

The Antagonistic Self: Politics and The Political

Hailey Murphy

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Political Science
York University
Toronto, Ontario

April 2019

© Hailey Murphy, 2019

Abstract

This work uses a critical existential perspective as a means to address the relation between self and state constitutions while also utilizing an open ended, anti-essential approach to the study of politics and the political. This is done in order to provide ideological distance in constructing an understanding of one's being as political, even if only through temporal encounters in the demos. Individual engagement within the political is phenomenologically assessed through identifying key markers of a distinctly antagonistic political experience from one's particular, reflective position. The state, on the other hand exists with more permanence and as such is perceived, changed, and acted upon in the temporal coming together of the political. Thus, the constitution of the self is the focus throughout, with the state being a pole from which we position ourselves. An analysis of differing self and state comparison is identified from great works of the canon of political philosophy in order to provide a basis for an open ended constitution model that reflects good faith political action. The existential type of action discussed here poses a challenge for being as it requires consistent action, reflection and a responsibility for our choices regardless of whether or not one engages as a spectator or an actor.

Key Thinkers:

Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, Immanuel Kant, GWF Hegel, Chantal Mouffe, Sheldon Wolin

Keywords:

Good/Bad Faith, Existentiality, Universality, Antagonism, Agonism, Being-Anxiety, Politics/The Political, (anti) essentialism, Continental Philosophy, Radical democracy , Existential phenomenology

Acknowledgements

I would like to give many thanks to my committee for all of their hard work and personal encouragement during the process of completing this dissertation. Dr. Leah Bradshaw has been a mentor for me during the time at Brock University and continued supporting me while at York. She also introduced me to my supervisor, Dr. Shannon Bell who inspires me to always think outside the box and to trust my own abilities both as a person and in academia. Shannon always has gone above and beyond to ensure I was on the right track. The influence of these strong women is something I am lucky to have had in my life. I would also like to thank my friends; Lindsay Scrivener, Bob Froese, Julian Campisi, and Alison Grevatt to whom I am forever grateful not only for your support in writing and sharing ideas, but for the many laughs and absurdities that I would never want to live without. To my family; Amanda, Mom, Dean – I would have never lasted without you always being right there to lift me up when I felt like giving up.

Table of Contents

<u>Abstract</u>	ii
<u>Acknowledgements</u>	iii
<u>Table of Contents</u>	iv
<u>Introduction</u>	1-15
<u>Chapter 1: The City and the Soul: The Constitution Model</u>	16- 40
Plato	18
Aristotle	29
<u>Chapter 2: Modern Universals: Constitution Model Continued</u>	41 – 67
Rousseau	42
Kant	54
<u>Chapter 3: Being, Revealing and Acting</u>	68 – 101
Constitutional Boundaries	70
The Existential Shift	74
Authenticity and Bad Faith	94
<u>Chapter 4: Antagonistic Self and The Political</u>	102 – 134
Purity and Nature: A Feminist Analysis	103
Mutual Challenge and Disruption	109
Mediations	114
Anxiety and Alienation	125
Moving Toward a Critical Existentialism	131
<u>Chapter 5: The Antagonistic Constitution</u>	135 – 172
Reason and Social Totality	137
Agonism as Truth Paradox	144
An Agonistic Foil	151
A Place for Antagonism in The Political	164
<u>Conclusion</u>	173 – 182
<u>References</u>	183 - 186

Introduction

“[Dialectics] indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived. Yet the appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself, in its pure form. To think is to identify...Conceptual totality is a mere appearance.” Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5.

Despite the drive within the canon of political philosophy to create unity or wholeness, I firmly argue that this is, in general, a lost cause. The urge to be complete and to reach unity will nevertheless remain in an attempt to create a façade of political comfort, stability and safety. Politics is about trouble, and philosophies of unity seek to eliminate this trouble by way of the erasure of politics. This may seem a great cause to free people from problems which stem from politics and conflict however, it is never going to happen. This does not mean there can never be peace, but instead that if we were to achieve peace, it will not be characterised by universal harmony and consensus. Plato's *Republic*, which is the prime example of a politics of unity, itself shows us that unity within politics or within the psyche of each individual is not possible either in nature or through construction. First Plato himself states that in order to establish his ideal unified city, the entire premise of the said city must be based on a lie¹. A perfectly unified political state could not organically form on its own. Further, the situation of the lives of the citizens within Plato's city are so extremely manipulated that without the oversight of a highly educated and authoritative master, people would not likely be able to continuously live up to

¹ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Allan Bloom (USA:Basic Books, 1968), 414c.

Plato's idealism. Yet this is the fundamental text within the canon regarding matters of unity – a system so contrived that without constant manipulation it would fall immediately. Even as early as within the work of Aristotle we can see that extreme unity is dangerous and is without merit. Book II of his *Politics* sets out to argue for a politics (more) based upon plurality and difference as this better reflects the way in which people actually are.² His philosophy comes from a much more clear observationalist perspective than that of Plato and beyond his scathing critique of extreme unity in Plato's city in speech Aristotle sets out on a similar trajectory to that of Plato but without the emphasis on unity. *The Nichomachean Ethics* and *The Politics* together are a project with comparable aims to that of Plato – to mirror the constitution of self to that of a city state.

The Antagonistic Self, on the other hand, draws from theories of political antagonism yet shifts the focus more prominently upon the individual actor and their self constitution. It uses a variety of philosophical frameworks in order to assemble a working political theorization which is critical, phenomenological, and existential. The bringing together of these frameworks may seem at times to be contradictory but it is in this way that the project will best reflect the contradictory realities of our being in this world. The epigraph from Adorno used to introduce this piece challenges us to pull apart our conceptual identifications in such a way that makes totality and wholeness impossible, a challenge needed to understand the type of antagonism which occurs within each individual self constitution. While several philosophical investigations taken up throughout this work lead us into a discussion of theories of unity or universality they are meant to set the stage of our understanding of a constitution which while originally conceived as a whole, is simultaneously undergoing a process of de-totalization. I will make no

² Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. T.A. Sinclair (London: Penguin Books, 1962), 126iaio-126ibi5.

attempt to blend differing perspectives into one cohesive whole – this task would not only be impossible but also invalidate the basis of my argumentation. Each individual consists of fluid and antagonistic aspects of self and this is recreated by them in their thoughts, identifications and subsequent recognition and validation from others. It is not possible to propose a theory of antagonistic politics as played out by individuals assumed to enter the political realm as unified or complete selves. While acting within the realm of politics does require an acceptance of antagonistic inter-relations, it must be recognized that within the psyche of the self lies a fundamental antagonistic-being.

Such a project has been pursued time and time again throughout history, as it must be in order to reflect the political and social reality of the times. If the political realm and its configuration will properly reflect the constitution of the individual or vice versa it must be clear what exactly it is that people want for themselves as well as the ways in which they pursue these interests. Usually people are concerned about their freedom or more accurately their freedom *to do*. This distinction is drawn between a more general or existential sense of being free rather than the freedom to act in a manner which might bring about the freedom of being. Historical, social, geographic and economic circumstance will influence the way in which a person will understand their own freedom. Historically speaking, while some themes or desires can remain more or less constant, new political regimes and constitutions will play a role in the way we can propose any sort of genealogy of freedom. This said, I will argue that one of these constant themes is that persons seek comfort and stability; yet at the same time, these concepts shift and change in meaning over time. Moving to Rousseau's *Social Contract* we are warned that freedom is not in itself defined by comfort and stability. To the contrary, Rousseau states that our freedom is at

risk in the moment in which people's desire for comfort overtakes their desire for freedom³. Of course Rousseau was advocating a direct form of democracy based upon the unity of the general will wherein citizenship was more limited than what we understand today, but his warning stands the test of time when placed up against differing societies which came before and after his. Considering the current junction of Western history it can be argued that from being overworked, or through hegemonic discourse and other distractions associated with the spectacle of politics we are pushed towards desiring comfort over freedom, whereas throughout history different factors of distraction come into play.

Time also dictates what situations people are comfortable with and which actions they are willing to take toward freedom. Within the texts of the Ancient Greeks there is not much discussion of the freedoms of citizens as the definition of what it means to be a citizen was so narrow that the freedom of those non-citizens was not exactly put into question. As history unfolded the definition of citizen became wider, and therefore there entered into the realm of political philosophy more questions regarding what freedoms people should and should not be entitled to. As this project is being undertaken with a critical existential and phenomenological approach, my historical and geographical location guides the assumptions and assertions made throughout. As a result, most claims made, unless explicitly stated otherwise are expressed in regards to Western (neo) liberal society. The reality of the Western 'liberal' conceptualization of freedom is complex and multifaceted. Western society is rights-based; and these rights are codified in documents where the freedom of each individual is supposed to be guaranteed by their country of citizenship and are categorized based on a specific, socially accepted group of identities. It is based on this regime of rights and identities that it becomes necessary to re-work

³Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 139, 142.

the association between self constitution and the constitution of the state. Similar to many who have engaged in this questioning previously, I assert there is a direct relation to how one comes to make identifications both of self and others and how we understand the functioning of the state. Within this work, I will propose the self and the state as having a dialectical relationship wherein they form and inform each other. However, the analysis will stem from that of the existential understanding of the individual and branch out to their (inter)actions within their specific state.

In order to maintain one's own being beyond 'mere existence' they must take in each other's look and perception and allow it to de-totalize their being in such a way that enables the constitution of self identification, furthering each individual's project of being within their current situation. Each individual action whether it is reiterating a personal idea of one's self identification or it is meant to reveal something new and changing about a person is a de-totalizing action as it serves to break the moments where one has a feeling of 'wholeness'. Action does not reaffirm essence but recalls the past; a past constructed via our interactions with others and the world around us. We negate ourselves to start anew while being haunted by the notion of a past self. The role of negation and nothingness will be crucial to this project and the definition of self which it will propose. Via the principle of negation, existentiality is defined without the conceptual barriers of wholeness and consensus that often result from conformity of determinism. The phenomenal and personal experience of existence requires a dual process of negation of being within the self – by way of the relation with the other. The Sartrean conceptualization of being and negation allows us to move from an understanding of our own being as constituted and reflected upon via interpersonal exchange. Negation is thus a process which mirrors the human being as nothingness. In action we do not make something of nothing;

we *are* nothing, negated internally towards being-for-itself and away from any essentialized and wholly totalization of self.⁴ Yet to end this process at this stage would assume that one is fully conscious of their being entirely in solitude, without any external factors present. A positional-consciousness is developed in both action and interaction. External negation is tied to being as perceived by the other⁵.

Moreover, we are anxious in the face of our freedom and the freedom to act; no situation can be considered completely self-regarding. Even if an action is undertaken while alone, our relations past and future will always haunt current action. Our past is a part of us in that it represents consciousness of being without our being able to live it. It is only in a reflection on the past that one can see themselves as whole, however with every new action or endeavour that person challenges their own being as whole and de-totalizes themselves toward future possibility. I intend to use this existential framework to analyse the constitution of self and using this idea, build an idea of the political and of politics that better suits this ‘antagonistic-self’.

In order to accurately assess the benefits and/or downfalls of a radical and antagonistic politics, we must first disentangle the being of the inwardly antagonistic self who is the impetus for the existence of a similarly antagonistic political landscape. This project assesses the co-constitution of self and political landscape; neither of these are constituted without the influence of the other. Therefore, I will assess two key questions using the same method and methodology:

- 1) How does the antagonistic self constitute itself, in and through its relation to the other? What role does our existentiell (ontic understanding of beings in the

⁴ Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 211.

⁵ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 263.

world) perspective play in the drive towards and away from idea(l)s of wholeness and consensus?⁶

However, unlike Plato's famed city in speech, this project does not assume it easier to find answers when looking at a 'bigger' picture. Instead, as the state or polis is constructed to reflect the needs of individuals (in a variety of ways) pursuing an analysis which starts *after* individual self constitution has occurred becomes problematic. This said, I do not propose any 'state of nature' theorization, rather I simply reject the existence of any a priori, fully constituted political actors. The differentiation of the political and politics⁷ takes 'the political' as political identity, a theory which I elaborate and draw in aspects of anti-essentialism,⁸ de-totalization⁹ and politics as active engagement in existing political systems and institution. The significance of this key differentiation leads into the second question to be addressed throughout.

- 2) How are antagonistic politics constructed as a reflection of the political? What role does our existentiality play in the drive towards and away from idea(l)s of wholeness and consensus?

The political, our political identity, is never a complete project and is multi-faceted and may manifest itself in differing ways upon new and difficult horizons. In this way, the political is never a complete project for any individual, except in death. This is not to assume that a human being is defined as extremely difficult, but rather that politics is a product of confrontation mediated by human actors. Attempts to appease such confrontation via consensus only leads to greater difficulty as they are always based on assumptions drawn by the dominant ideologies of

⁶ Existentiell pertains to Dasein as an entity, Existentiality to the being of Dasein. While these terms derive from Martin Heidegger, they are used throughout and when not in relation to Dasein specifically, they are used in relation to existence.

⁷ Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

⁹ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*.

politics or an out-right abuse of power based on the arbitrary will of those in elite political positions. While it is possible to separate the political from politics in order to analyse each, they are interconnected. The purpose of looking at both questions within this project is based on the notion that the antagonistic self is reflected into an antagonistic political sphere where situations surface that are not reconcilable in terms of consensus or unity; just as no individual can be considered a perfect unity.

Chapter 1, *The City and the Soul: A Constitution Model*, will analyse key examples from the canon of Western thought which have inspired the directions of this project by looking at individual self constitution as a mirror image to the constitution of the state in which they live or ought to be suited for. I will provide an analysis of theoretical frameworks which match, mirror or contrast the specific make up of the being of the individual with the ways in which political communities are composed and what they promote in citizens. I begin drawing from ancient Greek thought coming directly from Plato's *Republic* and both Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Politics* in order to lay a path toward the philosophical problematic identified between individuals and the polis. Plato's project is the most clear and direct correlation between individual and the polis, he is explicit in his goals of unity with the soul and the city¹⁰. Aristotle presents a similar dilemma within the dyad of *The Ethics* and *Politics*. The virtuous person outlined within the *Ethics* is perfectly suited for the type of politics Aristotle envisions. In *The Politics* he outlines a seemingly more practical approach to how we ought to understand the political, yet it is still very different from most conceptualizations that are spoken of today. For Aristotle, to be human is to be political and to be political is to strive for virtue. Therefore he describes a type of person and a type of constitution which are intimately connected by virtue

¹⁰ Plato, *The Republic*, Books III-IX.

ethics. A good constitution unearths the good in the person and in turn the person is able to habituate themselves toward virtue in such a way that is befitting for political participation¹¹. His approach is more practical as it is based on his teleological observations regarding the nature of human beings and their capacities. Intensive specialization and the manipulation of what he deemed to be human nature in Plato's *Republic* runs counter to what it means to be human because humans are political beings.

Chapter 2, *Modern Universals: Constitution Model Continued*, continues the themes of self and state constitution looking at Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. While Plato attempted to create perfect harmony, and Aristotle perfect virtue, Rousseau tried to capture the perfect political ethos. In *The Social Contract* he proposes a political community guided by the principle of the general will wherein each member of the community is inclined simultaneously toward the same prerogative¹². Just as with Plato and Aristotle, Rousseau offers a formula meant to develop the type of citizen appropriate for living, as well as upholding this type of political community. The perfect citizen archetype he offers to us is found in his work *Emile*, which reads as a text regarding the proper way to understand education, however when looking closer it is clear that the education process described produces a model citizen whose actions would mirror those needed to fulfill the hope of the general will¹³. Emile, the hypothetical child, cultivates the ideal ratio of dependence and independence required to authentically mediate his personal will and the will of all. These examples attempt to create a person suited for politics, this project does the opposite. What is required is instead to create a politics suited for people. Turning from Rousseau to Kant, I will bring in a more directly antagonistically based theorization to discuss the condition of the individual in relation to others. I will also shift towards identifying

¹¹ Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1276b20.

¹² Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 73.

¹³ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Allan Bloom (USA:Basic Books, 1979).

ideological concerns that form out of the political writings of Kant and affect those who come after him. Thus I switch the focus to the constitution of the individual as I reverse the blueprint set by the Greeks and early moderns. Theories of being and consciousness will be introduced towards the end of the chapter in order to set up the significance of a conceptualization of being which is actively (de)constructed.

Chapter 3, *Being, Revealing and Acting*, takes a more phenomenological and also existential approach; I will draw my theorization out from philosophers such as Hegel¹⁴, Heidegger¹⁵, Arendt¹⁶ and Sartre¹⁷. While their works less obviously create these mirror reflections of polis and personal, it is not a stretch to develop such a philosophy out of their trajectory. The chapter will trace the aspects of processing self identification(s) and navigating the sphere of politics within the thought of those existential thinkers who inspire this work. I will continue with a thorough outline of being and consciousness in order to clearly outline how I identify individual being within individuals. This outline will include an elaboration on the concept of Being-anxiety¹⁸ and its role in self revelation. Here I will not only focus on being in terms of becoming, but as revealing one's existence as authentic and as carried out through action. I will contend that it is through the active experience of our anxiety that the absence of authentic being as maintained in our bad faith is illuminated, yet not immediately changed. Using a Sartrean conception of being and becoming, the chapter will describe the process of being through the authentic experience of each singular person's singular experience(s). The motion in and out of a state of bad faith is understood as the experience of mediating our anxiety and fear

¹⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Perennial, 1962).

¹⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

¹⁷ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*.

¹⁸ The term Being-anxiety is developed out of Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* and as such is capitalized to reflect that the concept is derived from his ontic(being) and ontological (Being) distinction.

prior to engagement with the world around us, especially in relation to the other. In anxious moments we attempt to confront our possibilities and make decisions deriving from a positional, reflective consciousness regarding the potentiality of a situation and of ourselves.¹⁹ Anxiety is a primary mood, necessary for authentic human existence which is challenged by our being condemned to freedom. A constant project of constructing the (de-totalized) totality of our being is opened to us by anxiety and actualized by way of the navigation of the materiality of our particular situations. A person may feel moments of wholeness or a sense of being complete which is constantly being challenged with every new action and experience which opens us up for new possibilities. It is in this way that we can understand ourselves as a de-totalized totality. There is an urge toward totality under the assumption that it provides comfort or a sense of security, hence in our actions we do not necessarily feel an anxiety regarding a specific act or choice, instead we are anxious in our being due to its integral role in maintaining freedom. Sartre states that we are condemned to freedom not because freedom is an inconvenient burden, but because it is difficult and carries with it a responsibility to act which can be extremely uncomfortable and at times frightening. To be in fear is not to be condemned to perpetual inauthenticity, but is a more trying state of bad faith characterized by its difficulty in overcoming.²⁰ Therefore, unlike anxiety, fear discloses our existence only through the taking away, loss, or lack of freedom. We are being in the world and must take into account and recognize the need to act and evade passivity to allow us to transcend our own situation. Such a description of being is required to comprehend the self as inwardly antagonistic. I will use this basis to highlight the relation between this fundamental state of being and the inter-subjective relations that construct us and the ways in which we see *or* wish to see the world around us.

¹⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 185.

²⁰ Ibid, 179.

There is a notion of antagonistic being within the individual, and this effects how we understand consciousness, being and becoming and what it is that makes us act as ‘political animals.’

Chapter 4, *Antagonistic Self and The Political*, focuses on ideas of unity/consensus and deconstruction/antagonism. This chapter will specifically identify issues of unity and consensus in individuals and within the polis. I will answer the question: what are the reasons and consequences for the tendency for universally based theories to describe the active becoming and being of individuals? I will be identifying the effects and affect of this process, offering a critical theory which draws from the dialectical method as proposed in the early thinkers of the Frankfurt School and their critiques with a focus on the work of Max Horkheimer²¹. The purpose of this exercise is to bring together the arguments from within the previous two chapters and place them into a dialectical relationship with each other in a way that accentuates the reasoning behind posing a theory of antagonistic being and ‘ideal state’ configurations as closely linked. The dialectical method of the Frankfurt school, in offering an open ended epistemology further allows the project to maintain its philosophical integrity as one which rejects wholeness, or exact conclusions in way of proposing a political end point or definite goal yet still seeks to make statements about categories and concepts surrounding human beings and their self constitution. Horkheimer asserts that “Each [philosophical] school is equally confident of its own thesis and hostile to the method of negation inseparably bound up with any philosophical theory that does not arbitrarily stop thinking at some point in its course.”²² To understand oneself as inwardly antagonistic as well as having a being which is a de-totalized totality fits well with this philosophical sentiment and (anti)foundation. Thus ‘Antagonistic Self’ is an exercise of critical

²¹ Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

Max Horkheimer, “On the Problem of Truth”, in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed Arato and Gebhardt (Continuum, 1985).

²² Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 129.

existentialism. The simultaneous state of totality and de-totality which is characteristic of human beings is a theory which depends on a strong conception of truth without becoming dogmatic or relativist. This runs counter to a tendency in traditional and modern philosophies of the Western canon wherein presupposed truths are expected a priori and subsequently attempted again and again, failing to adequately address the maintenance of reifying, structural systems which have their focus on specific aims and ends. Here I wish to echo Horkheimer's hope for a philosophy which makes use of dialectical thinking in a non-formulaic way as a response to the philosophical mishandling of truth claims. In doing this I will be looking at the absolute or ultimate conceptions of truth as well as the more relativist and skepticist conceptualizations of truth. In this task, I will place my focus on the use of reason as a tool both towards objectivity and in everyday subjective experience.

Chapter 5, *The Antagonistic Constitution*, elaborates upon the proposed theorization by applying it to conceptions of the state and its organizational or institutional influence. I will assess the material conditions within the political and social realm which impact ontological outcomes for persons. Moreover, I look to particularized theories regarding identity and identification as opposed to the universalizing drive towards ideas such as human rights. Identity becomes a political tool for persons as they begin to make rights claims on this basis. Chantal Mouffe recognizes these phenomena in her category of the political as the "ontological dimension of antagonism".²³ The impact of the state and its organizational institutions have a great influence on the ways in which we understand ourselves and more significantly, how we understand 'the other.' This has influence far beyond how one understands themselves or the other, but also the ways in which identifications are made and are filled with meaning which is

²³ Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (London: Verso, 2013), XII.

then reflected out into the world around us. The creation of meaning is a constant process of external and internal negation wherein the self is created and creates the concepts and categories which it interacts with. Thus the role of identification is central to both the constitution of self in terms of ‘identity’ and also the constitution of the state in terms of identification of concepts imbued with meaning. The political interacts with politics – defined as “the ensemble of practices and institutions whose aim is to organize human existence.”²⁴ Navigation of politics and the political requires the presence of others. Counter to the notion that man requires a solitary life for the purposes of contemplation – the human mind cannot maintain its highest capacity without company. The abstract and concrete exist co-dependently. This connection is clear in the interaction between an actor and their spectator and is further illuminated through the judgement which takes place between them. The actor is dependent on the opinion of the other as it is that opinion which informs the consequences of the action itself. (Wo)man, conceived as a singular person, is condemned to freedom and autonomy, (wo)men are not. They need the other’s gaze, judgement and recognition in order to confirm their existence. It is in this way that the antagonistic self, made up of both conciliatory and opposing parts, breaches contact with others and mirrors this inter-relation into the body politic. Considering this processes contribution and maintenance of the antagonistic self, it is understandable that persons would seek out a politics which aids in bringing the conflicting parts of oneself together. Yet this is not possible regardless of how many times we codify and institutionalize these protections as it results in a fracturing of the self where aspects of one’s self constitution are ranked and ordered for us externally. For example, in a document such as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* citizens are provided a variety of political protections, many based on identities such as religion, race, gender, sexual orientation and so on. No person can be described as embodying

²⁴ Ibid, XII.

one of these identities singularly, most will fall, even partially, under several categories some of which are placed in opposition to each other in terms of legal rights. Further, these group rights are claimed by individuals who understand their role in that category of identity differently than others within the same category, and are also understood differently in the eyes of the other. Such rights claims highlight a tension between universal and particular, unity and fracture, and are a shining example of antagonism as both politics and the political.

Chapter 1: *The City and the Soul: The Constitution Model*

“Unless...the philosophers rule as kings or those now called kings and chiefs genuinely and adequately philosophize, and political power and philosophy coincide in the same place, while the many natures now making their way to either apart from the other are by necessity excluded, there is no rest from the ills for the cities...” Plato, *Republic*, 473d.

Introduction

This project maintains and works under the notion that each individually constructed self is inwardly antagonistic in terms of their multiple areas of self identification. While I do not intend to make definitive claims regarding human nature, this work posits that if anything may be considered as a given a priori it is that most human beings share an at least similar process of becoming and being in terms of the capabilities of consciousness. Such a condition can only be considered a baseline in which a layer of becoming and being is built. There is no essential nature to predict human behaviour or the outcome of one's being, neither is there a universal concept of who we are. Rather, there is a layering of co-constitutive self and other based identifications that logically, regardless of whether they are self or other related, will inevitably form an antagonistic relation. Such antagonistic relations are especially prevalent within a Western (neo)liberal context where rights and identity are so intricately and intimately related. In this context, one's self identification and subsequent recognition exceeds a private or even social dimension and takes a decidedly political one. This is a key factor in understanding the actions

and interactions of individuals in the political sphere. Under this specific type of rights based constitution the process of self identification within each individual far surpasses the mere self expression and playful performance of one's aspects of self but is tied to a complex configuration of categories of control and marginalization in which some parts of one's identity become reason for antagonism external to the self. The externally generated influence of recognition gained through interaction with others is not defined simply as being part of one or another category but being part of a less or more valuable category based on the other's view, wherein one's being becomes a fractured amalgamation of competing, antagonistic counterparts. It is in this way that we can see the reflection of an identity based constitution where one is granted rights based on being a part of one or another group mirrored in the psyche of each individual actor. Yet, despite this glaringly simple deduction, the political realm remains perplexed by instances of political antagonism between differing identity defined groups in competition for each other; without paying much mind to the fact that even the actors involved, as individuals, are living as fractured beings from within. The current political system in the West is locked into this cyclical problematic as each performance of identity and subsequent 'winning' of rights²⁵ for such groups perpetuates a reifying process of fracture within the formal legal structures of politics and within the actors engaging in the political.

This chapter works as a literature review of key works within the canon of political philosophy in which the same project of individual and state constitutions are constituted to maintain and sustain certain individual and political ends. I begin with the Greek polis using key philosophical works which I argue contain aspects of a self/polis constitution theme and through a thorough textual analysis I intend to show the ways in which the seeds of the philosophical

²⁵ For example the winning of rights for certain groups of people based on marginalized identities such as gay rights as enumerated in human rights codes and legal guarantees of equal treatment.

quandary have grown and modified over the history of political thought. I will begin by going through the city in speech and description of the tripartite soul within Plato's *Republic* in order to set the grounds on which I will base and structure my argument. The concept of unity and the political realm will then be highlighted. I will then examine Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* as well as other contemporaries who address these texts. These selected philosophers, whether being explicit or implicit, propose a political framework wherein a particular type of person is able to flourish and in turn provide for the flourishing of the polis or vice versa. The works of these thinkers will be used as a hinge that allows us to open the doors to further conversations that will lead cohesively into the following chapters, moving into modern philosophy and especially regarding themes surrounding being, and (political) action.

Plato

Within the books of Plato's *Republic* is the most direct example of the self/polis constitution model that will be discussed in this chapter. While Plato dedicates a large portion of the text to describing the makeup of the city and of the soul, the ultimate goal of the book is to uncover the meaning of justice. As such, both the development of his ideal city or *kallipolis* and the outline of the ideally ordered soul not only reflect each other but the Platonic theory of justice which they are meant to reveal. The motivation of his self/polis exercise is thus not necessarily meant as a guide to the building of legal constitutions but as a method to unearth the true meaning of justice and further, the forms. The significance of this point lies in the idea that, for Plato, the perfection required for creating a complete and whole individual and city(state) takes place only after the ascension through the realms of fluidity and permanence leading towards the culmination of the complete form of justice. I will begin by elaborating this idea(1) of justice as vital to a Platonic exegesis. Prior to delving in to the soul/polis comparison, I will outline the

theory of the divided line as a means for describing the philosophical reasoning behind using the aforementioned relation as a means to identify justice as a political good. Throughout the chapter it is significant to take note of the overarching theme each philosopher is aiming towards and that is facilitated within their version of the constitution model of person and polis. In the case of Plato, it is the Form of Justice that shapes the theory of the city and the soul.

Plato's divided line is found in Book VI of *The Republic*. It is a simile that is used to decipher the differences between imitations, things and opinions, from mathematical equation, philosophical knowledge and truth.²⁶ In order to show this he uses the image of a vertical line that is separated into four parts. In the lowest segment of the line are images or reflections.²⁷ These are not real things, but copies or imitations of them. The bottom section of the line, "derives what transient being it has from that of which it is a feeble imitation, and may vanish at any moment, without making much difference to anybody."²⁸ Thus, a concept represented at the bottom of the line is fluid and can be easily changed without changing any aspect of the concept's form. A concept may be distorted and perception of the concept may alter without changing the form which defines it. There will always be an object that is closer to reality than what is imaginable as images of things that are able to be reproduced and destroyed infinitely without ever affecting the materiality of the object itself.²⁹ The lowest portion of the divided line is similar to our perceptions and opinions.

The second portion of the line contains material things including animals, plants and people.³⁰ These are objects that one can see and touch and therefore seem real to them. They are

²⁶ Plato, *The Republic*, 510 a.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Stocks, J. L. 1911. "The Divided line of Plato rep. VI". *The Classical Quarterly* 5, (2) (Apr.), 75.

²⁹ Ibid, 75.

³⁰ Plato, *The Republic*, 510 a.

more knowable than the previously discussed concept of imagination; however, it is still possible for them to be understood or known more fully. This section includes the objects that have been replicated in the first section. A mere thought, imitating an object within the mind, a reflection of reality belongs in the first section, while material objects are in the current section. Material objects are real while also being changeable, they can be reconfigured, grow, alter themselves or undergo a change from an external source. However, this change is more significant than the change of a reflection or image because it alters our perception of reality. Objects are then also representative of the visible world or world of opinion. This is because what one thinks they know about an object can change, similar to that of a strong opinion.

The pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus provides us with a notion of flux or change that can be related to the described visible realm of the divided line. Heraclitus wrote that all things change over time and in different circumstances, foreshadowing the malleability outlined in the bottom sections of the divided line.³¹ As such, “it is impossible to step twice into the same river.”³² The composition of a river is constantly changing as things are added to it, taken out of it, as they flow through it and so on. According to the Heraclitan fragments, Plato also cites this example saying “Heraclitus says somewhere that everything gives way and nothing is stable, and in likening things to the flowing of a river.”³³ Plato’s statement provides recognition of the philosophers before him and while he proposes a theory of unity, an understanding of the role of fluidity is required in discussion of the working of the human soul, or rather, as will be used later in this text, human consciousness.

³¹ Robin Waterfield. 2009. Heraclitus of Ephesus. In *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and the Sophists*. (New York: Oxford University Press), 33.

³² Heraclitus, “fragment 34,” In *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and the Sophists*, trans, Robin Waterfield, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 41.

³³ Ibid.

Reflections, images, and objects are capable of changing and therefore are not representative of absolute truth. Similarly, Heraclitus states that nothing is static, and eventually all things will change. The river was used to show “the continuity of change in every single thing: everything is in perpetual flux like a river.”³⁴ Therefore, in accordance with the doctrine of Heraclitus, all things fit into the bottom sections of the line because everything is in a state of constant change. The lower segments of the divided line represent the visible world, this is the “class that is seen,” and therefore comprehended by our senses.³⁵ It is possible for us to see the objects or their reflections, but they are subject to our senses and capable of change. For Plato there must also be an intelligible realm, where the ideas of that which we can see exist eternally and are unchanging.

The third section of the line is the beginning of Plato’s intelligible realm. It includes mathematical equations and hypotheses. Instead of using images or actual objects, this realm consists of the idea that such things even exist. It includes “the arguments for the sake of the square itself and the diagonal itself, not for the sake of the diagonal they draw, and likewise with the rest.”³⁶ It is the idea or thought of the object that is represented in this section, rather than the object itself. A mathematical equation can exist as an abstract idea that is neither an imitation nor an actual object. Material objects may be demolished so that they no longer exist, however the angles within, the physics associated with its materiality and the chemical and biological processes remain. Therefore, these ideas once proven can exist eternally and without change. They can also be thought about and applied to different things.

³⁴ G. S Kirk, J.E Raven, and M. Schofield. 2007. “The Ionian Thinkers: Heraclitus of Ephesus”. In *The Presocratic Philosophers*. Second ed. UK: Cambridge University Press, 195.

³⁵ Plato, *The Republic*, 509 d.

³⁶ Ibid, 510 d.

The last section of the line includes the Forms and true knowledge gained through the dialectical process.³⁷ Though objects are perceivable to us, Plato explains that their true existences are found in their Forms. Therefore, if each object has a Form, it can exist eternally, even if all traces of the visible object are gone. The form or idea of an object or thing will exist even without a visible representation. The theory of the Forms exhibit Plato's affection for wholeness and universality as part of a superior, permanent unchanging world, the world of the Forms which surpasses the familiar world. It is this world alone that is truly real in the eyes of Plato, while the visible world is only partly real on account of its fluidity. This means that what we know from the world which we can perceive, or the familiar world, is not the truth, because the truth is eternal while the familiar world is constantly changing. Thus the upper sections of the line are the intelligible realm, that of true knowledge. As put by Plato, the upper sections of the line are the, "class that is intellected."³⁸ Mathematical equations, thoughts, ideas and Forms are a part of true knowledge. In contrast to the first two sections of the line, the latter are eternal and unchanging, and therefore more knowable than that which is in a constant state of change.

The intelligible realm provides clear connections between Plato's ideation and the philosophy of Parmenides. Parmenides focused on the ideas of 'what is' and 'what is not'. He theorized that it is impossible for 'what is not' to exist because in order to exist it must be made of something, and it is impossible to make something out of nothing.³⁹ Thus, 'what is' is the only thing that exists. This description of 'what is' suggests that *it* cannot be created or destroyed, rather *it* is eternal and universalizable.⁴⁰ In order for something to come into existence it would have to come from a state of not being, which Parmenides claims to be impossible. He asks,

³⁷ Ibid, 511 b.

³⁸ Ibid, 509 d.

³⁹ G. S Kirk, J.E Raven, and M. Schofield. 2007. "Philosophy in the west: Parmenides of Elea". In *The Presocratic Philosophers*. Second ed.UK: Cambridge University Press, 246.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 250.

“How and whence did it grow? I shall not allow you to say nor think from not being: for it is not to be said nor thought that it is not; and what need would have driven it later than earlier, beginning from nothing, to grow?”⁴¹ Via this line of questioning one can see that for Parmenides, as with Plato, the proposed theory of consciousness lacks a proper trigger for the creation of ‘what is’ to be derived from ‘what is not’ and therefore what is fluid or particular exists within the everlasting and universal. In addition to this, Parmenides did not believe that things were capable of change.⁴² He wrote that everything “remain[s] the same and in the same place it lies on its own and thus fixed it will remain.”⁴³ Parmenides’ thought can be compared to the upper sections of Plato’s divided line. The intelligible realm is representative of the true knowledge. In combining Heraclitus and Parmenides within the analogy of the divided line Plato is able to take account of both fluidity and permanence by bring the two states together as one whole, something that is universal while also particular.

Plato’s theory of the divided line is used to reveal that justice exists as a Form which is the embodiment of true knowledge and the complete form of justice one may comprehend. Further, it shows that in order to ascend to such comprehension of things in their most true and complete incarnation, unity is required between its more fluid and static parts. The same framework is used when coming to an understanding of the ideal configuration of the polis and soul. In his development of the polis/soul constitution model, Plato has Socrates first create the city arguing that because it is larger in scale justice will be easier to identify. Once the city is complete the discussion carries on in such a way to create man in the image of the perfectly just and unified city. “But if something different should turn up in a single man, we’ll go back again to the city and test it; perhaps, considering them side by side and rubbing them together like

⁴¹ Ibid, 249.

⁴² Ibid, 251.

⁴³ Ibid, 59.

sticks, we would make justice burst into flame, and once it's come to light, confirm it for ourselves."⁴⁴ The method used in both examples of man and city is the same; justice is revealed in each as a perfect unity between three opposing parts which are ordered on a principle of specialization. Following this blueprint ensures that whether within one city or one man, as long as they manifest as a unity, justice will 'come to light'.

Plato's ideal city (*kallipolis*) is made up of three hierarchical parts. The structure is headed by a ruling class of guardians who are bred eugenically in hopes of creating the best class of rulers possible. Guardians who display a superior intellectual capacity and a natural inclination for contemplation may rise to the position of philosopher king on account of their ability to have knowledge of the Forms and therefore have an understanding of the truth. The philosopher king ascends to the position of ruler due to their absolute knowledge which is gained by the perfection of their soul. The second element of the city is the auxiliary class which is responsible for enforcing order and defending the city from external threat. Auxiliaries are raised to exhibit perfect courage and from a young age are taught the ways of war so that they may be brave, yet also music and gymnastics to prevent them from erring towards savagery. The third and last element of the city is the class of the many who are responsible for the providing goods and services required to ensure the city is self-sufficient. This class is made up of crafts people, farmers, doctors and so forth that may not take part in the politics of the city and must focus only on their specialized tasks. If any group is to meddle in the affairs of another, it would cause chaos in the functioning of the ideal city and make the realization of justice impossible.⁴⁵

In order to create and uphold the image of Plato's *kallipolis* and to ensure that there is no mixing between the classes a great deal of manipulation is required. First, in order to establish

⁴⁴ Plato, *Republic*, 435a.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 443 d-e.

the rigid class system Socrates proposes that the citizens be told a 'noble lie' that is contrived to convince each person that their class placement is pre-determined and natural based on the quality of their soul. As such, a guardian is said to be born with a soul made of gold, auxiliaries of silver and the many of bronze. Moreover, even if the citizens are not fully persuaded by this myth of the metals the satisfaction gained by being an integral part of a whole, wherein each part is completely necessary for the proper functioning of the city should suffice in ensuring there is no meddling of persons between classes. The use of manipulation within the *kallipolis* does not end after the myth of the metals is internalized by all citizens. The lives of the guardian/auxiliary classes are contrived from birth to ensure that each member of the political establishment embodies the virtue and qualifications required for their position. Tactics used in the control of these classes include eugenics, the communism of women and children, and the elimination of family ties and private property. The interests of each citizen are the interests of the city and must remain as such in order for there to be harmony and unity within the city itself. The constitution of the *kallipolis* is mirrored in the soul of the individual.

Another key factor meant to ensure that there is harmony between classes within the *kallipolis* is the rule by one with a perfectly harmonious soul, the philosopher king. Accordingly, the soul of each individual is said to, like the city, consist of three conflicting parts – reason, spirit and appetite. The tripartite soul is considered to be well ordered and properly balanced when the reasoning part is in control followed by the spirit and then one's appetite. Upon achieving this order of the soul one is inclined toward rational decision making and in a better position to gain true knowledge, such as the Forms. A person with a soul wherein reason rules the two lower, more impulsive elements of the soul is also argued to be just as they are able to tame the desire and dispositions that lead one to pursue unjust acts. The human soul is

comparable, according to Plato, to a many headed beast which must “be in control of the human being and take charge...like a farmer nourishing and cultivating the tame heads, while hindering the growth of the savage ones – making the lion’s nature an ally and, caring for all in common, making them friends with each other and himself.”⁴⁶ However, as this is no simple task, the tripartite soul, described by Plato as necessary for those who hold positions of power is clearly the privileged political soul. Only a select few are able to order their soul in a manner which allows them to be suitable for political life in the *kallipolis*, leaving those who are deemed incapable of perfecting the just soul to the bronze, de-politicized class. Thus, while Plato’s city/soul model may create a stable state run by ‘just’ rulers, there is absolutely no conception of politics or the political within the majority of citizens who live there.

Plato provides us with a theorization of city and soul which is based on a framework of unity and order and is aimed at achieving his idea(1) of justice. Both city and soul are envisioned as mirror images of one another, consisting of a three part structure each ordered via the same design. The highest position within the *kallipolis* and the soul are both ruled and defined by reason. The silver, auxiliary class serves as a projection of the spirited part of the soul as the mastery of the passions and temperament makes them ideal enforcers and defenders for the city. The many, the lowest tier of the city, are assumed to be ruled by appetite just as the lowest portion of the soul is defined by impulse and pursuit of desire. These constructions mirror one another, each harmonious when ordered linearly from top to bottom form a perfect unity when considered alongside their purpose for being: justice. The aforementioned description of the divided line serves as another image of the structure of the city and soul. The ascension up the line (which culminates in the Forms and thus the form of justice) follows a similar path to the element we find in the constitution model used in *The Republic* wherein the many, the desiring

⁴⁶ Ibid, 589b.

part of the soul and the bottom of the line fit together as congruent counterparts; the auxiliaries, the spirit and the third section of the line encapsulates the middle, semi-political elements; and the philosopher king, reason and the top of the line are representative of the achievement of true knowledge, justice and it seems undivided political power.

The role of the philosopher king in Plato's *Republic* is the single political role of the *kallipolis*. In this way, Plato does away with politics within the city and as a result abdicates any political responsibility from the majority of its citizens. Their political and philosophical technē provides them a near instinctual knowledge suited for political decision making. They are "by nature a rememberer, a good learner, magnificent, charming and a friend and kinsman of truth, justice courage and moderation" to which one ought to "turn the city over to them alone."⁴⁷ Yet, it is not simply because Plato outlines the nature of ideal rulers in such a way that such a person is necessarily placed atop of the political community. The philosopher king is the personification of Plato's philosophy of unity. This is further evidenced within his work *Timaeus* where he elaborates on the idea of unity and sameness in the universe.

Plato is consistent within his works when it comes to certain foundational concepts such as unity. The creation of the philosopher king is a by-product of this constant line of thinking. In *Timaeus*, Plato re-addresses key points drawn from within *The Republic*, notably the idea of the physical and eternal world. The description begins by echoing the premise of the divided line in terms of the eternal and physical worlds: "The former, since it is always consistent, can be grasped by the intellect with the support of a reasoned account, while the latter is the object of belief, supported by unreasoning sensation, since it is generated and passes away".⁴⁸ Again we are given an account of sameness and difference and their relation to one another, but instead,

⁴⁷ Ibid, 487a.

⁴⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 28a.

applied to a theory of the creation and composition of the universe. The linear approach to intellect and the Forms is now expanded outwards, as a representation of the universe itself. Beyond this, *Timaeus* goes on to explain the creation of the ‘soul of the world’. This conception of soul consists of three elements, each a compound of a divisible and indivisible part: Sameness, Difference and Being. A careful combination of these compounds are the embodiment of the soul of the world.⁴⁹ The connection to the philosopher king of *The Republic* is found in the primacy of Sameness which is left undivided, while Difference is divided into six parts, making seven unequal circles. The creator of the universe, according to *Timaeus*, connected the body and the soul of the universe placing the body (physical world) at the core while the soul (eternal) remained undivided, surrounding its divided parts and constructing a closed unity. The soul rotates about the body as the ultimate form of eternal and rational life.⁵⁰ The soul of the world is the metaphysical conceptualization of intellect and understanding in the universe. It is consistent and eternal and therefore bears a direct similarity to the upper most section of the divided line. As such, if the soul of the philosopher king is represented by the ascent to the intelligible realm of the Forms, (s)he is also represented by the soul of the world, being the outer shell that holds the city together as a unity of undivided sameness and consistency. Unity is a key theme throughout Plato’s works and as such the soul of the philosopher king is replicated in several manifestations of Platonic metaphysics. As a result, the city/soul constitution model found within *The Republic* does not only create a city ruled by enlightened kings, but a necessary anthropomorphic version of the soul of the world given the status of both politics and the political. They encapsulate the walls of the city, holding together its divided parts and are the mouthpiece of eternity and unity within those walls. The political realm is completely isolated in

⁴⁹ Ibid, 35a-b.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 36e.

the role of the philosopher kings, the highest position of political hierarchy, the top of the divided line and the outer shell of the eternity for the universe.

Aristotle

The Nicomachean Ethics is part of a dyad of ethics and politics that Aristotle conceived as a single undertaking. Where *The Politics* deals mostly with political community and governance, *The Ethics* takes up questions concerning the individual. In this sense, *The Ethics* allows us to understand Aristotle's idea of human excellence so that we may then see how a constitution could be made to foster the growth of such a person. The Aristotelian constitution model of city and soul is found in the combination of these two canonical texts. The political community is one governed by law, according to reason and nurturing the moral and intellectual virtues that are required for happiness. The good life is defined via human happiness or flourishing by way of habituating oneself to cultivate virtue. It is the aim of the state to create a constitution which fosters a specific set of virtues in its citizens which allow them to fulfill their teleological nature.

Like Plato, Aristotle outlines the constitution of the individual and the polis in order to serve a greater overall purpose, "...the virtue of the citizen must be in relation to the constitution; and as there are more kinds of constitution than one, there cannot be just one single *and perfect* virtue of the sound citizen."⁵¹ For Aristotle, the comparison fits into his teleological framework which bases its argument on a definitive, a-historical τέλος (telos/end goal) of εὐδαιμονία, (happiness/fulfillment). Man has the potential to be either the best or the worst of animals, but under the right type of constitution it is more likely that one will be able to achieve their natural τέλος and live the good life.⁵² Two of the main themes found in Aristotle's work are happiness and virtue. The happiness he speaks of is not the fleeting happiness that seems often sought after

⁵¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1276b20.

⁵² Ibid, 1253a29.

in current Western society, but a more ideal, pure sense of happiness which is associated with the good life. Aristotle defines happiness as something that is chosen as an end in itself.⁵³ When understood in this way happiness is a complete good because it is not achieved on account of anything else. Happiness is often associated with individual gains, but Aristotle rejects this view. He states that when one attempts to achieve happiness *solely* on account of outside sources “the process will go on infinitely such that the longing involved is empty and pointless.”⁵⁴ If one accepts this view it is hard to believe that extreme excess and self-interest can lead to happiness. As soon as a person reaches one goal, they may find themselves to still be unhappy and will constantly be searching for something new to fill that void. Yet, it is also impossible that a person can simply choose to be happy. Therefore there needs to be a catalyst for such changes to take place. For Aristotle, becoming virtuous is what allows a person to become happy and fulfilled.

Pleasure is not dismissed by Aristotle. In this way he differs from Plato who looks on pleasure more negatively. Instead, pleasures when moderated by temperance are an integral part of the good life. Moreover, as the moral virtues are representative of the human (lived) aspects of life they are intertwined with the human passions. Therefore pleasure is still desirable but with qualification and must be taken in moderation. When habituating oneself toward virtue, persons must always aim for the mean between deficiency and excess. As pleasures are particular they cannot be a good in of themselves because they never will amount to the whole of goodness. Happiness and the good are ends in themselves, making them whole, whereas pleasure is not. One seeks pleasure in the pursuit of happiness, yet what they receive is a fleeting, impermanent

⁵³Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 1097a30.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 1094a20.

feeling of happiness. Therefore the happiness that is the end goal for Aristotle's politics is a complex concept defined by virtue and a great proficiency in acting moderately.

For Aristotle there are two types of virtue: moral and intellectual. The intellectual virtues are learned and are gained by education, while the moral virtues are habituated.⁵⁵ Through his description of the attainment of virtue the ideal model of the individual is illuminated. Moral virtues inform one's character and involve the ways in which one interacts with others, whereas contemplation is engaged with in solitude. The moral virtues inform character and thus aid in the development of the good life and human flourishing. The good life relates to ordering oneself in a way that that is dictated by correct reason. In doing this, a person can be content with their character and their actions which is a closer definition of real happiness. According to Aristotle, we are born with the ability to be virtuous, but not with the virtues already manifested in us.⁵⁶ This process is a sharp contrast to the virtue of the political class of guardians and philosophers kings in Plato's *Republic* who are by nature meant for ruling. For Aristotle, in order to gain a virtuous character we must train ourselves over time. As a result the young and those with an 'immature character' cannot be considered virtuous until they have been habituated in a way that allows them to order themselves in a way that is complete and good.⁵⁷ In developing the moral virtues one may become prudent (have correct and practical reason), a virtue that is needed to truly live the good life. Prudence is required to use the intellectual virtues. On becoming skilled at using the intellectual virtues one can make better use of the character without harm (by aiming closer to the mean), in this way the intellectual holds authority over the moral. Character then becomes virtue in the individual. "It is not possible to be good in the authoritative sense in the

⁵⁵ Ibid, 1103a15.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 1103a15

⁵⁷ Ibid, 1095a5.

absence of prudence, nor is it possible to be prudent in the absence of moral virtue.”⁵⁸ In contrast to Plato, Aristotle’s constitution model starts with the individual first in his explanation of the cultivation of virtue and its importance in the fulfillment of our human nature and its end goal of εὐδαιμονία. The role of the state and creation of political constitution are brought forward in *The Politics*.

The law and the state play a key role in habituating citizens. If a state is good, the lawmakers should be able to create a constitution that trains its citizens to act in a certain, more virtuous way. Aristotle qualifies that “it is in this respect that a good regime differs from a base regime.”⁵⁹ He gives examples of laws that aim at moral virtue such as laws involving proper departure from military posts which promote courage, and laws that punish those who are violent towards others, which promote gentleness.⁶⁰ In cases of legal ambiguity he discusses equity as being used to correct legal (corrective) justice which aims toward the mean. Similar to Plato’s ideation in *The Republic*, the constitution of the state matches the constitution of its prospective citizens. However, unlike Plato, Aristotle offers a more malleable political strategy that is based on the achievement of εὐδαιμονία. In this way the outer structure of Aristotle’s model may be static; its inner workings require plurality over unity – “Plurality of numbers is natural in a state; and the further it moves away from plurality and toward unity, the less a state it becomes.”⁶¹ He is not advocating for what we may call multiculturalism or anything of the sort, but for a multitude of voices and personalities that manifest in the citizens of a Greek polis (which excludes women, slaves, foreigners and those without property). His purpose in promoting a plurality is not to simply enlarge the franchise of citizens but to ensure man achieves his nature

⁵⁸ Ibid, 1144b30.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 1103b5.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 1129b20.

⁶¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 121a10.

as a political animal, a goal which requires the habituation of virtue through action and interaction with others in the political community. In a state such as the *kallipolis*, it would be impossible to cultivate virtue in the way Aristotle envisions.

Becoming virtuous takes time because it is a process of training oneself how to act in regard to one's passions. Therefore, simply changing laws is not enough. This is because those people who already have a character that aims at vices and deficiencies in virtue cannot be so easily changed. Therefore habituation must begin in childhood so that one can learn how to control their passions and learn to "enjoy as well as to be pained by what one ought."⁶² Doing this will ensure that from childhood, people will be able to recognize the importance of acting moderately and avoid giving into extremes and passions. The laws of the constitution are not solely punitive, but formative in relation to the constitution of the individual by way of their educative authority.⁶³ Further, it will allow persons' actions to aim at the mean in a way that seems instinctive. This will make the choice of deciding where the mean will come more easily to the individual actor. Virtue cannot be forced. It is a result of training oneself to use reason and deliberation to inform action. Fostering this growth by making progressive laws helps to promote the development of a good society that aims for justice. By focusing on cultivating just moral characters by habituation children can grow into more virtuous adults. They can obtain skills and use reason to make choices via deliberation that reflect the needs of society instead of self-interest alone.

⁶² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1104b10.

⁶³ Susan D. Collins, *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 176.

Justice is defined by Aristotle as complete virtue.⁶⁴ Thus when one has cultivated a character that aims towards the mean they are able to make complete use of virtue in all of their choices and actions. Also, justice is a virtue that involves a person's relations to others.⁶⁵ A person cannot become virtuous and just in solitude because having a good character is based on how they act. Therefore simply thinking about how one ought to be and think is not enough; one must also act on their judgements/deliberation and choices. Aristotle explains this saying justice "is complete because he who possesses it is able to use virtue in relation to another, and not only as regards himself. For many people are able to use virtue in dealing with the members of their household, but in their affairs regarding another, they are unable to do so."⁶⁶ This statement shows the importance of justice in the community. It is not sufficient to understand justice and know of the virtues, but to actually be this way and to act in a just manner in public. Key to this idea of community is Aristotle's discussion on friendship. A certain concord must be held among members of a community ensuring they see each other as equals. The cooperation of the citizens in a polis is not only dependant on laws but on shared concord.

Aristotle maintains that one cannot achieve happiness and thus the good life without friendship. This is tied to the community that is built by citizens who feel a connection of comradeship to each other beyond a relation of mere utility. It is significant to recognize that although *The Ethics* focuses mainly on the individual, it is the individual citizen he is speaking of. As part of a work on politics Aristotle is not solely concerned with providing an outline to achieving happiness, but happiness or fulfillment in a political community, a community shared with others. Therefore, the connection between happy individuals via friendship/concord will

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1129b30.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 1130a10.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 1129b30.

reinforce the idea of the good life throughout the polis. Also, the good life is a life lived in action. Action is also interaction, and as has been described in relation to the cultivation of virtue must be learned by habituation. It is something that must be done with/among others. Moreover, "... 'friendliness' as a virtue constitutes the proper disposition towards pleasures and pains in our associations."⁶⁷

The discussion of friendship as it relates to action and virtue leads to a final complexity in Aristotle's argument. As discussed, in order to be happy one must be content with their character, which is achieved by the cultivation of moral virtue and their actions, which will be informed by their good character. Both the actions required for habituation and implementation of good character require interaction with others. However, at the end of Book X, Aristotle states that "contemplation is both the highest form of activity" and that "wisdom is admittedly the most pleasant of the virtuous activities".⁶⁸ It seems here that Aristotle is taking a turn, now claiming that the best life is one of contemplation rather than action akin to the argument advanced by Plato. Further, he states that "the quality that we call self-sufficiency will belong in the highest degree to contemplative activity."⁶⁹ Not only does this seem to contradict the emphasis on moral/character virtue, but also the importance of friendship. This said, it is of great consequence to recognize the moral virtues in the attainment of the intellectual. As stated earlier, one cannot make use of the intellectual virtue without the cultivation of prudence, or right reason. In habituating oneself toward moral virtue one develops prudence in order to aim at the mean. It is only once this habituation has taken place that one could even attempt to lead a contemplative life. Aristotle's explication of the contemplative life thus differs greatly from Plato's as the

⁶⁷ Collins, 149.

⁶⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a20-25.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 1177a30

philosopher king determines what is just via solitary use of his reasoning faculties while the person of good moral and intellectual virtue knows justice and virtue as two sides of the same coin where “in relation to another it is justice, but in being a certain characteristic simply, virtue.”⁷⁰ Such an understanding shifts the constitution of the individual closer to that of the political. Under a constitution that promotes virtue, for Aristotle, the political is not only more accessible for the individual, it is part of their nature. Citizens are educated toward virtue which in their relations with others illuminates justice via action. The theorization proposed by Aristotle is still very restrictive in that his list of virtues are a-historical and permanent yet must be met by all peoples, as well as the fact that his idea of citizen does not include a large portion of the population; his departure from Plato offers a significant step in the direction of citizenry which is *actually* political in their being. The rejection of unity in favour of plurality (though limited) as well as the more action based definition of justice via virtue brings us one step closer to a politics of intersubjective, antagonistic relations. “Justice does indeed require us to act with a view to another’s good.”⁷¹

Further, the moral virtues detailed by Aristotle have a direct correlation to one’s political nature. While there may be some similarities between Aristotle and his teacher, the shift away from extreme unity and the focus on action and habituation for citizens gives way to a far more politically inclined citizenry. The tiers of the city in Plato’s *Republic* serve the purpose of unity and consistency, whereas Aristotle’s active citizen is inclined towards the city and its corresponding regime. Aside from happiness and contemplation, “the moral virtues are more directly related to man’s second natural end, his social life; one could therefore think that the

⁷⁰ Ibid, 1130a1013.

⁷¹ Collins, 71.

moral virtues are intelligible as being essentially in service of the city.”⁷² The Aristotelian citizen in their obligation to rule and be ruled as well as the role in cultivating a specifically political type of virtue is imbued with a type of political responsibility not found in the majority of those in Plato’s ideal political situation. The expectation that one is inclined by nature to be a ‘political animal’ is a crucial re-iteration of the constitution of self in relation to their political community and is key to the establishment of a relation between politics and the formation of a self which is political. It is due to these significant developments that the works of Aristotle maintain a vital role in questions surrounding antagonistic politics. It is due to this line of thinking that Aristotle, and not Socrates or Plato has been said to be the true founder of the discipline of *political* philosophy. Leo Strauss argues this point on the basis of Aristotle’s ‘discovery’ of moral virtue and states – “For Plato, what Aristotle calls moral virtue is a kind of halfway house between political or vulgar virtue which is in the service of bodily well being...and genuine virtue which, to say the least, animates only the philosophers as philosophers.”⁷³ The issue of de-politicization of the body politic in favour of the contemplative life is one addressed in several incarnations through the history of political thought as a result of the seeds sewn within the works of the Greeks.

For Aristotle, the constitution of the polis and that of the self (man) mirror each other not only in ideal situations but regardless of the aim of the state. A polis with good laws meant to foster good aims produces good men and citizens. While corrupt and unjust laws may still produce good citizens, in that they follow the laws laid out for them, these constitutions do not develop a city of good men. The moulding of the city into one occupied by good citizens who are also good persons in general requires virtuous legal structures. In this way, the constitution of the

⁷² Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 27.

⁷³ Ibid, 27.

self and its virtuousness is determined greatly by the regime in power, the type of government they run and the laws they enforce. Aristotle outlines a simple list of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ regimes that are ranked on the basis of the type of influence they have on their citizens and the type of constitution that they promote. In his discussion of correct and deviated constitutions he states: “constitutions and citizen-body mean the same thing, and the citizen body is the sovereign power in states. Sovereignty necessarily resides either in one man, or in a few, or in the many.”⁷⁴ As such, constitutions are ordered on the basis of their rule. Bad regimes include – tyranny, oligarchy and democracy; good regimes are – kingship, aristocracy and polity (constitutional government).⁷⁵ In a much more practical route than the one taken by Plato, Aristotle focuses his attention on the polity, not as the ideal state, but the best possible. The polity forms and informs the citizen to be virtuous through a more moderate process than other regimes and increases the franchise of citizens just enough to encourage the development of an emergent middle class capable of self sufficiency and simultaneously harmony with others who are equal. The key conditions of the polity find the mean between the excess and deficiency of two of the less favourable regimes – democracy and oligarchy. The mixed regime of the polity brings together these deficient types of government in order to highlight the best aspects of each while keeping the excessive parts at bay. The ethos of democracy, freedom and rule of law, merges with that of oligarchy, excellence and prosperity, creating a relatively stable compromise between the few and the many. “There is a natural harmony between the whole and the human mind. Man would not be capable of happiness if the whole of which he is a part of were not friendly to him.”⁷⁶ The focus he places on the influence of the regime, coupled with the importance of concord and

⁷⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279a22

⁷⁵ Ibid, 1279a32

⁷⁶ Strauss, *The City and the Man*, 41.

friendliness within the polis, suggests a type of political culture or mindset which is required to be upheld, and is completely absent within Plato's *Republic*.

It is the regime which is formative to the citizen and not the polis itself. It may be one's nature to live in a polis but there is no guarantee that the polis in which one lives will lead them to virtue and the fulfillment of a better nature. Only within a regime with an aim of happiness and virtue can an active and responsible political mindset be reached. Thus, the *politeia* (regime) is the basis for the constitution model for Aristotle more so than the polis (city) itself. The regime mirrors the individual because the regime defines their being as political in its own image. "It appears that 'citizen' is relative to 'regime', to the political order: a man who is a citizen in a democracy would not necessarily be a citizen in an oligarchy, and so on."⁷⁷ The actions and related responsibilities of the citizen of one regime differ based on the political order that aids in their formation. The aim of a regime is its most definitive aspect as it echoes the teleological method of Aristotle's philosophical foundation. If the aim of the regime is congruent with the aim of man, εὐδαιμονία, it founds the best possible Aristotelian constitution model of city and self. In this respect it is "through a change of regime the political community becomes dedicated to an end radically different from its earlier end."⁷⁸ The *politeia* defines not only the laws and regulation of the polis but defines the culture of the city and is tasked to uphold the goals to which the citizens are meant to aim for. In the best possible scenario, for Aristotle, a polity will devise a constitution which relies on the rule of law, active citizens and an aim or end goal of happiness as defined by virtue. In turn, such a constitution will contribute to the constitution of individuals by habituating them to internalize virtue in such a way that orders them to consistently act with these tenets in mind in such a way that is near instinctual.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 45.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 47.

The foundation laid by Aristotle is not without its flaws. Foremost is the fact that his active citizens are made up of only a small portion of the population, something he takes for granted throughout his political works. His favoured polity, or constitutional regime, is not one that promises “freedom of man as man but freeman as freeman” and on the basis of Aristotelian citizenship, “the freeman demands that he not be subject to anyone who is not in turn subject to him.”⁷⁹ Thus the responsibility gained by means of moral virtue is lost on those who are not considered to be one’s fellow freemen. Also, this edict places citizens above others members of the polis as determined by nature. Ignorance towards the remaining (large) portion of the population affords them a significant amount of leisure not common for the majority in most current Western societies and yet is a necessary element in the cultivation of virtue. The constitution model proposed by Aristotle aims to create a good life for its citizens in their pursuit of virtue and happiness which bests that of Plato on the basis of action, but is lacking promise for the majority of the population of the city. Later, in modern philosophy, this model is challenged in terms of the role of nature in our understanding of freedom. Whereas Aristotle attempts to use what he believes to be our nature to construct a city and soul model, modernity wishes to conquer and subdue nature.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 35.

Chapter 2: *Modern Universals: Constitution Model Continued*

“...one is not obliged to make a man a philosopher before making him a man.” Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, 18.

Introduction

This chapter continues the review of literature carried out in the former, drawing out constitutional state and self models in order to highlight the trajectory of this under-addressed issue within the canon of Western political philosophy. Here, I detail the theories of Jean Jacques Rousseau⁸⁰ and Immanuel Kant⁸¹ in order to draw out the changes within the model which result from the perspective of modern thought. Concepts of human nature and universality brought forth by these thinkers dramatically change the notion of both the state and the political actors within it. ‘Newer’ ideas of the modern era such as autonomy, identity, rights and the social lead to a more robust conceptualization of the state in relation to a self constituted self. These ideas are a product of the birth of liberal thought which gives a wholly different consideration to the meaning of constitution. The early liberal thinkers addressed in this chapter lay the groundwork for a community which takes ideas from the ancients and arranges them in line with a distinctly liberal order focused on equality, freedom, civic rights and the autonomy of the individual as socially and politically formulated. Therefore, the idea that the state helps form the citizen and

⁸⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, trans Franklin Philip (New York: Oxford, 1994), Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Allan Bloom (USA: Basic Books, 1979), and Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin Books, 1968).

⁸¹ Found in his collection; Immanuel Kant. *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. H.S. Reiss. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

that education and a pre-determined political order brings this formation to fruition is presented by Rousseau and Kant in a way that diverges greatly from their predecessors.

Rousseau

Within several works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau there is a theorization of the individual's ability to exercise their will and make rational choices which determines their actions, self-sufficiency (lack of dependence) and thus their engagement in a process of civic self-actualization. In an examination of three of his major works – *The Discourse on Inequality*, *Emile* and *The Social Contract* – I will identify the ways in which his notions of the individual and 'the self' are contingent and related to ideas of (in)dependence within the political community. Rousseau's conceptualization of the self and the formation of consciousness takes a slight turn toward the existential foundation that will be used throughout the following chapters of this work. Therefore his contribution is key to the development of my theorization of the self as constituted within a critical existential, phenomenological frame. The Rousseau-ian political community is governed by the ethos of the general will and necessitates a constitution model so unified that it constructs a body politic that may only exist when the will of its individual parts matches that of the whole. In choosing to analyse these three works, I will trace the themes of dependence and authenticity as integral to the formation of a civic self within the supposed state of nature, civil socialization (by moral and habitual education/cultivation) and within the sphere of the political as the overarching purpose behind his version of the state/self constitution model. While these texts are less explicit than those previously discussed in their goal of setting up a distinct relation between the way in which a state and an individual are constituted, when looking at Rousseau's works together it becomes clear that his philosophical project follows a similar pattern. While Plato and Aristotle craft a theory based on the goals of justice and happiness, Rousseau focuses on the

ideas of freedom and authenticity – themes that aid in uncovering the role of existentiality as required when critically constructing notions of politics and the political.

In the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau begins by describing what he considers to be the state of nature. This is characterized by a lack of organized society where each person is solitary and free. Unlike other state of nature theorists Rousseau does not assert that humans are naturally aggressive or immoral. Instead he claims that humans acted in a way to preserve themselves without much concern or recognition of others. He ties this to the idea of pity which is natural to humans and as a result we are pained to see another sentient being suffer.⁸² This concept of pity is fluid in that it is developed over time and as individual consciousness is developed. In the state of nature, pity would lead to a mere recognition of pain without an association with pain as a personal feeling either projected onto another or within the self. Yet, as a person becomes a *self*, meaning they are aware not only of their existence but also of their existence as active and reasoning, they are capable of feeling pity in such a way where they can recognize their relation to the other and the role each plays in the other's recognition and self identification.

Here they not only recognize their own, individual being, but also that of another. Further, Rousseau criticizes other theorists such as Thomas Hobbes for not going back far enough to describe nature. Though he recognizes that this state may have never existed he claims that in order for people to act as Hobbes describes them (self-interested, combative, and living in contentious relations to others), they must have already been corrupted by some semblance of civil society.⁸³ In other words, the state of nature proposed by theorists such as Hobbes make assumptions about the nature of human beings without fully stripping back the influences of civil

⁸² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 45.

⁸³ Ibid, 14.

society which may inform behaviour. As a result, humans are described as having natural attributes which are actually cultivated after a society, even an early society, would have been established and thus a process of socialization would have already been put into motion.

In outlining the origins of inequality Rousseau speaks of the two types of inequality. The first is natural and refers to the natural differences among people. The second type of inequality is derived from the natural and is highlighted or affirmed by social institutions and interactions.⁸⁴ The transition from one type of inequality to another arises when a person moves from a pre-human state with very little rational understanding, even of their own existence, to an understanding of themselves as solitary individuals, to then defining themselves as compared to others. The development of a conscious self brings with it the possibility of comparison and self-conscious reasoning which are the precursors to inequality. Rousseau highlights this by explaining that as people come together and begin to understand themselves and their own active faculties and existence they will eventually notice that some people have more talents or are more spirited than others.⁸⁵ At this point, people have already begun to come together and make comparisons, and this comparison breeds pride and envy within the individual.

By way of this act of comparison, harm came to be understood as capable of causing injury not only onto one's body, but to their character – to the individual as a self.

Once men learned to appraise one another and formed the idea of esteem, everyone claimed a right to it, and no one could then be denied it without taking affront. This was the source of the first duties of courtesy, even among the savages; henceforth every intentional wrong became a grave offence, for along with the harm resulting from the affront, the offended party often saw *an insult to his person* as more intolerable than the harm itself.⁸⁶

⁸⁴Ibid, 28.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 32

⁸⁶ Ibid, 61(my emphasis added).

This fracture shifts one's being from a proto-human like existence to one which is more phenomenological and contains the seeds of existentiality, the being of one's existence. Such praise for esteem brought with it the distinction between being and appearing and therefore a challenge to individual authenticity. The excess of pride leads to more deceitful and conniving behaviour in order to construct an appearance of superiority. Far from a sort of inequality which may be considered natural; the inequalities constructed by reason inform an appearance that no longer is based on being, or actual action – but instead on the construction of how one ought to be. Rousseau states, “It was soon to one's advantage to be other than what one actually was. Being and appearing became two quite different things...”⁸⁷

Rousseau then goes through the stages in which the natural inequalities inform the societal ones. Those who excel at certain tasks then gain power over others and society begins to form out of dependence. “Thus natural inequality unfolds itself insensibly with that of combination, and the difference between men, developed by their different circumstances, becomes more sensible and permanent in its effects, and begins to have an influence, in the same proportion, over the lot of individuals.”⁸⁸ As a society begins to form those who were understood to be weaker or less skilled become dependent on others in order to survive in the confines of society. This occurs via a process of self perfectibility which allows one to improve their situation and standing in the community by using more sophisticated methods and gaining an advantage over others. The notion of perfectibility cannot develop in the natural state and comes only upon entering civil society.⁸⁹

Freedom is of great importance in Rousseau's conception of independence. For Rousseau freedom is associated with the state of nature and can be understood as something that is solitary.

⁸⁷Ibid, 65.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 35.

⁸⁹Ibid, 28.

This is due to one's independence and self-sufficiency. Exiting the state of nature makes a person less free as they become more dependent on others. It is possible to see that striving for luxury or praise from others becomes a limit to freedom. Further, the needs of a society are far greater than the needs of one solitary person. As one begins a process of rationalization they are able to conceive more complex ways of acting or creating and in turn, rely more on the aid of others to achieve such newly developed goals. Therefore it seems that in relation to the state of nature, the formation of society was an accident of convenience. One loses a part of their natural independence but gains in discovering new complex and innovative tasks, and ways to live in society.

The state of nature is a state of autonomy. In this state we understand the world and ourselves via our relation to nature. In society we are defined by others. This explains the development of the individual or self because we notice our own identity and compare and judge this based on others. Through this others can become seen as limits to one person's goals of self-perfection or as a factor in one's loss of independence. A lack of independence exists not only in gaining and maintaining the material needs for one's life, but also in the conscious development of the self or individual. Civil society is a place where humans construct themselves through their interactions with others in an exchange of action and validation. This process is non-existent for those in a state of nature. Therefore Rousseau claims that men in society are less happy than those in the state of nature. 'Civil' persons who seek the praise of others and are concerned with the opinions of others cannot recognize their proper path.

To know one's path is not to imply a Rousseau-ean teleology, but that each person must be educated to best develop a balance between the particular (individual) and general (societal/as citizen) will which informs their actions. In *Emile* Rousseau outlines the ideal education of a

young man in order for him to be a good man and citizen. Emile provides an example for what Rousseau understood as the best form of moral and social education. Part of becoming an authentic and morally good person is closely tied to one's experience of freedom and ability to make independent choices. By this, one's particular will can best co-exist with that of the general will, giving the individual moral autonomy. Therefore, it is important to prevent certain negative or morally questionable habits from forming, as seen in the story of Emile. The educational process taken up in *Emile* outlines the basic structure of the constitution model as it concerns the self within civil society. The self, a person aware of their own state of being, is brought forth by way of the state of nature and then moulded for a life suited for politics within in the example of Emile.

Education can come from nature, man or things.⁹⁰ Nature here for Rousseau refers to natural biological functions and the physical body. Emile learns from this first as he is aware of his body before he is aware of his mind. Education from man teaches Emile to control and use his abilities. This is tied to dependence because it is something that is learned only by recognizing our need for help from others. Last, education comes from things, meaning what we learn from our own experience with the external world. This form of education is connected to independence because we learn our limitations through our personal experience. Education aims at and is closely tied to habituation. This raises the question as to whether Rousseau implies that Emile must actually be habituated into everything he does. This can be a difficult question because while Rousseau clearly states that it is important not to create habits⁹¹, he seems to be doing this in his description of Emile's education. However, as Emile is being habituated to be adaptable, this is not really a habit at all, but a skill. Therefore Emile's teacher must model his

⁹⁰Ibid, 38.

⁹¹ Ibid, 63.

student's skills in order to assure that he does not become too dependent on one or another habit. Emile is, or is at least raised to be, independent. Each of his actions are based on choices that are his own. Thus he is free, active in thought and praxis and less dependent.

The way in which the teacher contrives the conditions in Emile's life allows for a certain type of independence to be felt, even if this is false independence. In this way Emile is dependent on the will of another without recognizing it. Achieving this is a key difference between good and bad education. In order for Emile to receive a good education he must feel as though he is free. Freedom is incompatible with dependence. The way in which Emile is raised is very contrived so that the teacher can control the circumstances in which Emile finds himself and have him feel as if he has figured something out for himself, even if it was according to the plan of someone else. This gives him the feeling of being a master, when in reality he is dependent on others.

Rousseau assumes that people do not want to recognize their dependence on others, whether it is from their teachers or their politicians. This is why Emile is taught to understand himself as independent despite the fact that he is not able to succeed on his own in all situations. The main purpose of Emile's education was for him to learn to learn properly. Therefore the education process is less about learning things and more about learning about life and growing. As he will be educated towards gaining moral autonomy he will have "less memory than judgement."⁹² This is why it is so important for Emile to learn to make decisions from experience. So while Emile is led along and put into previously constructed situations for his education this may be justified for youth as a type of 'guided freedom' to the service of his judgement.

⁹² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, 160.

A significant aspect of this ‘guided freedom’ is that the teacher reveals himself and his role as educator to Emile once he has reached a mature age. The teacher shares his sentiment with Emile explaining his own feelings of friendship and generosity and igniting Emile’s own sentiment.⁹³ In doing this Emile is supposed to become more open to differing types of interpersonal relationships wherein he will understand the importance of connections he makes with others in his life. This development will also help in the next very important step in which he will partake. Emile must now enter into society and become accustomed to living with and amongst others; this can be applied to his fellow citizens. As a consequence of his education, he shall be safe from the potentially harmful influence of society. Though the influence of society is corrupting, it is best to be a part of it, than to be completely isolated from it and made an outsider. Once the goals of Rousseau’s ideal education are realized, this allows the authentic person to stand apart from the hypocrisy which stems from society. To become authentic or sincere is to find one’s own self which would be considered true. In relation to Rousseau this means that a person must be free from the realm of opinion and appearances if they intend on being authentic. As a result, it is important to cultivate within society a sense of self that is closest to nature; a self embodied in Emile.

Rousseau’s attempt at creating a natural man within the confines of society is a method of fostering the idea of sincerity so that it may be brought about by the reasoning person. He states that Emile will not be like other boys/men and will use reason to understand the ways in which society can act as a corrupting force. Instead, when witnessing the negative impact of others, “it will be with the eyes of the wise man, and he will not be carried away by the example of others or seduced by their prejudices.”⁹⁴ Following this logic, it is possible to understand the

⁹³ Ibid, 378.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 327.

consequence of Emile's contrived childhood and educational process to result in a person capable of understanding his role in political society. Considering the end result of Emile's education he can be considered to be authentic or sincere to a limited extent. He is aware of his own capabilities and does not try to exceed them. His needs and desires will increase only as his faculties/abilities increase. He is adaptable and will realize that at times his needs will need to be reduced or reevaluated in order to maintain happiness. Knowing one's own limits is tied to knowing oneself. Therefore if Emile is self-aware he will be better prepared to make an attempt at self-actualization *within* society. Emile is also raised to be mindful. Freedom is contingent on independence and being aware of one's own faculties without being diverted by imagination or opinion. He is contemplative and through this can understand his own freedom. This type of contemplation is a solitary endeavour allowing for the external distractions of society to fade.

Further, when relating to others in society, Emile will have to enter the realm of public opinion.⁹⁵ Therefore it is vital that he be able to recognize opinion but not to be overcome by it. In considering the opinions of others and its impact on relationships it is important that Emile want to please others, yet at the same time not wish to be esteemed by them.⁹⁶ He can acknowledge the role of others in his life and see their opinion but is not consumed by this. Therefore he can make connections with other members of society while still maintaining a semblance of sincerity. The key to this distinction is found in the genuine concern or sentiment one has for another as opposed to the imitation of these feelings based on publicly held opinion.

The state of nature outlined in *The Discourses* is a highly romanticized vision of human freedom and independence that Rousseau makes clear can never be exactly re-created. The education of Emile is the beginning of his constitution model, constructed in an attempt to

⁹⁵ Ibid, 197.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 167.

idealize a person suited for a civil society that can most closely mirror the circumstances of the state of nature. Emile is a fictional representation which mirrors the constitution he hypothesises in his *Social Contract*. The general will can be understood as the projection of Emile unto the political community. The idea of the general will is outlined by Rousseau as a moral collective political body. The commitment to this body must be a reciprocal relationship between public and private individuals.⁹⁷ A state based on this idea would be the ideal place for a person educated as Emile was. The general will is meant to minimize feelings of dependence on others, which has been a main goal in the education of Emile. Accepting the general will also relate to the idea of freedom as aforementioned. Freedom comes from knowledge of one's own capabilities and when a person enters a social contract they yield to necessity in order to be free.

The citizens of a particular political community will have their wills reflected by one all encompassing idea. This is what is meant by the general will. It is an abstracted ethos of the body politic which embodies the will of the people, a will that, if willed for/by one, must be willed for/by all. However, not all the citizens of a given state will be sincere. If the wills of both the sincere and insincere citizens are incorporated into the general will it fails at authenticity from its conception. Also, if sincerity is a solitary endeavour, as discussed previously in the upbringing of Emile, it cannot be so easily translated into a communal idea. Therefore the general will is not sincere in its own right.

It is possible however that the idea of the general will can be posited as something that facilitates sincerity in the individual. Just as Emile's feeling of independence and freedom leaves him open to self-actualization, these sentiments can be cultivated in citizens who fully subscribe to the general will. If one gives up part of their own particular will with a full understanding of what this means for their freedom it is likely that they share a similar constitution to that of

⁹⁷ Ibid, 460.

Emile. However, it is also possible for one to be mistaken about their own will after entering the social contract. In this case such a person will be “forced to be free.”⁹⁸ In this case it is highly improbable that a person who is unable to identify their own will from the general is self aware to the degree needed for self-actualization. To reach this stage of self awareness there must be a true sense of self present in each person. Yet if a person is told that they are mistaken about their own will this is not possible. Only if it succeeds at fostering a sense of self in individual citizens, can the general will be even partially compatible with sincerity.

To be sincere and true to oneself has become one of the greatest goods or virtues. In the works of Rousseau to be authentic is a key theme. Emile can be considered authentic or sincere as a consequence of his contrived educational process. However the concept of the general will is less consistent with being truly sincere. This is partly due to the fact that sincerity is more of a private matter. To be sincere one must try to be less dependent other people, while also recognizing them as equals in citizenship. While society is to be understood as a corrupting influence on human nature, it is important to attempt to shape the best society possible in order to curb this influence. This said, the purpose of *The Social Contract* is to construct a political community which defends both the personal and collective good. With others one can benefit from mutual dependence while remaining a free and self-determining person.⁹⁹ However, entering into a social contract is a commitment and those who refuse will be forced to be free. The reasoning is that if a person does not wish to be part of the contract they have misunderstood what is best for them and will therefore benefit from a forced freedom.

⁹⁸ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 64.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 60.

As previously outlined Rousseau believes that our physical inequalities play a role in the growth of civil inequality. This is associated with the idea of a ‘natural liberty’, or the physical power of the individual. Our more natural liberty is lost upon entering the social contract as one is no longer able to take as they please. Civil liberty is gained via the social contract and though it is limited by the general will, this limitation allows for the expansion of moral freedom.¹⁰⁰

Considering Rousseau’s distaste for dependence on public opinion, the idea that the general will, the centerpiece of the social contract, could become a mere culmination of particular opinions (the will of all) can be troubling. The general will as an abstract ethos of society exists permanently in the realm of idea, is not able to be destroyed, and is closely tied to what is morally good. It is like the walls that surround the interaction between governments and people. This is how the general will is reflected by the character developed in Emile. The general will is, in fact, general, and must be filled with content as it is applied to differing situations.

In order for one to remain free and less dependent in society it is important for them to play an active role. What is active is what is useful. Due to this, it is the passive, along with inauthentic action that ruins the social contract. As a result sovereignty cannot be represented accurately by elected officials. Hence it is when citizens become apathetic and choose comfort over freedom that they turn their attention away from the good and thus from the general will.¹⁰¹ In doing this, the people make the power of the government stronger, giving up more of their civil liberty than needed. With a stronger, more present governing structure one is more likely to feel their dependence and be less free. In order for the negative aspects of civil society to be overcome the general will must be put into place according to Rousseau. Yet, this general will

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 65.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 139.

would likely only be maintained by a population of citizens educated towards its purpose, who understand freedom and the need to have their particular will co-exist with that of the general.

Analysing the story of Emile allows us to better understand Rousseau's conception of independence, freedom and authentic/sincerity. The boy Rousseau describes is one who would fit perfectly into the political associations he outlines in the *Social Contract*. Yet, the reason for having to form such a character is due to the negative aspects of society which corrupt and change our more gentle nature, limit our natural freedom and support constructions of inequality. The education of Emile creates a character that takes the best aspects of man's solitary existence in the state of nature and makes them social. The freedom and sincerity of natural man is meant to be found in Emile so that he may move through a space ruled by appearances without it affecting his being. While the state/self constitution model found in Rousseau is less explicit, it is obvious that he is constructing a political project wherein a possible ideal state is theorized to the end of replicating the type of freedom, authenticity and independence found in the state of nature. He then, much like Plato and Aristotle, provides an educational model directed towards the prospective citizens of such a state. The addition of Rousseau's work to this timeline brings together theories of unity and particularity but with the addition of a concept of the self not found in the philosophy of the Greeks. It is in this concept of the self that welcomes the idea of the social into that of the private and political assumed in Greek philosophy and eventually gives way to a possibility of politics and the political as is used throughout this work.

Kant

The constitution model as outlined thus far has culminated in the *Political Writings* of Immanuel Kant. In coupling his work with that of Rousseau we are able to see the process of self actualization within the individual that is required for the liberal political project. Further,

looking at these two theorists together I am able to elucidate the character of the state and the character of the individual as a dialectical pair, distinct from theorizations posed by the ancients. Throughout this work, the relation of these two separate yet connected characters will be further drawn out not only via the proposed constitutional model but also in terms of their exercising of power. From Rousseau the fracture created within the individual itself is highlighted, yet in Kant it is clear that the modern, liberal approach still strives for a type that is unity salvaged from the ancients. Kant assumes that the progress of humanity requires that all states are liberal, an assumption based upon priority of individual autonomy and the notions of universality. His assumptions are built upon a foundation of reason, law, and publicity extended into a supranational realm of cosmopolitanism with the goal of eventual peace. Based on these key characteristics of Kant's political thought it becomes necessary to insert him into the constitutional model as an example of a theory of self and state that reaches beyond the singular nation previously discussed.

Immanuel Kant argued that cosmopolitanism was the logical and necessary outcome of the universal embrace of the doctrine of Right, while also maintaining a system of independent sovereign states. In order to understand the overarching idea, the creation of a cosmopolitan society as the foundation to perpetual peace, one must first understand his philosophy as it applies to the capacities and actions of humans as well as states. Using his *Political Writings* in conversation with each other the development of a state/self constitution model can be put forth. His focus on the idea of progress in human morality and within the formation of states aims towards the goal of a universal concept of right which culminates in perpetual peace by means of cosmopolitanism. The shaping role played by the constitution of the state directly moulds its citizen's moral public self. His vision is forwarded by his assumptions about the possibilities of

human reason, a notion which allows for individuals to abide by his categorical imperative and thus take part in the supposed universal values of a liberal federation of peaceful sovereign states.

Kant describes reason as an inherent human capacity. This allows individuals to gradually become moral social and political actors. The realization of this can only take place through the navigation of differing spheres: ‘private’ and ‘public’. In order to become a moral political actor¹⁰² one must have the freedom to make public their beliefs and values in order that they may become part of the overall discourse. In doing this people are going through a set of stages. First a person must become able to use reason in private and make judgements. However, in order for these judgements to hold meaning and not remain as empty ideas they must come into contact with the ideas of others. It is necessary for individuals to enter the public with these ideas. He describes these inter-relations as inherently antagonistic contributing to the creation and maintenance of a well constructed, law-governed political order.¹⁰³ It is the peculiar condition of man’s sociability that is the genesis of an antagonistic public sphere, yet also the potential for moral progress. In this way, Kant’s work provides a more reciprocal outline of the constitution model. The constitution of the state under which a person lives is fundamental to their political disposition, and in turn the political identity they put forth to the public shapes the growth and strength of the constitution itself. The reciprocal, yet also antagonistic relation set up in this model, provides a fundamental shift in how we can understand politics and the political.

As pointed out by Hannah Arendt, in her *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, people cannot function separated from human society and are interdependent in their basic needs as well

¹⁰² I attribute moral political actors to Kant’s ‘moral politician’, meaning one who does not allow their principles to become subordinate to their ends (Kant, “Perpetual Peace, 121).

¹⁰³ Kant, “Idea for a Universal History”, 44.

as in their higher faculties.¹⁰⁴ This is a far cry from Aristotle's claims that man is by nature a political animal. Aside from this main assumption about the need for others there are insurmountable differences between the two proposals. First, Kant's idea is historical in nature and incorporates an understanding of progress over time as opposed to being based on an a-historical teleological method. Further, the continental conceptualization of the self includes a distinction between autonomy and heteronomy that is absent for the most part in the ancient world where the purpose of politics was centred on the good life over the modern notion of freedom. The seeds of this are found within Rousseau's theorization of being and appearing. Arendt, in comparing Plato and Aristotle to modern philosophers such as Rousseau and Kant, states that the ancient focus on the good life (which favours contemplation as the highest good) results in a more amusing than practical political project. Citing Pascal, she forwards the idea that "[i]f they wrote on politics, it was as if laying down the rules for a lunatics asylum; if they presented the appearance of speaking of great matters, it was because they knew that the madmen, to whom they spoke, thought they were kings and emperors."¹⁰⁵ This is the same citation used by Strauss in his aforementioned argument that Aristotle is the real father of a distinctly political philosophy.¹⁰⁶ Yet Arendt goes beyond Aristotle and prefaces this quotation stating that while being somewhat melodramatic Pascal's words are accurate in describing the ancients in opposition to Kant. This is significant especially as Kant goes on in his own writings to describe a key motivation for the construction of political constitutions to be built upon a human impulse he refers to as 'pathological': sociability.

¹⁰⁴ Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 10.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 22.

¹⁰⁶ Strauss, *The City and the Man*, 18.

The sociability of man is linked to direct involvement with the political. He offers a theory of the nature of man as being an unsocial-sociability grounded upon antagonistic relations and an inward drive to be alone which must be overcome. This ‘unsocial-sociability’ is the defining characteristic of antagonism for Kant which he explains as the “tendency to come together in society, coupled, however, with a continual resistance...rooted in human nature.”¹⁰⁷

The resistance one expects from *and* towards others is fundamental to human progress as it draws man out of a static state of being and drives him toward action. Moreover, antagonism between individuals has the power to either break apart society or push one to develop and cultivate their talents and press toward enlightenment. “Without these asocial qualities (far from admirable in themselves) which cause the resistance inevitably encountered by each individual as he furthers his self-seeking pretensions...all human talents would remain hidden for ever [sic] in a dormant state”.¹⁰⁸ Along the lines of Rousseau, the development of reason pushes man towards a more social being, yet a latent pathology in connection with the faculty of judgement lays the groundwork for an inherently conflictual, or rather, antagonistic state of being. The expansion of individual talents allows for progress with potentially positive or detrimental results. As the inclination toward antagonism carries with it a deleterious potential, a sound legal constitution is required to motivate the constitution of the self to turn outside of itself and toward moral action.

Integral to the enrichment of a citizenry’s moral obligation is legal restriction. A strong constitution is needed to control and shape the public conduct of individuals. Though people are able to use reason in such a way that enhances their best qualities and teaches them to be morally consistent one cannot assume that this will unfailingly guide us towards Right. People are capable of reason, and Kant hopes that individuals will act in accordance with their ‘higher’

¹⁰⁷ Kant, “Idea for a Universal History”, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 45.

beings, meaning one will not simply use reason but ‘right reason’. However, he pragmatically considers that all too often, individuals act on the basis of selfish desire. Law compels us to be good citizens, even if we are incapable of reliably using proper reason on our own accord.¹⁰⁹ Private reason may make people inclined to revert to their selfish tendencies, but the law, which is public, can be used to diminish or tame such attitudes. In turn it is hoped that the good citizen will be able to internalize a greater concern for the needs of others. This said, for Kant a near instinctual internalization of these more cosmopolitan ideals is not actually needed as long as one’s public conduct is consistent with the norms and values of society. Once a moral public self has been institutionalized in law one assumes a responsibility to the domestic and cosmopolitan community because these spheres constitute a moral public community based on obligation over habituation.

Political institutions can ignite public enlightenment, yet contrary to that put forth by Aristotle, virtuous law does not make one virtuous but creates a fractured self whereby one may act one way in private but follow the rule of the land as a public citizen. Kant states “the problem of setting up a state can be solved even by a nation of devils.”¹¹⁰ If there are strong political institutions, filled with moral public actors, Kant claims that the remaining population will be positively influenced and over time begin to act in a way that moves beyond the boundaries of self-interest. The Greek polis, in theory, would cease to function if it were a nation of devils, as the influence of the state constitution and intense educational focus was assumed to draw out and highlight aspects for Plato in the political soul of the philosopher king and for Aristotle in the nature of man as political. For Rousseau, the seeds of the fracture identified in the Kantian citizen are planted in the separation between being and appearing wherein the role of appearing

¹⁰⁹ Kant, “Idea for a Universal History”, 112.

¹¹⁰ Kant, “Perpetual Peace”, 112.

in public becomes more performative than ‘natural.’ The lineage discussed leads to the continental theorization of the subject and its autonomy within the walls of the political constitution from which it is formed. Key to this distinction is the notion of progress, a concept absent in the constitution model of the Greeks. Kant is able to advance the idea that a state can be maintained even with a devilish population, not because of their inherent nature, but because they are able to progress and control nature, hopefully for the better, sometimes for the worse.

Kant looks at the role of the state regarding the development of cosmopolitanism in targeting the potentiality of perpetual peace and universal right. For a cosmopolitan praxis each state must be founded upon a republican constitution.¹¹¹ Such a constitution must be based on three principles: freedom for all members of society, the dependence of everyone upon a single common legislation and legal equality of all.¹¹² It is only under such a constitution that people can truly become citizens. Also, the state government must have a separation between executive and legislative powers.¹¹³ If one person holds the power to rule and create law, the system is not representative. Thus a republican constitution allows for a representative government over its citizens. These criteria are of great importance to our constitution model because of what they are intended to provide for the individuals living under its rules. The government grants rights to its citizens, “[b]ut if the mode of government is to accord with the concept of right, it must be based on a representative system.”¹¹⁴ Therefore without a republican constitution, according to Kant, there is no conception of Right. Rights are not natural to human beings, but are rather a protection granted to them by their state government.

In reference to the global role of states he calls for a coming together of states in order to

¹¹¹ Kant, “Perpetual Peace”, 99.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid, 101.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 102.

form a federation. This is not meant to be the same as an international state, but rather a league of sovereign states.¹¹⁵ Thus states will be brought together under the universal concept of Right. The movement from a single state to a multi-state model carries significance in its connection to the theory of progress and the implications of the Kantian infatuation with universalization. If each state within the federation is guided by a republican constitution, all members will share the same rights, freedoms, and equality. Kant states:

This homage which every state pays (in words at least) to the concept of right proves that man possesses a greater moral capacity, still dormant at present, to overcome eventually the evil principle within him...and to hope that all others will do likewise.¹¹⁶

Hence the state is able to guide its citizens to reach a higher sense of morality which Kant claims will eventually dissipate their hostility towards others. As more states join the federation, this moral progress will expand throughout the world. However, in order for a concept of ‘international right’ to hold any significance it must be rooted in reason.¹¹⁷ Reason will combine the idea of an international set of rights with the idea of a federation of states; otherwise it would work in theory, but not in practice.

The universality of reason in its expansion supranationally has a significant impact on the constitutional model posed. Kant argues that the constitution of the state helps form the citizen’s public actions and morality. This allows for morality to become institutionalized in the political and juridical bodies of the state and within its constitution in a way that forms the citizen and their moral obligations. As a result, the citizen’s self constitution becomes internalized in a near

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 102.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 103.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 105

instinctual way. The additional cosmopolitan aspect of Kantian theory projects such moral obligations or expectations, out and into the international sphere. His insistence on a non-coercive, progressive road for this process asks that individuals in other, perhaps non-liberal states take up liberal, moral obligations voluntarily, eventually leading to a slow progression of world liberalization. This process reflects the constitution model in a different, more cyclical way. The existing liberal republic forms moral rational actors within their borders. Once complete, the drive for a peaceful federation of cosmopolitan states asks that citizens within ‘less civilized’ states (to use Kantian language) use their power to influence the constitution under which they live. This is evidenced in his claim that even despotic governments have the ability for change as, “it is at least possible that they will be associated with a form of government which accords with the *spirit* of a representative system.”¹¹⁸ The reliance of representation even instrumentally used within ‘immoral’ and ‘illiberal’ states suggests that the individuals being represented will be the genus for substantial change within these settings. The ideal of representation coupled with a less coercive will by liberal states to name and shame their opposition signals the downfall of states that fail to uphold cosmopolitan values of Right. Further, the concept of international Right as formulated by Kant is repeatedly described not as something forced upon or even easily taken up by states but instead as an ethos first “embraced [by] all peoples of the earth”, and therefore “just like individual men, [states] must renounce their savage and lawless freedom, adapt themselves to public coercive laws and thus form an international state.”¹¹⁹ This section is immediately followed by the “Secret Article of a Perpetual Peace” in which Kant argues that the maxims of philosophers, or public intellectuals, are capable

¹¹⁸ Ibid 101.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 105.

of influencing public peace even within states ready for war.¹²⁰ These philosophers act as moral legislators who embody the Kantian ideal of universal Right and are given a platform to be heard by the governmental bodies of the state. While the will of such persons will not always be accepted, the possible influence they have is first, a product of external influence by liberal republics wherein their self constitution mirrors the Kantian state model and second, is then projected outwards as a prospect for states in transition; thus highlighting the circular function of individual and state constitution formation. The capacity for reason is not dormant in the public intellectual and is used to further the expansion of liberal republics according to Kant.

Reason is the faculty which makes us capable of recognizing and accepting our duties. From Kant's perspective, man is naturally endowed with the *capacity* for reason.¹²¹ Once this is cultivated and can be put to use, moral human progress becomes a possibility. Thus, the use of reason leads to the construction of the idea of morality as it develops in a given society. It is assumed that over time this morality will manifest in a way that applies universally to all people. Humans are not naturally moral but move closer to the ideal moral society via reasonable contemplation and action. In developing one's skills for reason they are able to understand the importance of progress and see society's evolution, or at times digression. This highlights the fact that while reason can lead to genuine improvement, it is also present in some of humanity's greatest failures. Therefore, an equally important part of progression can be found in one's mistakes as well as one's triumphs.

Nothing straight can be constructed from such warped wood as that which man is made of. Nature only requires of us that we should approximate this idea. A further reason why this task must be the last to accomplish is that man needs for it a correct conception of the nature of a possible constitution,

¹²⁰ Ibid 115.

¹²¹ Kant, "Idea for a Universal History", 43.

great experience tested in many affairs of the world, and above all else a good will prepared to accept the findings of this experience.¹²²

Through the use of reason, with an eye toward moral progress, an obligation/duty is created which pushes citizens toward making the best political society; a society based on Right. Though duty is not natural (in the sense of being instinctual or inevitable), it is imposed on us by our natural faculties. Kant implies that the most useful and significant use of our reason is duty, meaning that the best use of the natural capabilities of humans is found in accepting one's duty to Right.¹²³ In a way, the fulfilment of duty is an obligation to our natural capacities or 'better' nature. The role of duty or obligation for citizens is key to the reciprocity between the constitution of the state and the self. One's asocial 'nature' is overcome in the action of their duty. Within the Kantian public sphere these moral actions of duty apply to both the shaping of the law unto the person and the shaping by the person to the (re)evaluation of law.

In addition to reason, man possesses a moral capacity which allows him to overcome his negative selfish impulses which impede the development of a more enlightened society.¹²⁴ In effect, reason awakens this capacity and allows for progress to be made. From the Kantian perspective this progress occurs through one's recognition and then internalization of Right. Because morality is understood to be a natural capacity it is not required that a state projects a morality onto man, but rather uses law to draw out the best qualities of human beings. The state does not improve human beings, it just creates a platform for them to improve themselves.¹²⁵ In contradistinction, the individual is also not responsible for the furthering of Kant's cosmopolitan

¹²² Kant, "Idea for a Universal History," 46 -7.

¹²³ Kant, "Perpetual Peace," 112.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 103.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 113.

project, but their reason and enactment of moral obligation provides a platform to be fostered within states on a global scale. As humanity contains within itself the seeds for good and evil, it is ideal that the good is unearthed in such a way that one can use it to control their individualistic and egoistic tendencies.

This is not to say that all individual behaviour is inherently bad; it is actually necessary for one to create a public self. Instead, what is meant here is that people are able to understand their moral worth as equal to that of all others in order for society as a whole to progress. The selfishness of individuals puts them in constant opposition to one another. It is through reason, that people escape this never-ending competition in their external interactions. Therefore, there is more room for individualistic experience in ‘private’ than in public where people must interact with others who carry with them similar selfish attitudes and comply with a fixed version of public opinion and morality. The development of a public self thus is the development of public reason with Right as an end.¹²⁶ Moreover, the end of reason is *not* morality. It is best to understand these concepts as placed along a continuum. Reason does not lead to morality but rather it fosters a moral progress toward Right. This leads to a progression towards a universal good which exists before and separate from human experience. “Thus it is based on *a priori* principles, for experience cannot provide further knowledge of what is right, and there is a *theory* of political right to which practice must conform before it can be valid.”¹²⁷ With regard to the roles of states, the end goal of a cosmopolitan society is considered not only to be Right but also should bring about peace and autonomy for individuals.

Though there is a great importance placed on the individual political actor, it must also be remembered that together, these actors compose state governments. In this way, the Kantian

¹²⁶ Ibid, 113.

¹²⁷ Kant, “Theory and Practice”, 86.

constitution model involves forming and informing interaction of individuals and the state.

Whether one is a citizen with no direct political linkages or a policy maker, they play a significant role in the functioning of a state. In turn, the state also plays an indispensable role in the development of the individual. It is through political institutions that the individual becomes habituated toward the concept of Right and can be guided to accept their moral duties.

Through an analysis of Plato and Aristotle and moving forward in the canon of Western political thought to Rousseau and Kant several integral features of the constitution model have been identified. Plato provided inspiration for the conception of the model in constructing an ideal of justice which requires a mirroring of specific and tiered virtue within the state structure and the soul of the individual. His focus on unity also relays the notion of universality carried out within the canon. Aristotle provides a more varied pseudo (due to its restrictions) pluralist account of individual and state constitution. The aspect of difference plays a role in the way in which a state constitution can be expected to mould each of its citizens while still factoring in Plato's idea of unity via the culmination of a specific outline of virtue. Rousseau's work changes the dynamic of the model in identifying the more existential aspects of self formation. Rousseau significantly modifies the way in which one understands the individual portion of the constitution model. Immanuel Kant re-works the model via his cosmopolitan outlook as to then change the way state constitution is understood. He also brings forth key ideas that will be further expanded on within this work such as antagonism and judgement. The two important changes shown in the description of Rousseau and Kant lay the groundwork necessary for developing a conception of the *antagonistic self* and its relation to politics. The constitution model aids in continuing an outline of being and consciousness in order to clearly outline how I identify individual being internal to the self. The upcoming chapter will elaborate on the concept

of being in order to reveal one's existence as authentic and being carried out through action. I will be looking at antagonistic being within the individual, how we understand consciousness, being and becoming and what it is that makes us act as 'political animals.'

Chapter 3: *Being, Revealing and Acting*

“My identity is what I am and how I am recognized rather than what I choose, want, or consent to. It is the dense self from which choosing, wanting, and consenting proceed. Without that density, these acts could not occur; with it, they are recognized to be mine.” Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 64.

Introduction

This chapter will continue with a thorough outline of being and consciousness in order to clearly formulate how I identify individual being within persons. Moving on from the proposed constitution model, this work now turns toward a discussion of the individual constitution of the self through a critical, phenomenological, and existential lens. The purpose of this is twofold: first, I aim to problematize the universal, rationalistic and essentialist nature within the works of the aforementioned theorists. In doing so I identify the boundaries related to the notion of constitutions in order to uncover sites of power and antagonism within politics and the political. A constitution, coming from the perspective of Sheldon Wolin¹²⁸, works as a boundary which contains all that is within it as a service of the maintenance of its symbolic purity. As such, the constitution model outlined previously serves as a heuristic device meant to show the philosophic history of self and state models. In contrast, this chapter works to break these

¹²⁸ Sheldon Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy,” in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting Boundaries of the political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 33.

philosophic boundaries in such a way that is better reflective of the form of life¹²⁹ or radical spirit of the human condition. Second, the existential shift taken up here separates this work from key Post-Marxist or liberal democratic theorists who attempt to construct a deliberative model based on adversarial relations wherein difference equates to possibility yet is still bounded by assumptions based on rationality and limitation.¹³⁰ Instead, this chapter will include elaboration on the concept of Being-anxiety and its role in self-revelation. Here I will not only focus on being in terms of becoming but as revealing one's existence as authentic and being carried out through action. I will be looking at antagonistic being within the individual, how we understand consciousness, being and becoming and what this means for the constitution of the self as political. Key to this conceptualization are the theories of being and consciousness put forth by Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre. While Heideggerian concepts, specifically anxiety, and its revelatory capabilities are of great importance within the existential shift, a greater emphasis will be placed on Sartre regarding the understanding of being. Both writers reject the notion of a type of 'pure consciousness' or separation of being from one's 'being-in-the world'. However, while we will begin with Heidegger's definition of anxiety as an integral part of being, a move towards Sartre's term, anguish, is required in order to establish a foundation of positional and reflective consciousness. Heidegger replaces a process of Husserlian bracketing, and the separation of man from the world in which he lives with an ideation of ontic (relation to entities) and ontological (relation to being) interactions that while different, situate one's mode of consciousness as maintaining a position of '-in-the-world'. Sartre, on the other hand, holds onto some aspects of bracketing one's pre-existing suppositions and thus disagrees with Heidegger by posing a distinction between reflective and pre-reflective consciousness; a distinction that will be

¹²⁹ Term used throughout: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. GEM Anscombe.UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2009.

¹³⁰ Such as Chantal Mouffe, Jürgen Habermas, William Connolly

shown to be necessary in terms of acting upon one's own anxiety especially in relations that are antagonistic and require actions done in good faith. As such, when speaking of ontic or ontological being within this chapter I am specifically referring to Heidegger; when arguing in favour of a positional and reflective consciousness I am using Sartre. Deriving from this distinction, a discussion of the look of the other (Sartre) and the process of reflection which proceeds it, will make it clear that while there is much to gain from theories of ontic/ontological consciousness they are limited without a reflective position.

Constitutional Boundaries

Sheldon Wolin, in his essay "Fugitive Democracy," provides a detailed outline of the conceptual framework of boundaries and the ways in which they are formative not solely in a traditional, territorial way but also in terms of the democratic character of the state and individuals. He begins his inquiry by clearly delineating the differences between politics and the political. His formulation is the basis on which this distinction will be used throughout this work.¹³¹ The political refers to the societal rather than the institutional aspects of politics. It encompasses actors within a free society who engage in moments of commonality by means of deliberation, activism and the exercise of collective power.¹³² Following this understanding, the political occurs in the rare moments wherein the demos exercises its collective, democratic power. This could be in instances of protest, grassroots organizing, strike action and other, more sporadic moments of collectivism that form and are subsequently dissolved to some extent in order to advocate specific changes.¹³³ The momentary nature of the political captures the ebb and flow of social angst surrounding issues as they arise over time yet at the same time recognizes the

¹³¹ The distinction between politics and the political has been made by many, including authors used in this text. For the purposes of clarity, Wolin's ideation is that which will be referenced throughout unless stated otherwise.

¹³² Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy", 31.

¹³³ Ibid, 31.

continued presence of power through the political over time.¹³⁴ As such, “[t]he most fundamental terms of power are those that exact from the members of a collectivity by prescribing and proscribing activity that will enable power to be generated and continuously available.”¹³⁵ Wolin locates power in moments defined by several historical ‘ingredients’ of his time being “youthful rebellion, black resentment, provocative cultural forms...radically changing sexual mores, etc.”¹³⁶ His recipe underlying the political reveals a type of democratic power that is fluid and can be manifested differently throughout history and involves aspects that are clearly still the basis of collective political action today.

In contrast, politics refers to the continuous and relatively permanent political institutions of a given state. These institutions and the actors within them reflect the existence of organized power and public authority.¹³⁷ Politics in this context represents the more permanent fixtures of the state and its power. Here, we can see a slight connection to the constitution model outlined previously. However, the emphasis on action within both the state and the collectivity of individuals has a significant impact on the proposed constitution model. In fact, Wolin, in *The Liberal/Democratic Divide*, makes direct reference to each of the authors used in constructing the constitution model within this work stating that “[e]ver since Plato’s *Laws* political philosophers have been enamoured of constitutions as the practical correlative of a complete theory and, equally, of nocturnal councils; the combination ensures the realization of theory through an institutionalized interpreter insulated from politics.”¹³⁸ As such, the authors previously discussed, when setting up a constitutional model of state and self inevitably create a

¹³⁴ Sheldon Wolin, “People’s Two Bodies”, *Democracy* 1,1 (1981):11.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 20.

¹³⁷ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy”, 31.

¹³⁸ Sheldon Wolin, “The Liberal/Democratic Divide: On Rawls’s Political Liberalism,” *Political Theory* 24, 1 (1996):100.

boundary around the constitution of the state that legitimatizes its own authority and defines citizen action as limited within that boundary. The effect of this boundary is found in locating citizen action only in service of the state; and thus indirectly the individual is, by necessity, a mere reflection of the power of the state; void of real political identity and born to an a priori idea of appropriate action.

Constitutional boundaries may be applied to physical, territorial space as well as identity and self-construction. In both circumstances, a boundary is placed around an entity so as to demarcate it as a space of purity. In this way, boundaries mark both inclusion and exclusion. Territorial boundaries offer a much simpler explanation as they define a state by its physical location, and the constitutional makeup of said state works to code what may be included within that margin. When applied to the identity of the individual the definition becomes much more complex. The former recalls nationalist rhetoric and the push for national unity and the fulfillment of the myth of homogeneity. The latter (the identity of the individual) is highly influenced by the exercise of state authority in the upholding of their national or culturally based myths. As a result, “the state encourages identification of the self with the power of the state, the surrogate of participation and the sublimation of self-interest.”¹³⁹ It is in this surrogate relationship that the self is thus confronted with its pre-determined access to power and action.

The pre-determined limits to citizen action are bound within the legislative means of the constitution under which they live. This is especially true when the constitution is assumed to be democratic. For Wolin, democracy is defined as a version of the political rather than a regime of politics.¹⁴⁰ This means that beyond its categorization as a constitutional regime, democracy is an ethos of political potential for citizens. The possibility under this conceptualization is one of

¹³⁹ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy”, 33.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 33.

becoming political beings via self-discovery and differing and multivariate modes of citizen action.¹⁴¹ In this way, the boundaries of state constitutions work to limit these possibilities. The result is that action is restrained to the act of voting or finding work within the monotonous and conformative bureaucracy of politics. In the democratic context, the focus on constitutions is oxymoronic as the democratic character is not fixed on the demos as the key actor. Therefore, the constitution itself is far more than the assignment of laws and rights but also the boundary that specifies how much politics is allowed through codifying its “temporal rhythms or periodicity of politics, and [giving] it ritualistic forms”.¹⁴² Consequently, the constitution model must be expanded significantly so that citizen action exists beyond the blueprint and is reciprocal not only in words but in such a way that power is transformed and flows through the state to the citizen.

This is not to imply that all constitutions should be abandoned or that previous philosophical inquiry into constitutions is of no use. Not only would this render a large portion of this work moot, but it would be misguided. Instead, I argue that identifying constitutional affinities between states and individuals must be conceived beyond a matter of theory, but directed toward substantial action and the exercise of democratic power within the realm of the political. Hence, the shift toward a more critical, phenomenological and existential approach is meant to bridge the gap between theory and action in such a way that reveals the possibilities of being to one’s self. Thus, the impetus for political action errs on the border between prescribed (constitutionally permitted) action and the momentary instances wherein a myriad of possibilities are revealed to us through our existential anxieties toward a new future.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 31.

¹⁴² Ibid, 34.

The Existential Shift

Several prominent theorists have put forth the idea that the individual may be inwardly antagonistic in terms of the conflicting parts of their identity and being. Some key contributors that will be addressed in later chapters include Chantal Mouffe, William E. Connelly, and Anne Phillips. Each of these theorists contributes a great deal to my formulation of the self as an antagonistic being, however, the existential shift distinctly and significantly separates the conceptualization proposed here. This is because within other influential works the ideation of internal antagonism is placed in contrast to either deliberative democrats such as Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib or erected in response to liberal theories of pluralism such as that of John Rawls. The fault in setting up these dichotomies is in the creation of a foil for the purposes of destabilizing theorizations based on reason and rationality rather than determining a clear focus on the individual and their being. As such, existing works addressing the antagonistic self become too heavily reliant on combating reason and methods of deliberation as a way of dealing with pluralism without tackling why the inward existentiality of being/ becoming for the actors involved. The assumption is made that actors must enter the political sphere as beings not completely and wholly formed and that we must combat essentialism on this basis¹⁴³. Yet, the existential nod ends at this supposition without a full explanation of what this means for the individuals involved. An attempt to dismantle ideologies such as liberalism while also undergoing a project involving being and identity muddles the discussion of aspects within the self which may be inherently contradictory¹⁴⁴. With this in mind, I intend to outline my view on the phenomenological and existential construction of the self and the ways in which the self is

¹⁴³ Chantal Mouffe, "Democracy, Power and the Political," in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting Boundaries of the political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁴ This divergence will be elaborated on fully in Chapter 4 and 5 once the existentialist foundation is firmly established.

formed at its most basic level, prior to an engagement with, for example, members of a pluralistic democracy.

Inward antagonism is characterized by our being as anxiety. Similar to Wolin's emphasis on the momentary nature of the political, anxiety also comes to the fore and becomes more acute in the moments wherein individuals are confronted by their own freedom. It is known to us in the moments that a set of choices is revealed to us and we must (anxiously) confront these possibilities; either in choosing a new road or choosing not to choose. It is part of a deep-seated disposition which provides an unexpected and surprising revealing of ourselves with a clarity that facilitates the disclosing of human existence as *being* in the world. Individual anxiety when conceptualized ontologically is expressed at the horizon of our possibilities and can potentially drives us to action. In this way, anxiety differs greatly from fear. Fear is a state which materializes out of dismay in the face of imminent and present danger; if it is possible to remove the object of fear, its associated dread dissipates in such a way that calls for no further action. "Fear is a static state of being that renders us (more) powerless in its fleeting, combusive nature and irascibility."¹⁴⁵ Further, fear is also tied to the Nietzschean mode of resentment, especially when confronted by the historically and socially constituted other:

[...] the resentful man, on the other hand, is neither sincere nor naïf, nor honest and candid with himself. His soul *squints*; his mind loves hidden crannies, torturous paths and back-doors, everything secret appeals to him as *his* world, *his* safety, *his* balm; he is past master in silence, in not forgetting, in waiting, in provisional self-depreciation and self-abasement.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Hailey Murphy and Dean Caivano, "Revealing and Acting: Anxiety and Courage in Heidegger and Arendt" *Spectra* 6, 1 (2017): 251.

¹⁴⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Horace B. Samuel (New York: Dover Publishing, 2003), 21.

Connolly discusses resentment in his book, *Identity Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* in a helpful way that relates the notion of antagonism and identity to being.¹⁴⁷ His concept of resentment is derived from the Nietzschean understanding found in *The Genealogy of Morals*. Resentment is similar to both fear and anxiety in that it can work as both a positive and negative force in interpersonal relations. For Nietzsche resentment is tied to his theory of the slave morality wherein the morality of a slave or non-aristocratic individual is built upon a feeling of resentment towards one's own material conditions.¹⁴⁸ For Connolly, resentment is vital to the experience of identity and can be argued to exist on two levels. "One is specific and formed in response to socio-historical dislocations; the other is a general form of 'existential resentment' intrinsic to the contingency and finitude of existence."¹⁴⁹ Resentment, like fear, must manifest in the face of a present threat or an "objective stimuli to be capable of action at all – its action is fundamentally a reaction."¹⁵⁰ Connolly's Nietzschean conceptualization works well with the anxiety/fear factors discussed here by adding a more historically grounded state of being into the discussion. To expand, I will first outline the importance of anxiety and fear as fundamental ontological states of being for the individual actor, followed by the addition of historically contingent modes of resentment as a part of the historically, socially constituted self in their relation with the other.

This differentiation between fear and anxiety is crucial in understanding the dilemma of identity and difference in interpersonal relations. Unlike fear, anxiety responds to threats that exist as a possibility but have yet to fully come to be or confront the individual – it is an ephemeral mood that corresponds to a multitude of differing situations and moves us towards

¹⁴⁷ Connolly, *Identity Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, 78.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 19.

¹⁴⁹ Alan Finlayson, "Introduction: Becoming Plural," ed. Alan Finlayson in *Democracy and Pluralism: The Political Thought of William E. Connolly*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 10.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

action in the moments that we are actually confronted by these possible situations. In this way, being as anxiety is better reflective of our way of life as it does not rely on any concept of human nature or essential facts, but instead responds to a variety of possibilities and one's actions in relation to them. This transcends a mere anecdotal level in reference to being, abstraction "is a phenomenon of presence to being since abstract being preserves its transcendence [...] it can only be realized as a presence to being beyond being; it is a surpassing."¹⁵¹ Anxiety can be known only to the individual and therefore is conceptualized as an existential ontology that arises out of the particularities of the self through their being in the world. In anxious moments we are made to confront the possibilities ahead and make decisions brought forth from one's consciousness regarding the potentiality of a situation and of ourselves.¹⁵² Even when entering into the political with a previously formulated identity or belief, the moment of anxiety in the face of difference (the other) forces us to reformulate and reassess ourselves in terms of the current situation. This does not solely entail one having an open mind in relation to difference but addressing what it is that makes us anxious within that moment. Therefore, there is no essential being or unity within the self prior or after engagement with the other. Anxiety de-totalizes any notion of wholeness or unity within the self. To further elaborate on this concept of anxiety and being I continue to move the trajectory of the classics through Rousseau and Kant to G.W. Friedrich Hegel, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre in order to prove that anxiety is a key aspect to the conception of being.¹⁵³ Authentic human existence is challenged by our being condemned to freedom, a troubling state that is mediated by the primary mood of anxiety.

¹⁵¹ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 260.

¹⁵² Murphy and Caivano, 251.

¹⁵³ Key texts used include *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Being and Time* and *Being and Nothingness*.

A refusal of such freedom is categorized by a life of bad faith. However, ideals of a supposed 'radical freedom' proposed by Sartre fail to take into account the actual challenge that being free poses for us. The only thing radical about Sartre's 'radical freedom' surfaces in the radical democratic potential for the transformation of power and recognition contained by bad faith identity claims. It is through the active experience of our anxiety that the absence of authentic being as maintained in our bad faith is illuminated, yet not immediately changed. A continuing project of self constitution for the (de-totalized) totality of our being is revealed to us by anxiety and actualized by navigating through the materiality of our particular situations. We are being in the world and as such require recognition of the internal and external negations that combine to allow us to move beyond our own situation. Internal negation nihilates us as facticity, preventing a closed, complete totalization of our being. In other words, we are able to bracket the pre-supposed, essential 'facts' we may hold about ourselves in a move towards authentic meaning making. For the antagonistic self, internal negation is absolutely necessary as a de-essentializing process. The process of external negation is tied to Being-anxiety and allows for transcendence from our present situation; totalizing and immediately detotalizing the project of self-constitution and identification. This process is directly related to our interaction with the Other and our material life conditions. "I recognize that I *am* as the Other sees me."¹⁵⁴ Here we can notice a direct link in the trajectory of Rousseau into existential thought, wherein the mode of comparison triggers a sense of recognition required for being as well as appearing. However, it is the dual process: the internal/external negation as well as a process of de-totalization that signals a major shift within the work of Sartre. "I am unable to bring about any relation between what I am in the intimacy of the For-Itself, without distance, without recoil, without perspective

¹⁵⁴ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 302.

[...]”¹⁵⁵ For Sartre there is a distinction between the being of objects for consciousness, (being-in-itself), and the being-for-itself of consciousness. Yet even being-in-itself, the internal mode of being, is characterized by “perpetual reflection”.¹⁵⁶ The internally antagonistic being is confronted with the antagonistic realm of politics and the political upon being thrown into the world and must maintain a positional and reflective consciousness..

The development and active use of a positional, reflective consciousness is required to mediate our own experience of being in the world and that of the other. Nothing about the human condition can be firmly considered as preordained or fixed and thus we must shed the presuppositions and determinate attitudes which weaken the authenticity of one’s being. Understanding anxiety through this lens separates it from commonly used medical definitions of the term. The experimental sciences then, cannot be considered as providing the sole fundamental basis to one’s consciousness, its workings and the being of existence. This is especially true in the discussion of Being-anxiety. The scientific, biological or chemically defined specimen is not the only expression of being which one’s existence can have, nor is it that which lies at the forefront. Anxiety as part of being exists in and through our actions, reflections and in turn, consequences. Anxiety as a mental health issue does not correspond to the anxiety which we *are* in our average everyday-ness and must be approached in a much different manner. “This fact, in its facticity, is a problem ontologically, not merely with regard to its ontical causation and course of development. Only because Dasein is anxious in the very depths of its Being, does it become possible for anxiety to be elicited physiologically.”¹⁵⁷ The term Being-anxiety relates to the ontological state of being which negotiates what is possible and

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 302.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 28.

¹⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Perennial, 1962), 243.

our realities by way of reflection and action. It captures at its very core the challenge that our being free poses for us as opposed to the ontic or physiological type of anxiety associated with health. It does this in revealing ourselves as anxiety or anxious being in confrontation with the prospects ahead and the fact that we must constantly make decisions (both large and small) in order to endure our existence. The choice to persist signals a significant difference from that prompted by our fear. “While [b]eing-anxiety positions toward an open, yet difficult horizon, fear and resentment are an enclosure.”¹⁵⁸

Fear is a state of being that is static as the choices it concedes are total and decisive. Fear tends to make us turn back, away from the future or on the other hand attempt to destroy and dominate the object of our fear. Heidegger conceptualizes fear as a ‘mode of state-of-mind’ brought on by that which seems to pose a threat.¹⁵⁹ In relation, I continue this thought to include the fear response as one of either passivity – a waiting in fear –or of domination and control. Within the political this can be seen in relations of difference where the other becomes an object of fear that must be controlled or dominated in an act of suppression of what is considered a threatening form of existence. It may be passive in that it fails to engage in necessary processes of recognition and subsequent changes to the social or political landscape. On the other hand, domination and control plays out through the disregard of the being of the other, their relegation to the margins or acts of physical violence or silencing. While this distinction may seem to pose no threat in terms of mundane fears such as that to insects and such – when it comes to the conflictual relations within a pluralistic society a discussion of fear and anxiety becomes a serious issue. The act of domination seemingly eliminates that which we fear, yet does so at the expense of our freedom as well as that of others. Freedom is destroyed when situated within the

¹⁵⁸ Murphy and Caivano, 251.

¹⁵⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 180-181.

act of domination; this is best exemplified in relation to the other. One's freedom is realized in the reflection of freedom found in the other and therefore processes of recognition must be enacted between equals. The uncertain nature of fear is also a site of vulnerability. The character of threat and thus fear, as Heidegger states, can pass by or come close.¹⁶⁰ Our proximity and subsequent reaction to objects and instances of fright can also be the result of an act of manipulation by an external force or person. What we fear is highly dependent upon otherness, again increasing our vulnerability. It is this possibility for the other to affect the circumstances of our own lives that makes one's dealing with fear or anxiety so fundamental to our personal outcomes. Fear based action derived from a source external to us perpetuates an inauthentic mode of existence wherein we act without making conscious and reflective choices and instead act in a compulsive and nonpositional manner dictated to us by social convention or dominant ideology. This inauthentic state of being is directly related to Heidegger's discussion of 'The they [Das Man]' which can be understood as actions done based on common sense notions or because one fails to recognize the ways in which dominant ideology can determine what and how one reacts to their social reality. "In this inconspicuous and unascertainability, the real dictatorship of the 'they' is unfolded. We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they[man]* take pleasure; we read, see and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge..."¹⁶¹

The state-of-mind characterized by fear seeks reconciliation above continuation and as a result closes off a present situation without providing the necessary path for immediate detotalization as a continuation of one's project of existence. Often, what we fear is our responsibility for our existence as active, it is our Being-fear. In Being-fear, the self as endangered is disclosed to us. "Fear closes off our endangered Being-in, and yet at the same time

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 180.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 164.

lets us see it, so that when the fear has subsided Dasein must first find its way about again.”¹⁶²

Fear does not condemn us to perpetual inauthenticity, instead it leads us to maintain a burdensome state of bad faith that is difficult to overcome. Therefore, unlike anxiety, our existence when trapped in fear is disclosed to us only through the taking away, loss, or lack of something. Moreover, it is the mediating function of anxiety that provides a conduit onto which Dasein, or existence may be left open and de-essentialized. “Fear is anxiety, fallen into the ‘world’, inauthentic and, as such hidden from itself.”¹⁶³ Without recognition of this sort of ‘falling’ and, as such, lack of reflective action we are left making a choice without choosing, we live inauthentically in our refusal to see our choices as our own and in turning away from consequence.

Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost-potentiality –for–Being – that is its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its *Being-free for* the authenticity of its Being, and for this authenticity as a possibility which it always is.¹⁶⁴

The authenticity associated with one’s Being-anxiety is derived from there being a certain-uncertainty. That which brings about a mood of anxiety is varied and completely indefinite; it exists simultaneously as tangible while also nothing at all. “[T]he world as such is that in the face of which one has anxiety.”¹⁶⁵ The key to anxiety’s detotalizing function is that the imposing threat is derived in and through one’s own being-in-the-world. Its uncertainty imposes a motivational factor and works to direct one’s attention upon the horizon of possibility, a possibility which is undefined until acted upon. Through action, anxiety diminishes only to manifest in us once again as we approach a new and different situation. At this occasion, it may

¹⁶² Ibid, 181.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 234.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 232.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 231.

devolve into a fear which is focused on the past and lacks the authentic freedom of an existence seated in the present or future. On the other hand, in less meaningful situations, anxiety most often evaporates into nothingness and “we are accustomed to say that ‘it was really nothing’.”¹⁶⁶ Yet such a negation of experience moves us to recognize the significance of action and our affective relation to it as *something*. Each experience one has is not totalizing in terms of being but rather a moment in an entire project of becoming. Even when anxiety is overcome in favour of free action it extends beyond being nothing or something and exists as one moment within a series wherein each moment de-totalizes the prior via the process of negation.

Meaning associated with negation is formulated by the constellation of undefined concepts and phenomena which we encounter, leaving open the complexity of our being and (inter)actions. By means of the principle of negation, we are capable of opening up the possibility for existentiality which, instead of being conciliatory and whole, works against the conformity of determinism. Thus, what might be considered in the abstract – modes of internal and external negation and positional consciousness come together with the concrete, not through a pre-determined path but as co-constitutive processes. “The abstract is revealed as the meaning which quality has to be as co-present to the presence of a for-itself to-come.”¹⁶⁷ Here the abstract notions that ground concepts of being and becoming incite the meaning making behind the type of existential freedom earned within the political. The political is defined through the sporadic and temporal instances of political actions that can affect change in politics. For one to gain a being that is ‘for themselves’ there must be a coupling of action and reflection on the more

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 231.

¹⁶⁷ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 260.

abstract potentialities tied to authentic freedom over bad faith. “[I]t is sufficient to say that the abstract haunts the concrete as a possibility fixed in the in-itself, which the concrete has to be.”¹⁶⁸

Even one’s existentiell awareness, the purely phenomenal and personal experience of existence, necessitates a dual process of negation of being within the self – by way of the relation with the other. This term existentiell is coined by Heidegger in *Being and Time*; it is used throughout and supposes a distinct personal existential experience of being. In this work, I assume that while there is a personal experience of affective existence it cannot be defined as a “being” separated from one’s being seen by the other. As such, the differentiation between the existentiell and existentiality is necessary. The former, as used in this text, signals a discussion concerning the individual, phenomenological experience of self, the latter the co-constitutive aspects of existence in terms of self formation with external influence. Both are significant, yet existentiality assumes difference and anticipates the look of the other. The move from one mode of being to the other can be clearly outlined using the work of Sartre. Whereas Heidegger proposes that certain elements of self constitution are more solitary (the existentiell), Sartre’s addition makes it clear that even in one’s personal acts of self-formation, there is an interpersonal aspect. Heidegger conceptualizes anxiety as existing as one’s being as thrown into the world and thus outside of, what Sartre would describe as one’s reflective position. For him, anxiety as well as nothingness arise unexpectedly in the world. The Sartrean conceptualization of being and negation allows us to move from an understanding of our own being in fear and anxiety (angst)¹⁶⁹ as constituted and reflected upon via interpersonal exchange. Using this definition, consciousness becomes inseparable from the consciousness of something or someone, making

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 261.

¹⁶⁹ Sartre continually makes reference to ‘angst’ as playing a vital role in one’s freedom. While not defined in exactly the same manner, it is important to note that in the original German text of *Being and Time* (Heidegger) the word ‘angst’ is translated into ‘anxiety’ in the English translation. Anxiety will be used throughout in relation to both Heidegger and Sartre.

anxiety itself a component of reflective consciousness. “[Nothingness] founds negation as an *act* because it is negation as *being*.”¹⁷⁰ Negation is thus a process which mirrors human being as nothingness. In action we do not make something of nothing; we *are* nothing, negated internally towards being-for-itself and away from any essentialized and whole totalization of self. Yet to end the process at this stage would assume that one is fully conscious of their being in entirely in solitude, without any external factors present.

A positional-consciousness is developed in both action and interaction. External negation is tied to being as perceived by the other. Through Being-anxiety, one’s anxiety in the face of nothing and yet everything is unfolded before them. We are anxious in the face of our freedom and the freedom to act; no situation can be considered completely self-regarding. Even if an action is undertaken while alone our relations – past and future – will always haunt current action.¹⁷¹ While our past is a part of us in that it represents the consciousness of being without our being able to live it, the future is illuminated for us by the anxiety we hold prior to our nihilation of past and requisite external negation. We negate ourselves in relation to the other in order that we may know ourselves as being-for-ourselves. This is much more than a simple act of validation of one’s own action by the other, rather it is recognition of one’s being as conscious, reflective and free. Thus, exterior recognition plays a significant and active role in the project of being for each individual. It furthers the ability for one to embark in a process of de-totalization that extends beyond appearance and validation.

[E]xteriority is revealed to me in the fact that the negation which I am is a unity-multiplicity rather than an undifferentiated totality. My negative upsurge into being is parceled out into independent negations which I have to be; that is, they derive their inner unity from me and not from being.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 52.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 166.

¹⁷² Ibid, 262.

Unity, such as that described by the Greeks and carried on in the form of universality in the modern era by Rousseau and Kant is not a requirement or inherent component of being. Their contributions bring out important aspects in politics and the political as separated, as well as setting up notions of authenticity and appearance and civic/personal antagonism. It is the existential component that lays the foundation needed to understand self-constitution in a relational manner. Thus, unity takes place as one takes solace in reflection only so that they may be dismantled and re-constituted in their next act. The Hegelian conceptualization of negativity refers to the capacity of consciousness to critically undermine its own form of rationality, making Hegel's work a useful hinge from the trajectory outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 that ends with a discussion of Kant's universal ideal of reason. Hegel addresses the importance of contradiction within negation which occurs dialectically. For our purposes, fear/resentment and anxiety are able to be understood as contradictory yet reconcilable states of being. Yet, Hegel's 'determinate negation' functions as the skeptical undermining of a form of rationality. Each concept contains within itself its own negation and by way of dialectical inquiry, we uncover this opposite/alternative conceptualization in the form of synthesis.¹⁷³ If it is assumed that negation is determinate, one can claim that fear/resentment and anxiety are understood as one rationally assembled whole. This is not the case as there is no pre-determined future which an ontological state of being can provide. Being-anxiety reveals possibilities to us, not a distinct future which presents itself to us as a rationally constructed whole that one can grasp. If future possibilities were laid out in such a pre-determined manner they would exist as probabilities and not possibilities. Sartre warns against dismissing this key difference in terminology stating, "We can

¹⁷³ GWF Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. trans. AV Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 238.

not say that my possibilities *are*; they are possibilized. But probabilities are not ‘probabilized,’ they are each one *in it-self* as probable.”¹⁷⁴ To simplify, my possibilities do not exist in the past or present – they only exist when they are, meaning when I act and they are revealed to be and a choice is made regarding which action to take. A probability more accurately describes determinate notions of future events as what is ‘probable’ is contemplated upon as a specific and exact outcome. For Hegel, negation is determinate, meaning it comes to be only in so far as it contrasts with other things or concepts which are determined in a way in which it is not. The negative is that which is different from, opposed to, and other than. For Hegel, things and concepts are negations of one another, constituting one whole. He aims towards a goal of wholeness that seeks the complete unity of subject and object, as eternally valid knowledge or absolute knowing.¹⁷⁵ The error of synthesis persists in Hegel as it has throughout the canon of political philosophy in that “to Kant, multiplicity and unity were already categories side by side; Hegel, following the model of the late Platonic dialogues, recognized them as two moments of which neither is without the other.”¹⁷⁶

Theodor Adorno provides a critical analysis on the issues of unity and wholeness in *Negative Dialectics* which is extremely useful as it deals with issues of identify/identification, de-totalization while also taking aim at those philosophers who came before him – philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel. He states: “As early as Plato, dialectics meant to achieve something positive by means of negation[.]”¹⁷⁷ Determinate ends defined as the Form of justice, εὐδαιμονία, the general will, categorical imperative or absolute spirit maintain a dialectical process wherein the content of these concepts are presented in service to their

¹⁷⁴ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 271.

¹⁷⁵ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 488.

¹⁷⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* trans. EB Ashton (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1973), 158.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, xix.

unchanging existence. There is no real process of de-totalization involved. The content, or meaning of each concept, is defined by the internal contradiction of the whole and is sought out to explain a singular and unified end and therefore produces a false synthesis. This not only results in a risky move toward essentialization and notions of purity but also explains why a constitution model where two entities are held up against one another is not sufficient. A critical existential application of the constitution model constructed around determinate negation and unity aids in breaking the model apart into fluid and interchangeable counterpoints, moving us away from a Parmenadian metaphysic where ‘what is’ cannot be ‘what it is not’ and more towards a conception of poles in constant motion and re-creation (flux). The embracing of one’s existential anxiety as a fundamental state of mind deconstructs the finitude found in determinate negation. It is required that one negates themselves as nothingness rather than discontinue thought about certain concepts or actions once they have arbitrarily decided upon an idea(l) of absolute knowledge.

Authentic freedom for the individual presents to us a struggle. The struggle is not overcome via the obtaining of absolute knowing but in the uncertainty of our being. The way in which anxiety illuminates is not in the revealing of a simple choice between several options, but in highlighting the risk and sacrifice inherent in each possibility. The confrontation of risk associated with the constitution of the self and its freedom during each (inter)action reminds us that one cannot preserve themselves as a unity, but rather must provide their own existence as a sacrifice before the other. Any continuation of self-identification requires such a sacrifice. Hegel is explicit in his description of becoming that in order to *Be* one must challenge their consciousness via a life or death struggle with the other – his most useful contribution to this work. “They must engage in this struggle, for they must raise their certainty of being *for*

themselves to truth, both in the case of the other and in their own case.”¹⁷⁸ The fight for life is not done for life of the body or in relation to physical death, but for the life of our freedom. The conflictual project of freedom is exemplified in lordship and bondage. Self-consciousness, an integral step in becoming free, can exist as being in-and-for-itself only when acknowledged and thus propelled by the other. For Hegel, this is more a project of recognition than transformation. The lord understands themselves as free in relation to the bondsperson because they are ‘free’ to instruct the bondsperson and use them as an instrument which they maintain power over. The lord believes they are living for-themselves, while holding the other in bondage, and in actuality remaining as only a being in-itself.¹⁷⁹ Such is an inauthentic sort of freedom for both persons as both relations are characterized by dependence and lack the recognition of two self-conscious individuals. The lord is more dependent on those (s)he keeps in bondage as their being-for-self is based upon a freedom which has not been challenged but instead was taken. The bondsperson may realize their freedom in the action of their work and reflection upon it. In work as a formative activity, Hegel argues, one is able to develop their own reflective consciousness.¹⁸⁰ “Without the formative activity, fear remains inward and mute, and consciousness does not become explicitly *for itself*.”¹⁸¹ Here we can also see another instance where fear exists as a state of passivity in comparison to anxiety. Both the lord and bondsperson must allow fear to manifest as anxiety and illuminate the contingency of their freedom. Freedom cannot be taken by force; the freedom of a lord is an inauthentic genesis, just as the freedom of the bondsperson cannot be coercively removed.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 114

¹⁷⁹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 111.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 119.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

While seeking recognition between the lord and bondsperson serves as an adequate example of authentic freedom it is hindered by the Hegelian idea of universality and completion carried on by his predecessors. Further, the example alone supposes that each person recognizes their being in the other; assuming that the being of each was developed in solitude and confirmed and completed in their personal interaction. The aspect of recognition in Hegel is key to the bridge he provides from the continental or modern theorists to the existential and critical thinkers founding the existential ontology developed here. The life and death struggle present in the process of recognition also signals the complex and troubling situation the self must grapple with in their Being-anxiety. Yet to propose such a type of self constitution while simultaneously asserting that it is achieved to the end of an absolute and unchanging knowledge is an error that must be overcome. The assumption that an individual enters the public sphere as a whole and determinate self closes off so many possibilities for change and communal action. It is this notion that is carried on in the work of the deliberative/radical democrats mentioned above.¹⁸²

The claim that persons enter the political and learn and impact one another is accurate but too broad. It is the experience that informs the concept of an identity or self identification which is filled with meaning through action. The identity of one does not blend with or re-iterate that of the other, both come to be through action as a new process of totalization. Therefore, while the idea of a totalized self may exist prior to engagement, recognition and judgement it is immediately de-totalized and constituted as something new yet still incomplete – an affirmation of nothingness and not identity. The work of Sartre gives a significant benefit to theories of pluralism, deliberation, and democracy by taking this into account. The look of the other does not confirm something that positively exists, it illuminates possibility out of nothingness. Moving toward a Sartrean definition of the self in relation to the other we find a more thorough

¹⁸² Habermas, Benhabib, Connolly, Mouffe.

and particularized description. Even in relation to Heidegger, for whom he shares many affinities, Sartre recognizes that inter-personal relations are not solely based on co-existence between individuals but in struggle.

In leaving behind thoughts of universality we see that the recognition gained from the other is a significant aspect of the never completed project of self-identification and being. Being as “detotalized totality [...] temporalizes itself in a perpetual incompleteness.”¹⁸³ Therefore, the lord and bondsperson described by Hegel must recognize each other in order to *Be* at all. They must take in each other’s look and perception and allow it to detotalize their being in such a way that enables the constitution of self-identification, furthering each individual’s project of being within their current situation.

The prior consciousness is always *there* (though with the modification of “pastness”). It constantly maintains a relation of interpretation with the present consciousness, but on the basis of this existential relation it is put out of the game, out of the circuit, between parentheses...¹⁸⁴

In each new relation and experience consciousness nihilates its past being in process of detotalization aimed at a future totalizing experience. However, this project is constant and thus the existence of each totalized self-identification eventually must be put ‘out of the circuit, between parentheses’.

The presence of the other is a necessary component in the processes and actions which enable negation of self and as such are a requirement for becoming and being. It is also in the relation to others, both directly and indirectly that, we realize our freedom. Hence, the state of mind of anxiety is tied closely to freedom. In our Being-anxiety, we become not only aware of

¹⁸³ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 250.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 64.

the multiple possibilities before us, but of the ways in which each possibility places us in a struggle for freedom. The conscious function of being our anxiety is twofold: it reveals ourselves in the uncertainty of abstract possibility and in doing so uncovers the risks laden in our corresponding actions towards freedom. “The abstract is a structure of the world and is necessary for the upsurge of the concrete; the concrete is concrete only in so far as it leans in the direction of its abstraction, that it makes it-self known by the abstraction which it is. The being of the for-itself is revealing-abstracting.”¹⁸⁵ In anxious moments we assess our options, coming up against the potentiality of a situation and of ourselves as free individuals. In Being-anxiety, freedom is not perceived as given and constant, or as something innate but as a persistent struggle which must be engaged in order to overcome ourselves as facticity. “[I]t is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom...anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being”¹⁸⁶ The free, authentic self first comes into existence by way of anxiety, a derivative of Sartre's term anguish.

It is without the acknowledgment of ourselves as Being-anxiety that one's freedom is maintained as inauthentic and is characterized by living in bad faith. One lives in bad faith in their failure to recognize freedom as an issue and instead presumes it is given. To assume freedom, or to determine oneself as free without the juxtaposition of the freedom of others is to live in limitation – not to be free at all. Fleeing in the face of anxiety is to remain in a static, fear like state of being. Being-anxiety does not exist in ‘falling’ or ‘fleeing’; these dispositions act counter to the continuation of the project of being and only hinder human existence. Moreover, this refusal assumes that “I can dispose of a nihilating power at the heart of anguish itself. This

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 267.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 65.

nihilating power nihilates itself in so far as *I am anguish in order to flee it.*”¹⁸⁷ Such an existence is characterized by bad faith. One may encounter possibility and act on it, but while acted on in bad faith they are simply ‘going through the motions’ and open no opportunity for disclosure of self. One may live in bad faith and maintain a life in which their current situation is never surpassed. Bad faith becomes a certain style or mode of living in a prolonged state of inauthenticity. A life of bad faith is not inescapable; like a state of fear, it is a static and passive mode of being in which motivation is required to produce a state of clarity. Clarity brought about by Being-anxiety provides an open foundation for the disclosure of self required for being characterized by authentic freedom.

Anxiety is a mediating, fundamental mood of human existence which directs the self toward the possibility of an authentic, free existence. Being as anxiety ensures that what is revealed before us is not a singular future but a multitude of possible courses of action which we choose freely and comport ourselves toward. Being free is not out of our hands, but must be acted upon consciously and reflectively. Freedom is not inherent or essential, but a constant struggle wherein each person risks themselves in order to *Be*. The project of being presents itself as uncertain and manifests differently as we approach new situations. What can be considered as a constant is that individuals experience themselves as being in fear or anxiety upon the horizon of the unknown. These states of being are not to be considered negative in the sense that that is something to be avoided but instead are a necessary aspect of our being which is in itself ambiguous. Our Being-anxiety reveals our existence as free yet also troublesome. Nevertheless, individuals are being in the world and must engage with that which they come up against in a way that allows them to avoid living in bad faith, and instead, experience authentic freedom. The

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 83.

conceptualization of anxiety as the necessary motivational mood rather than a hindrance aids in our understanding of the realities of self-determination as free individuals. Being is a challenge for humanity as we relate to prospective freedom and to that of others. Anxiety highlights what is possible as well as the challenge any possibilities may pose for us. In this way, Being-anxiety is considered a complex mode of being which is reflective of the complex world in which we live.

Authenticity and Bad Faith

An over-reliance on boundaries muddles the usefulness of the phenomenological, existential approach. The constitution model set up first by Plato and carried on throughout the canon of Western thought is broken open and conceptualized without a determinate blueprint when taken up in relation to being and existence. Each of the constitution model theorists aforementioned work to set up a programme that citizens are allowed to act within. Quite obviously, Plato's model is very contrived and limited as seen through his noble lie and caste-like system that concentrates power in the hands of a selected few. Aristotle is more open and accounts for difference to a certain extent, but again is very limited in terms of who is included under the umbrella of difference – no women, slaves, or those in extreme poverty. Rousseau's works bring us closer to an existentially based idea of action and being in his focus on authenticity and appearance. However, his general will confines the political and its associated actions within a specific frame of suitable political willing. Last, Kant opens the field of action wider by taking on a cosmopolitan focus, yet even within this framework sets up a specific mode of being under liberal republics. As such we can see that these authors while contributing a great deal to this work, each mistakenly set up a boundary that restricts action within the realm of the political. These limitations, when assessed in relation to the individual and through a phenomenological and existential lens, set up a situation of bad faith.

While citizens are given opportunities for action, they are outlined and gifted to them by the state in which they live. The inauthentic mode of being brought on by boundaries conceived by the power of the state leads citizens to merely reflect that of *politics* into *the political* through taking on the processes of state mechanisms to enact their role as citizens in a way that is acceptable to the state itself. According to Wolin, the constitution and the rights it bestows on citizens represent an idea, for example of democracy, and not the citizens.¹⁸⁸ Thus, the constitution creates representation without recognition because there is no action granted to the citizens outside of the traditional system of voting. Spontaneous moments of radical action and the exercise of power by citizens does not exist when they themselves are not the seeds of power and action within the state. Representation without recognition perpetuates a ‘bad faith politics’ wherein individuals toe the line of their party or leaders and adopt their methods of being political while ignoring their own innate freedom.

The issue of bad faith has great consequences to the authenticity of that which takes place in the realm of the political. Further, as states make attempts to rectify difference and plurality they end up deepening the problem of authenticity. I will detail this problem using two significant examples – first, the boundaries that confine the constitution of self and state dampen the potential for radical acts of power on the part of the individual who is inwardly antagonistic yet placed into legal categories that externally define their being. Second, the state focuses on intergroup relations when it tackles issues of difference and thus re-enforces notions of intra-group purity that runs counter to the realities of our lifeworld. Both instances represent iterations of actions done in bad faith within the political. According to William E Connolly, “If difference

¹⁸⁸ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy”, 34.

requires identity and identity requires difference, then politics...pervades social life.”¹⁸⁹ This statement shows the reciprocal relation between identity/difference and the power of the state. It would be wrong to assume that individuals are incapable of effecting the constitution and legal boundaries of the state as there are several examples of minority groups fighting and subsequently gaining recognition in the form of rights and protections (civil rights movements, women’s rights, LGBTQ). These moments of struggle are those in which the radical democratic potential described by Wolin comes to fruition. Moreover, they also show that in moments where citizens hold democratic power they are confronted with the horizon of possibilities and harness anxiety and angst derived from their particular situations to move forward and cause change. These acts are taken up under the scope of civil disobedience and radical democratic action wherein citizens recognize an injustice in their society and act against the state in order to overcome it. It is only after such acts, such as sit-ins, protests, strikes, and so on, that citizens are able to use legal means to achieve their goals. Thus, in these select moments of citizen action power, representation and recognition are one. Marginalized groups must first be recognized before they can be represented within the laws and constitution of the state. In many cases, this entails not only a logistical fight but also an internal one in terms of being and existentiality. One of the ‘evils’ of difference and identity is found in the overcoming of hegemonic identity.¹⁹⁰

An identity that is hegemonic works to create unity and purity within the self and plays a significant role in processes of misrecognition. In protecting the purity of the hegemonic identity the self is defined in the act of securing one’s identity against the other.¹⁹¹ However, I assert that such a purity in terms of identity is not possible and also, not something to be aimed for. Further,

¹⁸⁹ Connolly, *Identity Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, ix.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, ix.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

the drive towards purity and unity within the self is further complicated in interaction with others in the action of (mis)recognition. Being itself exceeds interpretation. It is constructed by the self but seeks recognition to confirm its existence, yet interpretation will never fully grasp the meaning assumed by the individual whose identity is in question. With regards to the state, legal categories promote hegemonic forms of identity by invoking the majority identity to represent the whole.¹⁹² For marginalized groups, this often means that a negative idea of a group is perceived as the norm for all members of that group. For example, that African Americans are criminals, that gay men are pedophiles, or that women are weak. These prejudiced notions are viral in that they infect the body politic with harmful views, views associated with a pre-determined idea of a hegemonic identity. On the other hand, hegemonic identities, even if conceived in a more benign manner may not reflect each individual of that group. As a result, it becomes possible, legally and interpersonally to be misrepresented.

Holding multiple identities furthers the mode of misrecognition. It would be a vast overgeneralization and simplification to assume that legal categories of identity serve to represent every individual within a certain group. Thus we cannot assume that a single woman in politics can represent all women, or that a single LGBTQ person represents all LGBTQ persons. It is within these examples that we are reminded that the constitution of the self is contingent and ambiguous.¹⁹³ Relying on representation in this broad and simplistic way assumes something essential about the identity group in question. Reliance on authentic or unified identity essentializes and homogenizes a group as an idea regardless of experience. “It is not simply that black people or women or lesbians would disagree among themselves as to appropriate policies

¹⁹² Ibid, xiii.

¹⁹³ Anne Phillips, “Dealing with Difference: A politics of ideas or a politics of presence” in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting Boundaries of the political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 144.

and ideas and goals (they will vote for different parties for example) but that their very senses of what it means to be black or female or lesbian will necessarily vary.”¹⁹⁴ It is at this juncture where we can locate bad faith in relation to politics and its legal and constitutional boundaries. State constitutions serve to protect their citizens by providing a set of rights allotted to specific identity groups within society; it is then under the banner of such group related identities that individuals often must claim their rights. A balancing of identities held by a single person is then maintained in relation to the rights given to the identity group from which they identify with.

Beyond this, the inter-group differentiation between legal, identity-based groups works to further ingrain a false sense of authenticity and purity with said groups. This is because one’s being exceeds another’s interpretation and at times even one’s own expectation of themselves.¹⁹⁵ It is impossible for a person to accurately predict with certainty the extent of discord within one’s internally constructed self. Thus, over-reliance on pre-defined identity pushes individuals toward accepting that there is something pure and essential about their being. The affective, identity-based disposition of an individual produces a contingency that runs deep into their self-constitution. As a result, when one finds themselves outside of the comfort of their own disposition or, on the other hand, if one externally decides that a certain individual does not conform properly to their set identity the anxiety that turns to possibility is muted and turned to fear and control/destruction. In these cases, a divergence between freedom and action is illuminated with stark clarity wherein citizens “love repose more than freedom” and allow for basic ideations of group representation to stand as truth.¹⁹⁶ Rousseau gives us this warning in regards to laziness associated with elected officials but his words apply more broadly to

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 145.

¹⁹⁵ Connolly, *Identity Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, xvii.

¹⁹⁶ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 139.

(mis)representation in other forms. Especially in rights-based societies as found in the Western world, representation extends beyond the electoral process and into fixed categories of legal rights. Enumerated legal rights such as those in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights are built on the basis that citizens may find solace under one or several of the state protected areas of their rights. Their identity is represented in such documents and if an individual or group is to benefit from this they must receive recognition for their proclaimed identity. It is in bad faith that we can assume any level of unity or essentialized aspect of identity that is not contingent on being and one's form of life. Neglect of the fluidity of being and identity on the basis of a variety of possibilities leads to a vast misrepresentation of how people really are. Individuals hold several conflicting and or harmonious identities – they are inwardly antagonistic. At times one might seem 'whole' and project themselves as such, yet this can be easily dislodged, re-organized and in Sartrean terms, totalized and de-totalized. Rousseau's statement against dependence on representation begins in describing the dependent person as "avaricious, cowardly, [and] pusillanimous".¹⁹⁷ Using an existential perspective one can see that over-dependence on pre-conceived notions regarding identity transform anxiety into fear and direct it away from possibility and toward hostility or lazy bad faith ideas that remain unchallenged. Freedom is difficult to realize, even more so when individuals fail to see the challenge as a possibility in terms of their being and inter-subjective relations.

The issue of essential identity and in-group purity will be taken up in the next chapter with great detail. Here, such issues are meant to highlight issues of bad faith that stem from constitution-type models and are played out in politics and the political. The issue of bad faith and authenticity is meant to be taken up in terms of politics and the political and less as an issue

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 139.

in one's average everydayness. Authenticity cannot be expected in every single interaction between persons. Not only is this generally impossible, it would not exactly be desirable either. Knowing exactly what one is truly thinking may cause more harm than good and is not the goal or purpose of this work. No person would conform to all of the expectations placed on them without seriously affecting their own well-being. However, in the realm of politics, a level of conformity is projected onto the political via the rigid structures and boundaries of politics. This stifles the moments of radical action that are brought on by way of reflective consciousness and the acceptance of anxiety. It is not my intention to break open all notions of conformity or social mores in this work – but to show where bad faith lies within the political.

The constitutional boundaries as put forward by Sheldon Wolin have served to problematize the constitution model and move us toward a more radical and free understanding of the relation between politics (the stable, institutional elements of the political power of states) and the political (the changing, momentary spark of human action and exercise of citizen power). While it is clear that there is a relation between self and state constitution it cannot be taken as determinate or as a blueprint of conformity for citizens. The spontaneous and temporary characterization of the political can be explained when assessed using a critical, phenomenological, existential method. Anxiety as the catalyst for radical possibility aids in determining why the political is not a permanent fixture or everlasting form of action.

Engagement within the political is a realization of a troubling sort of human freedom as described by Jean-Paul Sartre. We are condemned to be free and thus at crucial times in our becoming individuals are moved to act on the horizon of possibilities before us. In these moments our being is challenged as Being-anxiety. This said, fear plays a significant role in our actions as well. For Heidegger, fear can be transformed into anxiety – yet usually manifests in

actions of control and domination. In the following chapter, the role of fear will be further developed in relation to resentment and its relation to one's disposition and therefore their future actions. Issues of bad faith will be further elaborated as well in order to disentangle issues regarding nature/lifeworld and agonism/antagonism. Following from the assumption that politics is antagonistic, it will be shown that the self is inwardly antagonistic. As the existential framework has now been set, a discussion of the antagonistic self will be elaborated further following this line of thought.

Chapter 4: *Antagonistic Self and The Political*

“This critique of every concept and every complex of concepts by progressive incorporation into the more complete picture of the whole does not eliminate the individual aspects, nor does it leave them undisturbed in subsequent thought, but every negated insight preserved as a moment of truth in the progress of cognition, forms a determining factor in it, and is further defined and transformed with every new step.”

Horkheimer, On the Problem of Truth, 414.

Introduction

Politics is about dealing with problems. As such, this work has aimed to problematize and raise questions in regards to the ways in which this trouble is understood within politics and the political. A focus on anti-essential, critical existential inquiry is not a call to eliminate politics (as defined by Wolin) and replace it with a post-structural imaginary of de-construction. Instead, I suggest that in looking at the individual through an existential lens one is able to best understand the movement of de-totalization in its ebb and flow. This is significant in that besides trouble, politics is about people and their actions. The boundaries that exist around the individual in terms of their self constitution are representative of the temporary totalization and the degree to which one chooses to maintain or change themselves through this process. The process itself involves an aspect of trouble just as in politics. There is no certain blueprint to self or state constitution while undergoing change. This is not anarchy – there is still a place for state structures, legal and otherwise as well as personal routine and scheduling. However, these more ‘permanent’ fixtures

are the walls that surround us and do not define each and every action taken within. In some circumstances, a complete renovation is undertaken in which the walls are reduced to rubble; that is not the intention here.

It is of great importance to ask questions at every turn in order to prevent stagnant politics and conformity in the political. This chapter will continue the line of questioning into the inquiry of antagonism as it relates to the self and the state. I will continue identifying issues with bad faith and authenticity/purity with greater detail concerning non-essentialized being using a feminist perspective to illuminate real life examples and analysis. In situations of marginalization and inequality the difficulties in reaching an authentic form of freedom and fluidity in being are more clear and provide insight into the realities of theory in practice or the abstract in relation to the concrete. Deliberative democratic theory will also be addressed as an ineffective means of addressing antagonism in the political. Thinkers such as Seyla Benhabib and Jürgen Habermas provide a type of theorization that shares some similarities with what has been argued here but is flawed in its particular use of reason and in universality as its basis. A critical existential lens that is informed partly by theorists of the first generation of the Frankfurt School will aid in unpacking questions of essentialism and stagnation.

Purity and Nature: A Feminist Analysis

The constitution of the self and the actions derived from its disposition is at times predictable due to processes of habituation as well as the deep seated contingencies of character. One's actions can appear nearly instinctual and thus as a product of essence or nature. However, the human condition is characterized by a much greater degree of habitual choices and adaptability developed and changed over time. There is some discord in the literature regarding the depth of the contingent aspects of identity. Connolly claims identity to be a mix of natural and constructed

parts leading him to assert that identity is “biocultural”¹⁹⁸ This founds his argument that some components of identity are highly contingent and are extremely resistant to change. For him, some parts of our selves will be more susceptible to change than others. This is likely true; I do not doubt that personal history, societal norms, experience and reflective position would certainly make a person more protective in regards to certain parts of themselves than others. The relation of being to becoming will also produce hesitation in the face of change in relation to aspects of ourselves that are defined by struggle and the affective power from the integral moments that have shaped us. The challenges brought about by change and contingency signals to us that the antagonistic self is defined as one’s being as anxiety. Anxious being errs closely to fear and resentment and is easily transformed as a result of uneasiness when faced with future problems, changes and challenges. This is especially true in terms of one’s identity and the meaning which it personally holds for each person. The ‘goal’ is for anxiety to provide a clearing during such moments of our lives wherein the horizon of possibilities encourages action. The use of essence or nature as a crutch in anxious moments fosters the feeling that change is an impossibility and resentment towards the idea that the ‘truth’ of our claimed identity is merely a deeply seated contingency that can and should be challenged or even changed. Thus, the issue with Connolly’s ‘biocultural’ proposal is not in the idea that some things change more easily than others, but the over reliance on biology as fixed.

A great deal of assumptions about nature and essence are often used to explain or account for outcomes as destined or obvious. When tied with politics, such assumptions have serious consequences. First, in exchanging the possibility of embracing one’s anxiety towards new possibilities or upcoming change for inevitability, myths and stereotypical notions are left

¹⁹⁸ Connolly, *Identity Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, xvii.

unquestioned. Indirect ramifications of the upholding of such myths may cause serious harm to one's being and their ability to act in an authentic and free manner. As such, a situation of perpetual bad faith is maintained in which some people's future possibilities are restricted or assumed outside of their control. Second, direct consequences are drawn from these prevalent assumptions. This is especially true when an assumption based on nature or essence is applied broadly and uncritically to an entire group of persons. Resulting from these inferences are situations in which an entire, assumedly unified group receives or, on the other hand, escapes blame on account of a pre-supposed, essential characteristic. Marginalized groups are thus at a greater risk of facing negative repercussions from biologically based claims regarding their nature and identity.

For example, existential theorist and writer Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* refers to women as the 'inessential other', devoid of meaning or essence and thus in a constant state of imminence, or non-being that enables male transcendence instead of her own.¹⁹⁹ In other words, 'woman' as a concept is filled with meaning appropriate for her position, an assumption made on the basis of her true nature. This is done external to her own being and without regard for the possibility of her actions. The other plays a significant role in constructing the self, in this case, of the woman. The male actor, however, gains freedom and transcendence by way of the female. This is not natural or inevitable, but discursively constructed through the myth of essential nature. "Woman in myth appears as the absolute Other who enables male transcendence" and "[w]ithin myth woman operates as a metaphor that helps make sense of something new and unknown."²⁰⁰ As man makes sense of the 'new and unknown' terrain of his Being-anxiety and

¹⁹⁹ Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex*, trans. HM Parshley, (Vintage Books: New York, 2011), 411.

²⁰⁰ Elizabeth Prügl (2012) "' If Lehman Brothers Had Been Lehman Sisters...' Gender and Myth in the Aftermath of the Financial Crisis." *International Political Sociology* 6(1), 23.

subsequent action, he defines himself through and in opposition to the female, creating a myth of masculine action and feminine docility.

Notions of women and men become naturalized and held, even if temporarily, to be scientifically true. When using a ‘biocultural’ approach to these matters the bio ends up taking precedence over the cultural components of one’s being and identity. This can be seen when biological factors such as when levels of testosterone or oestrogen are turned into excuses or explanations for one’s actions without critically addressing the link between being a biological specimen and being an acting member of society. History and social status, which are largely cultural, are often the basis of biological claims. In the constitution of the self, “myth is a type of speech chosen by history. It does not emerge from the nature of things, but lives and dies in historical context.”²⁰¹ Depending on the historical context, a myth is used to explain something without a natural or known genesis. For example, in order to give men the ability to work in politics, outside of the private sphere, a myth was constructed that presumed a natural basis for male superiority – one of rational thinking and strength over that of irrationality and lack of authority. Thus, “[m]yth transforms history into nature, empties a political situation of reality, and establishes what is deeply contradictory and power-laden as self-evident and blissfully clear.”²⁰² Falsely held notions surrounding certain identities or states of being have the power to depoliticize and de-historicize certain actions and phenomena for a specific intention allowing for the ‘nature’ of men and women to be transformed for differing needs.²⁰³

²⁰¹ Ibid, 23.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ For the purposes of this paper I focus solely on myths surrounding masculine and feminine within the Western canon of political thought, while noting that myth is deployed for several purposes and to naturalize many forms of domination (racial, national, class, ability, sexuality and so forth).

As there is no inherent human essence, each myth, in this instance myths and associated notions about gender, construct a reality only as it is needed to explain something ‘new and unknown’ and with a specific motivation. Linda McDowell discusses the possible biological basis for the ‘masculinist’ behaviour of political and financial actors who partake in more risky decision making characterized by a degree of fearlessness.²⁰⁴ She refers to “Testosterone Capitalism” as having a possible biological basis on the hormonal influence of men and their actions in the market. The research of neuro-economists has shown a link between testosterone and “excessive exuberance or confidence that together account for the masculinist culture that contributed to the huge surges of confidence” which spurred more ‘irrational’ and risk orientated behaviour that characterized the 2008 financial crisis.²⁰⁵ Yet, despite the research McDowell is still rightly hesitant about the essentializing claims regarding men and masculinity. She asks, “Can hormonal and/or brain scan data really predict choices?”²⁰⁶ Using the research cited in McDowell’s article “Capital Culture Revisited: Sex, Testosterone and the City,” one can link the new shifts in the myths associated with the masculine and feminine to a process of naturalization. If it is decided that testosterone proves to be an obstacle for male rationality, a biological or even biocultural explanation is required to assure the dominance of capitalism and specifically patriarchal capitalism which maintains male control of finance.

Testosterone itself does not make one irrational, as aforementioned, it naturalizes a sort of ‘male essence’. Men and women can be rational, irrational and are often both throughout their lives and experiences. Second, if assuming the biological research regarding testosterone to be true, this does not make the interpretations of its findings objective. Thus, if testosterone is a

²⁰⁴ Linda McDowell (2010), “Capital Culture Revisited: Sex, Testosterone and the City”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34(3), 656.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 655.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 656.

hormone guiding one's impulse, it is a discursive construction or part of a myth that impulse must always lead to the greed, domination, need for control and self-interest that can be found in global finance (or elsewhere). It is the culturally embedded notions and essentialisms that make the move from 'men have testosterone' plus 'testosterone increases impulsiveness' to equal 'men are victims of their biology and thus are not accountable for harmful actions to others'.

Unfortunately this more favourable conclusion is not applied to all persons and their associated biologically assumed determinates. The fact that the myth or process of meaning making changes based on who it is applied to and the explanation most convenient to any particular situation makes it clear that even assumptions based on biology or science cannot be taken without question. This becomes especially dangerous when coupled with a fear reaction in the face of the other that drives one towards domination rather than possibility. It is the same testosterone in white male political elites that is found in racialized and marginalized men of a perceived lower social standing, yet in this circumstance they are the dominated rather than dominator. The look of the other as well as cultural or historically held ideals play a major role in the constitution of the self as it happens external to one's own self reflection. In the case of marginalized groups and oppressed groups such as women this process is more clear than for others. Using the example of women and assumptions regarding their nature shows how the self is not only antagonistic in its own project of being and becoming but also via its external relation to others. There are several times in one's lifetime where the control they have over the outward projection of their being is lacking. As such, their being as anxiety may, at times, require a greater drive for action that reasserts their reflective position and being in the world. The look of the other affects all persons, yet at times the influence of this look plays a larger role in perpetuating a situation of bad faith in terms of being.

The example of women as marginalized reinforces the importance of the look and its associated judgement and validation. As one moves toward a being-for-itself, away from essentialized notions of nature, internal as well as external negation is required to produce a change or re-iteration of self into the world. A positional, reflective consciousness, as discussed in Chapter 3, is thus more clearly exemplified in the case of women or other marginalized groups. The look of the other poses a question to each individual for their being and further recognition of that being as an external mechanism. While it is possible for a person to comport themselves in a specific way and to believe their personal truths regarding themselves and their abilities the influence of external forces has an undeniable impact on the maintenance and possibility for such a proposed state of being. Hence, if the woman struggles in relation to the man, and further, the racialized woman struggles in relation to the white woman, it becomes extremely difficult to then argue that one can simply will themselves to flourish, via a process of internal self construction and negation. Positional consciousness requires [inter]action – something that inevitably pushes one from their internal self regarding negotiations to engage in external, culturally and socially defined processes of recognition and validation. Each presentation of self to the other requires that one negates themselves in order to reveal a type of Being-for-ourselves that persists in the face of alternative modes of identification. This is not an act of vanity or appearance which seeks validation through others, but a more authentic recognition of their being as conscious, reflective and free. The process of exterior recognition is thus a crucial component for each person's project of being. Negation as part of one's reflective consciousness makes way for a process of detotalization that enables a type of recognition and being beyond appearance and validation.

Mutual Challenge and Disruption

Situations of unequal and oppressive subject relations make it more difficult to move away from bad faith identity constitution. Therefore any sort of ‘radical freedom’ does not exist foundationally as a presumptive concept. Instead, acts of mutual challenge and disruption are sometimes required to produce a situation in which one’s being as anxiety is revealed to them. Existential anxiety is akin to a tidal wave – it comes up against the shore, changing and shaping the landscape and at times pulls back for long enough for one to see these changes and safely walk along the shoreline and take in the new horizon. Times of increased political action from the demos are ignited when the tide is out, within the moments of clarity where one can see the possibilities in front of them. Anxiety itself never fully dissipates, but comes over us more strongly at some moments than others. The political is located in these moments of clarity, and as outlined by Wolin highlights the temporary and unpredictable nature of political action outside of the mere process of voting. In grasping these integral moments for political action people are engaging in a politics of mutual challenge and disruption which remind us that identity is contingent and ambiguous.²⁰⁷ Challenges taken on at times of political change take place both within the self and between persons. Within the self, a process of de-totalization takes place wherein one is able to reiterate their existing identity or, on the other hand, recreate parts of themselves in relation to their current life choices and situatedness. Both instances require the constitution of self to become open and de-totalized regardless of whether or not a significant change to one’s being takes place. There is no place for notions of wholeness or permanent totalization and completion within this process. Even if change is made (only) discursively such as in the re-claiming of words such as ‘queer’, ‘bitch’ or ‘slut’, the persons accepting this

²⁰⁷ Phillips, “Dealing with Difference: A politics of ideas or a politics of presence”, 143.

rebranding and meaning making must open themselves in such a way that these words enter their consciousness as an acceptable part of their identity. If a deep seated contingency is not purged in the process of meaning making (as related to certain aspects of one's self) a dislodging or disruption is still necessary in their definition.

Wolin provides several examples of disruption within the political which still hold relevance and significance today. As aforementioned, he discusses rising 'black resentment' and 'changing cultural and sexual mores' as indicators of disruption in the location of power.²⁰⁸ Such issues have been rejuvenated and more significantly entered into public consciousness, especially since considering the rise of right wing populism and movements around the Western world. LGBTQ rights, specifically for people who are transgender have become a significant part of mainstream culture both politically in terms of civil rights struggles and pop culture contributions. Groups like Black Lives Matter have taken up issues of racial injustice in their fight against police brutality and striving for diverse and inclusive black representation. Further, the huge support for women's rights and a renewed interest in feminism give additional examples of real situations of disruption within the political. While politics remains a more fixed, institutional location of power with the backing of police and military force, it is this use of force and constant presence that has created a mutual challenge of identity constitution and collective action. The momentary showings of democratic power by traditionally oppressed groups has risen in response to a crisis of dislodging at the most basic level of their being.

Again, issues of bad faith and (in)authenticity influence each of the above mentioned instances of action within the realm of the political. While there are numerous examples of renewed vigour in political action, the urge to totalize or broadly categorize each grouping is

²⁰⁸ Sheldon Wolin, "People's Two Bodies", *Democracy* 1,1 (1981): 20.

highly problematic. Disruption within the totalizing process of one's being reminds us of the contingent condition of our identities and lets us "see our identities as ambiguous and contestable and contested."²⁰⁹ When mediating difference the presence of the other, whether from within or outside of a specified group, provides a challenge to previously held certainties through, "the recognition of ambiguities within one's self as well as one's differences with others."²¹⁰ In such cases there is no transcending of difference but the persistent contingencies of identity setting the stage of antagonism from both within and without. These mutual challenges of our interpersonal relations are formative in the constitution of the self and any of their future actions and thus, are also relational from the moment we project ourselves outwardly. Yet, false essentialisms halt this process by projecting an image of consolidated truths already formed and closed off to the challenges of relation and reflective disruptions to identity.

As each individual is themselves inwardly antagonistic through their internal mediations of being and identity, issues of perceived unity and essentialism can be located well outside of the scope of intergroup relations. Honing in on the self and the ways in which it is constituted uncovers and aides in addressing both intragroup and intergroup pressures towards wholeness and totalization. In most cases, theories of antagonism are more concerned with intergroup or external influences on existing groups in society. The look of the other and external influence, as discussed earlier in this work, is integral to becoming as well as one's being, this applies to all others, whether they share a commonality with each other or not. Moreover, issues within group antagonisms are often framed using an external lens, as is the case for example, in arguments surrounding the potentiality of oppressive religious or cultural practises against their own members. Rhetoric concerning women's rights are often lauded against Muslim communities for

²⁰⁹ Phillips, "Dealing with Difference: A politics of ideas or a politics of presence", 144.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

the external maintenance of their status of distant and menacing other. While this type of rhetoric fosters intergroup antagonism it also works to seed in-group tension with an external genus. Though these distinctions shed light on a highly complex and problematic shaping of the other from the outside deserving of our attention, they are not exactly representative of the intra-group antagonisms aimed at here.

Instead, false essentialisms within specific groups perpetuate notions of truth or nature in relation to being that sets up a pre-supposed and stereotypical blueprint of how one ought to be and in doing so triggers an arbitrary ending to one's self constitution and further identifications. The horizon of one's possibilities is thus less of an open passage and more a locked door. This does not mean that we should eliminate or expel culture and tradition from all aspects of life but that it should be recognized for what it is; an important and formative part of our history, our life's connections and our situatedness and *not* an essential part of our being. Further, in relation to the rigidity of cultural values, I agree with Sartre's claim in *Existentialism is a Humanism* when he argues "I would say that I am also acting in bad faith if I declare that I am bound to uphold certain values, because it is a contradiction to embrace these values while at the same time affirming that I am bound by them."²¹¹ Group unity and cultural purity, even within subgroups, can be formed around a totalized notion of what it means to be part of that group which disguises differences even those who share a similar history or set of values. Any group is made up of individuals and despite what members may share, there will always be difference between them in some shape or form. This is easiest to see when looking at the multiple identities held by one person, especially in instances where one aspect of a person's identity clashes with the shared values of another group in which they are a member. Within the being of

²¹¹Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, trans. Carol Macomber (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 48.

the self alone, as in one individual, the generation of group based essentialisms creates fracture and discord of consciousness. Internal discord of identity erects a further blockage or unnecessary stopping point for one's project of being wherein an internal conflict is created that falsely dictates that 'If I am being as 'A', I may not also be as 'B' as they are incompatible' or alternatively 'the purity of my being as 'A' is challenged by my being as 'B' therefore I must close off the possibility of my being as 'B'. When it comes to the look of the other and its influence on one's process of becoming the boundaries of in or out group relations fades. The idea that membership of one group protects one from an externally generated constitution of self and self identification is a farce as it offers the same propensity for closure as with those from outside the group.

Mediations

Connolly warns of the internally generated problems concerning purity and identity calling it the "second problem of evil" as the "proclivity to marginalize or demonize difference to sanctify the identity you confess."²¹² His description points to the hegemonic orientation of deep seated identity constructed and maintained through an ethos of purity. The result is an identity and self constitution defined through securing of oneself in opposition to the other in a non-reciprocal and unreflective way. This explanation of identity and difference from Connolly accounts for the above stated formulas wherein the being of 'A' is defined and upheld in relation to being as 'B'. However, it does not account for the possibility that one's being as 'A' is maintained by comparison to another who shares a similar being as 'A', or more likely that one's being as 'A' is maintained by the judgement from another who shares a similar being as 'A'. In these cases the issue is not one of identity and difference but one of identity and sameness. The social logic

²¹² Connolly, *Identity Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, xv.

that constructs the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy for difference also plays out where interrelations are founded on sameness. The look of the other, the look which challenges our being and reflective position, applies also to those who are situated as sharing a more similar self identification. ‘The other,’ then, is not always unknown and distinct from one’s own position and can pose a significant challenge to one’s being in and for themselves as free and open to de-totalization. Failing to recognize the impact of intra-group sameness as the product of judgement and evaluation allows for arguments of political agonism and agonistic respect to protect pluralism in the public sphere while simultaneously isolating the identity group itself from the same critique privately. Instead, the within-group dynamic between individuals is sheltered from the expectation of agonistic relations that is expected between groups. Intergroup relations are mediated by democratic negotiations of identity and difference, while intra-group relations continue the continental practice of willing a collective universal morality for themselves assuring the maintenance of their internal purity.

While the political landscape of the West is characterized by difference, disruption and fluidity more compatible with the anti-essential theorization proposed here, the in-group relations of certain identity groups continue to operate within the modern, continental model of universality. Unity and universality remain as key notions when speaking of the existence and being of identity groups. Especially considering the model of universality found in Kant, and to some degree Rousseau²¹³, one can see the difference in expectation in relations of ‘sameness’ or ‘difference’. Arguments for universality are more commonly accepted as legitimate within specific groups than in society at large, which expects difference and hopes for unity. Liberal society did not come to be exactly as Kant envisioned, instead we are expected to will a sort of

²¹³ See Chapter 2

universal liberal morality while simultaneously accepting any contradictory arguments launched under that umbrella in such a way that seemingly equalizes all wills while separating them by slight difference – anti-liberal elements of society still exist on the fringes and occasionally make their way into discourse in the form of demands or incidents of unrest. The atomistic individual, however, is not constructed based on morality, but on judgement in both inter- and intra-group settings. Universality and theories of universal morality are “invested in examining the moral relationship of individuals to themselves. And, from such a beginning, there is no chance of going on to theorize how it is that connections between human beings are forged.”²¹⁴ Under this configuration there is no need to separate sameness and difference or consider the look of the other (regardless of how ‘othered’ they are) in the role of self constitution. As such, the tendency to revert back to ideals of universality showcases the greater need to move past closed models when looking at individuals and how their notion of self is related to all others.

The crucial role of the look of the other in one’s process of becoming and being constructs the individual through a form of judgement that may, in some instances, be moralizing but is not built upon a universal notion of morality. In Kant, we find the assumption that individuals are capable of internalizing the morality underlying the laws of their state of residence or universal laws of morality. Missing from this progression is the role of the other through their judgement and expectation which works as a moving force in one’s actions and choices. The constitution of the self is said to take place in the private sphere and then is brought into the public sphere in a way that has the potentiality to change others or the laws. The link between judgement and its effect on the other missing in Kant makes it inconceivable that individuals are constituted in an inwardly antagonistic manner prior to their confrontation with

²¹⁴ David L Marshall, (2010) “The Origin and character of Hannah Arendt’s Theory of Judgement”. *Political Theory* (38):3, 368.

another in the public sphere, leaving us attempting to deal with public antagonism without a clear understanding of those who are involved. The actor in the political is dependent on the judgement of the one who witnesses and places expectation on them. “He is not autonomous (in Kant’s language); he does not conduct himself according to an innate voice of reason but in accordance with what spectators would expect of him.”²¹⁵ This will alter one’s actions in an obvious sense, where one attempts to act in a manner consistent with what has previously been deemed appropriate – or on the other hand, deliberately try to subvert and exceed it. Beyond this more typical use of judgement, it also factors into the ways in which an individual identifies themselves and what this means to their process of becoming and being. The judgement and expectation one receives from others will differ depending on the particularity of each [inter]action and its location.

Universal maxims, as in the case of morality, assume that one’s self projection derives from a place where a person moulds themselves so that they are “fit to be seen”²¹⁶ which implies a drive towards totalization. To be fit to be seen is to infer a specificity or prototypical requisite for being in front of the other which completely circumvents the more basic motivation – to be seen. In order for us to consider who is fit for something there is an act of judging wherein the actor receives recognition from the other, or the spectator; a judgement originating from the particularity of the moment each participant finds themselves in. Arendt’s elaboration on Kant’s conception of judgement is a crucial hinge in connecting the political and theoretical groundwork that helps us understand the current state of the Western world with the existentiality of those who live within it. “[T]he actor is dependent on the opinion of the spectator”²¹⁷, when they enter

²¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 55.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 49.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 55.

into the realm of the political²¹⁸ because the look of the other is formative in one's process of becoming and therefore in their taking part in any potential political action. The internalization of the opinion and judgement of the other fosters the development of an antagonistic self only furthered by the antagonism between the actor (self) and spectator (other) in the realization that "the spectator has precedence".²¹⁹ For Kant, the importance of the spectator comes from the retrospection and longevity of their opinion, however what is most influential is the role of the spectator in the development of others in terms of ontic being in terms of interrelations. Their role is reciprocal; every spectator is both spectator and spectacle for the other through a fluid process of totalization and eventual de-totalization.

In Arendt's essay, "What is Existential Philosophy?" she outlines the ways in which Kant destroyed the ancient concept of being in his argument for the autonomy of man and the harmony between man and the universal laws that bind him to nature.²²⁰ The ancient concept of unity outlined in Chapter 1 that ties together man with thought and reflects the state is disrupted by the modern conception of man wherein his autonomy is asserted in the harmony or unity of law and the individual will. Thus, the modern focus on the individual is entirely different than the conceptualized and significance of the individual in the context of this work. Where there is an a-priori assumption regarding the unity in the individual or a harmony in their ontological being perpetuated by nature, the connection between individuals is non-consequential to their process of becoming. Group membership or situations of isolation would have little or no impact on one's self constitution or understanding. Sameness and difference are hence mediated by the same process of appealing to the universal doctrines that underlie the foundation of their state or

²¹⁸ This would roughly refer to the public realm in Kant.

²¹⁹ Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 65

²²⁰ Hannah Arendt, "What is Existential Philosophy," in *Essays in Understanding*, ed. Jerome Kohn, (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), 170.

by some moralizing (categorical) imperative which is self imposed. If this was the case, arguments regarding one's situatedness or reflective position toward their internal and external negations are relegated to pure philosophizing without practise. In a time when identity is so important not just in terms of a person's understanding of themselves but also their relation to the state via identity based rights, it is not possible to assert that the private act of willing can accurately reflect the realities of being in the world with others. The look of the other and its role in judgement and recognition is integral to understanding the process of being as well as how becoming leads us to the constitution of an antagonistic self.

Further, the focus on difference between groups works to solidify ideas of purity from within which negates the notion of fluidity assumed to exist between individuals with differing identities. The emphasis placed here on intra-group relations does not neglect the importance of difference but serves to highlight a major issue in the ways in which difference is theorized. Especially in theories of agonism, which assume a politics of mutual respect and thus the consistent possibility of a framing of adversarial relations over one of enmity. The persistent claim that agonistic politics is a corrective to some of the more problematic aspects of liberalism makes it inseparable from liberal discourses surrounding tolerance, consensus and deliberation and in the end, neutralization. The argument that it is to "urgent to restore the agonistic dynamics of a constitutive of a vibrant democracy"²²¹ rather than antagonistic political relations is derived from fear of conflict and disorder without consideration of the self as antagonistic in its condition and that conflict and disorder should be considered a key aspect to one's process of becoming. Instead, the conflict is most often seen as constructive for its role in the generation of new ideas for deliberation and in the political legitimization of difference within the demos.

²²¹ Chantal Mouffe, *For a Left Populism* (London:Verso, 2018), 56.

For some deliberative democrats or agonistic theorists conflict plays a significant and necessary role in the political and works to legitimize democracy through discourse, iteration and neutralization. The definition of the state relies on its having a “constitution [as] a site for communicative engagement and contest.”²²² The role of contestation in the public, democratic sphere for theorists such as Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib amongst others is to neutralize conflict and promote unity while legitimizing difference in pluralistic society. Further, communicative action in the public sphere is meant to expose unequal power distribution by challenging it within public discourse.²²³ It is through these public mediations that legitimacy in the political is derived, solely from its ability to be publically challenged and re-iterated. Difference in this context serves only the interest of politics and the prospect of changes to its permanency. I will outline briefly, some of the key deliberative arguments such as iteration and public communication in order to provide clarity as to the fundamental differences in their aims and arguments in opposition to what has been argued throughout regarding antagonism and the political.

For Benhabib, people must embrace the philosophy that universal norms can be carried out beyond the confines of their personal situateness. Universal norms are maintained by discourse ethics meant to ensure their malleability in relation to changing situations spanning time and space. They are not meant as a totalization of what is considered right but a philosophical project of mediations between law and morality.²²⁴ For example her concept of democratic iterations are a process of “linguistic, legal, cultural and political repetitions-in-transformation.”²²⁵ When the original meaning of something no longer makes sense it is

²²² Iris Marion Young, *Democracy and Inclusion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 168.

²²³ Marion Young, *Democracy and Inclusion*, 174.

²²⁴ Seyla Benhabib, *Another Cosmopolitanism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 21.

²²⁵ Ibid, 48.

reinterpreted to mean something new. Thus, the origin of meaning may be gone but the idea itself is preserved as it continues to be redefined. These iterations are meant to take place in the public sphere between autonomous actors either within political institutions or between differing identity groups and associations within a given society. During public arguments, deliberations, debates and exchanges people are able to contest certain ideas which in turn repositions and redefines them. “They not only change established understandings but also transform what passes as the valid or established view of an authoritative precedent.”²²⁶ In other words, democratic iterations have the ability to change and influence not only public opinion, but also law.

Habermas also defines the public as a space of transformation. He argues that the public space, though not rational in itself, is made up of rational actors who, through public deliberation, progress towards the realization of their political duties. For Habermas, a person becomes an autonomous actor through their participation in public discourse. This counters the Kantian conception of the rational actor which is based on the assumption that individuals enter the space as autonomous actors who have previously formed ideas that they then publicize. Habermas elaborates on the concept of the public by making it a place where moral ideas and identities are shaped through discourse.²²⁷ In order for one to self-actualize and create meaningful ideas, beliefs and morals they must make a commitment to the notion that having a public identity is what emancipates them and makes them, and others autonomous. Understanding the public sphere in this way shifts the individual’s role from a solitary actor to a member of a community of equal actors.

²²⁶ Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 180.

²²⁷ Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 59.

Each of the above theories of deliberation allow for a certain amount of fluidity within the political and the individual is able to re-iterate or engage in a process of becoming upon entry into the public sphere. However, several key assumptions make their claims regarding the flexibility of an individual's self-constitution become highly problematic. First, there is a vast over reliance on the capabilities of rationality as the foundation of change towards specific moral or legal goals. The assumption(s) that rational actors enter into the public sphere and produce a now rationally superior blend of their pre-conceived notions towards certain political issues is highly unlikely in cases of extreme difference. Further conflict would not be eliminated through legitimating already rational persons as political – it simply pushes the irrational persons to the margins and creates an even greater divide between those who exists in a relationship of extreme difference. Second, while iteration seems similar to de-totalization it is different in that there is no acknowledgment of necessary processes of negation as well as states of nothingness wherein we recognize ourselves as non-being.²²⁸

The commitment that a deliberative democrat makes to the public sphere is one of both giving and taking but without a formulation of positional consciousness. First, a speaker agrees that what they say is truthful and mindful in their words and that they can defend their statements. It is then the responsibility of the listener to accept such statements, or oppose them using their own, truthful and mindful argument.²²⁹ This entails active participation in public discourse and assumes that upon entering a public space one has already overcome any feelings of fear or resentment that may result in a hostile and conflictual relations. A public space made up of committed public actors is the ideal situation as described by Habermas. Without this sense of obligation to others and active involvement in the betterment of one's community he claims

²²⁸ As discussed in Chapter 3

²²⁹ Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, 74.

there is no public sphere.²³⁰ Instead there are only private opinions that can never be brought closer to a universally held idea as they can never gain genuine validity. If we accept this claim we are left with bad faith permanence and the closing off of possibility for momentary acts of democratic power in the political. Habermas' approach of universal pragmatics defines private contemplation as a situation where an individual is never made to defend or justify their views; there are no rules regulating one's private thoughts. However, public speech is dependent on a set of rules or norms, whether this be constitutional limitations such as those on hate speech or social norms such as maintaining a certain degree of political correctness.²³¹ Once a thought is presented in public the speakers are implicitly making themselves open to have to defend it. The private/public dichotomy laid out here is a mainstay of deliberative democratic politics that assumes the meaning behind one's identity or their beliefs are formed a priori as well as in private and then presented as whole and unified in public. While there is space for re-conceptualization within the public sphere of deliberation the reflective position of the individual is buried in the constant movement between supposed spheres. In addition, Habermas calls this act of speech and judgement a "universal validity claim,"²³² meaning that in every statement there is a chance to gain validity in meaning; however this meaning aims towards a universal determinate goal. The creation and maintaining of the public sphere as Habermas outlines means to bring together the solitary, private individual and the needs of the society as a whole; two modes of being (solitary or whole) that fail to bring about authentic freedom and challenge bad faith.

²³⁰ Ibid, 62.

²³¹ Here Habermas also refers to the linguistic competence that is a part of each speech act. This is important to highlight as language skills do not refer only to knowing a language or how to speak but how to *communicate* with others which is key to understanding.

²³² Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, 60.

Any discussion of the persons involved and their situatedness in the world is tarnished by the neglect of the constitution of self and the focus instead on an assumption that unified selves come together to legitimate their collective voices against the power of the state. First, the assumption that the public sphere is a place for conflict and difference completely disregards the issue of same-ness that often times will be defined by just as much conflict as in the mediation of diversity. The belief that the problem with pluralism is difference in opposition to sameness is a mistake that is inevitable without a consideration of the antagonism within each individual. Also, the supposition that political actors come forward and take part in the political as totalized beings generalizes the position from which each person and further, the group they may identify with, may understand the meaning of their engagement and the degree to which they are willing to engage in conflict or compromise. In the deliberative context, a fully formed individual comes forward to present their wants and from this juncture works with others towards consensus. In many cases a demand will not align exactly with an identity yet within the structures of a liberal society the demand and the identity are expected to be congruent with one another. Therefore, under this flawed model the political should work in this way: I have consolidated my being as identity A and therefore I reflect the demands of identity A; I see the other, consolidated as identity B and their demands as identity B; we now re-iterate our demands by finding the place in which they both will the same moral precept and declare this as legitimate democratic activity in so far as our drive toward consensus is overlapping. Last, the deliberative sphere, as theorized in this way is not conducive to the maintenance of antagonism. The goal of deliberative engagement is the validation of voices through the simultaneous legitimation of democratic politics to the end of, if not consensus, then agonistic relations based on mutual respect and

dignity for the other without seriously addressing the issue of bad faith purity and naturalization which brought them to this point.

Anxiety and Alienation

Antagonism is an integral part to the process of one's becoming and thus constitutive to one's being. The presence of antagonistic parts within the self is not to be understood as one's nature but an important part in one's character and disposition. It is not a constant pressure which dictates actions but is a strong driving force and presence in one's consciousness, especially in new and challenging political situations. As the political is characterized by its temporal state, as a flare up of action and increased social and political consciousness, so too are the antagonistic aspects of our being. In the current climate of the Western world, where identity and its various meanings are more politicized than ever, the role of antagonism as a part of ourselves has become more clear. A better understanding of the formation of consciousness through self identification in its relation to existentiality shows the ways in which our connections to others are often political. The look of the other and its role in one's process of becoming shows us that we are not defined solely in distinction to those who are othered but all others – meaning anyone who is not you, regardless of how they identify. Judgement and recognition comes from those both different and more similar to ourselves. The notion of care as brought forward by Heidegger and elaborated on through Arendt can be applied to both circumstances.

In a situation where individuals are engaged in a 'more similar' interpersonal relationship the way in which care is used to reveal us to ourselves plays out differently than instances wherein individuals must mediate and comport themselves to one who is 'more different'. Being-anxiety is likely to rise and be quelled within us more clearly when dealing with an individual who is familiar. The possibility of a direct and conflictual fear reaction is more likely between

those who are (more) othered than others in general. This is inherent in the concept of anxiety as an ontological state because the feeling of anxiety exists as a possibility and not a certainty in facilitating action and future possibilities. In the Heideggerian sense, anxiety is closely related to care because it is generated within us as we connect with others. Yet the revealing of self tied to one's anxiety is burdened by the manifestation of fear as a persistent outcome. Arendt recognizes this possibility with a more pessimistic view and with a more distinct orientation towards the self and self-reflectiveness. She argues that care "only appears to be directed at whatever it happens to be occupied with at the moment" and "actually does everything in the mode of for-the-sake of."²³³ Therefore, she points out that while care and any associated actions coming from this position may hinge on one's relations with others, it is not generated initially as a state of 'caring-for' but as a phenomenal state of being. Following from this, it seems a logical next step that one's deep seated (identity based) contingencies become entangled with a self referential notion of care. Such contingencies come intricately connected to historical, social and political biases held within each person and, depending on the particularity of one's self identification may incite a fear response over one mediated by being as anxiety. For her, the potentiality for transcendence via anxiety is nonexistent and instead anxiety is a symptom of one's survival in the world – a feeling of homelessness and alienation. She argues, "Being-in (In-Sein) enters into the existentiell mode of not-being-at-home. This is alienation."²³⁴

Arendt's hesitant existentialism adds an important contribution to the potential challenges for understanding anxiety as an ontological state that encourages progress. While it seems difficult to accept that Being-anxiety is tied closely to fear and its associated negative affective

²³³ Hannah Arendt, "What is Existential Philosophy," in *Essays in Understanding*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books:1994), 111.

²³⁴ Ibid.

influences, alienation poses another difficulty for the individual. There are two important components to her theorization that must be considered when discussing the propensity toward alienation when in a state of existential anxiety. On its surface, it seems to be another blockage on the road to a de-totalized and an authentic form of freedom of being. The alienation she describes in her essay is conceptualized outside of the more commonly cited Marxist framework which asserts that alienation is a barrier that must be overcome in order to progress to the realization of freedom or the fulfillment of one's species-being. Here, alienation is a form of being alone in the world – that one's being thrown into the world (in Heideggerian terms) often leaves us with a feeling of homelessness, loneliness and isolation. This is a persistent issue within the canon of political theory and is not made anew in the realm of political existentialism. As early as within the ancient Greeks, isolation, contemplation and action have been placed at the centre of issues regarding political responsibility. That the philosopher king must be compelled to rule for Plato, or that in Kant's cosmopolitanism the citizen of the world is characterized by loneliness – this serves to show that the challenge of freedom is an alienating endeavour.²³⁵ Considering the way in which one's consciousness is developed, first in the self and then projected outward and re-internalized through a process of de-totalization, a certain degree of alienation would be necessary in order for an individual to engage in reflective contemplation. As such, the argument for Being-anxiety makes use of alienation as a site of contemplation; it exists as its own (though troubling) reflective position. Alienation and isolation, to be clear, are not the same concept and cannot be interchanged with ease. Yet, because anxiety is an uncomfortable state of being that is temporal and fluid in its changing intensity and genus it would be more akin to a state of alienation than simple isolation. It also

²³⁵ The ancients as well as Immanuel Kant are used here as they appear previously in this text and, in addition, are constant fixtures in the works of Hannah Arendt in general.

impels one to action and imposes a struggle to choose, even if only momentarily, that alienates us from others materially and ontologically in a way that exceeds isolation. Thus, the alienating space forges for us through our being as anxiety a location beyond isolation. It is characterized more by a feeling of duress wherein our being is alien to us in that it no longer fits into the same blueprint as it may have at a previous juncture during our project of being.

Alienation's role in one's project of being draws attention to the presence of an epistemological violence comparable to that found in antagonism. The self is reflected into the realm of politics, not as a precise mirror image²³⁶ but through its temporal and sporadic ignitions over the course of time. There is no outline to either how and when these flare ups occur or, what they will look like once enacted within the political. What will be reflected is the seed of antagonism present in both the individual and the configuration of the state from which they are formed and informed. The state of alienation as described by Arendt which uncovers our being as anxiety and mediates our antagonistic (individual) parts manifests a temporal violence conducive to the definition of the political used throughout this work – a space for political change and contestation that is impermanent and subject to change. Its momentary condition is generated via alienation, motivated by antagonism and ignited through an ephemeral reaction to the violence associated to this challenging process. Here, the temporary nature of the political as found in Wolin coincides with the isolation and anxiety needed to act within these momentary flare ups of increases political action. Violence serves an instrumental purpose as it follows the rationality of meeting specific ends yet, “since when we act we can never know with any certainty the eventual consequences of what we are doing, violence can remain rational only if it

²³⁶ As discussed in chapters 1 & 2 of this work.

pursues short term goals.”²³⁷ Violence and its presence within the state of alienation helps clearly explain why the path to existential freedom and authenticity for being is such a difficult and troubling process. It is not simply that making choices in the face of something new and unknown or challenging one’s deeply seated contingencies pose a challenge to us, but that there is a violence underscoring these actions and the process they are a part of. The use of violence in this context is not an act of physical or mental harm, it is a concept with a meaning more personal and as a methodological way of problematizing one’s existentiell position. Arendt’s discussion of violence as temporary is made in reference to physical acts but epistemological violence may also be defined as temporary. Her discussion of the actor and the spectator (which is now tied to alienation here) is contingent on the act of witnessing. The location of epistemological violence is thus also witnessed and judged by the spectator who recognizes one’s being as challenged. The spectator judges and creates a situation of reciprocity and interdependency that provokes the other out of their state of violence and alienation. This does not free the concept from any possible association with physical/structural power or unequal power relations which contribute to violence in other ways. However as an epistemology, I categorize the site of change for the existential self to impose a violence in consciousness which is felt through anxiety and perpetuates a sense of alienation while active. Arendt’s claim that anxiety is alienation initially poses a problem for the theory of the self as antagonistic and characterized by anxiety, yet this problem merely exposes the epistemological struggle at the core of our being. Within the arena of politics temporal violence and internally generated antagonism is projected outside of ourselves and establishes the political without a blueprint but with a fluidity wherein the only assumptions are that some degree of conflict is inevitable and a hope that this conflict culminates in sporadic and temporary collective actions as needed for the particularity of diverse

²³⁷ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1970), 79.

situations. Violence or alienation are not constant, or at least not constant in their manifestation and consequence; what is constant are the mediations that take place within the self in relation to others as a result of the need to re-assess a de-totalized being. Alienation and anxiety arise in us as a short term state and both have the capacity to utilize epistemological violence as an instrument in finding a way out.

Calls to neutralize dispositions that are incompatible or unconventional for our current political structures in the West, and the drive to defend against nihilism and the supposed life and death struggle associated with theories of antagonism, interrupt the transitory state of anxiety within the self. In both situations, a latent and underlying conception of truth or objectivity drives us toward, if not consensus, then artificial harmony. It is accepted that there exists difference and that we must constructively mediate this within the political but under the assumption that these differences come head to head as the fully formed, totalized identity of whole persons. The notion that one should live their truth and learn to respect others for theirs crystallizes a false objectivity in being that causes more problems than it fixes. The idea that I am truthful about who I am and accept you for doing the same only works as a peaceful solution in situations that were already peaceful or, at least, passive. Where there is a conflict or an instance wherein one person's understanding of themselves challenges the other, the mediation required begins a process of one being thrown into the world in such a way that de-totalizes both and demands a reformulation of who we are and what this means. If we recall our example of women in terms of antagonistic mediation it is clear to see that generalized truth claims are highly problematic and, in some cases instigate a mode of violence beyond what is tolerable for the individual under scrutiny. A critical existential perspective can be used to identify and question the location and use of such truth claims or objectivity.

Moving Toward a *Critical* Existentialism

Bad faith derived from phony essentialisms is rooted in the concept of truth and its bearing on how we understand ourselves. The concept of truth as produced in other self/state constitution models is radically changed when considered through an existential lens and is pushed further with the critical perspective of theory. It is important, in order to provide a critical, immanent critique that a *critical* existential framework is utilized. Max Horkheimer offers a critical theory which depends on a conception of truth without becoming dogmatic or relativist.²³⁸ His intent was for a philosophy which makes use of dialectical thinking in a non-formulaic way as a response to the philosophical mishandling of truth claims and as such proposes a radical change in what he calls the social totality. However, in proposing a radical change in thinking, he does not aim toward a concrete solution or end. “Each [philosophical] school is equally confident of its own thesis and hostile to the method of negation inseparably bound up with any philosophical theory that does not arbitrarily stop thinking at some point in its course.”²³⁹ The dialectic maintains the complications present within our world and minds and asks that we put existing political, social and historical concepts in relation to each other instead of looking to combine or resolve them. In doing so, we maintain the aspects of antagonism which we face within the world and deal with them without trying to create a false conciliation based on what people and their actions should aim toward. In other words, nothing in reality is as easy or simplified as we make it in our false, totalizing abstractions.

Fear of the ambiguous, antagonistic condition of society has become a driving force toward the over reliance of essentialist bases for unity as a resolution for potential or current

²³⁸ I will be using Horkheimer’s essay ‘On the Problem of Truth’ as well as his book *Eclipse of Reason*

²³⁹ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 129.

conflicts. Myth once served a place to explain and control what we cannot understand. Identity and allegiance now serves this function in such a way that this ‘taking control’ becomes a clear form of domination. The assumption that our nature and its unifying urge reveals the truth about the world through those persons who have proven to be exemplars of their group membership creates a false blueprint of being that is untenable. Therefore all differences and challenges are able to fall under the pre-determined meta-category of what is true. This is maintained through the erasure and de-legitimizing of any alternative conceptualizations of what constitutes truth. The process has thus – “veiled the basic conflicts in society behind the harmony of its conceptual constructions, and in all its forms furthered the lie that elevates the existing to the rank of God.”²⁴⁰ Further, Horkheimer makes specific reference to the pragmatist theories which adhere to a subjective conception of truth which “places the pragmatic concept of truth in the centre of its system[...] According to this view, the truth of theories is decided by what one accomplishes with them.”²⁴¹ In this view, truth is only valued in regards to how useful it is to an individual or a certain group of individuals. To understand truth using notions of utility, or as a means toward a specific and determined end defines the meaning of one’s actions before they have taken them. Truth is neither absolute and unified or relative and utility based, but revealed to us in our actions when done in good faith. Again, this applies to both intra- and intergroup relations. If something is held as natural or essential it serves the purpose of hiding the contingencies and ambiguities that may actually form one’s identity or being. A lack of critical, anti-essentialism allows for the perpetuation of a competitive, antagonistic structure which also aims at control and domination rather than possibility and change. “In pragmatism there lies embedded the belief in the existence

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 120.

²⁴¹ Horkheimer, “On the Problem of Truth”, 424.

and advantages of free competition.”²⁴² If one can establish what is useful (the construction of a new, useful myth or identification) to be true, it is possible for them to claim a position of power.

When one’s actions are based upon pre-conceived notions of who and how they are supposed to be, any meaning attributed to our actions is evaluated based on how useful it is in achieving certain ends. In identifying misconceptions and mistaken stopping points in differing philosophical schools it is now evident that “[t]here is no eternal riddle of the world, no world secret the penetration of which once and for all would be the mission of thought.”²⁴³ The scandal of philosophy reveals itself as a farce so long as the aim is harmonizing and resolving, or compulsively repeating the same mythic conceptions of domination only under a new guise. Instead, we should look to free dialectical thought from the narrow notions of over-general and/or skeptical philosophy. In contrast to these systems, there is no blueprint or formula in Horkheimer’s critical dialectical thought. He asserts that “[w]hen the dialectic is freed from its connection with exaggerated, isolated thought [...] the theory defined by it loses the metaphysical character of final validity.”²⁴⁴ Shedding this finitude does not disassociate the dialectic from truth but opens up further possibilities for our intellect. The knowledge we gain from mediating our sensual experience, history, and our day to day conflicts are in themselves a manifestation of truth.²⁴⁵ By way of our mediations of concepts and their content it is possible to leave open and free the dialectic for a theorization which supplies a more radical challenge to the social totality. Rather than an aim toward synthesis or consensus of our concepts, concepts must be placed into, as well as out of relation with each other. It is important to inquire into the content of concepts themselves. This serves as a key to an open ended theory. The constitution of

²⁴²Ibid, 425.

²⁴³ Ibid, 421.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 421.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

a self without the formal meta-categories of truth which maintain domination allow us to situate ourselves in relation to the theoretical structures of a renewed situation. “Characteristics of dialectical reason correspond to the form of a complicated reality, constantly changing in all its details.”²⁴⁶ Change comes for each individual as a result of each of their actions and interactions by way of an actual change in the understanding of oneself or in the re-affirmation or formulation of a previously held self identification. One is the author of this change as a result of their choices and related actions – one’s circumstances do not change and simply become registered within their consciousness. Thus, whether a choice is made for change or recognition of circumstantial change within one’s life occurs, the process of reflection upon such changes affects self identification. The critical theoretical basis provided in the early works of Horkheimer will provide the hinge required for conceptualizing a critical existential project in the upcoming chapter. This critical approach aids in re-situating our key themes of being and antagonism both within the self and the state constitution models.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 433.

Chapter 5: *The Antagonistic Constitution*

“...absurdity is of the essence of things as well as of man. Anything that exists is absurd simply because it exists. The salient difference between the things of the world and the human being is that things are unequivocally identical with themselves, whereas man – because he sees and knows what he sees, believes and knows he believes – bears within his consciousness a negation which makes it impossible for him to ever become one with himself.”

Arendt, “French Existentialism”, 192.

Introduction

The politics and definition of being advocated throughout this work is characterized by difficulty and poses many challenges to the individual at their core. However, this is not a theory of what ought to be as a distant and ideal blueprint – the ways in which human consciousness works is inherently antagonistic and therefore we must try to understand what this means. It shines a light on why, perhaps, the world of politics and the actions of people in the political are so often marked by conflict. It is possible to augment ourselves, as we are adaptable and fluid beings and our natures cannot be so clearly defined as forming in only one, predictable or probable manner. An agonistic politics or a political ideology that aims toward a certain end is always possible to some degree, but if we wish to make such claims it is important to understand why so often even

the best made theories do not work in practise. One prototype made to define all political actions and demands is an impossibility. It is this reason that certain political ideologies have been more prominent in formal political designations than others; they maintain structures and forums for difference and rely on staples like majority rule as a means of finding equity in a world where consensus is not a reality. I attempt to stay away from ideological answers for this reason.

Liberalism, for example, more or less accepts fluidity and difference within a wide enough limit to umbrella a broad spectrum of persons and their related identities and beliefs and simultaneously takes in and neutralizes ideations from outside of this space in a way that other ideologies often fail to do. Even theorizations that specifically criticize liberal ideology often end in a political project that presents itself as liberalism under a different name. Therefore, theories such as those of Mouffe, Connolly and Phillips are useful in proposing a base for a critical existential theory of the self and the state as well as in identifying very strong critiques of current structures, but fall short in that their ideological foundation and focus mares their overall conceptualizations. Further, Connolly's and Mouffe's argument for agonism will be addressed as an insufficient substitute for antagonism. Over-reliance on agonism as a counter to liberal theory and the politics it purports weakens the argument that the political could make a substantial change by switching from an antagonistic approach to a diluted agonistic one. Instead, the disposition of antagonistic selves and the influence of resentment and one's personal (exitentiell) experience founds a theory constructed to better reflect the reality of our form of life and its diverse and contingent condition. While existentialism has faced criticism for not providing a distinctly political theorization, it is exactly this flaw that makes its approach so useful here. I do not call for a future existential political order but instead offer an explanation of the phenomenon

of self constitution as a contrast to that which occurs in politics as an exercise in identifying conflict and antagonism and future potentiality.

Max Horkheimer's critical approach to truth and objectivity enables us to conceptualize a constitution model that is built without a specific blueprint and separated from pre-determined, ideological notions which prescribe an end goal outside of the scope of minimizing suffering and arbitrary barriers to our being. This chapter starts by continuing Horkheimer's train of thought in terms of truth, reason and the notion of social totality towards a critical existential perspective. Idea(l)s of truth and reason will then transition us into a discussion of antagonism, truth and reason so that we may be able to separate the proposed constitutions and self and state from objectively and ideologically based maxims. To conclude the chapter I make a direct argument regarding the antagonistic constitution of the self and state in opposition to that proposed in theories of agonism. Antagonism and agonism share many similarities however it is important to stress why and how an antagonistic theory of the self differs from other formulations it may be often compared to.

Reason and Social Totality

Enlightenment philosophy, such as that of Immanuel Kant, in its attempt to free itself from religious dogma and the chains of its associated myths succeeded only in creating a new mythical doctrine built on a foundation of rationality.²⁴⁷ “This development in the history of ideas reflects the historical circumstance that the social totality to which the liberal, democratic and progressive tendencies of the dominant culture belonged”.²⁴⁸ This results in “[t]he role of human autonomy in the preservation and renewal of social life completely subordinated to the

²⁴⁷ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 10

²⁴⁸ Horkheimer, “On the Problem of Truth,” 408.

effort to hold together mechanically a dissolving order.”²⁴⁹ Therefore, humans have not progressed toward a free autonomous life of self constitution, but have moved from one form of restraint to another. The maintenance of a structure of absolute ends, whether those ends are religiously or ‘rationally’ determined, only reifies and stabilizes a continuing path of bad faith self identification and inauthentic being caught in a web of ideological truth claims.

The modern idea of the abstract rational individual authorizes us to proceed through life and toward the future in such a way that rational domination of the irrational solidifies itself as our (new) false ultimate. This allows for individuals to uphold the structures and expectations in society that assure our own misery economically, politically and in regards to the constitution of our selves. The idea that the human capacity for reason will one day lead us to ‘eudemonia’, ‘the general will’, ‘perpetual peace’, or ‘the realization of world spirit’ implies that at some point in human history we will be able to realize a universal form of fulfillment, freedom, peace and happiness without challenging the structural, systematic theories which homogenize human experience under one all-encompassing, totalized end. Such ways of thinking reify a certain ‘obsessive compulsive’ need for unity and wholeness that must be broken apart by critical existentiality. Such reification does not occur as an exact science by every philosopher or even in every school of philosophy. A major aspect in this differentiation comes with the handling of history. For example, while the traditional or classical philosophies of Plato and to some extent Aristotle produced challenges to ancient Greek society, especially through the voice of Socrates, they both provide an a-historical philosophical doctrine. Idea(l)s such as the world of the forms or universal teleology ask us to understand “all changes as mere additions of new subtypes under the universal types, made absolute and subsumed under the metaphysical view that all change is

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 408.

to be understood as the incarnation or emanation of permanent ideas and essences.”²⁵⁰ Even where notions of flux or difference exist they are placed below the higher goods defined by Parmenadian permanence or a singular and universal telos. In doing this they allow for a conceptualization of truth which is safe from relative or subjective dilution, but at the same time leave truth as something so abstract and unattainable that its only relation to our experience comes under a condition of solitude which completely neglects the need of the other in any meaningful way.

Further, in launching truth onto such an eternal and fixed platform a philosopher passes “over history and makes himself an apologist for the reality dominant at any given time.”²⁵¹ Thus, even Socrates himself, who died a martyr for philosophy and free thought, in reality had exchanged one absolute truth, the mythical gods of ancient Greece, for the new ‘god’ of absolute reason. The enlightenment theory of Kant among others fell to the same fate. “[Kant] made scientific insight dependent upon transcendental, not upon empirical functions. He did not liquidate truth by identifying it with the practical actions of verification, nor by teaching that meaning and effect are identical.”²⁵² Yet, similarly to the Greeks, he relies on reason to reveal objective truth by hollowing out any meaning from the concept of truth itself. Universal ideals of what is meant by ‘truth’ hold it as an eternal meta-category to which all changes or differences are lowered as sub-categories. Kant turns an allegiance to God into an allegiance to reason rather than escaping the trap of false objectivity and unity. In effect, “the history of reason or

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 435.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 429.

²⁵² Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 28.

enlightenment from its beginnings in Greece down to the present has led to a state of affairs in which even the word reason is suspected of connoting some mythological entity.”²⁵³

Horkheimer opens his book, *Eclipse of Reason*, pointing out that even asking ‘what is reason?’ seems a pedantic question as it has been widely accepted as something that is subsumed under the name of that which belongs to our ‘common sense’. Even this basic observation shows the formalization of reason itself as a simple faculty one uses to achieve what they desire. Thus, an activity can be deemed reasonable based on its utility alone.²⁵⁴ The focus on end goals and prescriptive oughts drives becoming toward a utility based project wherein being is a tool in the validation of politics and the constitution of the state. The reciprocal relation between self and state becomes a mirage when the interrelation is only valid when it achieves a certain, pre-defined end. As Horkheimer points out, this makes our experience “purely subjective and have no relation whatsoever to any meaningful order or totality”, and as a result consciousness is trained in a habitual manner unable to “fully realize the meaninglessness of the things [we] adore.”²⁵⁵ Under such circumstances, even the formally held absolute conception of truth has become completely vacuous. In pursuing a critical existential perspective on politics and the political, the aim is not a hollowed out ideal of truth and habitual authenticity, but the mere recognition of the inconsistencies and contradictions underlying one’s actions done in bad faith. Neither the complete reliance on objective or subjective truth is sufficient to disrupt a cycle of perpetual bad faith which leads us meandering through life and erases the intellectual substance from which democratic life once took its basis.²⁵⁶ Moreover, “it is also impossible to say that one economic or political system, no matter how cruel and despotic, is less reasonable than

²⁵³ Ibid, 11.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 24.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 20.

another.”²⁵⁷ Now, the content once present in objective truth has become completely empty and it is important to recognize the significance of both the subjective and objective content of truth so that they can be placed into relation with each other. Left with a mediation between the subjective and objective elements of truth we must recognize the value of negation. “[W]e are driven, by the principle of negation, to attempt to salvage relative truths from the wreckage of false ultimates.”²⁵⁸ Negation is not to be equivocated with nihilism²⁵⁹, as within this school subjective concepts are revealed to be always relative. This is carried out by its tendency to ‘arbitrarily stop thinking at some point in its course.’ Negation, on the other hand, finds meaning in the lesser or undefined concepts which we encounter, leaving philosophy open to the complexity of our antagonistic reality. Via the principle of negation we open up the possibility for a philosophy which, instead of being conciliatory, allows us to fight against false universals and a priori definitions of being. This said, one cannot lose hold of their historically constituted place in our social reality or fall into a radical idealism. Turning to critical theory aids in eliminating and checking the more nihilist and radically idealistic aspects of existentialism sometimes found in Sartre’s work. To be sure, understanding the negative or more relative aspects of our cultural concepts does not imply that one has overcome their historical context.²⁶⁰ Holding such knowledge does not place us in an elite status that is either separate from our history, neither should it be used to perpetuate a false idealism wherein drawing from the negative space opens up the possibility of a different, yet false, esoteric end. “To assume this

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 20.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, 129.

²⁵⁹ As is often assumed of existential theories.

²⁶⁰ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 130.

would be to confound true philosophy with the idealistic interpretation of history, and to lose sight of the core of dialectical theory.”²⁶¹

A less naïve definition of the principle of negation is the final piece needed in uncovering our critical dialectical device. Here, an examination of the work of Hegel again becomes necessary. While Hegel famously uses a dialectical method of inquiry, his approach becomes subsumed by the same ‘mythical’ or totalizing characteristics of his predecessors he looks to abolish. For him, negativity refers to the capacity of consciousness to critically undermine its own form of rationality. Yet, his ‘determinate negation’ establishes an artificial and false stopping point based on a notion of universality akin to those who came before him. Thus each concept contains within it its negation and via dialectical thinking we uncover this opposite/alternative conceptualization in a way which forms synthesis.²⁶² That which is different from, opposed to, and other than defines the negative for Hegel. Negation for Hegel is determinate, and concepts/content are negations of one another, constituting one whole. “For him, philosophy has the same absolute content of religion, the complete unity of subject and object, a final and eternally valid knowledge.”²⁶³ As a result, Hegel maintains the idea that even with the use of dialectical thinking, we are to discontinue our thought about certain concepts once they have obtained absolute knowledge.

In addition, while Hegel escapes the ‘conceptual generalization’ of idealism he does not free his thought from the idealistic system.²⁶⁴ Alongside his claims that by way of the dialectic one can come to a point of absolute knowing is his ‘inability to take theoretical and practical

²⁶¹ Ibid, 130.

²⁶² Horkheimer, “On the Problem of Truth,” 414.

²⁶³ Ibid, 415.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

account of the dogmatism and historical genesis of his own thought.”²⁶⁵ In losing sight of his own historicity, his system which aims at the completion of truth cannot take into account the temporality of the concepts with which he deals. Even though he presents his thought in a dialectical format he “diverts attention from the fact that his conscious and unconscious partisanship in regard to the problems of life must necessarily have its effect as a constituent element of his philosophy.”²⁶⁶ Resulting from this is false neutrality wherein Hegel presents himself as able to philosophize the absolute presupposing a progression of thought which has culminated in his own mind. “Hence, Hegel’s belief that his thought comprehended the essential characteristics of all being – the unity of which remained as it appeared in the system.”²⁶⁷ While in Hegel’s determinate negation concepts are understood in their negative relation to each other, it is a relation aimed toward absolute knowledge and synthesis. In order to prevent this hypostatization one must seek to understand the content of the concepts which they encounter so that concepts may be placed both in negative relation to one another and exist as singular concepts in themselves. Open-ended and critical existential thought works in this way to identify what can be called ‘truth’ both in its subjective and objective orientation. Through this process one can relativize “every many – sided but isolated definition in the consciousness of the alteration of subject and object as well as their relationship.”²⁶⁸ Theorizing in this manner serves to prevent the reification of dominating political, social and economic systems by leaving their conceptual content disassembled in such a way that is more accurately reflective of our complicated reality. There is fluidity to this process; the meaning of concepts and categories will

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 415.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 416.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 417.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 432.

change over time and space.²⁶⁹ A certain degree of optimism for change can be found within the active and more reflective process of mediation, deconstruction and reconstruction of reality by way of open ended, de-totalizing thought. ‘Truth’, in being salvaged from relativity and absolutism allows for the movement of individuals from the illusion of free, self-determination to its realization as “a member of a freely self-determining society.”²⁷⁰ This is achieved in avoiding the compulsive repetition of relative truths found within the ‘reasonable’ idea of common sense and the absolute idea of the abstract, self interested individual.

By way of non-formulaic and non-reifying thought we may develop a reflective position needed to succeed in an imminent critique of the social, political, economic and historical concepts which we encounter in the world today. Delving into the meaning of conceptual content allows us to realize the complexity of concepts in themselves and in their relations. Over-generalization of absolute objectivity dilutes the idea of ‘truth’ in its sole focus on ends. This arbitrary stopping in thought thus does not allow us to pose any radical challenge to our social reality outside of what are held as eternal ideas. Instead, the only possibility for change can be in the myth used to prop up the false universals that maintain rigid structures and pre-defined being in the political. Any proposed change in this system only reifies existing structures under a different name, as has been shown in the example of religious ideals being supplanted by absolute reason. No change occurs in the meta-categories of truth when held in such a light.

Agonism as Truth Paradox

Conformity and determinism are prominent themes throughout the works of Hannah Arendt where she warns against perceiving ourselves as determined as a means to abdicate political

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 434.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

responsibilities. Conformity via the hyper-bureaucratic, hyper-rational sphere of the social allows one to engage in questionable actions on the basis that dangerous consequences are not their intention or will but the indirect result of necessity as dictated by the ‘them’. In a society that is ideologically driven, notions of what one ought to be doing often come to the fore from an uncertain source provoking actions to be taken based on habit without reflection. Under these circumstances “One can behave, but not act.”²⁷¹ Relief from this problematic situation comes from finding a reflective position or even mean between isolation / ‘professional thinking’ and conflict / thought. Each of these pairings poses a problem for the possibility of action in the political. Isolation takes place between two (or more) selves who present themselves as wholes within the social, selves assumed to be constituted based on essential principles and separate from the gaze of the other; nearly impenetrable to the type of change and growth advocated here. Further, Arendt’s distaste for professional thinking presents itself using the same method but in an abstract, immaterial way. Professional thinking or mere philosophizing separates one from their thoughts and relieves them of any responsibility they may have for their consequences. The drive to disassemble the combination of isolation and professional thinking is seen quite clearly in the example of Plato’s philosopher king as well as in Arendt’s own critique of Heidegger. The philosopher king epitomizes the connection between isolation and professional thinking as (s)he is meant to come to the knowledge of the forms and of truth by way of isolated contemplation. This process is characterized by a contrived authoritarianism which may allow political action for one or few, but stunts any possibility for this within the demos. Aristotle, writing with a close proximity to Plato and his ideas provides a criticism on the basis of the (lack of) responsibility for philosophy and its consequence when separated from action. In Book II of *The Politics* Aristotle criticizes Plato for creating a philosophy in speech only, but one that has no practical

²⁷¹ Patricia Roberts-Miller, “Fighting Without Hatred: Hannah Arendt’s Agonistic Rhetoric,” JAC 22, no. 3(2002): 4.

implementation. Regarding extreme unity he asks: “But what of the arrangements of the constitution as a whole, and how do they affect participant members? In absence of any positive statements by Socrates it is very hard to say.”²⁷² Even if Plato’s *kallipolis* was formally instituted, his emphasis on solitary contemplation for rulers over action is problematic. Aristotle’s critique highlights several problems with extreme unity within the state and philosopher rulers, but his call for habituation is still not a fully adequate plan of action. Habituation is closer to behaving than action: you habituate yourself to behave in a certain way and to produce a specific character type, in action you may often break this mould. In the case of Heidegger we are confronted with a much more disturbing material consequence in connection with isolation/professional thinking. His philosophical contribution is immense, as can be seen even within this work, yet his politics as associated with National Socialism in Germany is highly problematic. “Heidegger’s thinking upon Being may have reflected his distance from human affairs. If as some have posited, he assumed a posture analogous to a high priest and ascetic...”²⁷³ His distancing of himself from his actions with the Nazi Party after the war signals an abdication of responsibility for any of his possible actions during that time. Thus disentangling professional thinking and its relation to isolation can be seen as more than a philosophical polemic but as a real issue for a politics and for being as based on action. Isolation and professional thinking go hand in hand and without action there is no way to test one’s theories in relation to the other or, more importantly, be met with the consequences of their once private thoughts. The continental maxim made famous by Descartes of “I think therefore I am” holds no weight here – instead one should say “*we think, we act, we reflect, therefore I am*”.

²⁷² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1264a11.

²⁷³ Jean-Pierre V. M. Hérubel, “The Darker Side of Light: Heidegger and Nazism, A bibliographic Essay,” *Purdue University Press* 10, no. 1(1991): 87.

The distinction between conflict and thought weighs heavily on this project while also having a significant connection to issues surrounding isolation and professional thinking. There is an obvious antagonism between a life of isolation/professional thinking and one characterized by political action (conflict/thought). Identifying a mean between these two sets is exceedingly complex and ever since the earliest philosophies of the pre-Socratics has not been able to be solved. I cannot claim to offer a solution or blueprint for this problem here, however, I pose that an embracing of our being as anxiety and through a critical existential lens it is possible to identify the inherent contradiction within this duality in an attempt to act on it, rather than behave in a way conducive to maintaining its unchanging existence. In assuming that the self as well as the workings of the state (the political and politics) are both antagonistic is to also assert that there is an intimate connection between conflict and thought. Dealing with this issue is often tasked by deliberative democrats, agonists and conflict theorists. Already, in discussing deliberative democracy, we can see that isolation and professional thought are a threat to the formulation of a 'public sphere' as action and communication is required to kick-start any potentiality for change. However, in separating isolation and action/conflict into differing spheres we are unable to disentangle the complex relations between the two. Fragmentation between isolated selves within the social requires some sort of agonistic or antagonistic relations in order to connect individuals with each other as well as to the responsibility of their political choices. Identifying the contradictions between our thoughts and our actions aids in illuminating the fear one holds in taking responsibility for their own existence and the impact on the existence of others.

Arendt's connection to both the critical thought of those from the Frankfurt School as well as existential theory allows us to engage with questions of conflict and fragmentation

reflectively and in a manner that is theoretically consistent. In her article, “Fighting Without Hatred: Hannah Arendt's Agonistic Rhetoric”, Patricia Roberts-Miller makes the case for Arendt as a polemical agonist as her means to address issues of conflict and thought. Conformity makes way for behaving over action as one is habituated to behave without reflection as well as to see the other as pre-determined. This comes as a by-product of isolation wherein one understands themselves and their being as whole and complete in an act of professional thinking done in bad faith. The painting of Arendt as agonist is twofold: first, the need for a specifically public type of action signals an ‘existential leap’ into the conflict produced by difference in the political.²⁷⁴ This is predicated on the assumption of a public space that is not made up “of neutral, rational beings who escape differences to live in the discourse of universals” but instead “one of different people who argue with passion, vehemence, and integrity.”²⁷⁵ Second, Arendt is labelled agonist based on the type of rhetoric that she advocates between political actors which is, for Roberts-Miller, not malicious or based on the drive to win in argumentation but is a mere contest between equals proposing their own notion of what is best for their political community.²⁷⁶ Characterizing public debate within the political in this manner uncritically implies that while there is no universal notion of rationality present, that somehow the outcome is a rational discourse free of enmity. Further, it also assumes that while consensus cannot be reached, that a rational decision can be made deciding that all arguments will be understood as a worthwhile exercise in and of themselves – a process mirroring Connolly’s notion of agonistic respect touched on in Chapter 3. She solidifies this stance stating: “Polemical agonism, however, one's intention is not necessarily to prove one's case, but to make public one’s thought in order to test it.”²⁷⁷ Despite these

²⁷⁴ Patricia Roberts-Miller, “Fighting Without Hatred: Hannah Arendt's Agonistic Rhetoric,” 589.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 589.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 595.

misgivings, there is something incredibly useful in Roberts-Miller's placement of Arendt within the school of agonistic politics.

The issue is not in the use of Arendtian theories as an escape from the deliberative democratic drive for consensus but in not moving beyond agonism toward antagonism proper. Agonism is placed in relation to antagonism as its safe, neutered alternative in relation to conflict. However, I find that agonism is actually closer to deliberative democracy than theories and political antagonism. This is because in order for deliberation to occur in a reasonable and peaceful manner that produces either consensus or a situation where individuals agree to disagree there must exist a relation of agonism. In situations where consensus is possible (of which there are few) an agonistic forum between persons would not necessarily even be required. Situations marked by conflict or difference on the other hand seem to take place between enemies. The agonistic argument is meant to take place between adversaries rather than enemies to the end of rational acceptance of diversity and the publicity of different (yet still rational) perspectives while antagonism is viewed as an engagement between enemies with dubious intentions and a drive to win at any cost. This categorization is lacking in several ways. The Kantian trajectory from which the works of Hannah Arendt have been taken signals that there is a place for antagonism within the political. Kant asserts that antagonism plays a significant role as a motivating factor in one's actions. While he claims that a sort of pathological sociability characterized by resistance is essential to human nature, that notion is shifted here to assume this is instead a common disposition of individuals in the political. "[T]he sources of the very unsociableness and continual resistance which cause so many evils, at the same time encourage man towards new exertions of his powers and thus toward further development..."²⁷⁸ Here we

²⁷⁸ Kant, "Idea for a Universal History", 45.

see the multi-faceted understanding of how conflict and resistance can be both negative or productive. Further, his views on judgement as outlined in Arendt's *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* suggest that the antagonism between the self and the other is a driving force in our judging and thus our being with others. An antagonistic state of being is integral to one's capacity for judgement, regardless of its genus and intent – malicious or genuine.

Moving forward, we also find a need for self and other based antagonism within Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* through the discussion of a necessary life/death struggle for being. In reference to the constitution of the self especially, it is clear that the existential struggle of becoming and being involves an antagonistic rather than an agonistic aspect. Hegelian self-consciousness assumes persons are both subject and object in relation to the other. Self-consciousness for Hegel is one's responsiveness of another's knowledge of self wherein one becomes aware of their being-in-the-world through the eyes of the other. This produces a struggle for recognition required for self-consciousness. "They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing the other."²⁷⁹ Recognition is a process; the initial impetus is in the meeting of one self and another which opens up the possibility of self-consciousness and the subsequent moment of difference which illuminates the "otherness" of the other. Key to understanding the struggle for recognition as a relation of antagonism and not agonism is the underlying assumption (in Hegel as well as in this work) that the other is required for one's being and that in their initial meeting the other transitions from object to subject. Anxiety is brought to the fore in such interactions, such that mutual recognition and its related struggles are played out in the political. Thus, relations between persons in the realm of the political are formed and informed by an antagonistic struggle at the level of one's most basic sense of being. They engage in a 'life and

²⁷⁹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 112.

death struggle', not for their physical materiality, but for the life of their being and consciousness. In reality, self-consciousness is a struggle for recognition between two persons tied to each other in a relationship of dependence. "The individual who has not risked his life may well be recognized as a person, but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness."²⁸⁰ The requisite life and death struggle faced by each individual is the seed of antagonism within the *antagonistic self* that eventually grows in the political and as a result defines politics as conflict and enmity over amity.

An Agonistic Foil

On the basis of this foundation it is a sound assumption that the self is inherently antagonistic in the make-up of their being, and further that this would be projected in the political realm as it is constructed by these antagonistic selves. This is not to say that interaction in the political is only ever antagonistic or that such relations cannot be overcome at some times, but to assert that reason or respect would dislodge not only the deep seated, identity based contingences of the self but also render moot their life and death struggle which defines their being is an assumption that is entirely inaccurate. Chantal Mouffe makes an argument for agonism in relation to the political liberalism of John Rawls in her essay, "Democracy, Power and 'the Political,'" where she rightfully critiques his notion of consensus and his claims regarding 'the fact of pluralism'. For Rawls, the equating of justice with fairness is supported by the idea of what he calls 'overlapping consensus'. Overlapping consensus allows for plurality and conflict to co-exist by allowing differing doctrines derived from religious, philosophical and moral dispositions of persons to overlap so long as they all support the same underlying idea of democracy and liberal rights.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 114.

²⁸¹ John Rawls, "The Domain of the Political and Overlapping Consensus," *New York University Law Review* 64, no.2 (1989): 234.

Four general ‘facts’ presuppose this ideation of overlapping consensus: pluralism is a fact and difference is a permanent fixture of democracy, state power is required for the maintenance of politics, willing support of the majority of active citizens is necessary, and there must be a reasonable foundation to the idea of justice within the state and demos.²⁸² These stipulations are not entirely controversial in terms of theories of liberal democracy and its related values, and yet are for the most part incompatible with the critical existential description of politics and the political. Rawls is over-reliant on notions of reason and its regulatory power despite his claims that even reason cannot bring all persons to one, singular conclusion.²⁸³ He claims that reasonable disagreement is possible between two or more persons who view each other as free, moral actors equal to one another within a democratic regime based on a mutual desire for cooperation on the basis of the values of liberalism which they share. “We assume such persons share a common human reason, similar powers of thought and judgement, a capacity to draw inferences and to weigh evidence and to balance competing considerations, and the like.”²⁸⁴ Those who do not embody reason in this way, or whose moral principles do not overlap with the majority of the demos are essentially disregarded within the Rawlsian demos on the basis that they ascribe to an unreasonable and therefore illiberal doctrine. Reason again becomes the basis of democratic deliberation and those who are considered to be unreasonable are excluded and relegated to private, isolated activity only until they become so influenced by the justice within the society for which they are spectators and develop an allegiance to its institutions.²⁸⁵ In a way, this is not entirely different from what we have heard before, that a good state and constitution makes good citizens, that citizens are able to will a general will that reflects a specific

²⁸² Ibid, 234.

²⁸³ Ibid, 236.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 250.

ideological ethos, or that good laws can tame a nation of devils. Yet, once again we find ourselves trapped by ideological truth claims, once more on the basis of reason. Moreover, we are again halted by choosing an arbitrary stopping point (liberalism) in our process of thinking where reason is assumed to produce specific values and individual dispositions suitable for democratic deliberation. The main concern is located in the assumption that all reasonable actors in the political (public) sphere are equals and as a result produce equal thoughts yet different opinions, perspectives and political identities.

Mouffe, on the other hand, challenges the liberal ideas of universality, rationality and essentialized notions of human nature. Counter to what is proposed by Rawls and those alike, democracy is not jeopardized by the rejection of rational universality and its essentializing views on human nature.²⁸⁶ She takes aim at Rawls' 'fact of pluralism' arguing that subscribing to such claims hides the impact of social relations in the political to the end of making difference irrelevant and a-political. A public space where all citizens are blind to difference and make rational choices based on overlapping consensus is not political; it's a utopic imaginary. Here she is correct in identifying the a-political basis of the Rawlsian public sphere. In Mouffe's critique our differences provide a condition of possibility against homogeneity and exclusion.²⁸⁷ Difference is inessential and fluid and cannot be defined as an objective fact. In addition, the reasonable/unreasonable binary establishes a core morality which underpins and directs democratic deliberation before it starts by providing a legitimization of certain values over others. That which is unreasonable cannot be permitted in the democratic demos when using Rawls' definitions of democracy or justice. "[P]olitical liberalism can provide a consensus

²⁸⁶ Chantal Mouffe, "Democracy, Power and the 'Political'", in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 245.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 246.

among reasonable persons who by definition are persons who accept the principles of political liberalism.”²⁸⁸ In other words, political liberalism pre-determines how action within the political should look and regulates itself accordingly. Therefore, the constitution of the self is only ever reflected into the constitution of the state when it is promoting liberal values and working toward change on these grounds. When the constitution of the self is not already in line with political liberalism it is de-legitimized as irrational and relegated to the margins. This is significant not only because it is exclusionary (which is Mouffe’s claim) but because of what then can happen to the disposition of those who become politically disenfranchised by their isolation from the political. As argued in the critical theory of Horkheimer, rationality has gained a dogmatic position within liberal thought, “whether in the form of God or of the transcendental mind, or even of nature as an eternal principle.”²⁸⁹ The capacity to rationalize has replaced a reliance of religious based explanations for phenomena, yet failed to dismantle the myth of a neutral basis for their existence. We may be less inclined to identify our acceptance of certain values as based on scripture, yet have few worries in stating matter of factly that they are based on reason, common sense, or liberal rationality. It is rationality, as the new religion of liberalism, that creates (wo)man in its own image so that the constitution of self and state are congruent and reiterate each other on the path to some form of consensus or neutralized difference.

Missing from Rawls’ a-priori assumptions is the role of power and antagonism in the social relations of political actors. His notion of public reason de-legitimizes illiberal perspectives but also relegates any such views to the private sphere and out of the realm of politics. Mouffe challenges this thought stating, “[A] well-ordered society is a society from which politics has been eliminated”, wherein “[c]onflicts of interest about economic and social

²⁸⁸ Mouffe, “Democracy, Power and the ‘Political’”, 250.

²⁸⁹ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 22.

issues – if they still arise – are resolved smoothly through discussions within the framework of public reason”.²⁹⁰ Yet despite, the elimination of any other conflicts occurring within the political power and antagonism are left unaddressed. Antagonism and the power relations that it is a part of cannot be eliminated by relegating identity construction into the private sphere. Not only is it not possible based on the way in which the other de-totalizes one’s being, but also on the basis of the simple fact that ‘irrational’ persons do not exist only in private. There is no authentic or essential identity that can be constructed in isolation or by way of homogenous relations with others. Every identity is contingent on numerous factors that contribute to the degree to which they have been embedded within consciousness. Even Mouffe, who proposes a theory of agonism recognizes, “that we should conceptualize power not as an *external* relation taking place between two pre-constituted identities but rather constituting the identities themselves.”²⁹¹ It is within the political that the constitution of the self is developed and challenged beyond the scope of a predetermined set of ideological values. While an individual may think themselves into an identity group in private, its reality comes to fruition only in action within the political and through processes of judgement and recognition that take place in the witnessing of such actions.

The agonistic understanding of politics and the political share many similarities with the antagonistic. There is a problematization of essentializing identity, a challenge to notions of consensus and a rejection of the dogmatic status of reason and its role in establishing the former. In several of her works Chantal Mouffe repeatedly tells us that “plurality is at the origin of antagonistic conflicts”²⁹² or that we cannot have “pluralism without antagonism”²⁹³. She even

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 252.

²⁹¹ Ibid 247.

²⁹² Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*, (London: Verso, 2013), 10.

²⁹³ Ibid, 22.

draws attention to what she calls a “double moment, of dis-articulation and re-articulation”²⁹⁴ that is similar to, but not synonymous with, the notion of de-totalization. On the surface, it seems that a ‘Mouffean’ conception of agonistic politics is compatible with the critical existential approach taken here. However, just like in her criticism of Rawls, Mouffe becomes entangled in an ideological problematic and falls victim to choosing an arbitrary stopping point in thought that collapses her overall understanding of the political. In placing her definition of power and antagonism in relation to Rawls she traps herself in refuting the claims of liberalism as a basis for an agonistic world. Throughout her works²⁹⁵ she often places herself in opposition to Rawls, offering a critique of concepts such as overlapping consensus, reason, politics and so on. At several junctures I agree with her arguments; however when she moves away from Rawls and elaborates her theorization beyond her critiques, I find that she often ends up in a final position that is not so dissimilar to his. Mouffe’s claim that we cannot define power and antagonism using public reason stands up against a call for overlapping consensus but not against her own claim that plurality is inherently antagonistic.

The turn toward agonism circles us back to the notion of reason and assumptions relating to the human capacity to rationally bracket one’s own illiberal thoughts for the maintenance of some ideological or neutral end. She takes issue with the liberal dependence on reason without acknowledging that an acceptance of agonistic relations in the political requires the same process of reasoning. In order for one to accept the other as their adversary, one whom they can share a common set of political values with, they must engage with public reason and a utilization of

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 74.

²⁹⁵ Within “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism”, *Return of the Political and Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*.

‘veiling’ of the personal or private. She defines agonism as a relation between adversaries as opposed to enemies (antagonism).²⁹⁶ Mouffe’s argument asserts:

In the realm of politics, this presupposes that the “other” is no longer seen as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an “adversary,” i.e., somebody with whose ideas we are going to struggle but whose right to defend those ideas we will not put into question. The category of the adversary does not eliminate antagonism, though, and it should be distinguished from the liberal competitor, with which it is sometimes identified. An adversary is a legitimate enemy, an enemy with whom we have in common a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of democracy. [...] To come to accept the position of the adversary is to accept a radical change in political identity, it has more of a quality of conversion than of rational persuasion²⁹⁷

First, the claim that antagonism is opposed to agonism because antagonistic relations result in the destruction of an enemy is not a universalizable or categorical claim. Further, what does it mean for one to be a ‘legitimate competitor’ beyond the sharing of a pre-determined set of political values? The life and death struggle that establishes being with others is reciprocal and based on recognition of the other and not total destruction. The enemy of the ‘adversarial’ demos is, in many cases, simply ignored and at times placed at the margins rather than destroyed and while this can be considered a form of annihilation in terms of de-legitimation or political disenfranchisement – it is not clear that this would not be the fate of adversaries in the a politics of agonism. Again, it is not clear what the mechanism of consciousness is for the agonist and how it allows them to recognize an individual as a ‘legitimate enemy’ whose right to forward their views cannot be challenged. Taken together, it seems this argument is quite similar to the liberal one that she rejects via her critique of Rawls. A ‘radical change in political identity’ by means of conversion assumes even a slight participation in public reason. It is acceptable to place some credence in the connection between reason and consciousness – even for a critical

²⁹⁶ Chantal Mouffe, “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism,” *Social Research* 66, no. 3 (1999): 755.

²⁹⁷ Ibid, 755.

existential conception of being to recognize its own bad faith would require some aspect of reason. Thus, the problem with Mouffe's argument is not that it refutes liberalism but that it claims this is the only route to establishing agonistic politics while simultaneously reiterating liberal values as political values only using a different vocabulary. Agonism is not rejected because it is implausible – at times (just as Mouffe states) agonism springs from antagonistic relations. It is instead questioned and critiqued as an alternative for liberalism when this simply is just not the case. Agonistic adversaries are found in the liberal public sphere and would be found under any political ideology if the right conditions were put into place. There will always be instances where individuals or groups are able to come to a common ground – politics deals with the situations wherein this is not always possible. Mouffe makes a strong case against liberalism, unfortunately it does not suffice as a case for agonism.

Being-anxiety, one's existential ontology, offers a fluid explanation for why some instances remain antagonistic while others move toward agonism. A fear response, one deeply connected to the challenge of being and the contingencies of one's self identification maintains a relation of enmity, while the embracing of anxiety toward the horizon of possibility can result in a more adversarial relation. Mouffe agrees that antagonism is an underlying force within the political but prescribes agonism as a reparation for this conflictual and contentious state. Key here is that Being-anxiety can bring us toward agonism but at times also upholds a productive antagonistic relation. Instead of viewing agonism as the productive form of antagonism, I maintain that in relation to differing situations, both are productive forces. Mouffe critiques Rawls' political liberalism for being exclusionary to some (those who do not accept liberal values and bracket their contentious differences within the public) while at the same time

proposing a politics between persons who share the same ethico-political values of democracy stating that some limitations are necessary in any democratic setting.²⁹⁸

Rawls' conception of politics in a well-ordered liberal society, and thereafter in his arguments pertaining to the field of international politics, it is shown how Rawls forecloses the recognition of the properly political moment by postulating that the discrimination between what is legitimate and what is not legitimate is dictated by morality and rationality. With exclusions presented as rationally justified and with the antagonistic dimension of politics whisked away, liberalism appears as the truly moral and rational solution to the problem of how to organise human coexistence, and its universalisation becomes the aim of all those who are moved by moral and rational considerations.²⁹⁹

While Rawls justifies exclusion only for those who uphold controversial doctrines, Mouffe is more weary of exclusion and instead proposes an ideation of mere limitation that is set by politics for the political in the form of political values. Neither argument is fully incorrect; at certain times there is a necessary limitation to the participation of some in politics and the political. However, when both Rawls and Mouffe assert that the engagement between persons or groups in the public sphere/the political occur upon a pre-determined plain of values they both falter. For Rawls, this argument rests on a set of moral values represented by the liberal ethos. His assumption (as rightly pointed out by Mouffe) is that conflict arises due to religious and philosophical differences which are a private concern³⁰⁰. To alleviate this he proposes a less political conception of the good that is maintained through his deontological prioritization of rights. Thus, the moral values of the public sphere, despite Rawls' intentions, become a set of rationally agreed upon maxims that benefit the atomistic, liberal individual; a concept which holds together ideations of political liberalism. The maintenance of the atomistic individual is not

²⁹⁸ Chantal Mouffe, "Democratic Power and the "Political"," 248.

²⁹⁹ Chantal Mouffe, "The Limits of Rawls' Political Liberalism," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 56, no. 118 (2009): 1.

³⁰⁰ John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, (Cambridge Mass: Belknap Press Harvard, 2001), 184.

the intent of Rawls as he insists he is constructing a political project using the original position as a heuristic device to the service of creating a neutral political landscape. He states, “The idea of the original position is to set up a fair procedure so that any principles agreed to will be just [...] Somehow we must nullify the effects of specific contingencies which put men at odds”.³⁰¹ However, what he ends up with is an a-political politics of neutral liberal subjects in an idealistic state where we are unable to see one’s identity outside of their being bearer of rights. The veil of ignorance is meant to shield the particularities of the other in order to maintain a system of fairness and equity where citizens “evaluate principles solely on the basis of general considerations.”³⁰² The problem is that if we consider Rawls to be putting forth a political project, this seems contradictory to a concept such as the veil of ignorance (which is hypothetical) as being philosophical or metaphysical. The reality of the political means that the veil must be lifted at some point as the (prioritized) rights holder must claim their rights on the basis of their obvious differences. Further, Rawls’ original position is a device used to show the possibility of a neutral political society reminiscent of Rousseau’s natural man described in *The Discourses on Inequality*. The ‘natural man’ similarly to one’s ‘original position’ only suffices to explain a hypothetical situation wherein “they do not know [society’s] economic or political situation, or the level of civilization and culture it has been able to achieve.”³⁰³ This concept is especially difficult to accept from an existential or phenomenological perspective because the closest comparison to a process of veiling is to bracket one’s previously held assumptions regarding one’s identity or their deeply seated contingencies – but in this case they would still be aware of the bracketed content. Moreover, this process may work for persons who already have

³⁰¹ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge Mass: Belknap Press Harvard, 1971), 118

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

legal rights within their state; those who are still fighting remain constantly unveiled as a means of being seen and in their hopes of gaining recognition.

Mouffe, on the other hand, relies on a determinate concept of political values that are meant to address the expansion beyond philosophical and religious conflicts within the political. Thus, while she rightly points out the a-political flaw in Rawls' political liberalism she simultaneously builds a theory on an artificially neutralized and diluted concept of conflict and individual inter-relations. She states that this "will require us to recognize that a liberal democratic regime, if it must be agonistic in terms of morality and religion, cannot be agonistic concerning political values...that is, the political principles of equality and liberty."³⁰⁴ Here, she erects poles of political values in an attempt to ground her agonistic argument. Instead of addressing the aforementioned issues within the work of Rawls she moves to accept agonism in terms of identity based difference or as a result of pluralism; but not in relation to the totems of a common political conception of the good. The miscalculation is not in wanting equality and liberty as mainstays in a democratic society, but in failing to address her own biases in relation to assumptions derived from an underlying conception of the good. Rawls' a priori assumption that everyone has a 'conception of the good' is maintained despite his prioritization of right as the two concepts (rights and the conception of the good) are co-dependent. While rights (as constructed and granted by the state) may be at the forefront of deontological liberalism they are a concept come to and agreed upon on through a shared notion of what the good is. In other words, rights are a priority because they confirm the conception of the good and the good founds the specificity of a state's promise of rights. Rawls assumes that individuals move through life with a coherent conception of the good, reinforced by one's status as a holder of rights. Mouffe,

³⁰⁴ Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, (London: Verso, 1993), 47.

despite her strong critique of Rawls does not abandon this priori assumption. For one to engage with the content of Mouffe's political values and give them meaning, one must come to the conclusion that these poles symbolize or encapsulate a fundamental conception of the good. This assumption is also at the root of her argument for agonism. For one to accept the other as their adversary and not their enemy they must share in the pre-determined assumptions regarding specific political values and their relation to what is understood as the good. This is a process which I argue would also call for an mode of public reason as a driving force. This said, for Mouffe we must recognize "a political conception of justice that could provide a pole of identification for democratic forces"³⁰⁵, however this 'pole' is held in place by a conception of the good that remains unaddressed in her works.

The closest recognition of these pre-set political values and their basis in the good comes by way of her call for productive counter-hegemonic spheres. In *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*, Mouffe states: "I want to offer a different conception of radical politics envisioned in terms of 'engagement' with institutions, with the aim of bringing about a different hegemony."³⁰⁶ This comes as a response to her own claim that power cannot be eradicated from politics. An attempt at doing so would mean an erasure of politics as based in action in favour of a neutral and rational political landscape. Thus, within Mouffe's theorization we cannot eliminate hegemonic influences in the political, but instead live in recognition of multiple counter hegemonies that challenge each other as legitimate configurations of political association. The argument follows the logic that, "the very configuration of power relations around which a given society is structured [...] is a struggle between opposing hegemonic projects which can never be

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 53.

³⁰⁶ Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*, 71.

reconciled rationally.”³⁰⁷ Per usual, I agree with Mouffe’s initial assessment – that power cannot be eradicated – but disagree with her means of addressing this issue. At its base, to recognize each group as representing its own ethos as a hegemony she also establishes a multi-polar relation of rationally agreed upon relations of being. In its most basic definition, for something to be considered hegemonic, it is conceptualized as a common sense notion that (at least for those who accept it) rationally explains their state of being in the world, making each grouping a rational entity. However, for some reason those within differing hegemonic spheres cannot use this same method or capacity to explain their confrontations with others. More importantly, the counter hegemonic solution has major implication for the anti-essential politics Mouffe herself strives for. While a counter hegemonic presence may be consistent with her claim that we need an anti-essential politics in that it addresses several modes of being or identity groups, it is not consistent with her objection to the result or consequence of essentialism. The maintenance of hegemony, even in multiple, competing spheres totalizes in-group purity and turns it into hegemony. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in-group purity poses a major problem for a political identification come to in good faith as even within a specific group stark difference will exist. The ethos of the group may be constructed in a manner that challenges essential notions yet in coming together as a unity, or, totality relies on rational processes of universalization regarding being and self constitution. A counter hegemony may aid in addressing the consuming tendency of a singular hegemonic power by providing a sort of checks and balance system to power relations but issues of totality and purity persist within the possibility of bad faith identification being at its root. Each counter-hegemony exists differently, checking the other’s power while simultaneously re-iterating a pre-determined set of political values that are constructed based on an underlying conception of the good held by each individual.

³⁰⁷ Mouffe, *On the Political*, 21.

Moreover, the assumptions made regarding conceptions of what is good and counter hegemonic are fruitful to politics and the political only when the relations between each group is, in Mouffe's terminology, adversarial. The case where relations are characterized by enmity and a fear response rather than one of cooperation may result in the marginalization of some participants within the demos. They are equal legal participants under the guise of shared political values, but the look of the other and the recognition received in their life and death struggle for being is insufficient in terms of real inter-relations between individuals. This is not natural or essential, but a real consequence of conflicts between the deeply held identities that come face to face with one another for historical, social, economic or political reasons. On the other hand, just because two persons or groups share a legal definition of equality does not mean that their views can always be considered equally. If we shift the focus from Mouffe to Connolly (who also proposes a theory of agonism),³⁰⁸ we can see how a fear response may be derived from the constitution of the resentful individual. One filled with resentment will err towards fear and thus be less likely to come to an agonistic relation with the other. Resentment and fear can turn deep seated contingencies of identity into a set of values that overtake the type of political values Mouffe lays out. This has great consequences in an assessment of antagonistic relations because resentment (as well as fear) are at the heart of conflict between those with seemingly irreconcilable differences.

A Place for Antagonism in The Political

If malicious intent that is based in prejudice is tested against someone with the opposite perspective it is not useful for the non-prejudiced person to uncritically accept aspects of the argument of the other. It is also unlikely that the prejudiced person will consistently give into

³⁰⁸ Recall Chapters 3 & 4

that of the other in the formation of an adversarial demos. This becomes obvious in the recent rise of right wing populism in the Western world. It is difficult to accept that harmful views from a person who is blatantly racist, sexist, homophobic and so on are equal to, or even close enough to that of the other so that they may become agonistic, even under liberal pretences. In terms of existentiality, it becomes clear that resentment overtakes the productive capacity of agonism in finding “[...]expression in religious fundamentalism (which had an affective affinity to the culture of self sacrifice) or in the kind of nationalism that promises collective dignity [...]”.³⁰⁹ In some scenarios arguments cannot be considered equal. The aggressor is more interested in finding an alleviation of their fear than coming to amicable terms; this is antagonism, not agonism, and a real political situation that we are often faced with. Persons may be equal in terms of rights or on some moral basis but the meaning and value behind their perspectives diverge greatly. In terms of Being-anxiety one can see that in such situations, the prospect of possibility must take shape under antagonistic circumstances. The directly prejudiced, violent political actor is not the adversary of the other who is not – they will always be the enemy until something productive can be made of antagonism.

If we expand on the notion that identities are formed and reformed in the political and not in isolation we can highlight the issues of freedom for actors in the political and what it means that there exists an inequality of political views. The inequality is not derived simply on the basis of one’s ideological adherence but in the totalization of identities taking place in solitude. In this way, the individual with the negatively unequal (harmful/malicious) perspective serves as a more clear example of the antagonistic self than, for example, the one whose political identity is more or less consistent with their actions. The fractures present within the constitution of the self aid in

³⁰⁹ Finlayson, “Introduction: Becoming Plural,” 10.

the explanation of why some person's political actions play out against what on the surface may seem to be their own interests. For example, a working class person who may benefit from some social and economic programs or safety nets offered by left wing ideologies may reject such policies on the basis that aspects of their identity that are not defined by class cannot accept other political propositions put forward such as those based on religion, race, sex and so forth.³¹⁰ The antagonism within the self, regardless of whether or not it is noticed by the individual is projected outwards into the antagonistic realm of the political. Therefore, a full exclusion or limitation on such persons can be very dangerous. In "Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically", Mouffe addresses Arendt's agonism, criticizing it as "agonism without antagonism"³¹¹ and proposes a reading of Arendt counter to what has been advanced here. In contrast to Mouffe's claim, I have argued that Hannah Arendt provides an epistemological basis for the violence that underpins the antagonistic self; Arendt also accounts for what occurs when this violence is not challenged.

The idea of the 'mass man'³¹² provides an account for what happens when, in recognizing the inequality of arguments, we ignore the individual and not just the fragment of their identity that is troubling. This has implications for notions of totality and unity and though this example is extreme, it allows us to see the effects of fragmentation within the self and political disenfranchisement more clearly. For Arendt, "[t]he truth is that the masses grew out of the fragments of a highly atomized society whose competitive structure and concomitant loneliness of the individual had been held in check only through membership in a class."³¹³ The political is

³¹⁰ This issue is also taken on clearly and productively in Mouffe's newest book *For a Left Populism*. She articulates problems of identifying, for example only in terms of class when there are so many other factors at play – yet still maintains an agonistic based prescription.

³¹¹ Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*, 10.

³¹² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Austin: Harcourt, Inc, 1968).

³¹³ Ibid, 317.

composed as a piecemeal of differing groups forming around sets of demands in order to have their voices heard and affect some sort of shift or change in politics itself. In some cases there will be a reasonable deliberation between groups and the state, at other times antagonism will shift into agonism as shared values are unearthed through political (inter)action. The masses whose participation in the former either, does not work, or is excluded and left to (attempt to) develop a political self identification in private. In these instances, public reason and/or agonistic relations are not always possible and antagonism remains. For Arendt, class membership often fills the void left where a universalizable identity should take shape, and without this people are pushed further and further to the margins to the point where they are politically disregarded. Over time it becomes understood that the “politically indifferent masses [do] not matter, that they [are] truly neutral and constitute no more than the inarticulate backward setting for political life of the nation.”³¹⁴ Analyzed from the critical existential perspective one can see how this trend could be the outcome of a bad faith identity formation coupled with a sense of desperation and a misguided drive towards unity in terms of their self-identification. Upon entrance into the political, this self imposed unity that has been derived in alienation from other political actors becomes a lightning rod for the creation of a pure and unified political movement. This becomes especially problematic when derived from the rhetoric of a supposedly pure mass leader who sets the stage for political action in a singular manner with pre-determined goals of unity. The self is inwardly antagonistic in terms of the conflicting allegiances to one’s self identification and this is mutually projected into the political through one’s actions and interactions in a process of recognition for the identities which they hold. Alienation itself can be useful as discussed in Chapter 4, but is also a site of epistemological violence. Thus, when forced into a prolonged state of alienation wherein one becomes completely isolated from the political it is no wonder that

³¹⁴ Ibid, 312.

they become ontologically unstable – meaning that their being is constituted only through intra-group settings which aim toward a false unity. Rather than the stability brought on through class membership as Arendt contends, I argue that it is the stability of extended periods of interaction (not isolation) through any caveat of the political that prevents one's Being-anxiety, or rather being in fear, to force them into solitude. A lifetime of engagement in relations of 'sameness' maintains a bad faith identity construction and push one's Being-anxiety toward a fear response when faced with the other that becomes near pathological. An a-social pathology underscores the human condition as antagonistic and is lifted and fed through the constant feeling of anxiety in relation to our inwardly antagonistic being. In other words, there is no outlet for individuals to de-totalize the totalized unity within their consciousness. Therefore all persons, even those with unequal political perspectives, must be pulled back into the political and engaged with others through differing fragments of their being from which they may find avenues for de-totalization.

In relation to the example of mass man, Arendt asserts that when pulled back into the political by a 'mass leader' they are offered a false universality to funnel all of their political demands into in the form of 'a movement'.³¹⁵ Being able to find a way to draw those who are excluded from the political back in without offering them a pre-determined unity or already existing blueprint of what they think their identity should look like mitigates some of the dangers of their initial de-legitimization. For agonism this means accepting that some political interactions will not be solved by changing the overarching ideology of politics or by diluting antagonistic relations to make them more palatable. Also, it means accepting that some conflicts will simply not be solved neatly. One's being-in-the world when understood through their actions becomes being-in-*this world*, which is highly conflictual and challenging. This does not

³¹⁵ Ibid, 326.

mean that we accept violent behaviour as part of antagonism in the political, the structures and institutions of politics provide repercussions for such actions. It does, however, mean that the process of being and becoming should be just as challenging for the liberal, the agonist, the socialist and so forth as it is for the those whose perspectives we cannot accept. The LGBTQ person is burdened by the responsibility of coming face to face with homophobia, the person of colour with racism, the woman with sexism if they want to produce a change within the political. The same is true for the rational, deliberative or agonist individual – they must bear the unwanted responsibility of confrontation with their enemy as well as their adversary. This is difficult, anxiety provoking and, to be blunt, not fair – but the history of the most significant and meaningful changes deriving from the political is not a history of easy and fair negotiations. It is also why a process of veiling, as discussed by Rawls, is not sufficient when addressing complex conflicts and struggles. This is reminiscent of Wolin’s claim discussed earlier³¹⁶, that the political takes shape in temporary outbursts of radical action by the demos in relation to oppression or discrimination. These confrontations are not the result of public reason or already existing adversarial relations but of antagonistic challenges starting within the constitution of the self and projected into the constitution of the state. A great deal of political responsibility is necessary to take part in an antagonistic politics because it cannot always be easy and in most cases is not. This is especially true for the person who is oppressed or marginalized because it is in their fight for rights or recognition where they feel the burden and associated anxiety from having to take constant responsibility to re-affirm their own identity in the face of the other – which in many cases can be dangerous and hostile.

³¹⁶ See chapter 3.

Theories of agonism ask us to stop our course of thinking at an arbitrary stopping point – a point which borders our fear of instability and the challenge of our being. The insistence that antagonism is dangerous, that it bases action in the political on a foundation of ruthlessness and insurmountable conflict supports the notion that we should produce some sort of agonistic hegemony where people accept difference and conflict as progressive and dismiss it where progress seems unattainable. To be blunt, this is a lazy politics. It fails to provide an explanation beyond the scope of adversarial relations that is productive. Moreover, while theorists such as Mouffe, provide many useful inroads to help us understand our role in the political, especially in recognizing the role of the political in identity formation, she falters in hoping that the excluded masses will ever be more than a backward thinking minority that can be dismissed. This comes out in her constant criticism of Rawls which ends up detracting from her argument more than solidifying it. She argues against Rawls, stating: “When a well-ordered society has been achieved, those who take part in the overlapping consensus should have no right to question the existing arrangements since they embody the principles of justice. If somebody does not comply, it must be due to irrationality or unreasonableness.”³¹⁷ It is here that she posits that Rawls’ theory of political liberalism is exclusionary, but with her focus placed so heavily on him she mistakenly misses the underlying reliance on reasonableness in her own argument. If her argument is centred on this point, one that she repeats when erecting poles of political values she eschews the issue of the exclusion or even a kind of a-politicization within her own theory. It would be inaccurate to label her works as a-political, especially in the sense that she frames Rawls; however, the avoidance of antagonism, of actually difficult and messy political situations represents an abdication of political responsibility for the agonist to engage with their enemy as well as their adversary. Especially considering the issues we are currently facing with the rise of

³¹⁷ Mouffe, “The Limits of John Rawls’ Pluralism”, 6.

populism and its political validation, it is irresponsible to think that we can either ignore our enemies or, on the contrary, turn them into our adversaries.

Reason and rationality play a problematic role in the conception of the antagonistic self as well as for an antagonistic politics. An over-reliance on reason raises it to the level of godly worship, allowing it to play a dogmatic role in ideological truth claims and blueprint driven politics. It also serves the function of creating a basis for the political which becomes axiomatic and thus provides inaccurate explanations and justifications for actions and perspectives that are simply not reasonable. This makes way for an exclusionary political realm where battles are said to be fought on reasonable grounds. The agonistic perspective attempts to circumvent these basic assumptions by accounting for conflict in opposition to a certain set of ideological values but comes to a similar conclusion. The relation between adversaries is only possible if both parties embrace reasonable notions of compromise or respect for the other which are unattainable.³¹⁸ Despite a recognition that the agonistic often follows the antagonistic, there is a missing link that would work to explain how this shift occurs outside of a basic legal or juridical change within politics. When looking at the self, we must identify a spark that pushes a confrontation from that of antagonism towards agonism. Logistically, what is missing is an elaboration of the steps taken before we could possibly consider a solution via agonism or even deliberative democracy or political liberalism. I argue that a semblance of public reason is required for us to look at the other and consider them an adversary and not an enemy; a claim not accepted in agonistic theory. In looking at the ways in which antagonism works within the constitution of the self as well as in politics and the political we see that several steps must be taken before we could ever accept

³¹⁸ In her newest book, *For a Left Populism* (2018) Mouffe more clearly states that the possibility for a truly political agonistic struggle is becoming eliminated, further showing, as I contend, the need for a recognition of the role of antagonism as a force within the self and the political.

those who we fear as those who we work together with. Processes of being and becoming through a positional and reflective consciousness that challenges the bad faith of our own deep-seated contingences are brought about when harnessing our being as anxiety, not reason. Yet, a complete dismissal of reason is also problematic as it sometimes characterizes the shifts and changes subsequent to these complex and often irrational confrontations with our individual fractured and antagonistic being. There is no pre-determined way to understand how things will or ought to play out in the political. At times there will be reasonable negotiations, at others there will not – this is, at its foundation where the need for politics is found. Politics, while able to set up systems and circumstances wherein reasonable exchanges take place, must also account for issues of a larger scope, those that are not reasonable at all. As such, recognition of the antagonistic foundation of politics is required to deal with these types of issues. To assume that dealing with irrationality and conflict deriving from substantial difference is beyond the reach of political action is a troubling prospect. If the self, in its own constitution is antagonistic, it is inevitable that this antagonism will spill over into the political in a significant way that requires a critical analysis.

Conclusion: *Constitution Model in Flux*

“...a man who commits himself, and who realizes that he is not only the individual that he chooses to be, but also a legislator choosing at the same time what humanity as a whole should be, cannot help but be aware of his own full and profound responsibility...The only way to evade that disturbing thought is through some kind of bad faith.”

Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, 25.

A critical existential perspective directed toward self and state constitutions allows one to take advantage of open ended, anti-essential theories and apply them to a study of politics and the political. To make use of this perspective is not to rely on it as an ideological basis for a theoretical future but to aid in our understanding of one's being as political, even if only through a temporal process of coming together in the demos. The individual is both actor and spectator in terms of their political engagement and may phenomenologically assess their existentiell experience from their particular, reflective position. The state, on the other, hand exists more statically and as such is perceived, changed, and acted upon in the momentary flare ups of the political. Thus, the constitution of the self has been the focus throughout, with the state being a marker from which we position ourselves. The existential type of freedom forwarded here poses a challenge for being as it requires consistent action, reflection and a responsibility for our choices regardless of whether or not we are a spectator or an actor. A drive toward universality and unity is understandable as it offers a sense of comfort and stability where things exist

unchallenged and the 'status quo' is maintained. However, it is not conducive to an authentic freedom within an antagonistic society.

This work began by asking the questions:

1. "How does the antagonistic self construct itself, in and through its relation to the other?
What role does our existentiell perspective play in the drive towards and away from
idea(l)s of wholeness and consensus?"
2. "How are antagonistic politics constructed as a reflection of the political? What role does
our existentiality play in the drive towards and away from idea(l)s of wholeness and
consensus?"

In order to tackle these complex questions we began by identifying a prevalent constitution model within the canon of political philosophy – comparing the self and the state in terms of their construction. Looking towards a projection of self into the state thus led to the expansion of the original question regarding one's existentiell (personal) perspective to a more broad and inter-relational form of existentiality. The first iteration of the research questions concern one's being with themselves, whereas the second, in dealing with existentiality concerns one's being in the world. The progression of the argument made throughout builds from a more typical self and state reflection, one where a specific end goal is chosen beforehand and the model is constructed afterwards. Even in the case of Plato, where the ideal city is come to at the end of dialectical process of question and answer and built from the bottom up, the end goal was always unity and the kallipolis was simply its vehicle.

Chapter 1 grounds the argument in providing a review of literature that is the basis for the constitution model of self and state reflections. Within the chapter, Plato's *Republic* as well as

Timaeus provide a prominent example of the self as a reflection of the constitution of the state. Plato outlines a highly manipulated situation where the state is conceptualized prior to the individual (soul) and a noble lie is required to enable its maintenance. Citizens are essentialized to the service of the polis, their identity is predefined based on a myth regarding the composition of their soul. While the many (bronze souled) live a life of action, it is artificially separated from the political as their actions are task orientated and specialized towards utility. It is only the philosopher king who lives a political life. The being of the (gold souled) philosopher king is consistent and eternal, and is represented by the ascent to the intelligible realm of the Forms and the soul of the world. The unity immortalized in the philosopher king holds the city together as undivided sameness. The initial exercise of comparing one's self constitution to that of their state is fruitful but does not account for difference and insurmountable antagonism. The assumption in Plato is that the masses will never seek entrance into politics as they will be fulfilled in their labour and perhaps too busy to care, however when looking at the current state of politics it is evident that a large mass of a-politicized, disenfranchised citizens can be disastrous.

Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* attempt to ameliorate the issue of extreme unity within Plato's model. Aristotle proposes a similar base argument that the state highly influences the character of the individual who lives in it. The constitution of the state is formative and promotes virtuous habits. Further, he argues for the positive benefits of a (limited) plurality that pushes us, even slightly, away from Plato's reliance on unity as requisite for the ideal state. For Aristotle our actions are also necessarily interactions with others who are different. This is not solely a base observation but a requirement for the development of good citizens. The notion of friendship beyond mere utility advances one past knowing of virtue and towards being virtuous. One needs the other in order to cultivate the political virtues outlined

within the constitution of the state. A recognition of plurality in the demos as well as the need for the other results in a more political citizenry. The regime and the constitution that it upholds moulds the citizen, similarly to that found in Plato but in a much more organic manner. Citizens for Aristotle have a being defined as political and interactive yet they are still orientated toward a singular, teleological goal. These interventions in the constitution model are an improvement but do not come far enough either in terms of pre-determined and a-historical end points or regarding the definition of action. Action is highlighted by Aristotle as part of one's being as political yet the type of action he presents is more akin to behaving than acting. This comes as a result of his focus on habituation towards a set of particular virtues rather than addressing the need for action beyond this scope.

Chapter 2 continues in reviewing great works within the canon where we can identify elements of a constitution model or a relationship between how we understand individuals and the state. Moving into modernity a shift occurs where politics as understood by the Greeks is expanded closer to what we refer to as 'the political'. For the ancients, notions of being are limited to discussions of the soul and cannot be exactly taken existentially in the same way as can be done with modern thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. It is Rousseau who provides an introduction of existentiality into the constitution model through his discussions of judgement, appearance and fracture within the psyche of the self. Taking three of his major works, (*The Discourse on Inequality, Emile, and the Social Contract*) a similar project of self and state reflection is clear. The existential seeds within Rousseau significantly shift the trajectory of the model towards one with a focus on the development of being and consciousness far beyond that of his predecessors. In the Rousseau-ean model the self is constructed first through a progression of the faculty of judgement. The genus of difference is identified when one

engages in judgement of the other. In fact, for Rousseau, being, or a mere knowledge of existence comes through engagement with the other. Judgement comes when one compares themselves and their abilities to those around them. It is no surprise that this revelation parallels one's knowledge of their existence as self. A recognition of being leads to the distinction between being and appearing, where an individual is not only aware that they exist but also that they are perceived and therefore can comport themselves in order to appear in contradiction to their being. Aside from this integral existential shift, an element of antagonism can be found in Rousseau when addressing the fracture created within the self as a result of the separation of being and appearing. However, as the constitution model progresses in Rousseau's works we are lead once again to a singular and unified end encapsulated within the general will. Individuals are driven towards false unity through a rigid and highly manipulated method of education that takes their existential being and funnels it into singular will to be shared with others. Their freedom is not derived through action within the political, they are 'forced to be free' on the basis that their dependence on others should be buried and not embraced.

The review of literature concerning constitution models was concluded with Immanuel Kant. Kant departs from the Greeks and Rousseau in that that his model has a distinctly ideological end goal of universal liberalism. However, his contribution on the role of judgement and recognition of antagonism makes his model of the state and the individuals within it of great use. He identifies an 'a-social sociability' latent in human interaction that allows us to see the early acknowledgement of antagonism as a driving force in one's being with others. Antagonism is tied closely to judgement in that it is what pushes us into the political and initiates an engagement with others. Under these circumstances one can be a spectator (who judges) or an actor (who is judged). The stage for a realm of the political that can be understood critically and

existentially is set here – where antagonism is understood not only as an aspect of the human condition but as an impetus for action and judgement/recognition. Kant's theorization, like those before him, is hindered by an over reliance on universality as one's actions in public are meant to reflect universal imperatives based on reason. Further, this notion of public reason is something that bases the liberal ideology that pathologizes difference as something in need of a cure.

Once a history of self and state constitution reflections was assessed, Chapter 3 looked to disassemble the constitution model and calls for a more fluid and de-totalized (non-universal) conception of the ways in which the self and the state may reciprocally influence each other. Thus, the model as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 serves as a heuristic device in order to draw out certain changes that have taken place over time that have led us to the point where a theorization of a critical existential perspective on politics and the political is illuminated and can be put to use. Sheldon Wolin's work provided a bridge, allowing the argument to take a significant shift as well as providing a foundation for exploring concepts such as politics and the political. His argument that the political exists in momentary and temporary coming together of citizens in action and that politics is found in static institutions and systems bridges the gap between the constitution model previously discussed and the critical existential approach advanced afterwards. Action in the political temporarily totalizes being as political, allowing for the opportunity for de-totalization upon the horizon of future actions. The universal models advanced in the first two chapters created boundaries around the self and the state, purporting that the self and state reflection occurs between two complete or whole entities either determined a priori or through an arbitrary end goal. In cases where the process of constitution is bound into a unity, a false sense of purity is indirectly promoted despite any claims in favour of a plurality or difference. Moreover, acceptance of such determinate notions encourages the state to maintain

an unequal power relation wherein it encourages a self constitution for its citizens based on its own image. This accounts for both the erasure of politics from the political but also lays the foundation for a self/state relation that is not reciprocal and promotes bad faith identification.

A rejection of notions of wholeness or a priori definitions of self (or state) characterizes the new constitution 'model' – if it can be called a model at all. Instead, there is a constellation of temporary flare ups and lulls. In times of action and inaction there will be affinities between the state and individuals allowing a myriad of possibilities for a substantial exercise of power in the political. The temporal definition of action as political is not only evident when observing or studying historical examples of resistance and change, but is also needed in order to allow time for reflection upon past and future action, organic self identification in relation to political issues and instances of spectating and judgement that further impact our being. This cannot occur with two prototypical entities constantly reflecting back at each other or in a linear and predictable manner; thus a time for retreat is necessary.

Being-anxiety as an ontological state is a driving force in recognizing the periods of flux in the political and pushing us toward the horizon of possibility upon turning toward the political once again. Defining being as anxiety is difficult for many reasons as when dealing with the overcoming of a fear response or shedding deeply seated contingencies; however, it is for this exact reason that being can be said to be characterized by an anxious ontology. Waiting in fear is a passive state of being whereas anxiety is dynamic and pushes us toward action. For the constitution 'model' this is imperative. It explains why the two poles of the model – self/the political and state/politics engage in temporal yet reciprocal relations. Each exists not as a bounded unity but one of two co-constitutive stellar evolutions occurring within the same system. They impact each other, retreat and are driven back into each other as an anxiety laden

prospect of possibility. Anxiety is harnessed in moments of the political and pushes us towards the continuing evolution of the constitution ‘model’.

Chapter 4 continued this trajectory in looking at instances of temporary totalization in connection to the temporary way of the political. The concept of bad faith was utilized to describe the inauthentic ways in which unity and universalization are often maintained. The advancing of bad faith purity in inter- and intra-group relations hides the presence of antagonism that underpins the conflictual relations of differing parts within ourselves and differences between individual selves. Again, the role of judgement comes to the fore in instances of antagonism where the expectation of the spectator weighs heavily on the other regardless of whether they share an identity with them or not. Action and the conclusions deduced in reflection are directly and, at times indirectly, based on the look of the other. It is not necessarily the ‘voice of reason’ that constructs one’s being – but the look of the other.

There is a violence in this process, located in the gap between isolation and alienation. A space characterized by alienation is also a space of anxiety. It facilitates a congruence in our ontic and ontological state where one is able to witness and experience their anxiety. This is thus a location beyond isolation due to our being as anxiety. There is present a feeling of duress wherein our being can be considered alien to us as it is dislodged from the perceived blueprint of totalization on route to its de-construction. Antagonism is present in the individual’s self constitution and the configuration of the state from which they are (in)formed. The Arendtian state of alienation uncovers our being as anxiety and is capable of mediating our antagonistic (individual) parts while also contributing to a temporal violence that matches the definition of the political used throughout this work. That is, a space for political change and contestation that is impermanent and subject to change. Epistemological violence serves an instrumental purpose

and while this is very difficult, it also accounts for what Sartre describes as our being condemned to freedom.

Chapter 5 provided a more clear definition of the antagonism advocated throughout in comparing it to agonism. Agonism, the relation between adversaries who share a mutual respect and knowledge that consensus is nearly never a possibility, may be possible at times but only after dealing with an initial seed of antagonism. As a result, it is integral to address the antagonism that often grounds our own existence both when alone and especially in relation to the other. Further, any sense of agonistic relations, once actualized produce an amicable end for those involved which is clearly not characteristic of some of the greater political issues we are confronted with upon entrance into the political. In situations where an adversarial identification with the other is not possible, we must be able to grapple with antagonism in a way that does not produce isolation or disenfranchisement for the other or, on the other hand, re-iterate bad faith assumptions related to being and identity.

A drive away from ideological based theorizations and broad truth claims allows us to address such antagonistic issues with greater clarity. Antagonistic relations are not solved by liberalism, deliberative democracy, agonism, and so forth. While differing ideologies may aid in minimizing exploitation or oppression more than others – difference and conflict would remain in some form or another. Existentialism's status as less political in its foundation makes it useful for this purpose. We can look at political problems while using a critical existential lens in order to identify how and why the self is constituted in the way that it is and how being and consciousness is affected by the constitution of the state under any regime type. The constitution 'model' (or constellation) that we are left with brings together the abstract and the concrete to produce good faith within the political. While situations of antagonism may not be perfect or

ideal, their chaotic and fluctuating mode of being is most congruent to our own form of life as antagonistic selves. Inwardly held antagonisms are carried into the political and produce a constitution of self and state that is reciprocal and not derived from an idealized or pre-determined blueprint of political life.

References

- Adorno, Theodor W. *Negative Dialectics*. Translated by E.B. Ashton. New York: Continuum, 1973.
- Arendt, Hannah. "What is Existential Philosophy." In *Essays in Understanding*, Edited by Jerome Kohn, 163-187. New York: Schocken Books, 1994.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Edited by Ronald Beiner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1970.
- Arendt, Hannah. "French Existentialism." In *Essays in Understanding*, Edited by Jerome Kohn, 188-193. New York: Schocken Books, 1994.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Austin: Harcourt Inc, 1968.
- Aristotle. *The Politics*. Translated by T.A. Sinclair. London: Penguin Books, 1962.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Translated by HM Parshley. New York: Vintage Books, 2011.
- Benhabib, Seyla. "Another Cosmopolitanism" in *Another Cosmopolitanism: The Berkeley Tanner Lectures*, edited by Robert Post, 13-80. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Benhabib, Seyla. *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Borradori, Giovanna. "Reconstructing Terrorism – Habermas" in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Collins, Susan D. *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Connolly, William E. *Identity Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

- Finlayson, Alan. "Introduction: Becoming Plural." In *Democracy and Pluralism: The Political Thought of William E. Connolly*, edited by Alan Finlayson, p. 1-19. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper Perennial, 1962.
- Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Hérubel, Jean-Pierre V. M. "The Darker Side of Light: Heidegger and Nazism, A bibliographic Essay." *Purdue University Press* 10, no. 1(1991): 85-105.
- Horkheimer, Max. *Eclipse of Reason*. London: Bloomsbury, 2004.
- Horkheimer, Max. "On the Problem of Truth." In *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, edited by Arato and Gebhardt, 407-443. New York: Continuum, 1985.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose." in *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by H.S. Reiss, 41-53. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Theory and Practice." In *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by H.S. Reiss, 61-92. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Perpetual Peace." In *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by H.S. Reiss, 93-130. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Kirk, G. S, Raven, J.E, and Schofield. M. "The Ionian Thinkers: Heraclitus of Ephesus." In *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 182-215. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kirk, G. S, Raven, J.E, and Schofield. M. "Philosophy in the west: Parmenides of Elea." In *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 263-285. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Marion Young, Iris. *Democracy and Inclusion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Marshall, David L. "The Origin and character of Hannah Arendt's Theory of Judgement." *Political Theory* 38, no.3: (2010), 367-393.
- McDowell, Linda. "Capital Culture Revisited: Sex, Testosterone and the City." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, no.3: (2010), 652-658.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *On the Political*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *The Return of the Political*. New York: Verso, 2005.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*. London: Verso, 2013.

- Mouffe, Chantal. "Democracy, Power and the Political." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting Boundaries of the political*, Edited by Seyla Benhabib, 245-256. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Mouffe, Chantal. "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism." *Social Research* 66, no. 3 (1999): 745-758.
- Mouffe, Chantal. "The Limits of John Rawls' Pluralism." *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 56, no. 118 (2009): 1-14.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *For a Left Populism*. London:Verso, 2018.
- Murphy H, and Caivano, Dean. "Revealing and Acting: Anxiety and Courage in Heidegger and Arendt." *Spectra* 6, no. 1 (2017).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Horace B. Samuel New York: Dover Publications, 2003.
- Phillips, Anne. "Dealing with Difference: A politics of ideas or a politics of presence." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting Boundaries of the political*, Edited by Seyla Benhabib, 139-152. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Plato. *The Republic*. Translated by Allan Bloom. USA:Basic Books, 1968.
- Plato. *Timaeus*. Translated by Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Prügl ,Elizabeth. "' If Lehman Brothers Had Been Lehman Sisters...' Gender and Myth in the Aftermath of the Financial Crisis." *International Political Sociology* 6, no.1 (2012): 21-35.
- Rawls, John. "The Domain of the Political and Overlapping Consensus" *New York University Law Review* 64, no.2 (1989): 233-255.
- Rawls, John. *Justice as Fairness*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Belknap Press Harvard, 2001.
- Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Belknap Press Harvard, 1971.
- Roberts-Miller, Patricia. "Fighting Without Hatred: Hannah Arendt's Agonistic Rhetoric." *JAC* 22, no. 3 (2002): 585-601.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Discourse on Inequality*. Translated by Franklin Philip. New York: Oxford, 1994.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *The Social Contract*. Translated by Maurice Cranston. London: Penguin Books, 1968.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *Emile: Or on Education*. Translated by Allan Bloom. :Basic Books, 1979.

Sartre, Jean Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism is a Humanism*. Translated by Carol Macomber. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Stocks, J. L., "The Divided line of Plato rep. VI." *The Classical Quarterly* 5, 2 (April 1911): 73-88.

Strauss, Leo. *The City and Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Waterfield, Robin. "Heraclitus of Ephesus." In *The First Philosophers The Presocratics and the Sophists*, 32-48. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by GEM Anscombe. UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2009.

Wolin, Sheldon. "Fugitive Democracy." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting Boundaries of the political*, Edited by Seyla Benhabib, 31-45. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Wolin, Sheldon. "People's Two Bodies." *Democracy* 1, no.1 (1981): 9-24.

Wolin, Sheldon. "The Liberal/Democratic Divide: On Rawls's Political Liberalism." *Political Theory* 24, no.1 (1996): 97-119.