<u>Forgiveness in a Broken World: Forgiveness, *Disponibilité*, and the *Homo Viator*</u>

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[1] The following works are cited in this paper: Lucy Allais, "Wiping the Slate Clean: The Heart of Forgiveness," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 36, no. 1 (2008), 33-68; Randolph Braham, *The Politics of Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Cheshire Calhoun, "Changing One's Heart," *Ethics* 103, no. 1 (October 1992), 76-96; Germaine Cromp, "La Communion à Soi-même Chez Gabriel Marcel," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 28, no. 2 (1972), 171-184; Pamela Hieronymi, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62, no. 3 (May 2001), 529-555; Andrew Janos, "The Restoration of Neo-Corporatism (1919-1931)," *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 201-237; Christopher Ketcham, "The Invisible Other," *Marcel Studies* 2, no. 1 (2018), 17-39; Søren Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling," in *The Essential Kierkegaard*, eds. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 93-101; Gerhart B. Ladner, "*Homo Viator*: Mediaeval Ideas on Alienation and Order," *Speculum* 42, no. 2 (April 1967), 233-259; John Lukacs, *Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988); Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator*, trans. Emma Craufurd (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1951); Thomas Nail, "The Nomadic Proletariat: an Interview with Alain Badiou," *Philosophy Today* 62, no. 4 (March 2019); Miklós Radnóti, *All That Still Matters at All*, trans. John M. Ridland and Peter V. Czipott (Milwaukee: New American Press, 2013); Samuel Reis-Dennis, "Rank Offence: The Ecological Theory of Resentment," *Mind* 130, no. 4 (October 2021), 1233-1251; Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996); David Shoemaker, "The Forgiven," in *Forgiveness and Its Moral Dimensions*, eds. Brandon Warmke, Dana Kay Nelkin, and Michael McKenna (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 29-53; Balázs A. Szelényi, *The Failure of the Central European Bourgeoisie* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Dávid Szolláth, "Literary Modernism, Anti-Semitism, Jewishness and the Anxiety of Assimilation in Interwar Hungary," *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 10, (2017), 145-157; Brian Treanor and Brendan Sweetman, "Gabriel Marcel," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2021 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/marcel/; Cheng-Ling Yu, "Moral Responsibility from the Perspective of Marcel's Intersubjectivity," *Marcel Studies* 2, no. 1 (2017), 23-35; Slavoj Žižek, "Nomadic // Proletarians," *The Philosophical Salon* (February 2019), https://thephilosophicalsalon.com/nomadic-proletarians/.

Forgiveness in a Broken World

<u>NEM TUDHATOM</u>

Nem tudhatom, hogy másnak e tájék mit jelent,
nekem szülőhazám itt e lángoktól ölelt
kis ország, messzeringó gyerekkorom világa.
Belőle nőttem én, mint fatörzsből gyönge ága
s remélem, testem is majd e földbe süpped el.
Itthon vagyok. S ha néha lábamhoz térdepel
egy-egy bokor, nevét is, virágát is tudom,
tudom, hogy merre mennek, kik mennek az uton,
s tudom, hogy mit jelenthet egy nyári alkonyon
a házfalakról csorgó, vöröslő fájdalom.
Ki gépen száll fölébe, annak térkép e táj,
s nem tudja, hol lakott itt Vörösmarty Mihály;
annak mit rejt e térkép? gyárat s vad laktanyát,
az gyárat lát a látcsőn és szántóföldeket,
míg én a dolgozót is, ki dolgáért remeg,
erdőt, füttyös gyümölcsöt, szőlőt és sírokat,
a sírok közt anyókát, ki halkan sírogat,
s mi föntről pusztitandó vasút, vagy gyárüzem,
az bakterház s a bakter előtte áll s üzen,
piros zászló kezében, körötte sok gyerek,
s a gyárak udvarában komondor hempereg;
és ott a park, a régi szerelmek lábnyoma,
a csókok íze számban hol méz, hol áfonya,
s az iskolába menvén, a járda peremén,
hogy ne feleljek aznap, egy kőre léptem én,
ím itt e kő, de föntről e kő se látható,
nincs műszer, mellyel mindez jól megmutatható.

Hisz bűnösök vagyunk mi, akár a többi nép,
s tudjuk miben vétkeztünk, mikor, hol és mikép,
de élnek dolgozók itt, költők is bűntelen,
és csecsszopók, akikben megnő az értelem,
világít bennük, őrzik, sötét pincékbe bújva,
míg jelt nem ír hazánkra ujból a béke ujja,
s fojtott szavunkra majdan friss szóval ők felelnek.

Nagy szárnyadat borítsd ránk virrasztó éji felleg.

1944. január 17.[2]

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[2] Radnóti, "Matters," 116-119.

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When, in 1896, Hungary prepared to celebrate its millennium one year late, the city of Budapest was only twenty-three years old. The cities of Pest, Buda, and Óbuda straddled the River Danube and had agglomerated into a thriving metropolis in 1873. Budapest was a modern city with a very diverse populace. The preceding century had witnessed a surge of national awakening and the removal from cultural life of a once dominant cultural minority – the Germans. As recently as two generations previous, Buda had been a "German city," with five out of six inhabitants being German speakers in 1851, a figure that plummeted to a mere 4.3% monolingual German-speakers in the unified Budapest by 1900.[3] The German language had been nearly totally displaced by Hungarian, alongside various mostly Slavic minority languages spoken by migrant workers from all corners of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Magyarization of Budapest was attended by a general Magyarization of many of the assorted peoples under the Crown of St. Stephen, including Hungary's very large Jewish religious community. Compared to the Jewries of Austria proper or Galicia, Germany or Poland, Hungarian Jewry was exceptionally well integrated.[4] The quarter century between the Millennium and the end of the Great War was the golden age of Budapest, rivaling even *fin de siècle* Paris or Vienna. The Jewish community in Hungary at large, but especially in Budapest, was essential to the flourishing of science and industry, arts and culture that propelled Budapest into an exciting and promising twentieth century.

Budapest's population was 21.5% Jewish in 1900, a very high proportion, which led the infamously antisemitic mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, to habitually refer to the city as "Judapest."[5] The economic prominence of the Jewish community skyrocketed in the second half

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[3] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 100-1.
[4] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 96, 102.
[5] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 95.

of the nineteenth century as they displaced the German minority as the leading force of economic

modernization.[6] This displacement occurred at a very large scale, with Szelény noting that the,

"Germans and Magyar gentry collapsed around occupations within the state sector [i.e. civil

service], while Jews did so in the private sector."[7] The Christian middle class was far from

vanished, however, maintaining significant power within the apparatus of the state. Intermarriage

between Jewish and Christian bourgeoises remained common through the 1930s. Centripetal and

centrifugal forces were at play within the Hungarian bourgeois at the turn of the century,

dividing Christian and Jewish bourgeoises in several spheres while drawing them closer together

in others. Although custom informally barred them from the upper levels of the civil service,

several Jewish Hungarians also earned reputable positions in municipal and national

bureaucracies.[8]

The influence of Jewish Hungarians was most visible and most untrammeled in arts and

letters, though it was not without its Gentile critics. In 1910, 42% of the journalists in Budapest

were Jewish.[9] The first great Hungarian Jewish novelist was Sándor Bródy, remembered for his

good looks and bohemian lifestyle as much as for his novels' social conscience.[10] In 1890, the

Hungarian Jewish poet József Kiss founded the influential weekly journal *A Hét*, a font of

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[6] Szelényi, *Failure*, 136-7; Lukacs, *Budapest*, 92-3. By 1900, Jews comprised 5-6% of the Hungarian population, yet, "owned 60-70% of banking institutions and 85% of independent credit institutions." Jewish Hungarians represented half of the founders of modern industrial enterprises, two-thirds of wholesalers, and operated 50-60% of publishing houses nationally (76% in Budapest). The Jewish minority had gradually but thoroughly displaced the German minority as the bulk of the bourgeois in Hungary over the later nineteenth century. See also Szelényi, *Failure,* 152-3.

[7] Szelény, *Failure*, 157.

[8] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 75, 189, 192. József Kőrösy's pioneering work in urban statistics as the head of the Budapest City Office of Statistics was admired and published in Vienna and Paris. Appointed in 1910, Samu Hazai was Hungary's Minister of Defense during most of the Great War. In 1912, János Teleszky became Hungary's Minister of Finance. Ferenc Heltai briefly served as the Mayor of Budapest in 1913. All were of Jewish heritage, though not all were observant, but this was quite common among the Jewish bourgeois. Additionally, there were 16 Jewish Members of Parliament in 1900.

[9] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 187.

[10] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 156.

political criticism and the most prestigious literary journal before the founding of *Nyugat*.[11] Born to an industrious but poor Jewish family, Miksa Fenyő co-founded *Nyugat*, the most significant literary journal in Hungary for the first half of the twentieth century, in 1908, before going on to serve as the longtime director of the *GYOSZ* industrial syndicate and a member of parliament.[12] *Nyugat* was the heart of Hungary's modernist literary milieu, and published many Jewish authors.[13] Two Hungarian Jews, Arthur Koestler and Georg Lukács, won themselves lasting international recognition for their literary and political output, though their Hungarian origin was little more than an afterthought for the two.[14]

The golden years did not last forever. Over the protests of the Hungarian legislature, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia in the summer of 1914 and the world stumbled gallantly into a terrible conflagration. Drowned in the blood of millions of dead young men, Austria-Hungary was defeated in the Great War, and the Dual Monarchy was dissolved. At the outbreak of the war, the Hungarian half of the Habsburg realm had boasted a population of twenty millions. Of these millions, roughly ten millions were ethnic Magyars, and another 800,000 or so

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[11] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 154.

[12] Szolláth, "Literary," 149-50. Fenyő's co-founders at *Nyugat*, Hugo Ignotus and Ernő Osvát, were also assimilated Jews, and many Hungarians of Jewish heritage published their work in the periodical. However, and most acutely during *Nyugat's* "second generation" after the Great War, the journal's strong thrust towards modernism carried with it a rejection of "old fashioned" identities, saliently the Jewish or Slovak heritage of several key contributors. Poet Miklós Radnóti, whose work appeared in *Nyugat*, refused to publish his work in an explicitly Hungarian Jewish literary anthology in 1943 because of his insistence on maintaining a Hungarian identity without qualifiers, even though Radnóti had already served a term in Hungary's forced labor battalions for his Jewish heritage. He would be murdered during a later term in the forced labor service in the autumn of 1944. Furthermore, *Nyugat's* strong modernist style invited attacks from the literary establishment. The established style was National Classicism, in the model of Sándor Petőfi's work during the 1840s, and the literary establishment largely balked at the "blasphemous imitators of Baudelaire and other immoral Western poets rotten through with venereal disease." *Nyugat* exemplifies the complex relationships Hungarians had to the diversity of their heritage. Szolláth's article explore this thoroughly.

[13] Szolláth, "Literary," 146.

[14] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 157-9. The Marxist theoretician Georg Lukács (born György) and the anti-Bolshevik novelist Arthur Koestler are surely among the most well-known Jewish Hungarians in the English-speaking world, but John Lukacs argues that both largely shed their particularly "Hungarian" identities and belong more truly to a Weimar German intellectual milieu.

were adherents of the Jewish religion.[15] With the exception of recent Galician immigrants or

small Orthodox communities, Hungary's Jewry overwhelmingly spoke the Hungarian language.

The Jews of Hungary were essential in securing the Magyar national majority within Hungary. In

the 1910 census, Jewish people were not enumerated as a separate category. The Imperial census

counted mother language rather than nationality, and the Magyar linguistic identity was divided

into three subfields – Hungarians of the Catholic faith, Hungarians of the Reformed faith, and

Hungarians of the Israelite faith.[16] Significant masses of Jewish Hungarians embraced their

belonging within Hungary. One in three Hungarian Jews Magyarized their names; all assimilated

much more deeply than their cousins in neighboring Jewries.[17] Hungarian Jewry's relatively

comfortable belonging within Hungarian life was shattered by the twin blows of the Hungarian

Socialist *Räterepublik* in 1919 and the Treaty of Trianon in 1920.

Socialist elements established a council republic in Budapest in spring 1919 as part of the

revolutionary wave that swept over Europe from 1917-1923. Many prominent figures within the

leadership of the *Räterepublik* were of Jewish heritage, albeit largely secular or nonobservant.[18]

The *Räterepublik* was swept away by force of Rumanian arms, wartime enemies who resumed

hostilities to secure territorial gains from the ongoing peace conferences and to combat

Bolshevism, a frightful spectre that transcended petty nationalisms. The *Räterepublik* lasted less

than a year, but it became a looming presence in the interwar Hungarian imagination. 1920 was a

catastrophic year for Hungarian nationality. Although the entry upon a white horse of Admiral

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[15] Janos, "Restoration," 205-6.
[16] Szelényi, *Failure*, 158, 188.
[17] Lukacs, *Budapest*, 96, 102. So thorough was the assimilation of the Hungarian Jewish community that it was only in the antisemitic milieus of Vienna and Paris, not his native Pest, that Theodor Herzl became radicalized into Zionism and the belief that Jewish assimilation into "Liberal Europe" was an impossible prospect.
[18] Szelényi, *Failure*, 159.

Miklós Horthy at the head of a reactionary army was a significant victory for the forces of order within Hungary, June of 1920 saw the promulgation of the Treaty of Trianon, which truncated the territory of the Hungarian state by nearly three quarters and reduced its population by two thirds.[19] The trauma and catastrophe that Trianon represented to Hungarians in the Interwar period is difficult to overstate. With the promulgation of Trianon, Liberal Hungary, the Hungary of Lajos Kossuth, Ferenc Deák, and Endre Ady, was dead and buried.

Fascism did not come immediately to Hungary. While antisemitic quota laws were adopted in 1920, they were later repealed.[20] During the Interwar period, the ideological gulf between liberal Budapest and the reactionary countryside widened. With the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary resembled a national state for the first time in its history and boasted a sizable Magyar national majority, so the Jewish community was no longer needed to secure the position of Hungarian speakers within Hungary. Nationalism took a racial turn within Hungary during the Interwar period (later than its European contemporaries), which marginalized the Jewish population in Hungary.[21] Furthermore, the racial turn within Hungarian nationalism pitted the Christian middle class (particularly the middling bureaucrats of the civil service) against the Jewish middle class.[22] Nonetheless, Hungarian Jewry was, relative to its peers in Germany and elsewhere, more insulated from legal persecution and physical violence for most of the period, though a succession of antisemitic laws were promulgated in the late 1930s as Hungary fell under the geopolitical hegemony of the Third Reich.

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[19] Janos, "Restoration," 205.

[20] Szelényi, *Failure*, 159.

[21] Janos, "Restoration," 222-228. See also Marius Turda, "Entangled Traditions of Race: Physical Anthropology in Hungary and Romania, 1900-1940," *Focaal* no. 58 (2010).

[22] Szelényi, *Failure*, 133-4, 136-9, 157-8. Jews were excluded from the civil service by unspoken tradition, not law, though their proportion in several sectors of the civil service dwindled between the World Wars.

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A salient factor in the relative protection of Hungarian Jewry, which continued even after Hungary's entry into the Second World War as a member of the fascist Axis powers, was the largesse of Hungary's unusually liberal service aristocracy.[23] Hungary underwent significant democratization during the Interwar era, but the upper levels of the civil service were still dominated by a class of mostly liberal bureaucrat-aristocrats carried over from the Habsburg era. The institutional power of the service aristocracy, which maintained the old alliance between the Jewish community and the Habsburg Crown, insulated Hungary's Jewry from the radicalization towards antisemitism and fascism that swept through the masses in Hungary. The contributions of Prime Minister Miklós Kállay and Interior Minister Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer to protecting the physical integrity of Hungarian Jewry, even as Hungary fought in the genocidal war in the East and as the Gestapo demanded access to the Hungarian interior to murder the Hungarian Jews living there, were significant and temporarily arrested the ambitions of the Hitlerites both within and outside Hungary.

This contradiction – of Hungary fighting on the side of fascism in the genocidal war in the East while protecting their national Jewish community – persisted until 1944. It had been apparent for some time that the fascists were bound to be defeated by the Soviet Union and their allies in the West, and by 1944 this inevitable defeat appeared more and more immanent. Prime Minister Kállay contacted the Western powers and sought an armistice in Spring 1944. Before this could be concluded, Germany invaded Hungary and installed a puppet Prime Minister,

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[23] Szelényi, *Failure*, 160. The civil service was a site of conflict illustrative of broader tensions within Hungarian society between the World Wars. The upper levels of the civil service remained largely under the control of Magyar aristocrats, while vengeful and reactionary Magyarized Germans and bourgeoisified nobles populated much of the middling bureaucracy as well as local and county administrations. Szelényi borrows the term *Beamtenbürgertum* from German historiography, but the particularly aristocratic character of Hungary's bureaucratic class might be better deemed "*Beamtenjunkertum* (*Beamte + Junker + tum*)." For more on the imperfect merger between the German minority, the Christian middle class, and the Hungarian aristocracy, see Szelényi, *Failure*, 130-134, 138-9, 147-8, 152-3; and Lukacs, *Budapest*, 71.

Döme Sztójay. Sztójay was a Germanophile, and allowed the Gestapo unfettered access to the Hungarian interior to enact the Shoah, with the enthusiastic support and participation of the Hungarian Gendarmerie, in addition to keeping Hungary in the war alongside the Axis powers.[24]

During Prime Minister Sztójay's tenure, from March to August of 1944, roughly half of Hungary's Jewish population – more than 400,000 men, women, and children – were first ghettoized, then deported to Auschwitz and murdered. Hungary had also enrolled Jewish and "politically unreliable" men in labor battalions since the outbreak of the war. Conditions varied significantly at the caprice of local commanders but typically ranged from brutal to cruel. Throughout 1944, many labor battalions were evacuated from their positions in the East and in Yugoslavia and withdrew towards the Reich on grueling forced marches. The Hungarian-Jewish poet Miklós Radnóti was compelled to participate in one such death march from Serbia to the north of Hungary, where he, and everyone else too frail to go on, was summarily executed and interred in a mass grave. Sztójay was replaced by Géza Lakatos in August in a rare and insufficient act of courage on the part of Regent Miklós Horthy, but the greater part of Hungary's Jewry had already been murdered. As far as there was any respite from the Shoah, it was fleeting, as a second German invasion of Hungary in October installed Hungarian fascist Ferenc Szálasi as dictator of Hungary under direct German control. Szálasi and his forces continued to engage in massacres of Hungary's remaining Jews through 1944 and into 1945, including during the months-long Siege of Budapest, until the whole country was finally liberated by the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army in the spring of 1945.

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[24] Braham, *Genocide*, 400.

The period from the Millennium celebration to the end of the Second World War was only 49 years, and the period between Trianon and the Shoah was, at the most, 24 years. In just one generation, an assimilated and integral part of the Hungarian national fabric was torn out, came to be despised, and was brought very nearly to annihilation. The tragedy that befell Hungarian Jewry in the first half of the 20th century is historically contingent in a number of ways that do not make it perfectly universalizable as a historical phenomenon, but it stands nonetheless as a stark and harrowing reminder of how ephemeral belonging within the Social is.[25] The preponderance of tragedies, world-historical and personal, suggests that ours is a broken world.

The world in which we live in fundamentally broken and has fractured further over the sweep of history. This world is characterized by a refusal or inability to reflect and imagine, by the rejection of transcendence, and by the smothering of creative and existential freedom by

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[25] The history of the Jews in Hungary cannot be simply bracketed off and deployed in any such circumstances as one finds expedient – this is neither the point nor the power of history. Nonetheless, the thorough and evocative recounting of the marginalization and exclusion (and eventual massacre) of Hungary's uniquely well-assimilated Jewry illustrates the precarity of belonging within the Social that will be explored later in this paper. Our world is rife with examples of this process, and any number of times, places, or circumstances could have conveyed the same themes. The issue of assimilation in turn-of-the-century Hungary has been explored deeply and artfully in the realm of fiction, particularly in the filmography of Hungarian director István Szabó. Szabó's 1985 film *Colonel Redl*, starring Klaus-Maria Brandauer, is a historical drama based on real events, though filtered through the British playwright John Osborne's fictionalization of events in his 1965 play *A Patriot for Me*, which the film follows more closely than the events as they actually occurred. The film charts the rise and fall of a Ruthenian peasant boy as he climbs the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian officer corps before being blackmailed into treason in a desperate effort to conceal his homosexuality. Assimilation and its discontents figure a major theme of the film, as Redl's peasant and Slavic origins routinely stifle his ambitions to make his name in the officer corps, an institutional prejudice that also hampered the careers of his Czech, Hungarian, and Hungarian-Jewish colleagues. The character of Dr. Sonnenschein, the optimistic and assimilated Jewish Hungarian who serves as the surgeon of Redl's regiment, is of particular interest. Szabó revisited the period and the subject with a closer focus on Hungarian Jewry with his expansive and magisterial 1999 film *Sunshine*, starring Ralph Fiennes. *Sunshine* is the story of three generations of the Sonnenschein family (no relation to the *Colonel Redl* character), from the turn of the century to the Communist era. Ralph Fiennes plays all three generations of Sonnenschein men, a deeply assimilated and well to do family of bourgeois Budapest Jews. The first generation of siblings Magyarized their name to Sors, a Hungarian name they kept through the rising tide of antisemitism between the World Wars and through the tragedy of the Shoah, only reverting their surname to its Jewish form in the 1950s, when the sole, embittered survivor of the family line realizes that Jews like himself had been irrevocably expunged from the fabric of Hungarian national identity. The fullness of assimilation, and its thorough destruction, is *Sunshine's* theme.

mechanical logic.[26] In this broken world live functionalized people, people who regard themselves and are regarded by others as merely the amalgamation of the functions they perform. To functionalize a person is to reduce them from a font of possibility as disclosed by their existential freedom into a quality or function that is seen to be representative in itself of their whole person.[27] By way of example, a man working as a forklift operator becomes functionalized when the ontological question is for him answered in its entirety by his driving of the forklift. A quality or function, done repetitively and mechanistically, governed by "time-tables" rather than rational choice, is extrapolated out and construed as representing the whole of a person's being. We can functionalize ourselves, we can functionalize others, and we can be functionalized by others. This ontological reduction happens very frequently, most saliently when we interact with service workers. As far as we see our barista as anything, we see her as a producer of iced coffees, not as her biography, her values and beliefs, and her possibilities in becoming.

The broken state of our world is a tragic but workable grounds on which to build our analysis of our social relations within it, first starting at the most abstract, the building upon itself. Primordially, the Ethical is the Universal, which validly applies to every person and in every situation, and "rests immanent in itself."[28] The Ethical as Universal also contains within

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[26] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 4-6. Marcel's views on the broken world and functionalization are similar enough to the views of his contemporaries to warrant acknowledgment. The "Crisis" that Edmund Husserl analyzes in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* is the universalization of the methodology of the "hard" sciences to all corners of human life, that which Marcel calls "technique." That our world is disenchanted and rejects transcendence and the dream of a better world, and that many of its people are functionalized, reduced into mechanical processes, is in part result of this crisis. The brokenness of our world is also consonant with the picture of the "fallenness" and inauthenticity of *Dasein's* everyday existence that Martin Heidegger elaborates in *Being and Time*. Functionalization also shares several significant qualities with "bad faith" as developed by Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*. While bad faith denies the precedence of our existence before our essence (insofar as one is *être pour-soi*), functionalization concerns itself more concretely with the ontic manifestations of this false ordering.
[27] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 5.
[28] Kierkegaard, "Fear," 99.

itself the Social, the body of norms, mores, beliefs, and practices that govern our everyday lives. The ethical task of the individual is to strive to express himself in the Universal. Spurning this, and asserting one's singularity before the Universal, is to "sin" (we shall secularize our language and hereafter say "transgress") against the Universal.[29] This is to say, to assert one's singularity before the Universal entails acting in such a way that violates the universally valid ethic. Part of the wrongness of a transgression against the Universal is that it expresses the false belief that we are either separate from or superior to the Ethical, which is also to say that we believe ourselves to be superior to our fellowmen and the ethic that governs them. This social aspect of transgression is most relevant to us. We understand assertions of singularity concretely through transgressions – morally wrong acts – that we make against others and that others make against us, be it Lucifer defying God or your roommate eating your leftovers without asking.

Even as the Ethical is the Universal, it expresses itself socially, so I shall hereafter say "the Social" to refer to that triune thing that might otherwise be called "the normal." Kierkegaard tells us that, upon asserting our singularity before the Universal and transgressing, we may only be reconciled back to the Universal by acknowledging our rightful subordinance to and place within the Universal-Ethical-Social.[30] While this may hold true in an abstract sense, ours is a concrete existence, and the Universal manifests itself concretely as the Social. The acknowledgement of wrongdoing is not itself sufficient to return one to the Social, because the Social is comprised of and animated by our fellowmen, who might act (or not act) upon this acknowledgement to allow us back into the Social by excusing our act, excusing some agential deficiency within us, forgetting about our transgression, or by forgiving us.[31] This agential

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[29] Kierkegaard, "Fear," 99.
[30] Kierkegaard, "Fear," 99.
[31] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 550.

element is indispensable and central, and the nature of the constituent practices of resentment

and blaming (and their withdrawal) must therefore be understood through the interpersonal

relationships that undergird their exercise.

At any echelon of interpersonal interaction, coherent practice requires an understanding

of what kind of relations we have to each other within the Social. The French philosopher

Gabriel Marcel offers a picture of humanity's condition as *Homo Viator*.[32] *Homo Viator* is a

polysemous term which can be rendered as wayfaring man, stranger, or pilgrim.[33] The condition

of *Homo Viator*, which is our primordial condition, is as the man on the road, the man on the

outside of the Social. The content of the Social is socially constructed and socially maintained,

so there is nothing that is natural to it. As far as any content remains in the Social, it remains

there because it is maintained by social practice. Transgressions make threatening claims against

us because they disclose the belief that we can be mistreated.[34] Such claims, which exist in the

social space, are the only means by which the content of the Social is maintained, so allowing

these threatening claims to go unaddressed represents a serious threat to our place within the

Social. The tragedy of Hungarian Jewry, with which this paper began, illustrates the way in

which even the most assimilated and integrated elements can be spat out of the Social at blinding

speed. The Social exists, and it has content. That we are part of its content is neither primordially

nor necessarily true. As far as we have a natural condition, it is outside the Social, swirling in the

dusty nonbelonging of *peregrinatio*, as *Homos Viator*.[35]

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[32] Marcel, *Homo Viator*, 153-4.
[33] Ladner, "Mediaeval," 233, 251, 256-7.
[34] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 548.
[35] Ladner, "Mediaeval," 236-7; Kierkegaard, "Fear," 99. Kierkegaard says that the Ethical (which we have established to be the Universal as well as the Social) has, "nothing outside itself that is its *telos* but is itself the *telos* for everything outside itself, and when the ethical has assimilated this, it does not go any further." The last clause ("*when* the ethical …") donates temporality to the Social. That all *teloi* will at some point be incorporated into the

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The startling revelation that we are all teetering near the precipice of the Social, some nudged closer than others by structural factors but none far enough back to escape feeling vertiginous, can engender either sorrowful lamentation for oneself or fraternity with one's fellow *Homos Viator*. It is this latter possibility that I wish to explore, and that I believe shall reveal itself to be superior to the former. All of us will find ourselves at some time to be on the road, caught in a slashing rain, pounding desperately upon locked doors, pleading with the owners of narrowed eyes to soften their hearts and see us as their fellowman, to forgive us for what they rightly hold against us, just as we have or would or could relinquish that which we hold against them, and to let us back in to the Social. To let us back in to the Social, to moral peerage, and to offer us a respite from the dusty road, so that we might be in a position to, in our turn, let back in a weary traveler who begs our forgiveness. We have been him, and we will be him again. We know that our being-in is more ephemeral and less natural than our being-out.

We travel, sometimes alone, sometimes with others; sometimes towards some glimmer on the horizon, sometimes merely away from that which grows hazier in the rear-view mirror. We spend more time being swept along in the Heraclitean stream of Becoming than we do in stable Being, pausing at pit stops that are mere catches of breath, ephemera that we delude ourselves into thinking are natural or lasting, before the current picks us up again and we are washed ashore upon a new coast, being gawked at by new eyes observing us and judging us to be

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Social does not disallow that some *teloi* are not currently incorporated into the Social, nor that some pursuers of *teloi* are not currently incorporated into the Social (which remains sensible even if their *teloi* are within the Ethical). So as to avoid conflating my own interpretations and arguments with those of Kierkegaard, one might better regard the Social as being the expression in actual practice of the Ethical-Universal in concrete manifestations by imperfect agents rather than as a full and equal third component of the Ethical-Universal. Forgiveness practice (or otherwise, excusal or forgetting) applies to those who have violated the Ethical by asserting their singularity, but more saliently in the sense that this unjust assertion has also violated the Social with the threatening claim that they are not beholden to the norms that govern their fellowmen. It is on the plane of the Social that relevant considerations of resentment and forgiveness take place.

friend or foe, potential insider or dangerous threat to be kept away. We are travelers always and

outsiders often. We break strange customs we do not comprehend just as strange people break

the most obvious, natural, and sacred of our ways. But not all transgressions are accidental.

Sometimes we transgress against rules we know and understand intimately, whether out of

desperation or malice, boredom or mistake. Where gracious excusal might be easily extended to

the foolish foreigner who knows no better, hearts often harden when regarding those that do

know better, even as all men transgress and all men are transgressors.[36] As their fellow

transgressors, ought not we be moved by a common spirit, a shared experience as the one

plucked out from the in-group and cast out, spat upon and despised?

Pamela Hieronymi offers a means by which a transgressor can be reintegrated into the

Social. In her seminal 2001 article, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness," Hieronymi

outlines a forgiveness practice that meaningfully negates the rightfully felt resentment that a

victim holds against a transgressor without falling into the errors that beset several other

accounts of forgiveness. One of the more common errors that previous accounts of forgiveness

have committed is compromising the essential judgments that resentment is built upon.[37]

Hieronymi argues that compromising accounts of forgiveness are not forgiveness at all, but

rather some form of act or agential excusal. Hieronymi offers a more robust account of

forgiveness, which is articulate, uncompromising, requires one to have readiness-to-forgive

before granting forgiveness, and centers the victim rather than the transgressor in considering the

rightness of forgiving. As forgiveness is understood to be the forgoing of resentment, Hieronymi

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[36] Allais, "Slate," 68.
[37] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 530.

also details an account of resentment that is understood to be a protest against maltreatment as

well as a judgmentally-sensitive attitude that can be subject to rational revision.

Hieronymi's articulate and uncompromising account of forgiveness has among its

stipulations that the dissolving of resentment in forgiveness is a biphasic process. Before one can

extend forgiveness-proper, one must regain a readiness-to-forgive.[38] Readiness-to-forgive is an

attitude or bearing that discloses compassion, goodwill, or a stance of love. While David Novitz

puts forth pity as the sort of emotion that can support a readiness-to-forgive, a superior option

would be the attitude of *disponibilité* developed in the work of Gabriel Marcel, in part because it

does not diminish the dignity of its object in the way that pitying does.[39]

Attitudes of *disponibilité*, and its opposite *indisponibilité*, are general ways in which one

can comport themselves towards others.[40] The attitude and bearing of *disponibilité* involves a

total availability of the self, one's powers, and resources to another. Furthermore, the *disponible*

attitude engages the whole person as a unique, individual person, whereas its *indisponible*

counterpart requires some measure of alienation and encounters the other as an "example … of

the genus 'other person.'"[41] The attitude of *disponibilité* is anathema to the functionalization of

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[38] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 540.

[39] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 533, 538-40. Novitz takes pitying (though sometimes phrased as 'compassion' or 'empathetic understanding,' both of which connote differently) to constitute forgiveness itself, while Hieronymi argues that pity only brings one to readiness-to-forgive but fails to itself constitute forgiveness.

[40] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 17-21. *Disponibilité* can be translated as either "availability" or "disposability," though neither of these options capture the full breadth of meaning in Marcel's usage of the term. Particularly because "disposability" in English has the connotation of being something like an object that can "be disposed of" carelessly (precisely the *opposite* of Marcel's intention), I have elected to keep *disponibilité* in its native French. *Disponibilité* also has the quality of handiness (one can imagine a parallel to Heidegger's *Griffbereit* or *Zuhandenheit* [readiness-to-hand]), insofar as the attitude of *disponibilité* carries with it the immediate readiness to put the whole arsenal of one's "material, emotional, intellectual and spiritual" resources at the disposal, availability, or service of another. It follows that *indisponibilité* is the bearing and attitude of unwillingness to put yourself at the disposal of another.

[41] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 18-19. *Disponibilité* encounters the other as "Thou (*tu*)," while *indisponibilité* regards the other as "He (*il*)," "She (*elle*)," or even "It (*le/ la*)." The concept is clearer in French, which retains a familiar (informal) second person singular form (*tu*), whereas English discarded this form sometime along its historical development and only maintains "You," which is equivalent to the second person formal *vous* in French. Moving past the grammatical gameplaying, the salient thing is the level of intimacy with which we engage the Other.

the other, to their objectification, and to the view that they are interchangeable in our relation to them, as identical members of a set would be. At the same time, being *disponible* precludes us from regarding ourselves as interchangeable in the relation to the other, for *disponibilité* engages the other in, "the absolutely unique communion of our two persons."[42] Being *disponible* to the other entails being present to her and present for her, being open and permeable to her. Insofar as we appear to the other, we appear not as an object but as presence.[43]

We will first turn to Pamela Hieronymi's account of forgiveness and resentment before trying to situate her practice within a Marcelian picture of the world. Hieronymi's forgiveness practice differs from standard accounts of forgiveness in several significant ways, though it is rooted in Bishop Butler's account of forgiveness as involving the forgoing of resentment, which is standard across the breadth of forgiveness scholarship.[44] Hieronymi's work diverges from common positions within the forgiveness scholarship through what I call Hieronymi's "Copernican Revolution." Transgressor-centric accounts make forgiveness a matter of the transgressor acting upon their internal states and coming to a state of deserving-to-be-forgiven, which is then presented to the victim as a *fait-accompli* that often does not allow for polite refusal.[45] Hieronymi's forgiveness inverts the subject and object of the forgiveness practice and becomes instead the process of the victim themselves acting upon their evaluations and judgments about the act and agent, prying the two apart, and relinquishing the rightful

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[42] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 20.

[43] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 20-21. Marcel does not make explicit use of Heideggerian language, but understanding *disponibilité* as involving ourselves being ready-to-hand in the world of the other serves to reinforce our understanding of the presence and immediacy that our availability has – we are not abstractly available in the sense that a table for two might be available at a restaurant. Rather, the totality of our being stands ready-to-hand amidst the real and actual possibilities that the other encounters in their world.

[44] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 529.

[45] Allais, "Slate," 38, proximate citation to Solomon Schimmel, *Wounds Not Healed by Time*, chapters 2-3. Allais is reproducing Schimmel's account of forgiveness within the Jewish intellectual tradition, which holds that in cases where, "perpetrators are truly repentant and have made appropriate and proportional restitution, forgiveness is *obligatory*." Italics original.

resentment they held against the agent while maintaining the belief that the act in question was meaningfully wrong, which is then expressed to the transgressor. The subject-object relation of standard forgiveness practice has been inverted, hence the appellation "Copernican Revolution."

Hieronymi's Copernican Revolution in forgiveness practice remains influential within the forgiveness scholarship and has contributed significantly to several successive accounts of forgiveness. The mechanic of a Copernican Revolution manifests itself in David Shoemaker's chapter, "The Forgiven," albeit placed in a slightly broader discussion of the nature of resentment at large.[46] Shoemaker seeks to invert the process of blaming-resenting-forgiving, which heretofore focused its analysis on what he calls "front-end investigations" of the nature of resentment and when it is appropriate to maintain. Shoemaker's focus is on the "back-end" of the directed blaming exchange, the withdrawal of "hard feelings" through forgiveness, from which one works their way back to the basis of these feelings. Shoemaker works through Hieronymi's account of forgiveness in detail, in particular Hieronymi's representation of resentment as a judgmentally sensitive attitude and the trouble that Hieronymi's focus on repudiation of the wrong act by the transgressor encounters, a role he posits would be better filled by remorse.[47]

Hieronymi's influence is implicit and pervasive in Lucy Allais' article, "Wiping the Slate Clean: The Heart of Forgiveness," in which Allais seeks to make sense of an uncompromising forgiveness that relinquishes agential blame while maintaining the wrongness of the act in question, which is directly Hieronymi's project, but extends the analysis further into the forgiveness mechanic and into the point of such forgiveness.[48] Allais' account, in several

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[46] Shoemaker, "Forgiven," 30-31.
[47] Shoemaker, "Forgiven," 33-35, 39-42.
[48] Allais, "Slate," 33-34.

significant ways, represents a more advanced version of Hieronymi's, making explicit or more clear aspects that were implicit or vague in Hieronymi's account. The most salient of the six stipulations she lists are that forgiveness is, "essentially personal: it is granted to the perpetrator by the victim," which makes explicit the positionality of Hieronymi's Copernican Revolution, and that forgiveness is, "elective in the sense that it can be given without repentance … and [that] repentance need not oblige the victim to forgive," which Hieronymi acknowledges as a possibility in a footnote but does not engage explicitly, even though it is fully compatible with her account of forgiveness, as Allais has identified.[49] Both of these notions exist within Hieronymi's article, but they are explicated in much greater detail in Allais' work. Despite Allais' article's positional similarity and more advanced formulations of many of the same arguments, Hieronymi's article gives a clearer account of the qualities and mechanics of an articulate and uncompromising forgiveness practice and is thus the preferable source to draw our understanding of such things from.

It would be misleading to allege that Hieronymi created the victim-centric positionality within forgiveness practice from whole cloth. Cheshire Calhoun's account of forgiveness, as detailed in "Changing One's Heart," which was published nearly a decade before Hieronymi's article, takes a victim-centered positionality by virtue of its very strong insistence on the electivity of forgiveness, in that the ability to elect whether (or whether not) to extend forgiveness rests solely within the victim.[50] Calhoun's account of forgiveness is something like a dispensation, by which we make the, "choice to place respecting another's way of making sense of her life before resentfully enforcing moral standards."[51] This dispensation is one that Calhoun

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[49] Allais, "Slate," 36-37.
[50] Calhoun, "Changing," 80, 95-96.
[51] Calhoun, "Changing," 95.

considers too onerous to be universalizable, even if such "sympathetic entrance into another's life" is appropriate among our intimates, so it remains fully within our elective power to extend or not extend aspirational forgiveness. That Calhoun's account of forgiveness practice blurs the line between forgiveness and agential excusing is not addressed in her article.

The Copernican Revolution towards victim-centricity in forgiveness practice is the facet of Hieronymi's work that has had the most vivacious afterlife, but there are several other qualities of her account that stand worthy of further explication. Hieronymi's forgiveness is also articulate, uncompromising, and involves judgmentally sensitive resentment. Hieronymi puts forth an articulate account of forgiveness, which holds that forgiveness is always granted for some reason, even when this reason is not intelligible, which serves to differentiate forgiveness from forgetting, therapeutic release, or any other such practice.[52] Furthermore, Hieronymi defends an uncompromising forgiveness, insofar as forgiveness must not compromise three judgments that give rise to valid resentment – that the act in question was wrong, and significantly wrong so as to warrant moral attention; that the transgressor is a legitimate member of the moral community, someone who can be expected not to do such things and who matters enough to us to be worth being upset by; and that I, as the victim of their transgression, should not have been wronged in the way you wronged me, which is an offense against my person and dignity.[53] Hieronymi also holds that the offense represents a continuing threat against me, but this judgment is the one to be overcome in the practice of forgiveness. Hieronymi relinquishes

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[52] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 531, 541-3.
[53] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 530.

resentment of the agent while maintaining the wrongness of the act. Hieronymi understands

resentment to be a judgmentally sensitive attitude, one that can be subject to rational revision.[54]

A further quality of Hieronymi's forgiveness practice is that is has two distinct phases.

Before one can actually extend forgiveness to a transgressor, one must establish the right kind of

relation to them, which allows a readiness-to-forgive.[55] For an uncompromising forgiveness to be

grounded, it requires that the transgressor matter to us in a significant way, in that we care about

their actions and their mistreatment of us. Inarticulate accounts of forgiveness represent

themselves as justifying forgiveness, but Hieronymi argues that these accounts, particularly

David Novitz's account of a forgiveness based on pity, compassion, or empathetic

understanding, only bring one to the stance of love and goodwill that allows readiness-to-forgive

but say nothing of forgiveness itself.[56] Readiness-to-forgive can be come by in a number of

ways, including Novitz's pity, Calhoun's biography, or Marcel's *disponibilité*. This last option,

an attitude of *disponibilité*, allows for a durable state of readiness-to-forgive without diminishing

the dignity of its object in the way that pitying might, a diminishment that threatens to warp

uncompromising forgiveness into agential excusal by making the object of pity into too poor a

wretch to feel threatened by.[57] A *disponible* attitude maintains the goodwill and stance of love

needed for a readiness-to-forgive while also respecting the dignity of the other. This still does not

constitute forgiveness itself, but it provides the means for forgiveness to possess an unqualified

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[54] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 534-6.
[55] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 539.
[56] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 539-540. In representing Novitz' position, Hieronymi interpolates "pity," "compassion," and "empathetic understanding" rather freely, but uses "pity" most often.
[57] Pity for transgressors is often a misallocation of that emotion. It seems strange and unlikely that we, as the victim of a serious transgression, would withdraw our valid resentment just because hurting me was *so* emotionally taxing for the transgressor. Pity as the basis of forgiveness does not withstand scrutiny.

electivity. In assuming an attitude of *disponibilité* as our primordial state, we also assume a

readiness-to-forgive because that attitude is comprised of radical openness and love for the other.

To have the necessary grounds for forgiving someone, we must be involved with them,

which necessitates that our relation to them takes the form of mystery.[58] Because the transgressor

matters to us and is significant to us, we must approach our relation as mystery to engage them

on the level of the whole person with an attitude of *disponibilité*. One can solve a problem, one

can excuse or forget about an insignificant or functionalized person; but one can only forgive a

person who has personhood to them, who matters to them, with whom we are to some degree

involved.[59] While we may speak of it in analytic terms, forgiveness is always an immediate and

subjective practice (as we ourselves are involved within it). An articulate and uncompromising

forgiveness is never a matter of, "One forgives," but of, "I forgive you." Our position as the

victim (and indeed the other's position as the transgressor) matters, it matters that it is me rather

than someone else and it matters that it is you rather than someone else. I forgive in the way that

I might forgive you, not in the way that one might forgive another. Naturally, we will be more

intimately involved with our lovers than with our friends, our friends than with our colleagues,

and our colleagues than with strangers, but we might still, through the attitude of *disponibilité*,

enhance our baseline level of intimacy with the other and assume a *disponibilité* that brings us to

a Hieronymian readiness-to-forgive without compromising the dignity of the Other through a

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[58] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 10-14. Marcel contrasts 'mystery' against 'problem.' A problem can be confronted objectively with technical and universalizable solutions, while mystery is inherently subjective, as we ourselves are involved in it. The identity of the questioner is tied to the question and is not interchangeable. A universalizable technique is not available to resolve the mysterious.

[59] Alternatively phrased in Marcelian jargon, "someone who *is* a person to them" rather than "someone who *has* personhood." Marcel's distinction between the ontological relations of *being* and *having* as forms of belonging or membership is explored later in this paper.

Novitzian pitying and without demanding a humiliating ritual of publicly-intelligible contrition, which is often cruel even when warranted.[60]

Hieronymi argues that resentment is a judgmentally sensitive attitude, one that can be subject to rational revision.[61] Upon the revelation that some facet of the transgressor's biography ought to excuse their wrong act, that the transgressor does not matter very much to us, that their wrong act was not as bad as we had made it out to be, or that their transgression no longer represents a threat to our position within the Social, our feelings of resentment can dampen and peter out.[62] This process can manifest itself in ways other than forgiveness, such as excusal or ceasing to care, but is nonetheless a necessary condition for Hieronymi's forgiveness practice insofar as Hieronymi's practice is articulate, meaning that we exercise forgiveness for reasons, never by something like an accident.[63] Hieronymi focuses her analysis on the model example wherein an apology brings about a positive revision in our judgment of the transgressor, but her account is encompassing enough to accommodate situations in which something else actuates our judgmental revision, or in which our judgmental revision is brutely elective, features of her account that Allais picks up on and develops.[64]

In the normally functioning mind, the realization that our resentment is unfounded will cause it to fade, though we cannot, of course, unilaterally decide to banish resentment *tout à coup*.[65] Hieronymi, however, does not consider revelatory biographical information to be

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[60] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 531-4, 538-9.

[61] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 535.

[62] Of these potentialities, only the belief that the transgression no longer poses a threat to us is valid grounds for forgiveness. The other options allow for excusal or forgetting but compromise the judgments that inhere to Hieronymi's account of forgiveness.

[63] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 541-2.

[64] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 545; Allais, "Slate," 36-37.

[65] In its judgmental sensitivity, resentment *fades*. This discloses a temporal element to forgiveness, suggesting that perhaps forgiveness cannot be granted immediately in the wake of the transgression. Whether the process of reflection and intentional relinquishing is time enough for resentment to fade, or if more time must pass, is surely a

sufficient grounds for forgiveness, even as it contributes to the readiness-to-forgive. Hieronymi

argues against Calhoun's account, which holds that forgiveness becomes permissible when one

can make sense of the transgression in the context of the transgressor's biography, after which

forgiveness can be freely elected.[66] Hieronymi rejects Calhoun's biography on the same grounds

as Novitz's pity (or compassionate understanding). "Stepping into their shoes" and coming to

understand why the transgressor acted in the way they did can actually cause us to resent them

more![67]

Contrary to Shoemaker's method, making sense of forgiveness requires an understanding

of what grounds our resentment on the "front end." Hieronymi conceptualizes resentment as a

protest. Specifically, "*resentment protests a past action that persists as a present threat*."[68] Past

actions can make present claims because they are authored, insofar as intentional action reveals

the evaluations of its author.[69] In this way, when someone mistreats us, it discloses that they

think of us as someone they can mistreat. We know that we are not, that we are deserving of

dignity and respect, which is from whence our resentment springs in the wake of transgression.

Resentment's character as a protest imbues it with a strongly relational nature, which is implicit

in Hieronymi's article but not analyzed in depth. Resentment is appropriate only to our social

fellows, people for whom we care to some degree. One does not often *resent* children, objects, or

"the world," even as these things infringe on our dignity and we make negative evaluations of

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subjective and circumstantial consideration. It is also beyond the scope of this paper, though it is an interesting line
of thought that warrants investigation.

[66] Calhoun, "Changing," 92, 94-6.

[67] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 539-41.

[68] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 546. Italics original.

[69] Hieronymi's account, as well as Marcel and Cromp's discussions of *disponibilité* etc., assume that freewill exists,
and that intentional actions can be attributed to their authors. We will operate under these assumptions. The putative
truth of determinism, however, would not be destructive to the protest account of resentment, because it is not the
author nor the act itself that we resent, but the *claim*, judgment, and attitude that the act discloses, which is
compatible even with strong accounts of determinism.

them.[70] Resentment affirms that the transgression was wrong, and that we as the victim have worth.

Hieronymi's account focuses on judgmental revision actuated by the transgressor's apology for, or renouncing of, their deed, after which it no longer remains as a threat to us because their objectionable evaluation of us has been nihilated.[71] Resentment has been cut off from its rational basis, and anger loses its point. Hieronymi's explication of the nature of resentment reveals a fourth judgment, in addition to the three uncompromisable judgments, which is that the act in question makes a threatening claim against us.[72] Being threatened by another's claims, it must be stressed, does not reveal deficiency or weakness within the victim of a transgression. Rather, we resent mistreatment because it is incongruous with our rightful belonging within the Social. Threatening claims threaten us because they wrongly treat us as lesser when we are in fact equals within the moral community to the transgressor. Were either of us not moral peers, resentment would be unfounded. We care about what our peers think, and resentment fills the important function of protesting misevaluations of our worth through transgression.[73]

Instances of apology or repudiation are foregrounded in Hieronymi's account of forgiveness but these, along with Novitz's pity, Calhoun's biography, or remorse alone, cannot themselves constitute forgiveness, because the threatening claim their transgression makes

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[70] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 546-7.
[71] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 548.
[72] The three judgments, we recall, are 1) that the act in question was wrong, and significantly wrong so as to warrant moral attention, 2) that the transgressor is a legitimate member of the moral community, someone who can be expected not to do such things and who matters enough to us to be worth being upset by, 3) and that I, as the victim of their transgression, should not have been wronged in the way you wronged me, which is an offense against my dignity.
[73] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 549.

against us persists in the Social. Were it that the meaning of the transgression and their own

moral standing were the exclusive domain of the transgressor, neither the pain of remorse nor the

desire to seek forgiveness would be coherent. Putative remorse or changes of heart on the part of

the transgressor requires ratification by others, and it lies within the power of the victim to

change the significance of the transgression by legitimating the transgressor's repudiation and

recanting of their threatening claim.[74] The threat threatening claims pose only threatens us

because they exist in social space. As such, an understanding of our relations within the Social –

our relation to ourselves as a constituent of the Social, our relation to our fellows within the

Social, and our primordial situation within the Social – will help illuminate how, when, and why

we might resent and forgive, and explicate the ways in which and why for our fellows in the

Social matter to us.

The primordial situation of a person is as embodied consciousness. This relation, between

the subject and their body, is a mystery in Marcel's sense.[75] Reflecting upon the mystery of

embodiment, however, can lead us to regard our relation to our embodiment in a purely objective

manner, which brings with it an objectification of the self that Germaine Cromp finds to be

troublesome.[76] Rather than objectify our embodied consciousness, we can choose instead to

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[74] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 550. Hieronymi explains that the acceptance of an apology constitutes, "ratifying the offender's change of heart," rather than, "dissociating the wrongdoer from his wrong deed," because we are changing the significance of the wrong act in our evaluations of the transgressor, not nullifying the attributability of the transgression.

[75] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 10-14. Marcel contrasts 'mystery' against 'problem.' Whereas a problem can be confronted objectively with technical and universalizable solutions, mystery is inherently subjective, as we ourselves are involved in it. We are participants in the mysterious and thus cannot regard the mystery 'from an outside view,' which is of course to say the objective view. Herein, the identity of the questioner is tied to the question and is not interchangeable, as was the case with the problematic. A universalizable technique is not available to solve the mysterious, including the mystery of one's relation to their embodiment, which renders some mysteries insoluble. The mysterious seeks to accommodate and engage the whole person, whereas the problematic, in dealing with specific aspects of a person, requires some level of alienation or abstraction to be practicable.

[76] Cromp, "Communion," 171. The mystery of embodied consciousness, like all mysteries, can be corrupted into a problem by imposing an objective distance between ourselves and the problem with which we ourselves are involved.

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engage with the existential freedom at the heart of our being that this mystery discloses to us.[77]

To achieve a true and sincere relation with the self, one needs to know how to love themself.

The self-affirming freedom at the heart of our embodied being can be a means towards

the "deepening of our being," but this hinges upon how we conceptualize the nature of our

relation to ourselves.[78] The engagement with our existential freedom necessitates that we regard

our self-relation as a mystery rather than a problem. If we regard this relation as a mystery, then

there can be no universal technique in approaching it. The relation between ourself and other

persons ought also to be approached as a mystery rather than a problem because we ourselves

participate in our relation to the other. The identities of the participants in this relation are

significant, and replacing either ourselves or the person in question would fundamentally alter

the appropriate responses to the mystery. In relating to another person, we do not relate to them

in the indefinite sense of "one relates to her," but in the immediate, involved, "*I* relate to her."

Others can and should relate to her in different ways, and I relate to others in ways I do not relate

to her. The interpersonal relation thus demands to be understood as a mystery rather than a

problem, because one particular relationship cannot be universalized as a rubric for

understanding any given relationship. I am involved with different people in different ways, and

my involvement itself suggests that these relations be rightfully considered as mysterious.

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[77] Cromp, "Communion," 171. The ambiguity and subjectivity that inhere within the mystery of embodied consciousness suggests a comparative analysis with Sartre's *néant* as, respectively, positive and negative accounts of the basis of existential freedom. The positive account might be stated as, "the mystery of embodied consciousness is an existing thing that we can shape in whichever way," and the negative account might be stated as, "the nothingness at the heart of our Being leaves space for some such thing to be created through our actions." This, of course, lies far beyond the scope of this work.

[78] Cromp, "Communion," 171.

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Emmanuel Levinas asserts that we can never come to fully know the "infinitely different other."[79] This lacuna threatens to lead us to accept the necessity of regarding the relation to the other as a problem, rather than a mystery, because we can only ever come to know the other by a mere part of themself, which is sufficient grounds to engage the relation as a problem, but worryingly thin for mystery. We must recall that problems may be solved by universal techniques, while mysteries cannot. The problematic reduces the whole person to something graspable, an object that can be analyzed objectively and swapped out at will for another member of its set. The relation of an individual to another individual cannot be accounted for by any universal technique. Insofar as a person matters to us (which is also to say insofar as they appear to us as a person rather than an abstracted quality or as someone functionalized) we are involved with them, and our involvement here again necessitates the classification of our relation as mystery rather than problem. Although misters Pfannkuche, Weeks, Lawrence, Flynn, and Wurth all belong to the set "friends named Andrew," I cannot freely swap one for another while maintaining the same technique and expecting the same result in the way I can freely choose from and interpolate frozen pizza, pierogis, and chicken pot pie to solve the problem of what to fix for supper. Mystery leaves open the *possibility* of the whole person even if we do not (or, indeed, could not) have access to this whole.

Mystery inheres involvement, and the mystery of our self-relation puzzles how we might be involved in ourselves, which is to say how we love ourselves. Marcel identifies two ways by which we can love ourselves. Marcel classifies the first type of love as idolatrous and *héauto-centrique*, accepting of the false notion that self-love is self-sufficient, as that which often engenders an excessive, paralyzing harshness towards oneself, and that which is capable only of

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[79] Ketcham, "Invisible," 17-18.

"sterile infatuation."[80] This first sense of love is exacting and centripetal, and engenders

complacency towards oneself. Marcel contrasts this first sense of love with another account, of a

love that radiates itself outwards towards the highest realization of the self.[81] Marcel's second

sense of love is love as creative action, as something that requires patience with its object

(particularly when its object is oneself). Whereas Marcel's first sense of love has as its object

some essential idea of the self, Marcel's second sense is a love of the self as possibility in

becoming, like a seed which can be nurtured into verdant bloom.

Thus, we might regard the other not as the reduction of a heterogenous whole into a

quality (as through functionalization) or as the extrapolation of a quality into essence (as through

abstraction), but as *possibility*. Mystery engages with the person *in toto*, neither as object nor

functionalized. In the relation of myself to myself, I love myself in the measure that I am

disponible to myself.[82] Indeed, we can love someone only to the degree which we make

ourselves available to them. I interpret *disponibilité* as involving an extension of the self-relation

into another person; or, to relate to another person in the manner of the self-relation, in its total

depth and availability. Cromp speaks of the relation of the self to the self; I seek to extend her

thought to the relation of self to *selves*.

The self-relation problematizes belonging and reveals the necessity of a distinction

between *being* and *having* as they constitute forms of belonging.[83] "Spiritual evolution," which

we can take to mean transcendence or, brutely, our ethical flourishing, consists of taking

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[80] Cromp, "Communion," 171-2. "*Héauto-centrisme*" appears to be a neologism of Marcel's. *Héautou* from the Ancient Greek, which seems here to signify a very strong sense of self-centeredness, bordering on the narcissistic.
[81] Cromp, "Communion," 171-2.
[82] Cromp, "Communion," 172.
[83] Cromp, "Communion," 172. *Appartenance*, translated here as "belonging," can also be translated as "membership." The term in French can encompass both meanings, but I will keep my language as uniform as possible by preferring "belonging."

consciousness of my ontological belonging, of belonging to that which I am, which is also to say having fidelity to our creative belonging.[84] It is in this belonging that we express our freedom, because it is through creative belonging that we are able to transform ourselves from a condition of "constraint to freedom." Belonging is rooted in freedom, and freedom flourishes in creation. Marcel's aversion to systematic philosophy somewhat muddles his point here, but it is intelligible that our freedom and belonging have their roots in each other in an inextricable and mutually dependent way that expresses itself through creativity.

Things can belong to us in two ways. The first sense is belonging-having, which governs things within my domain, category, or power.[85] Belonging-having is disputable and problematizable, and functions best when referring to objects, such as how my pencil belongs to me. I *have* belongingness over my pencil, my pencil belongs to me because it is within the set of things that are under my power. Belonging-having becomes troublesome, however, when attempting to express self-ownership. My nose belongs to me, but I do not have proprietorship over my nose like I do my pencil, my shoes, or any other external object. The relationship is manifestly different in the self-relation than in the relation of myself to objects. As embodied consciousness, our body problematizes the neat separation of our consciousness from our world. In that I am myself, I *am* my nose and my nose *is* me.[86] This reveals the necessity of the second account of belonging, belonging-being.

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[84] Cromp, "Communion," 172. *Appartenance ontologique*, directly "ontological belonging," and explicated above as "belonging to what we are," could just as well be rendered as "membership in ourselves."

[85] Cromp, "Communion," 172. Belonging-having is my translation of *appartenance-avoir*, which might also be rendered as "having membership in."

[86] Cromp, "Communion," 172. "Am" should be connoted actively, as a process one vigorously undertakes through their becoming, rather than the standard connotation of "am" as a static, passive state. In the sense that I am my nose, the am ams.

Belonging-being is a mystery in Marcel's sense.[87] While belonging-having concerns

itself with objective relations between an object and its category, belonging-being is the involved

relationship between an object and a particular "who" who claims this object as his own.[88] Thus,

to whom the object belongs in a relation of belonging-being is significant and immutable in a

way that it is not in relations of belonging-having. The object-whom relationship, expressed

through belonging-being, is therefore more appropriate for describing our embodied

consciousness than the object-set relation.[89] Belonging-being is, in a sense, primordial. I come to

have proprietorship over my pencil, it comes under the category of my belonging, but I *am*

primordially myself.

We lose our proper ontological standing when we regard ourselves through belonging-

having, which reduces us to objects. In the same way, when we regard the other like an object

(through the being-having relation, functionalization, or objectification, all of which are

interrelated), they become something we can get rid of, that we can dispose of like litter.[90] This

objectification as trashification of the other is neither inevitable nor necessary. The other can be

recovered with a subjective superstructure, which we can understand to be our interpersonal

disponible relationship, which springs from my spirit and continues into the other in the degree it

continues in me. To the degree that my me-ness penetrates her, I can no longer rid myself of her

like litter.[91] The disposability (English connotation) of a life, be it ours or that of another, is

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[87] Cromp, "Communion," 172. Belonging-being is my translation of *appartenance-être*, which might also be rendered as "being a member of."

[88] Cromp, "Communion," 172. Rather than as "its category," I might have translated more directly "the whole that it is a part of (*l'ensemble dont il est une partie*)." The "particular who" is a relatively direct translation of "un certain « qui » réclamant cet objet comme sien."

[89] Cromp, "Communion," 172-3.

[90] Cromp, "Communion," 174.

[91] Cromp, "Communion," 174. "My me-ness" is an inelegant but functional translation of "mon « je »" in the context of, "Dans la mesure où mon « je » la pénètre, je ne peux plus disposer d'elle."

commensurate with its objectification. The more we regard a life as an object to be had, the simpler it is to throw it away. By the same token, the deeper we extend our self-relation as belonging-being into another person through a *disponible* attitude and relationship, the less meaningful becomes the distinction between myself and the other. Where real intimacy is found, we cannot get rid of the other because they are not an object, but a presence with which we are ourselves intimately involved.

Marcel asserts that our life is only creative, which we recall is the mode of our ontological belonging, in the measure that it is consecrated.[92] Marcel is an infamously unsystematic philosopher and as much a dramaturge as he is a philosopher, so his language can sometimes become florid and opaque, but I take Marcel to be saying very straightforwardly that our existential freedom is expressed most truly when it is directed towards *teloi* or fundamental projects, following from the intentionality of consciousness. In consecrating our life to another, which is to say adopting the Other and their fundamental projects as our own, we nihilate the possibility of regarding our life like an object to be manipulated or thrown away through belonging-having.[93] One can transcend the realm of objects through consecrating one's life to another, which expresses itself through sacrifice.

Sacrifice reveals that there exists a world beyond our desires for it. Sacrifice affirms the world and affirms our belonging-being to ourselves, to another, and to the world. To consecrate ourselves to another through sacrifice, we cannot merely have a life – we must *be* our life.[94] To sacrifice yourself would be absurd if we ourselves were the sole "center of projection" of our

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[92] Cromp, "Communion," 175.
[93] Cromp, "Communion," 176.
[94] Cromp, "Communion," 176.

world. Sacrifice demands we ask ourselves the question, "What is the center of the world for you?" In Jean-Luc Godard's 1966 film *Masculin Féminin*, Chantal Goya's character, Madeleine, asks this of Jean-Pierre Léaud's character, Paul. Paul responds sheepishly that he finds it to be love.[95] This surprises Madeleine, who in turn answers that the center of the world to her, would be herself. This love, a *disponible* love consecrated in sacrifice, is irrational, but it is through this madness that the superior man can realize the full depth of his creative Being.[96]

Hieronymi's forgiveness practice involves sacrifice of this kind. Forgiveness is not a matter of "wiping the slate clean," as Allais' account holds. Transgression always takes its pound of flesh, and blood pours no less freely from our wounds upon the revelation that their inflictor had meant well. Forgiveness does not and cannot erase the damage of the transgression (which Hieronymi poetically calls "scars"). In forgiving, we incorporate the damage the transgressor has done to us into the fabric of our lives.[97] We do not erase the scars of transgression, but we do grow around them. Forgiving involves absorbing the damage the transgressor has done to us. In order to let them back into the Social, we must sacrifice our comfort and suffer whatever they have made us to suffer, and we must do so voluntarily. We have consecrated ourselves to the transgressor and engage them with a *disponible* attitude that does not seek to functionalize them, which is to say, to reduce them to their transgression, but to open ourselves up to the whole of their being and engage with them as possibility in the full communion of mystery in which we are intimately involved. In our radical attitude of openness, fraternity, and love, we choose not to

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[95] « Comme ça l'amour, je trouve. »

[96] Cromp, "Communion," 176-7. This is a rather free translation. Marcel details how sacrifice is, on a certain level, folly, but can sometimes be sanctioned and commendable because failing to do so would cause one to fall below oneself or become less than one is. « *Si l'homme la refusait, il tomberait au-dessous de lui-même.* »

[97] Hieronymi, "Articulating," 550-1. Hieronymi's discussion in footnote 39 is insightful and worth reproducing, "Forgiveness is not *simply* a revision in judgment or a change in view or a wiping clean or a washing away or a making new. Someone will bear the cost in his or her own person. The wrong is less 'let go of' or washed away than it is digested or absorbed." Italics original. See also footnote 43 on pp. 552.

functionalize the transgressor into their transgression, and we willingly bear the cost of this

openness in our person.

We have established the kind of relation that we have to ourselves and to the ontic other.

It now stands to explore our relation to the ontological Other. So, we return now to the figure of

the *Homo Viator*. Within our self-relation, we relate ourselves to ourselves in our embodied

consciousnesses. With the other, we share in a mysterious *disponible* relation which discloses

itself through sacrifice. In our relation to the Other, our relation to the Social, our relation

assumes the form of *Homos Viator*.[98]

The positions put forth in this paper will not be without their opponents. Jean-Paul Sartre,

for his part, would argue against the possibility of a general human condition, as *Homos Viator*

or any other such formulation.[99] Alain Badiou would likely find some consonance between

Homos Viator and his elaboration of a nomadic proletariat or *sans-papiers*, the class of people

who have been displaced by the expansion of global capital and exist at the intersecting

precarities of class, race, and migration.[100] The primary difference, as it appears to me, is that the

sans-papiers are an ephemeral and historically contingent social class caused by the completion

of the capitalist world-system's globalization and continuing inequal relations between the

industrial-imperial core and the periphery, whereas our situation as *Homos Viator*, whether or

not it succeeds in achieving it, aims for a basis more durable than transitory social-economic

structural conditions. Slavoj Žižek offers a cogent opposing reply to Badiou on Marxist grounds,

the heart of which is that *sans-papiers* arrive in the imperial core as refugees, without

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[98] Our relation to and within the Social could alternatively be understood as *coesse* or *Mitsein*.
[99] Sartre, "Existentialisme," 93.
[100] Nail, "Badiou," 1, 3-4.

documentation, or without the requisite local language knowledge to participate in wage labor and thus become proletarians.[101] They exist outside the dialectic of proletarians and bourgeoises and cannot be incorporated into it coherently. As interesting as these nuances are, they are outside the scope of this paper.

Samuel Reis-Dennis would argue laterally that the Hieronymian forgiveness practice we accommodated within a Marcelian picture of the world correctly identifies the social situatedness of resentment, but does not make enough of the dynamics of social power, to the effect that social strength ought to be a condition for valid resentment.[102] Reis-Dennis would follow Hieronymi's refutation of Novitz's pity-based forgiveness, but would add the further stipulation that it is impermissible because pitying implies a lopsided distribution in social power between the haughty and their lowly object of pity. Emmanuel Levinas would argue against the admissibility of the *disponible* mystery as the nature of our relation to the ontic other, because the Other is infinite in his alterity.[103] We will take up this objection in detail.

The Other plays a central role in Levinas' philosophy. Levinas' picture of the Other is as something completely separate from me, something that is infinitely alterior, meaning infinite in its difference or capacity for difference, to the degree where we can never come to fully know the Other as totality.[104] Levinas illuminates the ways that mediating terms, such as freedom,

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[101] Žižek, "Nomadic," 1-2, 4.

[102] Reis-Dennis, "Rank," 1234-5, 1237-9, 1244.

[103] Ketcham, "Invisible," 17. It is possible that my representation of Levinas' picture of the Other thus far might read as somewhat wrongheaded. I argue against infinite alterity not because it is untrue, but because its truth can be sidestepped through a relation of *disponible* mystery. Rather than acknowledge that the Other is a cosmos of mystery that we can never penetrate fully and working from this "closed" position, we encounter that ontic being which we find before us and open ourselves up fully to accommodate the unknown and unknowable ontological depths of their Being as it continually manifests itself to us temporally. Though intended for a popular audience, The Ethics Centre's blog post "Ethics Explainer: The Other" was helpful in clarifying Levinas' use of the Other and of alterity. https://ethics.org.au/ethics-explainer-the-other/

[104] Ketcham, "Invisible," 17-18.

infringe on the Other's otherness, in that through freedom we do not relate to the other "as such," but as a "reduction of the other to the same," or to reduce them to "I'ness."[105] Levinas' picture of the Other's infinite alterity requires that we do not extend our "I'ness," which we might otherwise conceptualize as our subjectivity or self-relation, into the Other. On first blush, this threatens our practice of *disponible* mystery, but upon examination I do not find this to be the case. *Disponible* mystery involves the other, it engages with them, but it does not involve the extension of our self-relation into the other in an intelligible fashion so much as it involves opening ourselves up to *receive* the other in their transient qualities as they manifest over time. Furthermore, alterity might be without limit, but it is not without sense, and there exists at least the possibility of recognizing emergent patterns that are intelligible to us and amongst us.[106] It is not through the ways in which we are like, but that we differ in like ways, that ground our intelligible relationships. As far as we have a constant condition, it is the inconstancy of our condition. *Disponible* mystery accounts for the whole person as possibility, through concernful care, and as a potential *Boden* for cultivation and growth.[107]

We do not (and indeed cannot) know the whole of their person, but we can regard the other as a font of possibilities and through the charitable openness of *disponibilité* we can accommodate the total whole even without knowing the total whole in its whole totality. The horizon of the Other's Being extends beyond our powers of perception, but we fall into functionalization only when we take that which we can see to be constitutive of the whole

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[105] Ketcham, "Invisible," 19-20.
[106] Ketcham, "Invisible," 29. Levinas would object to this point on the grounds that the Other's infinite alterity prevents us from assigning specific value or definition to either party to mystery. Ketcham's article is an able essay at placing Marcel and Levinas in dialogue, but further work is needed to make either's work intelligible in the terms of the other's *oeuvre*.
[107] *Stanford*, "Marcel," 20.

person. By approaching the other as possibility, with the attitude of *disponibilité*, we engage with the parts of the person we have before us while still accounting for the existence – actual or potential – of a broader person. An epistemological humility need not be the same thing as functionalization. The Other is, as Levinas says, "infinitely unknowable," but they are not entirely inscrutable, and the attitude of *disponibilité* leaves us open to accommodate the whole person as they manifest further aspects of themselves concretely over time, that an expanding personage can be accounted for without falsely believing that the personage manifested actually before us discloses their Being in its totality rather than a moment in the flowing of their Heraclitean current of Becoming.

The Social is that mysterious network of relations within which we find ourselves enmeshed. The artifice of the Social discloses the creative power that we as the masses have in the composition of and belonging to the Social. Marcel tells us that we live in a broken world, and the barest of exposure to human life reveals to us that we are fallible beings. The Social will be transgressed against, and we will transgress against it. In greater or lesser ways, more or less often, some moreso than others, yes, but everyone will at some point find themselves cast out of the Social, estranged from the moral community. The steward of the Social, in such cases when they arise, is the victim of our transgression (assuming *the* victim of *the* transgression is identifiable). Forgiveness power lies within the victim of our transgression, as does the elective power to allow us reentry into the Social once a readiness-to-forgive is attained without compromising the basic judgments of valid resentment. Through our *disponibilité* we can come to view the transgressor as more than their transgression, that while their transgression remains a wrong act, the transgressor in their Being-as-possibility ought no longer to be defined by that act, a practice which, in its worst excesses, becomes indistinguishable from functionalization.

Forgiveness in a Broken World

In the final analysis, we might regard our common condition as *Homo Viator* to be a rubric for enacting our attitude of *disponibilité*. Through our *disponible* and mysterious relation to the Other, we achieve a readiness-to-forgive in Hieronymi's robust and uncompromising sense without committing the errors that several alternative accounts of forgiveness and resentment fall into. We acknowledge that we do not and cannot come to know the other in their totality, be it for their infinite alterity or their not being an object.[108] We instead open ourselves up radically to receive the other, in their changing manifestations as they come to us in the current of temporality, and neither functionalize the Other by reducing them to their transgression or another active process nor abstract out one quality of theirs as being indicative of the total whole of their being. Our being and the being of others expands beyond our perceptual powers, in part because of the infinity of our alterity, but also because of the temporal nature of our being. Even if one were able to access the total whole of another, their information would soon become outmoded as the Other, as a creative being, exercises their existential freedom to create new meanings, beliefs, and biographical information for themselves as they traipse down the dusty paths we frequent in our condition as *Homos Viator*, stopping from time to time but rarely tarrying long and, even when we do dawdle, rarely belonging in a stable sense within the Social groups in which we find ourselves.

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[108] Yu, "Intersubjectivity," 6-11. Yu highlights a different aspect of Marcel's thought, intersubjectivity, but comes to broadly similar conclusions about the kind of open relations we might have with the other.

Forgiveness in a Broken World

I CAN'T TELL (*Radnóti*)
I can't tell what this country may mean for any other,
but for me, this tiny nation embraced by flames is my mother,
now a far-away world set on fire, where she rocked me in childhood.
I grew out from it, like a weak branch from a tree in a wild wood.
And I hope my body will one day dissolve in this soil to mulch its growth.
I'm at home in it here. I know the name and the flower both
of whatever shrubby bush I find kneeling before my feet.
I know where they're off to along this road, the travelers I meet,
and I know what it may mean in summer, towards nightfall,
when anguish the color of blood runs down a house's wall.
To the bombardier in his plane climbing high, this land is a map,
and he doesn't know Vörösmarty lived where his bomb will drop.
What does this map reveal to him? Factories, barracks of wild men,
but not crickets, oxen, church steeples, gentle homesteads, children;
high up there through his bombsight he sees factories, arable lands,
while I see the laborer also, trembling for all he holds in his hands,
forests, and budding orchards, vineyards of grapes, and the graves;
between the rows of graves a shrunken old grandmother grieves,
and what from above is a railyard to bomb, or a manufacturing plant,
is a railway-watchman's hut, before which the watchman, signalling, stands,
waving his red flag while the children cluster around,
and in the factory courtyard Komondor dogs tumble and bound;
over there in the park, where the lost lovers left their footprints,
I taste their kisses in my mouth; now honey, huckleberry, quince;
and one day walking to school, on purpose I stepped on a stone
on the footpath's curb, so that day I wouldn't be called on,
look! here's that stone; but from up there it too can't be seen,
all this is hidden from the instruments peering down from that machine.

But we are all sinners, just as other people always were,
and we know all the ways we have sinned, when and how and where,
but innocent workers live here, too – and poets also,
and babies at the breast, in whom reason grows as they grow,
an inner light which they guard, hidden in their cellars, in the dark,
until the finger of Peace writes its sign across our land in a sweeping arc,
and then they'll replace our strangled language with fresh words to sing.

Cover us, night clouds, as you keep watch, with your tremendous wing.

17 January 1944[109]

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[109] Radnóti, "Matters," 116-119.

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