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Advisor: Christopher Pye

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Second Advisor: Anita Sokolsky

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Desire in Between

A Paradigmatic Analysis of Hannah Arendt's Theory of Love

by

Nicholas Bernier

Christopher Pye and Anita Sokolsky, Advisors

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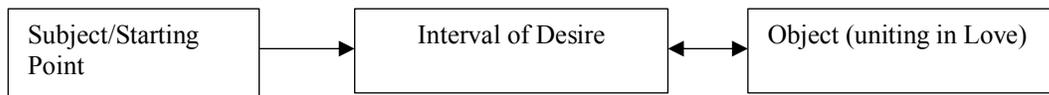
The biggest gratitude I feel is for the people I miss most in this moment. The people I lived with my senior year, Crissy McIntosh '20, Molly Egger '20, Maddie Miura '20, Harper Kerkhoff '20, Nyla Thompson '20, Annie Kang '20, and Grace Murray '20 have supported me through the emotional labor of a work that feels so deeply personal. They have quite literally been shoulders to cry on, people to laugh with, and the smartest students I've ever met to bounce questions off of. This work started as something daunting and emotionally impermeable, and I'm leaving it, because of them, feeling proud of my own personal growth, which has emerged as I've built and dismantled difficult paradigms surrounding love.

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Introduction

This project began with an analysis of Hannah Arendt's doctoral thesis *Love and Saint Augustine*, in which she pursues Augustine's division of two different types of desire. Arendt's acceptance of Augustine's division between *caritas* and *cupiditas* is emblematic of how she thinks: in a way that reflects post-structuralists who wrote during and after her career, she follows the consequences of the apparent necessity of boundary. She's an intricate and elusive thinker, and that divisive character to her writing is something that her critics tackle and misinterpret, such that she develops a reputation, in some circles, of being reductionist as she applies theoretical paradigms to various controversial political events.

The distinction between *cupiditas* and *caritas* prompts my analysis of the mechanisms of both types, which rely on a subject-object relationship. Arendt suggests that desire is goal-oriented, meaning that despite the division Augustine characterizes, the subject always aims at a type of uniting with the love object. It was through the potential enacting of this structure in Arendt's and Heidegger's love letters that I postulated a paradigm which the entire thesis works around, and that is what I have called the interval. In one particular letter, which Arendt titles *SHADOWS*, she describes the feeling of self-division, of being "thrown back on herself," such that she "concealed and obscured both her vision of herself and her access to herself" (Arendt, 12-13). The most important step I've made in this thesis is ask: where are these selves, along the path of desire that Arendt maps out in *Love and Saint Augustine*? I began to answer this question using Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*, in which he proposes several mechanisms of desire that explore what happens to the self in love. Here emerges the ubiquitous diagram in which the division of self from object, which must be crossed in the action of desire, is in fact occupied by a version of self, as Arendt describes in her letter:



Through this diagram I arrive at the term “interval,” which I use to refer both to the entire diagram (the “structure” of desire) and the in-between space (the center box), which is crucial to problematizing the subject-object basis. The diagramming of desire suggests a division of consciousness between three different container-acting locations: the starting point, the goal, and the space in between, which as I outline in the final portion of my first chapter is the place of Arendtian action.

I turn to Ovid and Propertius to discuss the performativity of action that takes place in the interval; the elegists’ love poetry, I claim, enacts the interval. The dramatic linkage between elegy-writing and mortality (or lack thereof) was the initial draw to these texts, and the use of elegy-writing to negate death, to achieve an immortality, maps onto the paradigm I’ve proposed in rewarding ways, particularly in thinking about an oscillation between the interval-space and the end goal, which I describe in my first chapter as a process necessary to the survival of self in Arendtian desire.

The third chapter realizes the genealogical nature of the thesis in its entirety: it traces the interval as a tool to understanding Arendt’s and Heidegger’s philosophy, as a means for understanding the identity of the elegist, and, eventually, as a paradigm that negotiates the public/private division which Arendt discusses in several of her works. I try to demonstrate in my third chapter that the interval of desire is related and in some cases identical to more political paradigms that also use the subject-object relationship to their advantage. In particular, Jacques Derrida’s paradigm of the host-foreigner relationship in *Of Hospitality* and the paradigm of

speech relating the subject both to the listener and back to himself in Paul Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another* aid in showing that Arendtian desire (not just desire more abstractly) is crucial to political discourse. I put Arendt's essays "Reflections on Little Rock" and "On Violence" in conversation with critic and poet Fred Moten—I aim to present Arendt as not claiming that a necessary division between the social and political naturally follows from strict distinction between the public and private, but as rather asking, *what are the consequences when, in a political system, there are no divisions between social, political, and private?* A movement between different realms suggests that desire doesn't only open up to the public, but also that that presence enacts the division between the public and private.

In this way the entire piece suggests a supersession by the structure, instead of a failing of it to understand desire. This is not to say that the interval comprehends desire sufficiently, but rather that it uses desire to understand similar structures that involve it, but also outlie it.

Chapter 1

“She got in her own way”: Modeling Desire in Hannah Arendt’s Philosophy and Personal Letters

Critics have evaluated Hannah Arendt’s doctoral dissertation *Love and Saint Augustine* as a departure from Self-based Heideggerian discourse and an emergence into her own existential but largely community-based ontology. Arendt is not integrating Augustinian philosophy into the philosophies of her mentors, but producing her own theoretical conclusions based on the schematic frameworks that Augustine presents: in Sarah Spengeman’s words, “Arendt intentionally and creatively (mis)uses Augustine as well as other philosophers...for her own purposes” (Spengeman 81-82). The majority of her argument hinges on the structure of craving (Augustine’s *appetitus*); essential to beginning to understand love is her axiom that “Every craving is tied to a definite object, and it takes this object to spark the craving itself, thus providing an aim for it” (Arendt 9). Desire, which is how we aim at love and therefore is constitutive to it, always has the goal of possession, Arendt argues, and it “ceases to act as a mechanism of craving once we obtain the object” (9). In Spengeman’s analysis, “We desire to belong, to ‘be with’ (Sein-bei) the object of desire. This ‘being with’ is the calm (*quies*) of having (*tenere*) and holding. Only in the calm of absolute possession does isolation end and enjoyment begin (Arendt qtd. in Spengeman 123). In other words, enjoyment and craving are distinct, in Arendt’s terms. The enjoyment described by Augustine is devoid of the change that desire initiates—in Arendt’s words, “fulfillment [of love] lies in seeing (*videre*) a specific and, to Augustine, excellent manner of having. This seeing becomes enjoyment (*frui*)” (Arendt qtd. in Spengeman 129). This supposed stability of enjoyment is threatened by the loss of the worldly love object: Arendt claims that lovers will always feel frustrated by loving the object who dies and thus is affected by time, because it’s impossible to wholly possess that object. Thus, desire is dually tied to this *experience* of having and the *fear* of losing once we obtain it: craving “gives

rise in the moment of possession to a fear of losing,” (10) suggesting that enjoyment can only occur in an idealized *caritas*.

The bleakness of impending loss of worldly love prompts Augustine to distinguish between two types of love: *cupiditas*, whose object exists in the world, and *caritas*, whose only object *must* be the eternal one—God. In *cupiditas*, humans repeatedly fall back into the structure of desire every time they experience loss; in *caritas*, desire ceases to act cyclically because its aim is eternal. Augustine’s conditions for *caritas* are unexpected. Instead of loving God for the sake of God, we should love God, in *caritas*, so we as mortals don’t have to experience loss-anxiety or the pain of loss itself, and therefore can remain in the changeless joy (*frui*) that underlies desire. The fear of loss is replaced by “chaste fear,” which is “the proper companion of *caritas*” because it holds you to your faith “out of fear of losing eternity”—in this way, “It is what prevents you from slipping back into *cupiditas*” (Spengeman 131). What’s not clear is whether or not the joy that arises from *caritas* is equal to that which comes from an idealized *cupiditas*—that is, a *cupiditas* which isn’t threatened by loss and therefore excludes fear. Because the object of God cannot be obtained before death and thus the lover only *strives* for unity, is the “joy” of *caritas* also provisional? And, if it is provisional, does that mean that the lover of God is less happy than the lover of the world, even if the lover of the world is (more) scared of loss?

While these questions are important to Arendt and demonstrate the fragility of Augustine’s ontology, it seems that the subject of desire as a sort of *substance* that interacts with both the lover and the beloved is more essential to the philosophy she’s examining. *Love and Saint Augustine* is intentionally based in Augustine’s belief that love is both the “‘in-between’ that unites the lover with the object of his or her affection,” as well as the ‘in-between’ that

bonds members of the community” (Augustine qtd. in Spengeman 72). Augustine believed that love is constitutive to the Holy Trinity (Augustine in Spengeman 72), but it seems more important to Arendt that love in fact *implicates* three beings: the lover (the father); the beloved (the son); and the elusive force of desire itself (the holy spirit) (Spengeman 73).¹ This representative understanding of desire gives her a necessary method for exploring human mortality, which is crucial to my argument in this project, as well as for discovering the basis of worldly or neighborly love, which is important to her later work in *The Human Condition*. But it seems that the basis of Arendt’s argument (desire as craving) imbues a materiality to the *relation* to the love object itself—and by materiality here, I mean that the relation becomes an occupiable space or container for self. The lover generates this materiality, which arises in the form of an interval, in his or her effort to establish a relation to the love object in the first place. Can we (as humans who strive for love and are capable of desire) manage, via a self-generated interval, a relationship to desire at all? That is, can we comprehend a relation (1) to a relation (2), if relation (2) is apprehended as a material object through language? The disappearance of desire once we possess the love-object is counter-intuitive, at best, and when it comes to something as “human” as love, I must trust my gut in asking: is it that simple? That is, do we have desire precisely because of its fleeting nature—do we have desire because we *had* desire?

Attempting to answer these questions is a daunting task, and it requires that I examine Arendt’s personal philosophies (her personal love life) as well as her academic work as poetic endeavors. This prerequisite will allow me to put her in a literary conversation with her best-documented romantic partner (Martin Heidegger), as well as with several other critics and

¹ While Augustine presents both 1) love as that which binds the Holy Trinity and 2) love as involving three parts, the mapping of one onto the other is my own.

philosophers—the intention being to understand the role of the notion of the interval in Arendt’s political philosophy, including her distinctions between the public and private realm.

It seems that most fundamentally, the structure of mediation (perhaps faulty from the beginning, because it assumes our ability to understand a relation to a relation) as presented by Arendt is one which looks towards ends to find a solution the problem at hand. This problem, which is answered through Christianity for Augustine and used to explore the role of the interval in politics for Arendt, is death. At first glance, *caritas* avoids death, which is the problem that the lover in *cupiditas* faces. By Augustine’s logic, the love that can disappear because of death is inherently wrong—so, as Arendt articulates it, a love that can *solve* death is correct in that it negates the problem of time. Arendt is fascinated by the possibility of a solution, which *caritas* offers:

She quotes from Augustine’s *De Trinitate*: “‘What else is love except a kind of life that binds, or seeks to bind, together some two things, namely the lover and the beloved?’” (Arendt 1996, 18; Arendt 2003, 36). Love is the bond that connects us to our beloved. In *caritas*, the lover “cleaves to” (*inhaerere*) the eternal God (Arendt 2003, 37). In *caritas*, we no longer belong to the world, but to eternity. (Arendt qtd. in Spengeman, 127).

Here, Arendt traces the double-ness of love (either *cupiditas* or *caritas*) as both a “kind of life” and something that requires a devotion, in fact a donation of the self—that binding of the self to something outside is automatically a construction that mutates that which first initiated the desire. In *The Human Condition* (1958), which she wrote nearly 30 years after her dissertation, the paradox of the self “being in love” plays out more clearly, particularly in a discussion of the difference between eternity and immortality.² Standing with the eternal God inherently lacks

² In Arendt’s terms, immortality belongs to God (for Plato and Aristotle, the Greek Gods). “Mortal” is a term used to describe man, and only man: “The mortality of men lies in the fact that individual life, with a recognizable life-story from birth to death, rises out of biological life... This is mortality: to move along a rectilinear line in a universe where everything, if it moves at all, moves in a cyclical order” (Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 19). From the perspective of Plato and Aristotle, mortals and immortal beings can interact. This differs from the typical mortal’s interaction with the mortal who exists in eternity, which I describe in the following.

worldliness, for eternity “can occur only outside the realm of human affairs and outside the plurality of men” (Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 20). The plurality of men refers to the simple but important idea that “men, not Man live on earth and inhabit the world” (Arendt, 7). Therefore the lover striving for *caritas* is striving to exit humanity, because the devotion of the self to the eternal God eliminates the experience of a human acting as one of many in humanity (which requires humans to act as individuals and not clones). If the lover achieves eternity in *caritas*, he ceases to act as a lover—in fact, he’s lost his selfhood, for “the eternal is a kind of death, and the only thing that separates it from real death is that it is not final because no living creature can endure it for any length of time” (20). In these terms the subject of *caritas*, in *becoming* part of eternity, loses the ability to return to the world (for if he could endure it for a length of time, then at the end of that time, he would re-emerge among men).

In *A Lover’s Discourse*, critic Roland Barthes takes a more poetic approach, presenting various potential intervals in an effort to visualize the lover in action. The closeness that Arendt identifies once the desiring subject enters love is the subject of Barthes’ chapter: “I am engulfed/I succumb” (Barthes 10). In love, the lover gives himself up to the hypnosis of the act itself, in that the experience supersedes his consciousness of it; he does not devote himself to the object but is instead entranced by their mutual project. He says, “I have no responsibility here, the act (of dying) is not up to me: I entrust myself, I transmit myself (to whom? To God, to Nature, to everything, except to the other)” (11). Being in love is not only the feeling of dispersal, but the transmutation of the self in possession of body into the unstressed non-body, according to Barthes. Thus, even though the lover is living by his very act of loving, “on those occasions when [he is] engulfed, it is because there is no longer any place for [him] anywhere,

not even in death” (11). Barthes means that the very act of giving up the self in loving causes the lover to *be* placeless, for he has *lost* his body in the hypnosis of his action.

The ambiguity of place when the self is devoted to the love object is exaggerated in *caritas*, simply because it’s not clear where the love object is (except that it’s in the future)—and thus the aim for *caritas* becomes defined by the conscience’s decision of where that object is, instead of its identity in the world. I’d argue that this ambiguity is essential for the successful cleaving of the lover to eternity—in *caritas* the lover achieves a dissolution of self precisely because they’re attaching (to use Arendt’s imagery of stickiness or adherence) themselves to something they don’t know. It’s precisely this outstripping of the self by the entering of the unknown, by the entrance of the human subject into the forbidden realm of eternity, that both starts and *ends* desire. It starts here because it’s when we look past ourselves that we’re able to apprehend it; it ends here because this is the beginning of Arendt’s “enjoyment,” which, in conversation with Barthes, is more like the death of selfhood or the end of development—desire here doubles back onto itself—it crosses itself out.

I don’t necessarily think this is a bad thing; that is, I don’t think that we’ve completely lost when we give away the self to the love object. Rather, *caritas* is the realization that we’ll always fail to stay ourselves when we comprehend desire; that this perfected obliteration of selfhood in the tossing of the self into the future in fact reveals desire within the world as well. In Barthes terms, then, to love is the realization of a the human power of longing: “it is my desire I desire, and the loved being is no more than its tool. I rejoice at the thought of such a great cause, which leaves far behind it the person whom I have made into its pretext” (Barthes 30). Barthes pinpoints the relevance of the self-generated interval here, for in wanting desire, the lover identifies a *craving* for the materialization of the relation itself. The tool aids the lover but she

(the lover) doesn't require it past the origin point—for at this point she has generated the machinery, and can return to the structure even without the love object.

Examining Hannah Arendt's personal love life produces its own nuances for the full Arendtian machinery of desire, which both informs *Love and Saint Augustine* and produces its own philosophical relevance that distinguishes Arendt from other existentialists. In order to fully understand Arendt's way of comprehending this, it's important to delve into the personal side of her realization of desire.³ Arendt was private with her personal life, in part out of obligation; she was a target in the 1920's and 30's not only because of her Jewishness but because she had a brilliant, convincing, and politically active mind. She was arrested in 1933 for anti-state propaganda, and after fleeing to France following this arrest, was interned at Camp Gurs, where she remained until she succeeded in escaping to New York in 1941. Fortunately, Arendt submitted correspondence to various archives between herself and Martin Heidegger, her lover and Professor at the University of Marburg, before her death in 1969. Only a small fraction of the remaining correspondences are written by Arendt—Heidegger was much more prolific and consistent in writing her than she was him, but he also was less diligent, maybe intentionally,

³ As critic Margaret Canovan describes, "In recent years, as Arendt's thought has attracted increased attention (partly for reasons she would not herself have welcomed, such as interest in her gender, her ethnicity, and her romantic relationship with Heidegger), the book's importance has come to be very widely recognized, but its meaning remains in dispute" (Canovan, *The Human Condition*, xxviii). Perhaps the largest qualification I'd like to make about my essay is that the use of her letters and less traditional philosophical texts does not pathologize Arendt, nor does it necessarily contradict her privacy—it merely offers a more wholistic understanding of a structure she both philosophically and personally examines in sometimes poetic and often explanatory ways. In one definition of "Action," Arendt writes, "With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. This insertion is not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and it is not prompted by utility, like work. It may be stimulated by the presence of others whose company we may wish to join, but it is never conditioned by them; its impulses spring from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative" (Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 177). It is the *responsibility* of us as humans to respond to impulses, and it is our peculiar function to *begin* things. My impulse is to understand where Arendt was coming from—that isn't conditioned by her, but by the texts she left that offer me a beginning. It's also important to consider that "It is thanks to Arendt that the letters and other documents have survived. She was the one who preserved most of what is here brought to light, then passed it on to archives" (Ludz xii).

about keeping track of her letters (Ludz xii). What's clear is that the two were enamored with each other, and that the intensity of their relationship informed their academic endeavors: Arendt worshiped Heidegger's existentialism, and the concept of Dasein, though not often explicitly stated, leaks into her later philosophy. More generally, her writing, though more coherent than his, reflects Heideggerian motifs, such as the consistent reminder that coming to terms with one's existence is an event that evacuates pleasure. Heidegger saw in Arendt an ideal protégé, a personality that, unlike his own, embodied his existentialist projects—and the insecurity he experiences in relation to her identity as a lover (as is apparent in their correspondence, he's jealous and frustrated by her superiority in both the embodiment of the lover and the performance of loving), and to conceive of love both personally and within her work, manifested into a diminutive and misogynistic, but nonetheless pervading, love for her.

Arendt speaks cagily in her letters. She ostensibly focuses on the project of remembrance; Arendt and Heidegger knew each other for fifty years, and while they stayed in contact through their correspondences over time, they consistently saw each other only during Arendt's time at Marburg. Following a lovers' reunion in Heidelberg, Arendt sends him the following:

I am turning to you today with the same security and with the same request: do not forget me, and do not forget how much and how deeply I know that our love has become the blessing of my life. This knowledge cannot be shaken, not even today, when, as a way out of my restlessness, I have found a home and a sense of belonging with someone about whom you might understand it least of all (Arendt, Letter 43, p. 51).

The visit that they shared has prompted Arendt to question the stability of their love—their closeness has put into question the ability to remember, which, when they are apart, is mechanically easy (for, when together, the lovers don't remember each other; they witness each other in love). Barthes presents the ability of one to forget the lover temporarily as crucial to the continuity of the relationship, and of the self: in forgetting, "I am, intermittently, unfaithful. This is the condition of my survival; for if I did not forget, I should die. The lover who doesn't forget

sometimes dies of excess, exhaustion, and tension of memory” (Barthes 14). The conception of the overcommitted lover dying from the exhaustion of loving without intermission (Barthes) is precisely what Arendt requests: “The sight of [Heidegger] always rekindles awareness of my life’s clearest and most urgent continuity, of the continuity of our—*please* let me say it—love” (Arendt, Letter 44, p. 51). The security of love for Arendt arises from the affirmation of the relationship through both correspondence (virtual presence) and physical contact with Heidegger, but it’s the absence of the other, the inability to immediately contact the other, that provides the necessary distance for living. Using this logic, the written correspondence provides mediation that makes love soluble in living, and it allows the lovers to cope with the strangeness of time, in love. In other words, the letters both ask and address the question: how do I have desire, which produces love (for my purposes, love is understood as the fulfillment of desire—“enjoyment” once desire is fulfilled and the love object is possessed) and prolongs desire (which, in Augustine’s terms, belongs to craving and therefore disappears in love)? It seems that answering this question requires the involvement of the interval, such that it produces an intermediate, mediating space to which the lovers might return.

Barthes claims that the lover is faced with the problem of enduring time, and to do so he “manipulates it: transform[s] the distortion of time into oscillation, produce[s] rhythm, makes an entrance onto the stage of language,” thus “extend[ing] this interval” and “delay[ing] as long as possible the moment when the other might topple sharply from absence into death” (16). While his identification of this “oscillation” or “rhythm” is vague, the act of mechanical *production* in love is crucial to the maintenance of self: the lovers must bounce between their limited self and the unlimited pairing—they must remain in a self-dependent time (what we might think of as worldly time, which happens in the public sphere) and a relationship-dependent distortion of

time (in that love distorts time, in the private sphere). In writing (using the stage of language), Arendt and Heidegger both establish remembrance and institute a framework in time for their correspondence (in that their letters are dated, and that the lovers gather physical letters over time that detract from time's tendency to distort in love), thus protracting the time before death. The paradoxical relation to death that I previously described as constitutive to *caritas* re-emerges in a more nuanced way here—Arendt and Heidegger defer death through their mediated correspondence, but it's the possibility of death (uniting in love) that enables the relationship. This death is both a lack of continuity (Arendt), the falling of the lover from a temporary absence into a permanent one, as well as the dramatic proximity of the lover *after* absence, the being with the lover that causes her to forget how to forget (Barthes). The lover is *lost* to death, as soon as she loses the relation to death.

In *Love and Saint Augustine*, Love requires a subject-object relationship, which desire mediates. It's a definitional force, one that supplies man with meaning only by his ability to recognize a longing for something other than himself: "Strictly speaking, he who does not love and desire at all is a nobody" (18). The concept of "nobody-ness" that Arendt names noticeably contrasts with but also parallels Heideggerian Dasein, whose "fundamental structure" is "being-in-the-world," and whose "existential meaning is *care*" (Heidegger 39). Such a parallel suggests an enactment of the "interval," though in a worldly context, for Heidegger. According to Professor Michael Wheeler, "it is with the configuration of care that we encounter the first tentative emergence of temporality as a theme in *Being and Time*, since the dimensionality of care will ultimately be interpreted in terms of the three temporal dimensions: past (thrownness/disposedness), future (projection/understanding), and present (fallenness/fascination)" (Wheeler, "Martin Heidegger"). Care is how Dasein mediates between having

been thrown into the world and what it expects to encounter in the future: it is a project of learning that negates the present through the cyclical and conscious projection of what's been learned from having been thrown—in mediating past, present, and future, Care guards against the middle term (the present, understood by the interval), which only contains “*idle talk* (roughly, conversing in a critically unexamined and unexamining way about facts and information while failing to use language to reveal their relevance), *curiosity* (a search for novelty and endless stimulation rather than belonging or dwelling), and *ambiguity* (a loss of any sensitivity to the distinction between genuine understanding and superficial chatter)” (Wheeler, “Martin Heidegger”).

Heideggerian Care and Arendt's Desire are definitely different and don't organically mesh; however, for both it seems that the present is largely devoid of meaningful human behavior—fulfillment lies in the future, and for Heidegger the future is largely informed by personal history. This present-exclusionary dynamic is perhaps qualified by a relation to the other, for whom we're responsible or implicated, because we've both been thrown into the world. As Heidegger explains, “In the ‘then,’ taking care expresses itself in awaiting, retaining in the ‘on that former occasion,’ and making present in the now,” for in this ‘then’ “‘lies the now and not yet,’ that is, it is spoken in a making present that awaitingly retains or forgets” (Heidegger 390). Perhaps most simply, Heidegger here claims that taking care is what locates us in the moment. Similar to how Arendt's *caritas* carves out a provisional eternity from the supposed cleaving of the lover to the eternal God, Heidegger's Dasein makes meaning of the present within the ontology insofar as it uses past (emotional) information to provide care in a present. But the logic of having-been-thrown-in-the-world also implies that we're already beyond ourselves in our recognition of the world, that our existence depends on us having been

thrown past the limit of what we conceive of self (that is, Dasein, in my interpretation, is the awareness that what we conceive of as “self” differs from the object of thrownness—our “self” feels strangely ahead of being-in-the-world). The anticipation of obtaining that’s integral to this mode of existence (“being toward one’s ownmost potentiality-for-being means that Dasein is always already *ahead* of itself in its being” (Heidegger 185)) manifests in the inscription of the self in a relation of care from the very outset of our emergence into the world. In these terms, “care” is what locates us, but it is also confines us to the Moment through its worldly contextualization. Here is where the most intricate similarity between Arendt and Heidegger lies: for Arendt, the embracing of an interval between self and other produces a means for achieving a provisional eternity that solves death; for Heidegger, care, which is limited to the present in its very creation of it, occupies the interval (care is a sort of material guise that is confined or shaped by the present) by which we are supposed to solve our having-been-thrown.

The obligation of a mode of interaction which is always mediated leaves the lover, or Dasein, trapped. Taking care is where Dasein turns when it realizes that it’s beyond itself, for “in its project it is revealed as something thrown. Thrown and abandoned to the world, it falls prey to its taking care of it” (Heidegger 387). Heidegger’s use of “falling prey” implies that Dasein is subject to something—that it’s lost control of the situation at hand, and that taking care of it is no option, but rather something it must do in order to exist in the present. This language of getting caught by something beyond you, such that the interval constitutes *you* (whether it be that which Dasein misses or the ends of Arendt’s desire) emerges in *SHADOWS*, one of Arendt’s only autobiographical works, written for Heidegger in 1925—but here in relation to the experience of being in love, not being in the world (which Arendt later argues is the opposite of being in love). Arendt explains, speaking of herself in the third person, that “She had fallen prey to fear as she

once had to longing, and again, not to a somehow identifiable fear of something determined in any particular way, but fear of existence itself. She had known this fear before, as she had known many things. Now she was its prey” (Arendt, *SHADOWS*, 12). This fear doesn’t match the fear associated with imminent loss in *cupiditas*. Rather, Arendt is identifying a particular fear which gathers its effect from its existence *outside* of the subject who’s experiencing it—just as Dasein, frustrated, falls prey to care in the present (which, intuitively, has its origin in the subject of the caregiver), the lover is startlingly aware of this fear arising from elsewhere. Arendt is in love with Heidegger, and therefore is caught in something that’s beyond herself.

Barthes describes this scenario as the lover’s “Catastrophe,” which is the “Violent crisis during which the subject, experiencing the amorous situation as a definitive impasse, a trap from which he can never escape, sees himself doomed to total destruction” (Barthes 48). But the nature of existence in “falling prey” seems paradoxical, instead of automatically doomed, because in becoming prey the self becomes further locatable. Barthes’ “total destruction” therefore dissolves into his “virtually eternal success of this [amorous] relation” (54), because the lover in being subsumed into a relation with the love object inherently exists *there*. This is the simultaneous comfort and frustration of the self-fabricated interval which is crucial to both Arendt and Heidegger: it’s a trap and the answer to where you are; in the desperate search for self, it offers a solution and the permanence of losing yourself, which recalls Barthes; its boundaries are impermeable in the subject’s quest to get to the other side of the interval (the subject gets stuck in the interval), but semi-permeable and in fact entrapping when it comes to the relation between the subject and the interval.

While love isn’t explicitly important to Heidegger’s ontology, his philosophy does bleed into his love letters. In an early letter to Arendt, Heidegger writes,

Why is love rich beyond all other possible human experiences and a sweet burden to those seized in its grasp? Because we become what we love and yet remain ourselves. Then we want to thank the beloved, but find nothing that suffices...

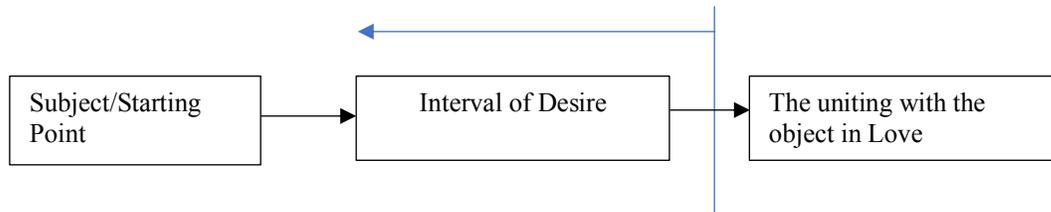
We can only thank with our selves. Love transforms gratitude into loyalty to our selves and unconditional faith in the other. That is how love steadily intensifies its innermost secret (Heidegger 5).

For Heidegger, we access perhaps something different from Dasein through love—for in love, we both become something of the other while deepening our own understanding of what we call our own: our self. The innermost secret of the self, that of our own existence, becomes both troubling and dangerous for the lover; in love, the lover scares himself with the intensity of access to self-understanding.

Arendt finds a similar frightening self-awareness in *SHADOWS*. She writes,

“For already early in her life, strangeness and tenderness threatened to become inseparable...Perhaps this has all come about because in her quiet, barely awakened youth, she had encountered extraordinary and wonderful things...[But] Her agitation, whose basis might have been nothing more than her helpless, betrayed youth, manifested itself in her being thrown back on herself, so that she concealed and obscured both her vision of herself and her access to herself. The double nature of her being became so apparent here that she got in her own way, and the more radically and blindly as she got older” (Arendt, *SHADOWS*, 12-13).

Indeed, Arendt was 19 when she first met 36-year-old Martin Heidegger; here she describes how the love she experienced for him felt premature and untimely, but also, hauntingly, like an elevation of herself—accompanied by the burden of love’s permeation—rather than a perversion of her sexuality. Love has blinded Arendt from viewing herself, *with* herself. This duality maps onto the division of the Self which initiates desire and the self that has been united with the love object in love, on the other side of the interval. But the image of her being *blinded* with herself suggests in fact the third party self, which occupies the very interval that divides the first two; Arendt has gotten ahead of herself, but the self that blinds in the interval throws the initial Self back to its origin. In this way, desire is further disqualified by the Self and the intermediate, interval-self from ever working together to getting to the other side, where the lover finds Love—the interval throws Arendt back to the starting point:



The blinding action is the fact of the division itself what constitutes and bars the self at the same time. But at the same time, that blindness, which takes on its own identity, is what prevents the subject from fulfilling the end-goal unity fully (meaning the leaving of consciousness from the space of the starting point and the uniting of that consciousness with the love object). This is the condition of Heideggerian thrownness: the subject can never know what it anticipates, and the blindness persists. Arendt *becoming* the interval inhibits the relation from making progress, just as taking care obligatorily relates Dasein to the present. But in a more poetic sense and more in line with *Love and Saint Augustine*, Arendt is strangely too aware of her own existence through love to understand herself in the world; there is only the intensification of Heidegger’s “secret,” the imbalance of self to world, and the developing isolation of the mundane (lover and love-object separated) from the profanity of having been made privy to something that feels inhuman (lover and love-object united). In these terms, Heidegger has also been elevated to a *supra*-world status—he is the object of *caritas*, and therefore, in a sense, Arendt’s God.

Arendt’s discussion of *caritas* working as a way for man to reach his “ultimate goal” (Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 34) is complex and intentionally imprecise, but most crucially it relies on the concept of self-denial. The lover realizes the possibility of eternal essence only *because* he loves God—he sees that his “inner man” who is invisible to all mortal eyes” and “is a stranger on earth” must “belong to the invisible God” (26), the master of essence and the negation of existence. Man can only find this inner man by aiming his love at eternity, for the “right kind of self-love (*amor sui*) does not love the present self that is going to die but

that which will make him live forever” (26). This process of man intentionally ignoring the present self for the benefit of the self in the future lets him deny the present. As Arendt describes it, “In longing for and desiring the future, we are liable to forget the present to leap over it” (27). This formulation seems to stand in contrast with Heideggerian thrownness because it suggests that the lover can in fact leap over the present—he isn’t confined to it when he takes care. When the future becomes the only goal of the lover, he *anticipates* the future through *caritas* such that “today” itself is a project of the future—the lover is bounced into a provisional eternity, supplied by his clever and “good” love (*caritas*) (27). Perhaps that project opens up, though, when it incorporates the paradox of the self-devoted to the love object—the leaping over the present is allowed by both philosophers because the lover has lost himself to the love object, and as I’ve identified, to the relation of desire itself.

The experience of an elevated self (as voiced in *SHADOWS*) that no longer values the world (because, strangely, the realization of a personal *Dasein* produces a fear of that which we’re blind to) is undertaken similarly by the individual who succeeds in Arendt’s *caritas*, which Arendt and Heidegger enact through their letter correspondence. Following his natural instinct to love,

Man initiates the quest for his own being—by asserting ‘I have become a question to myself.’ This quest for his own being arises from his being created and endowed with a memory that tells him that he did not make himself. Hence, the quest of his Being is actually the quest for his origin—for the Creator of the creature. In this quest, which takes place in memory, the past comes back into the present and the yearning for a return to the past origin turns into the anticipating desire of a future that will make the origin available again. In other words, by virtue of man’s quest for his own being, the beginning and end of his life become exchangeable (Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 57).

Arendt suggests that, in looking forward to eternity with God, the subject of *caritas* is looking to that which existed before himself—the uniting of self with God is an elimination of self both because it is a “succumbing” (Barthes) and because it is a return to not only origin, but the object that existed before the lover. As Augustine says, “since all men want to be happy, they also

want to be immortal if they know what they want; for otherwise they could not be happy”” (Augustine qt. in Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 50). Threatening his immortality is the question of the lover’s beginning understood by the subject of *cupiditas*, because that original event reminds him of the inevitability of his end in the event of *cupiditas*. When he considers his origin, the lover searches through his memories and recalls the past to the present, as Arendt does in her correspondences with Heidegger. The propulsion of the memory of origin (where the lover stops remembering, as Heidegger and Arendt do at their meet-ups) into the present prompts him to consider how that lack of remembrance (the origin) might be achieved in the future. The lover’s greatest desire is to go back, *soon*. At this moment, when he correlates the beginning (the initiation of Arendt’s desire for Heidegger) with what *must* happen in the future in order to maintain happiness, the lover is overwhelmed by the distortion of time that their existence in Love has generated.

In this way, to love is not to exist, but to be aware of one’s existence, to look back on the starting point of the subject—to know Heidegger’s “secret”—the secret of the self that only becomes apparent in love. The very worldliness of desiring Heidegger when they’re apart stands in opposition to the extremity of their uniting in love, which induces the anxiety of the world as a venue that inhibits an un-reality. Therefore Arendt’s love takes on the existential experience of both knowing oneself (including the death of that self) from *caritas* and the production of fear from *cupiditas*, insofar as it hasn’t eliminated fear altogether. Love, in action, has proved to be both the act of discovering sel(ves) and the extreme fear of *being* those sel(ves), in time. It seems that this is what Arendt means when she writes in *SHADOWS* that “The rigidity, the sense of being hunted—so that joy and suffering, pain and despair ran through [me] as if [I] were dead flesh—obliterated all reality, caused the present to shrivel, as it were, and the only thing that

remained certain was that everything comes to an end” (Arendt, *SHADOWS*, 15). It’s not as entirely simple as reducing this to “Love necessitates death.” Arendt instead cleverly identifies the strangeness of her own selves: she’s in her-self alone; she’s united with Heidegger; she’s in, or rather she *is*, the interval of desire between the two. This identification suggests not only the multiplicity of selves but also the potential of movement between those different places of self. This motion that occurs within the lover—motion which includes throwing—that both reinforces the boundaries between them and suggests their permeability. Just so, the shrinking of the present has both made the sensations of the world more mundane, as well as distorted the bounds (care in the present) under which the lover(s) operate.

Traces of the consequences of the distortion of both time and the self-in-love, as portrayed through the interval paradigm, emerge in Arendt’s political philosophy, particularly in *The Human Condition*. Arendt’s discussion of love is much more guarded in this work, though, which raises questions, particularly because of her previous statement that “he who does not love and desire at all is a nobody” (Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 18). Arendt wrote *The Human Condition* partly in response to the launch of Sputnik in 1957, which signified for her (and the world) a lurching forward of science ahead of human comprehension, and which, she believed, foreshadowed the replacement of human thought by artificial intelligence (Allen, x-xi). In relation to the reduced cause-and-effect method of thinking present in the rapid development of technological science, Arendt writes, “It is not even primarily contemplation which has become an entirely meaningless experience. Thought itself, when it became ‘reckoning with consequences,’ became a function for the brain, with the result that electronic instruments are found to fulfill these functions much better than we ever could” (Arendt qtd. in Allen, x). Politics is in decline, soon to be subsumed by science altogether; the solution is the re-integration of

three fundamental human “doings,” which Arendt articulates as Labor, Work, and Action: “Labor assures not only individual survival, but the life of the species”—how we sustain biological life (Allen xv); “Work and its product, the human artifact,” namely, physical and cultural construction, “bestow a measure of permanence and durability upon the futility of mortal life and the fleeting character of human time. Action, in so far as it engages in founding and preserving political bodies, creates the condition for remembrance, that is, for history (Arendt 8). According to her, the realization that these three categories are present in every individual and aren’t to be individually divided among the global population is the “rescue” of politics, and therefore the re-integration of less replaceable forms of thought (Allen xvi). *The Human Condition* initiates, for Arendt, a life-long quandary about the elusiveness of desire in politics. The interval helps understand Arendt’s paradigmatic placement of desire, relative to the public and private realm.

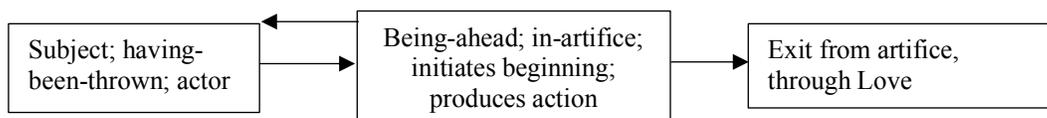
The hope for man’s continuity, a central and urgent focus in *The Human Condition* (and which Arendt believes differs from other biological reproduction) arises “In sharp contrast to Heidegger’s stress on our mortality” (Canovan xxix), because humans have the unique ability to continually come into the world and are capable of “new initiatives that may interrupt or divert the chains of events set in motion by previous actions” (246), but Arendt’s description of the human condition is remarkably reminiscent of *Being and Time*. Fundamental to the human condition is man’s duality: he is both human and animal, and therefore participates in both the artifice of human life and the animal life. While “The earth is the very quintessence of the human condition,” man is simultaneously separate from the world, because “The human artifice of the world separates human existence from all mere animal environment” (Arendt, 2). In Heidegger’s terms, man has been thrown into the world, and his comprehension of that thrownness (the

human artifice) is Dasein. In this way the human condition is dependent on plurality, not only amongst humans (as I will describe), but within or among the sel(ves). It seems likely that continuity, the production of new beings that are capable of initiation, exists between man and his progeny, as well as between the human and the human artifice (that is, something is generated within the individual, between herself). What (on earth), exactly, is being generated?

And how does man *become* plural? Essential to being and interacting as one of many for Arendt is speech, because “Men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they live and move and act in the world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense of each other and to themselves” (Arendt qtd. in Allen, xii). Arendt doesn’t define meaningfulness, but most fundamentally *meaning* is what generates the human artifice (outside of animal-ness) in the first place—because the human artifice requires meaning, humans banish themselves from regular biological reproduction into a more precarious structure which depends on the relations of the individuals within it. It is “with word and deed” we relate to those individuals, but more poetically “With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our own physical appearance” (177). Arendt suggests here that it is with word and deed, which are “not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and [are] not prompted by utility, like work” (177) which make duality possible; the second birth she designates as that which occurs when we speak to others is also the birth which occurs when man becomes part of the human artifice (and therefore plural).

Arendt counts labor and work as outside the function of speech—instead, speech functions as that which outlines or gives shape to action, in the same way that care gives shape to Heidegger’s present. Arendt claims that “Without the accompaniment of speech, at any rate,

action would not only lose its revelatory character, but, and by the same token, it would lose its subject” (178). The individual exists relative to other humans *qua* her speech, because without speech there isn’t an individual *beginning* the action. Action requires a starting point in the individual, and that necessitation of a beginning produces the self. This is clear when Arendt first explains that “action [out of her three human doings] has the closest connection with the human condition of natality; the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting” (8). So speech allows for acting, and acting allows for beginning—but the beginning of an action seems to happen outside of a self because it produces a subject. This beginner must be the Being in human artifice (Dasein, as I understand it), which creates action, and recognizes the other (it recognizes the neighbor in speech; it recognizes the animal-human having been thrown into the world)—it must be the man who *recognizes his thrownness and therefore is somewhat before thrownness* who is the origin because communication through language sets man apart and provides the structure for the artifice. The “in artifice” human produces a unity with humanity through the perpetuation of the artificial structure, protected by his ability to begin, which he recognizes as in-artifice. But it also seems that, in creating a “beginning” for the having-been-thrown, worldly subject (that is, in supplying the term “subject” for the having-been-thrown human), the artifice figure has entered—embraced out of obligation—an interval-like mediation that ensnares him in that very starting place, which requires consciousness in order to participate in humanity.



The trapping of the Being-ahead occurs when he outstrips himself to “begin” for the self that can’t—the stepping outside of the self is in fact the beginning of the beginning, and it constitutes the interval itself. The Being-ahead misses himself here, simply because he’s performing for the other self in stepping outside of himself.

In an effort to confront these terms, which produce many “selves” that re-enter each other upon the beginning, Arendt distinguishes between two realms of the world which humans operate in: the public and the private. The public is the realm of the artifice, where humans interact with each other (52), while the private depends on an isolation that seems tricky to achieve under the terms of action: “the privation of privacy lies in the absence of others; as far as they are concerned, private man does not appear, and therefore it is as though he did not exist” (58). While the definition of “other” here most immediately implies the other individual, in my terms it suggests the duality of the other that arises when man recognizes his other self who has been thrown—that for whom he produces action through in speech. In this way, man can’t speak in private, *even to his other self*, because if the othered self is present, then others aren’t absent. Yet, as Arendt suggests in *Love and Saint Augustine*, “love, in distinction from friendship, is killed, or rather extinguished, the moment it is displayed in the public...Because of its inherent worldlessness, love can only become false and perverted when it is used for political purposes” (52). The individuals in love unite in privacy; the singularity that excludes action says nothing except, “everything has already been done.” This is what occupies the other side of the Arendtian interval, that which Arendt blinds herself to in desire.

The elimination of the worldly self in love, such that consciousness leaves the first two spaces of the interval paradigm, adds a qualification to desire which can’t be integrated into the structure of the interval as presented in *Love and Saint Augustine*. The problem of

comprehending the relation to the love-object must also include the abandoning of the self in the world—desiring, in effect, is trying to get rid of the self in the world, for the sake of the uniting of the Being-ahead, interval-self with the love-object on the other side of desire (through Arendt's concept of love, which occurs in the private). This notion of elimination is perhaps troubled by the origin of love, which in Arendt's terms is inherently desire: the Being-ahead must outstrip himself and exit the posture of Being-ahead in the effort to produce the action of desire in the world (via the worldly self). If desire is at the limit of the relationship (insofar as it ends when the relationship of love begins), then the human-artifice (Being-ahead) has it when he goes beyond himself. Desire misses itself. This “missing” occurs to the lovers united in privacy, as Arendt describes in one of her few passages about love in *The Human Condition*:

Love, by reason of its passion, destroys the in-between which relates us to and separates us from others. As long as its spell lasts, the only in-between which can insert itself between two lovers is the child, love's own product. The child, this in-between to which the lovers now are related and which they hold in common, is representation of the world in that it also separates them; it is an indication that they will insert a new world into the existing world. Through the child, it is as though the lovers return to the world from which their love has expelled them. But this new worldliness, the possible result and the only possibly happy ending of a love affair is, in a sense, the end of love, which must either overcome the partners anew or be transformed into another mode of belonging together (*The Human Condition*, 242).

The lovers have the strange realization (as wholly combined by the elimination of separation) that they want to perform the Work of procreation—and therefore, perform worldly action (sex). This desire to return, to exit the death that Barthes and Arendt suggest in *caritas*, dismantles the permanence of love, and suggests that *caritas* in fact doesn't eternally banish the lover from the sanctity of uniting with its object. Rather it seems that the paradoxical relationship to death-in-love (that which enables desire and also confirms the loss of self in love) seems to also enable the possibility of return to the world. The lovers are lost to death, but then find themselves out of it again: the joint-desire to re-enter to the public and therefore exit love seems to split the Beings-ahead and return them to the world. In a sense, this throwing back transforms them from Beings-

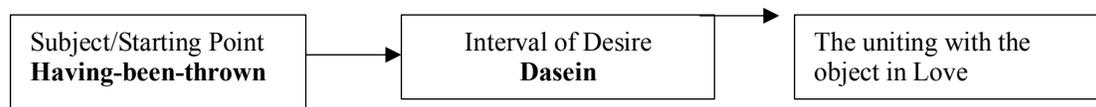
ahead into the original having-been-thrown (man in the world), thus requiring them to comprehend their thrownness all over again, if they should ever return to the privacy of Love. But, in a more meaningful way, the lovers are being thrown back into the human-artifice, into the interval space and not into Heidegger's world, seeing as they've entered that world before at birth and therefore realize their thrownness before they even arrive (they, acting as one, throw each other). The lovers who fall out of love, in this way, don't fall all the way down—they fall back to already being ahead. A desire to fall back solely as Beings-ahead enacts the most confounding property of desire, which might have been here all along: that we desire desire itself; we want the act of wanting; that the "enjoyment" of privacy can't match the aim in the public. But it's the fulfillment of love *after* desire which gets us back to desire in the first place, and it's that love which helps us manage the relation better once we fall back down.

Chapter 2

“I live by you...desire”⁴: The Arendtian Paradigm in Ovid, Propertius

The interval which I discuss in the first chapter is the result of a divided consciousness.

This division, which happens at the theoretical point of origin for desire, necessitates at least two spaces which the divided sections of the subject’s conscience inhabit: I’ve argued that these two spaces are the space behind (what we might colloquially refer to as the subject), and the space somewhat ahead, the interval, which bridges the gap between the starting point and the goal that Arendt considers Love or “enjoyment.” Both Heidegger and Arendt articulate the division of consciousness: for Arendt, the interval emerges poetically in *SHADOWS*, in which she discusses the feeling of being blinded by herself—this blinding occurs when the conscience of the lover simultaneously occupies the starting point, the united lovers’ conscience, and the space between; Heidegger’s sense of this divide comes through when Dasein apprehends the subject, who is his having-been-thrown, from the position of the interval. The interval becomes a space, a container, for the section of conscience that is propelled forward from the starting point into the space of the interval at the instance of desire.



The interval is fundamentally a space between. The discourse of *Love and Saint Augustine* suggests that the occupation of that space between is a problem, because it inhibits the lover from successfully and universally occupying Love, shown on the right side of the above diagram—trying to establish a relation to desire through the initiation of the interval ensnares the lover within the relation. It is by these terms that Arendt presents the multiplicity of self as a

⁴ The-Dream, “No Church in the Wild,” in *Watch the Throne* (JAY-Z & Kanye West). Produced by 88 Keys, Kanye West & Mike Dean.

problem that is only solved by accepting that the division of self prohibits a whole and clean cleaving to the love object.

Re-establishing the conditions of desire as that which doesn't necessarily negate death but instead aims at it (such that death is on the other side of the interval instead of fulfilled Love) might in fact take advantage of the interval, use it in a way that balances the lover in multiple locations such that existence, in contrast to Heidegger's terms, becomes a status of desire, not of mortality. What happens when the lover disregards the fear of death that constitutes *cupiditas*? I'd like to suggest that the interval structure that emerges through the conditions of *Love and Saint Augustine* can be utilized as a tool instead of a trap when the subject uses its multiplying factor without the anxiety of death. What happens to the interval when we forget mortality? How can the subject manipulate the terms of this paradigm without losing its constitutive parts?

The goal of this chapter is to identify the function of the interval in Ovid's and Propertius' elegies, which by definition tackle the topics of desire and death in entertaining and pertinent ways (they are both heavily concerned with their own personal status, both as writers and lovers). It seems then that both for Ovid (*Amores*) and Propertius (*Elegies*), love as accessed through the interval produces a way to look back on the self, to understand the starting point by means of its voiced elevation. As I will describe, this version of love often contradicts that which Arendt articulates in *Love and Saint Augustine* and *The Human Condition*. Both Augustan-era poets value the generative power of love, and consciously use it to elevate the *writer*, not necessarily the lover. Treating love as a status (of various types) lifter, one that often pushes the speaker to the edge of death and sometimes over the edge, allows Ovid and Propertius to explore romantic philosophical problems and therefore playfully contradict the mundane function of romance in the Roman Empire. According to critic Theodore Papanghelis,

To speak of love and death in the same breath is to speak of romantic passion *par excellence*. Classical antiquity knew such passion - and, as a rule, frowned upon it. Marriages of convenience and other practical considerations would normally take precedence over romance. It was also in a practical spirit that people prodded themselves to timely sensuality in view of death's inevitable onset...Catullus, Propertius and Tibullus shared with their contemporaries a sensitivity to it, but they could also fly in the face of their contemporaries' conception of love by endorsing, in varying degrees of seriousness, a type of lover consumed by the *morbus*, intent on the *militia* and wallowing in the *servitium amoris* (1).

In this way, elegiac poets promoted romanticized love that contradicted what surrounded them—it is my intention to explore the *morbus*, the *militia*, and the *servitium amoris* that Ovid and Propertius generate in their poetry, and also to suggest that the theatrical tone of the elegies actually invites us to read past the humor—that the hyper-dramatic mood that we often encounter as we read the Elegies might actually ask us to think more seriously about the extremes that these poets are considering, particularly of love and death. It seems that the poet's power was not only to reflect something either ironic or idealized; the intention of the dramatic, death-obsessed lover who was tied to the beloved by force was to present something explorative, and even political. Both Ovid (who wrote about his relationship with Corinna) and Propertius (who wrote about Cynthia) reflect on their own experiences with love, directing their discoveries towards a reader who's eager to learn instead of towards their respective lovers (Heath 1). This allows the poets to consistently reframe their lovers in a way that benefits the trajectory of the love story told through their elegies. Cynthia and Corinna change throughout the elegies—sometimes they're loving and giving, sometimes attention-seeking and self-centered, others jealous and distressed. I'd argue that Ovid and Propertius take this liberty of fictionalizing—refusing to give definition to their lovers by giving different and often contradictory descriptions of them—because the poems are largely *for* the writers, and the writing of the poetry allows them to access the interval through the fictionalized love object. Both writers are flamboyantly obsessed with the fame that they only achieve by means of the love poem.

Cynthia is based on Propertius' mistress, Hostia; while much is not known about Propertius' personal life, "What we may assert is that Cynthia is Propertius' dream-girl, with an endowment of all that his mind can contrive: she is beautiful, high-born, intelligent, educated, artistic, a poetess even; and of course passionate (and unresponsive), loyal (and treacherous) and audacious (for both good and bad)" (Goold 8). Essentially, Propertius seems to have generated a character who doesn't fail his ideals. The lover in the literary terms of the Elegy is the jumping-off point, the point of generation for the writer instead of the goal—in fact, the power of the Elegiac poet is only obtained once the fictionalized possession is created by virtue of the subversion of the interval. Propertius confirms this when he claims that he "can join estranged lovers again, and []open a mistress's reluctant door; [he] can cure the fresh love-wounds of another, and the healing power of [his] words is not slight," for "Cynthia has taught [him] what everyone must always seek and what avoid: Love has done something for [him]" (Propertius 1.10). It seems that Propertius believes that it's not his talent as a writer that has given him such power, which is the intuitive answer; instead it's specifically his relationship with Cynthia that allows him to have this curative, love-doctor ability. The language of what "everyone must always seek and what avoid" is subtly suspicious: while Cynthia might inform where to aim his desire and which separate objects to avoid, an alternative reading suggests that the desired object is the very object to avoid—that Love having "done something for [him]" is both a power and a danger, because it allowed him access to the interval, but also trapped him within that paradigm. Propertius implies in this elegy that the writer who writes love has the strange and unique obligation to experience love outside of the romantic relationship—again, for the sake of the acclaim, which both writers equate with posthumousness.

The writers here are creating a space outside of themselves that becomes essential to both that acclaim and their ability to assume the posture of elegist. Perhaps, though, this “outsideness” involves the mapping of the interval, that is, perhaps the “outside” is really an in between, a confined space from which the poets work. Indeed, the language of generating something in love suggests that the *lovers* have done something separate for the initial subject, whom we might think of as the writer—that a “Being ahead” has produced something within the space of the in-between, interval space, and thrown it back on himself. Here, Propertius is already acknowledging the cleaving of the conscience which produces the interval relationship that involves Cynthia as the love object, and also creates the perspective of only knowing something because a different version of the self has thrown it back to the origin.

The idea of achieving something through death, which produces acclaim for Ovid and Propertius, suggests that death is generative in the same way that love is: that is, the Elegist proclaims, either jokingly or sincerely, that *because* of the love poem, fame can be achieved posthumously. This claim contradicts Heidegger’s philosophy of death, which proposes that death is only a way out of existence; thus, “Death is not possible to ‘achieve’ and does not give to Existence, and his own death is nothing that can be realized. Death is possible, regardless of any behaviour by any existence” (What is Metaphysics, 2014, p. 337). But, more than this, the poets also describe love such that it aligns with Arendt’s argumentation in two ways: that the solution-oriented dynamic of desire is thwarted by nature of the interval; that Augustine’s notion that *cupiditas* and *caritas* have obvious objects (worldly vs. eternal) degenerates the line between the two types of desire. The highly romantic relationality described binds the lovers eternally, automatically, and permanently, in a way that contradicts Arendt’s structure of worldly love and Heidegger’s Dasein. This eternal binding, reminiscent of *caritas*, is the source of the evasion or

manipulation of death—it is this version or structure of love that allows for the notoriety that Ovid and Propertius predict for themselves and eventually achieve. It seems then that the two-sided relationality, the masking of *cupiditas* as *caritas* via fictionality, is only a phase in the development in the Elegists' notion of love.

Ironically, part of achieving this notoriety is creating a sense of self-martyrdom—the poets are taking on the burden of writing love, which they consistently convey is inescapable and all-consuming. This sense of obligation emerges most explicitly through a comparison of love to war in Ovid's *Amores*. Readers of Elegy IX, "Of Love and War," have complained about the faulty comparison, but, as critic P. Murgatroyd suggests, "Ovid was not really trying to convince anyone" of reduced parallels; instead, he "parades an inherently improbable thesis" to be "inherently flippant and provocative" (Murgatroyd 570), and in this way the readers who dismiss Elegy IX as reductionist immediately fail to recognize Ovid's sarcasm. Perhaps the reduction of both love and war to baseless parallels is a powerful tool in excavating the position of the love poet, though. For instance, Ovid writes to an unknown Atticus, "believe me, every lover's in arms./The age that's good for war, is also right for love./An old soldier's a disgrace, and an old lover" (1.IX.1-3). Ovid asks his friend to trust him as if he's an authority on both topics, even though Corinna lacks definition as his lover and Ovid himself was "unsoldierly enough to avoid military service" (Murgatroyd 571). As the love poet, though, Ovid strangely *does* have that authority, and his knowledge of that strange responsibility is something he's toying with in his flamboyant messages—and it's the duality inscribed in that position (as someone happily tied to the lover but also entrapped in Love by Cupid's arrows (1.1)) that generates that power. His acknowledgement of this ridiculous position that bothers his readers comes through in his

intentionally awkward phrasing: in line 3, the old soldier is a disgrace; the old soldier is an old lover; the old lover is a disgrace.

In a way, the fictionalization which Ovid performs in order to portray a genuine parallel of love and war helps to define the interval—Ovid is working from a liminal space, which is neither entirely that of the genuine lover, because the relationship between Ovid and Corinna takes shape out of the poems, nor is it that of the soldier or war veteran. Instead, Ovid speaks from the perspective of an Ahead figure, and that Being-Ahead gives him the authority I associate with the interval; he has thrown a conscience into the space of the interval which *knows* war and love, because it generates them. And so the interval in this case is constituted by a fictionalization of the end which is promulgated by the lover-figure, who receives the fictionalization from the Being-Ahead.

While the topic of death is a natural end for the elegist, both Ovid and Propertius perpetuate a mood of dramatic suffering that adds to their supposed position as martyrs—those who took on the burden of writing love. Death, then, is conflated with success for the martyr-speaker. Whereas Arendt, via Augustine, treats a uniting with the love object as a solution to death (although love itself takes a more poetic form of death in her work), Ovid views death as a goal which is accomplished through love. Ovid depicts a relationship between love and death that is fortified through his poetry—writing and loving become mutually ascetic practices that guarantee a particular fame:

Happy the man, who dies in Love's mutual battle!
Let the gods make that the cause of my death!
Let the soldier's breast oppose the enemy missiles
And buy a lasting name with his blood.
Let the greedy seek wealth, and weary with voyaging,
Shipwrecked, let their lying mouths drink brine.
But let me be taken fainting in Venus's act,
When I die: freed in the midst of it, the work half-done:
And someone will say, weeping, at my funeral:
'That death was *so* appropriate to his life! (II.x).

Ovid describes Love as a “mutual battle” to show that his version of love involves the lover and the beloved fighting with each other over the commonality of their love, instead of both fighting the structure of love, as Arendt suggests. Lines 3 through 6 show the man who cares about worldly success as experiencing a death mid-action, unrecognized by any Gods; this contradicts his vision of his own death, in which Venus catches him in the middle of his writing.

Recognition of his work in the public eye, which works to construct his fame, is something that Arendt would suggest dissolves love—which can only thrive in the private sphere. But more importantly, Ovid’s version of love *stays in the world* after his death—this perhaps opposes Arendt, who would suggest the love had already left the world as soon as the lovers had succeeded in Augustine’s “enjoyment.” But, insofar as love necessitates a self, the section or part of Ovid’s conscience which writes, the Being Ahead, remains in the world after death.. For Ovid, love *abandons* his body, which I’ve referred to as the lover, in order to maintain his reputation.

In this way death becomes part of the machinery for the development of the posthumous fame that Propertius and Ovid both predict for themselves. It’s love that allows for the process of prediction, because it elevates the lover to the position of creator, one who mediates the liminal space of death through the ascetic act of loving and writing love. Propertius claims that “Only the lover knows when he will perish and by what death: he fears neither the North-wind’s blast nor the arms of war. Though he sit oar in hand beneath the reeds of the Styx and face the somber sails of the infernal boat: let but the echo of his mistress’ cry recall him, and he will return on a journey no law permits” (11.28). The lover knows his own death because, by Propertius’ logic, the event of the death of the love poet is inherently constituted by love; Propertius seems to know, like Ovid, that he will be fainting in “Venus’s act”; that, as the love poet, he will die being and acting as the love poet, and in this way, the interval-self is preserved. Perhaps the echo of his

mistress' cry is a representation through which Propertius lives on—in other words, the remembrance, even by the proximal lover, is a form of gaining significant reputation. Cynthia therefore perpetuates the word of Propertius through her mourning cry, and requires her peers to remember Ovid because they know the meaning of the cry. In this way the love object is responsible for the love-writer after death. Of course, a more reductive reading might imply that the remnant of love between the dead Propertius and the living Cynthia is what turns the boat around, in a sense—that Cynthia's mourning over the poet calls him back to life. Then again, Propertius' claims that it's the *echo* that recalls him to the unpermitted journey, not the call itself. Perhaps this echo represents his work in which he recounts Cynthia mourning her own death, as a ghost, later on (Book IV). This would imply that his work, though a trace of the original sound, pulls him back from the afterlife; that the love poem yanks the poet back into mortality (representatively), leaving Propertius in the ambiguous space of the river.

According to Papanghelis, it's virtually impossible and unproductive for the reader to extricate Propertius's concepts of love and death from one another, particularly in the second book of the Elegies (2). In Elegy II.i, Propertius begins to explore this relationship, dismissing the event of his death as irrelevant so long as his love lasts:

To die in love is glory: and glory yet again to enjoy a single love: O may I alone enjoy the love that is mine...though I be doomed to taste the potion of stepmother Phaedra, a potion not destined to corrupt her stepson, though I have to die of Circe's herbs, or the Colchian witch heat for me her cauldron upon the hearths of Iolcos. Since one woman has stolen away my feelings, from her house only will my funeral train set forth (II.I).

Here Propertius mentions several mythological heroines not to present individual stories but rather to propose “collective embodiments of some ‘moral’ or aesthetic ideal”; as Papanghelis sums up, “Phaedra, Circe, and Medea have done nothing if not wrought havoc in people's physical condition, and here they are mythological substitutes for Cynthia” (29-30). The distancing effect of representing Cynthia through mythological figures emphasizes Propertius'

understanding of love as a productive force that uses the individual to the benefit of the romance's grandeur—since the romantic endeavor is generative, as it produces the consciousness within the interval and intends to get passed that in-between space, it can be viewed as a tool.

But what does the death that Propertius seems to desire actually look like? The drama of Propertius describing his “doom” distracts from his asking for a false poison—for a poison that's specifically designed to be appear lethal but, in reality, fail to kill when taken by the right person. Thus the Cynthia stand-ins create a pseudo-death through their intentional and unintentional failures; they threaten death with medicine and magic but leave the lover safe, or fail to conquer him completely as is the case with Circe and Medea. The potions thus produce a representative death that helps them explore love and in fact represent love after death: magic becomes a “major means by which Propertius delineates the nature and the depth of his love” (Follett 29—found in *Propertius: A Hellenistic Poet*) because it defines death as something both “enchanted and deadly” (Papanghelis 31). The glory, then, that Propertius identifies is one that the man who has drunk the potion but who still “lives,” one who has tasted death but who survives the lethality of the potion. The trope of the living dead emerges through Propertius imagining his own funeral train—the reader gets the strange sense that he's planning to watch it happen, from a libidinal “death” space. Propertius's love, then, opposes Arendt's concept of love as a removal or death of the individual from the public and an entrance into the more ominous private space, where Arendt's enjoyment flourishes; Propertius's continuous love in fact depends on the theater of Cynthia mourning in the public sphere; the act of mourning becomes one that is recognized or “read” by the public, and thus, by Propertius's terms, is transformed into an act of love.

Perhaps the most significant difference in structure between Arendt's love and the love presented by the elegists concerns permanence. Whereas Arendt's argument suggests a flexibility

of desire, such that it can be continually initiated with different objects, love is a stain for Ovid and Propertius—it haunts the lover throughout their life, and even beyond. Generally, the Roman poets’ image of love is reminiscent of something non-human. We expect humans to adapt, to expel, to actively include, but here love is controlling over the subject and even as man struggles against it, the question arises as to whether or not the lover has a choice—does the Elegist have a choice, as he assumes the posture of the Elegist who abandons the fear of death through his entrance into an adapted interval, but to obey desire? Ovid addresses these questions in this excerpt:

I struggle, and my fickle heart is pulled both ways,
Now by love, now hate, but I think love wins.
I’ll hate if I can do: if not, I love unwillingly.
No ox loves the yoke: yet he still suffers what he hates.
I flee your wickedness – your beauty draws me back:
I loathe your guilty ways – I love your body.
So I can’t live with you or without you,
And don’t seem to know my own mind (III.xiB).

Ovid plays with the familiar trope of the love-hate relationship in this poem. But the reluctance to love seems false: Ovid lies playfully when he says he “love[s] unwillingly,” taking advantage of the obvious irony of the love poet who resists love. The yoke he describes evokes the immovability of love, for the elegist. But, as he explains in line five, it’s much harder to hate that which can’t be escaped—the experience of trying to throw the yoke just hurts the ox more, not necessarily because of the act of reinforcement on the part of the yoke (love), but because of the oscillation between resistance and enjoyment. This back-and-forth both enacts the oscillation between the in-between space of desire and the completion of the trajectory (Arendtian enjoyment), but also results in the experience of Ovid not knowing his own mind (8), conjuring the elegiac paradigm of love as a permanent or incurable disease, such the production of the interval as the lover or love writer aims to achieve his goal catches him within the structure, forever.

Propertius might as well be speaking directly to Ovid here, though the passage is likely directed towards himself:

Whither do you flee, madman? There is no escape: though you flee to the Don, Love will follow you all the way...Love ever looms above your head, looms above the lover, and sits, a heavy burden, even on a neck once free. He keeps vigil as a keen sentry and will never let you raise your eyes, once captured, from the ground (II.30.A).

Love is ubiquitous, and the resistance of the “madman” is what causes his supposed madness.

Unfortunately, it doesn't seem as simple as gaining and never losing—unlike Arendtian love, this form ties you to the world—the yoke is not explicitly mentioned here purposefully, because the lover is permanently tied to the earth, literally, just as the ox is to the plow. I'd also argue that love remaining a heavy burden even to the “neck once free” not only suggests that the man who hasn't experienced love always remains vulnerable to its inevitable encompassing, but also that the man who has experienced love isn't released from its burden in death. In these terms, love's grasp continues to strain the lover even after death, but it's also the force that carries the one who *writes* love successfully from mortality into the libidinal space of fame. Thus, if the love poet is defined by love, then the status of mortality begins to dissolve for the elegists—love is the status of the poet, neither living nor dead.

This strained space is the interval from which Ovid and Propertius work. It's a tradeoff that the ascetic love poet takes on: they work from a confining space that holds a portion of their conscience, but because that interval space is protected from death via its relocation of death into the space of the goal, it negates the problem of mortality, and doesn't experience the fear of loss in *cupiditas*. Ovid expresses this when he explains that his death will occur as he “faint[s] in Venus' Act”; the goddess of Love carries him through the mortal transition of death, and the consciousness which operates in the interval is preserved through her Action.

Ovid and Propertius are generally playful, and their prescient tone, which reminds their readers of their coming fame, surfaces even in their most sincere poems. Perhaps this tonality,

which attracts the reader, does help the poets achieve the sort of afterlife they predict for themselves—but it also suggests a more troubling problem of the freedom of their Self, something the poets confront only indirectly. As Propertius describes in the above passage and as I will describe in Ovid, the elegist faces the problem of knowing love only once they're in it. This ensnaring action that produces the elegist's work, and within which they have no choice but to write, is largely reminiscent of the structure of love that I identify in the first chapter of this thesis. I originally suggested that the elegists I'm examining resist the solution-oriented project of establishing a relationship to desire, as Arendt does. Apparently, it's more nuanced than this, for even the poet who resists this divisive structure by ignoring the danger of *cupiditas* falls into it as he writes love. The distinction remains here: Arendt approaches death as a problem, which love can fix; Ovid and Propertius view death as an event that in fact secures their "living on" as writers of love (death assists love in perpetuating this representative mortality that is the literary afterlife). But isn't this because Ovid and Propertius are already *in* love—that is, haven't they already found some sort of literary *caritas* which helps them live forever? I've previously established that they write from the position of the interval, though—the space that allows them to establish a voice of authority, both on love and the guarantee of their posthumous acclaim. But if this is true, how do we reconcile the finding of *caritas*, or at least the provision of eternity, with the existence of the interval?

Ovid relinquishes his ironic and playful voice upon the realization that mortality links love and war best for the Augustan-era poet. Linking warfare with love more subtly earlier on in Book I, Ovid writes,

But, I think, if desire were attacking me I'd feel it.
Surely he's crept in and skillfully hurt me with secret art.
That's it: a slender arrow sticks fast in my heart,
And cruel Love lives there, in my conquered breast (I.ii.5-8)

Here, Ovid shows that Love has a secret warfare that subverts the power of the poet. Ovid explains that Love has put him in the awkward position of missing desire's moves, which first planted the "slender arrow" (7). The tone of the poem suggests that Ovid comes upon the realization of Love having occupied his heart at the beginning of line 7: similar to the structure of desire which requires that the subject go beyond himself in order to experience desire, there's the sense in this poem that the speaker only apprehends the "secret art" of desire once love has entered the heart. In this way, the poet's sense of derives from his frustration with knowing that something has happened without his knowledge—this recognition is similar to Heidegger's Dasein, since the lover is recognizing that he has been thrown, and that he's ahead of himself in love. This realization is mirrored by the ordering of the elegies; it seems that the intentionally more naïve "Of Love and War" precedes the knowledge of Elegy II; but in fact, Love living in Ovid's "conquered breast" is required for its apprehension by the poet later on. Ovid thus implies a false distance from love, such that he reads as ostensibly naïve (as he acknowledges in his lavish comparison of love and war), even though he feels obligated to discuss as the poet chosen by the Gods.

As is typical for Roman poets, both Propertius and Ovid speak about the effect of intoxication by invoking Bacchus, who seems to appear either in conflict with or working beside Love (Venus). While tropes of the seduction of alcohol, the loss of functioning, the false confidence of intoxication, and the pairing of alcohol with increased sexuality have come to be expected in readings of these poems, these poets seem to be invoking Bacchus less as a superior God and more as a partner in crime, as a tool or asset—as the God who works closely with Love because of his power to create strangely inhuman experiences. For example, in one of the first

elegies of Book 1, which include some of Propertius's most dramatic and romantic formulations, he writes,

Not yet were all my sense gone, and I tried by leaning gently on the couch to reach her; and, although seized with a double passion, for the two inexorable gods, on this side Love, on that Bacchus, were urging me to edge my arm deftly beneath her and try her as she lay, and, bring up my hand, to steal belated kisses, yet I did not venture to disturb my lady's peace (1.3)

Obviously, Propertius is drunk, and the alcohol and his new love for Cynthia are asking him to wake her up. It also seems that his act of refusing himself adds to the romance of the scene he writes; the formulation of restraint is more important than acting on any impulse of love. I'd argue that the first clause can be read alternatively, though—it's not that he resists the dulling of the senses, but rather that approaching of no sentience is required for Love. This variation in mode of sentience recalls the interval, which necessarily divides consciousness, and the inability to escape the drunkenness of Love, as Ovid and Propertius describe, reminds us of Arendt's private realm. And this is how Propertius describes Bacchus and Love working together: Bacchus gets us closer to the inhuman, where Love can function. This propulsion or banishment into the unhuman space of intoxicated cognition is reminiscent of both Barthes' chapter "I am engulfed/I succumb," in which he describes the transmission of self into the unknown in love, as well as Arendt's *caritas*, in which the lover cleaves to an unknown futurity in the eternal love object; this dispersal or giving up of self is a type of death, a loss of self, that is similar to the loss of self that the intoxicated speaker evokes in this passage.

Ovid discusses the pairing of Bacchus and Love in his Elegy entitled "The Doorkeeper," in which the lover asks for passage at a guarded door. As he berates the doorkeeper, the lover shouts, "Night and desire and wine don't urge moderation:/She quenches shame, Bacchus and Love the fear" (I.vi.59-60). Ovid is intentionally mixing terms here, reflecting the drunken encounter with an equally tipsy tone. If we assume that "She" refers to Corinna, though, the

quenching of fear by the love object contradicts Arendt's terms; *cupiditas* constitutes the relation to Corinna, and this form of love (that of the worldly object) is threatened by the fear of loss. So, even if the object of the fear differs, how could Love, which in this case is defined by fear, dismiss fear of any kind? It seems that the answer is in the wine—that is, the intoxicated lover enters a state of mind in which the object of desire becomes ambiguous: is it Corinna, or is it whatever is beyond the door?: This altered state of intoxication is in fact the presence of the interval—the disoriented lover has generated a dual conscience, which occupies both the lover and desire itself. The interval-speaker is Ahead, and doesn't generate desire; in this way, the speaker forgets what he wants, and can only know himself, not even fear. This perspective of only “knowing” of one's existence is primary for the elegist.

What *is* beyond the door, though? The speaker pleads with the gatekeeper, repeatedly asking him to “throw open the door” so the “shut out lovers” (I.vi.31-32) can pass through before daybreak, at which point he loses his chance to unite behind the door, whatever that might mean. But, counter to the previous mention of the lovers waiting together outside the door, Ovid later claims that he doesn't “come accompanied by armies and weapons,” for he “was alone till cruel Love arrived” (I.vi.33-34). This ambiguity opens up several readings that change the trajectory of the poem; first, the implication that the speaker is alone outside the door suggests that Corinna is already inside; or, rather, that the entrance is part of her (the yonic symbol of the door suggests that the speaker seeks sexual penetration, which is prevented by an outside social force—the doorkeeper). However, an imposition of Arendt's and Heidegger's version of being-in-love, in which the lover is only in love when he's united with the lover, when he loses himself in the lover, shows that the lover *must* be with the speaker outside the door; the penetrative imagery of Love, who, for Ovid, is being-with-Corinna, matches that of the door. Most important, though,

is Ovid's description of himself and his lover waiting outside the house of death: when the doorkeeper refuses to move for their passage, Ovid resignedly claims that "Soon Lucifer [will] move[] day's frosted axles, and the birds rouse poor wretches to their work" (I.vi.65-66). Lucifer seems to control the passage of day and night, and Ovid intends to show the publicity of human activity, absent in the vacuum of this poem, by comparing the emergence of daylight to the movement of an axle. In giving up on his request for entrance, Ovid writes, "Farewell, anyway, and know your duty's over:/it's no disgrace to admit lovers slowly, so goodbye" (I.vi.71-72). Ovid implies that he'll get to the other side eventually, and there's no shame in failing here; but, when he finally succeeds, I'd argue, it will be Lucifer's call, because Lucifer controls the passage of time, and he operates both during the day and at night, unlike the doorkeeper. Lucifer thus becomes a figure of salvation—one who finds the blocked door. The reliance on Lucifer as an authority figure here implies an urgent submission to death, reinforcing the idea that death is the goal for the Elegist.

What does it mean for the poet to desire death, or rather, to use the desire paradigm in order to "aim" at death? The concept of leaving the living is a popular one for the Elegist, because mortal reflection often turns to the question of: what will happen next? But both Ovid and Propertius are also concerned with Arendt's concept of eternity, which, as she explains, is only different from death in that those who experience the eternal can never experience it for any given time period—it is forever (Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 20). It seems that both Ovid and Propertius are conflating love and death, both "in jest" and "earnest" (Papanghelis 1), in order to express the sheer success of the lovers who experience the eternal through their love—the humor points to a successful subversion of the interval. For Arendt, the privacy of the ideal love only exists when Being-in-the-world ceases; it requires the Being-ahead to ignore Being-in-the-world

and to *only* “exist” with the lover in a place where beginning can’t happen, simply because beginning is a function of the world. This lack of beginning happens in the private that Arendt identifies in *The Human Condition*—Ovid identifies this when he pleads with the doorkeeper to leave the public domain.

While both Elegists discuss their fame almost presciently, Ovid’s tone is more predictive and authoritative—he’s more invocative and less concerned with the *servitium amoris*:

Gnawing Envy, why reproach me with an indolent life: And call the work of my genius idle song? Is it that I don’t follow the custom of the country, Seek the dusty reward of army life while I’m young? That I don’t study wordy laws, Or prostitute my voice in the forum? The work you seek is mortal. I seek eternal fame, To be sung throughout the whole world forever. (...)	Let the masses gaze at trash: let golden-haired Apollo Offer me a brimming cup of Castalian waters, And I’ll wear a wreath of myrtle, that hates the cold, And be read by many an anxious lover! Envy feeds on the living: it’s quiet after death, While everyone who’s dead gets their due honours So even when I’m given to the final flames, I’ll live, and the better part of me will survive (I.xv).
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In Book I Elegy XI, Ovid blames Envy for his sadness, claiming that his skill has made even the Goddess jealous. Ovid explains that his work aims at the eternal, and excludes the mundanity of the tasks designed by the Gods for humans. While Arendt would balk at this suggestion, Ovid *is* suggesting that his fame could last forever—this “eternal” is more provisional than that of Augustine’s *caritas* because it depends on human acknowledgement (and doesn’t consider the end of the world)—Ovid’s fame is no object of *cupiditas*. He envisions himself standing next to Apollo. He predicts his own elevation, by the proxy of his literary reputation. Continuing to dis Envy, Ovid explains that whereas Envy requires both herself and the human to be living in order for her to gnaw on human interaction, Ovid will continue to affect the minds of “anxious lovers,” even after his own death, ensuring a post-humous immortality through his poetry, even when he’s no longer embodied as Ovid.

At the most fundamental level, establishing a relationship to the desired object of fame requires an acceptance of death—it requires a peculiar loss of self that enables the possibility of living on through representation in literature. When Ovid says that “even when [he’s] given to the final flames,/[he’ll] live, and the better part of [him] will survive,” (41-42), he suggests that a splitting of himself occurs to produce the necessary elements for the afterlife: the splitting is necessary for living on. His being-in-the-world, which began the action of discovering desire, will die—however, Dasein, which occupies the interval, the modal space of action that reaches between the being-in-the-world and eternity, survives through representation. This implies that the project of the writer, who writes for the anxious lover, imbues the elegy with the consciousness of Dasein after the death of the having-been-thrown, in a way that goes beyond the cliché notion that the author lives on through his work. Here, it is necessarily the desire structure which produces the splitting of consciousness that enables such living on; desire is the reproductive stature for the immortal acclaim that both Ovid and Propertius seek, and then find.

What remains is the relationship between the interval consciousness and what I’ve called the goal, which, for the elegists, has emerged both as death and the success of Love. We’ve established that the Being-ahead, the version of self with the consciousness of having-been-thrown, is what falls in love. If the poem contains that consciousness, then it also contains the self that falls in love, stripped of mortality and born into eternity through the action of representation. This version of the subject/writer outstripping themselves in order to succeed in an eternal love has become something subversive; it’s Ovid acknowledging the limits of his consistency in self, which must encounter death and split apart. Ovid saves the Being-ahead through writing.

But as I've shown, the interval is at least partially defined by the conscience of the writer who predicts his immortality, whose existence is defined by love and not by mortality. And in this way, the interval *is* the acclaim, or at least the conscience of the subject who experiences acclaim. And so in *desiring* fame, which requires the occupation of the interval, both Ovid and Propertius seem to have already arrived there: in wanting fame, they have it. I think that this is the subversive action of the elegist who guarantees his fame: he acknowledges the experience of already having something he shouldn't yet, because he's still in the stage of the interval. This structure is similar to Arendt's desire, which is enabled by the death or exit from humanity that occurs in love; the lovers must oscillate between the interval (space of desire) and the end goal of being in love in order to participate in the world and not lose a sense of self entirely to the love object. A necessary oscillation occurs between the consciousness of the love poet and the desired object of immortality, in a way that sufficiently holds the conscience (within the interval) with the sense of returning to immortality—this is how the end goal enables the in-between, and also gives definition to the status of the writer's conscience in the interval.

In another way, though, the object of both Propertius' and Ovid's desire is still love, but not in the way that Arendt conceives of it. Instead, they desire the idea, the concept, the phenomenon of love—the subject of Ovid's II.x, for instance, depicts a speaker aiming at being united with Venus, not as a love object but more as that which he unites with in an exit from humanity—they will unite with love, objectified. Since the concept of Love (as opposed to being united with the love object) is itself provisionally eternal, the poets pursue *caritas* in desiring Love as phenomenon. However it also seems that in the very act of imbuing the interval with the poet's consciousness, dividing it between the subject and the in-between space, they prevent a full cleaving to Love as object because enacting the posture of the elegist holds them within the

interval space. This act of aiming that requires the in-between of writing generates the oscillation between the interval, where they nourish and document the concept of love for which they aim, and the union with Venus at the end. It's in this oscillation that the poets achieve a sort of dual immortality: through their aim to bind with an immortal, eternal being (the concept of Love; Venus); and through the interval itself, which is enabled by a successful end of immortality, and which survives the death of the starting point (the love poet).

The movement that happens between the interval and the end of Love is demonstrated or represented in the theater of the break up, or the colloquial falling out of love. While Propertius expresses his frustration with Cynthia's infamy, which has arisen through his own poetry, in Books 3 and 4 of the Elegies, he reveals both through Cynthia's speech and his own the eternality of both lovers. Criticizing his ex-lover, Propertius writes, "'Tis a false confidence, woman, that you place in your charms; your sparkling eyes have long since made you overproud. 'Twas my love that bestowed such honour on you; and I am ashamed that you are renowned through my verse" (III.24,25). Propertius explains that Cynthia's reputation as his lover has changed her reputation in the world; because of his representation of her in his poetry, she has become more respected outside of their relationship. The increased renown of Cynthia stands in contrast to Arendt's claim that true love exists only in the private realm; Ovid suggests that it is *because* of their love that their reputations have grown around them. Once Propertius moves on from Cynthia, she comes to him in ghost-form, and scolds him for how she's been remembered: "I chide you not, Propertius, though chiding you deserve: long did I reign supreme in your works. I swear by the rune of the Fates that no man can unravel—as I speak true, so may the three-headed dog bay gently for me—that I kept faith...As for the poems you composed in my honour, burn them, I pray: cease to win praise through me" (IV.vii.49;77-78). Angry with

Propertius, the ghost of Cynthia still thanks him for the elevation of self she experienced as a result of his work; here, “reigning supreme” suggests that the romanticized picture of Cynthia bled into the perception of her worldly self. Ironically, though, Cynthia is only *here* because of Propertius’ words; it seems that she hasn’t encountered Cerberus yet because Propertius’ poetry has imprisoned her conscience to this world. The elimination of poetry would, in her mind, not only stop Propertius from gaining any more acclaim from their love, but also free her conscience from the world—her ghost remains because her conscience is tied to, imbedded in, the poetry written by her lover.

And yet Propertius and Cynthia are clearly not in love anymore.

What happens to Propertius when he’s no longer in love? Arendt identifies the pseudo-death of leaving the public world to enjoy the end of desire—the privacy of true love is the death of the having-been-thrown self. But it seems the “exit” that seems possible in *The Human Condition* is a death in itself: a death of love that pushes back the lovers from the locale of Love into the space of Dasein. The result of this pushback is an action of reuniting in a singularity or at least a singularity of location, something that the original being-in-the-world self hasn’t experienced since the encounter of the interval. But interestingly, the death of Love has dragged the love object into the space of the interval as well, which Dasein inhabits. In a way, the “death” of Love here is different from colloquially falling out of love, in which the structure of *appetitus* would simply disappear in the relationship to that love object. Instead, this death of love is falling back into the public world, specifically relocating consciousness in the interval, after the elevation that being in Love provides. But it seems that the love poet, from already existing in the interval, *already has* the eternity that is provided by the writer’s consciousness. So the consciousness which falls back merely reunites with the Ahead figure of the writer who has

already secured immortality through his work—he falls out of the eternity of love into the eternity of fame. Thus the falling-down, out-of-love conscience walks into the human artifice, still immortal.

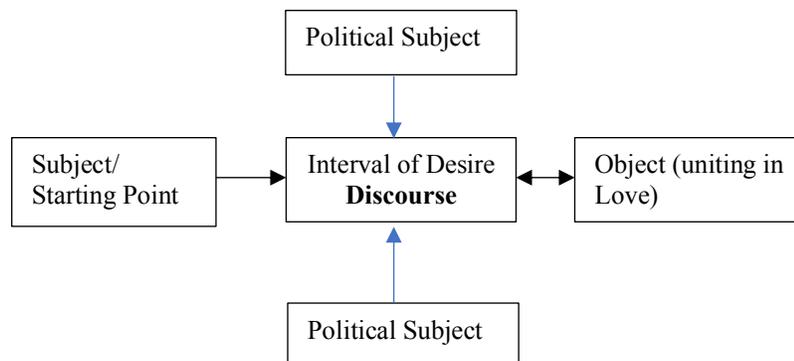
Chapter 3 Locating Fred Moten's Love through Arendt, Derrida, and Ricoeur

In my previous chapters, I have elicited a paradigm of desire constituted by the interval, using Arendt's *Love and Saint Augustine* as a starting point. The application of this paradigm to the elegists demonstrated the identity-based participation within the structure: I conceive of desire as an event in which the subject enters the interval, in order to join both with the object through desire as well as to look back on himself, and where he started. The process of entering the interval, which always happens in the act of desiring, generates different versions of the self: the self that started the action; the self that completes the action through the space of the interval; and the self that unites with the object on the other side of the interval. I've also previously demonstrated the movement that occurs between these selves using Heidegger: the interval-self blinds Arendt's starting point, for example. The lovers who exit the public realm, which happens at the end goal or other side of the interval, can sometimes be thrown back into the world. This is something Arendt describes happening when lovers decide to have children. I've followed the distinction between Arendt's public and private realms to expound upon her terms for desire in the following chapter. Desire, which prompts the interval, obligates a movement into privacy, for Arendt. Moreover distinction between the public and private has been essential to determining the roles of *caritas* and *cupiditas* in relation to the world, as conceived by Arendt, Heidegger, and, more subtly, by the elegists.

However, readings of other similar paradigms, such as the host-foreigner relation in Jacques Derrida's *Of Hospitality* and Paul Ricoeur's understanding of the modeling of speech in *Oneself as Another*, suggest that Arendt distinguishing between public and private is not a drastic and uncalculated move on her part. Arendt is a subtle thinker. Instead, she's suggesting that the division between the public and private must exist somewhere, because there's a danger to

having no privacy at all, no escape from the public sphere, which includes and in fact is determined by the political system. She alludes to the consequence of a lack of privacy, such that there is no escape from the production of the interval, a process which happens in the public in order for the lovers to enter the private sphere together.

Through Derrida’s and Ricoeur’s additional paradigms, I plan in this chapter to examine the interval as paradigmatic of the distinction of public and private, not only as a space through which the subject produces desire (or rather produces the desire-self). Perhaps this is what Arendt is after in her essay “Reflections on Little Rock,” which has taken such harsh blows because of its apparent surface-level acceptance of prejudice in the private realm. Such a linkage between the paradigm of desire I’ve described previously and the public-private division may problematize the distinction of the two realms, which aims to separate the drama of public discourse from the lack of performance in the private. Arendt imagines performativity through action in *The Human Condition*, and as I suggest in Chapter 1, the interval-self initiates action for the self to perform. In this way, the starting point/subject *is performed*: the job of the interval-self in performance is to enact the starting point. As it recognizes a relation between performativity and Arendtian Action, the interval produces the question of its identity as a junction between desire and politics, which necessitates performance:



If such a crossover between interval-desire and the public/private distinction exists, what are the stakes of the *drama* of political discourse, as conceived by Arendt? And since Arendt conceives of the private as a haven separate from political discourse, where does the dramatic nature of that discourse end?

In the following chapter, I apply the interval of desire to the public/private divide in contrast to the previous two chapters, in which I focused on desire confined, in Arendt's terms, to the private sphere. My investigation is threefold: 1) I examine the interval embedded in Derrida's *On Hospitality* and Ricoeur's *Oneself and Another* to reveal strong parallels to the interval of desire (and of particular relevance to this chapter the requirement of dividing the self, navigating movement within the interval and back to self, and the performance enacted through the public sphere), thus expanding my resources for the next step, which is 2) I analyze Fred Moten's critique of Arendt's essays, deploying the interval in the process to elucidate a desire structure and its consequences through Arendt's discourse with James Baldwin, and 3) finally, I examine Moten's *The Feel Trio* to show a crossover between Baldwinian love and the interval structure for the "non-desired" subject, via the runner figure in Moten's poems.

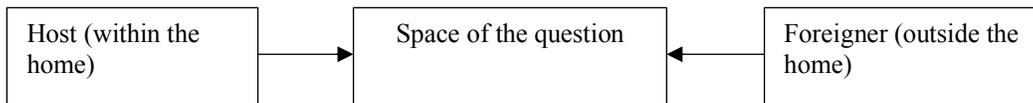
Derrida's paradigm of the host-foreigner relation in *Of Hospitality* enacts the transference from the public to the private that Arendt claims happens when desire meets its end in love. Derrida is most fundamentally considering the theatrical repercussions of the interaction between the designated foreigner (he who is outside the house) and the host. Prior to the interaction between the two, the foreigner's identity is marked by being outside, in relation to the host's house. But how does the host initiate the action of hospitality, and what happens when he does? For Derrida, "the question of the foreigner is a question *of* the foreigner, addressed *to* the foreigner. As though the foreigner were first of all *the one who* puts the first question or *the one*

to whom you address the first question. As though the foreigner were being-in-question, the very question of being-in-question, the question-being or being-in-question of the question” (3). The invitation here is equated with “the question,” which Derrida conceives of as a space (“being-in-question”). But the foreigner also poses the question: “can I come in?”, and it’s in this way that the interaction of hospitality requires that both the host and the foreigner enter the preliminary or liminal space of the question together. The paradox of the identity of the foreigner emerges such that the foreigner must both “be foreign,” that is, he must not be able to understand the host in some way, but he must also be able to be welcomed through language (the question) (17). Derrida asks, “must we ask the foreigner to understand us, to speak our language, in all the senses of the term, in all its possible extensions, before being able and so as to be able to welcome him into our country?” (17). If he’s already able to do this, can we “speak of asylum or hospitality in regard to him?”—is he already non-foreign in being able to speak the language of the host? (17).

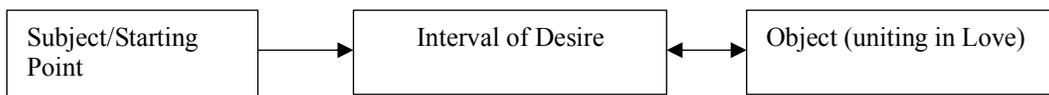
Derrida conceives of an absolute hospitality, in which the host “open[s] up [his] home and [gives] to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.) but to the absolute, unknown anonymous other, and that [the host] *give[s] place* to them, that [he] let them come, that [he] let them arrive...without asking of them reciprocity” (25). But the “question” which is a natural occurrence in the arrival of the other (what is your name? *Who* are you?) taints the definition of absolute hospitality, insofar as it asks for response; Derrida asks, “Does hospitality consist in interrogating the new arrival? Does it begin with the question addressed to the newcomer (which seems very human and sometimes loving, assuming that hospitality should be linked to love...): what is your name?” (27). As we conceive of hospitality in the world, it is virtually always conditional, because it is mediated by language—

the convention of speech propels both parties into the space of the question, as I see it. The host and the foreigner can exist as selves without using speech as convention prior to the event of hospitality, but the performative interaction, the transgression of the foreigner into the household, requires speech. Here arises a new paradox: speech is both the “ipseity of the self set up as a force of resistance, as a counterforce against these dislocations,” as “Language resists all mobilities *because* it moves about with me” (9); it is also true that “Language only works *from* me. It is also what I part from, parry, and separate myself from. What is separated from me in parting from me” (91).

Speech is a sticky part of the individual which moves with himself, but it also is the mobilizing factor: speaking moves the host and the foreigner into the space of the question. As the host and foreigner move into that mutual space upon the initiation of hospitality, it is the identity of each party which literally comes into question because identity becomes something recognizable or readable when it enters the in-between space of discourse.



Derrida's Paradigm of the Host-Foreigner Relationship



My Paradigm of the Interval of Desire

The supervening of Derrida's model onto my own paradigm of the interval unearths the requisite of performance in the latter because of the obvious similarity between the space of the interval and the space of the question. The generation of the self that exists in the interval maps onto Derrida's initiation of hospitality: in order to invite the guest in, the host generates a performative version of self, and that “self” occupies the space of the question, in part because its

identity depends on the ability of the object to comprehend the host's speech. The convergence that occurs between the two in-between spaces suggests other similarities between the two three-part diagrams. For example, an end goal is always in sight but never reached. Absolute hospitality idealizes a form of communication that doesn't require the performative space of the question, that would allow the host to *host* without the apparently necessary language. Similarly, Arendt's goal-oriented desire, which aims at uniting (in *cupiditas*, that uniting is threatened by loss or exiting the relationship to the object; in *caritas* it is not, because the object is eternal) is frustrated by the interval, which requires an additional occupation of space, an additional splitting of consciousness to occupy that space, before the subject can experience the uniting in love at the other end. In both cases it's also the identity of the object which encloses or ensnares the moving consciousness within the performative space of the interval: it is here that the subject must *perform* Action (relationship building, the politeness of question) in order to reach the semblance of the initial goal (Love, successful hospitality).

Derrida sets up a dynamic in which speech compels both subject and object to occupy the mutual space of the question, as both parties generate a performative self in order to speak to one another. This problematizes a typical subject-object relationship that is familiar to Arendt, in which action is completed by the subject in relation to the object's relative vacancy (a subject-object relationship establishes that the subject is in control and the object doesn't have the ability to respond with action). In contrast, Paul Ricoeur proposes a model in which the speaker, whenever he speaks, depends on both the other and himself as object (speaking multiplies the object, instead of bringing the identity of the object into question). Ricoeur articulates Derrida's duality of speech as both that which leaves the speaker and that which can never abandon the self

through hermeneutics: the distance of speech from the subject requires that the subject own it as part of his identity. According to critic David Kaplan,

Ricoeur maintains that symbols are 'bound to' their primary, literal meanings, which, in turn, are 'bound by' their symbols. The 'revealing power' of symbols is what binds meaning to meaning, and meaning to me. 'The movement that draws me toward the second meaning assimilates me to what I said, makes me participate in what is announced to me' (FP 31). In other words, we believe that a symbol has the ability to communicate something to us because we, in a sense, participate in it when we understand it (Kaplan 21).

It seems that the second meaning that Ricoeur speaks about provides the distance from the speech that we initially feel close to because of our own understanding of it as text.

Understanding, then, happens when the speech initiated by the subject communicates *back* to himself, in a way that prompts him to understand it, now from the perspective of himself as object. This happens naturally in dialogue, when interlocutors build their speech upon the other—the response of the other prompts the speaker to recall what he has previously said, to understand meaning through the lens of the dialogue instead of his own intention (which we might equate with authorial intention).

This understanding of the “self” privileges the object, because the object is free from observing the self as itself an outsider. In other words, the object doesn't have the boomerang habit of returning to the starting point—it doesn't communicate back to itself, but rather only answers to the subject. Consider the initial speaker in Derrida's scenario: he who asks “Can I come in?” depends on a response; he who answers, “Of course,” has no prior discourse to fall back on; here, the responder acts as the object, whereas the inquirer must recall his initial question in order to make meaning (he is both subject and object). As Kaplan puts it, the subject is at a disadvantage because of its “own self-deception, which makes uncovering the truth of consciousness and self-consciousness more difficult than it is for an ordinary object” (21). To discover the self as object is to look back upon the starting point from the self that newly occupies the interval, which in both Derrida and Ricoeur's paradigms represents the space that

speakers enter in politics or communication that is dramatized through the politics of discourse. While the interval-self initiates dramatization when it calls on the self to perform, language makes that performance evident—language is the trace of drama.

Perhaps this division of “self” differs from the multiplication of selves, as I suggested in Chapter 1, that occurs in desire, because this division necessitates that the interval-self looks back upon an *object*, which will always differ in identity from the original subject whose identity didn’t depend on the initiation of speech. Considering “Oneself as Another” as already asserting division, Ricoeur claims that “from the outset [] the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other, that instead one passes into the other, as we might say in Hegelian terms” (Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* 3) (the Hegel reference here is to the *Phenomenology of Mind*, where Hegel argues that the only way to observe the self-conscious self is through a process of othering in which the subject views self-consciousness as “other” (Berenson, *Hegel on Others and the Self*, 77)). So, while the interval allows for a new perspective to view the initiating subject, it also passes backward into that very space of the subject. The intimacy that the subject shares with the self-turned-object secures a structure that resists an infinite production of intervals, such that the subject who produces himself as object in political discourse does not have to enter the same locus of performance when speaking with himself. Ricoeur speaks about the object, disguised as the starting point through the passage of one into the other, in the following:

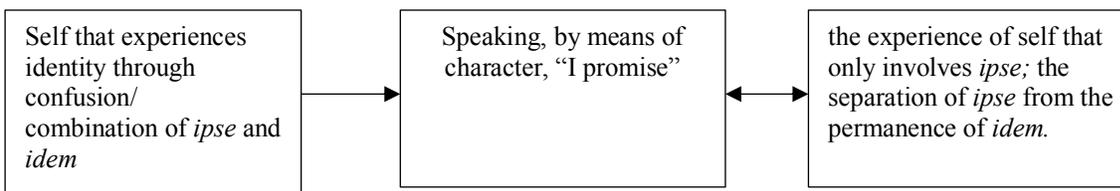
Sameness is a concept of relation and a relation of relations. First comes *numerical* identity: thus, we say of two occurrences of a thing, designated by an invariable noun in ordinary language, that they do not form two different things but “one and the same” thing. Here, identity denotes oneness: the contrary is plurality (not one but two or several). In second place we find *qualitative* identity, in other words, extreme resemblance: we say that *x* and *y* are wearing the same suit—that is, clothes that are so similar that they are interchangeable with no noticeable difference. To this second component corresponds the operation of substitution without semantic loss, *salva veritate*. (Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 116).

Here he identifies two types of sameness: the first is constituted through grammar (because things are the same as we categorize them as such via language—they are not identical but are the “same” because of how they are described); the second implies the disguise I’ve mentioned; the starting point subject and the interval-self share a qualitative similarity, in Ricoeur’s terms. The subject (x) and the interval-self (y) are “wearing the same suit,” in a sense, and differ in that the subject as starting point is non-performative, whereas the identity of the interval self depends on performance. It also seems that it is because of the movement of consciousness between the two (the subject and the interval-self) that meaning isn’t lost when movement occurs.

Ricoeur further qualifies sameness by expounding upon two types of identity: *ipse*, which is what we conceive of as self and is equated with “who,” and *idem*, which is that of which the subject consists (Ricoeur 122). He uses these terms to delve into questions of the permanence of self: *idem* as outside of Being-toward-death is “permanent,” whereas *ipse* is not only mortal but continuously conscious of death. It’s clear that character, which Ricoeur associates with permanence (insofar as the *ipse* is permanent), relies on a coinciding of the *ipse* and *idem* that “confuses” them, allowing the self to experience the permanence of the “what”: “character assures at once numerical identity, qualitative identity, uninterrupted continuity across change, and, finally, permanence in time which defines sameness” (122). Character therefore produces a timelessness with which the self associates itself incorrectly; Ricoeur quotes Heidegger and reaffirms the difference between the permanence of substance “from *self*-substance,” or substance that is made to feel permanent because “self” is the part of identity which we think of as most permanent (Heidegger qtd. in Ricoeur, 123). However, Ricoeur also introduces a characteristic of the *ipse* which stands up to time, and that is the problem of “keeping one’s promise.” He asserts,

“Even if my desire were to change, even if I were to change my opinion or my inclination, ‘I will hold firm.’ It is not necessary, for the promise to be meaningful, to place keeping one’s word within the horizon of Being-toward-death. The properly ethical justification of the promise suffices of itself, a justification which can be derived from the obligation to safeguard the institution of language and to respond to the trust that the other places in my faithfulness. This ethical justification, considered as such, develops its own temporal implications, namely a modality of permanence in time capable of standing as the polar opposite to the permanence of character. It is here, precisely, that selfhood and sameness cease to coincide” (Ricoeur 124).

By claiming that this permanence is “polar opposite to the permanence of character,” he shows that permanence is possible for the *ipse* through the ethical repercussions of certain uses of language (“I promise”). This permanence is perhaps more important to the self, simply because its generation occurs as a result of the “who,” and not, upon first glance, by means of the “what.” Ironically, this type of permanence seems to require the false sense of permanence that the self experiences through character; if it weren’t for the overlap of the *ipse* and *idem*, the self fundamentally wouldn’t have character, and therefore wouldn’t be able to keep or make a promise. Therefore it seems that it’s this falsity that produces a strange stability of language; the root of this permanence through language is the misidentification of *ipse* with *idem*, which we all practice, that is inherently involved in character building.



In these ways Ricoeur sets up several dualities that border on paradox but evade that mutual dependency, mainly through self-division: *ipse* vs. *idem*; character vs. keeping one’s word; quantifiable sameness vs. semantic sameness. It is by way of these dualities that he identifies his own interval: “an interval of sense which remains to be filled in. This interval is opened by the polarity, in temporal terms, between two models of permanence in time—the perseverance of character and the constancy of the self in promising” (Ricoeur 124). This

“polarity” suggests that the two instances of permanence oppose each other; that an oscillation must occur, that a self *must* move between these two, in order for the self to gain character by way of the “what” but also to affirm the self without character, through speech. In this way the oscillation occurs between a “lower limit, where permanence in time expresses the confusion of *idem* and *ipse*; and an upper limit, where the *ipse* poses the question of its identity without the aid and support of the *idem*.” (124). It’s difficult to conceive of an *ipse* without an *idem*, and the schematic suggests that the *ipse* must speak (to whom?) in order to ethically affirm existence independent of character.

To superimpose this interval upon my own is more convoluted than it is with Derrida’s paradigm, but it’s still possible to conceive of the performative space that divides the starting point from the end goal. The *ipse* which depends on the *idem*, in Ricoeur’s framework, aims at the separation of the two: the affirmation that the *ipse* can exist alone. But again this separation depends on the participation of the other, to whom the subject makes a promise by means of their character. The subject utilizes the eternity of character, which Ricoeur considers substantive outside of the mortality of *ipse*, in order to make the promise through speech. It is by means of this performative act that the subject, or at least part of the subject, achieves the separation of *ipse* from *idem* through the affirmation of the continuity of the *ipse*. Ricoeur’s spoken promise is one mode of that affirmation.

These three paradigms (Derrida’s, Ricoeur’s, and mine) pose the question of what enters the performative space: when the speaker, host, or desiring subject initiate the performative activity of discourse, what in fact enters the interval? I rely on these paradigms, each of which involves the division of self, a necessary predicate to the split of private and public, to examine Arendt’s application of that division in “Reflections on Little Rock” and *Of Violence*. By using

Moten's critique of Arendt in *The Universal Machine*, I hope to show the crossover between desire and the public/private division which opens up the political division in itself. This, in turn, will allow me to re-consider Derrida's hospitality and Ricoeur's modeling of speech in the context of desire.

Arendt published "Reflections on Little Rock" in 1959, two years following the integration of the Little Rock Nine at Little Rock Central High School. She bases her argument on her conception of the United States as a nation that, by its "heterogeneous" nature, uses prejudiced acts of exclusion organically; the crux of the argument focuses on her claim that "it is not the social custom of segregation that is unconstitutional, but its *legal enforcement*" (Arendt 49). In order to legitimize this claim, she distinguishes between two parts of the public world: one, "the social sphere"; and two, the "political realm of equality." According to Arendt, "each time we leave the protective four walls of our private homes and cross over the threshold into the public world," we enter the social sphere *first*, and it's in this sphere where discrimination, in her terms, is not only allowed, but natural. Often citing that she has faced prejudice as a Jewish woman when it comes to private spaces (she cites hotels and resorts, for example), she rather starkly states,

In any event, discrimination is as indispensable a social right as equality is a political right. The question is not how to abolish discrimination, but how to keep it confined within the social sphere, where it is legitimate, and prevent its trespassing on the political and the personal sphere, where it is destructive (Arendt 51).

The problem that many critics, including Moten, take up with Arendt's argument centers on her lack of clarity when it comes to what belongs to the social and what is political. It seems that the political is what is enforced nationwide by the constitution—she particularly takes issue with the government's legislation which forbids interracial marriage (this is also because she believes love, as the basis her definition of marriage, takes place in the private realm, in which politics has no place). However, the state's decision to segregate schools, enforce segregated seating on

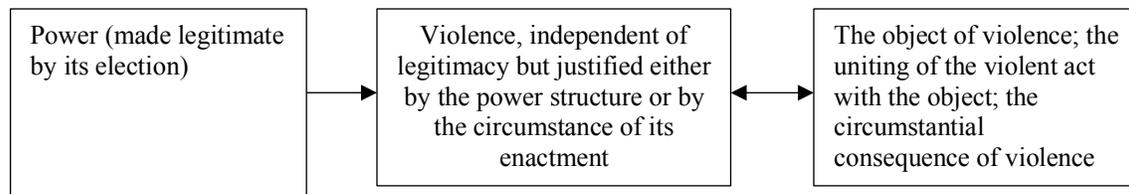
public transportation, and allow private businesses and recreational areas to discriminate based on race fall into the “social” category, in Arendt’s argument; it’s here that Arendt places her division. She claims that “While the government has no right to interfere with the prejudices and discriminatory practices of society, it has not only the right but the duty to make sure that these practices are not legally enforced” (53); in an act that points to the inextricability of the two, Arendt divides the social and political that many have read as not only racist, but as forcing a romantic notion of the public-private division upon something more complicated.

Arendt wrote a similarly divisive essay approximately ten years later, “On Violence,” which skirts this division more than her Little Rock essay, but still harkens back to her placement of prejudice in the private through her discussion of the Black Power Movement in the United States. According to Arendt, “Violence has remained mostly a matter of theory and rhetoric where the clash between generations did not coincide with a clash of tangible group interests”; this speaks pointedly to an emergence of violent action with the Black Power Movement, for whom, Arendt describes, “violence was not a matter of theory and rhetoric” (18). To speak of violence in terms of The Cold War is to evacuate it of action, though, and Arendt seems to capitalize on the potentiality of violence between nations to define violence, and by way of this definition she condemns violence that isn’t legitimized by power: “Violence...is distinguished by its instrumental character. Phenomenologically, it is close to strength, since the implements of violence, like all other tools, are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength until, in the last stage of their development, they can substitute for it” (Arendt 46). In this sense, violence is a substitutive mechanism that increases the strength of those in power—it’s an instrument through which the powerful can assert their power. Arendt’s most useful

distinction, although still laden with pro-nationalist ideology that undercuts social movement, occurs between her versions of “power” and “violence”:

Power needs no justification, being inherent in the very existence of political communities; what it does need is legitimacy...Power springs up whenever people get together and act in concert, but it derives its legitimacy from the initial getting together rather than from any action that then may follow. Legitimacy, when challenged, bases itself on an appeal to the past, while justification relates to an end that lies in the future. Violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate. Its justification loses in plausibility the farther its intended end recedes into the future. No one questions the use of violence in self-defense, because the danger is not only clear but also present, and the end justifying the means is immediate (Arendt 52).

When she claims that violence will never be legitimate, she means that it cannot be legitimate *on its own*, that is, when it's not backed by power. By means of this claim, power and violence map onto Ricoeur's *ipse* and *idem*, respectively: in its justification of being elected, the “power” figure she speaks of is mortal; while violence, phenomenologically, is immortal, it is used by the *ipse*, in a similar way that the *ipse* adopts character contained by the *idem*. Violence is an extension of power, generated by power, but cannot stand alone justifiably, by Arendt's terms—in fact, when the act of violence is made more abstract as its “intended end recedes into the future,” it loses its justification altogether. This conclusion presents a new paradox embedded in Ricoeur's paradigm: even though the *idem* containing character is considered immortal, in that character outlasts the mortality of the *ipse*, its identity as immortal only exists insofar as an *ipse* can adopt it. Likewise, Arendt seems to suggest, violence depends on a power structure in order to resemble or perform legitimacy, by relation to the power structure, whether that power backs the violence or not; consider the parallel of the *ipse* distancing itself from character (what is the purpose of character, as contained by the *idem*, if the *ipse* isn't going to use it?). Arendt's distinction between power and violence implies that violence exists as a progeny of power, even though the performance of violence might escape the identity of such power.



But violence as tool, as that which extends from the subject (*ipse*) of the power figure and provides a relation between itself and the other (object upon which the violence acts) reintegrates the form of the interval of desire similar to the way in which Ricoeur's *ipse/idem* divide gets incorporated: the space between the power structure and the consequences of action is constituted by that violent action. This similarity in structure prompts not only the question of a matching stylistic model for violence and desire, but also confounds the two structures in a way that harkens back to and invokes Ricoeur's versions of sameness. It is by means of the interval, by which the comparison in structure is made, that the quantifiable sameness of structure in the violence/desire comparison is exceeded by the semantic sameness (qualitative sameness that gets by difference through disguise) of action within the interval—this is to suggest that what happens in the interval produces identity-related consequences on either side, such that the comparison of the in-between pieces produces legitimate comparisons of the spaces that flank them. Fred Moten addresses this problem in the following excerpt from his critique of Arendt:

in Butler's words, 'the question is not only which relations of desire ought to be legitimated by the state but also who may desire the state, *who may desire the state's desire.*' Recognize, also, that another question lurks here, one concerning the modes of personhood that have been desired by the state as an object of incorporative exclusion and the general and generative field and force of impersonation who have not desired that desire, who have refused what has been refused to and imposed upon them, as well as that refusal and that imposition... What Arendt fails to see is a refusal not only of the state's desire but also of the brutally exclusionary desire of a society whose civility is manifest always and everywhere as hostility (Moten, *The Universal Machine*, 77).

Butler argues that the state validates relations of desire by the legal designation of certain kinds of marriage. But she also explains that this designation is a form of legislated desire in itself: the state *desires* heteronormative, non-mixed race marriage. Moten extrapolates upon this selective desiring on the part of the state (which, by design, should desire its constituents but instead

embarks on exclusive desiring by means of its legislated desires) in order to describe the bind that the non-desired member of the state is placed in: she is the object of “incorporative exclusion,” a violence of the *idem*, contained in the interval. Most important is Moten’s conception of the state’s designation of modes of personhood (by means of its selective desiring) as fundamentally requiring response from the object, regardless of that designation. In the divisive action in which constituents either respond with mutual desire or something else, the “something else,” non-desired constituents *might* respond with something resembling violence (as the state has initiated the relation through violence already). And so the “refusal of the state’s desire” that Moten speaks of is more of a recognition of the simultaneity of the action as both desire and violence, as desire having-been-masked by the sameness of violence. It’s by way of the response to the “brutal exclusion” by those who reject the state’s rejection that hostility potentially manifests.

How does the structure of the interval, as informed by Derrida and Ricoeur, find its place in politics? That is, is Moten’s assessment of the collision of desire and violence a fair assessment of the interval’s presence in the public sphere? An application of the principle of desire as outlined in *Love and Saint Augustine* would, on the surface, say no—desire romanticized through a subject-object relation belongs in the private realm, and the introduction of desire into politics befuddles her rendition of the human artifice. But Moten points to a conversation between Arendt and James Baldwin, in which Arendt responds to Baldwin’s essay “Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind,” where he writes, “If we—and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others—do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare” (Baldwin qtd. in Moten 83). Here Baldwin

uniquely asks the lover-parallel to wake the object, to awaken the consciousness of the other—it's as if this act of waking initiates a mutual desire structure, in which the object returns the gesture and thus mutually aims to end the “nightmare.” When Arendt responds, in a letter, that the “gospel of love” in this essay “frightens her,” because when love “intrudes upon [politics] nothing is achieved except hypocrisy” (Arendt qtd. in Moten 84), Baldwin rebuts, recounting his emigration to Paris from the United States,

there was in the life I fled a zest and a joy and a capacity for facing and surviving disaster that are very moving and very rare. Perhaps we were, all of us—pimps, whores, racketeers, church members, and children—bound together by the nature of our oppression, the specific and peculiar complex of risks we had to run; if so, within these limits we sometimes achieved with each other a freedom that was close to love (Baldwin qtd. in Moten 84).

Baldwin points to the excluded or non-desired individuals whom Butler speaks about, but from another angle. The violence of rejection not only prompts the response of counter-rejection, but also of a binding freedom—from the poetic notion of being bound by mutual rejection, Baldwin explains an excessive freedom, equating it to love.

Fred Moten artfully distinguishes this type of love from Arendt's “geometric” love, asking whether this love is, what Baldwin has referred to, a “love of the Lord,” or whether the binding action that the violence of the United States has imparted through divisive exclusion has generated a new love, “near to but distant from [preconceived] love and what that love opposes—something fallen before and beyond not in love, something more and less than love” (85). The distinction is the stranger, the outcast. Moten is right when he says that “Who or what bears this insolvent and insovereign love...is more and less than a stranger in the public-private world of Arendt and her friends” (85)—that is, the love that Baldwin has called out confounds the public-private distinction, because it's in neither (by the state's definition), and potentially also, by the virtue of the omnipresent other, in both. It's also clear that the excessive love of which Baldwin speaks cannot follow the subject-object relation of love *in which the object is the*

world, as Arendt claims both in her analysis of *cupiditas* and by construction of the human artifice (Moten 86). Again, Baldwin's love both exceeds and falls short of Arendt's tinkering of mechanism; it exceeds the bounds of it; it is deficient in its participation with it (86).

This distinction is essential in my attempt to excavate the presence of desire itself in politics, a term I'm using broadly both to describe both larger and often abstract actions of the state (for instance, segregation and marriage laws) as well as politically charged discourse engendered between the self and the object on the other side of desire/violence. Does Derrida's foreigner enter a desire-structure when asked, "would you like to come in?" Where is the violence here? Is movement within and into the desire structure violent, and why? Are the consequences of that entrance (into an interval) reminiscent of the operation of desire, such that the subject and object move to get closer, and simultaneously *block* each other? And what happens when you arrive into an interval you've generated, and the object, which you expected to act as object, is already there, performing as you are?

Moten focuses on these issues in *The Feel Trio*, a book of poetry in which he employs his experimental prose style to create visually enticing pictures of language. Many of the poems feature called-out enjambments, carefully printed line spacing, and large margins that create tight boxes of text. The following is an excerpt from "Block Chapel," the first of three sections:

the violence of the coping strata is specific and seasoned. we give
shit away to hurt people and build poor shelters that move and
wrap around...our thing event theme is doin it to death. I feel good
is brazen on the scene of personal injury. sugar and spice is some
country-ass shit in the middle of this shit. I know I'm not
supposed to say it like that, but what about the rock fights and
random blades when language lays out? there's no language for the
too sweet object of everyone's thing though any muhfuckin way.
along those lines, do I remind you of your mother? I want to but
just to scare you...I just want to satisfy you; though you're not
mine, you're not just mine (Moten, *Block Chapel* 23).⁵

⁵ It must be noted that all of the excerpts I present of Fred Moten's poetry are distorted by my selection, and this is likely something with which he would take issue. I urge readers to read the poetry in full, as presented in print—physical presentation is important to the poet, as made clear through unusual page size and uncommon printing

Whose “coping strata,” and who is “doin it to death”? Moten moves quickly through both abstract ideas and descriptions of various scenes to create something concise and volatile. For instance, it seems as though the “seasoned” and violent coping strata relates to the “sugar and spice” in “the middle of this shit,” but the two are also distinctly unrelated. Perhaps the “doin it to death” is the process of violent non-behavior—the passive act of “giving shit away,” Moten suggests, might be equivalent to the action of passive exclusion—the state’s non-desire (this would import that the “sugar and spice” is in fact the ass of the country—what both flavors and breaks up the appearance of all-desired (the state enforces an image of all-desire while maintaining a system that exclusively desires and through which that object is perpetually cared for). When Moten asks, “what about the rock fights and random blades when language lays out,” he invokes his previous blunt sentence to describe the penetrability of language both in violent and non-violent scenarios; it is what brings violence into Arendt’s four walls. “Rock fights” and “random blades” describe a fight of physical resources, where language might be used as an aid to violence or provocation. But Moten also describes how “language” might conjure these tools or even *behave* as them through its use. Language is not only an assistant to violent behavior but its practice, the shell or container or interval through which the subject *subjects*.

Moten claims, as an answer to the violence of language, that “There’s no language for the too sweet object,” which I believe is true. The true lover never wants to operate through language, because it creates a scenario that pulls on the lover, and asks them to act performatively (“I cannot love you when I speak to you, and therefore I will not love you, in order to speak to you”). There is the faulty language of desire, for Arendt, which doesn’t account for the excess of love when language isn’t necessary. But does the necessary action of love rely

methods, in which his “block” and line poems take up specifically chosen regions of the page to enhance the experience of reading.

on the potential violent movement that occurs in desire? And therefore, does the action of speaking inherently begin as an identical act of desiring? In this question Moten addresses his more romantic readers by twisting the image of the pleaser. “I just want to please you,” an intimate and vulnerable admission of desire, takes on the casualty of meeting someone for the first time—for both an intimate and a detached interaction might begin with a “hello,” or a, “may I come in?”. Moten recalls this peculiar similarity in his paradoxical double-negative at the end: not mine becomes “mine,” when everyone who is not mine enters a conversation with me.

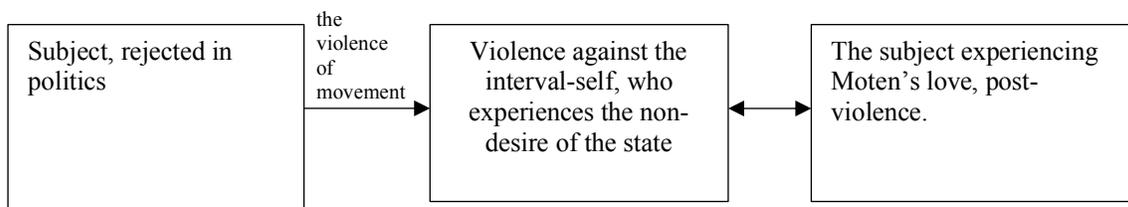
An understanding of love that excludes language doesn’t necessarily exclude the interval as means of observing the path to love. In an interview with critic Charles Henry Rowell, Moten reads a poem (perhaps a piece of criticism)⁶ that he’d written hours before the interview, addressing the necessary pathway for the love with which Baldwin is concerned:

There is a kind of pressure that music and poverty (constraint) puts on the sentence; the remainder (freedom) is poetry. Over the course of history the demands of truthful expression (as either or both correspondence and discovery) become more and more severe, but at the same time 'the plain sense of things' becomes more plain and the striated polyvocality of the vessel, the medium, the conductor strives for directness (Moten, “Words Don’t Go There” 960).

The pressure that he announces in the first clause is a slow and passive sort of violence, in which the “sentence” is held within the bounds of poverty, which Moten suggests is a mode of constraint (and in that sense the constraint of the sentence is constraint). Thus violence, produced by the necessity of the interval upon the rejection by the state and which I’ve shown using both Moten and its parallel to performance in Derrida, has a semantic sameness with language, provides a narrow tunnel through which the lover must traverse in order to achieve the type of

⁶ In the same interview, Moten says: “It’s true that a lot of the objects of inquiry in my critical work are objects of inquiry in my poetry as well. My wife, Laura Harris, has been working on the relation between experimental and documentary aesthetic forms, on what it means for artists and critics to consider both as modes of inquiry, and this has had a big influence. She has really transformed the way I think about and write poetry. Writing a poem has become for me, at least in part, an attempt to find out some things and to try to work through some things intellectually, emotionally, and musically” (Moten, “Words Don’t Go There” 956). This stance enables the reader to read his poetry not only as in conversation with his critical work (*The Universal Machine*, in this case) but also as part of it.

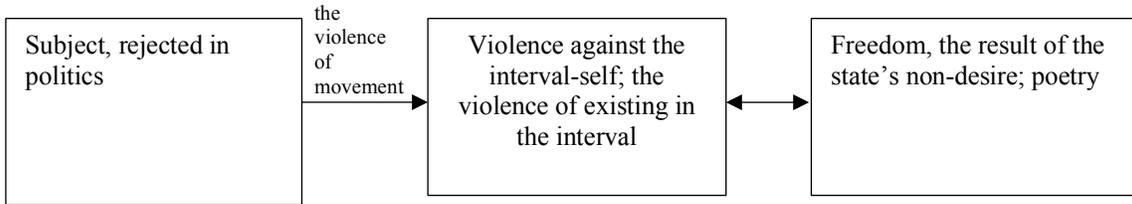
freedom in love of which Baldwin conceives. Moten suggests that the violence of constraint for the subject becomes natural and even fundamental to the “vessel,” which we might think of as the poet or the speaker, but which also is more physically the extension of the speaker, the constrained grounds of speech, becomes familiar and useful over time—it becomes plain. Although the container striates the innards of the interval-self as the subject attempts the movement through that space, which applies an internal violence to the subject that matches the violent action of the subject moving towards the goal on the other end of the interval, the speaker now subverts the violence of the structure such that it mobilizes the speaker towards their end more efficiently.



And on the other side of the interval is poetry, according to Moten: “poetry is what happens or is conveyed on the outskirts of sense, on the outskirts of normative meaning” (960). Insofar as sensory experience is worldly, then, Moten proposes that it happens in the world—that the end of the violent pathway (the other end) opens up into the sensory public, via the release of the interval, Arendt’s private realm, also on the outskirts of senses.

Moten (through Baldwin) conceives of freedom as the result of violent pressure, and this is counterintuitive: freedom is that which benefits from violence. This freedom seems to align with an end goal but also with what Moten calls poetry, since it lies on the other end of the violent pressure that the interval, which supplies a grounds for motion, imputes. Freedom is the result of the state’s non-desire, the experience of being excluded with others, because that non-

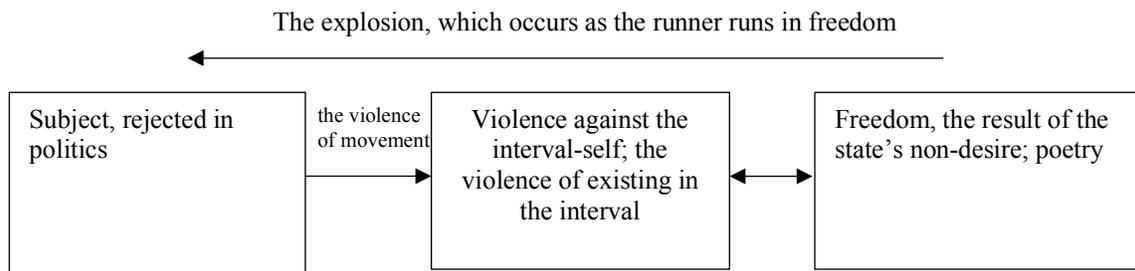
desire creates an urge for the violent movement towards freedom; non-desire initiates the pressure of violence in the interval.



Moten speaks of this freedom as vehicular in itself. He explains that “on the other side of that freedom, love emerges as an explosive whose destructiveness both Baldwin and Arendt recognize” (*The Universal Machine*, 87). This explosiveness disfigures the love that can only exist on the other side of the interval—that love leaks into both the interval and back to the starting point by means of the explosion, in such a way that involves love always in the transference between one’s own selves. Moten asks,

what if the love that must be opposed to politics—however much it is held in politics’ gravitational field, however much it is achieved and felt by what and who are subject to/subjects of politics—is the inadequate index Baldwin uses to point to a love that is beside itself in and as ante- and antipolitical sociality? Perhaps this love-in-exhaustion, this love at the end or over the edge of breath, brings a certain tumultuous derangement, a certain noise, an uncommon graining of the legitimate image (Moten 88).

The love is beside itself in antipolitical sociality—it comes before it, and it is against it. Perhaps Moten enacts the fuzziness created by the ante- love—this ante- love muddies politics post-explosion, which occurs before political sociality for the individual non-desired by the state—here I mean that production of freedom through the violent motion of the interval produces an explosion which disrupts the structure of political discourse.



Moten suggests that the reverberations of this love fracture the consciousness of the interval-self, as well as that in the starting point, suggesting that “there is a certain univocal speech of the love of a people that enacts what Arendt might call the unconscious pariah. It is in contradiction to this figure that the conscious pariah doesn’t love, but merely belongs, to a people” (Moten 88). Moten presents the tradeoff that occurs when the initial violence against the conscious pariah enacts the loss of consciousness, once that pariah floods with Baldwin’s love; the result of this is a universal consciousness of a love-people who achieve the freedom via the pressure violence in the interval, no longer *belong* by way of their exclusion from the political desiring body, but now belong to their after-freedom, to the rush of love which dismantles the self-hood secured by the interval. Thus, when Moten suggests that “The fugitive remains, in love, out of love” (88), he shows that the existence of the fugitive, the runner whom the political body forced to run, is guaranteed by Baldwin’s love, which survives strictly in opposition to Arendtian desire, but only by way of an active transference through it.

Who is the runner, and can he stop? That is, can the politically non-desired escape the explosion? Moten explores this subversion in one of the first blocks of “Block Chapel”:

...stay alive in the concept with an outbound feeling
of refuge, I’m a run, I’m o run, I’m gon’ run to the city
of refuse...
I get preoccupied with the tonal situation. I got
to kiss somebody to end up in the original. it’s like
that outside drama is our knowledge of the world
and nobody claims it but us. we get it twisted
in the diagram. We know the score. We got a plan.
(Moten, *Block Chapel*, 3).

Moten describes the fugitive, the individual who experiences the violent non-desire. The runner “stays alive” in the outbound, in the act of continual movement past the original action of the non-desiring political group. This running in the explosion is the point of refuge, simply because the refuge from desire must always be a running from it, and the consciousness on the other side of the interval must make the “conscious effort” to claim the freedom post-violence in the

interval. This refuge, the placement of the non-desired in the explosion, becomes the point of consciousness for the group-pariah, the readers of the “tonal situation.” By claiming that he can “kiss somebody to end up in the original,” though, Moten suggests a disruption from this group consciousness which results from exclusion: the individual can re-enter the original desire structure that first omitted them through their own desire act. In this action they carry a group consciousness, a love or knowledge of the world through desire-interval, similar to, as Arendt describes, how lovers who have a child fall back into the human artifice. Thus the pariah figure better navigates the interval through their twisting of it, through their own heightened conscience, not which they gained from the interval but which they found in excessive love that primarily dislocates a notion of the interval in which violence isn’t its identifying character.

Moten doesn’t disclose how that disruption or heightened *use* of the interval occurs—perhaps the excess of Baldwin’s love propels the politically non-desired to confound the interval by his non-use of language. What we do know is that my diagram has changed into something malleable, a structure blurred or melted by the runner, who remembers the love of the world, and has a plan, and the tools necessary.

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