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The Philosopher's Diagnosis: Sickness in Plato, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger

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The Philosopher's Diagnosis:
Sickness in Plato, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger

Senior Project submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
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Dedicated to

Professor Ruth Zisman

for guidance, friendship, and instilling in me a love of wisdom

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Intake

Philosophy has long pursued happiness. Throughout its Western tradition, philosophers have not only placed happiness as the goal for all human striving, but have set its own task to be its attainment, thereby positioning the discipline as the highest kind of undertaking. Plato strove for the “good life” as one defined by *eudaimonia*, the Greek term for happiness or well-being (“The Republic” 4). Aristotle also placed happiness as the “highest good,” and designated it as the object of all inquiry. His task was to come to an understanding of what that happiness meant (Aristotle, “Ethics” 19). Seneca took up this question again in “On the Happy Life,” which he begins by stating, “To live happily ... is the desire of all men, but their minds are blinded to a clear vision of just what it is that makes life happy; ...” (41). Thus, his philosophizing was to “look about for the road by which we can reach [happiness] most quickly ...” (41). Augustine moved to argue that he who “really possesses God ..., certainly, will be happy” (“The Happy Life” 54). Thus, in its founding, philosophy becomes staked on the possibility of happiness.

Modern philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, and John Stuart Mill, will once again return to these questions on happiness. Kant, in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, argued that “good will” must “constitute” the “indispensible condition” of happiness (104). Schopenhauer suggests in *On the Variety and Suffering of Life*, rather, that, “Everything in life shows that earthly happiness is destined to be frustrated or recognized as an illusion” (114). In *Utilitarianism*, Mill distinguishes between different levels of happiness based

on a being's capacity for it. In regard to the "intelligent human"—the thinker rather than the "fool"—Mill adds, "A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering, and certainly accessible to it at more points ..."

("Utilitarianism" 123). The concern with happiness, however, takes on new forms in the philosophies of the past century where its identity, worthiness, and possibility of attainment are further called into question. As one example, one need look no further than the famous last words of Albert Camus', "The Myth of Sisyphus"; Camus writes, "One must imagine Sisyphus happy" (123). Happiness, for Camus, may be heroic but is nonetheless *absurd*.

Despite philosophy's prolonged study of happiness, rarely do we associate this as a characteristic of the philosopher herself. Rather, the philosopher is depicted in two ways. At once, we imagine the philosopher who demonstrates brilliant madness and passionate, obsessive fervor in his work. We also see the brooding, suffering thinker struggling against the limitations of his own thought. We might think of restless philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre, who maintained a daily diet of amphetamines, alcohol, and barbiturates at night (Lanchester). Sartre even once told Simone de Beauvoir, "in philosophy, writing consisted of analysing my ideas; and a tube of corydrane meant 'these ideas will be analysed in the next two days'" (Lanchester). Alternatively, we might picture the isolated, melancholy philosopher, such as Friedrich Nietzsche in his tower under the care of his sister, or Søren Kierkegaard who, after being attacked and mocked by a satirical magazine, wrote, "I am convinced not a single person understands me," and that he suffered from a "profound mental agony" (Hannay 321-3). The philosopher comes to us as bi-polar—either manic and compulsive with his task, or depressed and lonely because of it.

It appears that the discipline has, in fact, been plagued with suffering practitioners. Both Socrates and Seneca faced convictions because of their statuses, both of whom willingly accepted their deaths and committed suicide—Socrates drank the hemlock; Seneca slit his wrists (Romm 23). Nietzsche experienced a mental collapse. Walter Benjamin sought death by overdosing on morphine. Gilles Deleuze suffered respiratory ailments throughout his career that eventually led him to kill himself by jumping out of his apartment's window. A student and colleague of Deleuze, philosopher Sarah Kofman, committed suicide on Nietzsche's birthday. This history of philosophical suffering leads one to question the ways in which the study of philosophy reveals life to be precisely *unlivable*.

Why does philosophy, inasmuch as it has been an examination of happiness, become a suffering discipline? Illnesses and distress cannot be said to be symptomatic of a career in philosophy (at least not exclusively), and these biographical examples risk making such an assumption. However, philosophers have also reflected on their pursuit as ridden with aches and pains. Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science*, wrote, "... often I have asked myself whether, taking a large view, philosophy has not been merely an interpretation of the body and a *misunderstanding of the body*" (34-5). Insofar as philosophers read their own deficiencies, we can understand philosophy as having such a relationship to health and the "body." And, as Nietzsche indicates, its "misunderstandings" can be understood as wrong diagnoses, failed prescriptions, or attempts to self-medicate. We can even look to philosophers escaping the body as a manifestation of its hindrances. Socrates located truth as closest to the soul, abandoning everything material, ultimately concluding in the *Phaedo* that "philosophers should be willing and ready to die" because the practice of philosophy, like dying, entails a necessary severance

of the body from the soul (99). Michel de Montaigne takes up this Socratic demand in his essay, "To Philosophize is to learn how to die" (89). Finally, René Descartes brought this to a new extreme in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, arguing that one's existence is exclusively defined by his thinking mind (63). How do we understand the relationship between knowledge, happiness, and suffering? If *philosophia* is the love of wisdom, must it also become the hatred of the body? Is it by way of knowledge that we become happy? Is knowledge the antidote to suffering? If so, how do we account for the fact that the procuring of happiness seems to be fraught with struggle? Is knowledge not ailed in itself? In aspiring towards happiness, has not philosophy diagnosed itself as thereby lacking happiness and, thus, as deficient or sick in some way?

The present exploration embarks from this point of diagnosis. The philosopher's diagnosis is twofold. On the one hand, the philosopher is engaged in an act of examination, analysis, and problematization of the world, the public, or the individual, and in so doing, diagnoses. On the other hand, the philosopher becomes the patient, receiving a diagnosis. One might understand this, first, as a self-reflexive diagnosis by way of inclusion in the philosopher's general criticism. However, more significantly, we can posit that it is she who is the one most aware of and closest to its symptoms who can identify the sickness. Who understands sickness better than she who is sick? Furthermore, the sickness is itself conceived of and formulated in the philosopher's writing. Perhaps the philosopher herself is the agent of the disease—she is infected. Lastly, is the sick individual not the one most in need of finding a cure or, at very least, something to soothe the pain? If the philosopher's occupation is to rehabilitate happiness to the sufferer, who would be most likely to fill this role but the sufferer

himself? One could simply reply that doctors tend not to be the ones in need of treatment and yet are still driven to carry out this line of work. However, it is precisely here that the two “diagnoses” coincide. A doctor may be informed about sickness as a means to his end, but to *know* it, as is the call and end of the philosopher, is another task altogether. Therefore, as the philosopher pursues knowledge of sickness, he becomes evermore vulnerable to it. In this project, philosophy calls for diagnosis. The philosopher is called to diagnose as we are called to diagnose him.

This project investigates diagnosis for four philosophers. Chapter 1 serves as a prefatory examination, a family history of Western philosophy, in its parent, Plato. Plato’s *Symposium* finds philosophy, as a love of wisdom, *lovesick*. Philosophy becomes defined by its simultaneous lack of that for which it loves and pursues, as well as its excess in its overly drunken state. Sickness comes in the form of not just lovesickness and hangover, but in their contradiction and imbalance. Chapter 2 explores Nietzsche’s second opinion in *The Gay Science*. Nietzsche identifies sickness not in philosophy’s lack of truth but in its very understanding of itself as lacking. Nietzsche’s use of metaphors of the sea indicates philosophy as *seasick*—philosophy has fabricated stable truth, like a steady horizon, where it has never existed. Sickness comes both in our self-negation as lacking and in our desire for cure. Therefore, Nietzsche offers us no prescription but, rather, teaches us to love our sickness. In Chapter 3, sickness also becomes inevitable and necessary. Kierkegaard brings us through the sufferings of pregnancy: its pains, miscarriages, abortions, and possible death. Kierkegaard experiences the agonies of the endeavor to give birth to an idea as well as its impossibilities. Therefore, this kind of suffering is at once *morning sickness* and *mourning sickness*. Finally, Chapter 4 demonstrates the

way in which Heidegger positions suffering at the center of philosophy through its *homesickness*. Understanding, for Heidegger, can only take place in a mood of anxiety or uncanniness. The uncanny, or *unheimlich*, is the feeling of “not-Being-at-home,” which occurs when one realizes that she has constructed a house of false meaning. One must choose to either live with this sickness, to live without the comforts of home, or drug herself into a state of tranquillization in which she can believe she has returned to it.

Through these four analyses, this project seeks to show the philosopher as a theorizer of suffering. The philosophical task is one of diagnosis. In diagnosing others, the philosopher is also engaged in an act of self-diagnosis. To take up unhappiness as a subject of philosophical concern means to produce it in its very being. While there certainly must be exceptions to the sickness of philosophy, afflictions nonetheless pervade throughout the tradition. Thus, I hope to engage in my own philosophical diagnosis by posing the following questions to each of the philosophers that I address: Is there a history of sickness in your (philosophical) family? Where does it hurt? How long have these symptoms persisted? What medications are you on? On a scale of 1-10, how bad is the pain? While each philosopher may offer a different response, in the end, I will demonstrate the way in which philosophy positions itself as a suffering discipline—a discipline that perpetually calls for, indeed demands, its own diagnosis.

Chapter 1: Plato and Lovesickness

John Stuart Mill writes in *Utilitarianism*, "...it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied" (260). The premise of Mill's argument is that one's level of happiness is relative to one's maximum capacity for it. For the pig or the fool, the standards for satisfaction are low. Although they might better be able to meet these measures, Mill contends that they are still less content than Socrates, despite his dissatisfaction. Therefore, one would be happier as an unhappy Socrates than as anything else. However, this raises the questions: why is Socrates, the paragon of the philosopher figure, the model of dissatisfaction here? Why is it assumed that the philosopher will be dissatisfied? This suggests that poor Socrates cannot meet his own standards for happiness for they are implausibly high—happiness will always be out of reach for the philosopher. Why do we accept this as given? Is such dissatisfaction valued by philosophy?

This chapter will explore the ways in which Plato's *Symposium* can begin to answer these questions. The *Symposium*, a series of speeches given as eulogies to Eros, is a Platonic dialogue representative of the act of philosophizing. By the penultimate speech, given by Socrates himself, the object of the philosophizing becomes philosophy itself—the pursuit of Eros becomes the pursuit of ideas. Additionally, Eros becomes linked to the word "satisfaction," which etymologically comes from the Latin, *satis*, meaning "enough." A dissatisfied Socrates then would be a Socrates consumed by a lack, a not having enough. Similarly, the idea of Eros as something of which the lover is always in pursuit but never fully attains, the specter of never

having enough, is how we can think of philosophy's dissatisfaction. Therefore, we might read this deficiency as akin to lovesickness. However, at the very moment of this lovesickness and lack, we see the interlocutors of the symposium hung over, overfull and suffering of excess. This lovesickness and hangover manifests the tension of lack and excess. Philosophers therefore can never strike the balance that would allow them to achieve that which they pursue, leaving them terminally indisposed. Socrates uses the interrogation and analysis of love as a way to do the same to philosophy, finding it born of such a contradiction and therefore fated to persistent striving and oversaturation.

In addition to Diotima's progression toward wisdom in Socrates' speech, which will be analyzed later, there are many formal elements that demonstrate the text's fundamental focus on philosophy itself. Insofar as philosophy etymologically means "love of wisdom," any discussion of love from the position of a philosopher and, therefore, a lover in his own right, is self-implicating. Agathon, who speaks before Socrates, reframes the discussion at play in his speech to exemplify this point. Agathon begins:

I want first to say how I must speak, and then to speak. For in my own opinion all the previous speakers did not eulogize the god but blessed human beings for the goods of which the god is the cause; yet no one has said what sort is he who makes these gifts. There is one proper manner in every praise of anything This is the just way for us ... to praise Eros—first what sort he is, and then his gifts. (Plato, *Symposium* 24)

Agathon reformulates the question here. He argues that the proper form of eulogy is definitional—that we must understand what "sort" of an individual is Eros. However, defining Eros is not a pre-requisite to the actual praise, but is rather inherent to it as it is the "one proper manner" of eulogizing. This is significant because it manifests the idea that getting to the truth of a thing should be the objective of all speeches of this manner. Insofar as giving

praise to something or someone is a kind of love in itself, we see this love of the idea or truth in the present mode of philosophizing. Furthermore, Agathon is not only defining the thing about which the speakers discuss—Eros—but he is also defining the form in which they speak. Agathon begins by calling out the previous speakers for not properly eulogizing and then explains the correct way to give speeches. First, this establishes the formal setting for philosophizing. More fundamentally, however, it signifies the meta-philosophical approach demonstrated throughout the *Symposium*: it is not just a question of what we love (or praise) but how one loves and praises. This parallels the way in which philosophy thinks not only of the matter at hand, but how one should think both in general and in regard to such a matter.

Socrates follows Agathon in speech. While he praises this definitional framing of the speeches, he argues that Agathon has failed to accurately describe Eros. First, Socrates establishes some basic premises with Agathon, using classic Socratic dialectic. In a line of questioning, we establish that Eros is the love of something, and that the one who loves desires something that he does not have, for one would not desire that which he already has (Plato, *Symposium* 29). Additionally, we learn that Eros is love of beauty and, as such, does not possess it (30). Socrates continues by recounting a dialogue in which he was the student, making the very same assumptions about Eros as Agathon made in his speech. Socrates is in conversation with a woman named Diotima, from Mantinea (31). Diotima establishes from these initial premises and further dialogue that Eros is the love of “...the good’s being one’s own always” (36). The new element here is the notion of the “always.” Diotima identifies that if a lover possesses the thing that he desires, his love does not cease, but rather extends eternally, for he wishes to have it always. This leads Diotima to ask of Socrates in what sort of

“activity” would those who pursue Eros engage (36). With Socrates unsure, Diotima answers, “Their deed is bringing to birth in beauty both in terms of the body and in terms of the soul” (37). Responding to this principle of the “always,” Diotima describes lovers as procreators, in both the physical and figurative senses. Diotima argues that lovers seek immortality—the “always”—through procreation because a part of themselves lives on through their offspring.

It is through this line of thinking that Diotima arrives at the ladder of love. One can become pregnant in a variety of ways, from pregnancy of the body to pregnancy of the soul, and this typology of pregnancy has its rank. Diotima argues that by progressing up this ladder, one can finally attain that which his love has been seeking. The lover must,

... no longer be content like a lackey with the beauty in one, of a boy, of some human being, or of one practice, ... but with a permanent turn to the vast open sea of the beautiful, behold it and give birth—in ungrudging philosophy—to many beautiful and magnificent speeches and thoughts; until, there strengthened and increased, he may discern a certain single philosophical science, which has as its object the following sort of beauty. ... So whenever anyone begins to glimpse that beauty as he goes on up from these things through the correct practice of pederasty, he must come close to touching the perfect end. For this is what it is to proceed correctly, or to be led by another, to erotics—beginning from these beautiful things here, always to proceed on up for the sake of that beauty, using these beautiful things here as steps: from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; and from beautiful bodies to beautiful pursuits; and from pursuits to beautiful lessons; and from lessons to end at that lesson, which is the lesson of nothing else than the beautiful itself; and at last to know what is beauty itself. It is at this place in life, in beholding the beautiful itself, ... that it is worth living, if—for a human being—it is [worth living] at any place. (Plato, *Symposium* 41-2)

Here, we see the progression of the lover to the love of wisdom. The lover’s gaze surpasses the body, the “practice,” which was previously described as politics or poetry, and becomes focused on attaining the idea of the beautiful itself. The lover gives birth to the expression of wisdom—speeches and thoughts—through “ungrudging” love of wisdom. Here we see that through developing the path of love, the lover is simultaneously en route to wisdom. It is interesting,

too, that Diotima describes this as a “single philosophical science.” This could be read as indicating that the two pursuits, love and wisdom, perfectly coincide. This also is supported by the notion of the ladder—that the philosopher must proceed through each phase of love in order to get at “the perfect end.” This end, however, as previously described, is not an end in itself but rather a “turn” to vastness, and the possibility of giving birth to a multiplicity of ideas.

The penultimate rung on the ladder is “beautiful lessons.” From this passage it is not immediately clear if the lover is giving or receiving the lessons. However, insofar as love is here signified as procreation, and of the sort that engenders one’s soul immortal in another, we can assume that the lover is providing the lesson. It is through this position of the teacher that we can also see the connection between love and philosophy, that in order to love one must be able to teach, or philosophize themselves into another. Finally, it is in conducting such lessons that the lover arrives at its product—“to know what is beauty itself.” Here lies the true interconnection between the two pursuits. Until this point, Eros has been described as the love of beauty and the good (Plato, *Symposium* 30). Now, however, the final objective is not simply the attainment of such things, but “to know” of them. This characterization of the lover as beholder of knowledge transforms the focus not just to “beauty,” but to the “what is.” The one who best understands and embodies Eros is the one who is granted access to the knowledge of “what is,” or rather, the “turn to the vast open sea” of the “what is” questions. Defining the achievement of love as a type of knowledge demonstrates that the interrogation of the pursuit of Eros has all along been, in fact, a portrayal of the path toward wisdom itself, and the extensive potentiality of “offspring.”

Diotima concludes this passage by adding that it is at this final destination that life is worth living. This ultimately evokes the question, is life worth living absent beholding knowledge? The possibility of satisfying life's desires is called into question, leaving one aching and confused. Furthermore, insofar as the ultimate goal is immortality, which can only be artificially achieved through metaphorically giving birth, the pursuit of love and knowledge becomes a fundamentally unattainable goal. In this way we can begin to think of the pursuit of knowledge for Plato as one ridden with lovesickness. Diotima ends her speech by addressing this very question:

Do you believe ... that life would prove to be a sorry sort of thing, when a human being gazes in the direction of the beautiful and beholds it with the instrument with which he must and is together with it? Or don't you realize ... that only here, in seeing in the way the beautiful is seeable, will he get to engender not phantom images of virtue—because he does not lay hold of a phantom—but true, because he lays hold of the true; and that once he has given birth to and cherished true virtue, it lies within him to become dear to god and, if it is possible for any human being, to become immortal as well? (Plato, *Symposium* 42)

Diotima recognizes the way in which the object of pursuit is only just in sight for most lovers. They have access to the “instrument” that is love with which they may ultimately be able to attain knowledge of the beautiful. However, the lover only experiences the mode of love, without fully achieving its object. Diotima predicts that one might find this a “sorry sort of thing,” that one might be made sad or hopeless, if he can only feel love but not actually capture it and all its potentiality. Insofar as the object of pursuit is knowledge, philosophy is intertwined and infected by such lovesickness. For Diotima, the end is “seeable,” but feels like a “phantom.” At the same time, there is a tangible “truth” that rests in this phantom—the pursuit does not feel empty. One knows that they have come across something of significance,

they “lay hold of the true,” and yet it always still remains out of reach. While “laying hold” may sound like possession of “the true,” it rather suggests that a truth exists in the pursuit, but it is not the *absolute* knowledge that resides at its end. Diotima argues that this recognition of the truth of the pursuit that, more specifically, is the simultaneous process of pursuing truth and engendering it in another, in some ways validates it. For the first time, however, Diotima concedes that this is not actual immortality, which is an impossibility, but only as near to it as a human can achieve. Furthermore, she states that it is only a getting closer, or “dear,” to god, but not possibly attaining the knowledge and immortality that god possesses. Regardless, Diotima maintains an optimistic tone. For Diotima, the only hope for immortality rests in pointing one’s gaze in the direction of knowledge of the beautiful. However, aside from validating the pursuit, this does not seem to provide much of an answer to the quality of life absent reaching a fundamentally implausible goal.

What we do understand from this passage is the fundamentally dichotomous nature of the philosophical pursuit. To refer back to the notion of the “phantom,” there is a simultaneous presence and absence. There is some truth or knowledge that is gained in the mode of pursuit but its end is absent. Just like a hangover, one is oversaturated by dedication to the pursuit. Such oversaturation leads to the accompanying toil of the hangover, which one expects and accepts as inevitable. One is also “hung over” because of withdrawal from the oversaturation. This withdrawal could be compared to the absence of that which has been so intensely pursued during the drunken craze. This state of presence/absence as it relates to drunkenness has already been established as the mode of philosophizing here. Eryximachus, the doctor, asks Agathon how intent he is on drinking (Plato, *Symposium* 5). Agathon, the host,

responds that he is, “Not at all ... nor do I have the strength,” for they are all hung over from the festivities of the night before, celebrating the award Agathon received for his tragic poetry.

Eryximachus continues:

Now, since in my opinion none of those present is eager to drink a lot of wine, perhaps I should be less disagreeable were I to speak the truth about what drunkenness is. ... Drunkenness is a hard thing for human beings; and as far as it is in my power, I should neither be willing to go on drinking nor to advise another to do so, particularly if he still has a headache from yesterday’s debauch. (5-6)

There is no obvious rationale for Eryximachus’ statement that because everyone is hung over, it is an ideal moment to “speak the truth” of drunkenness. However, there is certainly something significant in this act of speaking to truth. Earlier, it was established that such a “definitional” declaration was the proper mode of philosophizing, as endorsed by Agathon and Socrates. Here, through his notably diagnostic language, Eryximachus seeks to get at such a truth, thus calling up the action of philosophizing. It is less relevant that Eryximachus does not delve deeply into the matter at hand. Rather, as the guests and the reader are only at the point of setting the stage for philosophizing, it is more important that the hangover becomes one component that allows for the pursuit of wisdom. Furthermore, we could read Eryximachus’ rationale for speaking at this moment to be that since everyone is not inebriated, they are able to adequately listen and synthesize such truth. Interestingly, however, it is never suggested that these men should sober up, or that sobriety would be a more ideal situation for speaking to truth. Rather, it is expected, and ultimately comes to be, that this is only a momentary respite in their drinking. The hangover, which is simultaneously oversaturation (with ideas) and withdrawal, becomes the mode for philosophizing.

This intersection between excess and lack is repeated with regard to the state of being hung over. Each of the group of thinkers speaks in seating order. When we get to Aristophanes, however, he cannot speak for he has the hiccups, “from satiety” (Plato, *Symposium* 15). Satiety is, like the word “satisfaction,” also related to the Latin *satis*, and adds the additional implication from *satiētātem* meaning “abundance.” It is thus noted that the reason for Aristophanes’ hiccups is his hangover, presumably due to being dehydrated. Aristophanes suffers from an excess of alcohol as well as a lack of hydration. Aristophanes asks Eryximachus to “either stop my hiccups or speak on my behalf...” (15). It is likely not coincidental that Plato writes Eryximachus in as seated next to Aristophanes, so that, as the doctor and the next speaker, he is the appropriate individual to resolve the matter at hand. It is also interesting here how the ‘cure’ for the symptom of the hangover is equalized with speech itself. It is as if either option—holding his breath or speech—would function as a sort of cure. Eryximachus responds by saying, “Well, I shall do both. I shall talk in your turn, and you, when you stop hiccupping, in mine” (15). In his response, the cures coincide. Furthermore, the cure becomes the simultaneous lack of speech (by Aristophanes) while the superfluous speech of Eryximachus presents an excess. This tension further exemplifies how the hangover is simultaneously productive, in the sense that it allows for philosophizing, and unsatisfactory, because of its displacement. At the end of Eryximachus’ speech, he says to Aristophanes that he was compelled to be a “guardian” of his speech (18). This shows the role of the doctor and the philosopher as intertwined—both are guardians of health and mind. At the same time, Eryximachus, the doctor/philosopher, is a physical manifestation of lack—the lack of Aristophanes’ speech—as well as excess in the form of his contribution.

To further understand the way in which philosophy is posited by Socrates as born of such contradiction, we can look to the very origin of Eros in his speech, which has already been established to be commensurate with philosophy. Diotima explains that Eros is the son of the god Poros, who is Resource (and son of Metis, or Intelligence), and Penia, who is Poverty.

Because of this, Eros is, in his very essence, riven:

... he is always poor; and he is far from being tender and beautiful, as the many believe, but is tough, squalid, shoeless, and homeless ...; he has the nature of his mother, always dwelling with neediness. But in accordance with his father he plots to trap the beautiful and the good, and is courageous, stout, and keen, a skilled hunter, always weaving devices, desirous of practical wisdom and inventive, philosophizing through all his life.... (Plato, *Symposium* 33-4)

Eros' origin in Penia (Poverty) explain how love is always fundamentally without. He is without beauty, the initial object of love's pursuit, and is instead hardened by his experiences. He is described as "homeless," suggesting that he wanders and occupies all sorts of places and, similarly, beings. However, Poros, just because he is Resource, does not actually seem to "donate" anything to Eros. Rather, the qualities he seems to pass on are that he "plots to trap" and is "desirous" of beauty and wisdom. That said, we have to draw a different distinction between Poros and Penia. It is not that one has everything and the other has nothing; rather, the pursuit is inherent in both. We could say that Poros is striving for everything whereas Penia strives for nothing at all. Insofar as Penia makes Eros "*always poor*," we have the additional layers of both being fated for nothingness, in the sense of being eternally poor, and striving for nothing, just as, previously established, the lover wants his object *always*. Poros' nature, alternatively, is one of pursuit of things: "plotting," "hunting," and being "desirous." This further elucidates the tension of the philosophical pursuit. On the one hand, the objective

is the height of ambition—to be wealthy and fulfilled with knowledge. On the other hand, this objective has proven to be impossible. The pursuit of everything is essentially a pursuit of nothing insofar as it is already a losing game. Separately, these two pursuits, Poros and Penia themselves, appear fundamentally contradictory. However, they coincide and are mutually dependent in the manifestation of their offspring, Eros—one could not exist without the other. It is noteworthy that at the end, Diotima already foreshadows the parallel dichotomies regarding love and wisdom.

It may also be important that the mother figure is one who manifests “neediness.” Despite Diotima herself being a woman, this could certainly be read as an association of femininity with abjectness. The central pursuer of love always figures, throughout Diotima’s speech, as a man. This may, however, be too simplistic a reading. It must be remembered that Diotima clearly does possess wisdom about Eros and says that,

Whoever has been educated up to this point in erotics, beholding successively and correctly the beautiful things, ... shall suddenly glimpse something wonderfully beautiful in its nature—the very thing, Socrates, for whose sake alone all the prior labors were undertaken—something that is ... always being and neither coming to be nor perishing.... (Plato, *Symposium* 41)

Diotima herself is a philosopher and a priestess, and has clearly come to this point of the study of erotics, so she must have been able to glimpse at that immortal, unperishing thing.

Returning to Penia, then, we could think of women not as disadvantaged in the pursuit of love and wisdom, but as the essence of the need, and thus impetus, for that pursuit. Insofar as she represents the striving for nothingness too, she seems to bear more extreme woes in the philosophical pursuit which, in some ways, makes her more honorable. The role of women here is subverted and appears to demonstrate that women are in fact the most conscientious of

and embedded within the pursuit, and thus closest to it. Additionally, Diotima is not present at the Symposium. Instead, she speaks through Socrates, suggesting that Socrates has internalized her impetus through his philosophizing while simultaneously embodying yet another contradiction, this one of gender. Diotima's noticeable absence also serves to mythologize her through speech. This simultaneous lack and drive, as well as presence and absence, further demonstrates the centrality of contradiction in creating the image of the philosopher.

Finally, these contradictory forces that exist within Eros make him simultaneously a being of life and death:

And his nature is neither immortal nor mortal; but sometimes on the same day he flourishes and lives, whenever he has resources; and sometimes he dies, but gets to live again through the nature of his father. And as that which is supplied to him is always gradually flowing out, Eros is never either without resources nor wealthy, but is in between wisdom and lack of understanding. (Plato, *Symposium* 33-4)

Because Poros is a god whereas Penia is not, Eros is neither immortal nor mortal, but rather occupies a liminal space in between. This helps us understand the reason Eros has his eye set on and can glimpse divine knowledge and beauty, while simultaneously not being able to fully grasp it. It is peculiar, however, the way this is articulated as a cycle of living and dying. How are we to understand that Eros would be both simultaneously impoverished and resourceful, and also at some points have enough resource to live and sometimes not? The key word here is perhaps, yet again, "enough," *satis*. Insofar as his resource, or that which is "supplied" to him through his father, is always "flowing out," we can see that Eros' resource resembles something like a bucket with a hole at the bottom. The bucket is never completely full but continually seeping out. However, this "flowing out" does not appear to be wholly negative,

since the following clause does not result in saying that this means he is thusly always poor. We can perhaps read this “flowing out” then as a dispensing of resource—knowledge and beauty. Therefore, that which he thrives on is simultaneously that which extinguishes him. By using the language of life and death, it is almost as if Plato is calling upon the notion of a fated condition or illness. We could see this “illness” as a fate that makes Eros simultaneously suffer and content, ugly and beautiful.

This language of illness and suffering is intertwined with the highest pursuit elsewhere in Diotima’s speech as well. Diotima posits the “cause of this eros and desire”:

[A]ren’t you aware how uncanny is the disposition of all the beasts (the footed as well as the winged) whenever they desire to produce offspring? They are all ill and of an erotic disposition, first concerning actual intercourse with one another, then later concerning the nurture of what is generated. And they are ready to fight to the finish, the weakest against the strongest, for the sake of those they have generated, and to die on their behalf; and they are willingly racked by starvation and stop at nothing to nourish their offspring. (Plato, *Symposium* 37-8)

Here, desire is portrayed as a physical condition of illness and torment suffered by all, humans and animals. We might think of Diotima’s use of the uncanny as the German *unheimlich*, or unhomeliness in reference to Penia’s homelessness. Those who love feel fundamentally outside of themselves, and yet are responding to something from within. It is unclear what is precisely meant by “intercourse” with another in the context of the most beautiful pursuit that has to do not with the body, but with the soul. However, the real source of suffering from this illness seems to come in the process of “nurturing,” which refers to the pursuit of the “always,” or the possession of ideas immortally. Diotima seems to suggest that, through the process of metaphoric procreation, one is consumed by a irrational sense of will that is ultimately harmful to oneself. This will leads one to “die” for what they have created and are willing to endure

“starvation” for the sake of “nourishing” their pursuit. We can therefore read this passage as a description of the symptoms of lovesickness—a sickness in which one is overcome by an uncontrollable sense of both self-preservation and self-destruction. This exactly coincides with Eros as continually and simultaneously living and dying, in which the lovesick pursuit is to enact this contradiction upon oneself.

The discussion of the pursuit of love in Plato’s *Symposium* is in fact a description of the pursuit of wisdom for philosophers. This dialogue not only establishes what it is that the philosopher pursues, but how she should go about pursuing it. Diotima, through Socrates, articulates that the objective of love is the attainment of ideas, and the vast possibilities of which it opens. However, Diotima ultimately acknowledges that the telos of the philosophical pursuit is fundamentally unachievable. Thus, the philosopher is left lovesick and hungover. This state of sickness illustrates Socrates’ understanding of philosophy as fundamentally born out of contradiction, and it is precisely this contradiction that makes the philosopher ill. The dualities of excess and lack, and presence and withdrawal have been demonstrated throughout both the setting of philosophizing, and the philosophy itself. We are ultimately left with Diotima’s final question of whether life is worth living absent the truths that arrive at the end of the philosophical journey. While Diotima locates truth and validation in the pursuit itself, we have seen how it is still ridden with sickness and suffering. Socrates does not succumb to this suffering, nor does he attempt to take any sort of palliative measures. Socrates still finds the cure in the pursuit itself, despite its impossibility. This impossible cure is precisely what will be called into question in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Nietzsche and Seasickness

We can picture Friedrich Nietzsche, the philosopher-physician, stepping in with a second opinion at the moment at which Diotima concludes her description of the ladder of love with, “It is at this place in life, in beholding the beautiful itself, ... that it is worth living, if—for a human being—it is [worth living] at any place” (Plato, *Symposium* 42). Nietzsche would take issue with a number of the implications embedded in this statement. Most significantly, he might question, “what do you mean *if* life is worth living?” For Nietzsche, Socrates, by virtue of Diotima, has falsely diagnosed life as lacking absent beholding the truth at the end of the pursuit. Nietzsche rejects the prescription—that one must seek *the* truth in order to make life livable. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche argues that this diagnosis—that life as we live it lacks stable truth—and prescription, in which one searches and appeals to such stability, does not heal philosophy but, in fact, infects it.

The repercussions of such misguided doctoring have led to a kind of self-induced sickness that has plagued philosophy for millennia. We can read Nietzsche’s critique of philosophy as a new diagnosis, and thus a turn in its treatment. However, Nietzsche’s diagnosis functions differently from that which came before: he detects the illness not within philosophy itself, but in the philosopher’s understanding of its pursuit and evaluation of life without its object. If philosophy is the pursuit of the good for Socrates, then the good exists outside of the self. Nietzsche reads this suggestion of a lack in the self as a kind of sickness. The sickness comes from a self-negation of the good and the desperate search for a cure. In

other words, Nietzsche essentially diagnoses philosophers as hypochondriacs—it is not that philosophy is in itself sick, but rather its constant belief that it needs to cure itself makes it sick. But how does Nietzsche convey this counter-diagnosis to us? He consistently utilizes the metaphor of seasickness and its accompanying nausea as the particular type of self-induced sickness. In this sense, one is seasick only insofar as one recognizes one’s own instability in the context of remembering the possibility of a stable horizon. This mourning for the loss of solid ground and the desire to replicate that in the midst of the unknown sea is comparable to the philosopher who pursues Truth and attempts to secure himself within it. That said, it would be inconsistent with this judgment for Nietzsche to propose a cure. Therefore, Nietzsche prescribes an anti-cure, in which the greatest health comes from a recognition and embrace of and love for nausea.

The Gay Science, like the *Symposium*, is a text fundamentally about philosophy and the kind of philosophers we should aim to become. In his preface, Nietzsche describes his “Gay Science” as “[signifying] the saturnalia of a spirit who has patiently resisted a terrible, long pressure” (*The Gay Science* 32). It is clear, especially insofar as this “pressure” is relieved by a new philosophy, that the plague rested in the philosophy that came before. Nietzsche identifies this constriction as the ancient “will to truth” emblematic of Socratic philosophy:

... one will hardly find us again on the paths of those Egyptian youths who ... want by all means to unveil, uncover, and put into a bright light whatever is kept concealed for good reasons. No, this bad taste, this will to truth, to “truth at any price,” this youthful madness in the love of truth, have lost their charm for us We no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn; we have lived too much to believe this. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to ... understand and “know” everything. (38)

Through this passage, we can begin to understand the conspiracy of “truth” that Nietzsche ascertains as part of his counter-diagnosis. Nietzsche argues that a desire to “unveil” that which is hidden or unknown is not only of “bad taste,” but also potentially dangerous or risky to one’s health, for there is “good reason” to keep such things covert. Nietzsche suggests that this imminent risk is a “will to truth” that morphs into a proclivity to sacrifice, abandon, or be negligent about the actual nature of truth for the sake of a supposed notion of stable truth. Furthermore, pursuers of such truth fall into the same trap of lovesickness as discussed in the previous chapter. Obsession with the capture of truth devolves into “madness,” in lieu of the rationality these philosophers claim. Nietzsche goes a step further in his criticism of this kind of pursuit: he adds that this objective has lost its “charm,” suggesting the quest itself was a romanticized fantasy that is ultimately groundless. Nietzsche invokes his recurring metaphor of the veil to describe this lack of substance. For Nietzsche, truth lies in the veil itself—in mediation and language, for example—not in the illusory ideas that lie beneath it. Therefore, when the veil is removed, there is no truth. Nietzsche continues by arguing that to pretend to “know” all is a sign of indecency. He follows this by adding that, “One should have more respect for the bashfulness with which nature has hidden behind riddles and iridescent uncertainties” (38). Supposing to be able to understand the true essence of things is not only hubristic but impossible insofar as there is no meaning absent these “riddles.” It is evident that Nietzsche associates the antiquated mode of philosophizing with a sickness like nausea that has an individual desperately grasping at railings or supports. These supports, however, are indeterminate and chimerical. Nietzsche proposes alternatively that we must give up on the

need to “‘know’ everything,” and instead be “daredevils of the spirit,” risking all, without hope, in search of new knowledges (38).

This prefatory criticism of the pursuit of stable ground is further manifested through Nietzsche’s repeated metaphors of the sea, the ship, and embarkment in *The Gay Science*. In section 124, entitled “In the horizon of the infinite,” Nietzsche describes the loss the philosopher of the past felt when he is stripped of his “truth”:

We have left the land and have embarked. We have burned our bridges behind us—indeed, we have gone farther and destroyed the land behind us. Now, little ship, look out! Beside you is the ocean: to be sure, it does not always roar, and at times it lies spread out like silk and gold and reveries of graciousness. But hours will come when you will realize that it is infinite and that there is nothing more awesome than infinity. Oh the poor bird that felt free and now strikes the walls of the cage! Woe, when you feel homesick for the land as if it had offered more *freedom*—and there is no longer any “land.” (180-1)

In the act of announcing the instability and incoherence of the pursuit of the good and of ideas, Nietzsche has forced philosophers to leave safe and solid “land.” This antiquated notion of truth is no longer supported and therefore unavailable to us. Thus, we have left land without the hope of ever returning. Nietzsche warns us to “look out” for the perils of the ocean that we now face. While the ocean may appear calm at first, the vastness of its infinitude will begin to overwhelm. Nietzsche’s reading of this absence of boundaries as a birdcage is particularly interesting and in need of reconciliation. The openness of possibility begins to feel like entrapment insofar as our movements appear uncertain and futile, or any advances forward could lead to danger. Nietzsche also uses the metaphor of homesickness, signifying the ocean as unfamiliar territory. Nietzsche mocks the impression that the philosophy that came before offered more freedom, when in fact it only provided security and familiarity within a limited

world. Homesickness suggests a nostalgia for this invulnerability. We can read this as not only nostalgia but as a loss of stability and foundations, thus causing insecurity and precariousness. Lastly, when Nietzsche says that there is “no longer any ‘land,’” we should understand this to mean that there is no possibility of going back—not only is it not visible or reachable, but stability will forever more be suspect. In addition to the instability of the rocking, moving ocean that lies beneath the ship, these feelings of loss and lack also causes the sickness that seeks a cure. However, it seems that, despite the definitude of Nietzsche’s declarations about the despair of never returning, the underlying tone suggests that he is going to teach us to love the sea, for all its freedom and potentiality.

Now that Nietzsche has made his first observations about the patient—the philosopher, that is—we must look to his diagnosis. Nietzsche, earlier in the preface, writes, “But let us leave Herr Nietzsche: what is it to us that Herr Nietzsche has become well again?” (*The Gay Science* 33). While we could read this as somewhat flippant concerning his previous remarks, his sarcasm is never without substance or purpose. The inclusion of “us” calls upon the reader to be involved in his diagnosis. However, it is in fact “Herr Nietzsche” who is the object of our diagnosis. We already know that Nietzsche is involved in an investigation and criticism of philosophy and positioning himself as the patient associates him with the role of the philosopher. This is not to mention that his use of the formal “Herr” could be a satirical reference to the due respect a philosopher is given. Thus, we are invited to join Nietzsche in a self-diagnosis. Nietzsche continues, “For a psychologist there are few questions that are as attractive as that concerning the relation of health and philosophy, and if he should himself become ill, he will bring all of his scientific curiosity into his illness” (33). Once Nietzsche has

invoked the reader, he moves to the position of the “psychologist.” At this point, it is not yet clear what role the psychologist plays in Nietzsche’s project. Still, insofar as Nietzsche is engaging in a self-reflexive analysis, and uses a collective pronoun, he very well may be calling us to do the same. That said, Nietzsche’s self-reflexivity can be likened to the position of a psychologist. The psychologist employs his “scientific curiosity,” just as the gay scientist might. In sum, for Nietzsche, this new, scientific, self-critical approach that resembles the occupation of a psychologist is in fact his model philosopher, in which his reader is included. Insofar as this “psychologist” is now identified as the philosopher, we can look more closely at what Nietzsche describes as her philosophy, health, and illness. Why is the relationship between philosophy and health so “attractive”? Perhaps it is indeed because she is hyper-conscious of her own “illness,” which can be seen as her lack of deficiency in knowledge. All her “curiosity” is focused on this indeterminate failure. It is thus that we can connect the self-diagnosis of sickness with the discipline of philosophy itself—that in the event of an “illness” or inadequacy, all of one’s philosophy will be directed toward it and thus also a reflection of it.

Nietzsche reinforces this point by describing the two types of philosophizing that are inflected by either “deprivations” or “riches and strengths” (*The Gay Science* 33). In the former case, those philosophers:

[N]eed their philosophy, whether it be as a prop, a sedative, medicine, redemption, elevation, or self-alienation. For the latter it is merely a beautiful luxury ... But in the former case, which is more common, when it is distress that philosophizes, as is the case with all sick thinkers—and perhaps sick thinkers are more numerous in the history of philosophy—what will become of the thought itself when it is subjected to the pressure of sickness? This is the question that concerns the psychologist, and here an experiment is possible. (33-4)

Here, Nietzsche uses the language of medicine to describe the curative or palliative effects of philosophy for those who diagnose themselves and their pursuit as lacking or sick. Nietzsche, in his emphasis of “*need*” seems to imply that this kind of philosophy is less therapeutic and beneficial, but more addictive and unhealthy. Portraying such philosophy as a “prop” or “sedative,” alongside “medicine,” connotes a sort of ill-founded treatment. Notions of “redemption,” “elevation,” and “self-alienation” suggest psychological aids that distance the individual from reality. This correlates the philosophical pursuit with what can be seen as a constant and impulsive hankering for some sort of cure. This is further demonstrated by Nietzsche’s depiction of the history of philosophy as ridden with “sick thinkers” whose knowledge production is constrained by this search for a remedy. We can think back to Nietzsche’s use of the word “pressure” to illustrate the constriction of thought characterized by adamant truth seeking. This sort of philosophy, a desperation for truth that is not only restrictive but also unyielding, is indeed what makes these thinkers sick—it is the sickness itself. Thus, we return to the figure of the scientific psychologist, representing this new class of philosophers, who will conduct an “experiment” on this kind of thinking. This experiment, as we will see it unfold, will test the nature of this sickness and discover its potentiality.

This dichotomy of types of philosophers reappears in Nietzsche’s discussion of the Dionysian versus “those who suffer from the *impoverishment of life*” (*The Gay Science* 328). However, here we see it in the context of the metaphor of the sea and seasickness. These philosophers:

[S]eek rest, stillness, calm seas, redemption from themselves through art and knowledge ... those who suffer most and are poorest in life would need above all mildness, peacefulness, and goodness in thought as well as deed—if possible, also a god

who would be truly a god for the sick, a healer and savior; also logic calms and gives confidence—in short, a certain warm narrowness that keeps away fear and encloses one in optimistic horizons. (328)

Nietzsche further develops his notion of stability and seas here. ‘Land’ itself was always illusory. Just like that which lies behind the veil, the ‘surface’ beneath the ship is all watery illusion. That said, what such philosophers truly desire are “calm seas,” and thus comfort and an imagined sense of security. “Art and knowledge” serve as “redemption.” Etymologically “redemption” comes from *redemptionem* meaning a “buying back,” suggesting that something has been lost and needs to be earned back or regained. This loss coincides perfectly with the notion of lost land and stability. “Redemption” is an attempt at recovering something within oneself that was once true, and is familiar or known to be “good.” This “good” also makes sense if we think of redemption as redemption from sin—that there was a good that once comprised one’s worldview and now exists externally and needs to be recuperated in order to cure one’s lack or sickness. Nietzsche goes on to confirm that one needs “goodness,” in addition to “mildness” and “peacefulness,” further contributing to the image of philosophy as seasick and desiring a calming of the seas. Nietzsche argues that such “stillness” is achieved through “god” and “logic.” These are the very stable yet unfounded or “narrow” truths that are supposedly redemptive, but futilely work to pacify erratic and fluctuating waters. This “warm narrowness” reminds us of the homesickness in which one misses the comfort that the “enclosure” of a home provides. The sea, conversely, is cold and vast, and presents turbulent horizons, not optimistic ones. This turbulence, lack of safety, and uncertainty about the destination—the good—leaves the philosopher seasick.

Nietzsche continues with the notion of redemptive knowledges and art as a cure for nausea:

If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable. Honesty would lead to nausea and suicide. (*The Gay Science* 163)

Nietzsche's discussion of art as redemptive is extensive. Here, we see it connected to an embrace of the "untrue," meaning a defying of truth as it has been known. First, through the gay "science" comes the awareness, discussed throughout this paper, of the conspiracy of truth that existed in previous philosophies. Second, this insecurity—what he ultimately thinks of as a transparency through the "mendaciousness" of "truth"—will forever be a condition of our existence. That said, instability leads to a kind of "nausea" that is unbearable. This nausea, while it may be made survivable, is not curable. This tone of nausea and instability as fated can help us understand the conditions of seasickness and its cure. Insofar as this nausea is inevitable as a part of "honesty," we are all on this ship, all on unsteady waters. The question for Nietzsche is about finding a way to *live* with this nausea.¹

Nietzsche's ultimate anti-cure that provides a way to live with this seasickness comes in his affirmation of sickness itself. Nietzsche's diagnosis of seasickness does not claim that

¹ Nietzsche characterizes the concept of nausea differently in other contexts. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche describes the "the great nausea" as "the will to nothingness, nihilism" that is a product of the "decaying, self-doubting present" (96). When nausea is associated with the nihilism of the present age, an escape from it is necessary. Here, however, nausea is extracted and understood as the torment of seasickness, which is inescapable and which we must instead embrace.

sickness itself is bad, but only the attempt to cure it. Rather, Nietzsche argues that the proper mode of philosophizing is in this reconceived sickness:

You see that I do not want to take leave ungratefully from that time of severe sickness whose profits I have not yet exhausted even today. I am very conscious of the advantages that my fickle health gives me over all robust squares. A philosopher who has traversed many kinds of health, and keeps traversing them, has passed through an equal number of philosophies; he simply *cannot* keep from transposing his states every time into the most spiritual form and distance: this art of transfiguration is philosophy. We philosophers are not free to divide body from soul as the people do; we are even less free to divide soul from spirit. We are not thinking frogs, nor objectifying and registering mechanisms with their innards removed: constantly, we have to give birth to our thoughts out of our pain and, like mothers, endow them with all we have of blood, heart, fire, pleasure, passion, agony, conscience, fate, and catastrophe. Life—that means for us constantly transforming all that we are into light and flame—also everything that wounds us; we simply can do no other. And as for sickness: are we not almost tempted to ask whether we could get along without it? Only great pain is the ultimate liberator of the spirit (*The Gay Science* 35-6)

This argument comes soon after his call for a “philosophical *physician*,” who would confront the actual question of the health of philosophy. He returns to this question by adding that it is not that he wants to cure philosophy, but in fact the opposite—that sickness has provided his innumerable “advantages.” Furthermore, the philosopher who can best understand this relationship between health and thought can actually begin to expose the way in which sickness has inflected itself into philosophy. Nietzsche argues that one who has experienced various “kinds of health” will have been exposed to just as many “philosophies.” It is interesting that Nietzsche does not refer to these as sicknesses, but as *healths*. This demonstrates that Nietzsche does not understand sickness like Socrates does, as lack. Rather, Nietzsche does not simply inverse health and sickness, but views sicknesses as merely different forms of health and degrees of healthiness. This kind of perspective allows one to embrace one’s “health” without suggesting a lack and, thus, avoids a self-negating philosophy. Not only

is this beneficial for one's ability to philosophize, but it is inherent to the identity of Nietzsche's philosopher—the "art of transfiguration is philosophy" itself.

In the same passage, Nietzsche argues that philosophers, unique from the common "people," cannot separate "spirit" and "soul" from the "body," suggesting that their intellectual activity is rooted in the body. Through this physicality of the philosophical pursuit, philosophy no longer resembles Diotima's ungraspable and ephemeral "phantom." This leads Nietzsche to gesture in a similar but critical manner as Diotima. Nietzsche returns to the metaphor of procreation. However, rather than focus on the product of philosophizing, which for him is illusory, he concentrates on the process. That said, the process of giving birth is one of "pain," "agony," and "passion," even intertwined with "pleasure." This materialization of philosophy in the body could be read as, in contrast to Diotima's giving birth to ideas, a giving birth to sickness and pain. While this does not cure or resolve the "lack" or instability of sickness, it allows an expression, outlet, and an embrace of it. In some ways too, the return to the metaphor of birth is quite apt for its destined quality. Nietzsche shows the imperative by saying that, "constantly, we *have* to give birth." One could read the suffering of child bearing to also be a fate for women. This suggests that the nausea and suffering with which Nietzsche diagnoses philosophy also carry this fated tone.

Nietzsche's progression in this passage does, however, strike at further complexity with this argument. He goes on to suggest that the life of the philosopher is the process of transforming "all that we are," which might be read as our physical being into "light and flame," i.e., something more ephemeral. This may appear to mean the opposite of the materialization of ideas described previously. Perhaps, for Nietzsche, our giving birth to

suffering, and as he immediately follows, “everything that wounds us,” is *still* a giving birth to ideas, but ones that are inflected with the knowledge granted from the wide range of sicknesses and pains we have experienced with our bodies. This can also be compared to the Platonic movement away from the body. Socrates’ ladder of love proceeds from the body to the idea. For Nietzsche, on the other hand, embodied knowledge is part of his cure. Returning to the notion of the woman giving birth, Nietzsche rearticulates the inevitability of this fate by also asking if we could really “get along without it.” The answer is no—we would not be able to survive without procreation and thus we must affirm and embrace its inescapable pain.

Interestingly, Nietzsche also says that this “great pain” is our “ultimate liberator.” This seems to indicate that through the manifold sicknesses experienced by Nietzsche’s philosopher, and thus the manifold knowledges, one will gain a new sense of freedom. This may seem contradictory to the argument thus far that Nietzsche resists any sort of cure. This paper will go on to describe what Nietzsche’s alternative is, and how it does not resemble a cure in the typical sense of the word, or in the way that it has been defined thus far.

Nietzsche’s cure is a sort of ‘anti-cure,’ through which he advocates that his philosophers of the future reject any sort of cure in which the “good” or “truth” is located outside of oneself, thus permitting them to identify a defect within. This previous cure ultimately becomes ineffective and self-negating. Instead, we can see Nietzsche’s ‘anti-cure’ as a call to do nothing that affirms the self, good with the bad, pleasure with the pain, health with the sickness. We can find his anti-cure to be liberating in its “honesty” and transparency, as discussed before—that insofar one knows truth and the good to be shaky, one can free oneself of the burden to pursue it in its most rigid form. Additionally, once one gives up this “narrow” and unpursuable

path, the possibilities for the paths that we can take on become, like an ocean, open and infinite.

Nietzsche articulates the process of diagnosis itself as a central part of living with sickness. Nietzsche describes the self-critical nature of sickness as necessary. First, he says:

Just as a traveler may resolve, before he calmly abandons himself to sleep, to wake up at a certain time, we philosophers, if we should become sick, surrender for a while to sickness, body and soul—and, as it were, shut our eyes to ourselves. And as the traveler knows that something is *not* asleep, that something counts the hours and will wake him up, we, too, know that the decisive moment will find us awake, and that something will leap forward then and catch the spirit *in the act*: I mean, in its weakness or repentance or resignation or hardening or gloom, and whatever other names there are for the pathological states of the spirit that on healthy days are opposed by the *pride* of the spirit.... (*The Gay Science* 33-34)

Nietzsche argues here that in “surrendering” ourselves to our sickness, through what I have described as in the naming and identification of it in ourselves, we risk becoming vulnerable to the will of the sickness. By this, Nietzsche means that we “shut our eyes to ourselves” and allow our philosophies to be misguided by the sickness of believing oneself is sick, i.e. the state of hypochondria. Nietzsche compares this to sleep—as inevitable a condition of the body as the philosopher’s sickness. “We,” Nietzsche says, referring to his new class of philosophers in his readership, know that in the “moment” of realization provided by the gay science, we will be “caught” red-handed in the “act” of surrender. These “pathological states” one gets caught in are not necessarily bad, unless they are self-negating or approach uncritically, in which case they are a “weakness.” Rather, on days of Nietzschean health, they are opposed to the “pride” or hubris of the philosopher.

The need for self-reflexivity as a part of the diagnosis and anti-cure becomes evermore clear when looking at the symptoms to which one is vulnerable:

After such self-questioning, self-temptation, one acquires a subtler eye for all philosophizing to date; one can infer better than before the involuntary detours, side lanes, resting places, and *sunny* places of thought to which suffering thinkers are led and misled on account of their suffering; for now one knows whether the sick *body* and its needs unconsciously urge, push, and lure the spirit—toward the sun, stillness, madness, patience, medicine, balm in some sense. Every philosophy that ranks peace above war, every ethic with a negative definition of happiness, every metaphysics and physics that knows some *finale*, some final state of some sort, every predominant aesthetic or religious craving for some Apart, Beyond, Outside, Above, permits the question whether it was not sickness that inspired the philosopher. The unconscious disguise of physiological needs under the cloaks of the objective, ideal, purely spiritual goes to frightening lengths—and often I have asked myself whether, taking a large view, philosophy has not been merely an interpretation of the body and *a misunderstanding of the body*. (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 34-5)

Nietzsche, reflecting on the “moment” when one is “caught in the act,” argues that one becomes much more conscious about their position in relation to the history of philosophy. Sickness and its subsequent “suffering” is inflected into philosophy, which allows thinkers to be “misled.” Nietzsche isolates the “needs” of the sick body which can be understood as the desire to cure or resolve one’s self-perceived defects or inadequacies. These needs “lure the spirit” toward anything that will pacify its suffering. Again, Nietzsche points to the palliatives, such as “stillness,” “medicine,” and “balms.” One should also take considerable note of the inclusion of “stillness” in the context of seasickness and the sick body’s “need” for stability.

Nietzsche continues to list off the byproducts of such sufferings from throughout philosophy’s past. First, we can think of his criticism of an evaluation of “peace above war” similarly to how we would consider his take on stillness and calmness above turbulence. Nietzsche says that we must try to embrace such turbulence and perhaps even have conflict (an inner conflict if one is nauseous) affirmatively, without trying to solve it and thus losing sight of the true nature of ourselves. Next is one of the most striking examples, for our purposes:

the philosophy that enacts a “negative definition of happiness.” Insofar as such a philosophy describes happiness through what it is not, Nietzsche’s gay scientist seeks the kind of broad exploration and affirmation of life and possibility that would lead to a positive notion of happiness. Finally, the “aesthetic or religious craving” demonstrates the need and hankering for a cure—and a cure that exists externally, whether it be “Above” or “Apart.” This demonstrates precisely the perspective of oneself as lacking, and thus falls into Nietzsche’s critique of life-negating philosophies. Furthermore, this search for something that exists externally to give us comfort can be seen as the land that is neither visible nor accessible. Yet, our belief that it exists creates the basis for our sickness insofar as we judge our lives defective if we do not possess the solidity of land.

Insofar as we have been able to delineate the “medical” cause for each of these philosophies, we can see how Nietzsche argues that each are “inspired” by sickness, specifically a kind of seasickness. This finally leads Nietzsche to conclude that not only has philosophy been a reading of the body and its sufferings, but a “misunderstanding” of it. Despite using the word “merely,” it does not appear that Nietzsche sees a particular problem with philosophy as an evaluation of health—through the right framework, of course. He himself is calling for a “philosophical physician” who can truly confront this question (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 35). That said, he sees a fundamental misinterpretation of the body. This references back our discussion of the false diagnosis—of the self as lacking truth and the “good.” Instead, Nietzsche’s reading of the body is one in which we are always striving to recover and heal ourselves and that is our illness, not that we are lacking anything in the first place. Thus, Nietzsche’s anti-cure is not only an embrace of sickness but also an advocacy for an honest

interpretation of the body. Interestingly, the question thus of the identity and health of the philosopher is in itself a question of how she philosophizes, not just what about. This is significant because Nietzsche is addressing the notion of health and cure at a broader level, and a failure to do so would mean that he would merely be repeating the same false diagnoses of philosophers past.

In Section 382, aptly entitled “The great health,” we can see all of these fundamental principles that comprise Nietzsche’s diagnosis and anti-cure come together, once again through the metaphor of the sea and the ship:

Being new, nameless, hard to understand, we premature births of an as yet unproven future need for a new goal also a new means—namely, a new health, stronger, more seasoned, tougher, more audacious, and gayer than any previous health. Whoever has a soul that craves to have experienced the whole range of values and desiderata to date, and to have sailed around all the coasts of this ideal “mediterranean”; whoever wants to know from the adventures of his own most authentic experience how a discoverer and conqueror of the ideal feels, ... and one who stands divinely apart in the old style—needs one thing above everything else: the *great health*—that one does not merely have but also acquires continually, and must acquire because one gives it up again and again, and must give it up. (*The Gay Science* 346)

Nietzsche describes first the “new” philosophers who are neither classifiable nor comprehensible. This instability of identity emulates the instability of truth to which they adhere. This also suggests a self of endless possibility. Nietzsche characterizes us new philosophers as “premature births,” not only suggesting that we come before our time, but that we were born in sickness and were thus always affirmative of it insofar as it was our *raison d’être*. Our “new goal” is not described, nor is it clearly determinable. However, the means is clear: we need a “new health,” or perhaps, more appropriately, *healths*. This health has to be “stronger” in its ability to cope and support sickness, “seasoned” in its need to have

experienced many kinds of health, “tougher” in its affirmation of a difficult past, “audacious” in its abandonment of hope for a cure, and “gayer” in the sense that it must experience itself joyously. This is not to say that the health itself has to be joyous, but, rather its embrace. This health is embodied by the one who wishes to experience the most knowledges, which we have learned to be through illness. This individual is someone who metaphorically sails across oceans, which Nietzsche calls an “ideal ‘mediterranean,’” signifying its fertile possibilities. This “adventurer” has thus accepted and embraced the unsteady ground and moving horizons that cause seasickness. This “discoverer of the ideal” is set definitively apart from the “old style,” in which the seas were not open, and the routes for journeying were narrow and circuitous. Finally, the key to good health is not maintaining a particular kind of health or sickness, but constantly “[giving] it up” and allowing oneself to be consumed by another condition. Insofar as Nietzsche has stated that the more types of health one experiences, the more they philosophize, it is crucial that this gay scientist never becomes “healthy” or well. Rather, the metaphor of seasickness is particularly apt because despite where you are and what you are observing and pursuing, you will always have that nausea to keep you unwell.

We finally return to our central question of the discontentment of philosophy for Nietzsche. Nietzsche diagnoses philosophers as hypochondriacs, always negating their health as a ‘bad’ illness, and thus always providing a reason and method by which to suffer. Rather, through these new philosophers of the future, we can finally get a sense of what happiness could look like for Nietzsche. In Section 343, “The meaning of our cheerfulness,” Nietzsche asks, “why is it that even we look forward to the approaching gloom without any real sense of ... worry and fear for *ourselves*?” (*The Gay Science* 280-1). His answer, that we:

“[F]ree spirits” feel ... as if a new dawn shone on us At long last the horizon appears free to us again, even if it should not be bright; at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, our sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an “open sea.”— (280)

Ultimately, this “cheerfulness,” which could be read as at least coming close to a sense of happiness, is a result of the freedom with which the philosopher is newly granted. The horizon of our ocean is still not steady nor clear. Nausea will most certainly accompany us on our voyages. But at least the waters are now open. Interestingly, it seems that we have here a return to Socrates’ “lover of wisdom,” except now it can be fully embraced. The important distinction, however—and this is the way that Nietzsche does not fall into his own trap—is that the object of his desire is indeterminate and therefore he can never locate a lack within himself to recover and heal. There is also an embrace of “danger” here, and presumably its correlated suffering, as a mode by which one can philosophize more expressively. The sea is “ours”—our desire no longer lies external to us, but we possess it. Therefore, without actually resigning himself to a palliative cure, Nietzsche has been able to reclaim philosophy from its fear of the water. Now, philosophers are free to traverse the seas as they do knowledges, and everything is “permitted.”

Chapter 3: Kierkegaard and Mo(u)rning Sickness

The possibility of this sickness is a man's superiority over the animal, and this superiority distinguishes him in quite another way than does his erect walk, for it indicates infinite erectness or sublimity, that he is spirit. The possibility of this sickness is man's superiority over the animal; to be aware of this sickness is the Christian's superiority over the natural man; to be cured of this sickness is the Christian's blessedness.

– Anti-Climacus (Kierkegaard, *Sickness* 15)

Anti-Climacus, a pseudonym of Søren Kierkegaard, articulates the possibility of sickness to be an intrinsic qualification of being human. What is significant is the way in which he describes the stages of sickness as they relate to human possibility. Anyone can become sick. Only those who are Christian can be conscious of this sickness. For Anti-Climacus, being Christian is essentially defined not by one's attendance in Church or one's commitment to her community, but instead in the expression of oneself as a "physician of the soul," whose "task is not only to prescribe remedies but also, first and foremost, to identify the sickness" (Kierkegaard, *Sickness* 23). Anti-Climacus describes how most people are never able to diagnose their own sickness, and this very unveiling of the illusion of health—here, happiness and contentment—is what qualifies one as a Christian. We can thus read Anti-Climacus' conception of the Christian as likened to the role of the philosopher, for whom consciousness in "identifying" truth is an essential characteristic. The superiority of the Christian/philosopher is therefore not only depicted as a coming-to-truth but also a coming-to-

sickness. In other words, the closer we are to knowledge, the closer we are to disease. While we will see that the cure is almost unattainable, it only becomes possible through this type of consciousness. Therefore, it is not only through our knowledge of sickness, but also experience of it, that we can even hope for any sort of cure.

Thus far, we have diagnosed the philosophies of Plato and Nietzsche as readings of sickness. The sicknesses for each have been distinct, bound by contradiction, and inherent to the philosophical pursuit. Now we turn to philosopher, believer, poet Kierkegaard, for whom suffering and knowledge are not only intimately intertwined, as it is for Anti-Climacus, but are general conditions for the conscious being. Anti-Climacus posits sickness' inevitable possibility—that we can all get sick—and its necessity—that only through sickness do we come closer to consciousness. By locating sickness as a condition for the possibility of knowledge, we can understand this sickness as like that which comes with pregnancy and giving birth. In this particular kind of pregnancy—a pregnancy of knowledge—there are inescapable pains, which we will call *morning sickness*. We can read Kierkegaard's project as a pregnancy, but one of ideas, especially as he suffers to bring those ideas to term. Throughout several of his pseudonymous and non-pseudonymous texts, we see this manifest both in the underlying themes of the conception and creation of a self through consciousness, as well as the way in which his particular authorship is representative of this. Furthermore, just as a pregnancy initiates a change in identity for the mother—mentally, emotionally, and physically—readers see the way in which Kierkegaard's gestating ideas reflect back onto him to describe, illuminate, or alter his identity. In this reading of Kierkegaard, the philosopher conceives of and becomes pregnant with ideas, suffering then from all its accompanying morning sickness. Kierkegaard's

pregnancy, throughout his works, is one of faith. Faith, as elusive, represents an idea that can never come to term. In this sense, we can see philosophers as endlessly pregnant with knowledge that cannot come into fruition. Morning sickness is therefore also a *mourning sickness*—philosophers are pained both in the idea’s gestation and its fated impossibility.

Kierkegaard’s project consists of a prolific authorship of texts to which he attributes either himself or pseudonyms. These pseudonyms, while constituted in language, are far more than just in name. They represent idiosyncratic personas with unique “professions,” ideas, and perspectives. Therefore, we cannot assume one pseudonym to be representative of the beliefs of the others, or even of Kierkegaard himself. Rather, and for the purposes of this paper, we will view each of them as distinct and yet connected to the total Kierkegaardian project. In this chapter, we will explore two related pseudonymous texts: *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript* by Johannes Climacus, and *The Sickness unto Death*, by Anti-Climacus. We will also consider texts to which Kierkegaard assigned his own name, such as *The Point of View of my Work as an Author*, as well as his journals and papers.

The Concluding Unscientific Postscript is one of Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous texts that speaks most directly to the discipline of philosophy. At the time that Kierkegaard was writing, philosophy was defined by Hegelianism, or what Climacus refers to as “speculative philosophy.” Climacus launches an extensive attack against this kind of philosophy because of its attempt to create an existential “system,” which he holds to be a knowledge reserved exclusively to God. It is precisely because philosophers are existing beings, unlike God, that they cannot generate such a system since they exist within it. Therefore, its formulation can only be ongoing or “half-finished,” which Climacus argues is “nonsense” (Kierkegaard,

Postscript 196). The finality of such a system—its conclusiveness—is the opposite of existence (201). Therefore, Climacus argues that in positioning themselves as if they were God, Hegelians have forgotten that they exist. Rather than criticize their hubris, Climacus mockingly pities them for the “kind of dying away from the self” that is involved in such a gesture (200). Climacus addresses his Hegelian readers:

Let us proceed, but let us not try to deceive one another. I, Johannes Climacus, am a human being, neither more nor less; and I assume that anyone I may have the honor to talk with is also a human being. If he presumes to be speculative philosophy in the abstract, pure speculative thought, I must renounce the effort to speak with him; for in that case he instantly vanishes from my sight, and from the feeble sight of every mortal. (196)

The humor behind this cutting remark—that Hegelians are so “absent-minded” as to have forgotten the very fact that they are human—plays an important role aside from it being a decisive criticism (201). It also brings Climacus’ own non-existence into sharp relief. It is curious that Kierkegaard chose this specific line of attack for Climacus, as it begs the very question of the pseudonym’s own existence. How can Climacus’ argument be staked upon, what he very explicitly states, him being a “human being”? Climacus later writes that “a philosopher has gradually come to be so fantastic a being” (200). Climacus could also be considered a “fantastic” being insofar as he is a created character. This could be merely read as to suggest insultingly that even “someone” who does not actually exist can debunk the existence of a real human. However, it seems that something more is happening here—Climacus is redefining existence. First, being human is determined by Climacus’ ability to “speak” with someone, suggesting that one’s capacity to communicate through language is what constitutes his existence. Second, when Climacus says that this communication would

make someone else “*also*” a human, he is citing himself—a being that exists only through language—as the standard of existence.

Still, it seems improbable that Climacus can compare his own linguistic existence as comparable to that of an Hegelian philosopher. However, here, Climacus is describing someone who believes himself to “*be* speculative philosophy,” rather than remarking specifically about a living disciple of this philosophy. This reminds us that Climacus is not really interpreting his existence literally as like that of a human, but as an idea; describing himself as human is merely to reference the notion of existence. Therefore, Climacus manifests himself as an idea brought into existence through language. However, this demands a further question of Climacus’ author. It seems that, in a moment of self-reflexivity on Kierkegaard’s part, we see him come through and invoke himself as he who has brought the idea of Climacus into being through language. Therefore, on two levels, Climacus is dealing with questions of existence, while Kierkegaard is making it so the pseudonym can begin to exist on the very page. Thus, we see a fundamental concern for not only the conception of a self through ideas, but an authorship that brings those ideas into existence. Because Kierkegaard intertwines questions of conceiving self and conceiving ideas through his authorship, we can read this philosophical pursuit as a pregnancy—the idea, like the self, must be incubated and gradually brought to life. Additionally, insofar as there is a struggle to align the idea with its author, we can already get a sense of a correlating sickness.

Climacus continues to establish self-becoming through ideas. Here, he attributes it, more specifically, to one’s consciousness. However, consciousness only extends to self-knowledge, rather than whole Truth. He writes:

... [T]he persistent striving represents the consciousness of being an existing individual: the constant learning is the expression for this incessant realization, in no moment complete as long as the subject is in existence; the subject is aware of this fact, and hence is not deceived. (Kierkegaard, *Postscript* 204)

This “persistent striving” to which Climacus references and first uses to introduce this section of the *Postscript* is borrowed from a proposition raised by German-Enlightenment thinker Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Lessing submits, if God held absolute truth in the right hand and “persistent striving” for it in the left, and demanded that he choose, Lessing would select the left, stating to God that “the pure truth is for thee alone” (195 n1). Here, Climacus says that this “lifelong pursuit” signals consciousness of one’s existence, unlike for speculative philosophers who forget their existence because they assume a finality of truth in a system and theorize themselves as if they were God (195). Instead, in realizing one’s incomplete truth, one is constantly reminded of her mortality and, thus, existence. The impossibility of truth therefore becomes simultaneously the strain on existence as well as the only possibility of it. Just as in pregnancy, giving birth to an idea carries with it unavoidable pain, but only through this pain is there any chance of its existence. However, even though philosophy pursues or gestates Truth, it can never attain it, and is thus endlessly yet fruitlessly pregnant. Philosophers, therefore, endure both a morning sickness in cultivating the foreign body of truth within them, as well as a mourning sickness as they incessantly realize its finitude and unrealizability. It is arguable that the venture is not completely futile insofar as it produces a consciousness of the self, of her own existence. However, this only serves to make the philosopher even more aware of her own shortcomings, her inability to carry the idea to term, while also being plagued with the inescapable pursuit.

In *The Point of View for my Work as an Author*, Kierkegaard regards the *Postscript* as a turning point in his writing as it “sets ‘the Problem,’ which is the problem of the whole authorship: how to become a Christian” (326). By designating his entire career as a response to a “how to” question, we can understand Kierkegaard’s authorship to be repeated attempts at answers. However, Kierkegaard, by only establishing a “problem,” does not seem to suggest that his answers serve as a resolution to the question. Rather, Kierkegaard seems to imply that this is an eternal problem that lacks any definitive remedy. Therefore, Kierkegaard’s project resembles Lessing’s “persistent striving,” or, in Climacus’ words, a “constant learning” of how to become Christian. In order to be such, however, it can never be conclusive. Therefore, Climacus, as the first attempt at this problem, brings Kierkegaard closer but, ultimately, must *miscarry*. Furthermore, if we consider Kierkegaard’s authorial pursuit as Lessing’s “persistent striving,” we might also conclude that Kierkegaard comes face to face with the “incessant realization” of his existence. However, in the *Postscript*, it is not Kierkegaard who realizes existence, but rather Climacus. Kierkegaard is he who brings the idea of Climacus into creation. While, as already established, Kierkegaard is invoked in such a realization, his existence is limited here as a producer of ideas and is bound to his authorship, just as a mother may come to be defined singularly as procreator. Kierkegaard can only realize his existence through his offspring. Therefore, Kierkegaard is restricted to an existence and a consciousness that is contingent on his language, which is always fated for failure.

This sickness that accompanies pregnancy continues for Kierkegaard in his own self-realization. In his journals, Kierkegaard addresses the melancholy of his self and how it leads him toward the generation of ideas and pseudonyms. Kierkegaard writes:

For many years my melancholy has had the effect of preventing me from saying “Thou” to myself, from being on intimate terms with myself in the deepest sense. Between my melancholy and my intimate “Thou” there lay a whole world of fantasy. This world it is that I have partly exhausted in my pseudonyms. Just like a person who hasn’t a happy home spends as much time away from it as possible and would prefer to be rid of it, so my melancholy has kept me away from my own self while I, making discoveries and poetical experiences, traveled through a world of fantasy. (Berthold, *Ethics* 37)

Here, Kierkegaard finds himself in the peculiar situation of being incapable of addressing himself. To say “thou” to oneself suggests a moment of self-reflexivity. Stating “I” invokes oneself in the first person. However, to say “thou” to oneself divides the self in two—the self that is addressed and the self that addresses. If “thou” means the ability to speak to and, therefore, identify or articulate a self, this would suggest a definitiveness to that self. While Kierkegaard does not specify a source of his melancholy, its “effect” is this difficulty, which may be the result of a lack of a concrete self. It is also this melancholy that pulls Kierkegaard’s “I” into a “world of fantasy,” which allows him to create his pseudonyms, further dispersing the self. We may presume intuitively that Kierkegaard would seek to sever melancholy’s pull and return to a definite self. However, Kierkegaard reflects somewhat negatively toward this “self.” He refers to his self as like an unhappy “home” that he would rather distance himself from, or even be “rid of” altogether. Additionally, insofar as Kierkegaard is “making discoveries” and having “poetical experiences,” there seems to be something redeeming in fantasy. Ultimately, though, he does not even seem to suggest any possibility of, much less desire for, returning to his self. While we should not necessarily presume contentment in this “world of fantasy,” there seems to be something productive about it. It is the drive of melancholy that allows for production. This is another way in which morning sickness manifests itself, as a necessary suffering for the creation of expressions of himself.

It may seem as though Kierkegaard, in his disregard for his unhappy self, abandons a pursuit of self-consciousness as a source of unhappiness. This would pose a challenge to the argument that philosophy accepts a necessary unhappiness for the pursuit of consciousness. However, insofar as Kierkegaard specifies that he is “making discoveries” and having “poetical experiences,” it is evident that an alternative consciousness is sought in his “travels” of the “world of fantasy.” Furthermore, Kierkegaard’s “I” is still very much present and is the agent of these creative explorations. What is lacking is the imperative to concretize the “I.” Therefore, we can view Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms as different “experiences” of his “I.” This demonstrates the way in which the child that is conceived in pregnancy is derivative yet distinct of its creator. However, the possibilities of these ideas, especially as they exist in a “world of fantasy,” are innumerable and live far beyond the singular “I.” Additionally, Kierkegaard’s journal does not express contentment in the world in which his authorship is situated. One reading as to why this could be is because of the very lack of finitude in the possibilities of ideas from his ideas. Just as one might feel herself *alien* from her offspring, Kierkegaard can become alienated from his ideas, as they independently grow and proliferate. Lastly, to return to the abandonment of the “thou,” Kierkegaard may find himself additionally isolated from his self, insofar as the pull toward creation requires a sacrifice of a definite self, which is given up for the sake of the development of an idea *in utero*. The self is always in flux as an idea grows, and thus self-understanding is constantly altered and shifting. Therefore, Kierkegaard, suffers a kind of morning sickness from his pregnancy of ideas by becoming estranged both from its products and from his self.

In a journal entry from 1849, Kierkegaard returns to melancholy and the linguistic difficulty of addressing himself. Kierkegaard connects this issue in his authorship with the concept of demonic knowledge that is explored by pseudonym Anti-Climacus in *The Sickness unto Death*, which was published in the same year. Kierkegaard writes:

...I have never been able to take command of myself in the ordinary human sense because of my unfortunate melancholia, which at one point was a kind of partial madness. Thus my only possibility was to function simply as spirit, and that is why I could be only an author ... that is, in the third person. All my inner torment, together with my brilliance and the treatment I have suffered, brought me to the point where it seemed as if I myself were a governing force to organize an awakening. To be able and to be allowed to do this for the truth has been my only satisfaction, my only comfort. Now Governance has intervened and required me in self-denial to abandon that bold but also demonic idea. (*Journals and Papers* 6:175-6)

Like the previous entry, Kierkegaard reinforces here the idea of addressing and taking up a singular self in his inability to “command” it. This melancholy is even pathologized as a “madness,” but is only “partial” in the selves that it affects. Kierkegaard moves from the first (I) and second (thou) person to the “third person.” Insofar as Kierkegaard refers to his becoming author “in the third person” as his “only possibility,” we can relate this to the world of fantasy that he was driven into as earlier described. In this world, Kierkegaard authors his pseudonyms, which he only ever refers to in the third person and, thus, he is likely alluding to them here in his own self-portrayal. Because Kierkegaard characterizes himself as such—in the third person—we see that these pseudonyms are versions of himself. Still, as they are in the third person, they remain distinct from Kierkegaard. This again indicates the parallel to pregnancy, as Kierkegaard has ideas that are reflections of himself but are by no means the same. Kierkegaard also finds himself, once again, navigating his own existence through language. Insofar as Kierkegaard’s expressions of his self are constructed in the first, second,

and third person, language presents itself as the torment that accompanies bringing about existence.

Pregnancy, however, takes on a new meaning here as Kierkegaard identifies this existence as that of a “spirit.” Because he sees himself as a “governing force,” that would make possible an “awakening” through, what he mentions earlier, his written works, Kierkegaard’s pregnancy attempts to imitate or assume God’s unique capacity to create. Kierkegaard describes this as both “inhuman,” similar to the Hegelian’s forgotten existence, and “demonic,” insofar as it seeks to displace God. This possibility of attaining “the truth” was Kierkegaard’s only “comfort” to his “inner torment” that is suffered in the morning sickness of these attempts at ideas. However, God, or “Governance,” “intervenes” and takes away any hope of “satisfaction” for his pursuit. God forces Kierkegaard to act in “self-denial,” meaning to “abandon” the idea that he can ever fulfill his longing to create knowledge. Circumstances, as in Kierkegaard’s human existence, do not permit him to bear these ideas, and thus he is left with no choice but to *abort* them. While desiring to bring about truth, Kierkegaard does not have the capacity to carry it to term. Therefore, Kierkegaard suffers both from the morning sickness of his “inner torment,” as well as a mourning sickness in which he becomes painfully aware of his own deficiency.

Anti-Climacus establishes a typology of despairs in the *Sickness Unto Death*. The final and most severe form is “demonic despair,” which, although articulated here by a pseudonym, very much resembles Kierkegaard’s explication in his journal. Anti-Climacus writes:

In order to despair to will to be oneself, there must be consciousness of an infinite self. ... And this is the self that a person in despair wills to be severing the self from any relation to a power that has established it, or severing it from the idea that there is such

a power. With the help of this intimate form, the self in despair wants to be master of itself or to create itself, to make his self into the self he wants to be, to determine what he will have or not have in the concrete self. (Kierkegaard, *Sickness* 67-8)

Anti-Climacus has already established that while there are very few who do not despair, the intensity of despair is correlated with the extent of one's consciousness (71). We, therefore, already see sickness, which Anti-Climacus specifies as despair, increased in the philosophical pursuit. Furthermore, this form of despair—demonic despair—in which one wills to be oneself is the most “intensified” (71). Because it requires knowledge of an “infinite self,” which relates itself to God, this despair is at the height of consciousness. It is also the “thoroughfare to faith,” suggesting that through the most intensified suffering one is on the path and coming ever closer to the idea of faith (67). Anti-Climacus also says that “in a certain sense it is very close to the truth; and just because it lies very close to the truth, it is infinitely far away” (67). Being closer to faith is to be closer to truth. However, Anti-Climacus demonstrates here that insofar as this despairer seeks to “sever” herself from her creator, even ignoring and becoming ignorant of the “idea” of the creator's existence, she is distanced from truth. In trying to supplant that “power” which has willed her into being, and willing her own self, she becomes defiant and demonic. She attempts to be her own creator, manipulating her “concrete” form as she pleases. Therefore, we see that the creative figure is vulnerable to the most sickness in the bringing about of her created self. This despairer is creative because of her relationship to the infinite, but it is this very relationship, or rather pursuit, that brings her further from its truth. Therefore, the philosopher, or conscious despairer, is caught in an impossible situation in that the very thing that brings about life and creation—consciousness—also removes any possibility for it. This becomes the most extreme form of mo(u)ning sickness in which the philosopher

experiences the worst suffering—*birth*—that is the closest moment to creation and existence but also the most vulnerable and closest to its opposite—death. Philosophy, as we will continue to see in the *Sickness*, can only die in its birthing of an idea.

First, however, we must examine the presupposition that the striving toward consciousness is constitutive for the philosopher alone. Anti-Climacus says that, in fact, “This kind of despair is rarely seen in the world; such characters really appear only in the poets, the real ones, who always lend ‘demonic’ ideality—using the word in its purely Greek sense—to their creations” (Kierkegaard, *Sickness* 72). This would seem to suggest that Kierkegaard as a philosopher is not actually relevant here. However, Kierkegaard in fact identifies himself as “the ‘unhappy poet,’ existing at ‘the most dialectical borderline’ of despair and faith” (Berthold, “Kierkegaard and Camus”). This positions Kierkegaard in this text in a peculiar way. Unlike in the Postscript, where Kierkegaard is implicitly invoked as Climacus’ creator, Kierkegaard is here both outside and “disguised” within the text (Berthold, “Kierkegaard and Camus”). This lends itself to the complex layers of meaning manifested here in the poet’s despair. Kierkegaard is at once the author of the *Sickness*’ author—Anti-Climacus—as well as the created subject of the pseudonym’s writing. If Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms are part of his “poetical experiences,” as articulated in his journals, then Kierkegaard is at once the poet who creates Anti-Climacus as well as the character of the poet philosophized by Anti-Climacus. Furthermore, Anti-Climacus says that this despair is rarely found “in the world,” but rather it is suffered by “characters ... in the poets.” This could be understood in multiple ways. First, “in” could mean “within,” suggesting that these are “characters” that exist within the poet. Kierkegaard’s “characters,” as different expressions of himself, are reflections of his despair.

Second, this could also imply that these characters are within the *works* of the poet, and as such, each of Kierkegaard's works are reflections of sickness and the pain that accompanies the creation of ideas. The third reading could merely indicate that this is the character *of* the poets, not derivations of him. Because Kierkegaard, as earlier noted, recognizes himself as this poet, his character is one of despair.

Kierkegaard's ever ambiguous positioning, somewhere between him as Kierkegaard, Anti-Climacus, poet, a character of the poet, and a character of the poet's character, signals a kind of fading away. It is also in the culmination of Anti-Climacus' typology of despair—the closest he comes in his progression of consciousness—that the philosopher is most indeterminate. In this attempt to finalize one's philosophy, the philosopher cannot be located. In this gesture, the philosopher loses himself. This can be understood as a kind of *death in child birth*. In the moment at which a philosophy is closest to bringing out truth, it disappears. Furthermore, it is at the moment of birth that the philosopher loses the quality of the pursuit. Once its product is brought into existence, albeit imperfect and unable to capture truth, the philosopher is no longer creating, and therefore loses his identity. Therefore, the philosopher's existence is staked on the pursuit of truth and, thus, the philosopher cannot live on with its product which, itself, remains flawed.

The "author" becomes even more shapeless by the conclusion of this final despair in the *Sickness*. Anti-Climacus has described the demonic despairer as defiant in his will to not only sever himself from "the power that established it," but to "force itself upon it," in an act of rebellion against the existence God has created and the torment he has induced (Kierkegaard, *Sickness* 73). This one who despairs has gone from being "him" to "it," suggesting that the form

this despairer takes on is unclear. Additionally, this shift of pronoun indicates a dehumanization. Just as the “author” was brought into existence through language previously, the “it” signals his death. In the final lines, the author therefore becomes indistinct:

Figuratively speaking, it is as if an error slipped into an author’s writing and the error became conscious of itself as an error—perhaps it actually was not a mistake but in a much higher sense an essential part of the whole production—and now this error wants to mutiny against the author, out of hatred toward him, forbidding him to correct it and in maniacal defiance saying to him: No, I refuse to be erased; I will stand as a witness against you, a witness that you are a second-rate author. (74)

One cannot help but consider the omnipresent question of Kierkegaard’s authorship in these almost “maniacal” words. The author, in his prefatory word, indicates that he is speaking in the language of poets: “figuratively.” Therefore, knowing that Kierkegaard views himself as a poet and, thus, creator of Anti-Climacus, it is almost as if the voice has suddenly shifted and Kierkegaard is speaking directly to us. At the same time, however, the “error” is the poet who despairs defiantly, who is also Kierkegaard. This “error” is one that exist in language and, in its becoming “conscious of itself,” resembles the lives of Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms. Speaking of the “error” in the third person would also suggest that this is Kierkegaard’s voice.

Furthermore, these “errors” may be the very *attempts* and *miscarriages* established earlier. They were “essential” to the attempted project of reaching faith, despite all the anguish, confusion, and alienation they produced in pregnancy. Now, in their coming into being, they threaten their author, to “mutiny” or overthrow him, replicating the demonic creative act in which Kierkegaard is engaged. These ideas, which independently cannot represent an entire philosopher, much less truth, become alien to the author once he has given birth to them. They take on their own lives and are no longer his to be claimed. Their creator cannot retract or

“erase” them once they are out there. Insofar as they originate from this creator, these ideas can reflect and act as “evidence” to his flaws in their development and act as “witness” against him (73). Therefore, even when the philosopher dies for the sake of his pursuit, his ideas will forever represent his inescapable shortcomings. Kierkegaard has demonstrated how philosophy brings ideas to term and, in so doing, suffers from a morning sickness. This sickness culminates in the most extreme suffering—death—in which philosophy mourns both its creator and its impossible pursuit.

Chapter 4: Heidegger and Homesickness

Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927) is a text about philosophy. Heidegger does not just pursue Being, but addresses what it means to question Being as a fundamental element of his text and methodology. Heidegger is engaged in the process of unconcealing and uncovering the meaning of Being as expressed by the Greek concept of truth, ἀλήθεια (57 n1). Insofar as Heidegger is proceeding in this specific kind of truth-seeking, his task is clearly one of acquiring, or rather reconfiguring, knowledge. Heidegger terms this mode of knowing "Understanding," or the way in which we begin to relate authentically to others and things and can, therefore, encounter their actual meaning. In the concluding chapter of Division One, Heidegger assigns an essential state-of-mind to the initiation of understanding: anxiety. It is in anxiety that we cut our inauthentic ties with the world so that we might be able to build and reclaim authentic understanding.

Understanding is indeed the act of philosophizing, and, therefore, the mood of philosophy is anxiety as well. Heidegger characterizes the feeling of anxiety as uncanniness, or in German, *unheimlich*, meaning "not-at-home." Insofar as anxiety, as the feeling of not being at home, is set in opposition to the "tranquillizing" and comforting world of inauthentic existence, then we might think of inauthenticity of everyday Being-in-the-World as a kind of 'Being-at-home' (Heidegger 222). One anxiously turns toward this home in the face of anxiety (233). Yet, anxiety also poses the opportunity for authentic Understanding. This Understanding is only possible through a wrenching of home from Dasein, a relinquishing of

ties with safe, inauthentic meaning. Therefore, we can read the anxiety of the philosophical pursuit as a kind of homesickness: a longing to return, to find one's way home. In the end, however, what is actually anxiety-inducing and homesickening is one's confrontation with the fact that the home, as such, never existed. It is the *lack* of home, rather than its *loss*, that ultimately fosters anxiety. Thus, by indicating anxiety as the essential state of mind for understanding, Heidegger positions the suffering of homesickness at the heart of philosophy.

Heidegger initially distinguishes between the states-of-mind of fear and anxiety. Fear is a mood of being threatened by *something*, an entity-within-the-world, whereas "That in the face of which one has anxiety is Being-in-the-world" (Heidegger 230). That for which we are anxious about is then described as "completely indefinite" (231). This suggests that our Being-in-the-world, which is comprised of a totality of inauthentic relations in our Being-alongside things and our Being-with others, becomes that which is indefinite, insofar as in its entirety it is nothing at all. Heidegger unveils the way in which anxiety makes Being-in-the-world indefinite through the loss of the world's significance:

Not only does this indefiniteness leave factually undecided which entity within-the-world is threatening us, but it also tells us that entities within-the-world are not 'relevant' at all. Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious. Here the totality of involvements of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand discovered within-the-world, is, as such, of no consequence; it collapses into itself; the world has the character of completely lacking significance. (231)

Anxiety is a ubiquitous state-of-mind that is not directed toward or attached to any specific thing. Because of its pervasion, individual entities in the face of anxiety become thoroughly insignificant. The feeling of anxiety is far grander than, for example, a fear about whether or not you will accomplish a task. In the gesture of those entities becoming "irrelevant," so too do

their “significance,” or meaning. Heidegger indicates this through the inconsequentiality of the “totality of involvements”—meaning the way we imbue entities with a world of meaning, largely through their history, experience, and serviceability—in the face of anxiety. Anxiety is therefore a crumbling, or “collapse,” of the meaning we form in our relating to the world.

It is important that we remember that the meanings of these entities and relations are fundamentally superficial, or inauthentic. Heidegger frequently reminds us that we cannot understand what the essence of these things are without first answering the question of our own Being. Thus, we can now recognize that the mood of anxiety is about re-orienting ourselves toward entities and others, toward our world. Insofar as anxiety reveals our lack of true understanding in our everyday existence, it opens the possibility, even demands, for a critical turn toward something more authentic. This can be regarded as the initial step of philosophy: acquiring knowledge must come from a preliminary dismantling of false meaning.² Anxiety is therefore key to the philosophical task.

This collapse of meaning is, of course, jarring for Dasein. The meaning that Dasein assigns to entities through its relation to them is also self-defining. Therefore, the absence of significance in entities reflects back onto Dasein. Heidegger argues,

In anxiety what is environmentally ready-to-hand sinks away, and so, in general, do entities within the world. The ‘world’ can offer nothing more, and neither can the Dasein-with of Others. Anxiety thus takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the ‘world’ and the way things have been publicly-interpreted. (232)

² This imperative is central to Heidegger’s methodology in *Being and Time*. In his introduction, Heidegger says that, “we are to *destroy* the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being ...” (44). Heidegger’s pursuit to understand Being can only occur once he has detached himself from the tradition that conceals its basic nature.

Others and entities fade into the indefinite totality of our anxiety. Heidegger describes the way in which Dasein's creation of meaning through its relations to entities reflects its understanding of itself. Dasein, through its ignorance of itself, uses the language, or "terms," of entities to "understand itself," despite being inapplicable to and inconsistent with it. When the meaning conveyed by that language disappears, Dasein can no longer use it to self-describe. While Heidegger lends little viscerality to his description of anxiety, this notion that the world of things and others "can offer nothing more" suggests that, prior to anxiety, this very world offered something. This 'offering' could be read as a kind of foundation or protection. Furthermore, it is something that gets "taken away," which demonstrates some sort of possession. Both these implications could lead us to a reading of the world as creating a kind of home within it that is suddenly foreclosed upon. Even before Heidegger introduces his conception of the uncanny, or the 'not-at-home,' we can already see Dasein robbed of its home, as well as the interconnection of homeliness and inauthentic understanding. Dasein finds its home by way of self-assurance and safety through meaning in the world. The extraction of home displaces Dasein's inauthentic, yet comforting, self-understanding. Therefore, Dasein can only experience authentic meaning—Dasein can only philosophize—in homesickness.

Furthermore, Heidegger's conception of the uncanny demonstrates the way in which Dasein constructs home and, through anxiety, suffers its consequent collapse:

...[A] state-of-mind makes manifest 'how one is'. In anxiety one feels '*uncanny*'. ... "uncanniness" also means "not-being-at-home" [das Nicht-zuhause-sein]. ... Being-in was defined as "residing alongside...", "Being-familiar with..." This character of Being-in was then brought to view more concretely through the everyday publicness of the "they", which brings tranquilized self-assurance—"Being-at-home", with all its obviousness—into the average everydayness of Dasein. On the other hand, as Dasein falls, anxiety brings it back from its absorption in the 'world'. Everyday familiarity

collapses. Dasein has been individualized, but individualized as Being-in-the-world. Being-in enters into the existential 'mode' of the "*not-at-home*". (233)

Uncanniness is the feeling or the experience of the state-of-mind of anxiety. Heidegger indicates that the relations embedded in Being-in—being alongside or with Being-there—are inauthentic in their entanglement in the public and the "They." Heidegger also explains that the notion of "Being-familiar" is one aspect of inauthentic Being-in, which can clearly refer to the comforts of home in its familiarity. Home, quite fittingly, is a quality of the "average everydayness" of Dasein—it is familiar, as noted, but also manifests the structures (of meaning) one builds around oneself in order to feel secure in this world. Anxiety is, however, what can make this false fabrication perceptible and can, in fact, extract Dasein from this means of relating to the world. In such an ejection, Dasein becomes individualized insofar as it recognizes itself as distinct from entities and others—it is severed from them just as it is severed from its home. This demonstrates an important moment of understanding for Dasein, or at least its initial step: in homesickness, Dasein realizes itself as, for the first time, "there" in the true sense of Being-there (Dasein), existing.

It is also important that we ourselves do not become entrapped in the metaphor of homesickness as a type of ontic loss. Rather, homesickness is itself the experience of the ontological state of anxiety. Thus, there is an important distinction to be made. Just as anxiety is not fear of *something*, homesickness is not a loss of something. Rather, as demonstrated, this home for which one yearns never really existed. Therefore, the feeling of homesickness would be better described as a feeling of *lack*, rather than of *loss*. Lack, like anxiety's object, is indeterminate, whereas loss suggests that there was a definite thing possessed, which would be

impossible insofar as that thing—home—was illusory. What is most painful about homesickness is not the loss of a home but the realization that there never was one. This analysis is aided by Heidegger’s definitional statement that, “The kind of Being-in-the-world which is tranquillized and familiar is a mode of Dasein’s uncanniness, not the reverse. *From an existential-ontological point of view, the “not-at-home” must be conceived as the more primordial phenomenon*” (234). We understand here that Dasein’s misguided creation of home originates from a place of feeling not-at-home. Additionally, we can read this to mean that homesickness too is a more basic, “primordial phenomenon.” This demonstrates that, initially, home is not lost but is created in response to a fundamental lack. This does not detract from the description of homesickness thus far as the impression of one’s home collapsing, but rather shows that through the understanding made possible by anxiety, Dasein realizes the much greater problem that there was always a lack of authentic home. Thus, we arrive once again at the suffering caused by the initial turn toward philosophy in anxiety: it is in the moment of understanding that one is plagued with the ultimate form of homesickness—that of a home that never was.

While anxiety may present Dasein with the opportunity to take this philosophical turn into understanding, Heidegger emphasizes that Dasein’s tendency is to do the opposite. “Dasein clings” to “entities within-the-world,” despite its inauthentic relation to them (235). Rather than make itself vulnerable to the suffering that accompanies homesickness, Dasein seeks to “flee *into* the ‘at-home’ of publicness,” and “dwell in tranquillized familiarity” (234). As has been established, Dasein is anxious for something of an indefinite character. This indeterminateness is threatening and tormenting for Dasein. Heidegger writes:

Anxiety ‘does not know’ what that in the face of which it is anxious is. ‘Nowhere’, however, does not signify nothing: this is where any region lies, and there too lies any disclosedness of the world for essentially spatial Being-in. Therefore that which threatens cannot bring itself close from a definite direction within what is close by; it is already ‘there’, and yet nowhere; it is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one’s breath, and yet it is nowhere. (231)

Insofar as anxiety is the first moment of understanding, Heidegger’s emphasis that Dasein “does not know” what it is anxious about seems to suggest that Dasein has yet to come to any knowledge of itself or the world. Heidegger describes the indefinite nature of that for which we are anxious as the unlocatable “Nowhere” and the indefinite “direction” from which it comes. Heidegger has earlier established that Dasein “shrinks” away from a threat that has its own character: “it is Dasein itself” (230). Therefore, anxiety is “oppressive” not because it is “close by,” or proximate and oncoming—it is “*there*” within Dasein. Yet, because Dasein has no understanding of that for which it is anxious, it remains undetectable and “nowhere.” This discomfort “stifles one’s breath” and, like a reflex toward something unpleasant, causes one to instantly turn away from it and return home.

In Division Two of *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins to offer a fuller picture of this potentiality for which we are anxious. If the potentialities that lie hidden are cause for threat, the “uttermost one” is death (294). Heidegger writes:

With death, Dasein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. This is a possibility in which the issue is nothing less than Dasein’s Being-in-the-world. Its death is the possibility of no-longer being-able-to-be-there. If Dasein stands before itself as this possibility, it has been fully assigned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. When it stands before itself in this way, all its relations to any other Dasein have been undone. This ownmost non-relational possibility is at the same time the uttermost one. As potentiality-for-Being, Dasein cannot outstrip the possibility of death. Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein. Thus death reveals itself as that *possibility which is one’s ownmost, which is non-relational, and which is not to be outstripped*. As such, death is something *distinctively* impending. (294)

Death is the potentiality that threatens Dasein. In anxiety, Dasein comes face to face with itself as its potentiality. When confronted with one's possibilities, Dasein recognizes its ultimate one—that it can *not* be. Here, it is important to recall that one of the two basic premises as to Dasein's Being that Heidegger established initially is that Dasein is "in each case mine" (68). Here, Heidegger articulates death much in the same way—as one's "ownmost." Therefore, we can see how that which threatens has the same character as Dasein. Potentiality or, rather, the potential to die, is constitutive of Dasein's being. Dasein cannot escape or "outstrip" its death. Furthermore, death "undoes" Dasein's relations to entities and others in the world. Insofar as death is one's "ownmost," we can read this as individualizing and, thus, "non-relational."

Death is that which anxiety faces when it can no longer relate to the world. Despite Heidegger's conceptual delineation of the qualities of the possibility of death—its "ownmost," "non-relational," and "not to be outstripped" nature—death as a possibility remains indefinite (302). In this sense, death is "impending," and as such death is the "uttermost" example of that for which one is anxious. Death's direction is indiscernible insofar as it is "assigned"—one does not know when it will come but it will necessarily. One is also anxious about that which is "Nowhere." By the very fact that death is always present as a possibility for Dasein, it is also "Nowhere" to be found. Death is concealed until the moment that it is exacted. Therefore, death is that for which we are truly anxious and, as such, it is in the face of death that we recognize that we are never truly at home.

In response to the anxiety of death, Dasein's tendency is to flee from it into the 'at-home': "Dasein covers up its ownmost Being-towards-death, fleeing *in the face* of it. ... In this falling Being-alongside, fleeing from uncanniness announces itself; and this means now, a

fleeing in the face of one's ownmost Being-towards-death" (Heidegger 295-6). "Being-towards-death" is the way in which Dasein can authentically relate to its end, through taking it over as one's ownmost, not-to-be-outstripped potentiality (294). This "taking over" and authenticity require the understanding that is made possible in the moment of anxiety. However, rather than take over and understand itself, inauthentic Dasein "falls" away from the self into the world, making itself a home there. Therefore, the "uncanniness," or the sense of not-Being-at-home that Dasein feels, becomes evident, "announced," insofar as Dasein actively seeks to secure itself in the world. Heidegger then draws the connection between "Being-towards-death" as both that for which one is anxious and as the manifestation of the uncanny. This indicates that an understanding of death is the experience of not being-at-home. In understanding, one cannot feel protected from the constant threat that is death. Constructing a home around oneself allows one to have the illusion of being free *from* death.³ To be towards death is to not only to be without home, but to realize that it was always illusory. Therefore, the flight away from death is the avoidance of the homesickness of this understanding.

Additionally, this is the first time in the philosophies explored thus far that we see an active and innate resistance to the pursuit of understanding. The torment of anxiety—its "oppressive," "stifling," enigmatic, and foreboding nature—deters Dasein from taking up this possibility. Rather, Heidegger argues here that Dasein "covers up" the possibility of understanding in the face of anxiety. Thus, we see that Dasein's "fleeing" is not just a turning away from understanding, but a purposeful concealing of knowledge. Dasein finds comfort in the 'at home' not just because it believes itself to be extracted from its anxious state, but

³ Heidegger articulates authentic Being-towards-death as being free *towards*, or for, death (311).

because it has hidden from itself the very fact that both its meaning is inauthentic and that there is an alternate, authentic understanding of the world to be had. Therefore, Dasein's flight away from its anxiety precludes even the possibility of a pursuit of knowledge. Dasein remains safely at home both in its tranquillization and its sheer obliviousness. Dasein is like an individual who never gets tested—she appears carefree, but really fails to know herself in dread of her own potential to be sick.

One must therefore take active measures in order to evade homesickness and fabricate tranquility. Because the feeling of the uncanny is the more primordial state of Dasein, tranquility requires a step away from the self. Significantly, Heidegger repeatedly uses the word “tranquillized,” rather than ‘tranquility,’ to describe the condition of inauthentic Dasein as it conceals its potentiality for death. “Tranquillized” suggests an agent that comes from outside and works within to alter one's state. Therefore, insofar as Dasein works to cover itself over, to build walls against self-understanding, by way of becoming “tranquillized,” Dasein lives in its average everydayness as drugged. Like an addict, absorbed in the world, Dasein drugs herself to forget her anxiety. Average everydayness is revealed to be a kind of dependence on palliatives. To cure oneself of one's sickness-inducing remembrance of home, a home lost or lacked, Dasein needs to forget.

Home is a social drug. The need for tranquillization is a response to Dasein's anxiety for death. Heidegger has already explained how Dasein finds itself “at home” in the “public.” It is the public that is happy to “[provide] a *constant tranquillization about death*” (298). Heidegger argues:

... the phrase 'one dies' reveals unambiguously the kind of Being which belongs to everyday Being-towards-death. In such a way of talking, death is understood as an indefinite something which, above all, must duly arrive from somewhere or other, but which is proximally *not yet present-at-hand* for oneself, and is therefore no threat. The expression 'one dies' spreads abroad the opinion that what gets reached, as it were, by death, is the "they". In Dasein's public way of interpreting, it is said that 'one dies', because everyone else and oneself can talk himself into saying that "in no case is it I myself", for this "one" is *the "nobody"*. ... Dying, which is essentially mine in such a way that no one can be my representative, is perverted into an event of public occurrence which the "they" encounters. ... death is spoken of as a 'case' which is constantly occurring. Death gets passed off as always something 'actual'; its character as a possibility gets concealed (297)

Heidegger locates the way in which we become tranquilized from the threat of death in the public discourse. The ambiguity and anonymity of the subject "one," who could be anyone and as such is no one, replicates the structure of anxiety for death. The "one" manifests the "indefinite" threat of death and the to whom it will occur in any give "case." Because death is "not yet present-at-hand" for any specific Dasein, the "threat" is situated in the "they." Interestingly, the way in which Dasein becomes tranquilized, or the way in which the 'drug' "spreads," is through language in the expression, "one dies." As earlier described, Dasein understands itself in the way that it is publically "interpreted"—it sees itself in the "terms of" entities. Similarly, the ambiguity of the phrase "one dies" is internalized, like a drug, to remedy Dasein's anxiety and simultaneously changes the way in which Dasein understands itself towards death.

Furthermore, Dasein never experiences the "event" of death and, as such, it is "in no case" I who dies. This is yet another way in which the threat of death becomes neutralized. This corresponds to the basic premise, "Dasein is in each case mine." Insofar as Dasein rejects its death, which is self-constitutive, and claims it not as its own, this represents another kind

of dying through the falling away from the self. Heidegger earlier writes: “Factically, Dasein is dying as long as it exists, but proximally and for the most part, it does so by way of *falling*” (295). Once one is born, she is always heading towards her death and, thus, “factically,” she is always dying. However, here, Heidegger shows that dying is really the “fall” from the self. Just as one feels herself anesthetized from death while tranquillized, it is actually in consuming the drug that she is brought closer to another kind of dying—of her authentic Being. From this, we can understand that, while the home may appear to be the site of security, it is insidious in other ways. The home that provides tranquillization becomes decisively and deceptively harmful. Dasein is addicted to the feeling of home, but its effects turn against it.

There is also another form of denial taking place here—the denial common to the drug user about the risk of her own death. One might say, “‘One’ could die from drugs, but it has not and will not happen to me.” While Heidegger says it is “nobody” who dies, it is not so much that one is deluded about the fact that everyone will die eventually, but rather that, with the exception of one, “nobody” has to be liable for it in its immediate occurrence. Dasein may very well recognize death as “actual,” but in no case its own “possibility,” and death is therefore “concealed” in tranquillization. It is in this sense too that the “they” has a vested interest in keeping Dasein tranquillized. Such denial of death is also a justification to keep the public drugged:

At bottom, however, this is a tranquillization not only for him who is ‘dying’ but just as much for those who ‘console’ him. ... the public is still not to have its own tranquility upset by such an event, or be disturbed in the carefreeness with which it concerns itself. Indeed the dying of Others is seen often enough as a social inconvenience, if not even a downright tactlessness, against which the public is to be guarded. (Heidegger 298)

The “public,” as it is inauthentic Dasein, is always responding to its need to tranquillize itself. Heidegger emphasizes both the one who is “dying” and those who “console,” perhaps to demonstrate that it is *everyone* who is dying by way of falling, and thus their distinction is unnecessary—everyone in their everydayness exists in this tranquillized state. The possibility of one “coming down” from this drug, even through death, threatens to bring the “they” out of tranquillization insofar as an alternate state-of-mind becomes apparent. Therefore, the “public” maintains itself as anesthetized so as to not be “disturbed” in their world of “concern.” Death, therefore, becomes treated like a “social inconvenience” in two senses. First, in the collective state of tranquillization, Daseins do not genuinely relate themselves to death to be deeply unsettled by its occurrence. Second, this could also be read as an “inconvenience” insofar as the glimpse of death makes its possibility somewhat apparent and shifts Dasein just slightly out of its drugged state. One would rather rest comfortably in her tranquillization than be brought out of it, even momentarily. Therefore, the public “guards” itself, here using the same language of security and home, even perhaps against authentically anxious Dasein who risks bringing the “they” out of their sedation. The tranquillized “they” becomes the gated community that regulates disturbances to its sense of home.

In spite of Dasein’s tendency to tranquilize itself in the face of anxiety, Heidegger argues that one can be brought out of this state and must in order to have authentic understanding. Dasein responds to a call that comes from within and brings one out of the “they” and back to oneself. Therefore, we might characterize this kind of coming out and back as a *withdrawal*, as one experiences in quitting a drug. Heidegger writes:

The call points *forward* to Dasein's potentiality-for-Being, and it does this as a call which comes *from* uncanniness. The caller is, to be sure, indefinite; but the "whence" from which it calls does not remain a matter of indifference for the calling. This "whence"—the uncanniness of thrown individualization—gets called too in the calling; that is, it too gets disclosed. In calling forth to something, the "whence" of the calling is the "whither" to which we are called back. (325-6)

Just as Dasein shrinks away from its indefinite self in anxiety, the indefinite "caller" that calls, whose call is often neglected, is Dasein itself. The call to withdraw, to come off of the tranquillizer, comes from one's own self. The call originates from the "very depths of its uncanniness," which is to say, from the feeling of being not-at-home (322). Insofar as Being-not-at-home is a basic, primordial state of Dasein, the caller brings Dasein "back" to itself. This can be understood in two senses. First, Dasein becomes attentive to the call and turns toward the caller (Dasein), reorienting itself to itself. Second, Dasein is "brought back" insofar as it returns to its authentic self and its basic Being—its uncanniness. Therefore, by addressing Dasein in the mood of the uncanny—anxiety—Dasein becomes open to its ownmost potentiality, and thus its potential to die. In "anticipating" death, the call points Dasein "forward" to its end (310). Thus, the process of withdrawal is as much a calling forward as it is a calling back—the addict in withdrawal returns to the self as she begins to understand her possible future. Withdrawal is the anxious moment in which one realizes oneself as who she was in her tranquillization, and who she is in her Being not-at-home and could be in her potentiality.

The "whence," or the uncanniness from which the call is made, is also characterized by its "thrown individualization," and is also "disclosed" in the call. This disclosedness reveals the homesickness that one is also confronted by with the call: the individualization, or cutting of

ties, from the world in which one has been thrown is precisely the torment that Dasein sought to escape in its tranquillization. Therefore, by responding to the call, Dasein withdraws from the ‘they-world’ and suffers that withdrawal in its anxiety for its lack of home. Heidegger also articulates that that place from which the caller calls is also where it is called to—the “whither.” This would suggest that it is in the not-at-home and, thus, in homesickness that the call says to dwell.

Just as anxiety presents Dasein with two possibilities—authenticity or inauthenticity—one must want the call in order to be able to “listen” to it.⁴ The Dasein addicted to home must choose to give it up and face homesickness in its withdrawal and, thus, itself too. Heidegger argues that, “In understanding the call, Dasein lets its ownmost Self *take action in itself* in terms of that potentiality-for-Being which it has chosen” (334). Here, understanding is an action that must be chosen. Just like an addict in recovery, she must *want* to come off the drug. The call appeals to Dasein and by willingly accepting to understand it, it both enacts its own potentiality as well as chooses it. Dasein chooses itself and, in that, chooses its uncanniness, homesickness, and, ultimately, its end. Heidegger later adds:

What kind of mood corresponds to such understanding? Understanding the call discloses one’s own Dasein in the uncanniness of individualization. The uncanniness which is revealed in understanding and revealed along with it, becomes genuinely disclosed by the state-of-mind of anxiety which belongs to understanding. The fact of the *anxiety of conscience*, gives us phenomenal confirmation that in understanding the call Dasein is brought face to face with its own uncanniness. Wanting-to-have-a-conscience becomes a readiness for anxiety. (342)

⁴ The call has a particular and complex discourse in it “keeping silent” and “uttering” nothing (322). Therefore, “listening” should not be assumed here to be simplified.

We have thus returned to the beginning. Through the call, which has been articulated as the call of “conscience,” an openness to Dasein’s responsibility for its potentiality, Dasein arrives at understanding. The call must be attuned to the “mood” of “anxiety” which both reveals understanding and is revealed in it. Understanding “discloses” the individualization of Dasein in which it grasps itself as distinct from the “they” and thus, ‘that it is.’ Dasein’s ‘that it is’ is familiar in that it is its primordial self but alien as it is novel from the world of concern in which it resided. Through understanding, Dasein comes “face to face” with its “uncanniness.” Therefore, wanting the call of conscience means allowing oneself to be not-at-home. Dasein is thus “ready” for the subsequent anxiety of homesickness. This readiness is in contrast to the “cowardliness” that leads one away from anxiety and into tranquillization (311). In attempts to secure itself, Dasein constructs a home out of inauthentic meaning in which it can be exist carefree, as if in a drugged state. This “readiness” is also distinct from “wanting” insofar as the suffering of homesickness is not necessarily desired, and yet one remains open and receptive to it. Heidegger indicates that this is the condition for understanding, and thus one must willingly brave it. Therefore, it is in choosing to live the basic sickness—homesickness—of our Being that philosophy as the pursuit of understanding can survive.

Conclusion

If I have proceeded through the observations and analysis that bring us to diagnosis, one might expect that I would conclude my examination by reaching for the prescription pad. However, each philosopher I have admitted, to varying degrees, evades prescription. For Plato, the prescription is in the diagnosis. As long as the lover loves, love will always be lovesick. The philosopher can only pursue that for which he loves—wisdom—but to behold it has been shown to be impossible. Insofar as love is the highest pursuit, Plato essentially tells the philosopher to carry on, despite its sickness. Nietzsche has actively resisted a cure. It is precisely in the belief that there is something to remedy that Nietzsche locates sickness. For Kierkegaard, the risks of pain and even death are inescapable in bringing an idea to life. Not only is this suffering inevitable, but without it, the philosopher would not be able to produce consciousness. Heidegger won't step foot in the pharmacy. For him, we are sick in our most basic Being, and any prescription only serves to tranquilize and make addicts out of us.

What is the purpose of diagnosis absent some sort of plan for treatment? The philosophers' immunity to prescriptions demonstrates an important quality of their sicknesses. It is not that their conditions are untreatable, but any sort of recommendation would negate the essence of philosophy. Socrates' pursuit of wisdom is a result only of his love and, thus, lovesickness for it. For Nietzsche, choosing seasickness means embarking on the vast sea of possibility and knowledge. In Kierkegaard, giving birth to an idea cannot occur without having been pregnant, and endured its mo(u)rning sickness. For Heidegger, homesickness, the anxiety

of realizing one's inauthentic construction of meaning in the world, is the only mood for Understanding. Without these sicknesses, philosophy cannot occur. Therefore, to restore the health of these philosophers would be a mistreatment. To make the lover stop loving would be to take away his wisdom. To give the seasick thinker ginger ale and tell her to close her eyes would be an attempt to fabricate stability at sea. To tell Kierkegaard to stop gestating truth would be to sterilize him. To make Heidegger less anxious would mean dosing him. While this may seem to be a less than satisfactory response to the diagnoses, it is precisely here that we return to the initial question of philosophy as a suffering discipline. The philosopher suffers in her task because only in her suffering can she philosophize. Sickness is inherent to the philosophical pursuit.

This conclusion is further augmented if we reflect on the connections among the different philosophers. Each philosopher is engaged not only in the act of philosophy, but in so doing, establishes *how* one should philosophize. The *Symposium* sets the stage for philosophy in its practice of giving speeches. Insofar as the speeches are ones of praise, the present speakers are philosophizing in the mode of love. Additionally, because philosophers are lovers (of wisdom) in their own right, any speech on the question of love is self-reflexive. *The Gay Science* sets out to create a new kind of philosophy for the future by means of destabilizing the tradition. Nietzsche, therefore, induces seasickness as the way in which we experience and traverse through his philosophizing. Kierkegaard, throughout his several pseudonymous and non-pseudonymous texts, strives for higher self-consciousness that will allow him to address the problem of faith. In so doing, he is constantly attempting to realize his existence through his pregnancy of ideas. Kierkegaard thus establishes his mode of philosophizing as one defined

by the pursuit and pains of an impossible idea. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger also works to destroy the tradition in order to reorient us to the question of the meaning of Being. In describing the ways by which Dasein conceals and reveals itself in its mood of sickness, Heidegger is simultaneously articulating the way in which we uncover or cover over in our questioning of ourselves. Because the philosopher is focused on the 'how' of philosophy, we can also see that the diagnosis is just as much about his methodology as of his criticism. The method of philosophy therefore becomes set in sickness. This shows again how suffering comes to be internal to the means by which philosophy can occur.

We should also consider an important commonality shared by the sicknesses studied here. Each sickness comes from a kind of loss or lack. For Plato, the lack is the lover's object. Nietzsche's lack is one of steady ground (although, as should be noted, he does not respond to this negatively, but rather affirms our turbulence). Kierkegaard loses the child who agonized him in its growth and for whom he mourns. Heidegger lacks home in his most basic Being, even though he too embraces this homesickness. It is thus evident that philosophy contracts its sicknesses through its lacks. Plato and Kierkegaard experience their sicknesses in their attempt to recover or pursue that which they miss, despite the ultimate impossibility of this. By contrast, Nietzsche and Heidegger feel their sicknesses in moving toward knowledge of their lacks. Nietzsche's philosophy is nauseous in its acceptance of its seasickness. Heidegger is homesick only in the moment of understanding, with his realization that he lacks home. Thus, it is not so easy to say that the sickness of philosophy is the lack of its object—knowledge. Rather, sickness comes by way of trying to know what it is that is absent. This becomes another way in which we can understand the philosopher as a theorizer of suffering. In asking

the question of happiness, philosophy must also seek to understand what it is that we lack that results in the condition of unhappiness. Philosophy's concern is thereby reoriented toward its suffering. In order to theorize happiness, the philosopher must first address its lack thereof. If happiness is an eternal question, then we might even say that philosophy will be perpetually fixated on this as its preliminary task. Just as we have been unable to move to the next stage of prescription, philosophy positions itself firmly in this initial diagnosis. Therefore, philosophy becomes defined as the act of diagnosis.

We have hereby diagnosed the sicknesses of the philosophical pursuits of Plato, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger. While diagnosis may appear to be singular as the central activity of philosophy, there are of course further questions and resulting diagnoses that can be posited. In addition to looking at the sicknesses ridden in the philosopher's project and methodology, one might also look to diagnose the ways in which philosophy self-medicates. Heidegger has illustrated the way in which the inauthentic self drugs herself in a gesture that turns away from philosophy. However, if philosophers have recognized the struggle or even the impossibility of their task and yet continue to pursue it, in what ways do they 'take care' of themselves? Is there a way in which the philosopher can soothe herself without being rid of or covering up the necessary sickness? One can begin again, going from the philosopher's suffering to the philosopher's drugs: Sigmund Freud on cocaine or Walter Benjamin on hashish, for examples. When looking to works in which sickness is not immediately traceable, might we find a therapeutic instead? Sickness can take new forms, whether it be in its initial infection, its resistance to treatment, or its compulsion to self-medicate. Thus, our conception of the disease of philosophy continues to develop, as it spreads

and mutates, finding new hosts and changing its symptoms. Philosophy will, therefore, always demand new diagnosis.

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