theory of love, strictly speaking, excludes types of love with three or more people (such as "friendship" and "fraternity," for instance), which is in stark contrast to Fromm, hooks, and Camus, for example. One can gather from the above passage, however, that a certain radical politics—a new manifestation of Communism, to put it bluntly—would be a case wherein "love could be re-invented" with less social hindrances, and wherein love would be both a value in general as well as "a way to go beyond the immediate interest of the two individuals involved."

It is thus highly interesting to compare that Fromm concludes the *Art of Loving* with a similar appeal, namely that the "most rational response" to the problem of existence is to adopt a Marxism that is infused with love, the outline of which was indicated above. Fromm's theory of love necessarily includes, however, love types with three or more people, which and who are instrumental to politics and ethics. The current task is, however, to account for the paradox of "two in one" in love that both Fromm and Badiou suggest, without, however, resolving certain inconsistencies in the structure. This labor is important for conceptual reasons, *i.e.*, it would clarify that which is glossed-over in both Fromm's and Badiou's accounts. This labor is also ethically important for the reason that unless there is a way to account for the other person's agency in the structure of the paradox, then the "two" in love are in perpetual danger of being reduced to egotistical, narcissistic registers of meaning.

Despite himself, Badiou unintentionally flirts with this kind of interpretation when he couches love's structure (in the moment) as an instance of a "unique Subject" in which "I know" that "she sees the same world," as we saw above. The way that Badiou situates love as a two-person project *over time* is compellingly original and highly persuasive, however, and his outline of love as a truth procedure in this sense is ontologically, ethically, and politically captivating. Yet his description of two people in love *in the moment* yields an interpretation that detracts from the very difference that his truth procedure requires. Simply stated, when he asserts a "unique Subject of love," it opens the door to the possibility of "the Ultimate revenge of One over Two," which is clearly not what he intends in the moment of love as entailing two sources of difference.

Sartre, for example, argues that the paradox cannot be resolved, and hence that love for "two" is a bankrupt notion, as we see in detail in chapter Two. His erotic analyses, the conclusions of which were indicated in chapter One, show the distinctly opposite possibility of turning love into one person's manipulative project, in order to get another to 'outsource' his or her value to the lover: all that remains of "love" is to focus its possibilities on the "for-itself" *qua* his own ethical and political projects. The paradox is thus simply a *contradiction*, and the best response is first to recognize it as such, and then to proceed with lucid appropriations of the structure that best serve the for-itself's projects.

It is clear, however, that neither Fromm nor Badiou intends a reduction of "love" to egotistic or narcissistic registers of meaning; Fromm needs each person in love to "preserve their integrity" in their specific "difference," while Badiou needs to preserve a robust notion of "difference" in order to ground the existential truth procedures that imbue love with

lasting value—“what it is like to be Two and not One.” Yet Fromm, for his part, is simply vague about how “two in love” works.

It is worth noting that Badiou, like Fromm, never confronts the paradox in the moment, but instead labels it and moves on to other registers of explanation in order to construct a more consistent interpersonal narrative. Fromm gives a technical gloss about paradoxical logic in general, but he does not apply it to two people in a loving relationship (Cf. *The Art of Loving*, 68-75), whereas Badiou moves on to temporal analyses in order to differ the paradox into moments over time, the account of which we indicated above. It is only Lévinas who confronts (and arguably resolves) the paradox of love as difference *in the structure* of the moment, and when we have explicated his erotic phenomenology, it will be of tremendous help to fill in this troubling lacuna in both Fromm’s and Badiou’s analyses.

What is needed, then, is a link that is both consistent with Fromm’s and Badiou’s general structures of difference in love, but that also importantly preserves this difference *within* the seemingly paradoxical structure of love itself. To be relevant to my dissertation’s purposed, this link must also tap into love’s relation to ethics and politics. It is Lévinas’s phenomenology of love that provides just this missing piece, and in a way that is consistent with both of their general assumptions about “difference.” When we will have explicated his phenomenology, not only will it help to clarify a lacuna in the literature, it will also be a means with which to analyze and critique Sartre’s phenomenology of love.

The phenomenological implications of Emmanuel Lévinas’s thought are vast, even when they are restricted to interpersonal accounts of love, ethics, and politics. His philosophical preoccupation with love chronologically begins after his four-year internment in German “camps,” in his influential *Time and the Other* (1945), which represents a series

of lectures given at the *Collège Philosophique*. Organized by Jean Wahl as a creative outlet for intellectuals who were dislocated by the War, Lévinas's analyses of difference *qua* his notions of "alterity," "time," and of course "the Other" were sufficient to attract notice as a first-rate phenomenologist. The most mature phenomenological exposition of his ideas about love and ethics are best formulated in his 1961 *magnum opus*, *Totality and Infinity*.

The present purpose is to examine his phenomenology exactly to the extent that it informs the intersection of love, ethics, and politics, as well as the extent to which it offers key resources for resolving the paradox of "two in love" *qua* identity and difference. This will be accomplished through an analysis of select passages, along with the sketch of a two-person phenomenology that illustrates the mechanisms of the paradox. The further claim is that Lévinas's phenomenology resolves the paradox to the extent that it shows how "love" simply *is* an ambivalent structure; that is, a *Gestalt* type structure that must be understood as *necessarily* implying two valences or possible interpretations within its structure. The possible pathways or valences are reflections of his two key technical terms: "totality" and "infinity." Lévinas's argument about love (or any two-person structure, on my interpretation) is essentially embedded in the title of his work: to understand the structure is to understand totality *and* infinity.

I have argued elsewhere that to accurately appreciate Lévinas's phenomenology is to understand that his two key technical terms—"totality" and "infinity"—are in fact symbiotic and mutually reinforcing notions, as opposed to essentially antagonistic notions, as other critical readings incorrectly argue.²²³ Lévinas does not make a precise effort to define them in

²²³ *Levinas's Polyvalent Phenomenology of Infinity and Totality*. (Doctoral Dissertation), University of New Mexico, Department of Philosophy, 2010.

any rigorous fashion, yet close examination of the ways that he uses these terms reveals consistent patterns and examples, which I have analyzed precisely with an eye to clarifying them in secular philosophical terms.²²⁴ In this same work, I have argued that “infinity” represents a surprising, fluid, and repellent *limit* to what one's cognitive powers cannot fully comprehend, and “totality” ensures a conceptual, stable, and assertive *grasp* with which one organizes, and hence stably appropriates, the world. *The infinity aspect recognizes a certain agency in difference, whereas the totality aspect recognizes the agency in identity.*

When these two aspects are seen as essentially intertwined in a feedback loop of sorts, they thereby signal the most robust argumentative structure within Lévinas's central work. The further claim is that totality and infinity ought to be thought of as one conceives of the famous “duck-rabbit,” for example, in *Gestalt* psychology. At any given time, either the totality or the infinity aspect is possible, yet one can never “see” both at *the same time*. At any given time in the interpersonal structure in question, however, either consideration can be salient, and the subject's attunement contributes to the aspect. A person attuned to purely identical aspects is, simply speaking, a narcissist. A person attuned purely to the difference aspect is, crudely put, a human sponge. The Lévinasian insight is that an attuned recognition of both aspects embraces the structure's plenitude of identity and difference, and in so doing relates to self and other without necessarily compromising either's integrity.

*Time and the Other*ⁱ inaugurates Lévinas's analyses of the problem of ethically describing a relationship between two people that does not subsume the other person into a

²²⁴ Lévinas, in a 1974 interview with Theodore DeBoer, rather candidly dismisses the importance of terminological clarity: “I do not believe that there is transparency possible in method. Nor that philosophy might be possible as transparency. Those who have worked on method all of their lives have written many books that replace the more interesting books that they could have written. So much the worse for the philosophy that would walk in sunlight without shadows.” Bettina Bergo, (trans.).

purely egocentric reduction. As early as 1945, Lévinas recognized that the "pathos of love consists in an insurmountable duality of beings" (*T&O*, 86). The invocation of this "duality" informs my dual aspect interpretation of totality and infinity, since *Totality and Infinity's* analyses of interpersonal erotic situations, like those of conversation and teaching, aim to reveal two distinct and important perspectives on the same situation in question. The structure of the "paradox," that is, something that is seemingly contradictory and yet is perhaps true, is a structure in which he delights, and as I will argue below, the seemingly paradoxical situation of love fits neatly into the mechanisms of the totality-infinity structure.

The metaphysical and historical context of *Totality and Infinity* is itself paradoxical. Errant, provocative readings notwithstanding, totality and infinity are in fact complimentary structures that have equal worth in his philosophical outlook. Lévinas primarily critiques the totality aspect in his work, but this is because in recent history "totality" has received all of the press, as it were. That is, a calculatedly reductive, egological attunement to reality has *superseded* an originary structure: totality *alongside* infinity, that is, alongside an attunement to difference or "alterity."

His title reflects this conjoining: it is not 'totality *or* infinity' but rather their conjunction that he defends. The totality-infinity structure is an ambivalent structure in the sense that it intends two possible valences, and it is hence paradoxical, but this does not mean that it is contradictory. To dwell in the structure is to appreciate ambiguity and ambivalence as a positive value, and thus not to appreciate them in the sense of "cannot be rationally decided." He will draw upon the resources provided within ambivalent or "equivocal" structures in order to show an ethical way of situating both identity and difference in the moment of love.

Lévinas titles his introduction to the phenomenology of *erôs* as “The Ambiguity of Love,” and a look at the surrounding architecture of *Totality and Infinity* is warranted to help situate the general “ambiguity” indicated. The preceding section, “Beyond the Face,” characterizes the modern subject’s existential bind. On the one hand, one’s life comes to an end in death, and from a totalizing perspective, all that is left of one is a historically impersonal “judgment” in which the self “can no longer speak,” that is, can no longer “produce” its “own discourse”; this is a feature of one’s “political being” (253).

On the other hand, from the perspective of infinity, one desires a future that cannot be reduced to impersonal History and complete silence, although the exact nature of this future is necessarily “unforeseeable” as such (i.e., to “see” it would be tantamount to a totalizing anticipation). This aspect seeks a way to be “beyond death,” that is, a “way of letting me speak” that transcends egological life (253). This ambiguous way is characterized in the typically Lévinasian “neither . . . nor,” which then leads to his positive account, which is love and “fecundity.”

The only ethical way out of the existential bind, then, is to seek a yonder that “would not be a suicide nor a resignation, but would be love” (253). The crux of the procedure (through which the self paradoxically both remains identical and different in relevant senses) happens through an ambiguous erotic journey: the self recognizes true difference in love’s ambivalent structure, and becomes able to responsibly generate another life through “fecundity.” This procedure is described as a certain kind of “movement” in the plane of being that both confirms and resists a totalizing perspective:

Here we must indicate a plane both presupposing and transcending the epiphany of the Other in the face, a plane where the I bears itself beyond death and recovers also

from its return to itself. This plane is that of love and fecundity, where subjectivity is posited in function of these movements. (253)

Love's procedure wends through a series of ambiguities, ambivalences, and paradoxes whose aim is to cultivate an appreciation of both identity and difference in the moment of love as well as in its potential result: the child. One's initiation into love's ambivalence in the moment of the paradox attests to the appreciation of both identity and difference, and it leads to a final paradox. The final paradox is the situation of self and other *qua* the future to which the child attests. "This future still refers to the personal from which it is nonetheless liberated: it is the child, mine in a certain sense, or, more exactly me, but not myself" (271). Love's structure in the moment anticipates this ultimate paradox (of an identical but different self), and to appreciate it one needs to situate the aspects of totality and infinity that are both needed to complete the structure's "equivocal" meaning.

I have argued elsewhere that his descriptions of erotic situations emphasize, for example, both the blend of the self's totalizing need for identity and the always-elusive desire for difference that accompanies it (Wood 2010). These situations show that the self's effort to erotically "totalize" the beloved are importantly coupled with the lover's "caress," which intentionally "seeks" [*cherche*] or "forages" [*fouille*] for that for which it cannot account by itself. In one sense, this seeking is the subject's desire; however, it is "not an intentionality of disclosure but of search, a movement unto the invisible" (258). He characterizes love's seeking as part of an ambiguous adventure that cannot be decided in a linear fashion: "[i]n a certain sense it *expresses* love, but suffers from an inability to tell it," and, it "seeks what is not yet" (258).

In this ambivalent vein, Lévinas speaks in the following passage of the seeming paradox between the self's need be completely satisfied (as a totality) *and* its awareness of something it cannot fully possess (the desire for the Other's always elusive infinity):

The possibility of the Other appearing as an object of need while retaining his alterity, or again, the possibility of enjoying the Other, of placing oneself at the same time beneath and beyond discourse—this position with regard to the interlocutor which *at the same time* reaches him and goes beyond him, this simultaneity of need and desire, of concupiscence and transcendence, tangency of the avowable and unavowable, constitutes the originality of the erotic, which, in this sense, is *the equivocal par excellence*. (255, my emphasis for “at the same time”)

"The equivocal," literally of *equal voices or callings*, clearly maps onto the interpretation of totality *and* infinity as an essentially ambivalent structure. This passage highlights the possibility of seemingly antagonistic or incompatible forces that are in fact merely two aspects of the experience. In the Gestalt-switch dynamic, the other person can be appreciated as both an *object* of gratification and as an activity of difference who is "refractory" to the self's autonomous grasp; or, as both a warm, desirable body that satisfies the self *and* a source of unreachable surprise, refusal, or encouragement.

In one aspect, identity is asserted through “reach,” “concupiscence,” and “the avowable,” for example; the self knows what it wants, and its activity precomprehends the other person as fitting in to the self’s understanding and need. In the other aspect, however, difference dominates the perspective—the lover sees that he does not see everything, that is, he is dealing with “alterity” with respect to the other person’s agency and initiative, which are situated as “transcendence” and “the unavowable,” for example.

We should also notice that the "equivocal *par excellence*" character of the lover's attunement is *neither* a prioritizing of one aspect over the other, *nor* is it an exclusive disjunction—it is, rather, the "originality" of the erotic structure, that is, the most basic

potential of the structure. It states, then, that both are important aspects of the erotic situation in question. Within the moment ("at the same time") therefore, the other *can* have both a function of identity and a function of difference. Put differently, the erotic phenomena in question admit of two distinct perspectives that suggest differing, but nonetheless equally important, attunements. His language on the subject is quite clear, and it does not say that one of the two aspects is to be eliminated in some kind of preferential sense.

Lévinas's analyses of the "caress" also provide us with good grist for the interpretation of love-as-paradox. This is because in the span of two sentences he writes (in paradoxically Lévinasian fashion) that the "caress, like contact, is sensibility," *and* that the caress "transcends the sensible" (257). An important part of what he means in such passages, though, is that from the agent perspective two distinct things can take place. I have argued in much more detail for how this ambivalent structure works (Wood, 2010), but the following interpersonal sketch reflects a modified outline of the conclusions of that same work.

Alan, for example, desires his lover Erika's presence. When they are next together he finds himself possessively reaching out for *her* and rather arbitrarily finds his hand caressing her shoulder. To enable this action, Alan needed, for instance, the requisite physical "contact" and "sensibility" of a caress. *But* what is it that Alan is really seeking? Is it *merely* the possessive feel of Erika's trapezius muscle and the soft, warm skin that houses it? Is it simply a calculated ruse, moreover, that aims at weakening her prudent defenses so as to later satisfy Alan's lucid and precomprehended ambition?

Not necessarily, and arguably not at all. In addition to sensible contact and its lucid precomprehension, then, the lover's caress may also "transcend the sensible." This is so because the aforementioned "duality of beings" description can contribute to Alan's

attunement in this situation. This kind of attunement recognizes an abyss of sorts between self and other (*i.e.*, between identity and difference) and it desires, in Lévinas's sense, a being or activity of a different register than the self's lucid anticipation, as the next few paragraphs illustrate.

During the span in which Alan is reaching for Erika (as an object that asserts his identity and desire), then, he could *also* be aiming for something elusive and still to come, that is, her unpredictably futural activity, which is of an order that Alan cannot fully anticipate—"the caress seeks what is not yet" (258). He might be intending, further, to be evaluated in unpredictably revealing terms—"You really think I'm that kind of person? Hmmm...I never saw it that way..." He may also simply realize that what he is "reaching" for, *as* he is clumsily reaching *and* Erika makes him laugh, is something unanticipated but nonetheless desired. The caress, then, "is not an intentionality of disclosure but of search: a movement unto the invisible" (258).

This kind of stance—which is attuned to difference or “alterity”—on another agency is refractory to pure anticipation, and it speaks to a real difference between self and other. In all of these latter aspects, furthermore, Alan's attunement reveals an intentionality of the voluptuous that does not seek to return to its point of origin (that is, it is *not* a movement back to what Lévinas calls "the same"). It seeks, rather, a repetition with a real difference, and a (temporary) breach of its lucid self-conception.

In one possible aspect, Erika offers no Lévinasian "resistance" to Alan's grasp, that is, she may only appear, say, as a calculated object that fits in with his clear intention and design—this, importantly, is what Lévinas (and numerous partners the world over, we might add) would call "more of the same." In another possible aspect, however, that for which

Alan "forages" is neither any particular thing about Erika's body, at that time or any other, nor is it necessarily any precalculated intention whose anticipation is clear; the foraging, rather, is for what Lévinas calls "the invisible"—that is, the self's desire for difference, something that "transcends the sensible" and freshly informs or critiques the self.

One may say, then, that in the totalizing aspect, Alan can indeed caress Erika's body—he can assert identity, claim to know 'what she wants,' to 'see the same world,' etc. In the infinity or "difference" aspect, however, Alan can merely forage for a part of Erika that he cannot predict or control—that is, he must appreciate her as a source of difference with her own agency that has the ability to dislocate his identity, often to points of rupture and shock, moreover! It is during such moments, *pace* Badiou, that he does *not* understand her point of view at all; he has *no idea* how she sees the world at that moment. At best, he can initiate another two-person procedure like conversation in order to get (potential) insight about the world that she sees, but Lévinas's deeper point is that erotic structures reveal not just the identity portion of love's activity, but also an independent agency orchestrating the difference and *unsettling* the self's identity.

These seemingly paradoxical aspects are quite compatible and equally important within the same erotic situation, moreover, as we saw with the "equivocal" point above. This is true even if they are not simultaneously compatible in the agent's perspective (*i.e.* in the same way that one cannot see both the Duck and the Rabbit at the same time in the *Gestalt*). When one considers the aspects in tandem, they most basically *complete* the erotic relation rather than *compete* with each other, since clearly both can coexist in the same person, and in the same situation. Alan can thereby "need" and "desire" a future with Erika, and it is both

the future with which he clearly reckons, in one sense, and an interpersonal future that he cannot at all predict, but nevertheless desires as such, in another sense.

In different terms, it is significant that Alan be capable of both kinds of attunement, since this dual capacity fulfills the relation's existential potential. To eliminate one or the other aspect would therefore be to the detriment of the structure's meaning. Without the identity aspect to the relation, he would be conceptually blind to important features, and he thereby might merely "search" and "forage" for some mysterious yonder—that is, he might become one of those hackneyed poets who wait (no doubt in vain) for the "ethereal" and "eternal" feminine. To put the point differently, he might literally have no idea of whom it is that he really wants. Without the infinity aspect, however, Alan's attunement would be auto-poetical—"more of the same," as Lévinas calls it; that is, quite simply narcissistic.

Lévinas is not the kind of writer to have a "moral" to his stories, and being a phenomenologist most often goes hand in hand with avoiding "should." But if there were a moral, it would arguably be that the appreciation of both identity and difference in the moment of erotic love points to something more important down the road. We have seen the briefest of outlines of Lévinas's fear of being reduced to "anonymous" History through what he calls "political being." One reason for why the outline is so brief is that Lévinas is reluctant to cede any real ground to "politics," for the general reason that ethics suffer when one considers the other as part of a system to be manipulated and controlled without concomitantly accessing the other's direct discourse and capacity to critique one's agenda. His discussion of "politics" in *Totality and Infinity* is thus quite curt and sparse, and I leave that particular debate to another time and place.

The main point to his erotic analyses, however, is the importance that he cedes to difference in love and the amorous space opened up in the moment of *erôs*. This “equivocal” or “ambivalent” structure serves to ground an ethical impulse in the midst of the egocentric and purely ‘self-interested’ understandings of love. A part of the brilliance of his erotic theory is that he *both* cedes egotism and hedonism to an aspect of the structure, but he *also* grounds difference and respect for the other’s difference as an equally essential component of love’s mechanism. In this sense he ‘owes up’ to a certain part of our supposedly ‘baser’ nature while importantly accentuating that which engenders it with other-regarding and futural implications. Lévinas’s erotic architecture thus represents a distinct bulwark against the merely “trivial and disabused face of love” that has been this chapter’s recurring theme, and it responds to a certain historical threat to difference—the purely totalizing and egological *Zeitgeist*.

His theory of love also points to what Badiou would call a part of love’s truth procedure. Lévinas relegates the future fruit of the difference and identity of erotic love to a familial structure, which (Aristotle notwithstanding) is a far stretch from the political sphere itself. His general intention is clear, however: the perspective that unfolds from ethical forms of love (i.e. love types that thrive on not just identity but difference as well) show a positive way out of the seemingly problematic paradox of “two in love.” Real love can be appreciated in a sense that empowers both parties, while concomitantly preserving difference and aiming toward distinctly important social structures. Like Badiou and Fromm’s theory, Lévinas’s situates important standards within love’s structure that lead to ethical and ontological consideration of self and other that demarcate a space beyond the simple appropriations of a “for-itself.”

To recapitulate, one reason for pursuing Lévinas's phenomenology of love is to give a description of the "paradoxical" structure of "two people in love" who simultaneously preserve their difference while also maintaining an integral sense of self. This labor is important because it offers insight into the paradoxical structure of love in the moment as a function of both identity and difference. In terms of the dissertation's teleology, it is helpful to the extent that it yields (along with Badiou's and Fromm's insights) a view of love that rivals the description love as a sadomasochistic circle, which is crucial for confronting Sartre's phenomenology in chapter Two, as well as Beauvoir's characterizations of erotic love in chapter Four.

There is a further advantage of drawing upon these three thinkers in particular, namely that their respective preoccupation with "difference" can be used as a guiding thread in order to help them rely upon each other, for the purpose of working out a coherently broad theory of love that has a positive ethical and political dimension to it. If it is accurate that Lévinas's phenomenology helps to fill in a lacuna in both Fromm and Badiou, it is also accurate to say that Lévinas's account could benefit from Badiou's theory in many senses, as well as Fromm's. Lévinas's phenomenology of love lacks the broader *social* temporal vehicle in Badiou's account, for example. The former's analyses indicate familial, intergenerational ways to account for time in love (in "fecundity," for example), yet they would arguably be infused with a broader social worth when coupled with Badiou's notions of the time that can be reinvested precisely through difference, that is, what it is like to be two and not one in broader senses than the moment of love, or in the nuclear family. Fromm's theory, lastly, would help to anchor a broader network of love in the sense of love as difference in relations that exceed two people.

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