

TRADITION, GENDER AND DEMOCRACY TO COME - DERRIDA ON FRATERNITY

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Tradition is frequently evoked as the main obstacle to modern democracy, and very often, traditionalism and lack of democratic culture are expressed in terms of gender. The patriarchal organization of what is understood as 'traditional societies' is spotted as the cause that both slows down the advancement of democracy and oppresses women in these societies.

This article was triggered by the highlight which the contrast between tradition and modernity once again received in the press coverage on the tragedy of the assassination of the Pakistani political leader Benazir Bhutto at the end of 2007. The gendered nature of the commentaries was obvious, but among the stories of Bhutto's courage and importance for the future of democracy in Pakistan,¹ the beginning of the Obituary in *The Times* was startling:

Benazir Bhutto was one of several women who were collectively South Asia's greatest political paradox, each rising to heights of power on the backs of dead husbands and fathers for the sole reason that they possessed famous names. Bhutto's ambition and guts were beyond question, but without her name and family political pedigree – along with vast wealth – she could not have become the first female leader of a contemporary Muslim country.²

The matter-of-factness of this description is shocking, as it gives no consideration to personalities, contingencies, choices, events, or the existence of political families in Western countries.³ The fact that there have been very few female leaders of states in the developed democratic world to date,⁴ and the fact that in the supposedly leading democratic country in the world, the head of the state was at the time a son of an ex-president, is generously forgotten by the sweeping generalization of women gaining power through their families in the less modern and democratic societies considered traditional.

Why are “dynasty” and “family” invoked much more readily when the country is regarded as culturally “traditional”, and why is it so much more readily invoked when the politician concerned is a woman? Does a colonial sentiment join hands with a misogynist one here? In this article, I will link this interesting phenomenon to a specific discussion within the tradition of political theory, that is, to the discussions on brotherhood, fraternity.

Fraternity has been a topic of feminist scholarship on the tradition of political theory, most famously so in Carole Pateman’s work. Fraternity is also a key term that comes up in Jacques Derrida’s work on the tradition of democracy. This word constantly troubled Derrida in the democratic tradition. He consistently returns to the issue of fraternity in his 1990s books, in which he develops the theme of a “democracy to come.”

Towards the end of this article I will discuss the degree to which Derrida can be seen to make his comments from a pro-feminist point of view. This is an aspect which is often bypassed on the commentaries on his political thought,⁵ although very well known feminist theorists such as Gayatri Spivak, Drucilla Cornell and Elizabeth Grosz⁶ have applauded Derrida’s sensitivity to feminism.

In the main part of this article I will consider Derrida as if he acted as a political theorist and a feminist thinker. I will explore Derrida’s late writings on “democracy to come”, trying to tease out the feminist implications of his notion as well as its relation to the tradition. The tradition of democracy is, for Derrida, more than anything, the tradition of fraternity.

I will read Derrida’s late work on democracy to come as a critique of democratic tradition, which he simultaneously clearly highly respected, and as a critique of the traditionalism of this tradition, which claims to be non-traditional. Derrida’s feminism comes to the fore, for

example, in his “brotherly” debate on fraternity with Jean-Luc Nancy, and this, I will argue, interestingly joins his efforts with those of Carole Pateman from a feminist point of view.

Derrida’s concern with fraternity, however, does ultimately not focus on the numbers of women in democratic representation, but much more on the issue of family, filiation, blood, and nation that is embedded in the democratic tradition. In his constant turning around of the democratic tradition, Derrida ends up showing how much the familial is a part of the tradition, which claims to be non traditionalist and outside family ties; and how this deeply engraved trace in the tradition fundamentally troubles his democracy to come.

Democracy to come

The phrase “democracy to come” appeared in Jacques Derrida’s texts in *The Other Heading* (1991), having been preceded by the phrase “the promise of democracy” in the works of the late 1980s.⁷ In *Specters of Marx* (1993), *The Politics of Friendship* (1994), and *Rogues* (2003) Derrida struggles with this notion and with the tradition of democracy.⁸ He engages with some theorists who work precisely on democracy and politics, among them prominently Carl Schmitt, but his exploration is also, as always, guided by an endless turning over of his own textual tradition of philosophy: Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Husserl, Nietzsche, as well as Freud.

In the issue of modern democracy, Hegel in particular comes to the fore: Derrida seems to take seriously Hegel’s characterization of modernity and the modern political system, based on the principle of individual (numerical) equality, representation and public free speech⁹ as a form, which allows infinite change, and is, as such, not substantially but formally complete.

In *Specters of Marx* Derrida considers Fukuyama’s reading of Hegel, and cites him:

While some present-day countries might fail to achieve stable liberal democracy, and others might lapse back into other, more primitive forms of rule like theocracy or military dictatorship, the ideal of liberal democracy could not be improved on. (Derrida 1994a, 80.)

Derrida continues:

It would be too easy to show that, measured by the failure to establish liberal democracy, the gap between fact and ideal essence does not show up only in these so-called primitive forms of government ... But this failure and this gap also characterize, *a priori* and by definition, *all* democracies, including the oldest and most stable of so-called Western democracies. At stake there is the very concept of democracy as concept of a promise that can only arise in such a *diastema* (failure, inadequation, disjunction, disadjustment, being "out of joint"). That is why we always propose to speak of a democracy *to come*, not of a *future* democracy in the future present, not even of a regulating idea, in the Kantian sense, or of a utopia-at least to the extent that their inaccessibility would still retain the temporal form of a *future present*, of a future modality of the *living present*.
(Derrida 1994a, 80-81)

Derrida's message, in linguistically differentiating on how to speak of the future of democracy (*l'avenir de vs à venir*), is clear. Here he linguistically separates democracy which already has a meaning, and can as such be considered in a future state of it, from something we do not know: "democracy to come". If he would say the future of democracy (*l'avenir de la démocratie*), democracy would already be familiar to us, and we would be interested in its future; whereas, when he says democracy to come (*démocratie à-venir*), democracy may turn out to be something completely surprising to us, it is to be decided on in the future, which we cannot control. The verb's temporal mode is a crucial sign of the ultimate contingency and emphasis on the event character of history.

The gap between the traditional and the modern could be seen to diminish, if not disappear, through this move of linguistically ascertaining the incompleteness of democracy. However, Derrida also appears extremely serious in his faith in modern democracy. A passage in the same chapter of *Spectres of Marx* reads like an oath or a confession of faith: what remains "irreducible to any deconstruction" is a certain experience of emancipatory promise. Derrida connects modern democracy to the theme of experience, which he develops as *the messianic* hope of the 'to come' of an event. Besides *democracy*, the same theme includes *the messianic* which is without content, without religious messianism, and *justice*, which is beyond the law; all of these involve the absolute openness of future.¹⁰

Well, what remains irreducible to any deconstruction, what remains as undeconstructible as the possibility itself of deconstruction is, perhaps, a certain experience of the emancipatory promise; it is perhaps even the formality of a structural messianism, a messianism without religion, even a messianic without messianism, an idea of justice – which we distinguish from law or right and even from human rights – and an idea of democracy – which we distinguish from its current concept and from its determined predicates today [permit me to refer here to “Force of Law” and *The Other Heading*]. (Derrida 1994a, 74) ¹¹

Derrida remains nevertheless hesitant and undecided, as always. He wonders whether the name of the messianic, even in its adjectival form, which he chooses instead of the noun ‘messianism’, is able to preserve its atheological sense.¹² He is equally hesitant about the name ‘democracy’, and in that case his hesitation concentrates on the aspect of fraternity within the democratic tradition. Derrida seems to be acutely aware that the democratic tradition has been androcentric, and it has been about groups of male friends. It has not been the tradition of women. In the end of *The Politics of Friendship* he writes:

... is it possible to think and to implement democracy, that which would keep the old name ‘democracy’, while uprooting from it all these figures of friendship (philosophical and religious) which prescribe fraternity: the family and the androcentric ethnic group? Is it possible, in assuming a certain faithful memory of democratic reason not to found, ... but to open out to the future, or rather, to the ‘come’ of a certain democracy? (Derrida 2005a, 306)¹³

Fraternity

In *The Politics of Friendship*, Derrida engages in an extensive discussion on the topic of fraternity. The book is, in his own description, “a deconstruction of the Greek, Abrahamic, Jewish, but especially Christian and Islamic privileging of the figure of the brother in ethics, law and politics and particularly in a certain democratic model”.¹⁴ He also enters into a polemic against Jean-Luc Nancy on the topic of fraternity which he continues in *Rogues*.¹⁵ What is at stake in fraternity?

Nancy writes in his *Experience of Freedom*:

The community shares freedom’s excess. ... this excess it is common in the sense that it is the excess of the sharing of existence. It is the essence

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of equality and relation. It is also fraternity, if fraternity, it must be said, aside from every sentimental connotation is not the relation of those who unify a common family, but the relation of those whose *Parent*, or common substance, *has disappeared*, delivering them to their freedom and equality. Such are, in Freud, the sons of the inhuman Father of the horde: becoming brothers in the sharing of his *dismembered* body. Fraternity is equality in the sharing of the incommensurable. (Nancy 1993, 72)

In *Rogues* Derrida (2005b, 47) describes that “Nancy will give to this sharing of the incommensurable, and I will want to return to this over and over, a name that is to my eyes somewhat suspect: fraternity.”¹⁶ As “one of the many reasons” for being wary of the brother he mentions the fact that there is no worse war than one between enemy brothers. (Derrida 2005b, 49-50)

This is a reference to *The Politics of Friendship* and the deconstruction Derrida engages in it on Carl Schmitt’s work on the concept of the political, built on the concept of the enemy.¹⁷ The theme of the deconstruction is exactly “brother”. Derrida makes a typical move of making an apparently marginal aspect of the text the centre of attention. “Brother” is of the utmost importance to him, even if Schmitt only mentions brother in passing. Schmitt speaks little of the brother, but always in a significant and serious way. He speaks of the brother as the original friend, as a brother of alliance, or brother by oath, ‘sworn brother’, but also of the friend killed in absolute war: the absolute political enemy. (149) There can be absolute hostility for a brother only. The absolute war is fratricidal war. For Derrida this is significant, and he connects this significant position of the brother to what he says is, “an immense tradition, biblical and Greek.” (Derrida 2005a, 148)

Derrida pays attention to the fact that there is no woman and no sister in Schmitt’s scene of war, no women freedom fighters and no women in uniform, and suggests:

.. such a blindness, gives food for thought: what if the woman were the absolute partisan? And what if she were the absolute enemy of this theory of the absolute enemy, the specter of hostility to be conjured up for the sake of the sworn brothers, or the other of the absolute enemy who has become the absolute enemy that would not even be recognized in a regular war? (Derrida 2005a, 157)

He makes an imaginary Schmitt answer the question about this disappearance of the woman, in what he calls “phallogocentric neutral-

ization of sexual difference". Schmitt's imaginary answer proceeds via declining the "universal concepts of humanity, the earth and the world" which, according to Schmitt, are "foreign to the political".¹⁸ "The subject of the political is genderless; moreover it has always been, in fact and as such, a man, a group of men determining his or their enemy... I never do anything but diagnose", says the imaginary Schmitt. (Derrida 2005a, 157.)

Derrida points out that in this diagnosis, Schmitt repeats and consolidates the "general structure keeping under control and under interdiction the very thing that constitutes it – and which has so long been called the political – indeed, the theologico-political" (ibid., 158). In the face of the theologico-political keeping under control and excluding of women and sisters Derrida sees two options: either to admit that politics is this phallogocentrism in action, and then to combat this structure by carrying oneself beyond the political, forging other concepts; or to keep the old name and analyze the concept and the topic differently. (ibid., 158-159)

Derrida writes here as if he was diagnosing the chances for feminist politics, and indeed, his topic, fraternity, has been classically discussed by feminist political theorists before him, both by Hanna Pitkin and, more extensively, by Carole Pateman. In chapter 4, "Genesis, Fathers and the Political Liberty of Sons" of *The Sexual Contract* (1988),¹⁹ Pateman discusses the theories of brotherhood which create the abstract civic order. Her thesis in the book is precisely that: "modern patriarchy is fraternal in form and the original contract is a fraternal pact."²⁰ Pateman is building on Hanna Pitkin, who in her *Fortune is a Woman* (1984) took up the fact that what, according to classic contract theorists, is supposed to follow patriarchal rule, is a fraternal band of citizens who create civic life (*vivere civile*), and who basically are jointly able to sustain civilization.²¹

Pateman takes up several versions of the fraternal pact, but pays particular attention to Freud. She observes that Freud's writings are not usually considered in the discussion of social contract theorists, but she defends discussing him amongst them by using Freud's own words. In *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud calls the pact made by the brothers after the murder of the father 'a sort of social contract'. Freud's equivalent of the state of nature, according to Pateman, is the primal horde, an idea he derived from Darwin. The ruler is the primal father who has the powers of a *patria potestas* and who keeps all the

women of the horde, and one day, the sons rebel, kill the father and eat him communally. (Pateman 1988, 103)

While Pateman feels the need to justify her discussion on Freud in connection to contract theorists, Nancy apparently does not have any trouble in adopting the Freudian narrative of the primal scene in connection with discussions on the political community, the communal dining of the sons' sharing of the father's *dismembered* body, and becoming brothers and a fraternity thereby. It is interesting that it is Freud who figures in both Pateman's and Nancy's description of the fraternal pact, and consequently also in Derrida's worry of the democracy to come. The primal scene, the myth of the beginning of civilization, is interpreted as the beginning of the democratic system – the passage from undemocratic patriarchy to democratic brotherhood. This is the passage from tradition and family to civic life, to modernity and to modern democracy.

The democratic tradition and traditionalism

In his criticism of the term fraternity, Derrida is very conscious of the fact that in the tradition of democracy there is nothing natural about brotherhood. He reminds us that "The relation to the brother engages from the start with the order of the oath, of credit, of belief and of faith. The brother is never a fact. Nor any bond of kinship."²² In Schmitt, as in Nancy, this is clear: brother is a figure that is supposed to have little to do with real kin or real gender.

This is very clear for Pateman, too. According to her, public or civic fraternity of democratic theory has always been distinct from kinship; it does not refer to a blood relationship, but to men bound by recognized common bond, the *polis*. Unlike ancient *polis*, modern democracy involves all men, and therefore, Pateman points out, Freud can tell a story of civic order including all men as men.²³

What is crucial here is the male principle of the new political order. The blood principle is replaced by the idea of the law, which applies alike to men of different kinship groups.²⁴ Pateman's point is that the fraternal, which is not supposed to have anything to do with real brothers, or real men, but to stand genderless for civil relationship in general, actually has to do with real men. The modern democracy was built, both in practice and in stories between males; the figure of

a brother is no accident. It marks the difference between old patriarchal-monarchical and the new revolutionary democratic principle, but it also marks the democratic principle as firmly male.²⁵

The power of gendered and sexed figures and terms in central traditions of theory is, indeed, great. In a way fraternity cannot fail to have to do with real men. As a figure it is like the phallus of the psychoanalytic discourse: it should not, but it cannot fail to, refer to the male member.²⁶

Derrida is deeply aware of this, and he seems to make the exact same point as Pateman when he polemizes Nancy's position and writes: "But then, why not simply abandon the word fraternity as well, now that it has been stripped of all its recognizable attributes? ... If the link to the traditional word and concept is so arbitrary that one can abandon it, then why say nothing of the daughter and the sister - or the wife? Where have they gone?"²⁷

At this point of exploring Derrida's feminist credentials, I would like to return to the questions in the beginning of this article. When apparently less than modern democracies are criticized for letting women rise in political positions on the grounds of patriarchal conditions, might this, after all, also be a question of fraternity? If the traditional is supposed to be family-oriented, to be patriarchal, (as if the situation was more close to the primal horde), and if modernity and modern democracy is supposed to be built on the condition of the end of patriarchy, then the hint in the accusations of too much family and patriarchy in "traditional" political situations is that this forecloses the possibility of modern democracy, which is based on civic brotherhood. The coming into power of female politicians, through patriarchal channels, testifies to the traditional situation, the lack of brotherhood.

Therefore, the worry of those who talk about women in patriarchy might not be a worry for the women, but for the brotherhood. The concern may be not that the traditional societies are too patriarchal in the meaning of keeping their women under control, but that traditional societies are not keeping their women in control in the right way, in the tradition of the fraternal.

The Name and Effects

The centrality of brotherhood in the tradition of modern democracy, which cannot help but be a tradition, is the reason for Derrida's hesitations about the name 'democracy'. He worries that the heart of the monotheistic tradition of keeping women subjugated is embedded within the figuration of the modern democratic tradition through the very term 'fraternity.' When theorists discuss the seemingly abstract, gender neutral thing in gendered figures, it has effects.

Pateman points out how, through the theories of the transfer from the patriarchal to the modern democratic rule, the sphere of natural subjection is separated out as the non-political sphere. The non-political status of the familial and the private is confirmed by labeling it the realm of paternal power. (Pateman 1988, 93) Women and family, and the connection of the two to the patriarchal rule are thereby labeled both as non-political and non-democratic.

One of the effects in the firmly rooted association of women to family (and non-democracy), even in political contexts, may be the well known fact that in a situation in which feminine leaders in modern, supposedly gender neutral democracies are extremely rare, there also seems to be a suspicion that with every female politician some family situation creeps in. Hegel called women "the eternal irony of the state" and he seemed to be convinced that women can not keep their private family interests apart from the public state interest.²⁸ Does the deep tradition of brotherhood still cast doubt on women today in this way, too? Is there always someone looking for the family influence and family interest in a female politician, something which is miraculously not present in men, who purportedly are capable of pure brotherhood, with no family ties attached?²⁹

Pateman (1988, 116-153) also connects the centrality of fraternity in the democratic tradition to a number of other issues, including the segregation of the labor market and lingering idea of male as the wage earner and woman as the dependant. Derrida does not discuss such issues, but in his text there is a deep concern about the invisibility of women in the democratic tradition and about the structure of dominance in it, for which he uses the term phallogocentrism.

As a consequence of the problem of fraternalism and phallogocentrism Derrida sets himself a question about the tradition of democracy and politics in *The Politics of Friendship*: is the name of democracy

worth continued respect or should it be abandoned for other names? He answers the question in a way that is typical of him: there is no choice, a decision needs to be made without excluding either one of the options. To move beyond phallogocentrism, he says, yet without ceasing to intervene to transform the democratic tradition, we need to invent other names and other concepts. (Derrida 2005a, 158-159) There are no new concepts that Derrida would propose in place of fraternity for the tradition of the democracy to come, though. So, is Derrida primarily a feminist thinker in his treatment of the tradition of democracy, and how does his philosophical project match feminism?

Philosophy, Politics, and Feminism?

In terms of the tradition of philosophy, Derrida's writing consists of constant shifting between the quasi-omni-temporal philosophical questions, on the one hand, and the questioning of philosophical omni-temporality, on the other, and of always returning to the here and now of textual specificity and to a specific time and place, to the texts and to the ghosts in those texts. Derrida himself very often reminds his readers and listeners of the fact that he writes from within a particular place and time, and also in a particular language. Therefore, for philosophical reasons, despite many excellent efforts to systematize his thought, he always escapes these systematizations,³⁰ and despite the fact that there is much that is systematic in his thought, he nevertheless often also adjusts to his concrete time and place in his texts, and to his particular audience.³¹

The feminist Derrida is a good example of this more general feature, if not principle, of his thought. Always respecting the otherness of the feminist movement, he has, from a certain "profeminist" position,³² taken different positions within feminist struggles according to the discussions of academic feminism that were available to him in his vicinity. As a result, he has also extracted praise from feminist thinkers, such as Elizabeth Grosz: "Jacques Derrida was one of the very few philosophers for whom feminism made a difference and who, in turn, made a difference to feminisms."³³

Surprisingly, much of Derrida's work has commented upon, and lived a contemporary existence with, discussion within feminist theory from early on. His first "feminist" intervention was in *Spurs* (1972).

This commentary on Nietzsche, as well as his well known interviews and seminars on feminism, such as “Choreographies” (1982) and “Women in the Beehive” (1984), echo the sexual difference doctrine as well as feminist convictions on the specificities of “woman”. While remaining closely within the paradigm of sexual difference, and even contributing to the discussion in order to dismiss the “egalitarian feminists”, he directly follows the 1960s and 1970s second wave French and Italian sexual difference feminism.

His next discussion, which is tangential to feminism and concerned with gender is in *Geschlecht I-II* (1987). From a point of view of feminist theory, Derrida here takes up the issue of the ontological status of sexual difference. Again, Derrida joins the most recent feminist theory, and now, the status of ontological sexual difference is not as self-evident as before; on the contrary, it is the very question, which he decides to treat as an undecidable.

Elizabeth Grosz interprets Derrida as being in a stable position within feminism. She writes: “Derrida explicitly invokes feminism, woman, the role of the mother’s body, the images of femininity, sexuality, and maternity, as well as the work of women philosophers (his contemporaries, among them, Sarah Kofman and H el ene Cixous) in many papers and books.” (Grosz 2005,89)³⁴

In my view, this more accurately describes Derrida’s earlier work, when he was closely in touch with the sexual difference tradition. This needs to be shown more specifically, which would require another article altogether, but I would like to put forward a hypothesis that there is a constant change of Derrida’s tapping into what was going on in feminist discussions. In the *Geschlecht* texts the idea of many different sexes was clearly occupying him much more than “the feminine,” which was the main concern earlier. What, then, is at stake in these “political” texts of the 1990s in terms of feminism? Is Derrida taking on the course of equality feminists, with his occupation on democracy, on the numbers of friends, and on fraternity?

In the 1990s texts Derrida is as wholeheartedly as ever on the feminist track asking where the women, the sisters and the daughters are in the tradition of democracy, and why is the figure of the brother the privileged one. He wonders loudly whether the entire tradition of democracy should be discredited because of this lack of women. But I would argue that it is not the lack of women in the tradition *per se* that is the focus of Derrida’s discussion on fraternity. It is much more the

deconstructive idea that filiation, the family, the household, and more than anything, the whole chain of signifiers bind democracy, not only to family but to nation, race and blood.

Through the extensive book length rich and detailed discussion in *The Politics of Friendship*, it becomes clear that for Derrida fraternity is a bad word not only because it leaves out women but because of its associations with the familial, which mobilizes the chain of birth/nativity/national/natural/filiation/fraternity/proximity/neighbour in the democratic tradition and in the theorizing of politics. Fraternity is the name which, despite its supposed detachment from natural brotherhood, nevertheless as a figure links to the idea of initial togetherness of the democratic community. It is therefore closely bound up with the presupposition of democratic communities being national communities, communities of those who are born in the same place, close to each other by birth and race.³⁵

In *The Politics of Friendship* Derrida is, no doubt, going on with his earlier thought in the *Geschlecht* -series on the situatedness of Heidegger's thought in his particular German language and his particular German nation. *Geschlecht*, this peculiar German word which brings together sex, the extended family of aunts and uncles and cousins, as well as birth, race, and nation, comprising all those in your natural proximity, is at the heart of this exploration. In Derrida's 1990s work, his concern is of this same idea of *Geschlecht* being at the heart of the Western tradition of democratic politics, signified by the word fraternity, which in all its supposed non-naturalness cannot but link to this chain of meanings.

To relate this deconstruction of the tradition to the question in the beginning of this paper, one could assume that from the point of view of Derrida's analysis, the family ties of the Bushes and the Bhuttos would be part of a general problematic tradition of democracy. They would be that rather than a sign of a particular failure of one or the other democratic system. From this Derridean point of view, the question would not be about traditional or less traditional societies being more or less apt to privilege the familial, but the familial being actually part of the democratic demos, the civic being always somehow invested in the already being there of the ethnic or national community of friends as its natural boundary. The idea of filiation (stock, genus, species, sex [*Geschlecht*], blood, birth, nature, nation) brings in the

concerns of its nationalistic, ethnocentric as well as phallogocentric consequences in the conceptualizing of political tradition.

This Derridean insight would lead us not to draw a distinction between proper democracy and improper democracy, between developed and underdeveloped, between the Bush and the Bhutto family members' way of ascending to power. While the selection of friends and the number of friends in the group is central to the democratic tradition, as Derrida makes clear in *The Politics of Friendship*,³⁶ the familial intertwines into the democratic and is part of the same problematic of fraternity. Derrida shows that Schmitt's brother as a figure on "our side" in politics is significantly dependent upon properties of familial brotherhood. The tradition of family is therefore within the tradition of democracy. Family is implicated in the idea of friendship as fraternity, the "we" of politics and democratic community. The tradition of democracy in Derrida's redescription has a problem it needs to deal with: how to think of politics and democracy without a designated group of inborn people.

Concerning women in this familiar scenario: for Hegel, women are the eternal irony in the political, always in too much of a proximity to the family, indeed, *being* the sex/family [*Geschlecht*]. Today, this still seems to be the position that the media repeats, and not only in the case of Asian female politicians, but also with the Western ones. On the basis of media coverage one could easily conclude that female politicians are more closely knit to family interests, and also more monitored for mixing their private life with the public funds than are the male politicians.³⁷ The insight into the tradition provided by Derrida sheds light on this phenomenon. As it places the family deeply inside the democratic tradition, it also clarifies how women in the democratic tradition end up being reminded of their earlier place in the modern Western family not as heads but as dependents, as being immersed in the family and not as having a double role both in and out of it as did the men.

If the civic order of political groupings of, as the theory says gender neutral, fraternities, has in this tradition actually never been completely free of the group of born-in proximity, the very term fraternity being a sign of this underlying complicity, Benazir Bhutto should not be seen as an exception. If the selected groups of friends are in any case deeply implicated in national ethnic groups and families, her ascending to power should not be treated differently from that of George

W. Bush, the son, or Asif Ali Zardari, the husband. This is all about a certain selection of friends within the terms of fraternity. Bhutto's and other women's treatment as an exception testifies to the naturalizing phallogocentrism in the fraternal democratic tradition. Women come in structurally as dependants, not as fraternal heads of households.

Conclusion

Derrida's work on democracy-to-come and fraternity draws attention to a deep rooted gendered trait in the tradition of democratic theory and practice, and in this effort it is parallel to Pateman's work on the history of the tradition. Both point out the centrality of the fraternal structure to the idea of modern democracy, which the tradition contrasts to the patriarchal terms of the more traditional order. In his 1990s work Derrida deconstructs the idea of fraternal democracy with a focal point in Carl Schmitt's work, and through the notion of friendship. In the course of this deconstruction it becomes clear that the patriarchal order and the standpoint of fraternity share the age old tradition of treating women as the ones under the rule of the family heads, and as invisible.

Derrida's deconstruction of the democratic tradition exposes the modern democratic tradition as deeply paradoxical: its main idea is that of a political order devoid of connection to kinship; yet, it labels this order with the term "fraternity", which is nothing but a term of kinship, exactly. Through his characteristic method of terminological association Derrida makes visible the connection of fraternity and friendship to proximity, sameness, family, blood, birth, and nation. As a consequence, fraternity turns out to be the principle which inhabits the very familial connection which it was set out to counter in the tradition of democracy.

Pointing out the phallogocentrist fraternalism in the democratic tradition is a feminist effort on Derrida's part. His diagnosis gives support to the diagnosis by Pateman and many other feminist scholars of how the creation of modern democracy simultaneously created a non-political sphere on the basis of gender. Derrida is so aware of the drawbacks of the fraternal structures in the tradition that he is ready to consider leaving the word and tradition of democracy because of it, and only hesitantly ends up defending the tradition and

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keeping up its name. Yet, it is crucial that he writes about “democracy to come”, instead of “the future of democracy” which would imply a known content to the word.

The traditionalism of the democratic tradition, which claims to be modern in comparison to the traditional, is a problem of *Geschlecht* in all of the meanings of this word for Derrida. Therefore, democracy to come is a project of Derrida in spite of the tradition and simultaneously because of it.

NOTES

1. Benazir Bhutto (1953 – 2007) was assassinated in the middle of her successful election campaign in Pakistan on December 27th. 2007. Already Prime Minister twice before, she was the first democratically elected leader of a Muslim nation in 1988. On 28th December, 2007, *The Times* had a headline: “Can democracy survive and who will take Bhutto’s place?” Bronwen Maddox writes in *Analysis* (p. 4): “The assassination of Benazir Bhutto does not mean the death of democracy in Pakistan – provided that elections are held soon.” (...) “...she seemed to hold out the hope of turning Pakistan into a more modern country ...”
2. “Obituaries. Benazir Bhutto.” *The Times*, December 28, 2007, p. 69. The Obituary mentions in the following paragraphs Bangladesh’s Begum Khalida Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wajid, Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka and her daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga, as well as Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi of India, pointing out the husbands and fathers who brought them into power. It then concludes the list by a statement “Benazir Bhutto rose to power because she was the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a former populist Prime Minister, who was hanged by the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq in 1979.”
3. The past politics, choices, and struggles in the genealogy of modern democracies in Europe, and the highly contingent nature of the women joining it is highlighted in Pulkkinen and Rosales (2008).
4. The website *Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership* lists 46 female presidents, since the first one in 1940. Most of these presidencies have been outside the prime democratic countries of the Western world. The first one in Europe, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, president of Iceland, was elected in 1980. http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/women_state_leaders.htm#F (October 2009)
5. For example, the three well known writers on the topic of Derrida and politics, Beardsworth (1996), Bennington (2001), and Critchley (1999) hardly touch the issue of gender, and also a more recent comprehensive contribution to the study of Derrida as a political thinker, Thomson (2005), only briefly discusses it. It is also an open and a discussed question whether Derrida should be read as a political theorist at all, even during the latest “political” phase of his work. Even those, who have written extensively on his political thought, including Geoffrey Bennington, seem to doubt this to a degree. On this topic there are those who argue that Derrida’s work is completely devoid of political dimension, while others insist that it is deeply political. Most commentators, nevertheless, tend to shift the interest from Derrida’s specific comments on democracy to the overall political nature of his philosophy. An early discussion on Derrida and democratic theory between Richard Rorty, who had thus far consistently denied the political implications of Derrida’s work, and Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau and Simon Critchley, for whom there is such a political relevance in his work, is recorded in Mouffe (1996).
6. Cornell (1997); Grosz (1997) and (2005); Spivak (2005). To what degree Derrida can be read as a feminist theorist has been an issue in numerous publications over the past decades. In addition to individual articles on this topic, the collections devoted to it include: Holland (ed.) (1997) *Feminist Interpretations of Jacques Derrida*; Feder, Rawlinson, Zakin (eds.) (1997) *Derrida and Feminism*, and a special issue of *Differences. A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. “Derrida’s Gift” Fall 2005.
7. *Mémoires: For Paul De Man* (1989) and *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* (1989).

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8. Most likely, one origin for this task was the 1989 celebration of 200th anniversary of the French Revolution when the slogan Liberty, Equality and Fraternity was reinterpreted widely by intellectuals. Derrida's interview on the revolutionary heritage in *Le Monde* is published as an appendix in *The Other Heading*.

9. In Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* this "modern" system is supplemented by a constitutional monarch, and in this sense the modern political system he advocates is strictly speaking not democracy, although it characterizes the essential features of modern democracy.

10. Joining all these developments is the theme of an experience in a phenomenological sense: "This critique belongs to the movement of an experience open to the absolute future of what is coming, that is to say, a necessarily indeterminate, abstract, desert-like experience that is confided, exposed, given up to its waiting for the other and for the event." (Derrida 1994a, 112)

11. (*ibid.*, 74)

12. He writes: "How to relate, but also how to dissociate the two messianic spaces we are talking about here under the same name? If the messianic appeal properly belongs to a universal structure, to that irreducible movement of the historical opening to the future, therefore to experience itself and to language (expectation, promise, commitment to the event of what is coming, imminence, urgency, demand for salvation and for justice beyond law, pledge given to the other inasmuch as he or she is not present, presently present or living, and so forth), how is one to think it with the figures of Abrahamic messianism? Was not Abrahamic messianism but an exemplary prefiguration, the pre-name [*prénom*] given against the background of the possibility that we are attempting to name here? But then, why keep the name, or at least the adjective (we prefer to say messianic rather than messianism, so as to designate a structure of experience rather than of a religion), where no figure of the arrivant, even as he or she is heralded, should be pre-determined, prefigured, or even pre-named?.. Can one conceive of an atheological heritage of the messianic? (Derrida 1994a, 210 -211)

...The messianic trembles on the edge of this event itself. It is this hesitation, it has no other vibration, it does not "live" otherwise, but it would no longer be messianic if it stopped hesitating: (...) This messianic hesitation does not paralyze any decision, any affirmation, any responsibility. On the contrary, it grants them their elementary condition. It is their very experience." (Derrida 1994a, 213)

13. The very end of *The Politics of Friendship* reads: "For democracy remains to come; this is its essence in so far as it remains: not only will it remain indefinitely perfectible, hence always insufficient and future, but, belonging to the time of the promise, it will always remain, in each of its future times, to come: even when there is democracy, it never exists, it is never present, it remains the theme of a non-presentable concept. Is it possible to open up to the 'come' of a certain democracy which is no longer an insult to the friendship we have striven to think beyond the homo-fraternal and phallogocentric schema?

When will we be ready for an experience of freedom and equality that is capable of respectfully experiencing that friendship, which would at least be just, just beyond the law, and measured up against its measurelessness?

Oh my democratic friends....", (Derrida 2005a, 306)

14. Derrida (2005b, 57-58).

15. Derrida (2005b, 42-55) discusses Nancy in § 4 "Mastery and Measure", in *Rogues*. He discusses particularly Nancy's *The Experience of Freedom* (1993), and its chapter 7, "Sharing Freedom: Equality, Fraternity, Justice".

16. Underscoring Nancy's expression "if " in the quotation above "It is also fraternity, if it must be said, ..." Derrida mocks: "Must it be said? to which Nancy would have apparently answered, already long ago, 'Yes, it must be said' - and I, for a long time no, 'No'.". Derrida apparently refers here to what he has written on fraternity in *Politics of Friendship*. Nevertheless, throughout his polemics with Nancy Derrida also dilutes the disagreement by calling it a "brotherly". Rogues, 56 - 61.
17. Particularly in chapter 6 "Oath, Conjunction, Fraternalization", (Derrida 2005a, 138-170).
18. "All this is undoubtedly - like love or friendship in general, between men, between women, between men and women - a universal human cause, but I have shown that what concerns humanity in general, and as such, had no political relevance." says the imaginary Schmitt. (Derrida 2005a, 157)
19. Pateman (1988, 77-115).
20. Ibid, 77.
21. Pitkin (1984, 236).
22. Derrida (2005a, 159).
23. Pateman (1988, 80). Pateman discusses the political theories of fraternity according to which traditional society, in a fundamental sense, is kinship. The polis stood apart because it was founded on the principle of fraternity across different kinship groups. What is crucial here is the male principle of the new political order. The blood principle is replaced by the idea of law which applies alike to men of different kinship groups. The separation of the male principle of fraternity from blood descend is crucial for construction of the state. Pateman (1988, 79-80).
24. The argumentation on the basis of original contracts grew from the 17th century on, on the basis of the revolutionary assumption of natural individual equality, and it marks a change in the long tradition of patriarchal argumentation in which the ruler was in the position of a father (*patria potestas*). The separation of the male principle of fraternity from blood descend is crucial for the construction of the modern state. Pateman (1988, 77-115).
25. Pateman also dismisses the possibility of changing the tradition through "desexing" or "feminizing" the term fraternity. Such a change is not easy at all, because "the language expresses and forms part of the structure of our society", and the story is told over and over in the stories of democratic theory. The suggestion to desex fraternity, which Pateman comments on, is made by Bernard Crick, who would rather change the meaning of the word than "pause to rewrite most languages". Pateman (1988, 81-82).
26. Judith Butler has famously argued this on the Lacanian Phallus as the privileged signifier. Butler "The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary", in *Bodies that Matter*, (57-91, particularly 84).
27. Derrida (2005b, note 36, 166-167).
28. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, (1986, 352).
29. Another aspect of this may be the continued expectance of male as the main supporter of the family, and consequently, the naturalness or legitimacy of a male politicians' self-interested behavior in contrast to that of a female politician.
30. Among these is Geoffrey Bennington's *Jacques Derrida*, in which Derrida demonstrated this escape textually by providing a subtext to surprise those reading Bennington's interpretation of his work.
31. Many writers do remember this, for example, Drucilla Cornell says: "I am writing of a specific, or *certain*, Derrida (to use one of his favorite words)." *Differences* 16/3, 2005, 71.

32. Avital Ronell has described Derrida's feminist position as more than profeminist and rather as profeminist, and also describes it in terms of contamination "Derrida blew into our town-and-gown groves with profeminist energy, often, and at great cost to philosophical gravity, passing as a woman." Cited in *Differences* 16/3, 2005, in Derrida's Gift: Introductory Note by the editors. p.vi. Originally in Ronell, Avital. Forum. "The Legacy of Jacques Derrida." PMLA 120.2 (2005, 488-90).

33. Grosz (2005, 88). Grosz also writes that "With the exception of John Stuart Mill, I would suggest that Derrida is really the first (male) philosopher for whom feminism is essential if philosophy is to be undertaken properly, adequately, or well. Feminism, which comprises without clarifying the question of woman, the feminine, and sexual difference, is not a peripheral question, marginal to the concerns of philosophy, but is at its (unarticulated) heart, hence these undefined but inscribed terms infect all of philosophy since its inception.

34. Grosz also ends up her portrait of Derrida's gift as a feminist thinker, by "While Derrida's concerns were not only or even primarily feminist, he bequeathed to feminist thought and politics a conceptual infection, a germ of an idea that transformed it from its nineteenth-century impulse to equal inclusion into a twenty-first-century impulse to proliferate and maximize difference." Grosz (2005, 92).

35. I have followed through part of this discussion in Pulkkinen (2009).

36. The aporia within democracy is the question of number. In democracy, each citizen is supposed to be a unique individual, a chosen one, as one in universal brotherhood. And yet, democracy functions only by choosing the ones that are your friends. "The question of democracy thus opens the question of the citizen or the subject, as countable singularity. And that of 'universal fraternity'. There is no democracy without respect for irreducible singularity or alterity, but there is no democracy without the 'community of friends' (*koína ta philōn*), without the calculation of majorities, without identifiable, stabilizable, representable subjects, all equal. These two laws are irreducible one to the other. Tragically irreconcilable and forever wounding. The wound itself opens with the necessity of having to count one's friends, to count the others, in the economy of one's own, there where every other is altogether other. But where every other is equally altogether other. More serious than contradiction, political desire is forever borne by the disjunction of these two laws. "This is what Derrida calls "the tragedy of number". (Derrida 2005a, 22) The discussion also reveals that Derrida's underlying conception of what democracy entails seems to be pinned on the notions of "number" and "decision", which means that probably both Tocqueville and Schmitt are present as ghosts in his text. Compare Rosanvallon in this volume (28-29).

37. A famous case in Sweden was cabinet minister Mona Sahlin, who in 1995 lost her position due to a big public case concerning her use of public credit card for small personal goods. Very recently in Britain, as a consequence of MPs' personal expenses scandal, five female ministers and one male minister resigned. It would take a careful study of the complicated situation to properly analyze what has happened in these cases, but on the basis of media coverage it is hard to not come to the conclusion that women are particularly under scrutiny for private interests.

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