Masters, slaves and spiritual sexuality

by

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Introduction

Envisage a dance without music. Such a thing would be almost inconceivable. Contemplate a thunderstorm without energy. Dream up a story without drama and rebellion without transgression. Conceive of art without passion or pleasure without emotion. Imagine Dionysius without intoxication. Try to fantasise about the sexual without it being erotic. Picture a society without Will; life without spirit.

1.1 Prelude

Some would argue that we don't have to imagine a life without Spirit[1], because we are already living such a life. We can't dance, because the music has died. Some would move that the only colour left to paint life with, is some shades of grey.

This dissertation is an attempt to examine this claim and propose a narrative which may in part explain the process that lead to this critical condition. It will also seek a possible rehabilitation of the ailing Spirit.

The Spirit of sexuality will act as proxy for spirit found in all spheres of life. Nietzsche (1973, p. 92) said that a person's sexuality influences the very core of his/her spirit. In a certain sense, sexuality may also be seen as a metaphor for life:

> "If there is to be any aesthetic doing and seeing, one physiological condition is indispensable: *Rausch*[2], *Rausch* must first have enhanced the excitability of the whole machine; else there is no art. All kinds of *Rausch*, however diversely conditioned, have the strength to accomplish this, above all, the *Rausch* of sexual excitement … Also the *Rausch* that follows all great cravings, all strong affects; the *Rausch* in destruction; the *Rausch* under certain meteorological influences, as for example the *Rausch of spring;* or

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[1] When the word "Spirit" is capitalised in this dissertation it is meant to indicate a specific definition of the concept which will become clear in the introduction. See chapter 1, section 1.4.1

[2] A german word translated as rush or intoxication. (s.n., 2017)

under the influence of narcotics; and finally the *Rausch* of an overcharged and swollen will" (Came, 2014, p. 185).

The basic premise of this dissertation is that the Spirit of sexuality is in danger; or dying. Although this is an ontological statement, sexuality is an intimate subject. In this instance, the boundary between the intimate-personal and the ontological is permeable. The nature of sexuality and the Spirit of sex differ according to these "locations." Thus, a reader of this dissertation who is in the throes of a passionate sexual relationship will not experience a lack of Spirit in sex. This does not mean that the Spirit of sexuality is not in trouble in an ontological sense. This boundary will be crossed and re-crossed in this dissertation ending in a proposed intimate-personal intervention as a way in which the ontological Spirit of sex may occasionally be summoned.

1.1.1 Supposing Spirit is a woman[3]

An allegorical narrative will be used from time to time in this dissertation to help illuminate the thread of the argument being put forward. In this tale, Spirit is the tragic protagonist.

There is a wild woman, let's call her Spirit. This woman is elusive and fragile. The fact that she is fragile surprises most people, because when she is present she is the strongest energy known to man. From her, galaxies of possibilities are born. Her raw beauty and energy inspires life itself.

Like all such gifts she, however, has a weakness. Her weakness is that there has to be specific optimal conditions for her to be able to appear. If these conditions are not met, she disappears like a moment disappears into action. Some moments are strengthened by action, some are killed by it. This is her weakness.

Humankind loves her. They play with her and created beautiful things, beautiful societies, beauty itself. They create moments in which she could flourish. She dances in those moments – seducing them into action, the driving force of history.

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[3] Reference to Nietzsche's provocative opening sentence in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1973, p. 31) which is "Supposing truth is a woman - what then?"

But sadly, history will turn out to be her greatest foe because humankind will forget that they need her in that moment before action. They are starting to erase the conditions necessary for her moment. Perhaps they found another source of energy which they think they can control better and which they see as a "higher" driving force?

Most do this with the best of intentions. Her death is an unintended consequence, but it is still happening. Sometimes it is the men and women who originally created her perfect moment, who negate the same moment.

There are heroes who try to save her and her moment. Some are successful, some work against the very thing they are trying to accomplish. Some have decided that she can only be saved if she is kept secret, while some think the harsh light of day will save her.

This is her story – and another attempt to save her.

1.2 Background

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of the human rights culture on Spirit with specific reference to spirituality in sexuality.

Why does this dissertation link sexuality and spirituality? Sex is not a subject generally favoured by philosophers and Bible scholars. That does not mean their respective views on issues such as power, equality, spirituality and morality cannot be made to apply to sexual matters. It can be argued that their views concerning these subjects had an unintended effect on sexuality.

In this regard the effect of the human rights culture, the fact that it tends to relate equality to "sameness," on an individual's will to power as it manifests in the spirituality of sexuality will be looked into. This dissertation does not question equal rights or the victories the feminist movement has won for women. It is not campaigning to revert to outdated sexual roles. This dialectic is about spirituality and (specifically heterosexual) sexuality.

"There is no fixed or natural point at which liberty and equality come into balance, nor any way of optimising both simultaneously" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 239). This means that much of the present situation cannot be reversed or rectified. It is the nature of the modern society.

The question that will therefore be asked is if it is possible to re-claim true Nietzschean creativity in certain areas of life. Can a new spirituality be found which can turn slaves into masters – if only for a short while?

1.3 Methodology

This dissertation is a literature study. It will circle a few specific ideas. Struggle, tension and negation will be the focus of every theme that will be investigated. Hegel's dialectic model will also be reflected in the research methodology.

> "Each of the parts of philosophy is a philosophical whole, a circle rounded and complete in itself. In each of these parts, however, the philosophical Idea is found in a particular specificality or medium. The single circle, because it is a real totality, bursts through the limits imposed by its special medium, and gives rise to a wider circle. The whole of philosophy in this way resembles a circle of circles. The Idea appears in each single circle, but, at the same time, the whole Idea is constituted by the system of these peculiar phases, and each is a necessary member of the organisation" (Hegel, 1991, pp. 14–15).

Hegel adapted the dialectic model to explain the directionality of history. Every state of being has inherent oppositions that have to be resolved. This resolution is achieved through a synthesis of these oppositions. A thesis is synthesised with an antithesis to form a new thesis to be synthesised with a new antithesis. Hegel argues that this process would lead to full consciousness and an ultimate goal or truth. This idea of opposition driving history will be at the heart of this dissertation because every aspect that will be investigated has influenced the history of Spirit. Every instance of tension that has been negated, leads to the ultimate outcome, although admittedly, not necessarily the one anyone had in mind.

The outcome of the dialectic method is the compass this dissertation proposes to follow. Each chapter will focus on examples or areas where opposition were or are in the process of being resolved.

New oppositions, a new thesis, may emerge to be challenged in the future. One such possible challenge may ask what would have happened if Hegel did not focus on the ultimate goal –

the search for truth and enlightenment (and an end to history) – but rather focused on the process of growing he described so well?

1.4 Main characters

The main themes of this dissertation may be seen as the main allegorical characters of the narrative.

1.4.1 Spirit (Protagonist)

The center of the largest circle is Spirit. This is the most important term that will be used in this dissertation. It is therefore important to define Spirit first. For the purpose of this dissertation the word will have a very specific meaning. If it was possible to coin a new word which could be used to convey this meaning, it would have been better. What is meant here by Spirit will hopefully be sufficiently explained by commingling the definitions of spirituality, erotic, *Rausch* and Will to Power. These definitions will therefore be discussed first:

1.4.1.1 Spirituality

There are many definitions of spirituality. For the purpose of this research proposal the definition given by Lombaard (2009, p. 107) will be adopted:

"Spirituality may be described broadly as the orientation people have to the "big questions" of life. Their orientation to issues such as the meaning or purpose of life, whether or not there is life after death, the existence or not of gods, or a god, or God, and whether all these may be experienced, or may be expressed in this life. These are all existential/experiential matters that cannot be studied in any academic way."

Bovell (2007, pp. 340–348) explains the link between this spirituality and sexuality:

> "Individualised spirituality could include personal conversion events, mystic encounters, private prayer, and devotional readings, whereas shared spirituality embraces, for example following the liturgy of a religious service, involvement in practical service to the poor, participating in a Bible study group, actions of care for the environment, and other religious acts. These experiences (that is, these lived responses to an awareness of the "big questions") can be observed and can therefore be studied by scientists from various academic disciplines (such as theologians, psychologists, sociologists.)"

Spirituality, however, also has a social and cultural aspect. If spirituality is about the big questions of life, it will also be found in the fabric of society. It will inform the values of a society or specific culture. Sheldrake (2013, p. 4) says "there are signs that the word 'spirituality' is expanding beyond an individualistic quest for self-realisation. It increasingly appears in debates about public values, the further development of professional fields, or the transformation of social structures …"

Spirituality is thus seen as a subjective and meaningful experience, which can be argued are two things sexuality will always be. It is also cultural and social – something sexuality has also always been influenced by.

The World Health Organisation (2006) defines sexuality as

> "…a central aspect of being human throughout life (which) encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors."

Sex and spirituality are no strangers to each other. The link between sexuality and spirituality has always been there.

"Embodied in the sacred prostitute, in practice and in representation is the unity of womb and clitoris. The temples of sacred prostitution, the best known of which were the temples of

Aphrodite in Corinth, were oriented simultaneously to clitoral, uterine, and spiritual purposes: sexuality, fertility, and spirituality were not radically distinguished" (Bell, 1994, p. 24).

The focus of this study - sexuality combined with spirituality – is brought together by Carr (2003, p. 9) in the concept of Eros:

"This is a vision of Eros as flavoring all of life. Many people experience such passion most in sexual longing and fulfillment. But others know similarly intense passion when playing music, windsurfing on a sunlit bay, or discussing a new and exciting idea with a friend. So often, the word erotic is taken as equivalent to 'sexual.' Yet the word Eros originates in Greek culture, where it included all sorts of core desires; certainly the sexual, but also intellectual, artistic, and spiritual yearning."

This definition fits neatly with Lombaard's (2009, p. 107) "orientation" concerning the "big" questions.

The fact that Eros is not just about sex but about a way of looking at life is precisely the point of this dissertation. Sexuality has been chosen as the focus of this enquiry, but the arguments applied to sexuality can just as easily be applied to other aspects of life, or vice versa.

1.4.1.2 Erotica

Erotica may be said to be in the eye of the beholder. This is the first conclusion that can be made if one would ask people to define erotica. This subjectivity is however more in question when pertaining to the reader or consumer of erotica. The reason is that different things titillate different people. This subjective view from the perspective of the consumer should, however not influence the basic definition and features of erotica. This dissertation proposes that there are certain sufficient and necessary conditions that make erotica erotic. Most definitions would, however, proclaim "sexual stimulation" a necessary condition of erotica. That is why it is specifically added to the definition of the concept of Spirit that will be used here. Erotica is not just a spiritual feeling but in this case a sexual spiritual feeling.

For the purpose of this dissertation and as one of the attributes of Spirit, the definition of

eroticism as formulated by Morris (2013, p. 8), will be used. She defines eroticism as

> "some form of transcendent experience fueled by sexual desire, complicated by transgression, and exhibiting resistance to language. And if we accept that eroticism is a place where language breaks down, then we must be prepared to find bliss, as Barthes says, between the cracks and in the silences."

1.4.1.3 *Rausch*

The early Romantics defined *Rausch* as a transgression of the boundaries between humans and nature focusing on the individual's experience. *Rausch* is not a conscious decision to cross boundaries – it even sweeps away the very idea that boundaries can be crossed by choice. Rather, it is a sweeping away of someone by the forces of existence taking him/her back to the primordial and animalistic; to before the birth of civilisation (Lebovic, 2004, p. 3).

1.4.1.4 Will to Power

In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche (1969) used personified active and passive forces to write a master and slave narrative. This narrative (as opposed to Hegel's which will be discussed in detail in this dissertation[4]) does not lead to recognition but to the Will to Power. These "characters" are not types of people but symbols for types of consciousness (there are master and slave impulses in all people). The values personified as the master is active and have a will towards powerful physicality, abundant health, together with hunting, dancing, and adventure - all that involves free, joyful activity. Master-impulses are self-directed and self-affirming activities: the noble impulse is concerned with its self-production and expansion, independent of the Other. This impulse looks only to the future and affirms its own possibilities to becoming joyously and without fear, aspiring to height, power, and intoxication. This impulse is Dionysian-driven energy.

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[4] See chapter two, section 2.1.2

The slave impulse is reactive and is based on resentment, desire for revenge and hate of the Other. This impulse is basically negative and always says no to anything different - anything not itself. The slave is bitter. "His soul squints …" (Nietzsche, 1969, p. 21). It is bound up with the past, never forgets and never overcomes.

Spirit or Will to Power must be conceived as essentially active, as self-disruptive and eternally self-overcoming. Nietzsche's Will to Power is "a paradoxical formulation, a force that, unlike resolve or striving wills itself outside itself. Through the Will to Power we know ourselves as out beyond ourselves … a thrill of pleasure announces to us the power attained, a power that enhances itself" (Gordon, 2001, p. 13).

All these terms combined refer to the Spirit that this dissertation will be referring to. It is sometimes the energy created in a moment of tension that inspires people to act. Spirit, in terms of this dissertation is a moving force which is the essence of that specific situation. It may, perhaps, be called "the Spirit of the Moment."

1.4.2 Hegel (Main character)

In the beginning there was a person alone in his/her natural state. He/she desired to be desired by others – to be recognised by them. He/she could not see him/herself and needed someone to make him/her real. The person's sense of identity and worth was connected to how others saw him/her. One day this person encountered another person. At first she/he was elated because he/she could recognise himself or herself in the other person, and the person revelled in their sameness. Man/woman, however, wanted to be recognised as a person, and this meant being recognised as someone who was able to risk his/her life. This led to a violent struggle between the two entities – a struggle to be recognised by the other. At the end of this battle a winner and loser emerged. The one decided to submit to a life of slavery rather than to die. The victor became his/her master.

> "And it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained; only thus is it tried and proved that the essential nature of self-consciousness is not bare existence, is not the merely immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance. The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognised as a person; but he has not

attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 395).

This was the first moment of men relating to each other, as envisaged by Hegel in his famous thought-experiment. What happened next in this woeful tale is more interesting and more important for this dissertation: the slave turned out to be the one who ended up with a higher realisation of himself. The principle (though a lot more complicated) is almost like what happens at school – being "seen" by the captain of the rugby team meant more than being recognised by the school "nerd." The master saw the slave as an object, and thus was not recognised by someone worthy, whereas the slave realised he was subordinate and had the master to feed from.

This narrative is a simplified version of Hegel's concept of the "Struggle for Recognition" as interpreted by Kojévé (1980; also Fukuyama, 1992, p. 193). The narrative was a way of describing the important conditions for self-consciousness or subjectivity.

The narrative does not end here. Hegel envisaged an outcome which would ultimately heal the unequal relation between the slave and master. History would prove him right, but only after war. In a very real world a few hundred years after Hegel pictured this scenario, a man named Hitler showed what could be done in the name of inequality and changed the world for ever.

1.4.3 Negation (Antagonist)

In this dissertation negation is seen as a negative force. Negation, as defined here, is derived from Hegel's dialectic method where negation is the dynamic aspect that flows from contradictions of categories or identities. Through negation the static categories are dissolved and adapted to push history forward towards a "whole." "By negation or contradiction, Hegel means a wide variety of relations difference, opposition, reflection or relation. It can indicate the mere insufficiency of a category or its incoherence. Most dramatically, categories are sometimes shown to be self-contradictory" (Spencer, L and Krauze, 1996, p. 14). Hegel overcomes the particular to move towards a whole, but the whole does not disregard the specific identity or category. Nothing is destroyed; it is raised and preserved like in a spiral (Spencer, L and Krauze, 1996, p. 14).

1.4.4 Human rights (Antagonist)

Another definition important for this dissertation is "human rights" and the "human rights movement." The struggle for human rights pitted the concepts of equality and inequality against each other. The atrocities of war ended this battle. Peace, however, was not all it promised to be.

Fukuyama, in his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992, p. 289), discusses whether liberal democracy may not have turned out severely flawed. The failures Fukuyama alludes to are precisely those this dissertation will be addressing. Fukuyama says

> " … the possibility that liberal society does not represent the simultaneous satisfaction of desire and *thymos* (self-respect) but instead opens up a grave disjunction between them is raised by critics of liberalism on both the Left and the Right. The attack from the Left would maintain that the promise of universal, reciprocal recognition remains essentially unfulfilled in liberal societies, for economic inequality brought about by capitalism *ipso facto* implies unequal recognition. The attack from the Right would argue that the problem with liberal society is not the inadequate universality of recognition, but the goal of equal recognition itself. The latter is problematic because human beings are inherently unequal; to treat them as equal is not to affirm but to deny them humanity."

From the vantage of our post-holocaust, post-Bosnia-Herzegovina, post-apartheid, post–Rwanda genocide, post-9/11 world, the position this dissertation wants to discuss may seem an irrelevant and even dangerous one. In our "safe" egalitarian society it seems foolhardy to revert back to archaic ideas no philosopher takes seriously anymore: dangerous ideas.

In a world where the current political inclination towards "sameness" reigns supreme, it however becomes increasingly difficult to transcend mediocrity. Since history cannot be turned back (and in a political or legal sense there is no desire to return to previous unequal states), this study asks if the push towards equality may not have had an adverse effect in certain situations. Mediocrity does not contain Spirit. It is asked whether these adverse effects have not influenced every aspect of human existence. Have the strong moral obligation to be equal in all spheres of life not also infected our most intimate pleasures?

Some ideas should perhaps be revisited because in some cases the "safe" way may not be the best way. It is the dangerous ideas that lead to something new, something exciting and invigorating. In cohorts with Nietzsche, and reinterpreting Hegel, it may be possible to find a spiritual dimension - a small pocket of our existence - where it is still possible (and allowable) to be larger than life.

It is important to make the point that the focus of this dissertation is the "moment" that happens between people. It does not argue that opposition, negativity or contradictions are the only conditions which are necessary for Spirit. It does however argue that the negation of opposition and contradiction, in favour of a "sameness" can be detrimental to Spirit.

1.4.4.1 Morality

The name of peace was morality and the dove of peace was equality.

Hegel's narrative ends in peace. He believed that a moral and egalitarian community was possible where subjects could engage in a mutually equal environment and so fulfill the sufficient condition for subjectivity; the full awareness of one's consciousness through the consciousness of another.

After the Second World War, philosophers started rejecting biological approaches to morality, arguing that it ignored basic human sameness and magnified differences that were morally irrelevant.

One negative result of the moral emphasis on equality is that it has led to humanity becoming level with the lowest common denominators. Most people did not become equal to the level of Hegel's victor (the master) – all became slaves. Slave-morality became the norm and the moral to strive for. Where Hegel's slave had the "upper hand" in reaching consciousness, we now saw a change in the definition of slave. Nietzsche gave us a new thought experiment to illustrate the trend. His variation of a slave does nothing towards reaching consciousness with the "benefit" his submissive position gave him – Nietzsche's slave has decided that it is easier to pull the master down.

1.4.4.2 Battle of the sexes

Nietzsche (1973, p. 167) was very critical of the women's movement. Ansell-Pearson (1993, p. 30) paraphrases Nietzsche:

> "The great danger of the women's movement in attempting to enlighten women about womanhood is that it teaches women to unlearn their fear of man. When this happens woman, the weaker sex, abandons her most womanly instincts ... No social contract can put right the inequality of men and women, and the necessary injustice in their relationship."

It is the contention of this dissertation that Nietzsche was right. The elephant in the room is that in our modern society women have rights and equality before the law but whenever society crumbles (for example during war or in certain neighbourhoods or areas of society), they still have no power at all. Women will be (and are on a daily basis) subjected to whatever the whims of the strongest (usually men) may be for the simple reason that when civilisation ends, brutal biological realities will step in again. In the process of becoming equal have women not lost that which made them different from men? By losing her "womanly instincts" didn't she become a "weak man" in a world still governed by the rules of men? Maybe strength lies in differences?

Diprose (1989, pp. 27–33; also Patton, 1993, p. 32) acknowledged that in "the attempt to seek equality – primarily that of equality before the law – oppressed groups often make the mistake of clothing themselves in the attire of their oppressors or masters … the law which will make them equal is the law as defined and regulated by those in power, for women living under patriarchy, the law is the law of man."

If creation happens in power struggles, like Nietzsche (and Hegel in a sense) argued, is that not why men and women continue to struggle? "From the moment when something worthwhile about women is announced, men want to become women … Why, all of a sudden, must we be in a reversal of power in a problematic of the Same? Please don't become women, men" (Irigary, 1981, p. 64; also Patton, 1993, p. 91).

For the modern person, equality means peace. When it comes to equality between the sexes, equality before the law, however, is seemingly not enough. As mentioned previously, equality frequently means sameness. Ansell-Pearson (1993, p. 45) mentions Cixous as an

example of someone who wanted to eradicate sexual differences, suggesting that oppositions of man/woman should be used with qualification. Cixous hoped for a future in which it would be possible to write a non-phallocentric history. In an effort to overcome injustices against women, she thus wanted to abolish gender. Is this not exactly what Nietzsche tried to warn against? When even gender is swept aside by the big broom of equality, what will remain? In a world where there are no differences, there can be no tension and thus no Spirit.

Human sexuality has been turned into a battleground rather than an erotic adventure. It is, however, more than that. As Irigary says: "We've reduced Eros to unisex … This kind of love, unisexual, destroys, in effect, human identity" (Irigary, 1989, p. 108; also Patton, 1993, p. 90).

When a battle rages for identity, the body will also find itself in the line of fire. Another relationship that was targeted was the one each person had with his/her own body.

In *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political theory* (Patton, 1993, p. 69) Grosz writes that there are two concepts of desire tied in with two broad concepts of the body. The negative idea of desire ties in with the subordination of the body to the mind (and can be dated back to the work of Plato). Socrates claims that "one desires what one lacks" – desire is thus depicted as an economy of scarcity. In opposition to this notion, desire is seen as positive and something which "produces, transforms and engages directly with reality. Instead of seeing desire as a lack, Spinoza sees it as a form of production, including self-production, a process of making and becoming." Nietzsche can be seen as an example of this idea.

1.4.4.3 Battle of the body

The human body is a relevant component in any discussion of social morality, since "ethics always has to do with the body in one way or another, for morality refers to human action" (Cahill, 1996, p. 73). Early philosophers (and clergy) wrote about the body and soul and their relation to each other – usually elevating the soul over the body. Cahill writes that the body is either seen as constitutive of personhood or as a product of social discourse. "Both react against Enlightenment reason as universal and abstract; and against the modern scientific ideal of control over nature, including the body" (Cahill, 1996, p. 73).

Grosz, in *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory* (1993, p. 53) discussed Nietzsche's concept of body. She writes that for Nietzsche it is the body, at cellular level, and as a total organism, that is active and the source for the will to power and the movement of forces. "Knowledge and power are the result of the body's activity, its self-expansion and self-overcoming." The will to power involves a struggle to survive, to grow, to overcome itself on the level of cells, tissues, organs.

Nietzsche (1961, pp. 61–62, also Patton, 1993, p.60) says:

> "I wish to speak to the despisers of the body. Let them not learn differently nor teach differently, but only bid farewell to their own bodies – and so become dumb … The body is a great intelligence, a multiplicity with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a herdsman. Your little intelligence, my brother, which you call "spirit," is also an instrument of your body, a little instrument and toy of your great intelligence … which does not say "I" but performs "I."

The body is a gateway to life, and creation. Nietzsche had ill health for most of his life, and it was precisely because of this that he had an intimate relationship with his body. His will to power converted this suffering into something new.

1.4.5 *Song of Songs* (*Pharmakon*)

There is a book that speaks about love and sexuality. *Song of Songs*, a short book found in the Hebrew Bible, contains poems of a man and a woman singing their love to each other. It is not possible to investigate sexuality and spirituality without also studying the various interpretations of this book because it cannot be denied that the Christian religion had an enormous influence on the questions this study asks. *Songs of Songs* have been interpreted in various ways. Carr (2003, p. 4) explains, for example, that the poems were interpreted as "a song of love between God and God's people. Some saw the poems as about God and the individual believer. Others saw them as about Christ and the church."

According to Carr, in the 1800s Bible scholars began reading *Song of Songs* as being about love between a man and a woman. It was at this time that Christians started to turn away from *Song of Songs.* Now it was sexual and sex was "dangerous, chaotic and anti-spiritual" (Carr, 2003, p. 5).

In this dissertation, this turning-away from the *Song of Songs* and thus turning away from sexuality will be discussed in depth. It is important, because it may well show a similar progression to Hegel's dialectic – sexuality moving through the same steps – being conquered, repressed, freed and then subjected into the slavery of equality.

Exum (2005, p. 80) refers to arguments by feminist scholars (Brenner and Fontaine, 2000) to show how important the influence of feminism has been on the interpretation of *Song of Songs.* "Not surprisingly, feminist scholars were drawn to this book that seemed to offer a breath of fresh air in the patriarchal climate of the biblical world …" In *The Song of Songs: A new translation* Bloch and Bloch (1995, p. 4) explain how women are for the most part the second sex in the Bible. "But in the Song, where the lovers take turns inviting one another, desire is entirely reciprocal … Indeed, she often seems more than his equal. Most of the lines are hers, including the first word in the poem – 'Kiss me' – and the last."

A thorough examination of the various feminist readings of *Song of Songs* forms part of this dissertation because the movement is part of the human rights culture which pertains to the research question.

1.4.6 Marquis de Sade (*Pharmakon*)

De Sade has been studied and written about by various philosophers from all sides of the spectrum. The reason why he is included here is specifically because his theme was sexuality and how sexual freedom was influenced by morality.

The Marquis de Sade (1740 – 1814) was a product of his times. He lived through monarchy, the French revolution and Napoleon's reign.

Some argue that De Sade's "ethics" can be seen as a reaction to the morality imposed on society by the church at that time. De Sade believed that humans were ruled by their nature and they could do very little about it. They should therefore simply enjoy life to the full. To go against their true intrinsic nature would be to deny themselves. They can, however, only be themselves and enjoy their true nature when they are free from all moral and social inhibitions. He dismissed morality as artificial and said it was just a fashion.

Many of De Sade's commentators have said that he did not always mean what he wrote – he was deliberately provocative. This is an interesting reflection of the style Nietzsche would later also use. Just like Nietzsche, De Sade contradicted himself to prove the contingency of all ethical norms; by showing they can be negated.

De Sade may have forged his immorality as a reaction against the power and morality of the Church – the subtext behind *Justine* was the punishment of virtue - but it seems as if in doing this he made an either/or mistake. It is possible to be altruistic or kind without following a descriptive moral framework. Humans in their natural state are not *just* cruel and destructive. It has been shown recently that even animals (capuchin monkeys) can be altruistic and fair, which means being "bad" is not the only natural position. (De Waal, 2012).

The only answer to the morality of equality was thus not *just* immorality – or doing the "opposite." Nietzsche, as an example, turned his aversion to slave morality into a positive force towards change on an individual level.

One of the main themes of the French revolution was equality. De Sade publically supported the ideals of the French revolution, but paradoxically, he was in a sense a warrior against sameness. In one of the most famous passages of *120 Days of Sodom*, one of the libertines, Durcet, complains that their situation is not perfect, because pleasure depends on contrast: "And so it is, the financier declared, that according to my belief, there is one essential thing lacking to our happiness. It is the pleasure of comparison, a pleasure which can only be born of the sight of wretched persons, and here one sees none at all …" (De Sade, 1904, p. 1).

This dissertation proposes that Nietzsche would not have agreed with De Sade's excessiveness, even if his will to power has echoes of De Sade's philosophy of human nature. De Sade gives the impression that his philosophy is an act of transgression against the church – a lot of his writing is directed specifically against the church and Christian morality. In the end, in spite of his rebellion, he may have been more of a slave of that morality than he thought, because reacting is not creating.

1.4.7 Rehabilitation of Spirit

Humanity was in need of a new story, one that did not try to eradicate all differences. One that did not give an either/or choice.

1.4.7.1 Nietzsche

Nietzsche rebelled against the idea that everything is being leveled. He was convinced that the world is a collection of power struggles and that we should use it. Good is the realisation of potential and evil is not to realise your potential.

Nietzsche did not see people as having equal value. Nothing had inherent value – everything had value because it stands in a relationship with something else; but not just *one* something else. Although Nietzsche used opposites to illustrate his positions, his philosophy of the will to power was one of degrees of power.

Solomon (2003, p. 85) writes that it will be more accurate to describe the Will to Power as the "Will to Vitality, the Will to Life, the Will to Live." Better still, he says it is not a Will at all, but rather a defense of passion – a passionate life – being lived, not aspiring to live it. His ethics of affirmation of life, is an embracing of a life of emotions, engagement, affections and magnificent ideas. This is the Spirit this dissertation is searching for. It is impossible, insatiable, ambitions. It is a moment of frenzy and brilliance. "It is the very erotic conception of life" (Solomon, 2003, p. 85).

1.4.7.2 Transgression

This dissertation wants to put forth the contentious idea that Hegel's battle between lord and bondsman is exactly what has been lost in the world at large; and in sexual relationships. This battle, described earlier, alludes to the meeting of two consciousnesses, and it is when these consciousnesses meet on an unequal ground that growth happens.

In small pockets of resistance against the morality of equality, scenes are enacted today. Just like Hegel's tale is fictional and used by him to make a point, and just like Nietzsche's master

and slave story shows towards personality types, these scenes are also not "real" but used to play with differences towards the mutual satisfaction of both the participants.

A BDSM[5] scene, referring also in part to Sadism/masochism, is ultimately a "game" where power and inequality are used as sexual and creative tools. For the purpose of this dissertation the following definition of BDSM will serve as a starting point:

> "BDSM is a culture, community, lifestyle, and identity. The initials refers to many concepts, including Bondage, Discipline, Domination, Submission, Sadism, Masochism, Sadomasochism, and related subcultures. BDSM is a distinct culture that holds a set of norms and values that differ from those of mainstream society, with varying levels of participation. It is focused on consensual power differentials and arousal in a theatricalized context, maintained through a wide variety of tools and activities, structured around consent, openness, communication, trust, and safety" (Edmunds, 2013, p. 13).

The definition will, however, be supplemented throughout. Gallagher (1984, p. 169) refers to Foucault in an interview:

> "One can say that sadomasochism (SM) is the eroticisation of power, the eroticisation of strategic relations. What strikes me with regard to SM is how it differs from social power … the mobility in power relations is limited … the S & M game is very interesting because it is a strategic relation, but it is always fluid."

In BDSM scenes, it can be said, De Sade, Nietzsche and Hegel come together. Dionysius enters the room.

BDSM will always be an exercise practiced by a few, but there may be some basic ideas that can be incorporated into "real life." Nietzsche's solution was to laugh at life – abandon yourself with Dionysius. Maybe sex can be another place of abandonment.

In an interview for the Advocate titled *Michael Foucault, an interview: sex, power, and the politics of identity* Foucault said (Gallagher, 1984, p. 165):

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[5] BDSM – "The initials refers to many concepts, including Bondage, Discipline, Domination, Submission, Sadism, Masochism, Sadomasochism, and related subcultures of Domination/submission, Bondage & Discipline, and Sadomasochism" (Edmunds, 2013, p. 13).

"I think SM is … the real creation of new possibilities of pleasure … they are inventing new possibilities of pleasure with strange parts of their bodies – through the eroticisation of the body. I think it's a kind of creation, a creative enterprise …"

A merger of Hegel's and Nietzsche's tales, both as related above, will lead to this kind of positive tension. It is precisely the imaginative play-arena that leads to both the slave and the master being recognised optimally. The slave then does not have Nietzsche's slave morality. The slave is a master in his/her own right (because he/she enters the game willingly), which means that his/her will to power is driving him/her towards something new. The master knows that the slave is not just an object (as in Hegel's example) and is in effect put into the master position by another master – so he is also able to reach optimal consciousness. The focus of the relationship is on the area between the two positions – the inequality of power.

Something has been lost in the great war of equality. More have been gained. Nobody wants to go "back to the kitchen", but "realness" has been lost. The place where this loss is sometimes seen clearest is in the relationships between men and women.

If we only focus on morality, we remove the possibility of freedom. We do violence to all possibilities if everything is just a choice between right and wrong. Spirit lies in differences – and in the transgression of the categories of right and wrong.

1.5 Hypothesis

Human sexuality has been influenced negatively by the human rights culture. Eroticism or the Spirit of Sex has been lost, or watered down. To reignite the Spirit of sexuality, we need to transgress boundaries – and close others that have been transgressed for the "wrong" reasons. We may also need to return to a form of inequality – even if it is just for the moment and just through role-playing.

1.6 Aim and objectives

The aim of the study is to critique the effect of the human rights culture on the Spirit of sexuality.

The objectives are to investigate the effect of the human rights culture on sexuality through:

- the application and re-interpretation of Hegel's "Struggle for Recognition" and a discussion of Nietzsche's master and slave morality,
- investigation of ideas about morality, the private vs the public sphere, gender, "sameness," and how these themes were co-opted into the human rights struggle,
- *Song of Songs* as well as the works of De Sade will be interpreted as works which influenced opinions about sexuality,
- enquiring if the Spirit of sexuality has been affected in any way, and if so, if anything can still be saved.

1.7 Chapter division

The main themes of this dissertation will be argued in the following divisions:

1.7.1 Hegel

Hegel's Struggle for Recognition, mainly as interpreted by Kojévé, will be applied to the research question. It is through Kojévé's interpretation that the link between the loss of the Spirit of Sex and the human rights culture will be made. If Hegel's Struggle for Recognition is the thesis and Kojévé supplies the antithesis, Nietzsche's master and slave narrative will be considered as a synthesis of their respective positions.

1.7.2 Price of a better world

Morality, Public vs Private, and the body are all areas in which the tension between the Struggle for Recognition and the human rights movement were played out and dissolved. It

will be argued that the soothing of this tension also tempered the Will to Power or Spirit. The tactics used in the fight for equal recognition, had unintended consequences. It is in this chapter that those will be emphasised.

1.7.3 Spirit's *Pharmakon*

It may not sound as if *Song of Songs* and the work of De Sade can have any similarities but both have at times been used to promote "freedom" as interpreted by the human rights culture. It can be argued that both have had a negative as well as a positive effect on the Spirit of sex. This possibility will be researched and the texts will be compared with the aim of reaching a possible new thesis.

1.7.4 Rehabilitation

In the end it will be important to explain what has been lost and if the trend can be reversed. Can the Will to Power be applied in certain areas of human existence even if it may sound as if it is contrary to history and to where humanity says it wants to go?

1.7.5 Conclusion

In the conclusion the main objectives of the dissertation will be looked at again and the main points made will be summarised.

Chapter 2
Hegel – allegory of his own creation

There is an advantage to telling stories to convey an idea. A story has to be logical, even if it is just in terms of casual cause, effect and chronology. A narrative can be used to explain complicated thought experiments in a more digestible way.

This dissertation has already offered its own narrative as framework for the argument it wants to put forward. The second underlying narrative that adds to the foundation of the dissertation is Hegel's master-slave dialectic.

2.1. Introduction to Hegel

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 – 1831) was one of the most important philosophers of the Enlightenment. Proponents of the Enlightenment believed that reason and experience would lead to universal human emancipation. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Audi, 1995, p. 266) "… it laid the intellectual foundation for both the general scientific worldview and the liberal democratic society, which, despite the many attacks made on them, continue to function as cultural ideals."

Hegel, however, had a complex relationship with the Enlightenment. On the one hand he was committed to its ideas and on the other hand he criticised the destructive effect a limited formulation of reality could have on society and cultures (Sinnerbrink, 2007, p. 4).

Deleuze tried to ignore Hegel, attempting to formulate his thoughts as if Hegel never existed, but Žižek (2012, p. 11) argues that Deleuze's "own thought of pure repetition only works as a weird sublation of Hegel. In this exemplary last revenge of Hegel, the great Hegelian motif of the path towards truth as part of the truth, of how, in order to arrive at the right choice, one has to begin with the wrong choice, reasserts itself." He contends that it is only possible to ignore Hegel after one has thoroughly worked through Hegel.

2.1.1 Hegel, the enabler of Spirit - Battle for Recognition

The master-slave dialectic is one of Hegel's most well-known passages found in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It is his version of the social contract (state of nature) theories like those put forward by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.

Hegels' master-slave dialectic of consciousness describes independent and dependent consciousness caught in inadequate concepts of freedom. These concepts of freedom are based on our experience of desire. Our first concept of ourselves is that of a desiring being caught in a natural environment. When we satisfy our basic animal desires, we see ourselves fleetingly as we are, satisfied. But our desire (for food, drink and sex) will come back and demand our attention again. Hegel argues that it is only when we desire recognition or to be acknowledged by another desiring subject, that we gain real satisfaction and a more permanent sense of who we are. This is how we form our self-identity (Sinnerbrink, 2007, p. 18).

"It thus initiated a revolution in thinking about social life and identity, moving us away from conceiving of ourselves as fundamentally a monadological consciousness" (Reynolds, 2009, p. 12). The narrative of the Struggle for Recognition (master-slave dialectic) was summarised in the introduction. It will be elucidated in more detail here:

Human, for Hegel, was free and un-determined. He/she had certain animal desires like the desire for food and shelter, and above all he/she had the desire for preserving his/her own life. This first man or woman also desired something that animals don't desire – he/she desired something that was non-material. First woman/man desired to be desired by other men/women. The person wanted to be recognised. For Hegel, man/woman was a social being from the start because he or she needed other men and women to become self-conscious – which means to become aware of him/herself as a separate human being. A person's self-worth and identity was closely linked to how other people valued them (Fukuyama, 1992, pp. 146–147).

One day a person came into contact with another person. This, for the purpose of this dissertation, is an important moment. It is proposed that this is the moment where the conditions for Spirit come into being.

"The confrontation with the other is experienced as an abrupt self-transcendence, a plunge into relationality and otherness that is a loss of the self" (Williams, 2003, p. 67).

This is the moment that leads to action. What the action will be, makes all the difference for the argument being made here.

> "The need is felt to overcome this particularity, to reinstitute one's own universality as ground of value, and there is thus an attempt to solicit the recognition from the other of one's own absolute freedom and independence. The two interlocutors hence both try to bring their subjective self-certainty of their value to objective expression. Each desiring subject asserts its master-slave dialectic independence and self-identity by negating the other desiring subject" (Reynolds, 2009, pp. 12–13).

There is a second characteristic of Hegel's first human which becomes important at this stage of the narrative. He wants to be recognised as human and this can only be done through his/her ability to risk his/her own life. This leads to a violent encounter with his fellow humans in an effort to seek their recognition as a person by risking his own life. This battle can have three possible outcomes; both of the contestants may be killed in which case life would come to an end, one of the contestants may be killed in which case there remains nobody to recognise the survivor; or one of the contestants submits rather than being killed and so a relationship of lordship and bondage comes into being (Fukuyama, 1992, pp. 146–147).

The relationship that follows this initial encounter is where, this dissertation wishes to show, Spirit is found. It seems that the opposing and unequal relationship may be conducive conditions for all Spirit entails.

This relationship of lordship and bondage is not satisfying for the master or the slave. It can be argued that the master is more human than the slave because he overcame his biological nature for a non-material end, namely recognition. The slave, by choosing life over violent death, remains needy and fearful like an animal. But the slave's incomplete humanity means that the master is not recognised by a master - and his desire is to be recognised by one with worth and dignity. So by winning the battle, he loses the chance to be recognised by someone who is not a slave. This keeps the master in a "suspended" state. He remains less satisfied. He does not need to work; he does not need to change. His life is static (Fukuyama, 1992, pp. 193–194).

This predicament of the master is known as Hegel's dialectical reversals.

In this reversal, the slave is also not satisfied. In the case of the slave, however, the dissatisfaction leads to change; he becomes creative. The fact that the master does not recognise him as a human being, but as a thing, gives him the desire to change. He uses work to do this, and in the end recovers his humanity and recognition (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 195).

Fukuyama (1992, p. 195) writes that the slave will be the one who will think of freedom as an idea. He will begin to understand that he is human and capable of creativity and free labour. The slave, however, can only conceive of the idea of freedom. It is not his reality. There is a tension between the idea he has of freedom and the fact that he is not actually free. The slave is more philosophic: he must consider freedom in the abstract before he is able to enjoy it in reality. He must invent the concept of a free society before living in one. The slave's consciousness is therefore higher than the consciousness of the master, because it is more self-conscious, that is reflective of itself.

Does this mean that the condition for his higher consciousness was his "lesser" position in the relationship? It would seem that one of the conditions for this "growth" can be the tension found in his challenging conditions? Is this also the birthplace of Spirit?

"In his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) Hegel shows "how ordinary consciousness, in its attempt to know reality, ends up in contradiction, which motivates the movement to ever more complex and inclusive patterns of knowing… Hegel's *Phenomenology* thus depicts the odyssey of consciousness in its journey towards philosophical and historical self-knowledge" (Sinnerbrink, 2007, p. 11). Sinnerbrink (2007, p. 16) explains how, according to Hegel's *Phenomenology*, knowledge and experience comes into conflict in the subject when he tries to know the world. This struggle between what he thinks he knows and what he experiences is resolved through consciousness.

From this, this dissertation contends that it seems that desire to resolve the conflict is a driving force. In line with the focus on sexuality, it is interesting to note how Hegel saw love:

"Hegel conceived of love as an interpersonal relationship of mutual recognition in which the 'natural' individuality or uncultivated self is confirmed (rather than one's social role or contribution to the community.) Even sexual relationships involve the reciprocity of knowing oneself in the other, in sexual relations; both subjects can recognise themselves in their

partner, since each one desires to be desired by the other. In Hegel's view, sexuality thus represents the first form of the unification of opposing subjects" (Sinnerbrink, 2007, p. 115).

Fukuyama (1992, p. 176) points out that sexual conquest is more than just a physical gratification for which a partner is not always needed. The subjects also desire to be desired by the other. It wants to be desirable. The self that is being recognised is not necessarily the same as the self of Hegel's aristocratic master but when it comes to deep, erotic love even the slave longs to be recognised as something more than the sum of his/her physical characteristics. The longing is for recognition of one's worth.

This was Hegel's master-slave narrative – a narrative meant to have a happy ending. In Hegel's happily-ever-after the slaves become their own masters in the end. Both slaves and masters can then be recognised as equals, worthy and free. At that stage, the slave-master contradiction ends. The struggle is negated.

Was this indeed a happy ending? What did this abolishment do to Spirit?

2.1.2 Hegel - disabler of Spirit: negation and institutionalisation

In an ironic reflection of his method, Hegel creates the optimum conditions for Spirit and then proceeds to dismantle this Spirit through negation. The reason Hegel's master-slave narrative is elucidated in this dissertation is not because of the end of history he envisages, but because of the moment of recognition - the moment from where all movement springs. The focus here is the spiritual sexual possibilities of that moment.

In this regard Žižek (2012, p. 7) says about sexuality and Hegel that sexuality is the area where humans detach from nature. Sexuality is not a natural foundation of human lives. In the animal world sexual perversion or deadly passions do not occur. When Catholics preach that sex should only be for procreation and that sex born of lust is animalistic, they make a mistake. Sex for procreation is the way of the animal sphere.

Is it not possible to extrapolate that Hegel sublimates the "moment" shortly after creating the conditions for it (or, at the very least, he immediately starts working towards its negation) and so turns it into something that is non-sexual, or into sex without Spirit? He is guilty of destroying the moment he created – the moment of tension, by dissolving the tension.

Žižek (2012, p. 7) explains Hegel's philosophy of marriage as follows:

> "The true Pascalean formula of marriage is therefore not: 'You don't love your partner? Then marry him or her, go through the ritual of shared life, and love will emerge by itself!' On the contrary, it is: Are you too much in love with somebody? Then get married, ritualise your love relationship in order to cure yourself of the excessive passionate attachment, to replace it with boring daily custom – and if you cannot resist the passion's temptation, there are extramarital affairs …"

In this explanation it is possible to see how Spirit is institutionalised and negated. Tension, created by the feelings of passion experienced in the "battle" (desire for) of recognition is released as soon as possible and by any means.

Reynolds (2009, p. 14) says the same regarding overcoming the "unease" but with a different focus: "This unhappiness and alienation (found in the bondsman and slave relationship) can only be overcome, according to Hegel, by recognising that my subjectivity is always mediated by my relations with others, by my being recognised within an inter-subjective context of rational interaction." In the end, Hegel sees the two parties involved in the Struggle for Recognition turning into independent craftspeople when they realise that they benefit more from rational cooperation and mutual recognition than political domination. Reynolds points out that Hegel's two consciousnesses which come together and see themselves in each other, now know that the other is another 'for-itself'. This experience of seeing the other as the same immediately relativises the consciousness's subjectivity. He/she realises that we are merely one of many. Our independent idea of ourselves is immediately questioned. This is a form of torture because suddenly we are vulnerable to someone else's perspective (Reynolds, 2009, p. 15).

Relativism is "the denial that there are certain kinds of universal truths" (Audi, 1995, p. 790). It is the doctrine that all values are relative to their specific time and place and holds no truth. This dissertation argues that relativity may be seen as one of the "symptoms" of a liberal society and that taken to its extreme, it can negate Spirit.

Fukuyama argues that "the doctrine that says that there is no privileged perspective dovetails very nicely with democratic human's desire to believe that their way of life is just as good as any other. Relativism in this context does not lead to the liberation of the great or strong, but of the mediocre, who were now told they had nothing of which to be ashamed" (Fukuyama,

1992, p. 307). This dissertation suggests that convincing a slave that his way is just as good as the master's way, would be another way to relieve the tension found in the Struggle for Recognition and thus another way of negating Spirit.

Hegel has "pinpointed" the moment of Spirit by describing the moment of recognition and the actions which immediately follow it. He has, however also included the negation of that moment in his narrative. In this sense it can be said that he is an allegory of his own creation – he established Spirit and then endeavoured to supress it again through institutionalisation (for example, his view on marriage mentioned earlier). Kojève took this idea further.

2.2 Kojève – breaking the spell

Alexandre Kojève (1902 – 1968), a Russian-born French philosopher held extremely influential lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* between 1933 and 1939.

For the argument in this dissertation, Hegel-as-interpreted by Kojève, is important. The Struggle for Recognition became the struggle for human rights and equality. This dissertation argues that Hegel provided us with a "positive" starting point for Spirit while Kojève turned that positive into a negative – doing damage to Spirit.

Sinnerbrink (2007, p. 136) said that "(t)he novelty of Kojève's approach was to generalise Hegel's account of the Struggle for Recognition across human history, combining it with the Marxist thesis of the centrality of class struggle in historical development." Amending Hegel, Kojeve believed that we have reached the end of history overcoming the opposition and tension between master and slave. He contended that history has begun to institutionalise the forms of mutual recognition and that this institutionalisation would make historical action (war, conflict and social struggle) all but redundant.

> "We have arrived at the "end of history:" a condition of post-historical freedom where the institutional conditions for mutual recognition, and hence freedom, have in principle been achieved. For Kojève the Struggle for Recognition drove history from the first bloody battle; history has ended because the universal and homogeneous state embodying reciprocal recognition fully satisfied this longing" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 288).

Seeing the inevitable outcome of the 'end of history," Sinnerbink (2007, p. 137) points out that when universal equality and 'classless homogeneity' is reached, there would be no more reason for the Struggle for Recognition. Post-historical human would no longer engage in the conflict that informed historical action.

The Struggle for Recognition drives history and our actions, but can it not be said that it will be better for Spirit if this recognition is never totally achieved since the moment it is achieved is the moment when Spirit is negated along with the tensions caused by die struggle?

Kojève felt that humankind have entered such a post-historical landscape after the Second World War (WWII) where most basic potentiality for political and historical action has been depleted. "Although wars, conflicts and struggles would doubtless continue, there would be no further development beyond the principle of achieved equality of recognition in the universal and homogeneous state. If history is driven by the Struggle for Recognition – satisfaction of our desire for mutual recognition – the motivation for historical transformation ceases" (Sinnerbrink, 2007, p. 142).

Kojève understood the costs of modern democracy. "For if man is defined by his desire to Struggle for Recognition, and his work in dominating nature, and if at the end of history he achieves both recognition of his humanity and material abundance, the 'Man properly so-called' will cease to exist because he will have ceased to work and struggle" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 310).

In spite of this realisation, Kojève continued working towards this end.

The end of history means the disappearance of historical man. When that happens, Kojève believes that art, love and play will become merely personal pursuits again. Postmodern subjects will have material abundance and complete security in a new consumer society, but they will not be happy. "On the contrary, they will be content as a result of their artistic, erotic, and playful behaviour, inasmuch as, by definition, they will be contented with it. Cultural aestheticism, mass consumerism and personal hedonism will be our banal forms of post-historical satisfaction" (Sinnerbrink, 2007, p. 143). Spirit, it can be argued, will not live there anymore.

2.3 An important critique and qualification

Deleuze was one of Hegel's fiercest critics. It is important to touch on one of his criticisms of the master-slave dialectic because it can also be levelled against the argument of this dissertation.

Deleuze had reservations about themes which are prevalent in the master-slave dialectic. He argued that the dialectic insisted on seeing difference and conflict through contradiction and opposition.

> "Rather, any priority given to the causal phenomena of opposition and contradiction (rather than paradox) also misconstrues difference by simplifying the complex of factors and problems that are at play. In fact, he suggests that the appearance of contradiction, such as in the reified contraries of the master and the slave but also any other structurally equivalent opposition is but an epiphenomenon, a derivative ossification of a more fundamental swarm of differences (a productive multiplicity)… The posing of an opposition or contradiction between two forces (when there is really a multiplicity of forces) is a key component in this simplification" (Reynolds, 2009, p. 17).

It is precisely because of this "multiplicity" that this dissertation does not focus on the opposites but on the "tension" found within the situation. Will multiple forces in dialect with each other not have the same effect? The forces are the focus here, Spirit, not how many there are and if they are in strict contradiction or opposition to each other.

This dissertation agrees with Sinnerbrink (2007, p. 174) that Hegel's dialectics subordinates difference and plurality. The theory can therefore not imagine individuation and becoming new. It is precisely the subordination of difference and plurality which will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.4 Conclusion

Hegel's Struggle for Recognition may be seen as the impetus for the moment when Spirit comes to life. Spirit is found in the moment of tension. Hegel, as well as Kojève, may

however, also have erased that tension because their focuses were precisely on negating the tension. Both knew and acknowledged that something would be loss in the process. The desire to dissolve the tension found in the Struggle for Recognition is one that is also found in the struggle for human rights and equality.

Chapter 3
Price of a better world

3.1 Prelude

There will be warriors. There will be castles to storm.

The castle is surrounded by high walls. Behind the walls of the castle the warrior can hear people wailing. People are suffering, treated no better than animals. The warrior leads an army in the fight for liberation. They break down the walls of oppression and lead the people to freedom.

The warrior shows the people a new life – one of brotherhood, equality and freedom. The people rejoice.

See the warrior walking through the castle's halls. Shadows retreat in front of the flickering light of the torch in the warrior's hand.

Suddenly the warrior comes to a heavy door. The door is locked. The warrior hears someone crying behind the door. At least, the warrior is sure it is the sound of crying. The warrior knocks on the door. A shaky voice can be heard: "Please, don't enter. I want to be private."

The voice behind the door ends in a sob. The warrior is almost sure it was a sob. And anyway, everything is better in the open where the light can shine on it.

The warrior steps back to kick down the door leading to the private quarters. The warrior knows this is the better way. The door cannot withstand this amount of certainty. Before long it is shattered. The warrior strides confidently into the room, followed by the army. Nothing that happens in private can hurt anyone again; the warrior will help keep all the private places safe.

The warrior raises the torch.

There is a woman in the room. She is soft and defenceless and yielding. The warrior cannot stand it. The warrior is strong. The warrior looks at her and decides that she is weak. The warrior cares. The warrior saves. There are more walls to break down here, more to liberate.

"We are the same," the warrior says while taking off her dress. "These mean nothing. If I remove the differences, you will be safe. You will not have to struggle for recognition anymore, because we are all recognised. We are free to be one and the same."

The army that followed the warrior into the room begin taking off their clothes. When everybody is defenceless, nobody can be a victim.

The warrior raises the torch.

The warrior looks into the woman's eyes and sees that she is crying. The warrior knows why she is crying. The warrior is sure that it is thoughts and ideas that do not fit her new world that is tormenting her. There is still some liberating to do.

The warrior does not realise the anguish in the woman's eyes is Spirit who has retreated into the last place she could find to hide. Having been negated to death, she clings to the tension between good and evil in the woman. This is the last bit of struggle she could find – it was whipped up by the woman's rebellious morality.

At last the warrior sees Spirit in the woman's eyes and recognises the old foe. The warrior realises that this is her last stand. Only one more boundary to break through; nowhere left to hide.

The woman looks up into the warrior's righteous, caring eyes. "This is what we think," the warrior says. "This is what we believe. I will deliver you."

The warrior raises the torch. The last wall has fallen.

3.2 The liberal ideal – A tale of some unintended consequences

Historically the world was a brutal place and still sometimes is. We tend to forget that fact from our safe vantages in a modern, liberal Western society. The brutal Struggle for Recognition was real. Ideas of brotherhood, freedom and equality were novelty before Jean-Jacques Rousseau brought us his social contract and civilisation. The struggle was, however, not over after he took his stroll in the woods and discovered intimacy. Hannah Arendt reminds us that this rebellion took place before the principle of equality which led to conformism, took root (Arendt, 1958, p. 39). Humanity had to go through wars where we

experienced and saw our inhumanity in all its gore and cruelty. Only then, did we decide to care about the rights of all humans; rights everybody is entitled to just because we are human.

Circling back to the theme of this dissertation it can be argued that these inhumane times in history gave birth to the moment where Spirit, which led us to a better world, came into existence. The atrocities of Nazi-Germany propelled us into action; we started to create a world where people would never again be seen as some"thing" which has no rights. Fukuyama (1992, p. 311) also commented on this dichotomy when he wrote that "(h)uman life, then, involves a curious paradox: it seems to require injustice, for the struggle against injustice is what calls forth what is highest in man." This is exactly the Catch-22 situation we find ourselves in: injustice calls forth Spirit which arouses our Superman - which, as will become clear in this chapter - is sacrificed (negated) to become, Human, all too human[6]. Hegel also focused on our humanity, but unlike Nietzsche who wanted to overcome our humanity, Hegel saw liberal society as preserving a positive aspect of the human personality, namely his non-selfish part. Hegel sought to put that non-selfish part at the centre of the modern political society (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 145).

As can be imagined, much has been written and declared about the ontology, use and future of human rights. "Immanuel Kant considered human rights to be the transcendental emanations of our collective consciences (echoing Tom Paine) and John Stuart Mill followed both of them by stressing that they constituted the natural essence of the liberated, rational individual" (Kinley, 2007, p. 547). John Locke stated that human rights were inalienable – as they were also described in the American Declaration of Independence. According to the French *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* (s.n., 1793) they are natural and imprescriptible.

The first human right as proclaimed in the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (s.n., 2015).

Freedom, equality, brotherhood – these are the first rights mentioned. The scope of this dissertation does not allow an in depth discussion of each of these, but a specific observation about equality and freedom is important here. Regarding the first mentioned, questions about

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[6] Reference to Nietzsche's book, *Human, all too human* (Nietzsche, 1996).

equality, according to Fukuyama (1992, p. 290), can be divided into two categories, namely those identified by human protocol and those that can be ascribed to nature. The first are put in place through laws – for instance, apartheid[7] or Jim Crow[8] laws or specific qualifications required before being allowed to vote. Inequalities due to religious and cultural differences also fall in this group. The second are natural obstacles to equality which include the uneven distribution of physical abilities or attributes between people within a population. This second type of equality will be discussed with regard to "sameness" later in this dissertation.[9]

One of the cornerstones of the modern liberal society is the quest for freedom which is closely linked to the quest for equal human rights – all have the right to be free and freely be themselves. In this regard it is interesting to compare the way freedom was seen in ancient Greece with the idea of freedom we have today. According to Arendt (1958, p. 31) freedom was situated in the political realm because necessity was the characteristic of the private household. Thus force and violence was found (and accepted as inevitable) in the private because that is how necessity is mastered (by ruling over slaves, for example) and how you become free. Violence, writes Arendt, is the pre-political act through which a person liberates him/herself from the necessity of life (food, procreation) for the freedom of the world. The polls knew only equals as opposed to the household/private where inequality reigned. Freedom meant not to be a "slave" to the necessity of life as well as not to command another or be commanded by another. It thus goes without saying that freedom did not exist within the household except in the sense that the rulers of the household was considered free because he had the power to leave the private and enter the political sphere where all were equal. This equality, however, had nothing in common with the concept of equality we have today. It meant living among and dealing only with your pears and took the existence of "unequals" (who were the majority of the population) for granted. As opposed to how we see it today, equality had nothing to do with justice and everything with freedom. "… (T)o be free meant to be free from the inequality present in rulership and to move to a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed" (Arendt, 1958, p. 33).

This dissertation in no way questions the validity and necessity of human rights as a basic condition for and characteristic of a civilised society. These ideals are cornerstones of the modern liberal society and few people would have it different.

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[7] The system of racial discrimination and segregation which was law in South African between 1948 and 1991.
[8] State and local laws that enforced racial segregation in the southern United States until 1965.
[9] See chapter 3, section 3.4

What is asked, rather, is what happens after the basic conditions for these ideals have been accepted by society and written into law? More to the point of this dissertation is the question about what happens to the Spirit when these ideals have been reached and the Struggle for Recognition of these ideals, for all humans, have been concluded? As was argued in the previous chapter, when negation takes place, Spirit withers. The argument will be made here that this happens whenever the quest to attainment the highest ideals, are taken too far or are forced into areas where it does not belong.

In this chapter four areas in which the campaigns of the human rights movement did precisely that to the Spirit of sexuality, will be investigated.

3.3 Violating my secret garden - the Private and the Public

Spirit (specifically as defined in chapter 1) does not thrive in everyday, mundane circumstances. As we have seen, special conditions are required, often conditions where tension is a main feature. These attributes are not those normally associated with sex and intimacy. Sex and intimacy can have Spirit without tension and without a struggle for rights or recognition (although it will later be argued that a dose of tension can help). Sexual energy is a natural Spirit exciter.

Why then, does this dissertation want to connect these two "kinds of spirit" if they are normally found in different environments in different circumstances? How are they related?

It is the contention of this dissertation that the "natural" Spirit of sexuality also needs special circumstances to flourish and that these circumstances are threatened by the same enemy – negation of tension. In the case of sexuality the tension that is negated is not found in a Struggle for Recognition between the lovers but between the "areas" where sexuality flourish (private) and the public. This tension is being negated in the quest for equality and this is where the Spirit of sexuality is threatened. In the private realm, where societal judgement and morality has no place, the Spirit of sexuality can be called forth. By violating this private realm and turning it into something else (the social and political) the mandate of the human rights movement was overstepped and Spirit was wounded.

As a starting point for looking at the private/public question, two uses of the public/private distinction as listed by Gavison (1992, p. 5) may be mentioned. The first is a distinction between the private and the public realms of life, meaning the political realm and the realm of the household/family and the second form of distinction which is made about public and private moralities and if there are limits to enforcing them in these different spheres. She says that "(p)eople often view the 'private life' as a realm entitled to non-interference and freedom from accountability due to its basic self-regarding nature, connection to the intimate, and importance to one's self-identity and welfare. Private life is often perceived to be free in fact, governed only by the free consent of the adults whose lives are concerned" (Gavison, 1992, p. 7).

This is, however, not how the private has always been, and, it will be argued, not how it is now. Was this "view" of the private life ever reality?

3.3.1 How it was

The philosophical debate about private and public has too wide a scope to give a fair account of the discourse here. This dissertation will try to highlight the part which will pertain to the "private-made-public" problem.

Definitions of private and public have, as would be expected, changed quite dramatically through the ages, morphing yet again with the advent of personal computers and our inter-connectedness through the World Wide Web. It may be helpful to look at how privacy was defined and experienced through the ages.

Ariès (1989, p. 1) writes that humans first started with no privacy. In feudal times there wasn't room for personal autonomy and solitude. The acts of daily life would be performed in public. At most, places were recognised where a precarious intimacy could take place like a quiet spot in the forest or a corner of a hallway or a hut.

Arendt (1958, p. 28) elaborates on aspects of the "private" and "public" based on ancient Greek thought. She says that the difference between the private and public spheres of life matched the household and political realms in the ancient city-state. They were seen as distinct, separate entities. The home and family was at the centre of a natural sphere. This

space was in direct opposition to the political sphere. In the city-state a man had two "lives" – a private life and political life – and there was a definite distinction between what was his and what was communal (Arendt, 1958, p. 24). The most important attribute of the private/household was that it was driven by the inhabitants' needs and desires. Life itself was the driving force. For the survival of the species man and woman was needed, each with his/her own responsibilities. Man laboured to provide food and woman laboured giving birth – all in service of life. "Natural community in the household therefore was born of necessity, and necessity ruled over all activities performed in it" (Arendt, 1958, p. 30).

Habermas (1974, p. 49) says by "the public sphere" we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body.

A third realm, the social realm, is a new occurrence that came into existence in the modern age and found a political form in the nation-state. What is important for the argument this dissertations wants to make here is Arendt's concern with our difficulty of understanding the divide between public and private and between the polls and the household because of the development of the social. This divide is also between activities that relate to a shared world and activities related to the tasks of maintaining life – a dissection that was the basis of all ancient political thought and was seen as unquestionable. Today that division is blurred because we see groups of people and political communities as families who need to be looked after by someone or rather, by an administration. This super-family is now called a society and its political organisation is called a nation (Arendt, 1958, p. 28).

3.3.2 Today

In *A History of Private Life: Passions of the Renaissance*, Ariès (1989, p. 2) argues that the changing role of the state as well as the spread of literacy coupled with a new form of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries helped to change attitudes about bodies and privacy. Today our lives are compartmentalised into work, home and leisure. People want privacy and the family has become the focus of this private life. Habermas (1974, p. 50) would agree because he says that the idea of the public sphere and public opinion only arose

in the eighteenth century. He says "they acquire their specific meaning from a concrete historical situation" (Habermas, 1974, p. 50). The historical situation in which this dissertation frames the private/public is the modern liberal state. This state has changed the way private and public is seen irrevocably. "The disappearance of the gulf that the ancients had to cross daily to transcend the narrow realm of the household and 'rise' into the realm of politics is an essentially modern phenomenon" (Arendt, 1958, p. 33). It is the contention of this dissertation that this phenomenon was partly driven by a quest for equality and rights and was in that sense detrimental to Spirit.

Mabille (2016a, p. 1) says "(t)he birth of the intimate sphere is closely associated with the explosion of individualism in the eighteenth century, its emblematic figure being Jean-Jacques Rousseau with his search for authenticity." He did not rebel against the oppressive state but against society's' "perversion of the human heart" by intruding into the most intimate part of humankind. Before then, this innermost part did not need any protection. "The intimacy of the heart, unlike the private household, has no objective tangible place in the world, nor can the society against which it protests and asserts itself be localised with the same certainty as the public space" (Arendt, 1958, p. 38).

The private has been immensely enriched through modern individualism. It is however important that it must be opposed to the social as well as to the political. The most relevant function of the modern privacy, according to Arendt, is to shelter the intimate (Arendt, 1958, p. 38). This, it is argued here, did not happen.

Arendt (1958, p. 45) writes that since the private activities have become part of the public sphere it seemed as if one of the main characteristics of this change was to consume the older spheres of the political and private as well as the more recent sphere of intimacy. She says that this tendency is fed by the life process which was channelled into the public sphere.

"What concerns Arendt is the loss of the ontological independence of the political realm, an event that she describes as the rise of the social. Social in this context does not simply indicate the 'opposite of the individual', the mode of 'living-with-others' as explored by Emanuel Levinas, but a distinctly late modern condition of existence generated by the collapse of the distinction between private and public" (Mabille, 2016a, p. 1).

In the social, activities connected to survival are allowed to appear in public and take on public significance. "Labour," meaning activities related to human existence, from

production to procreation, also became public activities. The private has thus become public. Mabille repeats Arendt's argument that the rise of the social sphere will rob humanity of the freedom found in the political realm as well as of the safety found in the private. "The private and the public has become part of mass consumption, while the public dwindles" (Mabille, 2016a, p. 1). She also argues that the activities practiced in the private, from "sex to the most private self-reflection has acquired a new importance." This dissertation agrees. It is this new importance that prompted some to infiltrate that most private space in their quest for equality.

> "As the boundaries that held the biological in check disintegrates, one encounters the paradoxical situation of the 'unnatural growth of the natural': The social realm, where the life process has established its own public domain, has let loose an unnatural growth, so to speak, of the natural; and it is against this growth, not merely against society but against a constantly growing social realm, that the private and intimate, on the one hand, and the political (in the narrower sense of the word), have proved incapable of defending themselves)" (Mabille, 2016a, p. 1).

From this formulation we can circle back to the previous chapter since this argument has reflections of Hegel's view on marriage[10]. Žižek argued that "natural" was procreation without Spirit because that is how animals function. The life process in the public domain – in the social realm – can only become "natural" and thus institutionalised. Institutionalisation is negation of whatever may have been in the private and intimate. By removing the natural from the private under these conditions, or by making the private public, the door was opened for misuse and misappropriation of the sexual for political means. This was the beginning of the end of the Spirit of sexuality.

3.3.3 The private in the open

Tuttle (1986, p. 296) has also made this connection saying that sex and sexuality has been taken from the private and been made public by the feminist discourse. In a way foreshadowed by Foucault's observation that the discourse on sexuality has much to do with power and foregrounding, "(t)he concept of sexual politics is at the very heart of modern feminist theory. Like the slogan 'the personal is political' it represents a different way of

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[10] See chapter 2, section 2.1.3

thinking about male-defined reality, and connects two areas (private = sexual + public = political) which had previously been presumed to be dichotomous" (Tuttle, 1986, p. 296).

Echoing some aspect of Hegel's Struggle for Recognition, Arendt says that our experience of reality depend on appearance and appearance depends on the existence of a public sphere where something can "appear" out of the private and intimate. There are, however, a lot of things that cannot survive being exposed to others in the public scene. As an example she chooses love, as opposed to friendship, as something that can only survive in the private realm. She says it is

> "extinguished, the moment it is displayed in public. Because of its inherent worldlessness, love can only become false and perverted when it is used for political purposes such as the change or salvation of the world… Indeed, the most intense feeling we know of, intense to the point of blotting out all other experiences, namely, the experience of great bodily pain, is at the same time the most private and least communicable of all" (Arendt, 1958, p. 52).

This sounds exactly like Spirit.

Breaking down the border between private and public was one weapon in the arsenal of the "freedom fighter." MacKinnon (1989, p. 191) said that "for women the measure of the intimacy has been the measure of the oppression. This is why feminism has had to explode the private. This is why feminism has seen the personal as the political. The private is public for those for whom the personal is political. In this sense, for women there is no private …"

A certain group of feminists, especially radical ones, are against classifying things into political and personal. As seen in the quote above, they see many personal problems as deeply political. The slogan is a challenge against differences. For them, the personal should not be used as an excuse to stop conversations or accountability. The personal is not above concern or public interference (Gavison, 1992, p. 20).

To elucidate this interference, an example will be given:

In 2008, Max Mosley, Formula 1 Racing boss, was the focus of a scandal after photographs and a video showing him in a Nazi-themed sadomasochistic orgy was published in the media. He acknowledged participating in the session and insisted that it was a private matter, standing his ground while various groups called for his resignation (Burns, 2008, p. 1). He

later won £60,000 in a privacy action against the newspaper. During the judgement, Mr Justice Eady said:

> "There was bondage, beating and domination which seem to be typical of S&M behaviour. But there was no public interest or other justification for the clandestine recording, for the publication of the resulting information and still photographs, or for the placing of the video extracts on the News of the World website – all of this on a massive scale. Of course, I accept that such behaviour is viewed by some people with distaste and moral disapproval, but in the light of modern rights-based jurisprudence that does not provide any justification for the intrusion on the personal privacy of the claimant" (Holmwood, 2008, p. 1).

Some things are meant to be private.

Erotic tension - Spirit - is destroyed when private is not private. Sometimes, for this tension to exist there has to be a taboo attached to the situation. In the next chapter it will be discussed how religion, by making sex taboo, may have inadvertently been good for Spirit. Some sub-cultures are all about the taboo attached to it and about being "underground." A lot of these were opened up and "explained" in an attempt at rescuing the participants from perceived discrimination or inequality. An example of this was the BDSM subculture that was "ousted" by the *Fifty Shades of Grey*[11] books.

BDSM as defined in chapter one, is a sub-culture that focuses on "differences" and plays with power structures. In a sense it can be described as an enactment of Hegel's master-slave narrative. The consensual scene enacted by the participants is designed to build tension – power and inequality are used creatively to arouse and self-actualise. Something is lost when a sub-culture becomes public property. When the tension between the private and the public is broken, the taboo is lost and the transgressive energy of the sub-culture loses its power.

"The author of *Fifty Shades of Grey*, however, not understanding the essence of BDSM, namely the "recognise" dimension of this lifestyle, exposed a private world to the public gaze, thereby stripping it of its heart, of its spirituality" (Erasmus and Lombaard, 2017, p. 5). E.L. James negated the BDSM sub-culture, but, it must be made clear for the purpose of this dissertation, she probably didn't have any "higher" motives than writing a book, one that

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[11] The Fifty Shades of Grey series of novels was written by EL James (with 2011 as the publication date of the first of these) and subsequent films.

started as fan-fiction. She is not mentioned here as a warrior who wanted to break down any boundaries. Her unintended consequences however, still serve as a good example for what may happen to Spirit when the private realm is forced to become public.

3.4 My lover, the enemy

Where is difference more profound than the difference between men and women, male and female, masculine and feminine? Where is tension more palpable? Gender is not the only distinctions that can be made between people and it is not the only doorway to the Struggle for Recognition and some form of Spirit emanating from the struggle. It is, however, the distinction the dissertation is focusing on because it is between man and woman where the spirit of sex is mostly found.

What a strange position we find ourselves in. We are Hegel's masters and slaves, still caught in the struggle. The slaves are emancipating themselves, while they are also laying in the arms of their masters. Some slaves find themselves in a daily struggle for equal rights and equal opportunities, while their bodies burn with desire dreaming about submitting to that same master. The same can be said of men, the current "masters of the universe." While most support women in their quest, it is not always clear how the sexual sphere should change because for most, this sphere functions different from the rest.

Hartman (2013, p. 1) refers to research which analysed how men and women respond to prompts about morality and identity differently. Gilligan recorded that men reacted individualistic; while women were much more empathetic. Because psychologists throughout history have used adult male identity as the norm for everything; whatever degree women may differ in caring about others, was judged as abnormal. The researcher did not necessarily link these differences to what is natural or biological. She makes clear that these differences are often constructed, while she doesn't deny gender differences. Her tactic would be to reverse the poles. She wants to revaluate female traits like cooperation and empathy as "better" or more valuable. In some instances or situations, it would mean that female is better than male." This seems like a positive manoeuvre because it does not try to negate the tension, or rather the Other.

There lies magic in the Other.

In *Nietzsche and Wilde on Women*, Mabille (2016b, p. 1) writes that

> " in both Nietzsche and Wilde, Woman appears as ultimate Other, desirable, seductive and yet forever distant and unconquerable. The relationship between man and woman is dependent on what Nietzsche famously calls the *Pathos der Distanz*: the tension-inducing distance between men and women that keeps allure alive. This idea is one of the oldest in the Western tradition, and yet even today remains fresh enough to keep the romantic comedy alive even in an age as cynical as our own. The late nineteenth century was no exception. Even in a genre as frivolous as Wilde's society comedies, there is a sense of the darkness and mystery of the most complicated of human relationships."

When does Spirit leave this relationship? The moment this distance is negated. This distance was also positively emphasised by others. Mabille reminds the reader that "distance is precisely the most important aspect that, according to Derrida, Nietzsche attributes to Woman. She says that "as the absolute Other, Woman is as distant to man as is humanly possible" (Mabille, 2016b, p. 1).

This "otherness" debate is acknowledged here. It has been raging for years.

Also known as egalitarian or bourgeois feminism, the first wave of feminism focused on equality. This stage, in the 1960s and 1970s, was grounded on the ideas of equal rights, liberty and individualism put forth by philosophers like Locke, Rousseau, Bentham and Mill" (Hernandez-Truyol, 2002, p. 121). This position later evolved into something else. Hernández-Truyol (2002, pp. 129–130) writes that

> "postmodern feminism contests the existence of any objective reality and rejects that categorical, abstract theories derived through reason and assumptions about the essence of human nature can serve as the foundation of knowledge. To postmodernists, there can be no single truth; rather, all truths are linked to and bound by a person's experience, which is wholly dependent upon that person's position in the world. Consequently, the liberal and difference feminist inquiries about the issues of sameness or difference are irrelevant to the postmodern feminist inquiry because these dichotomies are illusions caused by the flawed structural frameworks that generate them."

The argument thus went from trying to deny difference to creating a situation where everyone is their own kind of different. Both of these tactics negate the tension found in facing the Other.

A current example of this kind of thinking is Femen. Femen is a Ukrainian-French feminist activist group. They call themselves sextremists and their weapon of choice is bare breasts. It is my contention that they may be the biggest threat to the Spirit of sexuality because they believe "(m)anifestation of the right to her body by the woman is the first and the most important step to her liberation. Female nudity, free of patriarchal system, is a grave-digger of the system, militant manifesto and sacral symbol of women's liberation" (Femen, 2017). In an effort to liberate, they march topless, hoping to de-sexualise the female body and so free it from the objectifying male gaze. In this way they wish to erase differences completely. But what will happen to desire and sexuality between men and women, when this goal is reached? Women's power lies in the fact that their bodies are perceived differently. Power lies within Spirit of difference.

As is evident in Paglia's article (2014, p. 1), *The modern campus cannot comprehend evil*, the denying of sex differences rooted in biology has also had other more dangerous unintended consequences. She says that the current gender ideology found on campuses sees these differences as inventions that can be moulded as one wish. She accuses them of assuming that when women protest and complain and laws and regulations are changed, men will be fundamentally altered. "Misled by the naive optimism and 'You go, girl!' boosterism of their upbringing, young women do not see the animal eyes glowing at them in the dark… They do not understand the fragility of civilisation and the constant nearness of savage nature" (Paglia, 2014, p. 1).

Even though the focus of this dissertation is Spirit, it is clear that there is more at stake. First they came for "Spirit" and I did not speak out … We are way past that point already.

Irigary (1993, pp. 12–13) approaches this question from a more metaphysical angle. In *An ethics of sexual difference* she writes that

> "… to arrive at the constitution of an ethics of sexual difference, we must at least return to what is for Descartes the first passion: wonder. This passion has no opposite or contradiction and exists always as though for the first time. Thus man and woman, woman and man are always meeting as though for the first time because they cannot

substitute one for the other. I will never be in a man's place; never will a man be in mine. Whatever identifications are possible, one will never exactly occupy the place of the other – they are irreducible one to the other… Who or what the other is, I never know. But the other who is forever unknowable is the one who differs from me sexually. This feeling of surprise, astonishment, and wonder in the face of the unknowable ought to be returned to its locus: that of sexual difference."

Describing something akin to the definition of Spirit used in this dissertation, she says that the passions has been distinguished or repressed and reduced. Wonder is not found anywhere except maybe in art. It is never found between man and woman. She says in the place of wonder came "attraction, greed, possession, consummation, disgust…" But the wonder that would see something as if for the first time and which never see the other as an object to own, does not exist. This wonder would not try to possess but would leave it free. "This has never existed between the sexes since wonder maintains their autonomy within their statutory difference, keeping a space of freedom and attraction between them, a possibility of separation and alliance" (Irigary, 1993, p. 13).

Irigary asks why this has never happened. She implores us to look at history and try to understand why this sexual difference, this wonder, has not developed. "Why it has failed to have its own ethics, aesthetic, logic, religion, or the micro- and macrocosmic realisation of its coming into being or its destiny. It is surely a question of the dissociation of body and soul, of sexuality and spirituality, of the lack of a passage for the spirit, for the god, between the inside and the outside, the outside and the inside, and of their distribution between the sexes in the sexual act" (Irigary, 1993, p. 15).

One reason this dissertation can suggest is that wonder (which I would call Spirit) has always been negated as soon as it came into existence. It's as if we are afraid of the tension of difference, or we have been taught to be scared of it. So, instead of having wonder towards the ultimate Other, we decide to abolish them entirely.

3.5 Sameness – boring Spirit to death

It is imperative to remind the reader again that this dissertation does not want to argue against human rights or the liberal ideal. A question is, however, being asked about the specific effect

some applications of these ideals may have had on Spirit and specifically the spirit of sexuality as defined in the first chapter.

It may be beneficial to first go back in history (as Irigary suggested) and also look at the bigger (societal) picture again before returning to the Spirit of sex.

For Nietzsche, the ancient Greek civilisation was preferred above modern culture's homogeneity and *jejuneness*. They had a vital culture because they accommodated conflicting ideas, values and lifestyles. The Greek culture was life-affirming and healthy because of this. As opposed to this our modern society is homogenising and represses the body. Through most of his work Nietzsche contrasted a Dionysian culture against an Apollonian lifestyle. "Dionysian culture was eminently life affirming, expressive of bodily energies and passions, and bound together individuals in shared cultural experiences of ecstasy, intoxication, and festivals, which Nietzsche believed created strong and healthy individuals and a vigorous culture." This Greek culture of "suffering and redemption" created a "tragic pessimism' that in turn created the conditions in which philosophy and great art led and redeemed humanity and produced healthy and strong societies (Kellner, 1991, p. 7).

It can be argued that this is the equivalent of the discord and tension caused by Hegel's Struggle for Recognition. The struggle for balance between the Dionysian and Apollonian is the moment when Spirit comes into being. This Spirit leads to greatness.

The vibrant Greek society was replaced by Socratic culture. Socratic culture was optimistic that a good life is possible through reason. Reason would discover truth. This was, for Nietzsche, the birth of Enlightenment optimism and modern rationalism. All this would have life-negating results. Socrates for Nietzsche was thus a symbol of decay, of atrophying life-instincts in which reason came to dominate the body and the passions, a process that intensified over the centuries" (Kellner, 1991, p. 8).

Again it is possible to see the narrative of this dissertation unfolding. Tension is negated in search of the good life. It seems that humanity always pays for that "good" life in Spirit.

The society Kojève wished to see[12] can be equated to Socratic culture. Kojève negated the Spirit he found in Hegel's master/slave narrative in the same way Socratic sensibilities negated Greek passion. For Kojève human history, which is basically Hegel's Struggle for

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[12] See chapter 2, section 2.2

Recognition, ends when the opposition is suspended. "At this point, true equality through mutual recognition is achieved in what Kojève calls the 'universal and homogeneous' political state ('universal' in the sense of upholding the principle of equality for all, and 'homogeneous' in the sense of eliminating cultural, religious, ethnic and other particularities in favour of equal citizenship)" (Sinnerbrink, 2007, p. 140).

Nietzsche's criticises the same principles of the modern state that Kojève praises. He believed the liberal society expressed sickness and resentment. All the "movements" and causes are characteristics of Socratic culture "that posit reason over passion, ideas over life, and all are also manifestations of modern leveling and homogenising tendencies, and are thus anti-life, helping to produce weak individuals and cultures" (Kellner, 1991, p. 13).

The homogeneous state Nietzsche refers to was an ideal which was thought to be proof that equality has finally been achieved. This is however, not how it played out.

In feminist theory, "sameness" sometimes refers to same sex or queer theory. This is not what is meant here. The focus of this dissertation is heterosexual relationships and other sexual identities are only important in so far as they overstep their own concerns and negatively influence heterosexual relations. This, sadly, happens regularly when a minority of the (sexual) population tries to obliterate gender. "It is one thing to attack other interpretations so as to keep dominating and winning over competing world views; it is another to attack the very source of new challenges, the physiological and intellectual qualities which certain human beings possess" (Tomasi, 2007, p. 168).

In the article, *The Sexual is Political*, Žižek (2016, p. 1) says about this phenomenon that it is a paradox that plays out frequently. He says "the more marginal and excluded one is, the more one is allowed to assert one's ethnic identity and exclusive way of life. This is how the politically correct landscape is structured …" He writes that transgenderism behaves the same way. Transgender subjects who defy all "normal" rules and codes, are hyper-sensitive when they feel as if they are oppressed by being forced to choose a role. They then demand a place where they could recognise themselves. (Is it possible to recognise yourself?)

> "The vision of social relations that sustains transgenderism is the so-called postgenderism: a social, political and cultural movement whose adherents advocate a voluntary abolition of gender, rendered possible by recent scientific progress in biotechnology and reproductive technologies. Their proposal not only concerns

scientific possibility, but is also ethically grounded. The premise of postgenderism is that the social, emotional and cognitive consequences of fixed gender roles are an obstacle to full human emancipation" (Žižek, 2016, p. 1).

Žižek goes on to explain that the reason why every new identity group that tries to incorporate others fails, is not because there are so many that can't be classified, but precisely because the real sexual differences persist. He says these differences "defy every categorisation" but are still unavoidable. The multitude of gender identities all flow around a discord which it is forever tied to. "Gays are male, lesbians female; transsexuals enforce a passage from one to another; cross-dressing combines the two; bi-gender floats between the two… Whichever way we turn, the two lurks beneath" (Žižek, 2016, p. 1). The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement wants to deconstruct that which is seen by society as normal; they want to challenge the binary sexual oppositions of male and female. These campaigners recognise in the opposition a history of tension. They, however, presume that this tension only exists because a multitude of sexual positions are narrowed down to only two and that a myriad of sexual positions will flourish (each as a consistent ontological whole) if this forced binary is removed. "From the Lacanian standpoint, nonetheless, the antagonistic tension is irreducible, as it is constitutive of the sexual as such, and no amount of classificatory diversification and multiplication can save us from it" (Žižek, 2016, p. 1).

Interestingly, Žižek also refers to a "third element" – one which, in the context and terms of this dissertation, may be seen as Spirit.

> "Difference 'in itself' is thus not symbolic-differential, but real-impossible — something that eludes and resists the symbolic grasp. This difference is the universal as such, that is, the universal not as a neutral frame elevated above its two species, but as their constitutive antagonism. And the third element stands for difference as such, for the 'pure' difference/antagonism which precedes the differentiated terms."

He explains that if the division of society into classes were complete, in other words if there were no elements that did not fit into one of these classes – no excessive groups like rabble, Jews in Nazi-Germany etc. – there would not have been a class struggle. All the classes would have been divided and clear. This third element, as Žižek calls it, is not a group that can't be classified into society, but rather a coming into being of the opposed "difference" itself because the difference precedes the classifications. The third element is "eventual" – it symbolises the never-ending tension between the existing identities/classes. For example, in

an anti-Semitic space, the "Jew" is this antagonism because "without the Jewish intruder, the other classes will live in harmony …" (Žižek, 2016, p. 1).

"… the formula of sexual antagonism is not Male/Female (MF) (the clear opposition between male and female) but MF+, where + stands for the excessive element which transforms the symbolic opposition into the Real of antagonism (Žižek, 2016, p. 1).

Following from the previous arguments a mini-narrative may look like this: After fighting for basic human rights, liberal activists eventually campaigned for the freedom to be anyone you want to be. This led to the refutation of biological and sexual differences, amongst other such denials. This emphasis on personal identity led to no-identity and a sameness because rather than unique, everyone became non-descript. Does the denial of natural/traditional/biological identities lead to the experience of "all interpretations are false" rather than the intended experiences of all interpretations are special and valid? Nietzsche also described this apparent dichotomy. "He saw Christianity, morality, and social conformity levelling individuals into a homogeneous herd, and fragmenting into incommensurate social groups. Both tendencies have indeed accelerated since Nietzsche's day …" (Kellner, 1991, p. 25).

This levelling negated struggle and without struggle it can be said that a crisis of authenticity arose. Without struggle the "pre-Socratic discord" Nietzsche looks for in a society, Žižek's "third element" and Irigary's "wonder," all disappear. This, for Nietzsche, was nihilism. And what is nihilism if not a condition without Spirit?

Tomasi (2007, pp. 153–154) says that for Nietzsche "… (n)ihilism as the radical repudiation of value, meaning and desirability is a force contrary to the will to create something that is valuable, meaningful and desirable ... we could say, with Nietzsche, that nihilism, as a belief in meaninglessness, as the inference that "all interpretations are false," is opposed to the interpretive activity, a process by which meaning is "introduced."

Nietzsche saw the modern individual as "decadent" because they obediently yielded to the social domination. He believed their instinct for life was decaying. The modern individual is full of ressentiment of those they perceive as strong. Nietzsche believed that these people perpetuate nihilism because they didn't believe in great ideals and values any more. It was a mark of cultural fatigue and the cure is a transvaluation of values. He stressed emphatically the utter futility and undesirability of modern efforts to harmonise contrary spheres of values and ideas. The capacity to orient to the world from fundamentally different and conflictual

perspectives subverts the abstract rationalism, one-sidedness, and mediocrity characteristic of modern selves and theory (Kellner, 1991, p. 20).

It seems indeed as if the attempts to negate sexual difference may be futile. This has been argued by many. History has also confirmed it. In her article, *Arendt, the body and the loss of the political,* Mabille (2016a, p. 1) writes in this regard:

> "If anything, modern society is but the expression of a universal life-interest – a collection of wordless subjects united only by their universal need for safety and survival. Unlike political friendship, the sociability of the body of *animalia laborans* exhibits a pathological closeness that is devoid of genuine fellow-feeling. Arendt was painfully aware that the cult of 'warmth' and 'human empathy' was insufficient to prevent the actions of the Nazis in WWII. Late modern society commits the error that by focusing on similitude, uncomfortable difference would be overcome. Rather than to stimulate the forging of the social bond, the body as source for social unity has stripped man of his most human characteristics and reduced him to the anonymity of animal life."

Indeed, as referred to in this dissertation already, Žižek reminded us that to be reduced to animals means to be reduced to the basic instincts of procreation. There is no sexual Spirit in procreation. Is this what sameness will do to Spirit in the end?

3.6 The tyranny of morality

Where is the last place Spirit can hide? Where is the last place where struggle can be found; a struggle between conflicting ideas, conflicting interpretations, a struggle between good and evil? When all are bland, will the last bit of unharmed tension not be found within?

Paglia (2014, p. 1) argues that "liberalism lacks a profound sense of evil … The basic Leftist premise, descending from Marxism, is that all problems in human life stem from an unjust society and that corrections and fine-tunings of that social mechanism will eventually bring utopia. Progressives have unquestioned faith in the perfectibility of humankind" (Paglia, 2014, p. 1). There is, however, "no fixed or natural point at which liberty and equality come into balance, nor any way of optimising both simultaneously" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 239). So

liberty is starting to lose the contest, because the last vestige of freedom has been stormed. We are being told what morality we should and will have.

Morality is another way in which Spirit is sublimated. And here, we return again to the master-slave theme of this dissertation.

In the first essay of *Genealogy of Morals,* Nietzsche provides us with his version of a master-slave narrative. The dominant master lives the "good" life. They are depicted as active unreflective, uninhibited, powerful and having physical self-affirmation. The slaves are weak and submissive and cannot enjoy life through physical self-affirmation. These slave resent (ressentiment) the master's valuations and one day they revolt against it (Owen, 2006, p. xxi).

This revolt happens in the imagination of the slaves where they can harm the masters even if they cannot harm them physically. So they invent a new evaluation, a new concept which they call "evil." Evil is what they use to describe the lifestyle of the masters and they use it judgementally, disapprovingly. Slaves can now affirm themselves against what they are not – they are not the "evil" which eventually becomes the central focus of their morality. Nietzsche says good, in slave-morality, is that which is not-evil.

"Through a variety of further conceptual inventions (notably, 'free will'), the slaves stylise their own natural weakness into the result of a choice for which they can claim moral credit. Western morality has historically been a struggle between elements that derive from a basic form of valuation derived from masters and one derived from slaves" (Nietzsche, 1973, p. xxi).

A healthy conversation or struggle between these conflicting moralities could have (in keeping with the argument put forth in this dissertation) been the catalyst for action; for Spirit. But this is not how slave morality functions. Tomasi (2007, p. 168) puts it rather harshly when he writes that

> "such dogmatic aberration manifests itself with a vengeance in the form of Christian morality. The Christian interpretation is not life-denying simply because it "despise[s] every other way of life, but because its expansionistic tendency aims to overcome the world by fostering and nurturing one type of human being, passive in essence, at the expense of another type, the creative. Even though it has saved us from "practical nihilism," it has done so by initiating a process leading to a "slow suicide."

Slave morality promised a heaven in the future where salvation awaits in return for obedience and submission to institutions and social forces. In this way powerlessness and ressentiment was turned into social control and discipline - "herds" who obey the dominant morality. For Nietzsche the result of this subjugation through the repression of the body was the frustration of instincts (Kellner, 1991, p. 6).

We live in the era of slave morality. It can be said that the Struggle for Recognition became a struggle to be recognised as a victim. Choose your identity, choose the specificity of your victimhood, become interdependent, and disappear as an individual. This happens when morality oppresses the individual by controlling their behaviour through universal and restrictive structures. Morality is inherently something that oppresses individual drives and passions because it is universal. It leads to "excessive subjectivism and inwardness, creating unhealthy concerns with guilt, shame, and conscience" (Kellner, 1991, p. 10).

Today enforced morality can be seen everywhere. Social media is regularly being used to impose it. One example happened in November 2014 when British physicist Matt Taylor wore a shirt which featured cartoon images of scantily clad women. The public (feminist) outrage was so huge that it overshadowed the historical scientific achievement of the moment and he was humiliated and forced to apologise in public (Young, 2014, p. 1).

To be able to enforce a specific morality there needs to be an enforcer. It is also important that society is receptive for this. "… Hegels' *Aufhebung* (sublimation) of the will is therefore not merely individual self-control, but the explicit socialisation of man's interest. It is the explicit recognition by the will that the satisfaction of individual needs lies in social interdependence and interaction" (Houlgate, 1986, p. 15).

Arendt argues the same point when she comments on the rise of society which coincided with the decline of the family. She says the family unit was absorbed into corresponding social groups. Equality found in these groups is a far cry from the ideal of equality among peers and rather resembled the equality of household members before the power of the head of the household. In society, however, when there is a common interest and opinion which is enforced by sheer numbers, actual rule by one person could eventually disappear. "The phenomenon of conformism is characteristic of the last stage of this modern development." (Arendt, 1958:41) In this instance, the head of the social order is no longer an absolute ruler, but a kind of "no-ruler." But, importantly, this one interest and one opinion of society as a whole still rules, even though it does not have a personality. "As we know from the most

social form of government, that is, from bureaucracy (the last stage of government in the nation-state, just as one-man rule in benevolent despotism and absolutism was its first), the rule by nobody is not necessarily no-rule; it may indeed, under certain circumstances, even turn out to be one of its crudest and most tyrannical versions" (Arendt, 1958, p. 41).

In this regard, and returning to the morality of sex and sexuality, Paglia contends that the feminist establishment has become the new moralists, replacing the moralists of the 1950's. Feminists are now the representatives of codes and authority. "Its rampant policing of thought and speech is completely reactionary, a gross betrayal of the radical principles of 1960s counterculture, which was inaugurated in the US by the incendiary Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley" (Hartman, 2013, p. 1).

Paglia believes that people should be free from moralist and feminists who try to regulate sex. Her view is that as long as there is no violence, sexual conduct should not be legislated at all. Intrusion by authority of any kind is totalitarian (Hartman, 2013, p. 1). This will leave room for Spirit to breathe.

In *Nietzsche on the Cross: The Defence of Personal Freedom in The Birth of Tragedy*, Borody (2003, p. 80) writes that "ecstasy as a human experience has always been micro-managed by the powers that be, whether by the Alpha males of primitive hunter-gatherer tribes or the bureaucratic power-functionaries of the Modern State." The managing of morality is one such example. It is the opinion of this dissertation that the moment of Spirit can't contain morality. Morality has to do with the moment after that, the action following the moment of tension. If that action is the negation of the life-affirming contradictions, Spirit will die.

3.7. Conclusion

It can be said that in the case of the struggle for human rights, good intentions had some unfortunate side effects. After the World Wars, history was driven by the desire never to repeat the monstrosities done by humankind. History was driven by fear, rather than Spirit. It was driven by a wish we had to be more humane and check ourselves. In our attempts to bring equality to all, we may however, have overreached our welcome and ventured into spheres where tension should not be negated because in some places tension is needed to inflame relationships and Spirit.

Chapter 4
Spirit's *Pharmakon*

4.1 Prelude

In philosophy, the word *Pharmakon* is used as a synthesis between three words; combining the meanings of the words poison, remedy, and scapegoat. In this chapter this dissertation turns to two texts which may at first not seem to have anything in common. The first text is the Old Testament book, *Song of Songs*, hailed as an erotic exception to the rest of the Bible. The second "text" that will be looked at is the combined writings of De Sade. It will be argued that both have been a poison as well as a remedy for Spirit in sexuality.

Since this is a philosophical dissertation, it will not presume to make literary or theological assumptions or arguments. In line with the purpose of this study, the focus will continue to be on Spirit as defined in the first chapter. Struggle and moments of recognition (and tension) will guide the motif of this chapter. In this regard it may be interesting to identify different "locations" of Spirit. The first location is the Spirit of the author and how he/she might be in a struggle with their culture or environment. Another instance of Spirit is found in the commentaries and the influence of the commentaries on society as well as on the book of *Song of Songs* itself. The last instance of Spirit, this investigation wants to argue, lies within the text itself – which leads to the question if there is a negation of the inherent Spirit of the *Song of Songs* itself.

Just like all the topics touched on in this dissertation so far, *Song of Songs* encompasses too many years of research (and centuries of interpretation) and too many points of argument even to start scraping the surface here. The same can be said for the writings of De Sade. The scope also doesn't allow for in-depth discussions of these themes. A few of the most important matters will be acknowledged here, before focusing on some specifically for the purpose of this dissertation.

4.2 *Song of Songs*

Although *Song of Songs* is found in the Hebrew and Christian Bible, there is no unconcealed reference to God, prayer or any religious practice in it. As opposed to this dissimilarity with the "book" in which it was incorporated, through archaeological endeavours, a strong likeness has been found in the past century between love poetry of ancient Egypt and *Song of Songs*. *Song of Songs* is a popular book amongst scholars. More than a hundred commentaries on *Song of Songs* have already been written by the year 1200 while "… linguistic evidence indicates that it is to be dated between the fourth and the second centuries B.C.E." (Davis, 2000, p. 231).

4.2.1 Song of contention

Commentaries on the *Song of Songs* usually have long introductions in which questions of genre, dating, authorship, structure and purpose, to name a few, are discussed. Authors of commentaries must decide where they stand on issues like the number of characters in *Song of Songs*, the historical context, the unity of the book and the theological arguments. They should address hermeneutical questions concerning the genre to indicate how the book will be read, for example as an allegory, a wisdom book, liturgical text, a drama or a poem about love and sexuality. In general, recently "(t)hree broad approaches have been developed to answer some or all of these questions: the comparative approach which emphasises the role of other ancient literature; the feminist approach which focuses on questions of gender; and a literary approach which analyse the poetic structure of the book" (Clarke, 2012, p. 168).

There are therefore different kinds of commentary on *Song of Songs*. The first is an allegorical interpretation of Songs. This is a more traditional method of commentary. The historical-critical method of commentary relies apart from textual concerns, also on evidence from outside the Bible, such as from archaeology or comparative literature. Such a commentary is concerned with dating, setting, purpose and authorship and the text itself is examined in detail. Some commentators prefer to focus on the literary questions, while others read it as a collection of poems about love. Theological commentaries believe the *Song of Songs* has a theological purpose and their theology provide the guideline for their interpretations (Clarke, 2012:172).

When reading the literature about *Song of Songs* it is apparent that scholars still do not agree about most of the issues mentioned above. But "(w)hile scholars continue to hold different opinions on the above mentioned issues, a good number of modern scholars however agree that the Song is a poem of love" (Juma, 2014, p. 119).

In step with the line of thought proposed in this dissertation, such contention and tension between opposing views vying for recognition, are good for the Spirit of *Song of Songs*. As long as difference exists, the Song will continue to inspire scholars.

This dissertation proposes that the aspiration to negate especially sexual energy, arises from people's discomfort with the subject. This discomfort has influenced readings of *Song of Songs* through the ages prompting analysts to try to solve this perturbation. Fields (1980, pp. 221–222) supports this theory by writing that

> "… it is the very obviousness of the sexual love of the Song that is the root of this variety; for, to the Western Christian mind explicit statements about sexual love and detailed descriptions of the anatomy of the human body, all discussed under a number of unmistakable and rather graphic similes and metaphors, are most embarrassing to read in a book of the Bible."

It can thus be argued that commentaries themselves have been a *pharmakon* to the Spirit of the *Song of Songs*, sometimes aiding Spirit and sometimes destroying it.

One such a negation of the natural spirit of sexuality may be the allegorical interpretation of *Song of Songs*. Houlgate (1986, p. 14) in *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics,* maintains that humankind was "purely natural" before Christianisation. His/her behaviour was regulated by instincts. Christianity smothered the natural and gave man/woman "power to negate themselves." In this way humankind made something unnatural of themselves by violating the natural order.

The history of the exegesis of the *Song of Songs* is therefore also a reflection of Jewish and Christian commentators' techniques of dealing with their discomfort about the text's sexuality which they can't ignore (Fields, 1980, p. 222). Tanner (1997, p. 26), confirms this

point, writing that the idea that the *Song of Songs* can be read and understood as it is as plain and straightforward, has been resisted throughout the ages. Proponents of allegory as an interpretative method have insisted on a "spiritual" message hidden in *Song of Songs,* which message would lift the book above the earthly subject of human sexuality. The search for the meaning behind the obvious has led to a plethora of interpretations. Jewish interpreters read *Song of Songs* as an allegory of "the love between God and the nation of Israel, and Christian interpreters have suggested that the book depicts love between Christ and His bride, the church. The interpretation of the details, however, became quite varied and fanciful" (Tanner, 1997, p. 26).

Another kind of reading of *Song of Songs* that may have negated Spirit, is the theological one, most recently Schwienhorst-Schönberger (Hagendorn, 2005). Theological commentators interpret *Song of Songs* as negating the negative narrative of the Garden of Eden. "The theological importance of the Song is that it represents the reversal of that primordial exile from Eden. In a word, it returns us to the Garden of God" (Davis, 2000, p. 232). Just like the story found in Genesis 2-3, the *Song of Songs* is also set in a garden. This garden in which the lovers tryst is however, one where love reigns and where the relationship is once more at peace, equal and in harmony. Mortality is overcome by love, which is "as strong a death" (Amos, 1991, p. 51). Reminded of the thesis of this dissertation that struggle and tension is needed for Spirit to come into existence and flourish, the garden found in *Song of Songs* may be beautiful, but it is ultimately barren.

Meyer (2000, p. 210) (inadvertently while in another context commenting on modern literary techniques) shows us how other kinds of commentary may sidestep these unintentional forms of negation and become a remedy of Spirit:

> "Recently, however, scholars trained in literary analysis as such, rather than in the peculiar brand of literary criticism developed for or linked to the study of sacred writings, have begun to examine the *Song of Songs*. In so doing, they have explored its figurative languages and have liberated the rich imagery as well as the poetic craft from the inescapable though unintentional constraint imposed by the methodological predisposition of both traditional allegorists and critical exegetes."

4.2.2 As sung by women?

Gender is an important theme found in commentaries on *Song of Songs*. One of the questions frequently debated is whether the author(s) was male or female. Another consideration is whether the fact that the "voice" of the author assumes a female character (in spite of what the gender of the "real" author might be) can be interpreted as a sign that the women of *Song of Songs* are liberated, equal to the men, and sexually emancipated. A third aspect of gender in *Song of Songs* concerns the heterosexual characteristic of the sexual relationship.

With regard to the gender of the author, Exum (2000, p. 27) in her article *Ten Things Every Feminist should know about Song of Songs* which was published in *The Song of Songs. A Feminist Companion to the Bible* reminds the reader that

> "(t)here are no real women in this text. The Song is not a transcript of a lovers' tryst. It is not a record of the words of real women spoken to or about their lovers. It is a text, an artistic creation, and the man and woman/men and women are literary personae, literary constructs. We know from our reading experience that a person who speaks in a text is not the same as the author, but, when it comes to the Song, commentators tend to forget it …We cannot use the Song as evidence of what (ancient Israelites) in love commonly did and felt."

Exum acknowledges that there may be a possibility that the *Song of Songs* has a female author as was argued by literary scholar Harold Bloom, but thinks it is unlikely. As it is, it is problematic separating an author from a voice in an anonymous text (Exum, 2005, p. 67). The women may be creations of male writers. Authors can become whoever they wish to become and assume any voice they choose. The woman, perceived as free and equal, may even be the creation of an androcentric author" (Exum, 2000:28).

Focusing on the implications of the "female voice," be it the voice of the author, character or text, Meyer, in a feminist reading, concentrates on the implications of the fact that this voice is being heard and insists that the *Song of Songs* is indeed a text that can be interpreted as a feminist text. She argues that in analysing the Song we must take into account that conventional and traditional images for gender are reversed in the poem. Normally in the patriarchal world of ancient Israel, an androcentric perspective would have held sway.

Biblical literature in general came from this perspective. In the Hebrew Bible, women are mostly portrayed as accessories of men, important only in relation to men and their activities. The society found in the Bible is a male society: written from a male perspective about male accomplishments and in relation to a male God. "Yet in the Song, such characteristics disappear and in fact the opposite may be true; that is, a gynocentric mode predominates" (Meyer, 2000, p. 218). The majority of the characters in the *Song of Songs* are female, but this does not detract from the awareness of gender mutuality. Meyer (2000, p. 220) asserts that "neither male nor female is set in an advantageous position with respect to the other… In the erotic world of human emotion, there is no subordination of female to the male."

Burrus and Moore (2003, p. 26) confirm the premise of the feminist argument when they write that "(t)he feminist trajectory in this general swerve in critical discourse on the Song is furthermore characterised by an intense emphasis on the essential equality of its male and female protagonists - an unqualified equality, not hedged in by hierarchy …" Does the female voice in the *Song of Songs*, however act and speak in a way foreign to the customs of Old Testament society?

Polaski (2008, p. 436), in the article *Where Men are Men and Women are Women? The Song of Songs and Gender* questions the assumptions about equality in the *Song of Songs*. While acknowledging that the *Song of Song* indeed offers us a picture of a "mutualistic" sexual relationship between a man and a woman he argues that this does not imply that the poem considers what is masculine and what is feminine identical or even interchangeable. "Men and women are different in the Song," he says.

This fact, this dissertation will argue, is not disputed. Even feminist readings acknowledge that in *Song of Songs* two distinctly different genders are in love and lust with each other. Polaski (2008, p. 437) emphasises:

> "The *Song of Songs* assumes that males and females differ yet relate to each other. The Song underscores this view by linking its masculine and feminine figures to the created order. Masculinity and femininity are simply part of the way things are. …Within this overarching sense of order, the Song attempts to define masculinity and femininity as distinct categories. The masculine figure appears as the object of female desire and, likewise, the feminine figure is the object of male desire."

The issue, however, lies in how the desire is expressed, and this shines a different light on the "equality" claim. Polaski (2008, pp. 437–438) argues that the male character in the *Song of Songs* is most frequently desired when he is not with the female character. Her longing is a theme that is found throughout the poem. To be masculine in the Song means to be able to decide to be absent, to be your own master. In contrast the desire of the male character for the female figure is constructed differently in the sense that she is, in most instances, a direct object of desire. In this case the male is present and expressing his wishes "Despite a degree of mutuality in their relationship, the masculine figure seems to be the primary focus, the one who is free to move, the one who must be found" (Polaski, 2008, p. 438). This reading may imply that the degree of mutuality perceived in the *Song of Song* may be a very thin layer. Polaski insists that gender lines are blurred only to be reinstated in a different way, as if obeying an underlying anxiety to maintain clear distinctions in the end. This happens often when the feminine character asserts some kind of control in the world of the poem (Polaski, 2008, p. 440).

Juma (2014, p. 106) remains positive, though, that the feminist readings of *Song of Songs* still have constructive implications, in spite of the fact that the book can't escape the patriarchal milieu of the time. She writes that "(i)n the Song, the female voice, therefore, presents readers of the Bible with a new image of women with regards to issues of sex and sexuality. One will also further see that while the *Song of Songs* in certain regards remains a patriarchal book, the female voice in itself may offer the readers of today an incentive to advocate for a society where gender parity is the norm."

The third area of contention that is discussed here with regards to the feminist reading is the heteronormative character of the *Song of Songs*. In their article titled *Unsafe sex: Feminism, Pornography, and the Song of Songs,* Burrus and Moore (2003, p. 29) take exception to the heterosexual character of *Song of Songs*. They argue that the erotic lyrics of love, found in the Song, is underpinned by an intrinsic, essential sexual orientation that is accepted as a truth of their identities as gendered subjects. The expression of love between the male and female enforces the assumption that the *Song of Song* is about heterosexual desire and that by implication heterosexual love is accepted as a transhistorical fact rather than a historical construct. They write that "(i)n the wider domain of feminist theory and criticism, heterosexuality has long been suspected of enshrining an eroticisation of gender inequality..."

and criticise the feminist commentary of the Song for interpreting a book with such glaring faults as a paragon of erotic gender equality (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 30).

4.2.3 And the walls came tumbling down

Mirroring the demolishing of the private-public boundary in service of a liberated, equal sexuality (as discussed in the previous chapter[13]) the different spheres found in *Song of Songs* befalls the same fate. The spirit of the erotic poem, which plays out in a private/intimate setting, is superimposed to the public/political sphere where inference is made about perceived significance without taking into account the different conditions of each milieu.

For example, Meyer, (2000, p. 220) holds that the domestic realm, in pre-modern societies, belonged to the women. Women were in charge of the realm of life which incorporated the technologies, spirituality, socialising and procreation. In agrarian cultures, the household was the dominant unit economically and socially, which means the women's roles were hardly subordinate or secondary. She writes that "(t)he Song of Songs, set apart from the stratifying consequences of institutional and public life, reveals a balance between male and female. The domestic setting allows for the mutual intimacy of male and female relationships to be expressed" (Meyer, 2000, p. 220).

Meyer maintains that the supremacy of the female characters and the fact that they are described in masculine language in this realm of love and erotic mutuality are related to the fact that this song of love sprung from the "the non-official and non-public arena of daily life" (Meyer, 2000, p. 221). The ideal of female power which is raised by the images of military architecture and animals are perfectly suited to the "private' world of Israelite households where women are strong and in charge.

> "Precisely because it is set apart from the national and the institutional settings that constitute the compelling religious and historical originality of the biblical corpus, the Song depicts that aspect of life in which the female role was primary. Public life looms large in the Bible, and females consequently are virtually invisible. But where

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[13] See chapter 3, section 3.2.3

private life can be seen apart from the myopic focus on the people of Israel, one glimpses a life with lively female prominence" (Meyer, 2000, p. 221).

Thus, according to this information, the fact that the sphere in which *Song of Songs* plays out is set apart from institutional and public life (and the consequences faced in those spheres), allows for circumstances where a balance between male and female can be achieved. "The domestic setting allows for the mutual intimacy of male and female relationships to be expressed" (Meyer, 2000, p. 220).

Is it valid to interpret the *Song of Songs* as a text reflecting equality between the sexes if the women's voice is heard mainly in the context of the domain where she already enjoys a dominant position? Is it a reversal of the female image if she traditionally already had a voice in the domestic realm – the realm from where her voice is heard in *Song of Songs*?

A *pharmakon* is found again; this time in the feminist appropriation of *Song of Songs* mostly based on the embracing of the female "voice." It is interesting to note that "sameness[14]" as opposed to equality – discussed in the previous chapter – does not feature in feminist readings of *Song of Songs*. Although the perceived equality between the male and female characters of the Song is hailed by most feminist commentators, it is evident (or accepted as evident by most) that there is an interaction between male and female, a play between lovers of different genders – and even though the female character may at times be described in strong, male terms, the difference between the sexes in *Song of Songs* is still clear. It may even be argued that in this instance it is important for the feminist reading that difference *should* exist because a narrative about a woman who comes into her own (sexual) female power in a male-dominated society (or in spite of a male-dominated society) would be stronger than one which merely shows that all genders were/would become "the same." The voice of the author/character in a *Song of Songs* poem is important precisely because it is not the same as that of the male, and the sphere of power does not lie in the same place as that of the male. She is thus not liberated "in the society," but is rather recognised as what she is, but with a voice to proclaim it. Her achievement is one driven by the Spirit of the struggle and by tension, precisely because "she" is speaking into a society in which she is not free. At times it seems as if feminist interpreters so deeply desire a book in the Bible that can be

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[14] See chapter 3, section 3.4

commandeered for the female sex that they are prepared to overlook some themes with which most traditionally would have had problems. In this case, however, to read *Song of Songs* as a sign that the women in the poem were free and equal and the same as men would be to negate that moment of Spirit whipped up by the *Song of Songs*. It would be counter-intuitive to the feminist cause and a negation of the Spirit of feminism.

4.2.4 Song of sex and the sound of violence

This dissertation proposes a question about the Spirit of sexuality. Moving from the sublimated and allegorical to the genuine and eventually the disturbing, it is important to take into account how deep the chasm between intellectually commenting on a poem of love and sexual metaphors, and considering the sex found within the same pages may be. Carr (2003, p. 5) reflects on this divide when he says **"…** the Song was perceived as either sexual or spiritual. Yet these opposing readings reflect a much deeper separation of sexuality and spirituality, mind and body, which runs through the heart of Western culture, particularly Western Christian Culture."

Juma (2014) brings the reader of *Song of Songs* back to reality as opposed to the romantic interpretation. She acknowledges the violence of the society in which the women of *Songs of Songs* feature. We know about the life of women in the Old Testament, she contends, through stories and moral laws found in the Old Testament. Most of these show that men had control over women's sexuality. Because women are portrayed negatively in the Old Testament, traditional interpretations of some passages have also been negative about women. Women and girls of the Old Testament were probably afraid of expressing their sexual feelings. It must have been difficult for them to share their feelings and even to come forward when sexually violated (Juma, 2014, pp. 106–108).

Focusing on the sexual violence found in *Song of Songs* leads us to a transgressive reading of *Song of Songs*. Sometimes, when sexuality turns "darker" it is classified as pornography. This may not be an accurate assumption, but for the sake of this dissertation (and scope), this link will not be questioned. In exploring a final commentary of *Song of Songs* we discover, even here, a possible master-slave narrative.

In *Unsafe sex: Feminism, Pornography, and the Song of Songs,* Burrus and Moore (2003, pp. 30–31) make the same point when writing that "… pornography epitomises the kind of sex that most people, feminist or not, claim to like least of all. The egalitarian erotics attributed to the Song by successive feminist critics has permitted a frankly literal reading of its sexual innuendos, while simultaneously preserving it from charges of being pornographic" (Burrus and Moore, 2003, pp. 30–31).

Can it not then be argued that the feminist aversion to a pornographic reading have been a form of censorship? What would a pornographic reading entail and what may it mean for the Spirit of sexuality?

A first answer to these questions may be that a pornographic[15] reading of *Song of Songs* will create struggle and tension as opposed to the "censored," erotic/loving, quality-based readings previously discussed. A pornographic *Song of Songs* will create tension between the various types of reading of *Song of Songs*, it will create tension between different feminist readings, it will create tension between two versions of the text and it will create tension between die characters in the poem.

Perhaps the text lacked a "male gaze" to recognise (or acknowledge) the male gaze – as well as the pornography – found therein. Clines (1995, p. 95) presupposes that the Song was written by a male (as opposed to the viewpoint this dissertation has been focusing on up to

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[15] While doing research for this dissertation, a secondary theme presented itself. A literary (in both senses of the word) study into the use of erotic "tools" in *Song of Songs* and comparing it with other erotic writing may be interesting. *Song of Songs* may, for instance, be compared with De Sade's work, as well as the work of Anaïs Nin. Such a study may link to the theme of this dissertation because erotic words are used to summon up the Spirit of sexuality. The difference between erotic work and pornographic work may also fit into this theme. (Some traces of this theme will be visible in this dissertation.) Concerning erotic strategies, Exum wrote: "Among these strategies I include such features as the illusion of immediacy, the impression that, far from being simply reported, the action is taking place in the present, unfolding before the reader conjuring (and allowing to disappear), that is, the way the lovers materialise and dematerialise through speech in an infinite deferral of presence; the invitation to the reader to enter into a seemingly private world of eroticism; the use of double entendre, circumlocution and indirect language, which enables the poem to be read as both delicately and explicitly erotic, and blurring the distinctions between anticipation, enjoyment of love's delights, and satisfaction (and so between past, present, and future); and the way the poem circles back upon itself, repeating itself and ending without closure so that it can begin again with desire in medias res: "let him kiss me …" (Meyer, 2000). These are strategies by which the poet strives to make present, through language, what cannot be captured on the page, the lovers whose various identities enable them to stand for all lovers and, ultimately, for love itself." About *Song of Songs* as pornography, see Boer (1999, pp. 53–70).
Since this theme falls outside the narrower focus of this dissertation, this matter will further be explored in subsequent research.

this point). He wants to know how the texts compose the woman. He remarks that the woman is constructed as the object of the male gaze. She cannot escape from her male spectators who are the readers of the poems. She has been created by the author to be stared at, without the option of covering up herself. "She has been the victim of male violence and anger and she bears the marks of it on her face; and now the poet invites his readers to share his sight of the woman's humiliation. That is the very stuff of pornography" (Clines, 1995, p. 95).

For Boer[16], pornography is the political opposition to censorship. This was apparently not his reason for writing a "pornographic" version of *Song of Songs*, but it has the effect of opposing the (also probably unintended) censorship of the feminist reading. We do not have to imagine a "pornographic" version of *Song of Songs*, because Boer has already done the work. In *Knockin' on Heaven's door* (Boer, 1999) he performs a pornographic analysis on *Song of Songs.*

Using the same metaphor found in this dissertation, Burrus and Moore (2003, p. 39) describe Boers' "relationship" with *Song of Songs* in BDSM terms:

> "Performing a 'strong,' even violent, reading of the Song as hyper-erotic literature, Boer tops the biblical text. Like all good tops, he is a persuasive as well as a forceful partner. Like all good bottoms, the Song resists even as it surrenders to his will. The Song of Songs is indeed a perverse text, it seems to us. Its excessive eroticism, like that of Boer's commentary, runs counter to the conventionally pornographic - yet it does so differently."

They go on to explain that in Boer's pornographic rendition of Songs, "too much happens too often," whereas in the *Song of Songs* the reader is kept in constant suspense, because nothing

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[16] In an effort to stay true to the dialectic endeavour of this dissertation, it is important to acknowledge Boers' different treatments of *Song of Songs*. He takes issue with the assumption that reading the Song as a poem about human love and sex is a literal reading. He argues that such a reading substitutes the divine allegory for a carnal allegory. To challenge the belief that a literary reading of the Song leads to love and sex, Boer took such an interpretation to its extreme by doing a pornographic reading of the book.
This dissertation appropriates some ideas of the pornographic reading, while acknowledging here that the purpose of that extreme reading was to make an entirely different argument. In the article, *Keeping it literal: The economy of the Song of Songs,* Boer argues "that the *Song of Songs*, or rather the second chapter that is my focus, operates according to what may be called an allocatory worldview. Rather than represented directly, it shows up in the fabric of the language, particularly its imagery. So we need to look elsewhere in order to locate it; hence my focus on metaphor, breaking the metonymic axis and then exploring what world is constructed when the images of nature coalesce (Boer, 2007, pp. 2–3)."

ever happens. The *Song of Songs*, seen from this "bottom" position, becomes a slow, recurring series of detailed scenes that create anticipation but never satisfy the need. In a literary reflection of the erotic frustration of the text, the narrative is also not consummated, frustrating the readers on this level as well (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 40).

Boers' "domination" of *Song of Songs* is an interesting exercise. What does it do to the Spirit of sexuality in this erotic Bible book? It can be proposed that the "frustration" caused by this technique leads to tension, but that the tension is negated by the same thing that causes it. As opposed to eroticism, pornography does not raise Spirit. In this regard the *Song of Songs*, read as pure pornography, poisons Spirit in the same way that De Sade does. (This statement will be elucidated in the next section of this dissertation.)

This, at last, brings us to the master-slave theme of *Song of Songs* and the sexual spirit found in a 'struggle" between these two sexual identities.

There is a general sound of silence about the violent scene found in some verses of *Song of Songs*. The violence perpetrated against the female does not fit the interpretations of the different invested commentators. It also does not fit into the tactic of negation that would normally be used to "soften" any tension found.

Burrus and Moore (2003, p. 41) describe the scene:

> "The *Song of Songs* bottoms out at 5:6-7: 'I opened to my beloved but my beloved had turned and gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer. The watchmen found me as they went about in the city; they beat me, they wounded me, they took away my mantle, those watchmen of the walls.' This sequence reopens and repeats 3:2-4, but whereas the earlier scene ended with a meeting ("scarcely had I passed [the watchmen] when I found him whom I love"- 3:4), the later scene ends with a beating."

Since we are engaged with a pornographic reading of *Song of Songs* – and specifically one opposed to the feminist interpretation, which usually also oppose the idea of submission as a choice – can this scene not be read as representing precisely such a sexually submissive

woman? There are women who desire to experience physical pain and humiliation at the hands of a man (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 43).

The beating is not the only aspect in this scene that may qualify it as a BDSM scene. Denial is a large part of erotic master-slave power play. "The SM tendency of this scene develops further, for as she 'opened to [her] beloved' he 'turned and was gone," writes Boer (1999, p. 69). The withholding by the master of something a slave desires is a recurring theme in BDSM fantasies, in literature as well as physical play. The master would withhold an object of desire, or pleasure, or attention, or the pleasure of "concluding" (orgasm). As mentioned previously, this is also a characteristic of *Song of Songs*. It frustrates because it never "concludes."

"In *Song of Songs*, however the withholding is especially important, it seems to us, for the scene in question, encapsulating a theme that, arguably, permeates the entire Song, and concludes it although without concluding: as we have already noted, the Song goes nowhere, ultimately, and ends without closure" (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 44).

The *Song of Songs* is included in this dissertation because it is a book of love and sexuality. Once R. Akiva said: "No Israelite disputed that the *Song of Songs* renders the hands unclean (being Holy Scripture), for the whole world is not worth the day that the Song was given to Israel. For all the Scriptures are holy, but the *Song of Songs* is Holy of Holies!" (Tomson, 2015, p. 2). In the shadow of all the commentaries on *Song of Song*, this dissertation asks if the poison has not had a bigger influence than the cure? After centuries of undressing *Song of Songs*, not much of her erotic spirit has survived. Whether in service of a spiritual or of a feminist reading, the text has regularly been violated. Spirit has been whipped up by the struggle of the opposing interpretations; but tension has been identified and negated through intellect. Spirit may live in the dialogue about *Song of Songs*, but is the sexual Spirit of *Song of Songs* still alive?

4.3 Donatien Alphonse François de Sade

Almost every commentary, book, article or thesis about the Marquis de Sade introduces him with the same words; e.g. lurid, controversial, deviant, violent, criminal, rebellious. Most see

those characteristics as something negative, while a few argue that it may be interpreted positively when explored from a different angle. This dissertation will not presume to make any moral judgements on De Sade, even though many can be made. The reason for the inclusion of De Sade in this enquiry is strictly to focus on the effect he may have had on the Spirit of sexuality as consistently defined here.

4.3.1 Context paints a clearer picture

The Marquis de Sade lived from 1740 to 1814. He is known for his shocking books *Justine* and its sequals, *La Nouvelle Justine* and *L'Histoire de Juliette*. It was, however, not before the 1920s that artists, philosophers and writers began to seriously take note of him. A profusion of critical work as well as more than twenty biographical studies on De Sade have seen the light since the 1960s (Phillips, 2013, p. 526). "Sade's life lends itself very well to sensational biography: it features illicit sex, revolution, persecution and war. Given that he was an aristocratic revolutionary, a libertine, and a philosopher, Sade's life story gives a good indication both of his Enlightenment interests and education, and his ethical disposition" (Russell, 2014, p. 4).

Part of the renewed interest in De Sade's life and loves was triggered when letters between De Sade and his friends, family and lawyers started emerging from the early 1970s. The recent discovery of correspondence between De Sade and Anne-Prospe`re de Launay - his sister-in-law with whom he had an intense affair - gave new insight into De Sade's personality. Their mutual love as well as his distress when they were separated, leading to an attempt on his own life, became clear. Another De Sade emerged; one that was romantic and capable of deep love (Phillips, 2013, p. 526).

To say that De Sade was misinterpreted and misunderstood and wrongly reviled would be an understatement, but De Sade was also not innocent. He may have violated more characters between the pages he has written than "real" people, but that is because violating people was not what he desired. He wanted to violate society.

The most important aspect to keep in mind when reading De Sade is that he was an Enlightenment thinker. He pushed many themes to the extreme in an attempt to challenge the moral limits of his society. Many of those themes only make sense in the context of the Age

of Enlightenment because a feature of enlightenment was new perspectives and new ways of thinking about God, nature and human nature. However, "Sade's positions on these issues, though rarely original, are taken to such radical extremes that they are transgressive not only in the light of entrenched religious authority, but even to Enlightenment views of reason and ethics" (Russell, 2014, p. 32).

4.3.2 Boundaries – De Sade's windmills

De Sade lived in a tumultuous political time. During his lifetime he lived under three French regimes: the monarchy, the republic and the empire. He also lived in a tumultuous intellectual time when ideas about "atheism, materialism and natural theology competed with traditional religious ideas, and the sheer variety of his arguments is evidence of this" (Russell, 2014, p. 2).

Russell (2014, p. 36) explains the context of the time. She writes that religious thinkers believed that nature was created by God and that it demonstrates God's will. Because of this, nature could provide a template for human behaviour. Radical thinkers argued that nature was rational and could serve as a template for the rational in humans. For enlightenment philosophers, systems of nature were vital for systems of ethics which was not dependent on religion. De Sade was such and enlightenment thinker. He used these systems as basis for ethical theory and elucidated them through detailed scenes. He didn't merely want to advance opposite theories to those that were generally accepted. His goal was not only the promotion of atheism or the materialistic interpretation of Nature or to dispel superstition. His goal was to transgress all of the above. He wanted to transgress ideas of virtue, nature, God and rationalism. Transgression is thus the main characteristic of his system and is the reason why his work cannot be read as purely materialistic. De Sade's ethics, seated in this tension between Christian categories, transgression and reason, is complicated, but cannot just be dismissed because of that. Russell acknowledges that radical and shocking work like De Sade's are generally seen as destroying morals.

It may be true that they are destructive to normal ideas of ethics because libertines on purpose transgress and problematise normative ethics. She writes:

> "When libertines theorise and act out some of the monstrous consequences of taking seriously proposed bases for ethics, such as Christian theology, or nature, or reason, they destroy both those frameworks of thinking which have been used to ground ethics, and the very possibility that ethics can be grounded in any universalising conception of morality. Libertine arguments against universalism highlight the oppressiveness of universal reason, more than a century before postmodernists questioned universal reason" (Russell, 2014, p. 36).

This said, a universal idea must exist for the libertine to oppose. De Sade cannot escape his own culture and context. "At the same time each counterpleasure[17] is particularly suited to its cultural context; each engages some element of subjectivity that is particularly significant for its time and place" (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 19).

De Sade's ethics of transgression is rooted in Christian dogma, theology and practice. Christian ideas have not been homogenous through the ages, but there are Christian categories of understanding which are widely accepted because Christianity has had an enormous impact on the structure of Western thinking and how the world is seen. It is a Christian worldview that informs ideas about sin, good and evil, virtue and sacredness (Russell, 2014, p. 33).

Klossowski (1991, p. 15) writes "… that the atheism proclaimed by normative reason, in the name of man's freedom and sovereignty, is destined to reverse the existing generality into this countergenerality. Atheism, the supreme act of normative reason, is thus destined to establish the reign of the total absence of norms."

From the above remarks it may be inferred that the *modus operandi* of the libertine to transgress the existing norms creates a tension in which Spirit may arise. It is opposed to normative ethics and a Struggle of Recognition between the two doctrines may ensue. The action after this moment of ignition, however, will determine Spirit's destiny. This struggle "must" never be won if Spirit (which the libertine may call Pleasure) is to survive. De Sade "cannot fulfil this destiny because the transgression which the libertines frequently affirm to

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[17] Counterpleasure is MacKendrick's word for transgressive sex.

be the source of their pleasure would lose all meaning if social norms and moral categories were to be abolished" (Klossowski, 1991, p. 15).

4.3.3 Destroying boundaries, destroying sex.

As mentioned earlier, it is not possible to cover pornography as a separate concept in the scope of this dissertation, but it must be mentioned here briefly again because De Sade's writings are regularly defined as pornographic.

In the previous section[18] it was shown that Boer, (1999) as well as Clines, (1995) linked *Song of Songs* to the genre of pornography. De Sade's writing would, however, be poorer one-handed reading than *Song of Songs*. MacKendrick (1999, p. 28) pinpoints what theorists consider pornography: "violence in a sexual context, sexual explicitness with a focus on body parts and disregard for relationality, the degradation of women (and men, but this doesn't seem to perturb such theorists.)" These are not the only characteristics of pornographic text and there is much more to De Sade's writing. One can also find long and at times boring pieces on politics and philosophy, deliberate failure of erotic resolution in the sexual part of his texts (also found in *Song of Songs*) and complicated framing devices. Shaüfer-Althaus, who studies hagiographical narratives, also highlights the sadistic and pornographic traits found in these narratives. She says "(w)ithin female hagiographical narratives, stimulating, pornographic, and often sadistic endeavours can be detected; gendering the tortured body parts such as the tongue, teeth or the breast and thus supporting the development of (negative) erotic fantasies" (Shaüfer-Althaus, 2014, p. 151). Sadism and humiliation does not make pornography, at least not on its own. For De Sade, the reason behind sadism is not merely the desire to have power over people. The basic premise behind sadism is that the law can be overcome or transcended through a form of institutionalised anarchy that conquers reasoned principles. These reasons and principles, however, exceed and spread themselves and in that way questions that which is seen as normal" (Reynolds, 2009, p. 20).

This dissertation argues that De Sade's writing is not pornographic (MacKendrick calls it failed pornography) and also not erotic. As explained previously, he didn't write to titillate. He wrote to decimate. His text does not create erotic tension. De Sade's text, read as anything sexual, is 'self-subverting' "because of the element of interruption, but also because of the

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[18] See chapter 4, section 4.1.4

element of repetition: Sade's narrative climaxes are immediately irrelevant (it is only the next that matters). Boer's text, too, may be read as effectively disrupting the alternating sequence of frenzied build-up and orgasmic release typical of pornography …" (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 45).

If De Sade's writings did not serve the Spirit of sexuality, did his philosophy about sex serve it?

De Sade, according to Roche (2006, p. 157), had no concept of sexual "relations," sexual love or mutual care. Sex is for De Sade, was the attainment of a sensation. Sex and SM (the master-slave narrative) is frequently linked to the experience of a "limit-experience." This refers to a feeling of a falling away of boundaries and merging with the universe. In De Sade's view, a limit-experience can be reached through torture and pain, even independent of penetrative sex. It is thus the violence and pathology of sex which becomes central instead of sex itself (Roche, 2006, pp. 160–161). This means that it would be wrong to link De Sade's variation of limit-experience and master-slave narrative to BDSM where relations as well as limit-experience specifically as a result of sexual stimulation, are paramount.

This dissertation argues that the prerequisite for a limit-experience is precisely the "relations" - which De Sade neglects. Sexual sensation without relationality is masturbation. De Sade's sadism is opposed to society, the violence in his text is opposed to his reader – these are his relations. They are, however, not sexual or erotic relations. They are political relations. The characters in his sexual scenes are merely props on which to hang his outrageousness. A limit-experience cannot be reached without Spirit.

Russell (2014, p. 1) says that "(s)ex is the vehicle for transgression because sexual taboos have been the effect of and have helped to constitute the theological, philosophical and ethical systems which many Enlightenment thinkers sought to challenge." His compulsive writing (even risking his life) is driven by his desire to affront Christian virtue and the structures that intellectually kept them in control. It is abundantly clear that even though De Sade's theme was sex, sex was merely his vehicle. It is the Western culture's obsession with sex and the accompanying neurosis that made this a logical vehicle for his crusade. Sexuality is thus the point of libertine dissertations because it can be used to illustrate society's fault lines. He uses his writing to transgress everything – from religious norms and laws to Enlightenment's understanding of the world and nature. For De Sade and his libertines, sex is only pleasurable when coupled with crime. "In his work, Sade makes transgression inherently

sexual, but he also makes sex inherently transgressive. This is a transgression of societal and cultural taboos" (Russell, 2014, p. 148). His work states that all sex is transgressive and can be nothing else because transgression is a side effect of society – it is created and accepted through the creation of prohibitions.

If there was any Spirit found in De Sade's sexual writings that could be negated, it would have been negated through intellectualisation regardless. In *Radical Evil as a Freudian category*, Žižek (1997, p. 1) focuses on the similarity between De Sade and Kant acknowledging that the link has previously been developed by Adorno, Horkheimer and later Lacan. The basic premise is that De Sade makes use of reason to create a moment when hierarchical rules are suspended and all is permitted. "The point, of course, is that Sade announces the moment when, with the emergence of bourgeois Enlightenment, pleasure itself loses its sacred/transgressive character and is reduced to a rationalised instrumental activity." De Sade shuns metaphysical moralism while knowing the price that will have to be paid is the "radical intellectualisation-instrumentalisation-regimentation of the (sexual) activity intended to bring pleasure" (Žižek, 1997, p. 1).

Here a short detour must first be taken to consider a term that may be substituted for negation namely desublimation. Desublimation is Herbert Marcuse's term "for the process whereby art is rendered banal" (Marcuse, 2010). He argues that the mass production of art and the fact that it saturates the whole of society, has destroyed that which is "most potent in art;" its "antagonism toward the ordinary." This may be another name for what in this dissertation is meant by Spirit? Sublimation, according to Freud, happens when the libido is controlled by the reality principle. Sexual gratification is delayed and altered into something aesthetic. Marcus called this Eros. This artistic realm, Marcus states, is distinct from and hostile towards everyday life. The artistic dimension is lost through desublimation when Eros is reduced to sexuality.

> "Where before in art and literature representations of artists, prostitutes, adulterers, and so forth testified to another, perhaps utopian, life, now they are simply an affirmation of the existing order and carry no power of negation. Desublimation is in this sense repressive. So-called sexual liberation, Marcuse argues, comes at the price of the destruction of Eros, which leaves us with an intensified sexual existence but no resistance to the present, no space that can be considered 'other'" (Marcuse, 2010).

Žižek, in *No sex please, we are post-human!* writes that the radical intellectualisation-instrumentalisation-regimentation desublimates Eros. After all the barriers have fallen, after sexual activity has been transformed, after all sublimation's barriers have been broken down, we don't get "raw, brutal, passionate satisfying animal sex. We rather, get something that is regulated, controlled, manipulated and intellectualised - something without Spirit?

De Sade's characters are thus not passionately immersed in the pleasures of sex; they are intellectual and cold-blooded and alienated from what the flesh has to offer. His pleasure is not derived from sex but from the "contest" with rational civilisation, trying to beat it at its own game by taking an idea/intellectualisation to its logical conclusion. De Sade shows us that sensual bodily pleasure and spiritual love are not opposed but interlaced. Passionate, sensual lust can be deeply spiritual and a desublimation of sexuality will, through intellectualisation, turn something with Spirit (an intense pathetic experience) into something that is apathetic and mechanic (Žižek, 1997, p. 3).

From this, this dissertation argues that De Sade's sexuality holds no Spirit. He used sex to desublimate sex. Instead of freeing it, it is destroyed. (The "good intentions" of the liberal movement comes to mind.)

4.3.4 Destroying boundaries, destroying Spirit

Even though the focus of this dissertation is the spirit of sexuality, the same thesis and process of investigation may be applied to other areas where Spirit may be found and may be threatened. It may also be argued that optimal conditions for Spirit in spheres other than the sexual, may unwittingly open up spaces where sexuality with Spirit can be experienced. De Sade may have raised up Spirit by heightening the tension caused by boundaries.

Schaeffer, author of *The Marquis de Sade: A life*, writes in an article titled *Perverting de Sade* (2001) that commentators are of the opinion that the point of De Sade's work and life was to oppose censorship. This, he says, is wrong. "In fact, his main obsession was to push the limits – sexual, spiritual, and political – as a means of feeling out the limits of his times and of his own mind. If there were no limits, there would be no meaning." His perversions were not only sexual, but also rhetorical. They were meant as a dialogue with the authorities, God and nature" (Schaeffer, 2001, p. 1).

Roche (2006, pp. 157–158) says that De Sade's true message was revolution and the wish to be a victim of the dangerous movements he wants to release. For him morality was oppressive and therefore disorder and chaos in opposition to this morality, was moral. (Roche, 2006, p. 172)

One of De Sade's main targets was the Christian church. In the name of Enlightenment, he challenged the Christian religious authority, theology and dogmas. Because of his "sexual" method, he linked sexual transgression to religion in his work. His libertine characters were fiercely atheist and he let them perform intricate blasphemous sexual fantasies. De Sade was, however, an equal opportunity challenger. He also confronted the Enlightenment ideas that gave him his materialism. The libertine characters of his novels, for instance, justified their crimes with Enlightenment theories which they used to form their own ethical code. In this way he pushed ideas to their limits (Russell, 2014, p. 2).

Interestingly, this method of using Enlightenment tactics against Enlightenment itself is a reflection of the philosophical focus of his era. In the context of rationality he pushes reason beyond the limits of reason to irrationality. "Masoch, writing in the nineteenth-century context of European Romanticism, uses the imagination and affect (emotive) as the essence of the subject – and as the impossible in his text" (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 19). Today, with the focus on subjectivity, pleasure plays with movement, sensations and possibilities to turn lust into postsubjective power (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 19).

A rebel needs a cause. De Sade needed the boundaries his society imposed on him. Butler, in *Bodies that Matter. On the discursive limits of sex*, (1993, p. 184) describes performativity as "this relation of being implicated in that which one opposes, this turning of power against itself to produce alternative modalities of power, to establish a kind of political contestation that is not a 'pure' opposition, a 'transcendence' of contemporary relations of power."

Reason is also a boundary and it can also become something that opposes. MacKendrick, in *counterpleasures,* (1999, p. 44) argues that reason by its nature sets limits and requires boundaries. "It may be self-limiting (limited by no other force) but it is never unlimited." De Sade, she says, has a passion for that which comes out of reason but is unlimited. So he can only use reason to move in the direction of the infinite – he cannot reach the infinite. Rational human is not comfortable with infinity. Infinity suggests no limits. Reason is used to set limits and sort concepts into their places. De Sade, through his characters, however, desires pleasures of unlimited, infinity intensity. In the quest to reach this intensity, they will

disregard enthusiasm and even pleasure itself. The temptation of the infinite is to resist the urge of reason to remain within limits. "Sade must demand the infinite, that which goes beyond conception, that which defies the limits that unlimited reason so unfairly places" (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 45).

The state of tension found in the stand-off between the limits imposed by reason and the drive to exceed those limits, may be seen as inspiring creative Spirit. It may have been this Spirit that drove De Sade. However, every moment of creative tension also contains the seed of its negation. Intensity can lead to apathy. Examples are our desensitisation by images of violence in social media, footage of war, daily news accounts of murder or abuse or by reading De Sade's text. This apathy is the result of negation. It is negation of the ego. "That is, it is the pleasure of reason in negating the individual, personal, subjective, and passionate" (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 46).

4.3.5 De Sade's Spirit

De Sade also violated the public-private boundary. Writing and speaking about any type of sex in his time, would have been received negatively in public. Pornographic literature was, however, a booming business in the eighteenth century and as long as it was kept in the private sphere, people ignored it. It was generally easily available and written and consumed by men. True to De Sade's project, however, he first breached the boundaries of what pornography usually contained, focusing on subversive and non-normative sexual deeds and then breached the boundaries of public/private by using a private matter, sex, to fight a public battle. "The physical body and its desires, is, to Christianity and the Church, the single most troubling part of nature. Sade takes advantage of this by presenting transgressive sex as being in harmony with nature's wishes" (Russell, 2014, p. 162).

In presenting a transgressive sex, he breaks down all possible oppositions and positions. "In most respects, Sade had already shown a different libertine Eros without sexual privacy or a tyranny of love and with gender inversions, confusions, and transgressions" (Hekma, 2006, p. 12). As was argued in this dissertation, negation of areas of "struggle" will also negate Spirit.

De Sade, in his time, was not strong enough to break down the boundaries imposed on him. In that sense, he was before his time, because a lot of what he tried to achieve has been

realised today. He couldn't escape the very social order against which he transgressed. It is not possible to be autonomous, rational and self-sufficient without the opposite of those characteristics being present. Russell (2014, p. 12) writes that "Sade is unable to resolve the conflict that is caused by the distinct lack of apathy towards the other, who, for the libertine, is both society and the victim, which constitutes indissoluble boundaries and taboos to transgress, and an 'other' to witness this transgression, or else it is meaningless." The libertine does not have true freedom. They hide from society and are limited by the fact that libertine life is exclusive, while they still need an "other" as witness. To destroy the other is the only way to be free of this bond, but that would necessitate destruction of the self. In this way, the Spirit of the libertarian will always be in tension, because negation would mean death. May this be the only instance of perpetual tension and "everlasting" Spirit?

4.4 Conclusion

Tension may be found within the word *Pharmakon* because it has two opposing definitions. Is *Song of Songs* a medicine or a poison for the Spirit of sexuality? This dissertation argues that it is more poison than cure. The appropriation of *Song of Songs* by various feminist commentators have, for the same reasons discussed in chapter 3, negated tension. The writings of De Sade may have led to tension, but not sexual tension. It is argued here that both *Song of Songs* and the writings of De Sade may be well known for their sexual content, but that the discussions surrounding them are political discussions and about morality, rather than about the Spirit of sexuality.

Chapter 5
Rehabilitation

5.1 The Spirit of sexuality is dying

Jean Baudrillard, in *The Transparency of Evil* (1993, p. 7) writes that when sexual liberation was paramount, the goal was to maximize sexuality and minimize reproduction. Today we desire reproduction with as little sex as possible. The body, once a metaphor for the soul, became a metaphor for sex. Today it is a metaphor for a machine containing connections between processes and programming. The body is "given over to the pure promiscuity of its relationship to itself – the same promiscuity that characterises networks and integrated circuits" (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 7).

This dissertation argues that on a personal level, the Spirit of sexuality may not appear to be in trouble, but on another level it may already have left the body. Perhaps what we call sex is only a memory of it.

Baudrillard compares it with water that "remembers" molecules even if diluted. We remember it on a molecular level and are left with an "imprint" – sexuality diluted in politics and media (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 9).

In *No Sex please, we are Post-human,* Žižek asks what will happen if this political dilution of everything continues. He contends that unrestrained sexuality is reduced to apathy in our postmodern, permissive world while we participate in our collective orgies. It may be recalled that "apathy" was also the final destination of De Sade's orgies, whether real or imagined. Žižek writes:

> "What if sexual difference is not simply a biological fact, but the Real of an antagonism that defines humanity, so that once sexual difference is abolished, a human being effectively becomes indistinguishable from a machine … Along the same lines, is it not that, once the socio-symbolic order is fully established, the very dimension which introduced the "transcendent" attitude that defines a human being, namely SEXUALITY, the uniquely human sexual passion, appears as its very opposite, as the main OBSTACLE to the elevation of a human being to the pure spirituality, as that which ties him/her down to the inertia of bodily existence? For this

reason, the end of sexuality in the much celebrated "posthuman" self-cloning entity expected to emerge soon, far from opening up the way to pure spirituality, will simultaneously signal the end of what is traditionally designated as the uniquely human spiritual transcendence. All the celebrating of the new "enhanced" possibilities of sexual life that Virtual Reality offers cannot conceal the fact that, once cloning supplements sexual difference, the game is over" (Žižek, *No sex, please. We're Post-Human*).

Sinnerbrink (2007, p. 143) writes that postmodern subjects will live in material abundance and will have complete security within the consumer society, however this will not make them happy. They will find contentment in art, play en the erotic in the sense that they will be contented with it. Our post-historical satisfaction will take the banal forms of mass consumerism, personal hedonism and cultural aestheticism.

5.2 Nietzsche, a saviour of Spirit?

This dissertation presents Nietzsche's philosophy as a possible saviour of Spirit.

"Hegel is "a systematic philosopher who places his faith in the rigorous and methodical unfolding of dialectic reasons, whereas Nietzsche is an unsystematic, highly literary writer, the champion of brilliant isolated perceptions and colourful, arresting metaphors (Houlgate, 1986, p. 1).

Here, at the end of this dissertation, it will be argued that Nietzsche's "method" will lead to the creation of more moments of Spirit. As has been argued throughout, Hegel's Struggle for Recognition determines the moment of tension from which the Spirit of action flows, but (especially as appropriated by Kojève) his method also leads to negation of this tension. It may be said that universalising recognition inevitably trivialise and de-valued it (Fukuyama, 1992: 301). Deleuze saw Nietzsche and Hegel as direct opposites. An objection to Hegel's dialectics is that it negates difference and plurality and can therefore not perceive individuation and something "new" (Sinnerbrink, 2007, p. 174).

Is it possible to continue creating moments of Spirit through the tension of the struggle, but without the assumption that the moment needs to be sublimated and ritualised? A natural

dissolving of the tension (which is inevitable) may then be followed by the creation of consecutive moments of tension instead of trying to negate the tension permanently. A marriage between Hegel and Nietzsche for the sake of Spirit is what is proposed.

Nietzsche is anti-dialectics. In Hegel's case the process of self-reflection only happens once. In Nietzsche's view it is a recurring and continual event (Houlgate, 1986, p. 10). Sublimation, for Nietzsche is self-overcoming. It is the control of the instinctual self by the rational self. But the control Nietzsche advocates is not a negation of Spirit. It can even be said that it is done because of Spirit.

5.2.1 Will to Power – Will to Spirit

Nietzsche was the modern-day champion of *thymos* (spiritedness). He reacted to the rise of a civilisation without Spirit. He saw the coming of a society of men who wanted nothing more than their own comfortable self-preservation. "For Nietzsche, the very essence of man was neither his desire nor his reason, but his *thymos*: man was above all a valuating creature, the "beast with red cheeks" who found life in his ability to pronounce the words "good" and "evil" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 188).

And therefore, writes Kellner, (1991, p. 20) Nietzsche, in reaction to the oppressive features of modern society, developed an ideal of a superior individual. This individual is distinguished by a perspective way of interpreting and knowing and also by the ability to commandeer an abundance of perspectives.

A negative consequence of modernity is that humans lost their evaluating power. They traded it in for security and material accumulation. Nietzsche's doctrine of the "will to power" can be seen as his effort to rekindle *thymos* and to re-instate their pride and self-assertiveness which was lost through modern liberalism. "His work is a celebration of Hegel's aristocratic master and his struggle to the death for pure prestige, and a thunderous condemnation of a modernity that had so fully accepted the morality of the slave that it was not even aware such a choice had been made" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 189).

> "Culture for Nietzsche fundamentally consisted of an "ordering of rank" (*Rankordnung*) that established higher and lower values and Nietzsche calls for a revaluation of values, an overturning (*Unwertung*) of the highest values and

establishment of new values that would promote stronger individuals and a more creative culture. His *Ubermensch*, therefore, is a superior individual who overcomes the decadent values and is able to create new life-affirming values and a stronger and more life-affirming culture" (Kellner, 1991, p. 20).

Today's society strives for the opposite values. In the place of *megalothymia* (the desire to be better than others) the desiring part of the soul has rather manifested itself as the economisation of life. *Megalothymia* has secondly been replaced by *isothymia* (the desire to be recognized as equal to other people" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 190). True human excellence, for Nietzsche, could only arise from the desire to be better than others. People would not push themselves to their limits if they simply wanted to be like everyone else, even if they were born equal. The desire to be superior to others is essential if you want to be superior to yourself. Fukuyama (1992, p. 305) writes that this desire

> "… is also the precondition for the creation of anything else worth having in life, whether great symphonies, paintings, novels, ethical codes, or political systems. Nietzsche pointed out that any form of real excellence must initially arise out of discontent, a division of the self against itself and ultimately a war against the self with all the suffering that entails: "one must still have chaos in oneself to give birth to a dancing star."

The problem Nietzsche had with modernity was that it leads to nihilism and decadence because it fails to create original values. It drains the creative life-energies. In opposition to nihilism Nietzsche wants to create original, life-affirming values. He did not, however, call for uncontrolled release of passion and desire – self-discipline is a key characteristic of superior individuals. These individuals would "be able to grasp the particular, uncertain, incomplete, disjunctive, and 'experimental' nature of knowledge. They would be uninhibited enough to live without warrants in the midst of difference and to embrace, thrive on, and, even, will difference" (Kellner, 1991, p. 25).

It may appear as if Nietzsche criticised the liberal state. It will be argued that this is not the case. He does, however, criticise the push toward equality that leads to sameness. For him the will to power and struggle is more important than a will to survive or to merely persevere. He believed diversity and struggle would lead to a stronger culture.

"Nietzsche believed that mingling of different races and the development of a multicultural society in which different groups competed would create a stronger European polity that would overcome the banal nationalisms and national chauvinisms of his day. Moreover, Nietzsche constantly theorized gender, class, national, and ethnic differences and thus emerges as a theorist of difference against the homogenising trends of modernity and the tendencies of theorists to wipe out these differences in a more generalised concept of human beings" (Kellner, 1991, p. 14).

5.2.2 Nietzsche's opposites

Nietzsche argued that Western culture gave too much importance to ideas and reason and negated the body, nature and objective experience. This created a subjective society that cultivated and valued personalities – as opposed to social institutions, nature or strong bodies. He held the Socratic cultural complex responsible for the repressive rationalism that underlies modern culture. He argued that it has infiltrated the economy, the state, philosophy and everyday life. In Socratic society the passions, feelings and body are inferior to reason. Reason became the ruling principle of everything. Nietzsche opposed this one-sidedness (Kellner, 1991, p. 8).

For the argument being made here, it is important that Nietzsche is not read as rejecting modern reason and rational enquiry. The point is exactly that he tried to re-establish balance. He called for a reconstruction of Enlightenment. Even negation was not seen as purely negative. Nietzsche believed that a specific kind of sublimation would lead to strong, healthy bodies and personalities. He criticised the repression of natural drives which lead to cruelty and guilt through the conscience. Against this self-repression he proposed a sublimation that will refine the natural instinct creatively (Kellner, 1991, p. 9).

Nietzsche searched for the tension found between opposites. To accomplish this, he turned to the ancient Greek society that balanced Apollonian and Dionysian elements. In this way he wanted to create a new modern culture. Kellner (1991, p. 9) writes that Apollo symbolised the ideas of form and order and individuation while Dionysius embodied the "powers of intoxication, disorder and dissolution of the individual ego in collective ecstasy and sensual

surrender. Intense Dionysian passion should therefore be harmonised, spiritualised, and refined by Apollonian form."

Nietzsche did thus not reject the Apollonian principles, but called for a synthesis. One does not negate the other; the powers of reason and creativity, rational and irrational combine. It was an attempt to heal a split that was generated by the Socratic society between inner and outer experience and between the subjective and objective. This split lead to a fetishism of inwardness with subjective spirit and reason being valued over external nature. A split between subjective experiences and social reality will lead to repression of the body and a crisis of representation (Kellner, 1991, p. 8).

5.3 A valiant effort

Although Nietzsche's will to power and the creative energy of the struggle refer to *thymos* or Spirit in a wide sense, this dissertation aims to illuminate the issue through the lens of human sexuality. Is there a way in which Will to Power may benefit the dying Spirit of sexuality?

According to Paglia, (2017, p. 26) the Dionysian side of human nature is best understood through human sexuality. She argues that men created culture and civilisation, which reflects our Apollonian side, in order to contain women, who symbolise Dionysian forces. She argues that sexual freedom and liberation are modern delusions. "We are hierarchical animals. If we destroy one hierarchy another will come in its place. Both nature and society have hierarchies. In nature it is kept in place by brute force and in society by protection the weak. Civilisation is our barricade against nature." She theorises that sadomasochism will follow every time sexual freedom is achieved. Romanticism, according to Paglia, turns into decadence.

Can this be an attempt to return to Spirit? Paglia refers to a "point" where two opposing forces meet. This dissertation calls it the moment of stuggle/tension. She calls it by a different name: She contends that

> "... (s)ex is a far darker power than feminism has admitted. Behaviourist sex therapies believe guiltless, no-fault sex is possible. But sex has always been girt round with taboo, irrespective of culture. Sex is the point of contact between humans and nature,

where morality and good intentions fall to primitive urges. I called it an intersection. This intersection is the uncanny crossroads of Hecate, where all things return in the night. Eroticism is a realm stalked by ghosts. It is the place beyond the pale, both cursed and enchanted " (Paglia, 1991, p. 3).

In *When equal becomes the same. The spirituality of sex: Have we lost it?* (Erasmus and Lombaard, 2017) BDSM was proposed as a way in which the Spirit of sex is summoned. Although the suggestion still stands; the cure may also contain traces of that which will kill Spirit in the end. BDSM emerged as a pharmakon of Spirit.

5.3.1 The philosophy of BDSM

BDSM can be described as transgressive sex, although this dissertation argues that the conditions for it to be truly transgressive have been removed. The transgressive potential of BDSM lies in the fact that erotic play starts with reality and then dissembles it, only to reassemble it. In this way it mimics rather than imitates (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 47).

Nietzsche's Will to Power and Hegel's Master–slave dialectic can both be found in a BDSM scene. It is the contention of this dissertation that one of the dilemmas of Hegel's thought experiment is not present in a BDSM scene. Reynolds describes a problem the master in Hegel's master-slave narrative faces as follows: The master desires a certain kind of recognition. He wants recognition and respect from an equal. The problem the master is confronted with concerns the truth of his value and identity. The master extorted the slave to flatter him, so it would be delusional to believe the slave. This will lead to a false consciousness. In this sense, the master is worse off than the slave. The slave is recognised by a master (Reynolds, 2009, p. 13). In a BDSM situation the slave is not really a slave and subordinate to the master outside of the scene. As opposed to the slave in Hegel's dialectic, this master is recognised by another "master" even though they pretend to take on different roles for a while. The tension does not come from the desire to be recognised as such, because the recognition has already taken place. The tension and moment of Spirit comes from "reversing" that recognition and pretending that the hierarchal roles they agreed to assume, are real – at least for the duration of the play.

The "slave" in a BDSM scene stands much to gain. Concerning Hegel's master-slave dialectic, Reynolds (2009, p. 13) argues about Hegel's dialectic of bondage and lordship that a dialectic reversal takes place after the initial stage of the relationship. Fear of death decided the position of each person but in a sense the master never really confronted death. The master may have overcome his *fear* of death but the slave confronted the prospect of death first and averted death by agreeing to be the slave. It is therefore the slave instead of the master who has experienced their own limits. "The slave has experienced fear of death (of not being) and the absolute melting away of everything stable, something like a revelation of the essential aspects of self-consciousness, and as such is less attached to natural existence than the master" (Reynolds, 2009, pp. 13–14). This may be argued, is similar to the position of a "slave" in BDSM. The submissive is taken to his/her own limits where a "melting away" takes place. It is in this (sub)space where Spirit is regularly found.

Masochism is complicated. The submissive/masochist seduces the "partner" into being a "quasisadist." The pleasure is found in this process, along with specific rituals (Reynolds, 2009, p. 19). A true sadist would never tolerate (or "submit" to) having a willing masochist accomplice. The "safety" locked into the BDSM lifestyle is that a "so-called" punisher is seduced, educated and convinced into behaving as if he is a sadist (Reynolds, 2009, p. 22).

The concept of *jouissance* (understood here as pleasure-pain or transgressive pleasure) explains the purpose behind BDSM. Even though it may not be good for us, we enjoy authority and relationships of power. A different perspective may also be entertained. It may be said that BDSM relationship relies on opposition, contradiction and negativity. If we question these prerequisites we may find that sadism and masochism do not rely on opposition but rather on mutually reinforcing modalities of being (Reynolds, 2009, pp. 16–17) .

5.3.2 Violating BDSM

BDSM is a problem for today's liberal society. The insistence by some on, for example, a link between the female submissive/masochist and the fact that it mimics battered women, denies the essence of the whole lifestyle. They claim that it is not possible to distinguish between a woman who "asks for it" in the context of a BDSM erotic scene and when a rapist

claims that "she was asking for it." The reason for this uncertainty is the very character of a BDSM scene. Cloudiness is intentionally part of the game. To start with, the BDSM mantra, "safe, sane and consensual" is blurred and not easily determined. "(I)t is because SM is characterised by a subtle play of resemblance and dissimilarity, a structure of risk, that, for its practitioners, accounts for much of its seductive appeal—and, indeed, lends it much of its subversive potential" (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 48).

On this boundary lies the difference between a complicated transaction in which power and being overpowered conspire to create pleasure; and an enforcement of an oppressive will. The violent scene in *Song of Songs* (5:6-7) can be read both ways and although it is vital to denounce the beating of the woman in *Song of Songs*, it is just as vital to acknowledge and celebrate the possibility that the scene depicts a submissive erotic fantasy (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 48).

Feminists are concerned about the subtle psychological effect graphic images of male domination and female submission may have on women. Women who fantasise about erotic violence concern liberal feminism who argues that these women have internalised their submissive position under patriarchy. These women are accused of advancing patriarchy while being its victims (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 48).

Perhaps these accusations stem from an ignorance of BDSM because as MacKendrick (1999, p. 32) attests: "Masoch's fetish for contractual alliance and explicit mutual agreement is really very politically correct" (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 32).

Accusing women of internalised patriarchy is a "paternalistic" and even arrogant allegation because it denies the authenticity of desires that do not fit into the current moral landscape. By that accusation the accuser lays claim to knowledge of an ultimate truth which the other apparently cannot see or comprehend. This policing of women's sexuality and fantasies is a way of breaking down the private-public boundary. Criticising BDSM also shows the poor understanding of the lifestyle by those watching from the outside. A submissive may be male or female and (as explained previously) in BDSM the power lies with the submissive (of any gender). It is exactly the requirements of liberal society that leads to the over-ritualisation of BDSM and as we have seen, this ritualisation leads to the negation of sexual Spirit: "Are you too much in love with somebody? Then get married, ritualise your love relationship in order to cure yourself of the excessive passionate attachment, to replace it with the boring daily

custom and if you cannot resist the passions temptation, there are extramarital affairs" (Žižek, 2012).

Burrus and Moore (2003, p. 48) see an opportunity to subvert the submissive female fantasies. They proclaim that the power of the submissive female should not be underestimated. They argue that instead of fearing that these fantasies may be keeping the patriarchy in place, they can be used to disrupt it from within. "The patriarchal sexual order is, arguably, already disrupted when a woman constructs herself as an actively desiring subject, even if - perhaps especially if - what she desires is a good beating" (Burrus and Moore, 2003, p. 48).

This dissertation contends that this feminist tactic will not subvert patriarchy, but it will subvert BDSM and negate the Spirit of sexuality found in the lifestyle.

MacKendrick comes to the rescue of Spirit by stressing that "context is everything." Each of the "counterpleasures" (as she calls transgressive sex) makes perfect sense in its own social and historical context (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 11). She warns against the effect these pleasures have on our thinking. We are used to classification and want to categorise. Is a counterpleasure normal or pathology? To label it as pathology (for instance accusing women of internalised patriarchy) means to dismiss it. To normalise is however, just as problematic. As has been shown in Chapter 3, to normalise is to take a sub-culture into the mainstream in the way James did with *Fifty Shades of Grey*. It is to render that marginal element harmless and safe and in this way the pleasure is rendered null and void – they are negated – because they are pleasures that are specifically dependent upon transgression. Where the "marginal" is transgressive, assimilating it into the mainstream can be the same as denial. Transgression is not normal (even remembering that pathology is not the only other possible explanation). MacKendrick (1999, p. 19) proposes that we imagine a third idea which refers to the transgression of the boundary of pleasure. This term include the spirit of transgression, the subversive and that which seduces. Pleasure is part, but not all that this counterpleasure entails. It remains an important part of it, though, especially since this dissertation accepts Nietzsche's link between pleasure and power.

> "The assimilation of the marginal by the mainstream is not evil, except perhaps in the most purely aesthetic terms. But where the "marginal" is, as it must be here, the transgressive (and certainly "transgression" has become trendy enough that its mainstreaming seems a very real possibility) assimilation can only be the same as

denial. What transgresses is precisely what cannot be contained, what bursts the boundaries, rendering the centre (the safe, harmless, assimilationist centre) nowhere at all (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 17).

Sometimes transgressive sexual pleasure is violated and negated by the "transgressors" themselves. Rubavičius (2006, pp. 74–75) writes that more things are usually allowed in the private sphere – norms for the public domain are stricter than that of the private domain. As has been seen in this dissertation, the boundary between the private and the public has been an area of contention in political struggles. The breaking down of these boundaries, especially those delimiting transgression, is an area of intense focus in the attempt to validate private identities in the public domain. This struggle lead to the politicisation of the body and of sexual expression through the legalisation of actions previously deemed indecent or unacceptable or even illegal. These transgressive pleasures were now publically permissible. Rubavičius shows that "(t)ransgression and then citizenship established in the public domain by changing the accepted norms and attitudes – these are the two stages of all sexual movements for the right to express publicly the peculiarities of one's sexuality" (Rubavičius, 2006, p. 74). This is where transgressors have contributed in negating the spirit found in the transgressive pleasures. By consciously functioning on the public-private boundary, tensions are generated with the purpose of having his or her sexual identity accepted in the public sphere. They persistently create and recreate meaning of the self and identity while challenging the marginalisation of those identities by society. Through the excess of breaking norms, it forces society to accept meanings generated through sexual expression and ascribing civil rights to such identities (Rubavičius, 2006, pp. 74–75). Different types of pleasure now comes into play, namely sexual pleasure, the pleasure of political power and the pleasure of ideological passions (liberation). In this sense there is a strand of political violence in transgression if the reason for transgression is to break taboos and social norm to force others to accept a new cultural dispensation. Rubavičius (2006, p. 76) maintains that "(i)t is understandable that the fans and ideologists of transgressive action will argue that by undertaking such actions they liberate not merely themselves, but also help the society liberate itself, for the new possibilities of sexual expression, new precepts and discourses of experiences help it understand itself better, and this is presumably serves public good."

In the context of this dissertation, it can be argued that there is a price to pay for this "forced liberation" of the public. Transgressive sexuality and the Spirit that is found only in that

context are the victims. Transgressive identities lose their context because the boundaries which gave them life, has been demolished.

5.4 A dancing star

5.4.1 Importance of boundaries

Without boundaries we don't have context. Boundaries are like weights; they weigh us down, but weightlessness is also unbearable. "In the face of the threats of a total weightlessness, an unbearable lightness of being, a universal promiscuity and a linearity of processes liable to plunge us into the void, the sudden whirlpools that we dub catastrophes are really the thing that saves us from catastrophe" (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 69).

Nietzsche has the same argument because he believes that good health and self-satisfaction may be liabilities. *Thymos* will seek out struggle and sacrifice to prove to the self that it is better and higher than an animal driven by fear, instinct and need (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 305). Not all men are inspired by this struggle just like not all people are attracted to transgressive sex, but for those who are, boundaries against which to frame the struggle are important.

Rubavičius (2006, p. 69) writes that postmodern thinking is awash with the idea of overcoming or flouting of countless boundaries. These ideas are informed by the concept of transgression. He argues that reflecting on a boundary assumes a possibility that it may be crossed – the act of grasping a boundary mentally is already a crossing of it and this will in time be converted into creative or real action. Boundaries are also confirmed and strengthened through social and cultural struggle. This creates individual and group identities that connect the body, consciousness and territory (Rubavičius, 2006, p. 68).

Modern artists practiced an ideology of liberation through the transgression of boundaries by breaking the society's taboos and norms. Action on the boundaries was seen as an important means of liberating the individual from limitations imposed by society. In fact, these acts of transgression became repetitive and were commodified. Inspired by the artist and motivated by the supporting ideology, the breaking of norms and taboos became an individual and creative 'act of liberation' and an important mode of self-expression. In the end, this "socialised, politicised and de-spiritualised transgression" (Rubavičius, 2006, p. 68).

It would seem that transgression itself is being "transgressed" or negated through this process. This is, however, not necessarily true. Rubavičius writes that

> "(a)n important feature of recent approaches to transgression is that transgression is increasingly understood as a condition of both established and emerging norms as well as of all kinds of identities and normalities. It is the idea George Bataille has infused into much of postmodern theory: what transgression does is not to negate the taboo, but to transgress and complete it. Transgression is needed in order to institute and establish all kinds of boundaries" (Rubavičius, 2006, pp. 69–70).

MacKendrick (1999, p. 17) writes something similar about transgressive sex when she states that what most have in common are "love of boundary-play." This is wrongly understood as a dislike of limits or a desire to shock society. She says they "delight in the existence of boundaries, that they may be broken and overleapt; in the establishment of limits, that they may be surpassed."

Transgression needs the law. For transgression to become *jouissance,* an opposite principle is needed. *Jouissance* incorporates both movements – pleasure as well as the constraint of the law (Zukauskaite, 2003, p. 6). Sexual transgression acquires a positive meaning through Foucault (1977, pp. 30–35) when he says

> "the only division possible in a world now emptied of objects, beings, and spaces to desecrate ... Profanation in a world, which no longer recognises any positive meaning in the sacred – is this not more or less what we may call transgression? It … must be liberated from the scandalous or subversive, that is, from anything aroused by negative associations. Transgression does not seek to oppose one thing to another, nor does it achieve its purpose through mockery or by upsetting the solidity of foundations… Transgression contains nothing negative, but affirms the limitlessness into which it leaps as it opens this zone to existence for the first time."

5.4.2 Boundlessness – the character of Spirit

Once, Spirit was limitless. Baudrillard (1993, p. 72) paints a bleak picture of the current state of Spirit. He writes that "(t)he great drives or impulses, with their positive, elective and attractive powers, are gone. We desire still, but in the feeblest way only; our tastes are less

and less highly determined. The constellations of taste and of desire, like that of the will, have been blown apart." There is a counter-energy, he argues, grounded in unwillingness and disgust which has replaced desire in us. Only the negative features – distaste is determined and rejections are violent. Our actions rise from these places instead of having objective motives. Thus our actions become exorcism, rather than will to action (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 72).

Transgression and crossing boundaries may be seen as evil. But evil is a necessary boundary – one that needs to exist. We don't speak of evil anymore, says Baudrillard. All we talk about is the rights of man and woman – a discourse derived from an idealised view of human relationships. He writes that "(t)his is the condescending and depressive power of good intentions, a power that can dream nothing except rectitude in the world that refuses even to consider a bending of Evil, or an intelligence of Evil" (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 86).

"To transgress is to cross boundaries, but it is boundaries, after all, that mark places" (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 3). The transgression this dissertation wants to propose as a way of rehabilitating sexual Spirit is not one that wants to break down or negate boundaries. It is one that wants to confirm boundaries. This dissertation argues that crossing a boundary does not necessarily negate it if the crossing is not "permanent." For something to be an act of transgression, boundaries against which the act is "perpetrated" are needed. For a boundary to have any meaning, acts of transgression against it is needed. This confirms the boundary. If the modern state pursues its liberal mandate by breaking down boundaries between private and public; and between differences and oppositions by striving towards sameness, then it may be a transgressive act to re-establish boundaries. A liberal act (transgression) will be employed to counter the (unintended) harmful effect the modern liberal state has on Spirit.

This place of struggle between establishing a boundary and crossing it, this place of tension, is difficult to find. The place these transgressive pleasures have in tradition is a place of disruption, overriding our understanding of the tradition. As MacKendrick (1999, p. 4) remarks, it is absurd to try to pin-point the place of transgression and set its boundaries. Transgression is perplexing and impassable; its spirit is found in places of rupture and in the work of the philosophers of power, pleasure and disruption. Bataille understood both the craving for systematic order and the drive to disrupt that order. This is where Dionysius meets Apollo, where spirit lies (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 4). The space can be described as edgy, at the cut, at the space opened across boundaries where anything may happen. In more

than just a physical sense, they can be described as edge-play or limit-pleasures (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 18).

What would these transgressive pleasures entail?

It can be said that the pleasures are modes of self-discipline. Just like *thymos* they defy "normal" pleasure. They can be described as "strategies of pleasure against the simple gratification of desire" (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 14). Many do not understand these pleasures because the elements contained in them do not fit our idea of pleasure. The pleasures of transgressive sex reach the participants through frustration, refusal, humiliation and pain. These pleasures are extraordinarily intense even though they do not make "normal" sense. Perhaps part of the intensity lies precisely in the difficulty of the challenge of reaching it. In these pleasures the subject disappears. The very subject we suspected were required for pleasure is denied. These transgressive sexual acts go so far as flouting one's own survival, leading, for an unthinkable moment to the death, not of the body, but the subject. It is at that point, when the subject is transient, that the subject experiences pleasure that is not connected to gratification (MacKendrick, 1999, p. 19).

In a world where sex has become Spiritless, the ultimate transgression may be the single-minded pursuit of the lost Spirit.

5.5 Conclusion

Tension found in transgressing boundaries may, in the end, be how Spirit will be rehabilitated. An important distinction is that the breaking down of boundaries is not purposed but rather a transgression where boundaries are strengthened. A perpetual positive tension is the aim – a place where Spirit may flourish.

Chapter 6
Conclusion

6.1 Prelude

Spirit was wasting away. Nobody wanted to believe it. The thought was so frightening that most didn't acknowledge it; scared that conceding the truth would make the end more inevitable.

Some tried to replace her with something else, like money, possessions and light-hearted entertainment. Some took comfort in rage. Some denied that she ever existed. Some became depressed. Some told themselves that she was dangerous to have around. Some decided that if everyone cannot have Spirit it is better that no-one had her. Some declared her sinful.

Some felt deep sorrow.

Those who understood what was happening and cared enough, tried to save Spirit. They raided the pharmacies in search of a cure, forgetting that some medicines can kill. This meant that she had bad days and better days.

Spirit started leaving Spirit.

At last a wise man came down from the mountain. Although he was not healthy, he was dancing up to her bedside. His eyes were burning with intensity. When he saw how weak Spirit has become, he became angry.

"Out!" he bellowed, moustache twitching.

The warrior who has liberated her and has been standing guard next to her sickbed ever since, reaches for the sword of righteousness, not understanding that resistance makes the wise man stronger.

"You could have been a dancing star," says the wise man sadly, "but you decided to become human."

Then he summons the wind. The wind dances through the room scattering people in its path. It blows furiously. People try to close the door, only to realise that it has been broken down ages ago.

The wise man says: "Let me tell you the story about the day Apollo and Dionysius met."

"There is no such story," yell the people, while they start retreating out of the room.

"O yes, there is," says the wise old man. "It is a true story, a never-ending story. They meet each day at daybreak to cultivate the boundary between them. "

Spirit is smiling up at the wise man. There is a look of wonder on her beautiful face, as if she has found something she thought she had lost forever.

The wise man can see that the people still don't understand. So he explains, while he starts dressing Spirit in a shimmering white gown.

"Boundary is a living, breathing thing. Dionysius and Apollo each take care of their own side of boundary. Sometimes Dionysius lets his side get out of control and then it grows wild, creeping into Apollo's manicured garden. On some occasions Apollo trims his side too vigorously, cutting too far into Dionysius's succulent garden. No aspect about boundary is ever permanent, except that it is there and strong and wide, precisely because it is lovingly tended from both sides."

Spirit is glowing now. She remembers. She remembers the garden and the pull every morning. She remembers her intense discussions with Apollo and the wonderful orgasms Dionysius gave het.

She laughs at the wise man who has closed the windows and fixed the door with one wave of his hand. He has given her back her thoughts, body, identity and privacy. He has given her back to herself.

Tomorrow morning she will go to her secret garden where she has been going since the dawn of time. There she will, as she has always done, sit and climb and balance and walk and dance on that living, breathing, growing boundary between her two best friends. And she will live again.

6. 2 Research problem

This dissertation investigated the effect of the human rights culture, the fact that it tends to relate equality to "sameness," on an individual's Will to Power as it manifests in the spirituality of sexuality. This dissertation does not question equal rights or the victories the feminist movement has won for women. It is not campaigning to revert to outdated sexual roles. This dialectic is about Spirit and sexuality – a private sphere of experience which is also influenced by the public sphere.

6.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of this dissertation is to research the effect of the human rights culture on Spirit and specifically the Spirit of sexuality through the following objectives: Hegel's Struggle for Recognition as a place where tension is found; the stance of the human rights movement on morality, private vs public, difference and sameness; *Song of Songs* and the writings of De Sade, the rehabilitation of the Spirit of sex through Will to Power and transgressive acts.

6.4 Methodology

This dissertation is a literature study. The focus is on the moment of tension where Spirit is ignited. Each theme is investigated in terms of this moment and what happens in the moment after Spirit enters it. Some aspects are found to harm Spirit by striving to negate the tension. In the last chapter a specific form of transgression is proposed as a possible cure for Spirit.

6.5 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this dissertation is that human sexuality has been influenced negatively by the human rights culture. Eroticism or the Spirit of Sex has been lost, or watered down. To reignite sexuality, we may return to inequality – even if it is just for the moment and just through role-playing.

6.6 Future areas of investigation

A literature study into the use of erotic "tools" in *Song of Songs* and comparing it with other erotic works may be done to determine if *Song of Songs* can be classified as an erotic work. For the purpose of this dissertation 'erotic" meant the same as Spirit. In this sense such a study would be a continuation of this one.

Another theme that presented itself while working on this dissertation is the link between Spirit and transgression.

6.7 Conclusion

This concludes the argumentative narrative presented in this dissertation. Starting with Hegel's master-slave dialectic the importance of the Battle for Recognition was emphasised. The moment of tension born in the battle is the pivotal moment which was the focus of the dissertation. Every aspect investigated was tested according to what that aspect did to the moment of tension.

Negation was identified as a culprit in the narrative of Spirit. Opposing the positive possibilities of forming something new by combining aspects of two conflicting ideas or entities, this dissertation tried to show that negation may also have harmful consequences. It is acknowledged that these consequences were probably not intended. Kojève, however, had a different outcome in mind. He longed for the end of the struggle even though he realised that there would be a price to be paid.

Kojève was a disciple of the liberal ideal, but history didn't leave humankind much choice. Human rights were a dream of civilised man/woman. It was the logical progression of history and of vital importance if we wanted to avoid a recurrence of the horrors of the World Wars.

We stormed the caste walls and broke down boundaries in pursuit of a fair and equal society. We were caught up in the struggle, driven by Spirit and inflamed by tension. In a wave of political transgression we demolished boundaries. In our zeal we went too far.

The boundary between public and private started changing. In the modern state the social sphere came into existence. With the improvement of technology and communication partitions started tumbling like dominoes.

With a foothold in the intimate, the intimate became fair game. The struggle was taken to the bedroom. Male and female identities became the focus of tension, male and female interaction became a battleground. The big negating factor was a push towards sameness.

This dissertation argued that the outcome of a drive towards individualisation, paradoxically, lead to sameness.

The last boundary fell when morality was liberated. When morality is regulated, the Spirit of sex is negated.

This dissertation then turned to two specific case studies. An attempt was made to determine how *Song of Songs* and the writings of De Sade may have influenced the Spirit of sexuality. These two themes were highlighted because of its large influence on the philosophy of sex. In the case of *Song of Songs* commentaries reflect the changing social norms throughout the ages. Religious commentary came up against feminist commentary which came up against commentary influences by a pornographic reading of *Song of Songs*. It can be argued that *Song of Songs* became a point of Struggle for Recognition of various identities.

De Sade, writing during the moment of birth of the modern state when the seed of social equality was sown, influenced the Spirit of sexuality in a different way than *Song of Song*s did. It was argued that he wanted to transgress the boundaries of the state and institutionalised morality and that sex was merely a tool he used.

Both the *Song of Songs* and the Marquis' writings have had positive as well as negative effects on the Spirit of sexuality.

Finally a possible remedy for the ailing Spirit was suggested. The transgressive boundary of sexuality was proposed as an area in which Spirit can be raised up.

The BDSM subculture as an example of such a transgressive state was investigated but found lacking because aspects were already negated through the breaking down of the private-public boundary as well as ritualisation.

This left transgressive sex as the only possible rescue, because it is the only authentic area of sexuality still left to us. When sex has been stripped of Spirit, having Spirit-enhancing sex may be the only condition necessary for deeming it transgressive. This may be said of any sphere of life where Spirit is lacking. Living with Spirit may turn out to mean living a transgressive life. It is the characteristic of a true master. Some, may still, dance on the wind of Spirit as exalted by Nietzsche (1961, p. 20):

> "Be like the wind when it rushes from its mountain caves: it will dance to its own pipe, the seas tremble and leap under its footsteps.
>
> That which gives wings to asses and milks lionesses, all praise to that unruly spirit that comes to all the present and all the mob like a storm-wind,
>
> - That is enemy to all thistle-heads and prying noses and to all withered leaves and weeds: all praise to that wild, good, free storm-spirit that dances upon swamps and afflictions as upon meadow!
>
> That hates the wasted dogs of the mob and all the ill-constituted brood of gloom: all praise to this spirit of all free spirits, the laughing storm that blows dust in the eyes of all the dim-sighted and ulcerated.
>
> You Higher men, the worst about you is: none of you has learned to dance as a man ought to dance – to dance beyond yourselves! What does it matter that you are failures! How much is still possible! So learn to laugh beyond yourselves! Lift up your hearts, you fine dancers, high! Higher! and do not forget to laugh well!
>
> This laughter's crown, this rose-wreath crown, to you, my brothers, do I throw this crown! I have canonised laughter; you Higher Men, learn – to laugh!" (Nietzsche, 1961, p. 306)

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