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Extreme and Ordinary Harms;
Reflections on the Tragic Paradigm

Introduction

I am honoured to participate in this important occasion celebrating the contribution of

Professor Debra Bergoffen to the field of philosophy. Debra and I have been friends and intellectual

colleagues for close to twenty years. She has made substantial contributions to feminist philosophy,

philosophies of embodiment, and to the theme of vulnerability that we are marking today. Her work

explores the vulnerability not just of feminine bodies, as in the case of war rape, but the

vulnerability of human bodies. As such, she shows the truth of the insight that feminist philosophy

is not marginal but is vital for re-thinking central concepts in philosophy, such as concepts of the

body and materiality.

The term vulnerability derives from the Latin word "vulnus", which means wound.

Vulnerability refers to my injurability -- and hence points to the limits of the view of the subject as

an autonomous agent. Vulnerability implies the risk that one's capacities and one's weaknesses will

be used against oneself, against one's consent.[i] Vulnerability points to the risk of becoming an

unwilling instrument of violence against others and of losing those whom one loves.[ii] Hence, the

notion of vulnerability points to the way in which individuals or groups unintentionally can become

caught in a net of destructive dynamics, and points to the possible causes of this net – some of

which are found in social systems of power which create dissymmetry in human relations and some

of which are found in existential conditions of contingency and mortality. By focusing on the

centrality of the human body in interpersonal, ethical, and political relations, the notion of

vulnerability highlights both the constructive and destructive possibilities in human existence that is implicit in Hannah Arendt's notion of natality.[iii]

Vulnerability is also linked to a broad family of concepts including the notions of evil, pollution and purity, sacrifice, violence, war and sexual violence with which I have worked. Although a focus on these dark aspects of human existence may express the personal orientation of an individual scholar, there are underlying methodological questions at issue: How can one understand extreme situations of crisis in relation to ordinary and so-called normal relations? Do extremes enable us to catch sight of dynamics that we would overlook if we took the naïve understanding of ordinary relations as the whole truth? This insight is hinted at by Adorno when he warned, "if thought is not measured by the extremity which eludes the concept, it is from the outset in the nature of the musical accompaniment with which the SS like to drown out the screams of its victims."[iv] Or should we instead analyze what is normative in ordinary social interactions in order to appreciate the way in which extremes deviate from the norm?

Two paradigms

I will briefly sketch these two alternative paradigms for understanding the relation between extreme and ordinary harms. The first paradigm arises from what one loosely can call "tragic" philosophy. The tragic approach is based on the view that there are inherent contradictions in the situation of being human, including the dichotomy between freedom and dependency, finitude and infinity, particular and universal. These conflicts can be a source of suffering, but they can also be a source of value by bringing to consciousness the importance of aspects of the world that we potentially lose.[v] This approach has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy, in Jewish and Christian thought, and has been developed in the work of phenomenology, existentialism, psychoanalysis, post- structuralism as well as in many literary works.

This approach has ontological, epistemological and moral and political dimensions. To the ontological question, "what is the nature of human life and social existence?" this approach focuses on the conflicts and dichotomies that are viewed as inherent in human existence, that come to expression both intra-subjectively and inter-subjectively, and that show lines of continuity between extreme and ordinary relations. To the epistemological question, "how does one understand extreme situations?" the tragic paradigm focuses on the genesis of extreme situations from the complex contradictions immanent in ordinary relations. In this sense, extremes are not viewed only as radical disruptions, but also are analyzed in terms of lines of continuity and processes of change.[vi] To the moral and political questions, "how should we respond to extremes as individuals and members of a community?" the paradigm of tragic philosophy emphasizes the possibilities of transformation. By feeling pity or horror at the failure of the social order which produces such suffering, one can find the seeds of revolutionary agency.

By contrast to the tragic paradigm, I will call the second paradigm a "normative" paradigm. This approach follows the self-understanding of ordinary daily life as normal and hence as normative, and articulates a view that is close both to common sense and many mainstream theoretical approaches. From the normative point of view, crises are understood to be pathological deviations from normatively normal relations. To the ontological question, "what is the nature of human life and social existence?" the normative paradigm posits such relations as essentially non-oppositional. Hence, extreme situations of war or atrocity are viewed as completely different from ordinary relations. This approach has the tendency to overlook the harms that take place in ordinary daily life. The question of which paradigm one adopts is relevant, for example, in debates about rape and sexual violence. Do the mass rapes that take place in war express patriarchal dynamics that also are manifest in rapes in peace time, or are these radically different kinds of phenomena? To the epistemological question, "how does one understand extreme situations?" the answer is that one

learns about the deviation from the norm, and the focus is on the notion of rupture with ordinary relations. One finds this response in some interpretations of the Holocaust, where the latter is marked out as inexplicable or incomprehensible, because there is no internal logic leading from pre-crises to crisis relations. In relation to individual behaviour in extreme situations, the normative approach focuses on pathological or sadistic personality types. As such, this approach disqualifies the question of change that Hannah Arendt was after when she asked of Adolf Eichmann: did he have a conscience? And answered, "yes, he had a conscience, and his conscience functioned in the expected way for about four weeks, whereupon it began to function the other way around."[vii] To the moral and political questions, "how should we respond to extremes as individuals and members of a community?" the normative paradigm shows a restorative impulse in the quest to recover the postulated harmonious relations that existed prior to crisis.

Each paradigm has different strengths and weakness. In the tragic approach to extreme harms one focuses on processes by which societies and individuals become shaped by and transformed during crises. One potential weakness is that in viewing conflict as intrinsic to human relations, one may assume a pessimistic view of the inevitability of violence and the uselessness of efforts to limit it. In the normative approach to extreme situations, one highlights ideals that may enable establishing relatively harmonious relations. One potential weakness is that in focusing on a radical break or rupture, this approach limits the analytical tools available for studying processes of individual and social transformations in the genesis of extreme situations.

My own approach falls within the tragic paradigm, and this field is populated by a number of important 20th century thinkers. The German writer Walter Benjamin, who took his life in 1940 at the Franco-Spanish border[viii], focused on the potential of violence that is *immanent* in society, as opposed to viewing violence as stemming from external threats. In his essay "Critique of Violence", Benjamin probed how violence is in fact central to the character of law in a social order.

Typically violence is viewed as a means to either a just or unjust end, and the end adjudicates the legitimacy of violence. But a deeper understanding of violence shows that violence is implicit in the making of laws. It is because violence has both a lawmaking and law-preserving function that the community fears violence in the hands of the individual.[ix] In this way, Benjamin understands violence as inherent in the establishment and justification of law. The anthropologist Mary Douglas, whose ground-breaking study *Purity and Danger* also places her within the tragic paradigm, understands human social behaviour in terms of the effort to separate and make boundaries, as a way of trying to create a symbolically consistent universe out of the reality of fragmented experience. The inevitable potentials of disorder which threaten the social order express the frailties of the symbolic system.[x] She writes that purity in rituals and religion are "an attempt to force experience into logical categories of non-contradiction. But experience is not amenable and those who make the attempt find themselves led into contradiction."[xi] And the Bulgarian-French literary critic and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, drawing on the work of Mary Douglas and George Batailles, uses the term abjection for the twisted braid of affects including loathing, disgust, uncanniness, and meaninglessness. She writes abjection is caused by "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite." The abject shows both what threatens subjectivity and meaning, and how the "impossible within…constitutes its very *being*…" The experience of abjection reveals "the inaugural *loss* that laid the foundations of its own being."[xii] For these theorists, the key terms in their analysis – violence, pollution, abjection – represent the threats to law, the social order, or subjective and bodily systems that at the same time constitute the systems that they threaten. This doubleness -- that what is constitutive of order is also threatening to it -- recognizes the fragility of the order with which humans structure their lives and social relations. It recognizes that what is

viewed as dangerous, threatening, abject is produced by the very system that seeks to control,
contain, or exclude it.

Extreme and ordinary harms

In what follows I will try to show how this hypothesis is compelling in cases both of
extreme and of ordinary harms. I will look briefly at two very different kinds of cases: 1) the
extreme harms of war rape; 2) the ordinary harms of school bullying. I will not here define the
concepts of "extreme" and "ordinary" harms which I draw on. But I do think that the cases I look at
are exemplary of such harms and could be used in developing such a definition. I present in
summary form arguments that I develop in more detail elsewhere. I will try to show how the tragic
hypothesis that the threat to community is produced by internal relations in the community is
compelling in both cases of extreme and ordinary harms.

War rape and the production of vulnerability

Sexual violence in wartime is not new to the 20th century. We find references to it in
Homer's *Iliad*, as well as references to capturing women in war in the Hebrew bible. Not until the
14th century did European leaders announce standards of chivalry to forbid rape, though these rules
were rarely enforced. The license to rape was considered a major incentive for being a soldier. Not
until the 19th century did humanitarian law protect noncombatants, including women. In the 20th
century, mass rape occurred during the Rape of Nanking, which refers both to the rape of 20,000-
80,000 Chinese women by Japanese soldiers in 1937, and the killing orgy that took 350,000 lives in
a few weeks. During World War II, up to two million women were raped by soldiers in the Soviet
army.[xiii] The French army allowed Moroccan soldiers to rape Italian women. And there was
evidence of major Nazi sexual crimes against French women, though the Nuremburg tribunal did
not mention rape in the final judgment.[xiv] Rape did take place in Auschwitz, though there has been
a conspiracy of silence about it, and the victims of rape in the camps were psychologically the

"sickest" after liberation.[xv] In the 1990's, not only did war rape take place in Europe (with an estimated 20,000-50,000 women raped in the former Yugoslavia), but during the genocide in Rwanda when 500,000 to 800,000 Rwandans were massacred, the majority of them Tutsi, at least a quarter-million women were raped. In the Congo, every armed group has discovered that rape is a cheaper weapon of war than bullets.[xvi] A Human Rights Watch specialist noted that women have had their lips and ears cut off and eyes gouged out after they were raped, so they cannot identify or testify against their attackers.

The use of sexual violence in war-time exploits the sentiment that identifies the mother's body with the earth and the territory of the nation. This view is expressed by the Cheyenne Indian saying, "A nation is not conquered until the women's hearts lay on the ground. Only then is this nation finished. This regardless of how brave its men are or how strong its weapons are."[xvii] But it is worth examining more closely how this sentiment operates. Why is a nation finished when the women's hearts lay on the ground? Does war rape exterminate women so that biological reproduction within a nation becomes impossible? Although war rape often is coupled with the murder of women, their physical death is not the only means by which a nation is finished. In the war rapes in Bosnia in the early 1990's, war rape was coupled with the strategy of enforced impregnation. Why is it that even when war rape produces childbirth, a nation is destroyed and this form of war rape is legitimately called genocidal?[xviii] One answer to this question is that war rape destroys communities by transforming women into abjects.[xix] A raped woman is often rejected by her community, her neighbors and even family, and becomes an outcast or "piece of shit." The woman, now polluted, becomes worthless – hence the reaction of one Muslim father who gave his raped daughter a rope to hang herself, the reaction of husbands who divorced their raped wives, and women's fear of disclosing their rape to their husbands.[xx] This abjection in the community is mirrored in a woman's relation to her own body and psyche. A raped woman's bodily integrity is

violated through the act of penetration that trespassed the intimate borders of her body. When forcibly impregnated, the fetus as a foreign thing in her belly also becomes abject. One woman interviewed by the UN commission in Bosnia in 1993 said of the baby that she gave birth to, "if anyone had tried to show it to me after it was born, I'd have strangled them and the baby too." This violation of bodily integrity is experienced as a violation of psychic integrity as well. Hence, some women described themselves as on the brink of madness while pregnant, and others committed suicide.

The notion of abjection reminds us that although the violence of war rape may be committed by external forces[xxi], the success of war rape in destroying a community depends on its own internal dynamics. It is a raped woman's position as both inside and outside the community that accounts for her vulnerability and the vulnerability of the community. Were she wholly outside the community, violence committed against her could be a matter of indifference to the survival of the community. Were she wholly inside the community, the specific acts of violence would not suffice to destroy the social structure of the group, but could be integrated into on-going social life. It is this ambiguous position of in-between, both included and excluded, that accounts for vulnerability. Some theorists compare the abjected victim of rape to Agamben's figure of *homo sacer*, who is situated as both included and excluded from the realm of power.[xxii] Agemben writes, "The fundamental categorical pair of Western politics is not that of friend/enemy but that of bare life/political existence, *zoe/ bios*, exclusion/inclusion."[xxiii]

Hannah Arendt's notion of natality also helps us understand how war rape works on the internal dynamics of community. For Arendt, natality is "the new beginning inherent in birth (that) can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting…. Moreover, since action is the political activity par excellence, natality, and not mortality, may be the central category of political, as distinguished

from metaphysical, thought."[xxiv] Arendt's notion of natality underlines the dependency of human being on community, and hence the vulnerability of human beings to loss of community[xxv]. Forced impregnation undermines not only a woman's capacity to belong to this particular community, but also her capacity to belong to some future possible community. It threatens the capacity of a child born from violence to belong to this community, as the trauma of her/his origins may reappear in unexpected moments[xxvi]. But forced impregnation also shows the vulnerability of the principle of beginning that is implicit in human birth. With forced impregnation in war rape, *birth* itself becomes a *weapon of death*. In this context, the fundamental meaning of both human birth and the concept of natality become radically transformed. Without this basic condition of natality, the ability of the political community to guarantee its members basic human rights is also undermined.[xxvii] In this way, the conditions that are necessary for individuals' inclusion in the concept of "humanity" are fragile and vulnerable to loss.

School bullying and the production of exclusion

In discussing ordinary harms, I draw on my current work on school bullying in the collaborative Danish project *Exploring Bullying in Schools,* which explores processes of inclusion/exclusion in school bullying. Bullying is a widespread phenomenon in the lives of school children world-wide. A 2008 survey of Danish children (12-13 year olds) indicate that 32% of children have been bullied. Research in the field is dominated primarily by the normative paradigm, by which the harms of bullying are viewed as pathological deviations from normal relations. This approach is taken by the Norwegian psychologist Dan Olweus, whose work has dominated the field, His basic definition is: "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students"[xxviii] One of the assumptions in his approach is that there is stability in the position of bully and victim over time, perhaps even over years.[xxix] And he explains bullying primarily in terms of individuals'

personality characteristics. In his view, bullies are aggressive children who are impulsive, have a need to dominate, have a positive attitude towards violence, and have little empathy with their victims. And he explains this aggressive reaction pattern as a consequence of poor children-rearing, in particular on the part of the "primary caretaker (usually the mother)". When the primary caretaker (usually the mother) lacks warmth and involvement and has been permissive and tolerant, then she has reared an aggressive child with a tendency to become a bully. Victims are passive, submissive, anxious, insecure, and weak, largely because they have overprotective mothers.

Olweus makes a number of problematic claims, all of which revolve around his assumption that bullying should be understood as abnormal social relations that are a result of anti-social individual personalities. He stipulates personality types with a stable set of personal characteristics, instead of exploring how individuals also are transformed by the situations in which they find themselves. In viewing bullying as quintessentially a relation between two fixed types -- bully and victim -- he overlooks the experience of children who sometimes act as bullies and sometimes are bullied. His understanding of group relations is modelled on the notion of a charismatic leader and he overlooks the many processes by which groups define themselves in terms of who is included and excluded in a group. In linking bullying to a family of concepts such as pathology, criminal and anti-social behaviour, Olweus suggests that bullying is abnormal and occurs where normal socially integrative practices fail. But this pathologizing of bullying is disturbing, given that he also cites the incidence of bullying to be consistently 5-10% of students questioned.

If instead of the normative paradigm one draws on the tragic paradigm, a different analysis of bullying becomes possible. Here it is possible to focus on processes of inclusion and exclusion that are constitutive of social interactions, and that bring with them both the pleasures of

belonging to a social order and the vulnerability to exclusion from it. From this perspective, I propose the following definition of bullying:

> Bullying is an ongoing process of constituting informal groups through mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. All members of the group are at risk of being excluded, and changes of position are dangerous to the group order and are a source of fear and anxiety to all members. When particular children are systematically excluded as "other" to the group, they are deprived of social recognition and their experiences can be compared to psychic torture.

This approach has the advantage of looking at bullying as a harm of ordinary groups instead of postulating it as an expression of dysfunctional group relations. In focusing on the processes of constituting groups one avoids the assumption that some children are natural bullies and others are natural victims. In my view, it is advisable to disqualify the question, "*why* are some children bullies and some children victims?" One gets no further by posing this question than one gets in posing the question "why are women treated as Other in society?"[xxx] Like Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, I answer the question of "why" with "how". One can understand *how* group processes operate by which some individuals *become* bullies, victims, or bystanders. Individuals who are excluded from the group, who are positioned as other, become attributed with characteristics that define them as outsiders to the group. If a child is bullied with the claim that she/he is ugly, stupid, unpopular, then the group has the power to define itself as beautiful, smart, or popular. The values associated with in- and out- positions fluctuate. Children can be bullied just as much by being considered beautiful (full of themselves), smart (teacher's pet), or popular (manipulative) as for the opposite. Children are not bullied *because* of these attributes, but *with* these attributes.

It is important to note that exclusion does not produce an absolute outside to the group, but more accurately produces a borderline position.[xxxi] Children who are bullied belong to

the formal group as members of the class. But they also belong to the informal group, in the sense that the social relations are charged with the emotional dynamics of negotiating positions in relation to the group. Here again the notion of abjection is useful. Abjection calls to mind both the need for group borders and the fragility of these borders, which provokes intense feelings of disgust. Since groups create an outside to make possible an internal order, every individual is at risk of becoming outside or on the border.[xxxii]

From this perspective, social dynamics of inclusion and exclusion are central to groups and cannot be eliminated, though they create feelings of anxiety in group members. Shifts of positions inside and outside the groups occur relatively frequently, so these positions are not rigid. But when the positions become rigid, when certain individuals become fixed as "other" and lose the possibility of becoming part of the group, then they lose social meaning that is bound up with recognition.[xxxiii] When this occurs systematically and over time, this experience can be compared to psychic torture.[xxxiv]

Hence, concepts that help us understand the extremes in human life, such as abjection and the fragility of the borders of symbolic systems also are crucial for understanding ordinary harms. In fact, it is only through such an approach that ordinary harms can be understood as ordinary. Within the normative paradigm, even the ordinary harms of school bullying become inexplicable within its own context and can only be understood as expressions of pathological, dysfunctional, anti-social or abnormal behaviour that originates outside this context. The tragic paradigm does not alchemize ordinary harms into extreme harms, as critics might object. Instead, by focusing on the tensions inherent in human existence and social systems, the tragic approach expands our understanding of normal relations and provides conceptual resources to analyze the processes by which ordinary individuals commit both extraordinary and ordinary harms.

Concluding reflections

I have tried to show that the tragic paradigm is compelling for understanding both extreme and ordinary harms. From an ontological perspective, the study of extreme harms opens up an understanding of conflict in the heart of political, social, and intra-subjective relations. It points to the fragility of systems and the inevitability of what Beauvoir called failure.[xxxv] Such a position links to a family of concepts such as power, vulnerability, otherness, and abjection.[xxxvi] This approach suggests that there are aspects of embodied social reality that appear in both extraordinary and ordinary relations.

From an epistemological perspective, confronting the shock of existence in the face of extremes such as genocide or war rape helps us confront the shock of existence. Extreme situations confound the naïve assumptions of positivism which take the matter of fact view that reality is given through sensation as true without questioning the processes by which reality is shaped or confronting the risks to which reality is subject. Adorno writes "in philosophy we experience a shock" and thinking "must also be a thinking against itself."[xxxvii] Such a commitment brings with it the practice of epistemological virtues of openness, searching, self-criticism and humility.

From a moral and political perspective, the tragic paradigm is associated with "emancipatory" interests in diagnosing social reality with the interest in transforming it.[xxxviii] In my view, this emancipatory approach bears the traces of a sacrificial logic.[xxxix] It assumes that there is a collective subject; that there is a victim who suffers; that the suffering of the victim can lead to a beneficial transformation for the community; so that the suffering of the victim pays. Terry Eagleton claims that it is horror at the suffering enabled by the social system that becomes an engine for radical transformation. Characterizing an emancipatory interest as sacrificial is undeniably uncomfortable. It seems to suggest that violence and suffering are part of a trans-historical dynamic and hence are impervious to change. But perhaps we need to revise our

assumptions about where change is possible. As Eagleton notes, "It is proving rather more feasible in our age to alter certain genetic structures than it is to tamper with capitalism or patriarchy."[xl]

For all these reasons, the tragic paradigm is compelling for its ability to avoid compartmentalizing between normal and extreme relations, to diagnose processes that lead to the genesis of extremes, to shock our practices of thinking, and to glimpse the possibilities for transformation amidst conflict. For philosophers, the tragic paradigm reminds us that human pain deserves philosophical attention and that attending to it leads to rethinking central questions about reality, knowledge, ethics, and politics. As Michele le Doeuff writes of feminist philosophy, this approach insistently explores aspects of human relations that philosophers often have taken for granted, and thereby helps philosophy become more philosophical. We can be grateful to philosophers like Debra Bergoffen who contribute to this on-going project.

[i] See Debra Bergoffen's article, "February 22, 2001: Toward a Politics of the vulnerable Body" in *Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil*, edited by Robin May Schott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

[ii] See my review of Judith Butler's *Precarious Life* (London: Verso, 2004) in *Forum*, December 22, 2004, http://www.forum.kvinfo.dk/forskning/?id=3350201

[iii] The British sociologist Bryan Turner argues that the precariousness of human bodies is mirrored in the precariousness of social institutions. In his view, the shared vulnerability in the human condition can provide the basis for normative rights which protect all individuals from suffering and indignity. Bryan Turner, *Vulnerability and Human Rights* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 25, 9. I argue for the importance of supplementing Arendt's notion of natality with vulnerability in my article, "Natality and Destruction: Arendtian Reflections on War Rape" in Schott, ed. *Birth, Death, and Femininity; Essays in the Philosophy of Embodiment*, under submission.

[iv] T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (London, 1960), 365.

[v] Terry Eagleton, *Sweet Violence; The Idea of the Tragic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 21, 26-27, 241.

[vi] Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989) emphasizes this continuity in his diagnosis of the role of modernity in the Holocaust.

[vii] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem; A Report on the Banality of Evil* (N.Y.: Penguin, 1964/1994), 95.

[viii] Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955/1983), 170.

[ix] Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence" in *Reflections*, Edmund Jephcott trans. (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 283-4..

[x] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 68-9, 94, 99.

[xi] Douglas, 162.

[xii] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia, 1982), 1-5.

[xiii] Antony Beevor, *Berlin: The Downfall, 1945* (N.Y.:Viking, 2002). One should note that some historians oppose the numbers game, in which the highest possible figure is systematically cited.

[xiv] "Rape and Genocide in Rwanda: The ICTR's Akayesu Verdict", http://homepages.uc.edu/thro/rwanda/RwandaRapeCase2.htm, accessed October 27, 2003, 4.

[xv] Henry Krystal, ed. *Massive Psychic Trauma* (N.Y.: International Universities Press, 1968), 342.

[xvi] Jan Goodwin, "Silence=Rape", *The Nation*, March 8, 2004, 8-22.

[xvii] Robin May Schott, *Discovering Feminist Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 112.

[xviii] See Claudia Card, "Genocide and Social Death" in Schott, *Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil*, 71-86.

[xix] Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, "Becoming Abject – Rape as a Weapon of War", *Body and Society*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (2005), 111-128. I refer to the slightly longer manuscript version of this paper.

[xx] Schott, *Discovering Feminist Philosophy*, 109-114.

[xxi] This claim is too simple. In many cases the "external" forces become external by virtue of internal conflict in the polity. This is the case during civil war as took place in the break-up of the former Yugoslavia.

[xxii] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer; Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 71-74. This is Diken's and Lausten's strategy.

[xxiii] Agamben, 8.

[xxiv] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 9.

[xxv] As she shows in her analysis of Nazi Germany, total exclusion from community is equivalent to exclusion from the category of humanity. Hannah Arendt. *The Origins of Totalitariansim* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1951/1973). See especially the chapter "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man", 267-304.

[xxvi] Jasmila Zbanic's film "Grbavica" explores this trauma. The story of the single mother Esma, who has told her 12-year old daughter Sara that her father died as a martyr in defence of Bosnia, reaches its climax when Sara is to go on a school trip. If she can produce evidence of how her father died, she will be able to go on the trip for free. But her mother is unable to produce this evidence. As a prisoner in a camp who had been repeatedly raped, she finally erupts and shouts to Sara, "You are the daughter of a chetnik!"
http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/content.aspx?audioID=2422, accessed January 18, 2008.

[xxvii] Peg Birmingham argues that natality provides the ontological foundation for the universal principle of humanity in Arendt's thought, and "humanity itself must guarantee the right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity (Birmingham 2006, 4-6)". I am suggesting that it is the public world or community – variously concretized in local, national, or trans-national terms – that guarantees political rights.

[xxviii] P.K. Smith, Y. Morita, J. Junger-Tas, D. Olweus, R. Catalano, P. Slee, eds., *The Nature of School Bullying; A Cross-National Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 10ff.

[xxix] Dan Olweus, *Bullying at School* (Malden, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 27-44.

[xxx] Robin May Schott, "Beauvoir on the Ambiguity of Evil" in Claudia Card, ed. *Cambridge Companion to the Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 240.

[xxxi] Helle Rabøl Hansen uses the phrase, "inkluderet eksklusion" to emphasize that an individual is both excluded and included in the group at the same time. She uses the notion of "longing for belonging" as a psychological impetus for understanding both bullying and the anguish it causes.

[xxxii] Popular films about school dynamics, such as the American film "Mean Girls", illustrate this threat. This dynamic is also useful for understanding the role of sacrifice in societies, including the role of the scapegoat. I develop this analysis in my chapter "Sexual Violence, Sacrifice, and Narratives of Political Origins" in Schott, ed. *Birth, Death, and Femininity; Essays on the Philosophy of Embodiment*.

[xxxiii] The problems with being fixed in the position of "other" are explored by Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*. As Beauvoir notes, otherness is inherent both in human consciousness and in society. What is problematic is not otherness as such but the lack of reciprocity, so that some groups retain the position of Subject and other groups are only defined as Other and never as subjects.

[xxxiv] Primo Levi, a survivor of Auschwitz, uses the term shame to describe the feeling of being chained to an impossible self. Giorgio Agamben elaborates, in shame, the self "becomes witness to its own disorder, its own oblivion as a subject" (Agamben 1999, 106).

[xxxv] Schott, "Feminist Ethics of Conflict" in *Discovering Feminist Philosophy*.

[xxxvi] See my manuscript, "The Social Concept of Bullying: Philosophical Reflections on Definitions".

[xxxvii] Adorno, 364-5.

[xxxviii] Habermas in *Knowledge and Human Interest* (1968) stressed this normative dimension as one aspect of knowledge.

[xxxix] I develop these points in "Sexual Violence, Sacrifice, and Narratives of Political Origins."

[xl] Eagleton, xii-xiii.