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The 2011 Keynote speaker was James C. Doig, Professor Emeritus at Clayton State University.


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Introduction

I think that at heart, a fallacy is an offence that ought not be committed. In other words, at the heart of the occurrence of every fallacy is an ethical consideration. As a result of Hamblin’s seminal work *Fallacies*, the growing literature about fallacies and fallacy theory has developed lines of thought regarding the necessity and usefulness of certain previously accepted fallacies. The debate between useful fallacies and un-useful fallacies has led to some confusion regarding which occurrences ought to properly be called ‘fallacy’. Trudy Govier has highlighted the idea that outside of formal considerations, there is some common feature of argumentation considered fallacious.¹ I will attempt to progress fallacy theory by arguing that, at the heart of all properly called fallacies, a normative wrong has been committed insofar as the occurrence of a fallacy takes away from what I call the integrity of the discussion.

To achieve this end I will begin by discussing some evidence to suggest there is confusion regarding where to find a common thread by which to identify a fallacy. I will then outline the parameters of my concept of ‘the integrity of a discussion’ and give reason to believe that the common thread between all fallacies is the work they do to offend such integrity. Finally, I

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* I would like to thank Dr. Christopher Tindale for his help with the development of this paper. I would also like to extend a special thank you to my long-time friend and colleague Michael Walschots for his helpful comments on earlier drafts.
discuss the relationship of my idea with other well known conceptions of fallacy in an effort to show that the notion of the integrity of a discussion reaches a more fundamental and encompassing level of characterization than other attempts. To be clear, however, it is not the aim of this paper to provide a new theory of fallacy or argumentation. Rather, it is to provide a promising approach to a meta-theory of fallacy from which a theory of fallacy may be more fruitfully developed.

The Problem

As Hamblin pointed out and numerous commentators have criticised since, the notion of fallacy has had a long tradition of being equated with deductive incompatibility. Hamblin's characterisation of fallacy as an argument that seems to be valid but is not opened the doors for many argumentation theorists to not only question this definition, but take up his project of providing a theory of fallacy in general. The Informal Logic movement that began in North America around the same time as Hamblin's book appeared was in no small part premised on the idea that people seldom argue according to the formal rules of deductive logic. As such, a new standard was needed for the evaluation of everyday argumentative discourse. The developing standard (which it would be wrong to say was completely opposed to the formally theorized structures of logic) developed the notion that strong arguments were not, in every case, deductively valid. One criticism levelled against formal logic was that it did not take the content of an argument into account. As such, new “informal” theories of argumentation emerged which set guidelines for the creation of strong argumentation as well as methods for the evaluation of already proposed arguments taking place in an everyday context. As

debates continued among argumentation theorists, the now generally accepted notion emerged that arguments vary in strength and that some weaknesses within an argument are more serious than others. In addition, an effort to pinpoint and provide a theory for the weaknesses of arguments is a part of the enduring effort of fallacy theorists, argumentation theorists and informal logicians today.

As a product of their work and their conscientiousness of the strength of deductive reasoning, many philosophers have pointed out that some commonly regarded fallacies such as begging the question, while in-fact deductively valid, remain fallacious. Trudy Govier in her “Who Says There Are No Fallacies?” does an excellent job illustrating why the formal rules of deductive logic cannot work as a universal common thread among all fallacies. For formal logicians, a fallacy is an invalid form of argument; that is, an argument which cannot be translated deductively into a recognized system of formal logic. As has been mentioned, however, fallacies such as begging the question, while formally valid, still strike many as fallacious. As such, “[s]eeing the common factor is easy for formal fallacies but hard for informal ones”. There seems to be something other than formal validity at the heart of every fallacy.

On the other side of the same coin, there is also evidence to suggest that commonly regarded informal fallacies can be used non-fallaciously. For example, Douglas Walton, in his paper “Defeasible Reasoning”, provides the example of using an argument from ignorance to resolve an issue regarding the belongings of a missing person. Walton illustrates that, in a court of law, when a person is missing for a certain period of time he is presumed dead in order to ensure that his estate can be settled. Although the court is ignorant of the facts regarding the whereabouts of the missing individual, it is presumed that

no evidence of his existence suffices as evidence of his death. Typically, the pattern of drawing a conclusion based on an absence or lack of evidence has been considered a fallacy. A commonly cited example of a fallacious use of the argument from ignorance involves reasoning such as 'God exists because there is no evidence that s/he doesn’t exist'.

While observations regarding the usefulness of some so-called fallacies are beneficial for fallacy theory as a whole, it does complicate efforts to find a common thread by which to identify the true instances of fallacy. One approach to finding a common thread which can account for the fact that begging the question, while formally valid, is still fallacious, as well as the fact that some fallacies such as an argument from ignorance can be used non-fallaciously would be to focus on the deceptive role all fallacies play. In their definitions of fallacy, both Govier and Walton point to deception as an indicator of the occurrence of a fallacy. Govier defines a fallacy as "a mistake in reasoning, a mistake which occurs with some frequency in real arguments and which is quite characteristically deceptive."6 A fallacy for Walton is also, "associated with a deception or illusion"7. In this way, the fallacy of begging the question is not deemed fallacious because it is valid or invalid, but, at least in part, because it is deceptive. Likewise, the argument from ignorance is not considered a fallacy in the case of a missing person because the use is not deceptive; whereas in the example of the existence of God, deception has occurred.

While I think there is room to continue the debate whether or not every fallacy does deceptive work, I will not engage that debate here. For our purposes, I wish to propose the idea that to better understand the role of deception it must be clear that it is not solely the fallacy which is inherently deceptive as much as it is the participant in the discussion who is deceived. This distinction shows its importance in fallacies of ambiguity. If, after hearing a claim that can be plausibly

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6 Govier. Pg. 2.
7 Walton. Pg. 2.
understood in two or more distinct ways, I understand the claim in a way that is consistent with the larger context of the discussion, according to the idea of deception, it could be argued that no fallacy has occurred. If however, my understanding of the claim in question falls on the side of inconsistency with the larger context of the discussion, I could be inclined to argue a fallacy has occurred. As is illustrated by the use of ‘I’ in the above example, a de-personalized definition of deception is impossible.

At the same time, however, for a person to deceive or be deceived there must be something that does the work of deceiving or that explains the cause of being deceived. One does not open their eyes at any given moment in an uncaused state of deception. There is an interplay between the work of the fallacy and the one on whom the fallacy takes effect. For our discussion, it will be important to note that, because this interplay is very intricate, there is room for work discussing where to place, if it can be placed at all, moral blame.

Keeping in line with the personal character of deception we can further reason that deception, as an isolated characteristic, does not reach the heart of the matter in determining what a fallacy is. More foundationally, deception can be considered an indicator of the occurrence of a fallacy precisely because one ought not deceive or be deceived.

At this point we have also come to a moral claim at the heart of fallacy. As Fogelin and Duggan assert, “Commiting a fallacy is a kind of wrongful doing”\(^8\), and we can infer as a general moral rule that one ought to avoid doing wrong. But what is it about a fallacy that makes it a wrong doing in light of our considerations presented above which illustrate that deception provides an incomplete account? After thinking about this question, I realized that a fallacy is often pointed out as the occurrence of anything undesirable in a discussion and

the undesirability of a fallacy is explicitly linked to it diminishing the strength of the discussion. Along these lines, I propose that a clearer way to think about fallacies is by assessing whether the occurrence of the fallacy in question has taken away from the integrity of a discussion in which integrity has been deemed to be of importance; the topic to which we now turn.

**Integrity**

In my view, a fallacy is the occurrence of an offence which diminishes the integrity of the discussion in which it takes place. Cheshire Calhoun, in her article “Standing for Something”, reviews the notion of integrity and supports and criticises different characteristics of the virtue as they have been expressed up until 1995 when she wrote. In short, for Calhoun, integrity is “standing for something before fellow deliberators” and as such it “seems tightly connected to viewing oneself as a member of an evaluating community and to caring about what that community endorses. That is, it seems to be a social virtue.” For our purposes then, the integrity of a discussion resides in its ability to be endorsed by others who deliberate the quality of discussion. I mean by this that the personal trait of standing for something among deliberators can be transferred to the characteristics of a discussion insofar as the aim and style of the discussion are something deliberators endorse. In this way, there is a crossover between the integrity of the deliberator and the integrity of the discussion itself. An expert in argumentation who endorses the promotion of integrity in a discussion has both personalized his integrity and granted integrity to the discussion itself.

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10 ibid. 254
The important part of Calhoun's lengthy distinction between personal and social identity is that integrity does not stand or fall with how well rules are formulated to fit all imaginable circumstances. On the social view of integrity determining the integrity of a discussion contains a certain level of humility, or willingness to be adapted to changing times, while at the same time, standing for what is best for the purposes of the discussion. In this regard, then, to define a fallacy as that which takes away from the integrity of a discussion allows that offences considered a fallacy at one point may come and go in light of good deliberation. For reasons that will become clearer later, the essentialist tendency has been, in part, removed.

As a starting point, I propose that for a discussion to be deemed as having integrity it should promote truth, honesty, flexibility, and charity. The four pillars of the principle of integrity promote;

**Truth** – The promotion of truth is aimed at the outcome of the integral discussion. Although it is not the priority of every type of communication to reach as true as possible a conclusion (eg. joke telling, thought experiments etc), the foundation of an integral discussion must be the agreement that the outcome can be trusted to be aimed at truth, regardless of whether or not a conclusion is reached. The qualifying term ‘promotion’ is used here, and in relation to the three characteristics below, because it is not assumed that any given participant, in any given discussion, can have knowledge of the Truth. In fact, it is often the case that during a discussion, what one believed to be true at the outset is proven false by the end of the discussion. As such, to avoid a metaphysical discussion regarding Truth, truth here is defined as being that which one believes with sincerity to be the case. In this way two or more discussion participants with opposing viewpoints may all be considered to be promoting truth while discussing their views; there is no one view which is more true (or is ‘the truth’ more) than another.
Honesty – Whereas truth addresses the aim of an integral discussion, honesty addresses the method for arriving at the truth; it is a procedural matter. The aim is to be honest with yourself and any other discussion participants regarding your roll in the discussion. This entails being honest about the limitations of your knowledge and your intentions. Honesty promotes admitting when the discussion must remain open due to lack of evidence, time or other inhibiting circumstance. In an integral discussion aimed and the promotion of truth through an honest methodology, there is room for false argument and untrue premises. This would be the case where an imaginary example or an incomplete analogy is used to illustrate the truth of a matter. The important part is that the participant using false claims or untrue premises is honest about the usage.

Flexibility – This characteristic promotes both the discussion participants and the discussion itself to be open to defeat, modification and/or acceptance of other views. It promotes an understanding that no argument is won forever, but that the evidence before you has been reasoned as truthfully and honestly as is currently possible. It allows for defeasibility in every instance and encourages participants to admit a change of mind if and when it happens, at any given moment.

Charity – This characteristic is meant to promote common ground between discussion participants. It supports the mentality that all participants ought to provide their discussion partner(s) with the best/strongest interpretation of their views whenever possible. It encourages being open to helping others formulate their position even if it might be to the detriment of your own. A charitable participant will also be open to being her own devil’s advocate. The discussion itself maintains charity by incorporating the strongest possible interpretations while simultaneously admitting its own weakness. If the aim of the discussion is truth (as far as it can be determined) there is no need to worry about ‘losing’ a discussion. The principle of charity helps encourage the support of another participant’s viewpoint, promotes truth, and helps remove the mentality that one has to admit ‘defeat’.
These four characteristics are by no means an exhaustive list, but are what I think, important pillars. In addition, all of these characteristics play a dual role. They are characteristics to be taken up by the participants in the discussion, but also, they are characteristics of the discussion itself. In other words, I encourage truthfulness, honesty, flexibility and charity to be traits that the participants of an integral discussion act according to, as well as encourage that the discussion itself (say if evaluated by an outside observer) embody and emanate these characteristics.

Relation to Other Views

One might be inclined to equate these four characteristics with Paul Grice's maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner.\(^\text{11}\) While many insights are shared between our two views, the characteristics of discussion integrity do differ from Grice's maxims in some important regards.

First, the characteristics of integrity are appropriately more flexible than the maxims Grice lays out. This is especially noticeable in how they differ in regards to the Quality maxim. Although we do agree on the general aim to "Try to make your contribution one that is true"\(^\text{12}\), Grice stipulates two conditions to the maxim that would be treated more flexibly under the principle of integrity. Grice asserts "1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence."\(^\text{13}\) Under the principle of integrity both of these restrictions are allowed under the characteristic of honesty. Because Grice did not differentiate between truth and

\(^{11}\) The following discussion is based entirely on Paul Grice (1975) "Logic and Conversation" taken from Studies in the Way of Words. Harvard University Press. 1989. pp 22-39

\(^{12}\) Grice. Pg. 27.

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
honesty the two were conflated. The principle of integrity would suggest that one admit the purpose of saying something false and admit if you think you lack adequate evidence. Prefaced in this way, we are also able to avoid a debate regarding the definition of adequacy.

Furthermore, it seems Grice’s maxims are inherently one-sided. All four of his maxims place the responsibility of action on one side of the talk exchange. Is it not the case, however, that talk exchanges rarely occur with such defined interaction? I mean here that, in a common discussion, interruptions happen and turn taking is often more sporadic than regimented. The characteristics of flexibility, honesty and charity, if held by all parties, allow that if one individual is being too informative or not informative enough (Grice’s concerns in the Quantity maxim) the other participants might quickly interject to point it out. For example, if I am rambling on too long about irrelevant matters (relevance being Grice’s concern in the Relation maxim) I would be open to being interrupted momentarily to be questioned on my longevity and relevance. If there is a point to my longevity, I will have the chance to explain, and if I become aware my discussion has become irrelevant, I will admit it and move on or end my turn.

One point of similarity between Grice and I is the use of a circular definition to indicate when our suggestions become effective. Grice states that,

the Cooperative Principle and maxims is reasonable (rational) along the following lines: that anyone who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication (such as giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others) must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in
In sum, the Cooperative principle is applicable only when it is accepted. Similarly, I have specified that an integral discussion occurs only when the participants agree that integrity is of importance to that specific discussion. These stipulations are important so that the jurisdiction of our suggestions is not over-extended to areas where it ought not be applied, such as joke telling (my example), quarrelling or letter writing (Grice’s examples).

Another seminal work in the field of argumentation that might appear to be overly similar to the characteristics I have presented can be found in the ten rules for a critical discussion developed by Frans van Emeren and Rob Grootendorst in their Pragma-Dialectical approach to argumentation. In my view, however, 8 of the 10 rules of a critical discussion proposed by van Emeren and Grootendorst can be read as needing to be followed in order to preserve the integrity of the discussion; the exceptions being rule 7 and 8 which focus on equating argumentation with formal validity, a view with which I disagree on the same basis as Govier, which has been explained above. Below is a list of the 8 rules that apply to an integral discussion sorted under the integral characteristic to which they apply.

**Truth**

4) **Relevance Rule**
A party may defend his standpoint only by advancing argumentation relating to that standpoint.

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14 ibid. Pg. 30
15 ibid. Pg. 29
Honesty

2) Burden of Proof Rule
A party that advances a standpoint is obliged to defend it if the other party asks him to do so.

3) Standpoint Rule
A party’s attack on a standpoint must relate to the standpoint that has indeed been advanced by the other party.

6) Starting Point Rule
A party may not falsely present a premise as an accepted starting point nor deny a premise representing an accepted starting point.

Flexibility

1) Freedom Rule
Parties must not prevent each other from advancing standpoints or from casting doubt on standpoints.

9) Closure Rule
A failed defense of a standpoint must result in the party that put forward the standpoint retracting it and a conclusive defense of the standpoint must result in the other party retracting its doubt about the standpoint.

Charity

5) Unexpressed Premise Rule
A party may not falsely present something as a premise that has been left unexpressed by the other party or deny a premise that he himself has left implicit.

10) Usage Rule
A party must not use formulations that are insufficiently clear or confusingly ambiguous and a party must interpret the other party’s formulations as carefully and accurately as possible.

The two rules related to formal structures of argumentation are the Argument Scheme Rule which states, “A party may not regard a standpoint as conclusively defended if the defense does not take place by means of an appropriate argumentation scheme that is correctly applied and the Validity Rule which
states, "In his argumentation, a party may only use arguments that are logically valid or capable of being made logically valid by making explicit one or more unexpressed premises." For the pragma-dialectician then, "A fallacy is...a speech act that prejudices or frustrates efforts to resolve a difference of opinion and the use of the term 'fallacy' is thus systematically connected with the rules for a critical discussion."  

Like the Gricean maxims, these rules seem both more rigid and one-sided than the integral discussion approach. For the pragma-dialectician, if a rule is broken, a fallacy has been committed. In addition, all of the rules articulate what you must do. I want to suggest that another approach is to promote the overall integrity of the discussion which is a much more malleable endeavour. Along these same lines, the integral discussion approach is able to answer “why these rules?” on a level that is not related to pragmatics, but morals. The integral discussion is integral because it is good, not because it is efficient. As has been noted, in the critical discussion approach, I have tried to avoid positing the characteristics as hard and fast rules, but have instead attempted to argue for the promotion of integrity.

Finally, whereas the pragma-dialectical rules are aimed at resolving a difference of opinion, the principle of integrity allows for difference of opinion to come and go. The participants of a discussion wherein integrity is of importance may start on completely agreeable grounds, come to a disagreement, resolve it and come to yet another disagreement, all the while agreeing to maintain the integrity of the discussion. For the pragma-dialectician, the 10 rules would only apply while a difference of opinion is occurring.

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17 Frans Van Emren. Pg. 136.
Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to show that fallacy theory has moved beyond being equated with formal fallacy but has remained incomplete due to the inability to articulate a common thread through what are intuitively considered fallacies. As a solution to this problem I have suggested that the common thread through all fallacies is the moral claim that the offence diminishes the integrity of a discussion. Furthermore, I have proposed that the integrity of a discussion is maintained through the promotion of truth, honesty, flexibility and charity. I have used the term 'promote' in an effort to preserve the idea that fallacies vary in their degree of seriousness. Finally, I have suggested that all fallacies are failures on a moral dimension insofar as they are offences which ought not be committed, but that there is an intricate interplay between the roll of the participant and the fallacy itself in determining where to place the moral blame. My overarching aim in this paper has only been to provide a fruitful contribution to the social and integral discussion currently taking place aimed at answering the question 'what is a fallacy?'

Bibliography


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Daniel John Carroll—The Aesthetic Experience of Music as Kierkegaard’s Subjective Truth

Abstract: This is a sequel to a previously written paper entitled “Thoughts on the Aesthetics of Melody” in which I addressed the difficulty of determining what elements of music elicit an aesthetic experience/emotional response in the listener. In this new paper, I present the idea that the aesthetic experience of listening to music is a realization of the kind of “subjective truth” described by Kierkegaard in his Concluding Unscientific Postscript within the observer created by contact with the musical work. I address the key points in the relevant passages from Kierkegaard’s work as to their applicability to the musical experience and support the connections by explaining how the experience is not entirely an objective, static phenomenon but a subjective, changeable one.

Whether one believes that music mimics the sounds of nature, expresses emotions, is “expressive of” them, “expresses primarily the composer’s knowledge of human feeling”, or merely contains musical analogues of physical actions or psychological states, it is indisputable that

19 As Kivy maintains in Sound Sentiment, chapter II, “To Express and to Be Expressive.”
21 As Hanslick maintains in The Beautiful in Music, quoted in Hospers 1946, 85.
22 As in the case of an “idiomatic translation from the psychological...to the musical.” Attributed to Adorno, quoted in
humans experience emotional responses to music. The aesthetic experience of listening to music has become, for me, an increasingly intriguing phenomenon and a vitally important topic of personal investigation.

The nature and possible causes of it have occupied a significant part of my scholastic attention as a musicology major, philosophy minor, and Undergraduate Research Associate over the past several months, though before becoming a musicology student this was not one of my areas of interest; I preferred instead to live as what Kierkegaard would call “a romantic soul”; one with “no desire to try and perceive the broad scope of his emotions and passions...no interest in understanding his situation fully.” 23 I was content to either give no answer to the question of why certain musical sounds or passages were agreeable, or to dismiss the matter with a cry of “I just do” in the style of a “non-educated philosopher.” 24 For this reason, navigating through the jargon-laden waters of philosophy and aesthetics has not been easy. (Martina Viljoen’s reference to the “persistent evasion of transparent answers” 25 among writers in this field is thus rather identifiable.) One of my extracurricular papers, entitled “Thoughts on the Aesthetics of Melody” 26 was the product of a great deal of original thought,


26 Presented at SIUE’s 5th Annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference in October 2010 and at the 10th Annual Stephen Humphrey Student Philosophy Colloquium at the University of Louisville in November 2010.
research into the ideas that have already been forged by the great aestheticians, and a large amount of communication and idea-sharing with philosophers throughout the world. One of the conclusions of that paper was that although scientific and empirical studies indicate what happens neurologically or physiologically to indicate the occurrence of the aesthetic experience, a deeper philosophical or spiritual reason for these responses remains a mystery. This is due not only to personal dissatisfaction at the thought of the experience being "wholly analyzable in terms of reactions merely mechanical and automatic," but also due to the perennial difficulty of this issue since it requires a different method of investigation than that done in the natural sciences. (The inevitability of my consideration makes it daunting as well: in a summary of Richards's *Principles of Literary Criticism*, David Bleich wrote that "if we understand the motives of our own pronouncements, the question of what is objective and what subjective would not arise." Since we do not understand them, the question naturally arises.) It is the purpose of this paper to present a possible reason; that the aesthetic experience of music is a realization of "subjective truth" within the observer caused by contact with the work of art.

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27 One such study is that conducted by John Sloboda in which "shivers down the spine, laughter, lump in the throat, tears, goose pimples, racing heart, yawning, pit of stomach sensations, sexual arousal, trembling, flushing/blushing, and sweating" were presented as common bodily reactions to music among the participants. (John A. Sloboda, "Music Structure and Emotional Response: Some Empirical Findings," *Psychology of Music* 19 (1991): 112.)


29 Mentioned by Husserl in his "First Lecture."

It is important to mention that I have continued my excursions into the arena of musical aesthetics unperturbed by Hofstadter's opinion that the "pleasurable contemplation [of art], however enjoyable and refreshing, is, so to speak, a luxury, and the philosophy of it a tolerable but hardly very serious part of philosophy as a whole." 31 As Socrates stated, "the unexamined life is not worth living." 32 I continue this investigation due to a self-imposed responsibility to not only study the formal aspects of musical composition, but to develop within myself aesthetic potential, referred to by music educator James Mursell as "the great essential" 33, that might not be considered or cultivated in merely formal or analytical consideration of music, particularly that which is conducted in the classroom setting, since "the prime purpose and justification of music is that it be enjoyed aesthetically, spiritually, sensually, and emotionally." 34 Up to the point at which I decided to broaden my observational horizons by embarking on this "reflective celebration" 35, the adherence to academic,"textbook" study of music at the expense of research into its spiritual or aesthetic power or into its potential for association with non-

34 Emphasis original, Edwin John Stringham, *Listening to Music Creatively* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1959), 18. Bleich's criticism that "the personal and emotional connection we have to language and literature is just not consciously explored in our educational system" seems to apply to music as well (Bleich 1978, 8).
musical entities like people, places, things, and ideas\textsuperscript{36} had stunted my aesthetic growth and sensibility. Yet the light was seen by following in the footsteps of Faust (as described by Kierkegaard); a character who became dissatisfied by the mere reality of sense perceptions and who strove to search for a more fundamental, underlying reason for them.\textsuperscript{37}

Two works with which I have recently become acquainted exquisitely describe and validate this self-imposed responsibility. One is Plato’s \textit{Republic}, in which philosophy and education in general are described in the famous “Allegory of the Cave” as a progression from confusion to understanding of objects and then to contemplation of their very forms.\textsuperscript{38} The other is David Bleich’s book \textit{Subjective Criticism} which, although about literature, contains a reference to the same kind of observational progression described by Plato: “To treat literature as a symbolic object is to shift our attention from the acts of informational perception first to the perceptual initiatives we automatically take with a work, and then to the more deliberate conceptualizations we try to synthesize from these initiatives.”\textsuperscript{39} Both of these sources describe my new approach to listening; a procession from technicality of the music to a contemplation of the very essence of its beauty and its ability to produce an emotional response or aesthetic experience.

It is important to qualify my usage of the word “truth” here. As a “subjective truth”, it would, of course, not be objectively correct in the sense of “propositional truth” or


\textsuperscript{37} Gilbertie 1996, 28.

\textsuperscript{38} Relevant passages were found in Bonevac 2001, 210-215.

\textsuperscript{39} Bleich 1978, 96.
“truth-about” since instrumental music lacks the syntactical ability to express actual propositions or their truths. Therefore an explanation of the concept of “subjective truth” is in order. It comes from Kierkegaard’s *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. I shall then address each of these main points in terms of how I believe the aesthetic experience of music is a realization/application of them. He states the following:

The subjective reflection turns its attention inwardly to the subject, and desires in this intensification of inwardness to realize the truth. And it proceeds in such fashion that, just as in the preceding objective reflection, when the objectivity had come into being, the subjectivity had vanished, so here the subjectivity of the subject becomes the final stage, and objectivity a vanishing factor...Inwardness in an existing subject culminates in passion...The knowing subject becomes a fantastic entity rather than a human being, and the truth becomes a fantastic object for the knowledge of this fantastic entity...Here is such a definition of the truth: an objective uncertainty held in fast appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual...When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox; and the fact that the truth is objectively a paradox shows in its turn that subjectivity is the truth. For the objective situation is repellent; and the expression for the objective repulsion constitutes the tension and the measure of the corresponding inwardness.

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40 Which entails the “facts [and] data” about an artwork (Hospers 1946, 208).
41 Soren Kierkegaard, translated by David F. Swenson, *Kierkegaard’s Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Princeton:
1.] "The subjective reflection turns its attention inwardly to the subject, and desires in this intensification of inwardness to realize the truth."

When one is listening to music attentively rather than passively (the latter being described as done in a "brainless but attractive state of mind"), one is not only focusing on the formal aspects of the music but also considering his emotional response to it. If listening with still greater attention and interest, he may even ponder over how the various elements contribute to his enjoyment. Thus his attention can be turned inwardly towards himself, resulting in a desire to determine a possible explanation for his "partial apprehension."  

2.) "Inwardness in an existing subject culminates in passion...The knowing subject becomes a fantastic entity rather than a human being, and the truth becomes a fantastic object for the knowledge of this fantastic entity...Here is such a definition of the truth: an objective uncertainty held in fast appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual."

When engrossed in this musical experience, the person can lose a sense of his own identity and essentially "mesh into" or "blend in with" the music itself (or "live' the embodiment before him" as Bosanquet described it), satisfying the following three of Cattell's "characteristics of subjective experience": "fusion or indistinguishability of feeling and


44 Quote by Bosanquet, quoted in Buermeyer 1929, 124.
sensation…loss of sense of time… [and] being ‘drawn’ to [the] stimulus.”

This is also congruous with Foucault’s method of attaining truth by a “conversion of transformation of the subject…in the form of a movement that removes the subject from his current status and condition.”

He may not be interested in explanations for his aesthetic response. However, if he is, this can occupy a significant amount of his attention, particularly in light of the fact that his reasons will be entirely his own, since the reasons for an aesthetic experience constitute one of the “important phenomena [which is] inherently subjective and thus immune to third-party verification” and “the world which the aesthetic object reveals is a singular world into which one enters.”

Thus the reason may be objectively uncertain, or “interpersonal[ly] unverifiable” to others, even if the visible manifestations of the aesthetic experience are observed.

3.) “When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox; and the fact


that the truth is objectively a paradox shows in its
turn that subjectivity is the truth. For the objective
situation is repellent; and the expression for the
objective repulsion constitutes the tension and the
measure of the corresponding inwardness."

The individual’s indeterminate and ineffable subjective
reaction (and thus what Cousin calls a matter of “the heart”50) is
a feeling of a subjective/spiritual truth realized through
“personal understanding [through which] the realm of spiritual
truth is for the first time opened up and made accessible to the
subjectivity in quest of this truth”51; “the paradox is that
something uncertain is asserted with passionate certitude as
being the truth.”52 For many music-lovers, both those that are
well-versed in the formal and structural aspects of the art as
well as those who are not, objective or analytical study of music
can be unpalatable or “repellent” as Kierkegaard described it
(and not just as an immediate reaction, but from “an act of
reflection” on the existing conditions53), as it may compromise
the freedom with which an individual can approach and

50 M. V. Cousin, Lectures on the True, the Beautiful, and the Good
51 Hofstadter 1965, 135. This personal understanding is
mentioned by Buermeyer when he mentions the appeal “to
something in our native constitution” (Buermeyer 1929, 96).
52 J. Heywood Thomas. Subjectivity and Paradox (Basil: Oxford,
1957), 73.
53 One of Gurwitsch’s criteria for repulsion. Aron Gurwitsch, “A
Non-Egological Conception of Consciousness”, Philosophy and
Phenomenological Research 1 (1941): 333. This of course
would not be so for Marcus Aurelis, who recommended that the
parts of a melody should be analyzed so as to allow us to realize
that they are mere parts and thus do not contain any “power,
charm, seduction, or flattery”, thus insuring our dominance over
them (Foucault’s summary of Aurelis’s Meditations Book XI,
Foucault 2005 translation, 301-302).
appreciate music.\textsuperscript{54} This is due to “a fundamental and irreconcilable opposition between the concept of [objective] truth, in both its empirical and mathematical forms, and the concept of freedom”\textsuperscript{55} as well as the inadequacy of objective truth to “illuminat[e] the central reflective question”\textsuperscript{56} at hand. The dissatisfaction over the emphasis on purely objective matters, such as those which are heavily emphasized in many music-educational traditions, seems to constitute the very desire to retreat inward to begin with, as this inward retreat yields this feeling of truth which is “not required [to] fit what is objectively and antecedently present in the world...[or] conform its representations to objective differences between things...\textsuperscript{57} (like the differences between alternative kinds or genres of music.).

Support for the idea that this feeling is one of subjective truth comes from Dufrenne’s \textit{The Phenomenology of the Aesthetic Experience}, in which he distinguishes the objective “necessary rational truths [from] the sort of truth that could be called intuitive and \textit{subjective}”\textsuperscript{58}, differentiating “knowing and feeling”, the latter being “nourished by a concrete presence.”\textsuperscript{59} Since I believe the aesthetic experience requires actual contact with the music in performance\textsuperscript{60}, it is reasonable to state that it

\textsuperscript{54} Bruno Louchouarn warns that the worst habit of structural listening is “\textit{the attribution of a transcendental value to the very notion of structure and the objectification of structure itself.}” Emphasis original. B. Louchouarn, “Volume I: Moment to Moment: An Interdisciplinary Meditation on the Emergence of the Musical Experience” (PhD diss., The University of California at Los Angeles, 2003), 16.
\textsuperscript{55} Diefenbeck 1984, 133.
\textsuperscript{56} Diefenbeck 1984, 133.
\textsuperscript{58} Emphasis added, Dufrenne 1973, 428.
\textsuperscript{59} Dufrenne 1973, 429.
\textsuperscript{60} I thus disagree with Roosevelt Porter’s claim that there are aesthetic qualities of music that can be experienced by merely
is attributed to the concrete presence of the music and is therefore a matter of feeling and thus “subjective truth” according to Dufrenne. (Dufrenne also refers to something like this as a “metaphysical truth” when he writes that they “do not resolve themselves into a rigorous and universally valid knowledge, since they have their fullest meaning only for me.”) Some additional support comes from Diefenbeck’s observation that “sense perceptions...manifest, as Heraclitus clearly saw, diversity and ceaseless motion rather than the permanence required by objective knowledge.” Since the aesthetic experience of music is not a static, immobile state or entity but one of flux and fluidity based on both the medium at hand and the state of alertness or attention of the listener, as well as on the level of musical training of the listener, it lacks the permanence to which Diefenbeck referred and thus seems to be a “subjective truth.” In addition, the music itself lacks this permanence since, as an art of performance, it is temporary in nature; it “comes into being, stays for some time, produces some by-products, dwindles and then vanishes.” Other support for this idea comes from the fact that the very description of music in words renders it subjective since “the instrument of subjectivity...is language.” It seems that the most compelling support comes from Daniel Barbiero’s summary of the Kierkegaard work:


61 Dufrenne 1973, 430.
63 As explained throughout Lawrence Robert Griffin’s dissertation entitled “The Relationship of Subjective and Physiological Responses of Music Majors and Non-Majors to Musical Chords that Vary in Consonance.”
the subjective truth of a thing, then, consists of the quality of its relation to the person for whom it is subjectively true. It is the meaning that that thing has for the person in question, as manifested in the way in which the person appropriates that thing. Subjective truth is, in other words...truth as meaning... [and] consists in a way of responding.66

It would be inappropriate and disappointing for me to explain the connections between subjective truth and musical-aesthetic experience without also explaining the value and significance of such thought. The question that should quite justifiably arise is “why is this important?” The value of this subjective truth, other than from a utilitarian standpoint in that it allows non-musicians to understand the importance of music (particularly in schools67), is that it is infallible. (Barbiero uses the phrase “introspective infallibility.”68) The explanation of how the various musical elements, such as dynamics, instrumentation, or harmonic progression (my personal favorite) contribute to one’s aesthetic experience is not subject to attack or criticism in the way that the interpretive programs of musical hermeneutics69 are, given the potential of the latter

69 Defined concisely by Bruhn as the idea that “music may be invested with meaning independently of an associated verbal text, and that such meaning may be conveyed through the parameters of the musical language” (Siglund Bruhn, “Introduction,” The American Journal of Semiotics 13 (Fall 1996): accessed in Print View, page number not indicated.) Roger Savage indicates that this kind of interpretation is instigated in response to the isolation of music from its surrounding cultural or social context rather than from the more simple associations with people, places, or ideas
for “promiscuous[ness]”\textsuperscript{70}, noble though they may be since they allow for participation from the observers.\textsuperscript{71} This is because the awareness of this subjective truth comes as a result of self-realization, not interpretation and especially not interpretation which is based on “subjective perceptual initiatives”\textsuperscript{72} or “narrative agendas”\textsuperscript{73}; realization of which aspects of the musical work strike his heart and soul, rather than interpretation of what they “say”; from “possibility rather than fact”\textsuperscript{74}, or to put it in slightly Kantian terms, from “the intrinsic value of the experience rather than...its consequences.”\textsuperscript{75} Thus perhaps the issue of whether or not music can “say” anything (indicated by, among other contenders over the years, the dispute of Greene on the side that it can express propositions and Hospers on the side that it cannot\textsuperscript{76}) has caused more

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\textsuperscript{71} Hofstadter 1965, 186.

\textsuperscript{72} Bleich 1978, 96.


\textsuperscript{75} Nahm 1946, 80.

\textsuperscript{76} Hospers criticizes Greene’s belief that music can express propositions (Hospers 1946, 159).
confusion and trouble than it is worth. If we all just listen “ateleologically”\textsuperscript{77}, we can learn and realize so much.

Such has been the continuation of this true drop in the philosophical bucket; a continuation that I have done as, as Kierkegaard described himself, “a poor existing spirit like all other men”\textsuperscript{78} or as Swami Prabhupāda would call me, “a mundaner.”\textsuperscript{79} I have no doubt that the struggle to reconcile our world with our experiences of it shall remain open for quite some time to come. Eager to begin the next day of this investigation, I shall close with the words of the philosopher Leslie Armour: “much of the excitement in philosophy, of course, lies in the refinement of problems rather than in the solution of them....Under the circumstances, it hardly needs to be said that I do not suppose myself to have said the last word...I shall be content with that.”\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{77} Nahm describes the “ateleological” theory at length, which states that the arts can be enjoyed for their own sake without consideration for a possible end.

\textsuperscript{78} Kierkegaard 1941, 169.

\textsuperscript{79} Prabhupāda 1983, 14.


Brian Collins—What Does Spinoza Prescribe?

Abstract: One of the debates regarding Part IV of Spinoza's Ethics has to do with the prescriptions that Spinoza seemingly gives about reason, emotions, the good life, and the “free man”. Some scholars believe that Spinoza's work is a normative project and that these prescriptions are justified. Others think that he can only provide a description, not a prescription, of the “good” life. There are also some scholars whose view falls somewhere between these two. With this paper I present and defend Michael LeBuffe’s version of this third view. LeBuffe argues that Spinoza is prescribing and describing when he is talking about reason, emotions, good and bad, and the free man. The strength of this interpretation is in its ability to make the entirety of the Ethics intelligible and cohesive. I defend LeBuffe’s interpretation by offering additional textual support and by highlighting the seemingly contradictory nature of Spinoza’s social contract in relation to the rest of the text.

Introduction

In Parts I-III of Spinoza’s Ethics, a metaphysical and epistemological foundation is put in place to support the moral philosophy from which the book takes its name after. In Part IV, the reader is finally presented with some discussion of ethics, but, just as with the first three parts, there are many arguments about how one should correctly interpret Spinoza's philosophy. One of the debates regarding Part IV has to do with the prescriptions that Spinoza seemingly gives about reason, emotions, the good life, and the “free man”. Some scholars believe that Spinoza's work is a normative project and that these prescriptions are justified. Others think that he can only provide a description, not a prescription, of the “good” life. There are also some scholars whose view falls somewhere between these two. The goal of this paper is to present and
defend one example of this third view. To fully accomplish this goal I will first present the pertinent sections of Steven Nadler's overview of Part IV. This will include a brief explanation of the normative versus descriptive interpretive disagreement. In the second section I will present Michael LeBuffe's view that Spinoza is prescribing and describing when he is talking about reason, emotions, good and bad, and the “free man”. In the final section I will then defend LeBuffe's interpretation by offering additional textual support for his view that some sections are prescriptive and normative while others are merely descriptive.

**Normative Ethics and the “Free Man”**

In Steven Nadler’s book, Spinoza’s Ethics: An Introduction, Nadler provides a well-articulated interpretation of the Ethics as well as a description of some of the contemporary scholarly debates. The two interpretive disagreements that I will focus on in this paper are: the status of Spinoza’s normative claims and the dialectical purpose of his “free man” propositions.

In the preface to Part IV, Spinoza examines the ethical terms “perfect”/“imperfect” and “good”/“bad”. Nadler uses this as the foundation for his interpretation of the “free man,” and takes it to be Spinoza’s point of departure for human freedom. Spinoza contends that the terms perfect/imperfect and

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81 It must be noted that this paper is not necessarily intended for those who are not familiar with Spinoza’s Ethics. I do not provide a significant explanation of the metaphysics and epistemology found in Parts I-III, or deliver the in depth explanations that would be required for a person to gain a sufficient understanding of Spinoza’s work through this paper alone.


good/bad “indicate nothing positive in things considered in themselves, and are nothing but modes of thinking, or notions which we form from comparing things with one another.”

His view is that these adjectives are descriptions that do not refer to objective characteristics of the things they describe. The normative use of these terms is a human invention “for comparing individuals of the same species or kind.”

A thing is called perfect/imperfect or good/bad depending on how well it resembles the inadequate idea of an adopted model.

Spinoza reminds the reader that he has already alluded to this misrepresentation of meanings when he wrote Def. 6, II, “By reality and perfection I mean the same thing.”

The correct definition of perfection is merely “completion”. Nadler notes that,

These evaluative labels are, likewise, always to be understood in the context of a thing’s relationship to a standard or model... The result is that ‘good’ and ‘evil,’ like ‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect,’ are totally relative terms (relative, that is, to the conception of some individual’s interest), and what is good for one person may not be good for another person.

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85 Ibid. 153.
86 An "inadequate idea" is one example of Spinoza’s epistemology (from Parts I-III) that is not specifically explained but that the reader must be familiar with.
While this may seem to leave these terms extremely relative and subjective, Nadler thinks that Spinoza wants them to "bear a more objectivist burden." Nadler says that there is "a specific ideal that can serve as an objective standard according to which things can be judged as truly 'good' for a human being. There is a particular kind of person and life that represents a perfection of human nature." Spinoza writes,

Since we desire to form the idea of a man which we may look to as a model of human nature, we shall find it useful to keep these terms in the sense I have indicated. So in what follows I shall mean by 'good' that which we certainly know to be the means for our approaching nearer to the model of human nature...and by 'bad' that which we certainly know prevents us from reproducing the said model. Again we shall say that men are more perfect or less perfect in so far as they are nearer to or further from this model.

Things can legitimately be judged good/bad or perfect/imperfect not on the partial and inadequate knowledge that most individuals possess, but with adequate and certain knowledge. But this objective use of terms can only work if Spinoza provides an objective model of the ideal human. Nadler believes that Spinoza provides this model later in Part IV with what he calls "the free man".

With this objective human model in mind, Nadler directs his own, as well as the readers' attention to Proposition 18 of Part IV, where he sees Spinoza transitioning from his previously bleak description of how humans are constantly overcome by external forces and passions to describing a life of reason and understanding. As Nadler says, "The resulting moral

90Ibid. 218.
91Ibid. 218.
philosophy is virtue-oriented.\textsuperscript{93} For Spinoza virtue is acting from the laws of one's nature, and he believes humans' nature to be the striving to continue existence.\textsuperscript{94} Thus, "the virtuous person is the person who successfully follows the laws of his own nature and acts so as to preserve his own being."\textsuperscript{95} Conversely, Spinoza believes that the person who lacks virtue is one that does not act according his or her nature and allows outside forces to influence them.

Nadler sees Spinoza's next step as explaining what "following the laws of one's own nature" actually means. He explains,

Spinoza identifies 'living according to one's own nature' and 'living according to the guidance of reason.' This is because a human being lives according to his own nature when the things he does have their adequate cause in that nature alone and not in the ways external things affect him; that is, he lives according to his own nature when he is active, not passive. And, as we have seen, a human being is active when what he does follows from his own adequate ideas, from his rational knowledge of things, and not from the inadequate ideas or the passions.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{93}Steven Nadler, Spinoza's Ethics: An Introduction (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 225.
\textsuperscript{94}Spinoza defines this virtue as power and as man's essence. He writes,"By virtue and power I mean the same thing; that is (Pr. 7, III), virtue, in so far as it is related to man, is man's very essence, or nature, in so far as he has power to bring about that which can be understood solely through the laws of his own nature". (Baruch Spinoza, Ethics, Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, and Selected Letters (translated by Shirley, S.)(Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1992), 155.)
\textsuperscript{95}Steven Nadler, Spinoza's Ethics: An Introduction (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 226.
\textsuperscript{96}Ibid. 227.
So Spinoza understands “living according to one’s own nature” as being active by using reason to acquire adequate ideas. A person who is determined by his or her adequate ideas is active insofar that they are caused by nothing external to themselves and their own nature.

The virtuous person is one who acts according to his or her nature and thus is guided by reason. The virtuous person strives towards a “good” that is permanent (not connected to external forces) and abundant (an infinite number of individuals can partake in it). This virtuous person is not causally determined by external forces, and thus is labeled the “free man”. Nadler believes this free man to be the ideal model that Spinoza speaks of in the preface to Part IV. Nadler describes this person as, “a person in whom belief and desire are led by knowledge, not the passions and random experience. Thus, he (and not external things) is in control of himself.”

Because of this “freedom”, the free man does not experience greed, ambition, lust, envy, jealousy, sadness, melancholy, hate, pity, or excessive love or desire for external material things. The free person’s actions are based on true knowledge of what is good because he or she is guided by reason and adequate ideas, not passive emotions. In short, the free person “tries to guide himself and others by the free judgment of reason and to do only those things that he himself knows to be of primary importance.”

Nadler also believes that the free person is more than just free because they are unencumbered by external causes. He thinks that the free person’s freedom also consists in the fact that they are the adequate cause of their thoughts, desires, and actions. He elaborates on this belief when he writes,

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97 Ibid. 230.
98 Ibid. 231.
99 Ibid. 231.
Every volition (like any mental state) is caused by another mental state and thus is (relative to the volitional state itself) externally determined -- the mental cause of a volition is distinct from and external to the volition, even when both occur within the same mind. But... this does not mean that the free person himself is not self-determining. We need to distinguish, in other words, freedom of the will from freedom of the person. Spinoza's free person may not have freedom of the will, but he can still be free in the ID7 sense of freedom. His freedom consists precisely in the fact that the adequate cause of what he thinks, what he desires, and what he does lies within him, namely, his adequate ideas and his power of persevering.  

Nadler thinks that this distinction between freedom of the will and freedom of the person allows for a freedom to exist in Spinoza's fully deterministic world. However, he does remind the reader that Spinoza does not think anybody can be perfectly free. This is part of the reason he sees the free man as the model human perfection is based on and that a person, although not able to be perfectly free, can be closer or further away from this model.

Nadler also discusses the closely related and highly debated question of normativity in Spinoza's fully deterministic universe. A monumental question is whether Spinoza intended to prescribe that people ought to be like the free man. Nadler notes that is seems strange to say that, "a person 'ought' to do something when his doing so or not doing so is not under his control", when someone "...will just necessarily be or do whatever one is determined to be or do." However, he

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101 Part I, Definition 7: “That thing is said to be free (liber) which exists solely from the necessity of its own nature, and is determined to action by itself alone”. (Ibid. 31)
103 Ibid. 237.
follows this with a reminder that it only seems strange if one presumes that prescriptions are incompatible with determinism. One scholar who argues that Spinoza’s ethics are compatible with his determinism is E.M. Curley. He contends,

It makes perfectly good sense to issue a general prescription to people to avoid acts of a certain kind, even if you know that some of them, in some circumstances, will be unable to comply. It is sufficient to give the prescription point if there are some circumstances in which some will be able to comply. A command which prescribed conduct that is absolutely impossible would be pointless. But a command which prescribes conduct that will only be impossible under certain conditions may be a perfectly sensible command.\(^{104}\)

Curley’s proposal is that normative ethics are consistent with a fully deterministic universe. It is only when determinism is confused with fatalism that prescriptions become pointless, but as long as a prescription can provide a determining factor for influencing ethical behavior, it can and ought be offered.

A scholar that holds the opposing view regarding Spinoza’s ethical language is Don Garrett. His nonprescription interpretation contends that, “Spinoza can do nothing more than provide for the reader a naturalistic and descriptive account of what is ‘good’ for a human being and what is ‘bad’.”\(^{105}\) Garrett writes:

The ethical propositions of the Ethics themselves do not command, exhort, or entreat the reader. Rather, they evaluate, using four primary terms of positive


ethical evaluation: ‘good,’ ‘virtue,’ ‘guided by reason,’ and ‘free man.’ As Spinoza uses these terms, each is, or can be, defined naturalistically - that is, in natural, descriptive, nonethical terms... Accordingly, ethical propositions can report straightforward natural truths, and the subject matter of ethical propositions is not radically distinct from the study of nature. Rather, ethics is simply that particularly useful branch of the study of nature which compares ways of living in respect of goodness, virtue, reason, and freedom. Its usefulness as a branch of study consists in its ability to aid human beings in pursuing a way of life that will truly suit their purposes.\footnote{Don Garrett, “Spinoza’s ethical theory”, The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza (edited by D. Garrett) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 286.}

For Garrett, there is no normative language in the Ethics, only descriptions of nature that are specific to humans. As I mentioned in the introduction, there are also some scholars who believe Spinoza prescribes and describes. I will now present and defend one example (LeBuffe) of a “prescriptive and descriptive” account.

**LeBuffe - "Spinoza’s Normative Ethics"**

LeBuffe makes the argument that to understand Spinoza’s project one must categorize the propositions he presents. He believes that only some of the claims made by Spinoza are universal prescriptions intended for everyone at all times. These are limited to a very few in the entirety of the Ethics. A second category of propositions is offered not as universal prescriptions, but as guidelines for people insofar as they are guided by reason. These are mirrored by others that advise people insofar as they are not guided by reason. And lastly, there are the free man propositions that are not
prescriptions at all, but descriptions that should be used as a diagnostic tool to determine which prescriptions one should follow. His primary point, and reason for the categorization, is that most of the normative claims in the Ethics are not unqualified prescriptions. To fully understand LeBuffe’s argument, it is necessary to first be familiar with his views regarding “Spinoza’s moral psychology” and how he thinks it affects Spinoza’s “understanding of the human condition and how it may be improved.”

LeBuffe’s first point concerning Spinoza’s moral psychology and human condition is that, “while human beings always strive for perseverance in being, they do not in every case aim consciously for perseverance.” LeBuffe believes this to be evidence that passions play an important part in Spinoza’s ethical theory. It is only when a person is acting according to reason that they will truly understand what is to their advantage and what will help them persevere in their existence. When a person is led by passions they have an inadequate understanding of what is beneficial to them and what would be consistent with their nature.

His second point about Spinoza’s moral psychology is that, “passions are similar in kind to ideas we get from sensations, such as visual perceptions, and so affect us in similar ways.” LeBuffe thinks this is an important point because the consequence of passions and sensory perceptions/ideas being similar is that the techniques used for overcoming them will essentially be the same. He writes,

In both cases alike, the problem is that an external idea influences a mind in such a way that the mind is not the total efficient cause of what it does. And, again for both

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108Ibid. 375.
109Ibid. 376.
110Ibid. 376.
cases alike...a technique for overcoming the tendency to err that the idea gives a mind will require, somehow, changing or overcoming an external causal influence.\textsuperscript{111}

Because all people are continually subjected to external influences it is necessary for there to be prescriptions that are universal. This is the first category that LeBuffe argues for. These universal, unqualified prescriptions are few but essential because humans are in a predicament of continuous bombardment of external influences. LeBuffe notes the Scholiums of Prop. 4 and 10 in Part V as the examples of Spinoza’s universal prescriptions. He explains that in Prop. 4 Sch., Spinoza is arguing that people should seek an adequate understanding of our affects and in Prop. 10 Sch. that since people cannot have perfectly adequate ideas of all affects, everyone should memorize and apply reliable rules that overwhelm these affects (nobility and tenacity).\textsuperscript{112} LeBuffe explains that Spinoza prescribes using nobility and tenacity because they are not passions themselves but are affects, and as Spinoza has already pointed out, affects cannot be overcome by anything other than stronger affects.\textsuperscript{113} LeBuffe believes that it is only these affects that Spinoza prescribes to everyone, at all times.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{111}Ibid. 377-378.
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid. 378.
\textsuperscript{113}Prop. 7, IV.
\textsuperscript{114}Outside the difficult terminology of the Ethics, the argument is, roughly that an understanding of the science of perception delivered by, for example, optics, can help me to know why external objects, for example, the sun, seem to me the way they do. When I come to understand what my visual idea of the sun truly suggests about the sun’s size, distance, and so on, my idea loses its tendency to lead me to err. The case of the passions is just a special case of the interaction of the mind with external objects, for Spinoza. So, similarly, if I understand the causes of an idea that involves hate, I will not longer have the tendency to err on the basis of that idea; that is, it will cease to be a passion
LeBuffe’s reasoning for a distinction between the universal prescriptions and qualified prescriptions for individuals insofar as they are rational is also due to Spinoza’s conception of human nature (i.e. that nobody is ever completely free from passive emotions and inadequate ideas). He cites Prop. 39 and 40 of Part IV as examples of Spinoza’s descriptions of things that are good/useful and only prescribed for those that are rational. He acknowledges that the language seems to be exactly the same between the unqualified and qualified prescriptions, but he thinks the temptation to interpret them as equivalent is misguided. To defend this view he offers three differences between the two types of propositions.

The first difference he sees is that,

[W]hat a person who desires from reason to persevere ought to do in order to increase his power of perseverance may be different from what anybody at all ought to do because there are many things that, on Spinoza’s account, may benefit a person who desires them in the right way but will not benefit a person who does not.\textsuperscript{115}

Food and drink is an example that he offers to explain this difference. For someone who desires food and drink through reason, they are good things. But, for an alcoholic or gluttonous person who desires food or drink because they are overwhelmed by passion, they are not good things. Consequently this is not an unqualified universal prescription or good that all people in all circumstances should do or pursue.

The second difference between these types of normative claims is that sometimes something that is good should not be pursued because there is a greater good. LeBuffe

\textsuperscript{115}Ibid. 383.
believes that this point is represented in Spinoza's Prop. 65, IV. There Spinoza states that, "By the guidance of reason we pursue the greater of two goods."\textsuperscript{116} LeBuffe thinks this proves that Spinoza's list of "goods" is not equivalent to universal prescriptions because if there are times when one good can or should be chosen over another then neither can be universally prescribed.

The third and final difference is that the universal prescriptions are easy to follow while there is no guarantee that the other goods can be attained. LeBuffe references the Sch. to Prop. 10 of Part V as evidence that the first category of prescriptions is fairly simple and absolutely attainable. The segment reads, "He who diligently follows these precepts and practices them (for they are not difficult) will surely within a short space of time be able to direct his actions for the most part according to reason's behest."\textsuperscript{117} This is contrasted to the Sch. to Prop. 42 of Part V where Spinoza writes, "If the road I have pointed out as leading to this goal seems very difficult, yet it can be found. Indeed, what is so rarely discovered is bound to be hard."\textsuperscript{118} It is because of these three differences that LeBuffe believes Spinoza’s normative language needs to be categorized based on who the prescription is intended for.

The final category accompanying “universal prescriptions” and “advice for rational people” is “advice for irrational people”. LeBuffe notes that while the largest part of Spinoza’s ethics concerns the right way of living for the virtuous and rational person, most people most of the time are not reasonable; therefore, advice for that group is also necessary. Because a person is not active when they are irrational (and thus not able to use the active affects of nobility and tenacity to overcome passive affects and passions) Spinoza recommends

\textsuperscript{117}Ibid. 209.
\textsuperscript{118}Ibid. 223.
keeping “better” passive passions close at hand to ward off the worst types of passions.\textsuperscript{119} LeBuffe cites Sch. Prop. 54, IV to highlight this point. In this proposition Spinoza writes,

As men seldom live according to the dictates of reason, these two emotions, humility and repentance, and also hope and fear, bring more advantage than harm; and thus, if sin we must, it is better to sin in their direction...So it is not surprising that the prophets, who had regard for the good of the whole community, and not of the few, have been so zealous in commending humility, repentance, and reverence.\textsuperscript{120}

Up to this point in the Ethics Spinoza has declared that humility and repentance are evil or useless, but here he gives a qualified prescription (only to irrational people) that these may be of benefit to ward off more detrimental passions.

LeBuffe sees one additional component to this categorization of prescriptions Spinoza offers. He has presented universal prescriptions, qualified prescriptions for those insofar as they are rational, and qualified prescriptions for those insofar as they are irrational, but he also sees a need for a way to assess which of these prescriptions to follow. Obviously everyone should always try to understand and resist externally caused affects (as the universal prescriptions state), but how is one to know if they are rational or irrational? LeBuffe believes the free man propositions to be just this measuring stick. He states that the free man sections, “do not recommend particular kinds of action but, rather, describe circumstances, actions, or affective states that are associated with either rationality or passion and by that means help us to

understand when we are not free."  

He holds this belief because he thinks that the free man is the model that the preface to Part IV describes as the way of judging ourselves good/bad and perfect/imperfect.  

These descriptive propositions are merely a diagnostic tool for determining whether a person is rational or irrational and thus which prescriptions they should follow. He writes,

"...Spinoza's assertion that the free man always acts honestly (Prop. 72, IV), not deceptively does not recommend any particular kind of action directly. Rather it suggests that, whenever I find myself in a circumstance where I have lied or am contemplating dishonesty, I lack power and virtue in that circumstance. What I ought to do is a very complex question requiring me to understand what passion is influencing me and how, given my particular circumstances, I can best resist it and increase my power to persevere."

LeBuffe believes that these categorizations fully explain Spinoza's intentions with his normative language in the Ethics.

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122 The problem of understanding when we are under the influence of passion is generated, in large part, by the facts that we can desire particular external ends, in most cases, either from reason, as a means to perseverance, or from passion and that desires from reason or passion, again in most cases, differ only in their causal sources and the names Spinoza uses for them, not in their phenomenal characteristics. The free man propositions indicate particular kinds of actions, such as honesty and thankfulness, that are rare, reliable marks of virtue and help us to understand ourselves" (Ibid. 390).
123 Ibid. 390.
The “Social Contract Defense” of LeBuffe

I believe LeBuffe’s argument is well formulated and offers a great deal to the interpretation of the rest of the text. I was immediately drawn to it because not only can it explain the normative language of the Ethics cohesively, it is also able to make sense of other extremely paradoxical passages. In this section I will offer a defense of LeBuffe’s reading by calling attention to one of these puzzling passages that his interpretation is able to clarify.124

Near the middle of Part IV, Spinoza presents a social contract as a part of his “ethics of human interaction”. This discussion of politics is found in the second Sch. to Prop. 37 in Part IV. In it Spinoza writes,

...[I]n order that men may live in harmony and help one another, it is necessary for them to give up their natural right and to create a feeling of mutual confidence that they will refrain from any action that may be harmful to another. The way to bring this about, (that men who are necessarily subject to passive emotions (Cor. Pr. 4, IV) and are inconstant and variable (Pr. 33, IV) should establish a mutual confidence and should trust one another) is obvious from Pr. 7, IV and Pr. 39, III. There it was demonstrated that no emotion can be checked except by a stronger emotion contrary to the emotion which is to be checked, and that every man refrains from inflicting injury through fear of greater injury. On these terms, then, society can be established...and

124 It must be noted that I am arguing from the perspective that Spinoza’s intention was to offer a normative doctrine. My intention with this paper is not to make the full argument that Spinoza is consistent in his determinism/necessitarianism and normativity, but only that if the Ethics is to be seen in any way as prescriptive then the categorical prescriptions that LeBuffe offers is the most cohesive interpretation.
furthermore if it has the power to prescribe common rules of behavior and to pass laws to enforce them, not by reason, which is incapable of checking the emotions (Sch. Pr. 17, IV), but by threats.\textsuperscript{125}

This inclusion is extremely paradoxical if the reader assumes or interprets the Ethics as being a normative work. This social contract shows many signs of Hobbesian type thinking.\textsuperscript{126} As is noted by another scholar, “Each thinker [Spinoza & Hobbes] clearly makes self-preservation an absolute moral priority... Like Hobbes, Spinoza takes the natural state of all beings to be one of permanent conflict.”\textsuperscript{127} These pessimistic Hobbesian ideas about human nature seem inconsistent with some of the other more optimistic sections where Spinoza seems to be saying that humans can overcome this brutish slavery to the emotions. This idea that a government has to be set up based on fear seems to go against all the positive passages that imply an ability to become active and take control of our affects and emotions. Some examples of these contradictions to his social contract include Prop. 18, 32, 33, 37, 40, 47, 59, and 63 (Part IV). I will briefly present some of these selections to support my assertion that the social contract seems to be out of place in a normative doctrine.

Beginning in Part II, with one of Spinoza’s first references to government, the positive tone seems to be set. He writes, “this doctrine is also of no small advantage to the


\textsuperscript{126}“So far, Spinoza’s reasoning is perfectly Hobbesian. Each person, fearful of every other person, agrees to give up some portion of his natural liberty for the sake of mutual security and advantage. It is not because we are rational but because of fear of harm that we agree to enter society. Fear is still the passion to be reckoned upon.” (Steven Smith, “What Kind of Democrat Was Spinoza?,” Political Theory 33 (2005): 18.)

\textsuperscript{127}Ibid. 14.
commonwealth, in that it teaches the manner in which citizens should be governed and led; namely, not so as to be slaves, but so as to do freely what is best.” As can be seen from the other sections of the Ethics, to be free means to be unencumbered by passive emotions (fear being one of these). From the beginning of his book, Spinoza seems to imply that the best government would not be one that ruled by use of fear.

In Part IV’s Sch. to Prop. 18 he again speaks against fear when he says, “men who aim at their own advantage under the guidance of reason, seek nothing for themselves that they would not desire for the rest of mankind; and so are just, faithful and honorable.” Everything that is said about fear, outside of the social contract section, portrays it as a negative emotion to be avoided. It seems that rational men would not desire fear for themselves or for others and that a government that rules over people should be the last thing to be founded on and continue this “evil”. More evidence supporting this very notion is found in Prop. 63 and 32, IV. In Prop. 63 Spinoza says specifically that a person who is guided by fear is not guided by reason. This is preceded by Prop. 32 in which he says that insofar as people are subject to passive emotions (fear), they do not agree in nature. If these people who are subject to fear do not agree in nature then they also cannot be good for one another. This is antithetical to a positive, “reason guided” form of government.

Immediately preceding the social contract section, Spinoza also proclaims that the “foundations of the state” are reason, piety, and honor. This just strengthens the paradox because each one of these is directly opposed to the passive emotion of fear. Following the social contract section, he also says that, “those things that introduce discord into the state are

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129 Ibid. 164.
130 Ibid. 174.
bad." Fear (and consequently differing natures) seem to be just this type of discord. I believe that these examples from the Ethics are the strongest support for my assertion that Spinoza’s social contract is not an unqualified prescription for government, but I also think that these are strengthened by giving further consideration to his later writings on politics.

In his unfinished Political Treatise, he elaborates on this social contract segment from the Ethics. With this specifically political work, he speaks much more forcefully about the idea that reason is the best guide for a government. In his chapter entitled “The Highest Aim of Society” he writes:

The best way to organize a state is easily discovered by considering the purpose of civil order, which is nothing other than peace and security of life. Therefore the best state is one where men live together in harmony and where the laws are preserved unbroken... A commonwealth whose subjects are deterred from taking up arms only through fear should be said to be not at war rather than to be enjoying peace. For peace is not just the absence of war... For a free people is led more by hope than by fear, while a subjugated people is led more by fear than by hope; the former seeks to engage in living, the latter simply to avoid death. The former, I say, seeks to live for itself, the latter is forced to belong to a conqueror; hence we say that the latter is a slave, the former is free.

I think it is evident from this passage that Spinoza believes a government established and operated according to the dictates of reason is much more ideal than one based on fear. This supports my notion that despite the seemingly pessimistic things Spinoza says about the social contract in the

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131Ibid. 177.
133Ibid. 699-700.
Ethics, his ultimate prescription for a government would be positive, active, and reason guided.

Due to the enormity of examples that speak out against people being guided by fear (let alone any passive emotion), and because Spinoza also says that, “In the case of all actions to which we are determined by a passive emotions, we can be determined thereto by reason without that emotion”\textsuperscript{134}, I find it conclusive that the social contract he presents cannot be an unqualified prescription for governing systems. If the Ethics is interpreted as a normative project\textsuperscript{135}, then Spinoza’s inclusion of this type of social contract seems paradoxical because it does not seem like he would offer it as a recommendation to people trying to become free and reason guided. However, if the Ethics is interpreted as LeBuffe proposes (that there are categories of prescriptions and not everything is presented as an unqualified recommendation), then the social contract portion can make sense as a prescription for people insofar as they are all inescapably irrational.\textsuperscript{136} It is not an unqualified universal


\textsuperscript{135}As mentioned earlier, some scholars believe that it is a normative project (e.g. Curley), while some believe that it either is not or simply cannot be made sense of (e.g. Garrett). While I do not intend to offer an argument for this in the present paper, I believe that the most accurate interpretation of Spinoza’s intent must explain how it can be viewed as normative. LeBuffe’s idea that Spinoza offers different types of prescriptions as well as descriptions escapes Garrett’s troublesome conclusion that Spinoza can’t be offering any advice, but also escapes the problem of having everything be a prescription.

\textsuperscript{136}I agree with M. Brinker’s evaluation of Spinoza’s belief in the human inescapability from the passions. “To remain forever attached to the third kind of knowledge, the philosopher has to give up his finitude, i.e., his life. Hence the philosopher must be infected like everybody else with hatred, rivalry, and envy.
prescription for how a government should be founded, instead it advises on how irrational people can take the first step towards seeking a reason guided life by using one passive emotion (fear) to bring people together and get them out of the state of nature. If all people were guided by reason this would not be necessary, and if all people succeed in following the universal prescriptions to understand and resist the passions, then maybe a better form of government can be set up. But, insofar as humans are always subject to some passions, this is a qualified recommendation for how to keep people out of a state of nature where each person has to fend for him or herself.

Conclusion

With this paper I have presented selections from Steven Nadler's overview of Part IV as a background for some of the debates surrounding the normative language Spinoza uses. I have also presented LeBuffe's argument that Spinoza is before he converts them into the objects of adequate knowledge, which brings joy. This conversion is not a solitary act but a never-ending continuous process. Philosophers can constitute a perfect community without any kind of antagonism only when they study together. Since they must exist also outside the study-room, they cannot fail to experience the same urges that other people experience... for the wise man life is a continuous transition from the preoccupation with possessions that cannot be held by many individuals to a preoccupation with the one and only possession that can be shared universally, namely, knowledge. But this process of transition is never complete. The philosopher cannot achieve perfection once and for all but must struggle for it again and again all his life. The same reasons that prevent him from achieving a constant and stable state of beatitude also prevent the human commonwealth from achieving a permanent state of perfection." (M. Brinker, "Spinoza on Human Desire and the Impossibility of Utopia," Ethica IV: Spinoza on Reason and The "Free Man" (Edited by Yirmiyahu Yovel and Gideon Segal) (Charlottesville, VA: Little Room Press, 2004), 179-180.)
prescribing and describing when he is talking about reason, emotions, good and bad, and the free man. I find that the strength of this interpretation is found in its ability to make the entirety of the Ethics intelligible and cohesive. My intentions in describing the seemingly contradictory nature of Spinoza’s social contract to the rest of the text is to provide further support for LeBuffe’s categorical prescription interpretation. By understanding the social contract section as merely a qualified prescription for people insofar as they are irrational, one is able to make sense of its paradoxical nature to the other more optimistic sections. Spinoza does not contend that this is necessarily how people should ideally set up states, but this is how it should be started insofar as we are all subject to the inescapable human condition of irrationality and passions.

**Bibliography**


Zak Fisher—The Madness of (Not) Forgiving According to Derrida and Hegel

Abstract: The essential question pursued in this essay is, Does Hegel, as Derrida claims, unjustly normalize forgiveness as an instrumental moment in the becoming of Spirit by claiming it to be a necessary precursor to the event of reconciliation? I argue in defense of Hegel and conclude that he does not claim forgiveness or reconciliation to be necessary in the sense of inevitable. Rather, Hegel chronicles the necessary conditions for the rational recognition and restoration of dignity to both the victim and assailant, and in doing so preserves the supererogatory value of both parties’ contributions to the event of reconciliation.

I. Derrida’s Pure Forgiveness

Forgiveness, Derrida claims, has become a popular subject in contemporary political discourse. He claims that ‘asking for forgiveness’ is no longer conceived of as only a personal show of regret to an individual one has harmed, but is standard fare among and between “entire communities, professional corporations, the representatives of ecclesiastical hierarchies, sovereigns, and heads of state…”¹³⁷ Further, to

¹³⁷ Jacques Derrida, On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness, tr. M. Dooley and M. Hughes (New York: Routledge, 2007), 28. Obviously there is some anachronism here in comparing these authors’ views on forgiveness. Derrida claims that “The proliferation of scenes of repentance, or of asking ‘forgiveness’, signifies, no doubt, a universal urgency of memory: it is necessary to turn toward the past…” and names World War II
understand these political shows of forgiveness is to recognize the grave immorality attributed to a ‘crime against humanity’,

Here is a humanity shaken by a movement which would like itself to be unanimous; here is a human race which would claim to accuse itself all at once, publicly and spectacularly, of all the crimes committed in effect by itself against itself, ‘against humanity’.  

The Hegelian undertones are unmistakable. In the same way that self-consciousness could only affirm itself as such after having recognized its essential nature in another self-consciousness and in doing so, become in-and-for-itself, so too on a global level does Derrida describe a humanity that desires unity with itself. To fulfill this desire, responsibility cannot be discriminately divided and assigned to only particular members of humanity, but must be shared by all, as the crimes are claimed to have been committed ‘by itself against itself.’ This is not to say that Derrida is in full agreement with speaking of forgiveness as taking place within this grand theatre of “humanity.” Rather, Derrida claims that true forgiveness is inter-personal, not political; it can only be an act between two individuals and remain so if it is to be pure: “forgiveness must engage two singularities: the guilty... and the victim. As soon as a third party intervenes, one can again speak of amnesty, and specifically the Nuremberg Tribunal as the origin of the human rights culture that is at the heart of these public displays of forgiveness. (Ibid., 28) Still, Derrida names Hegel as one of his interlocutors in this text.

138 Ibid., 29.
139 Though, he does admit that “We are all heir, at least, to persons or events marked, in an essential, interior, ineffaceable fashion, by crimes against humanity” by evidence of our adoption of the language and concept of such a crime. (Ibid., 42)
reconciliation, reparation, etc., but certainly not of pure forgiveness in the strict sense.”  

It is a defense of this 'pure forgiveness' that constitutes Derrida’s central critique of traditional and modern political formulations of forgiveness. However, he does not claim that pure forgiveness, without qualification or condition, is the only legitimate form of forgiveness.

Sometimes, forgiveness (given by God, or inspired by divine prescription) must be a gracious gift, without exchange and without condition; sometimes it requires, as its minimal condition, the repentance and transformation of the sinner[...] These two poles, the unconditional and the conditional, are absolutely heterogenous, and must remain irreducible to one another.

Obviously this dichotomy would not stand well with Hegel. Derrida almost seems to be inviting dialectical analysis in claiming the permanent incommensurability of these forms of forgiveness. In fact, Derrida explicitly mentions Hegel in his critique, ascribing a particular position of conditional forgiveness to him: "Hegel, the great thinker of 'forgiveness' and 'reconciliation', said that all is forgivable except the crime against spirit, that is, against the reconciling power of forgiveness." Derrida does not fully explicate what he thinks this view of forgiveness entails, but he does suggest that it's similar to Vladimir Jankélévitch's and he paraphrases the position as such: "If they had begun in repentance, by asking forgiveness, then we could have conceived granting it to them,

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140 Ibid., 42. On the following page, Derrida cites the statement of a widow whose husband was assassinated who came before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, “A commission or a government cannot forgive. Only I, eventually, could do it. (And I am not ready to forgive.)”

141 Ibid., 44.
but that was not the case.”

Minimally then, this forgiveness must be initiated by the offender having knowledge of the error of the act, admitting regret and asking to be forgiven.

Although Derrida claims an irreducibility between the two poles of conditional and unconditional forgiveness, it is obvious he finds the unconditional forgiveness, in naming it 'pure', to be of more merit. Indeed, he likens any conditional formulation to an economic transaction; forgiveness is a good sold by the forgiver in exchange for an apology and concludes in a reconciling calm between the parties. In exchange for this reconciliation granted by the forgiver, the forgiven is obliged to not repeat the immoral behavior, to not jeopardize this ideal state. By 'economizing' forgiveness in this way and using it as a means to reconciliation, Derrida argues that the ideal of forgiveness has been lost and in its place has been put a corporeal version with a limit to its efficacy. In this economic language, when a most grievous crime has been committed that is beyond the possibility of granting redemption, it becomes too expensive for the currency of forgiveness; it thus becomes 'unforgivable.' Additionally, when an assailant does not ask for forgiveness, it is understood then that the gift of forgiveness is being refused. In this way too the crime becomes unforgivable, by reason that the would-be-forgiven subject is unable (unwilling) to be forgiven. All of this Derrida claims is the common 'economic' narrative that expects and lends itself to reconciliation, to which he prescribes his own for correction,

I shall risk this proposition: each time forgiveness is at the service of a finality, be it noble and spiritual (atonement or redemption, reconciliation, salvation), each time that it aims to re-establish a normality (social, national, political, psychological) by a work of mourning, by some therapy or ecology of memory, then the 'forgiveness' is not pure – nor is its concept.

142 Ibid., 35.
143 Derrida considers the ordinary sense of a 'crime against humanity' to be of this sort. See ibid., 33.
Forgiveness is not, it should not be, normal, normative, normalising. It should remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible: as if it interrupted the ordinary course of historical temporality.\textsuperscript{144}

So, for Derrida, if the act of forgiveness is to retain its supererogatory quality, it must forego all expectations, especially any future reconciliation between parties. Such a state of resolution is not prohibited in Derrida’s estimation, but can only be created volitionally by the victim and assailant after the event of forgiveness. Courts and commissions may deal with and deliver justice and amnesty, but true forgiveness, Derrida claims, can only take place between two persons. The defining moments of this event are when the victim considers the questions, “What do I forgive? And whom? What and whom? Something or someone?”\textsuperscript{145} thus deciding whether or not the crime and criminal are to be judged ‘unforgivable.’ Paradoxically, without denying the legitimacy of the label ‘unforgivable,’ Derrida proposes, “Is this not, in truth, the only thing to forgive? The only thing that calls for forgiveness?” It is, he claims, if forgiveness is to break all expectations and be preserved as an exceptional act.

Yet, despite its unexpected quality, Derrida insists that this pure unforeseeable forgiveness is in fact the source of the meaning of forgiveness as ordinarily conceived:

Yet despite all the confusions which reduce forgiveness to amnesty or amnesia, to acquittal or prescription, to the work of the mourning or some political therapy of reconciliation, in short to some historical ecology, it must never be forgotten, nevertheless, that all of that refers to a certain idea of pure and unconditional

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 31-2.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 38.
forgiveness, without which this discourse would not have the least meaning. What complicates this question of ‘meaning’ is again what I suggested a moment ago: pure and unconditional forgiveness, in order to have its own meaning, must have no ‘meaning’, no finality, even no intelligibility. It is a madness of the impossible.  

So while earlier he claimed that conditional and unconditional forgiveness must remain as two irreducible poles, here Derrida reveals that he does predicate the existence and meaning of any conditional formulation of forgiveness on the ideal of the pure unconditional form. Yet still, pure forgiveness must be entirely unexpected and so its deed can be described only as unintelligible ‘madness’, thus resisting codification in any ethical system. Pure forgiveness, in Derrida’s prescription, creates a simple, singular totality around the relation of victim and assailant - it requires nothing else, it produces nothing else, and after forgiveness there is no necessary causal link to reconciliation.

II. Hegel’s Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Derrida’s position on forgiveness seems to be in intentional tension with Hegel; this last statement that forgiveness is often reduced to some ‘historical ecology’ seems to specifically target his system’s notable historical scope and organism. Derrida’s critique seems to be twofold; first, that Hegel, “the great thinker of ‘forgiveness’ and ‘reconciliation’,” conflates the two by claiming that forgiveness is an event that necessarily must proceed to reconciliation. For Derrida, to do so is to codify the act of forgiving into a standard and strip it of its supererogatory quality. Secondly, by formulating forgiveness and reconciliation as inextricably woven together, the prime

146 Ibid., 45.
conditional is formed that true forgiveness is only such if it leads to reconciliation and so reconciliation is inherently predicated on forgiveness; thus, “all is forgivable except the crime against spirit, that is, against the reconciling power of forgiveness.” To asymmetrically forgive but refuse to reconcile is this capital crime. Derrida rejects this conditional forgiveness on the basis that it’s a perversion or incomplete formulation of true, pure forgiveness.

I begin with the first half of Derrida’s critique, that requiring one event to be necessitated by another conflates the two. It should be noted that Hegel was acutely aware of what he implied when speaking of necessity, as this was a feature of his ‘Science.’ In fact, in the preface to the *Phenomenology*, aptly subtitled “Scientific Cognition,” he comments on the problematic of writing such a preamble that traditionally includes a text’s aims and a summary of its results, as though a reader should be able to so easily extract an essential understanding of the text in this way, “For the real issue is not exhausted by stating it as an aim, but by carrying it out, nor is the result the actual whole, but rather the result together with the process through which it came about.” He goes on to say that, if expectations must be stated, then, “To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title ‘love of knowing’ and be actual knowing—that is what I have set myself to do.” Applied to the issue of the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation, this observation suggests that, though Hegel does view reconciliation as a necessary development from forgiveness, actual knowledge of this transmutation can only be had by studying ‘the process through which it came about.’ Such is the scientific study of the necessary relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation.

147 Ibid., 34.
149 Ibid., 3.
However, this is not the first necessary relationship that appears in the *Phenomenology*. Rather, it could be said that all movement within the system is “necessary.” For example, consider when Hegel speaks to the struggle for harmony between morality and Nature, which “is thought of as something that necessarily is, i.e. it is postulated.” That is, the natural or sensuous instincts and urges are imagined, desired even, to be in agreement with morality because at this notional undeveloped stage in self-consciousness, moral duty has only gone against natural inclination. For happiness to ever be achieved, the unity of Nature and morality is necessary, but this necessity is said to be so by the developing notion of morality, and so, “necessity is at the same time essentially relation based on the Notion.” This necessary unity is an urgency in thought, but not of an arbitrary, merely contingent thought, but of a rational self-consciousness,

The existence thus demanded, i.e. the unity of both, is therefore not a wish nor, regarded as purpose, one whose attainment were still uncertain; it is rather a demand of Reason, or an immediate certainty and presupposition of Reason.\(^{150}\)

So, between the notional essence of morality and bringing this essence to bear in existence by actually acting morally, there exists the middle term of interrupting natural impulses. Rather than attempt to completely quell these selfish desires, on the contrary, a struggle with them is the very condition of acting morally. Eventually, with experience in struggling with these competing desires, the desires themselves can be reshaped to be in support of moral action and this actualization is described as an utmost expression of ‘Reason’,

Moral self-consciousness is not, therefore, in earnest with the elimination of inclinations and impulses, for it is just these that are the *self-realizing self-consciousness*.

\(^{150}\) Ibid., 367.
But also they ought not to be suppressed, but only to be in conformity with Reason.\textsuperscript{151}

When this new horizon is achieved and this moral second nature replaces the first natural and sensuous nature, the Notion of conscience is born. This Notion introduces a qualitatively different kind of moral self-knowledge that understands the good in-and-for itself and not just the good for ‘me and my pleasures.’ Yet, at this higher horizon neither the personal pleasures nor the struggle to act morally are abolished. Instead, they are preserved in the sublation to conscience. This developed moral self-knowledge is better able to recognize its struggle with the sensuous desires and so is better equipped to defend itself: “This self of conscience, Spirit that is directly aware of itself as absolute truth and being, is the \textit{third self}.”\textsuperscript{152}

This is an important movement to include in explaining Hegel’s scientific study of forgiveness, as only two such ‘third’ selves, rational self-consciousnesses of conscience, can embrace one another in reconciliation. Hegel contrasts this self with the two previous: the legal person, whose “existence consists in its being acknowledged by others,” and the person of culture, who oscillates between abiding by moral duty and acting on private inclination, seeking to unite them in its willing.\textsuperscript{153} Only the third self of conscience has “in its \textit{self-certainty}, a \textit{content} for the previously empty duty, as also for the right and the universal will that were empty of content.”\textsuperscript{154} This content is conscience, existing as the self-possession of moral knowledge. To recall Derrida’s objection, he challenged the notion that “all is forgivable except the crime against spirit, that is, against the

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 377.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 384.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 384.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 384-385.
reconciling power of forgiveness,"¹⁵⁵ but this really raises the challenge of providing an interpretation of these verses:

   Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. Therefore, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.¹⁵⁶

   I don't intend to provide a full exegesis, much less one that could speak fully for Hegel, but some minimal analysis is necessary. As noted, for Hegel only two 'third selves' of conscience are able to truly participate in an authentic reconciliation. This requirement is not the same for a unilateral act of forgiveness, in which a victim with the conscience, the moral self-knowledge, to know that she's been unjustly harmed forgives her morally ignorant assailant by reason of such ignorance. And what better archetype is there of such an innocent, self-conscious victim than the figure of Christ, the Son of Man who pardons all others' sins? Despite being entirely blameless and undeserving of his punishment, still he makes the appeal, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."¹⁵⁷

   This is not a plea to forgive unconditionally, but forgiveness is only offered in this one-sided way because the assailants are inwardly ignorant of moral knowledge; they possess no conscience that restrains their natural instincts and base desires. In this narrative, Christ's torturers exist at what Hegel names the legal standard of Spirit, characteristic of the Roman Zeitgeist, in which personhood is defined only by

¹⁵⁵ Derrida, ibid., 34.
minimal recognition and moral fulfillment (if it can be called such) consists only in abiding by formal statutes. With this standard, no spirit of the law exists beyond its letter and insofar as the law is broken, there is no court of appeals or higher interpretation possible. In this way the merely legal person can not reasonably be considered cognizant of the moral significance of her actions, as she hasn’t yet developed to be an actual person, she is only formally recognized as such. Full personhood can only be achieved with a self-possession of conscience that operates above the material manifold of pain and pleasure impetuses.

However, as Hegel conceives it, a conscientious person is not entirely free from selfish and asocial tendencies. Rather, such affinities are sublated and preserved in the higher consciousness. Accordingly, only in a person of conscience can guilt and regret be experienced, which are necessary stages before an authentically grieving assailant could confess. In this way, the conditions for forgiveness become more demanding when the offending party is a person of conscience, as such a person would have been able to recognize the fault of her crime. In such a case, rather than being forgiven outright due to the handicap of moral ignorance, an offender would first need to confess knowledge of the transgression and in doing so admit that the victim’s self-worth and dignity is more than an empty legal personhood, but equal to his own, and

Perceiving this identity and giving utterance to it, he confesses this to the other, and equally expects that the other, having in fact put himself on the same level, will also respond in words in which he will give utterance to this identity with him, and expects that this mutual recognition will now exist in fact.\(^{158}\)

Only at this scene is reconciliation possible. Previously, a blameless victim of moral self-knowledge could one-sidedly forgive her morally ignorant assailant, but reconciliation would

\(^{158}\) Hegel, ibid., 405.
not be possible, as this state of community is predicated on a mutual recognition beyond that which takes place under the legal definition of personhood. In demonstrating one's possession of moral self-knowledge, but admitting to betraying it, this erring person of conscience is able to ask for forgiveness. Still, this does not necessarily guarantee reconciliation, as the victim may still refuse to forgive. Hegel describes this possibility:

   But the confession of the one who is wicked, 'I am so', is not followed by a reciprocal similar confession [...] It repels this community of nature, and is the hard heart that is for itself, and which rejects any continuity with the other.  

   In this way, Hegel does not claim reconciliation to be necessary in the sense of inevitable. Indeed, for whatever reasons, the intensity of the pain or mourning or the horrid nature of the crime, a victim may reasonably choose to not forgive. This is precisely Derrida's point, that by ordinary rational standards, forgiveness is not expected. Forgiving the unforgivable is then an act of 'madness of the impossible.'

   Interestingly enough, Hegel levels the charge of madness not to the victim that chooses to forgive after recognizing the authenticity of the confession and apology of the assailant, but to the victim that, given all of these fulfilled conditions, still chooses not to forgive, for fear that such recognition would equate her innocence with the other's wickedness: "This 'beautiful soul' [...] being conscious of this contradiction in its unreconciled immediacy, is disordered to the point of madness, wastes itself in yearning and pines away in consumption."  

   The alternative, to recognize the assailant as equal to oneself, Hegel claims is necessitated by the following movement:

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159 Ibid., 405.
160 Ibid., 407.
The breaking of the hard heart, and the raising of it to universality, is the same movement which was expressed in the consciousness itself. The wounds of the Spirit heal, and leave no scars behind. The deed is not imperishable; it is taken back by Spirit into itself, and the aspect of individuality present in it, whether as intention or as an existent negativity and limitation, straightway vanishes.\textsuperscript{161}

So, similar to how at the level of consciousness, the unity of subject and object could be had only when the object of desire was recognized as oneself, so too does a community of self-consciousnesses of conscience emerge only after the recognition of one another as such. Therefore, Hegel does not conflate forgiveness and reconciliation, but through his scientific treatment of the subjects, he demonstrates how forgiveness first can only be offered from a self-consciousness of conscience. The possibility for this event becomes more complex when dealing with two such self-consciousnesses, as the assailant will have to recognize the self-worth of the victim and confess its crime and newfound recognition to the victim. Then, the victim must recognize the genuineness of the recognition and confession and in return offer its own recognition and finally, forgiveness. Only through this process of mutual self-recognition can both parties be elevated to the level of reconciliation, in which they exist as ‘more-than-individual’ individuals in community – and if they are to remain in this ideal state, they must not withdraw their respectful recognition for one another.

Yet, it is crucial to recall that the possibility for this entire process of recognition and reconciliation is founded on an original act of forgiveness, which is alone notable for what it is not – retaliation in the form of violence, resentment, or some other antagonism. Not responding to harm by inflicting harm may seem like an axiom for diplomatic purposes, but only for a rational self-consciousness of conscience. The natural sensuous

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 407.
reaction to being harmed is to retreat or return harm, so as to abolish the presence of the hostile other. Forgiveness, as an act of thoughtful pacifism, requires operating above the material manifold of pleasure and pain impetuses. In absorbing an enemy’s blow and then absolving the debt that would be paid in revenge, the victim has given the assailant an opportunity to act in the same dignified grace by confessing and repenting, and as Hegel says, this "is not an abasement, a humiliation, a throwing-away of himself in relation to the other[...] on the contrary, he gives himself utterance solely on account of his having seen his identity with the other."¹⁶² This forgiveness is an inherently uneconomical act, only irrational in the sense that persons are construed in classical economic theory as self-interested agents. Indeed, in the event of reconciliation, the parties acknowledge one another as other-interested. With this mutual recognition, assailant and victim are transformed into confessor and forgiver, forging a new relationship in the event of “The reconciling Yea, in which the two ‘I’s let go their antithetical existence, [and] is God manifested in the midst of those who know themselves in the form of pure knowledge,”¹⁶³ thus reflecting the action of the God-made-man on the cross.

**Bibliography**


¹⁶² Ibid., 405.
¹⁶³ Ibid., 409.
Dana Fritz—Angst, Shame, Knowledge: The Baptism of Dasein

Abstract: The concept of the human spirit has been much debated. Martin Heidegger calls this spirit Dasein. He argues that Dasein cares for things in a manner no other things can and that Dasein has complete free will. For Heidegger, however, existence is an unexplainable fact, which leads to anxiety. Karol Wojtyla, a Polish Roman Catholic bishop who would later become Pope John Paul II, takes the concept of Dasein and improves it. He agrees that Dasein cares for things in a unique manner, yet he focuses on Dasein’s interaction with other Daseins. He also agrees with Heidegger on free will, but argues that this is given by God, not derived from a spontaneous nature. Finally, he believes that existence is meaningful and that we should seek to enjoy the world in a responsible manner. Wojtyla’s notion of Dasein thus gives an optimistic view of the human spirit.

Society views anxiety as something undesirable, to be eliminated or at least suppressed. There are drugs to manage anxiety and people whose profession it is to help alleviate anxiety, but the truth remains that some people feel anxiety for no apparent psychological reason. Society views this onset as abnormal and detrimental, but others such as Martin Heidegger and Karol Wojtyla disagree.

Martin Heidegger, an atheistic German phenomenologist of the 20th century, conceives anxiety (Angst) as a normal experience that leads us to truths about our own existence. Karol Wojtyla, a Polish phenomenologist who would later become Pope John Paul II, expands on Heidegger’s conception of anxiety, proposing that it can lead us not only to truths about our own existence but also to ethical truths. In
addition, Wojtyla proposes that anxiety can be alleviated. For both Heidegger and Wojtyla, anxiety can be beneficial.

In order to understand Heidegger’s conception of anxiety, one must understand his atheism, which he articulates and defends in The Basic Problems of Phenomenology. Heidegger writes, “[A]ccording to the Christian view, a being’s actualization is accomplished by God, but the actual being, as actualized, nevertheless exists absolutely for itself, is something that is for itself” (Heidegger 103). Heidegger posits that if there were a God who created us, we would have to exist for His purposes. Yet our capacity for self-determination would indicate that we exist for our own purposes. This becomes a paradox, which Heidegger resolves by claiming that God does not exist.

In this world without God exists the person, or Dasein, who relates to the rest of the world in a unique manner. Heidegger states that “[t]he Dasein speaks for itself, expresses itself, as existent being-in-the-world, dwelling with and occupying itself with beings. Only a being that exists, that is in the manner of being-in-the-world, understands that which is, beings” (208). Dasein understands that it is a being. As far as we know, no animal or inanimate object can perform this feat. Dasein, though, can reflect on what it means to be a Dasein along with the potential implications of being. This gives Dasein unique characteristics and separates it from other beings. This feeling of being different is further revealed through anxiety.

Anxiety must be distinguished from fear in order to be fully understood. In Being and Time, Heidegger states that “fearing discloses something threatening” (Heidegger 391). Fear is directed towards an object, person, event, situation, or state of affairs; it never spontaneously appears. Fear is also temporal. When the threat appears, Dasein feels fear, but when the threat is removed, so is the fear. Dasein may fear a return of the threat, but only because Dasein does not know the future.
Heidegger claims that “anxiety springs from Dasein itself” (395). Dasein exists in such a way that anxiety is an innate yet spontaneous state. One minute a Dasein may be happy, the next minute anxious. Anxiety is not the result of external stimuli. Heidegger writes, “Being-in-the world, however, is both what anxiety is anxious in-the-face-of and what it is anxious” (393). The mere fact that Dasein exists in this world causes anxiety. Unlike fear, which animals can experience, only Dasein can experience anxiety because Dasein is the only being that is capable of contemplating its own existence. While Dasein's impulse is to rid itself of anxiety, Heidegger encourages us to confront it so that anxiety can lead us to knowledge.

A facet of anxiety is uncanniness. In Being and Time, Heidegger writes, "Anxiety is anxious about naked Dasein as something that has been thrown into uncanniness. It brings one back to the pure, 'that-it-is' of one's ownmost individualized thrownness" (304). Uncanniness also means "not-being-at-home" (233). Uncanniness is the knowledge that Dasein views the world differently from other entities. Dasein can view objects as things to be used for its own purposes, or things that should be cared for. Because Dasein is aware of its being in a unique way, it never feels that it belongs in the world. Dasein has no true home; it simply exists.

Another facet of anxiety is thrownness. Being thrown into the world entails Dasein's awareness that it does not understand why it exists. There is no reason for Dasein's existence. Its existence is simply a brute fact which cannot be explained because it is unexplainable. Dasein is also aware of the fact that one day its existence will be obliterated. Since Dasein has no soul and no hope of an afterlife, its anxiety mounts. There is no cure but to accept that knowledge and live out one’s existence.

Karol Wojtyla’s analysis of anxiety aligns with Heidegger’s, but he draws different conclusions about its implications and the knowledge to which it leads because his analysis is rooted in his Catholic faith and its understanding of
the Fall of Man. With Wojtyla, Heidegger’s uncanniness becomes “solitude.” In order to understand what John Paul II means by solitude, one must examine his concept of original solitude. He begins by reflecting on the first human, Adam. John Paul II is not trying to make a case for creationism. Rather he, like Heidegger, is exploring the nature of being. John Paul II believes that our original being was in union with God, thus his reflection begins with a time where man was in perfect union with God in the Garden of Eden.

John Paul II examines Adam’s initial reaction to being in the world. He states:

Thus, the created man finds himself from the first moment of his existence before God in search of his own being. ... The observation that man “is alone” in the midst of the visible world and, in particular, among living beings, has a negative meaning in as much as it expresses what man “is not.” Nevertheless ... he cannot identify himself essentially with the visible world of the other living beings. (John Paul II 149)

Like Heidegger’s Dasein, Adam is able to reflect on his own being. Unlike the animals that surround him, he is able to consider his existence and ponder its meaning. As with Heidegger’s Dasein, Adam feels uncanniness, or separation from the rest of the world. He finds no suitable companion. There is no one with whom to communicate or to share his search for meaning. He names all the animals and has dominion over them, but has no true companion. It is in this moment that Adam experiences what Heidegger would call uncanniness. John Paul II calls it “original solitude.”

Though John Paul II uses the term “original solitude,” it is worth mentioning that a similar form of solitude still exists
today. Within the world, the person is in the same predicament as Adam concerning other objects. John Paul II states that “[m]an is alone because he is ‘different’ from the visible world, from the world of living beings” (150). Man, like Dasein, is unique from other creatures, and through solitude becomes aware of this.

There are two major differences between the solitude we experience today and that which Adam experienced. First, as the first human, Adam truly was alone. Second, he was in a perfect union with God. He knew God and was naked before Him. Even though God is unseen, Adam could nonetheless communicate with Him, unafraid. Still, Adam yearned for a physical connection with another being. God, seeing that it was not good for man to be alone and anxious, created another human being, Eve.

This closeness with God was shattered when Adam and Eve committed the original sin. Now death is a reality. John Paul II says, “The words that God-Yahweh addressed to the man confirm a dependence on existing, so that they show man as a limited being and, by his nature, susceptible to nonexistence” (155). Death is a reality and, as Heidegger would state, anxiety towards death is now part of the human condition along with solitude.

The original sin caused Adam and Eve to feel anxiety towards death. It also caused them to feel anxiety towards each other. This was first described when they looked upon each other, realized they were naked, and put on fig leaves. A new anxiety was introduced into their existence, one which John Paul II calls “shame.”

Wojtyla writes, "Shame has its roots deep in the very being of the person" (Wojtyla 185). He defines shame as “a tendency, uniquely characteristic of the human person, to conceal sexual values sufficiently to prevent them from obscuring the value of persons as such” (187). Like Dasein, the person is the only known entity capable of reflecting on his or
her own existence. The person believes that he or she is valuable and wishes to be treated as such. Still, the person is aware that the world is in a fallen state. It is possible to be used by others, so the person is prone to anxiety towards his or her own body.

Wojtyla states, “It [shame] yields to the realization that those values are not merely a stimulus to ‘sexual desires’” (185). Shame alerts the person to the fact that the sexual act is a joining together of persons, not merely a fulfillment of an animalistic urge. Through shame, the person is aware that his or her partner is a person, just as he or she is. The shame that he or she feels is common to both partners, which is a warning for them to treat each other with respect and care. The mutual respect of persons is an ethical truth, one which has been uncovered through the experience of anxiety. This knowledge becomes the basis of a moral code, something which Heideggerian anxiety cannot accomplish.

Wojtyla’s parallel to Heidegger’s concept of “thrownness” is our separation from God as a result of sin. Being united with God is our true purpose. We feel distant from God because sin has decimated the intimacy that we once experienced with Him. Since sin has separated us from God, we sometimes feel as though we were simply thrown into the world.

Though he agrees with Heidegger that anxiety is part of the human condition, Wojtyla argues that anxiety can be alleviated. While we are apprehensive about God because of His infinitude, we also yearn for Him because we conceive a proper relationship with Him as fulfilling. Wojtyla states that “the happiness of the human person [is] in union with a personal God” (173). Happiness is found only through God and His love. Jesus’ death and resurrection reunited man with God and effectuated atonement for our sins. This cures our anxiety through the promise of salvation and eternal life.
Martin Heidegger offers no such hope for relief of anxiety. He can offer only what he calls an authentic life. In *Being and Time*, he writes, “Authentic being-towards-death cannot evade its own-most non-relational possibility, or cover up this possibility by thus fleeing from it, or give a new explanation for it to accord with the common sense of the ‘they’” (Heidegger 304-5). The “they” for Heidegger are the other Daseins around us. He sees others as a barrier to understanding being because “they” can influence Dasein in negative ways by enforcing false beliefs. In particular, the “they” try to convince Dasein that there is an intrinsic meaning to life and death. There is none though; both are brute facts devoid of meaning. Instead, to be authentic, Dasein must face this fact and try to live its life accordingly. However, this does not alleviate anxiety.

One could argue that Wojtyla’s view is too dependent on God’s existence. If God does not exist, then Wojtyla’s philosophy is not on a firm foundation. By the same token, however, Heidegger’s view of anxiety is just as dependent on the non-existence of God. If God does exist, then Heidegger’s philosophy is on a shaky foundation, because we are not thrown into the world and our existence is not a brute fact. Since both theism and atheism are subject to ongoing debate, neither God’s existence nor His non-existence should be considered a solid counter-argument against either view.

While Heidegger’s and Wojtyla’s conceptions of anxiety have much in common such as the similarity between uncanniness and solitude, there are fundamental differences such as their respective explanations of the feeling of thrownness. Most of these differences result from their divergent views on God. Whereas Heidegger’s atheistic Dasein has no ethics or any hope of alleviating anxiety, Wojtyla’s theism is able to accomplish both. Anxiety leads to knowledge of God, and ultimately to eternal life.
Bibliography


Ross Hardy—The Camel, the Lion, the Child, and the Will to Power: The Shadow of the Overman Across Nietzsche’s Writings

Friedrich Nietzsche was one of the most influential philosophers of the 19th century, with ideas and concepts introduced over a hundred years ago still being studied today. In the prologue to his book, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist, biographer and philosopher Walter Kaufmann calls Nietzsche “a myth even before he died,” a legend created by zealous German nationalists, rapidly evolving philosophical theory, and his sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche (3-9). After his death in 1900, his ideas became twisted and misinterpreted, with no “basic agreement about what he stood for: his admirers are as much at odds about this as his critics” (Kaufmann 3). Though Nietzsche’s writings cover a wide range of topics, there is one figure who casts a long shadow over all his major texts: the paragon of radical individualism, the Overman. The Overman is the natural evolution of the master-slave morality, and is the embodiment of each stage of the metamorphosis of the soul.

The Overman was first introduced in Nietzsche’s seminal work, Thus Spoke Zarathustra. In this book, the eponymous hero journeys throughout the land, spreading wisdom as he goes along while meeting many strange and interesting people. The idea of the Overman is first mentioned in one of his earliest speeches: “I teach you the Overman. Human being is something that must be overcome...What is the ape to a human? A laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. And that is precisely what the human shall be to the Overman” (6). The notion that the Overman is a state into which humans must grow is important and is directly linked to the Nietzschean model of the soul progression.
In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, the great prophet introduces his audience to the three transformations of the soul. While the Overman is not mentioned in this instance, it will soon become clear that this metamorphosis is vital to the formation of that figure. "The spirit becomes a camel, and the camel a lion, and finally the lion a child" (16). This metamorphosis is one of the most important concepts that must be grasped if Nietzsche's views on individualism are to be made clear. Each stage of the transformation shows an increased amount of independence and personal growth, and, with each stage, the Overman emerges more and more. The process starts with the camel.

The camel is described by Zarathustra as "the carrying spirit," who seeks out the most difficult tasks available so that [he] might take it upon myself and rejoice in my strength" (16). While vital to the growth and development of the human soul, the camel is not an independent being, as the Overman will eventually become. The camel is defined by that which is around him, seeking not to avoid society and its ills, but to absorb them; Zarathustra describes the camel as "lowering oneself in order to hurt one's pride...abandoning our cause when it celebrates victory...[and] loving those who despise us" (16). Here, in this great strength, the first glimmers of the Overman can be seen.

The camel bears his burdens, and gladly, but it cannot be said that the camel is an independent being. The process towards independence begins, as Zarathustra says, in the desert, when the camel becomes a lion. The lion wishes to "hunt down its freedom and be master in its own desert...it wants to battle the great dragon" (16). Here, at last, there is a glimmer of personal power in the soul. While the status of Overman has not yet been reached, the lion no longer accepts the burdens that society places on him; instead, he wishes to destroy those burdens so he may be free. This agency is essential to independence, just as it is required for the transformation from human being into the Overman.
The dragon is another Nietzschian concept that appears throughout his works. In Beyond Good and Evil, it is the Church and the priestly class, while in Ecce Homo, it is “unclean conditions.” In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, the prophet says that the name of the dragon is “Thou Shalt” (17). The dragon is what would later be called in Beyond Good and Evil “a will to the denial of life, a principle of disintegration and decay” (393). Any force that commands, obligates, or pressures another individual would be the dragon of Zarathustra.

What, then, is the purpose of the lion? “To create freedom for oneself and also a sacred No to duty,” says Zarathustra (17). The lion represents the destruction of classic morality, similar to the barbarians of Beyond Good and Evil, men of “unbroken strength of will and lust for power” (391). However, the lion is not the end of the metamorphosis. As Zarathustra says, the lion cannot create new values; it can only destroy old ones (17). While the lion’s will to battle the dragon is an important component of the Overman, the Overman is not a destroyer; he is a creator, and for that, one final transformation is required.

This creator comes in the form of the child, the sacred “yes-saying”—that is to say, a willingness to embrace rather than to condemn—that allows “a new beginning...a first movement” (17). The child is the Overman, the ultimate expression of individuality. It is this foundation on which the rest of Nietzsche’s career is based; the idea of “going under” as he says in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (6). By saying that the Overman demonstrates qualities inherent in the camel, the lion, and the child, Nietzsche is saying that the Overman is a comprehensive being; he is not simply another stage in moral or intellectual growth, he is the metamorphosis. However, this is not the only important concept necessary for comprehending Nietzsche’s stance on individualism and self-improvement.

Simply being the child, simply saying yes, is not enough for the Overman. There must be present, on some level, a mindset that demands that yes must be said. For this to occur,
the Overman must see that there is something wrong with the world. He must see that he is stronger than others, and that his being stronger puts him in a class above everyone else. He must have a desire inherent within him that states that life is worth affirming, that strength is worth embracing, and that his unassailable character is worth admiring. For all of this, the Overman needs the noble Will to Power.

In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche discusses the concept of nobility, which is coupled inseparably with the Will to Power. He uses the term to describe the type of life lived by an aristocrat or a nobleman, one who embraces life. Of this desire, he says, “it will have to be an incarnate will to power [emphasis mine], it will strive to grow, spread, seize, become predominant—not from any morality or immortality but because it is living and because life simply is will to power” (393). This clarifies Nietzsche’s views on the Overman—with the Will to Power, it is not just yes-saying, but yes-seeking. The Overman desires to live life unfettered by the bounds of a weak society dominated by what Nietzsche calls the “slave morality” (394).

The slave morality only makes sense when one understands what Nietzsche calls master morality. According to Nietzsche,

When the ruling group determines what is ‘good,’ the exalted, proud states of the soul are experienced as conferring distinction...the noble human being separates from himself those in whom the opposite of such exalted, proud states finds expression: he despises them...One feels contempt for the cowardly, the anxious, the petty. (395).

He makes it clear that the nobleman does not hate the slave, who he sees as weaker than himself. Indeed, it is often the nobleman that helps the less powerful, although Nietzsche cautions about doing so for the wrong reasons: “the noble
human being, too, helps the unfortunate, but not...from pity, but prompted more by an urge begotten by excess of power” (395).

These noblemen embody the spirit of the Overman. In fact, just like the Overman, they seem to embody all three of the transformations at the same time. Just as the nobleman “honors himself as one who is powerful,” so does the camel seek to prove its power by accepting the most difficult tasks. The nobleman who despises the common nature of the peasants and slaves is similar to the lion, who fights back for the ability to be free. When the nobleman makes the statement that that “which is harmful to me is harmful in itself,” he has created a value, said “Yes” as the child does (394-5). In this way, then, it must be said that the nobleman in Beyond Good and Evil must be the Overman.

In the early stages of society, master morality was the law of the land; with qualities like “an enterprising spirit, foolhardiness, vengefulness, craftiness, rapacity, and the lust to rule” being “cultivated to [be made] great” (303). These are the qualities of the barbarian of old nobility, who is the ancestor of the Overman. However, this is no longer the case. A new system of morality, which Nietzsche termed “slave morality,” is now in place. Nietzsche describes it succinctly when he writes that “the slave's eye is not favorable to the virtues of the powerful...he would like to persuade himself that their happiness is not genuine” (397). Slave morality is a reaction from the weak against the master morality of the much stronger Overman; the qualities mentioned above, threatening to the weak as they are, were soon branded as evil by the slave class. As Nietzsche says,

It is this fear of the neighbor that again creates new perspectives of moral valuation. Certain strong and dangerous drives...are now experienced as doubly dangerous...Now the opposite drives and inclinations receive moral honors...the highest and strongest drives...wreck the self-confidence of the community...Hence just these drives are branded and slandered most. (303)
Kaufmann makes a note about the hatred that the slave class has regarding the master class, or even the Overman, by saying “to want pity is to want others to suffer with us” (184). This illustrates clearly the desires of the slave class, and explains their hatred of the powerful; since they are weak, they desire others to be as weak as they are. This is contrasted by the Will to Power of the master class, which, acknowledging apparent weakness, wishes instead to eliminate that weakness by gaining power.

Nietzsche continues describing the slave morality by calling it a “morality of utility,” based on the qualities that are the opposite as from those favored by those in power; namely pride, courage, and truth. It is slave morality to embrace “pity, the complaisant and engaging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness” (397). These qualities, so hated by the noble, are embraced precisely because of the status that they hold among that class. In other words, the slaves, in their weakness, know only that their masters despise these tendencies; thus, in an attempt to make themselves as different from their masters as possible, take the qualities on themselves.

The slave is an evolution of the dragon mentioned in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Slave morality has turned the dragon into a threat of much greater proportions. Instead of being a malignant force that must be confronted on an individual basis, it has become a malignant force that requires the collected and focused strength of the Overman-nobility to defeat.

While it is true that the slave is the natural evolution of the dragon, this new threat is far different than the one originally conceived. This dragon is no longer dangerous, frightening, and cruel; it is the opposite. The slave morality has fundamentally changed the dragon and made him into something that is “good-natured, easy to deceive, a little stupid perhaps” (397). These are not the qualities of a dragon that must be slain; these are the qualities of sheep.
“Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality,” Nietzsche asserts in Beyond Good and Evil, and the reason for this shift is marked, according to Nietzsche, by an increased importance in the role of religion. Religion is the dragon in the most traditional sense; it is "obedience over a long period of time and in a single direction," the ultimate “Thou Shalt,” which Nietzsche calls “the long unfreedom of the spirit” (Beyond Good and Evil 291). It is this Christian ideal which is acting as the overpowering, stifling force against individuality and the free spirit. "What the Christians call ‘faith,’" Nietzsche calls “the herd" (Beyond Good and Evil 294).

The herd mentioned above is Nietzsche's way of describing our society. He is bemoaning the loss of true nobility, and with it, its Will to Power. The Will to Power, perceived as a great threat to the stability of the modern world, has been stamped out under the booteels of both the church and the state. He writes that “the democratic movement is not only a form of decay of political organization but a form of the decay, namely the diminution, of man, making him mediocre and lowering his value” (Beyond Good and Evil 307).

Nietzsche held those who desired to obey and be comforted in very little regard. In fact, Kaufmann writes that “all men obey certain laws...children do this, and so do primitive men who submit to medicine men, totems, and taboos; and Nietzsche believed that most of his contemporaries were, in this respect, in the same class as children or primitives” (Kaufmann 250). Nietzsche's disgust for such herd creatures can easily be seen in his writings, particularly in his descriptions of the modern herd-like man: “They are at one with the lot in their thorough and instinctive hostility to every other form of society except that of the autonomous herd” (Beyond Good and Evil 306).

Why does Nietzsche believe that the religious spirit has grown so powerful that it has crushed the idea of intellectual enlightenment? According to Nietzsche, religion, as the dragon of our age, demands a 'Thou Shalt;' but in this age, it demands
unconditional obedience as well. Thus, writes Nietzsche, “[the need to obey] accepts whatever is shouted into its ears by someone who issues commands—parents, teachers, laws, class prejudices, public opinions” (Beyond Good and Evil 300). It is the herd itself that requires the dragon, as “the appearance of one who commands unconditionally strikes these herd-animal Europeans as an immense comfort and salvation” (Beyond Good and Evil 301).

Where is the Overman amongst all of this chaos? What is his role as a leader and a transcendent being in a world controlled by the weak morality of slaves? He must do exactly as Zarathustra said: fight the dragon, wrest control away from the “Thou Shalt” and become as a child, creating a new set of moralities that allow him his own growth, independent of any religion.

In order to ensure that there is no confusion, it has become necessary here, before the final point is made, to engage in a brief review of the key concepts presented here. Chief among them is the claim that the Overman is the ultimate end of Nietzsche’s major writings, and that elements of this figure can be found in various places, even when he is not explicitly named. One of these ideas that contributes to the formation of the Overman is the metamorphosis of the soul, the growth and moral development of men that leads to a man becoming the best that he can be. The metamorphosis embodies, in its various stages, all of the strengths of the Overman.

Another main strength of the Overman is the master morality, or the morality of those who rule, who embrace life with the lust of the conquering barbarians of ancient times. The morality of the Overman is the morality of the master, as both men possess what Nietzsche calls the Will to Power. These powerful, masterful men are opposed by the ever-growing herds of slaves, who practice their own morality as a way of striking back against their masters. The natural evolution of this
slave morality is religion, and the natural evolution of religion is democracy.

The democratic movement, which he earlier describes as the “heir to the Christian movement,” seems to be destined to fail, and in this failing can be found a small glimmer of hope within the pessimistic outlook and cynical nature of Nietzsche; Nietzsche’s description of ‘decay’ brings to mind rotted wood that will eventually crack and splinter. Indeed, it is almost as though he sees the end in sight, and calls upon those who still believe in the Will to Power and the force of the nobility to strive for this goal:

If we place ourselves at the end of this tremendous process, where the tree at last brings forth fruit, where society and the morality of custom at last reveal what they have simply been the means to: --then we discover that the ripest fruit is the sovereign individual, like only to himself...in short, the man who has his own independent, protracted will. (Genealogy of Morals 495)

“The man who has his own independent, protracted will;” in other words, the Overman.

Bibliography


Abstract: Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn seem to disagree much more than they actually do disagree. By examining the operative elements of each respective philosophy it is seen that they describe much the same general shape of how scientific progress should be made. Both see that scientific progress is sometimes made when old ideas are discarded, advocating the withdrawal of old ideas when new, better ideas come along. The main difference between the two seems to be how quickly a theory should be discarded in the face of contrary evidence. Popper argues that a theory should be debunked and discarded as soon as one obtains and appreciates contrary evidence, whereas Kuhn sees the need to keep ideas until a critical mass of contrary evidence forces a change. In truth, the difference between them is more one of degree than of kind. Popper examines scientific theories individually, whereas Kuhn considers complex paradigms.

Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn seem to be greatly at odds with each other, but are much more similar than they first appear. In *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, Popper speaks with deep inductive skepticism, arguing that science can know nothing and must continue forward with its theories with skepticism and the intent to disprove itself. Scientists should always attempt to disprove whatever theory they come up with. Moreover, Popper claims that a scientist could never prove her theory. A good scientist tries to disprove her theory over and over, and if it is disproven in just one test the theory is debunked. On the other hand, if thousands of tests are conducted and the theory is not disproven in any of them, all that can be claimed is that the theory has not yet been disproven. By Popper’s measure, the
theory in question is not even considered supported after all these trials.

Kuhn does not feel that it is helpful for scientists to be so eager to disprove themselves. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, he contends that science operates by paradigms. Paradigms are defined, in a broad sense, as sets of claims about the world, habits of scientific thought or behavior, and methods for gathering and analyzing data within a specific field—cf. Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*. According to Kuhn, scientific fields that are united under a single paradigm hold foundational tenets in common; said tenets are not critically examined or debated, but passively accepted and built upon. To do as Popper charges would make scientific progress all but impossible. Kuhn argues that to do so would leave scientists in a position without any theory to build upon, as theories would be constantly discarded.

Indeed, Popper and Kuhn seem quite at odds, but only at first brush. When one digs a bit deeper into the ideas of each, a great deal of similarity can be found than is first obvious.

Popper makes an analogy between science and the search for a holy grail. In this analogy, there is an infinite number of grails, yet only one Holy Grail. While the Holy Grail glows forever, all other grails glow just as brightly, but will stop glowing eventually and without warning. In this analogy, theories are like grails and a grail stops glowing when the theory is debunked. The Holy Grail is the perfect theory, one that will never be disproven because it is right and there is nothing to disprove it. Science is like a person searching for the Holy Grail. As this person can carry only one grail at a time, his only true option is to pick up a grail that glows and hold onto it until it stops glowing. Once his grail stops glowing he must discard it and pick up the next still-glowing grail. Even if he does find the one and only Holy Grail he cannot know that it is the Holy Grail because, for all he knows, the grail he carries could stop glowing at any moment. This is, according to Popper, how scientists should approach science. There may be one
theory out there that is 100% right, but there are many, many theories that appear right for the time being until they are disproven and "stop glowing." At that point the old theory must be abandoned and a new one found.

An analogy can be drawn between a Kuhnian scientific paradigm and a well-constructed and well-shielded bomb. Kuhn sees “normal science”—i.e., science conducted within a given paradigm—as being constructed in such a way as to make its own destruction inevitable. According to Kuhn, science sometimes but not always progresses when the bomb explodes, and a new paradigm is found. However, scientists are to work within their current paradigm. They are to move forward, assuming that the foundational tenets of the paradigm are correct, and continue doing so until the paradigm is destroyed and a new one must be found. Of course, as the bomb is well-made and well-shielded, it will not detonate at a passing breeze or a slight disturbance. Only the proper stimulus can cause the bomb to destroy itself, and so it is with a paradigm. The proper stimulus comes when, in the course of doing normal science, observations are made that cannot be fit into the current paradigm. Such observations are called “anomalies.” Small anomalies do not have the force to unseat a paradigm and so work continues under the current paradigm until there is a critical mass of anomalies to detonate the bomb. Only a right combination of proper stimulus and discovered alternative will destroy the paradigm; smaller problems are not so odious as to force the scientific community to go through the greatly disruptive effort of finding a new paradigm.

The grail analogy and the bomb analogy are quite similar. In fact, it seems that Popper and Kuhn agree on the shape and path of scientific inquiry, but disagree on how quickly a theory should be dropped. These analogies should be deconstructed. If one looks at Popper’s analogy of the Holy Grail and replaces instances of the word ‘theory’ with those of ‘paradigm’ the descriptions seem similar indeed. All paradigms are destined to be discarded eventually, but we carry them until they stop glowing and a new one must be found.
The main difference here is that, by Popper’s analogy, theories seem to snuff out much more passively and without notice. The end of a theory, in Popper’s account, almost sounds run-of-the-mill; the grail stops glowing so we toss it away and find a new one. Such is indeed quite different from the tone of Kuhn’s analogy. The detonation of a bomb is a very loud and messy thing, and given the well-shielded description, it’s not likely to be brought about passively either. This isn’t a fatal and irreconcilable difference, however. Kuhn’s approach is simply more holistic. Popper speaks of grails representing individual theories, kept or discarded individually, whereas Kuhn speaks of paradigms, which are much more intricate constructs, like bombs. It seems to be a truism that complex constellations of theories are more difficult to prove or disprove than a single theory. This is true in the same way that a weight is easier to drop if one solitary thread supports it than if it is entangled in a thick net.

Popper’s approach has been faulted for its inability to stand up to holistic criticism. Indeed, taking holism into account, Popper’s ground becomes shaky. Suppose a theory states that all cows are heavy and yet a lightweight cow is found. By a strict interpretation of Popper’s doctrine, you must now reject the hypothesis that all cows are heavy. Perhaps your definition for ‘heavy’ is ill-conceived? Your instruments for measuring the weight of the cows are faulty? Or your concept of a cow is off, and this is in fact a calf and will be heavy once it is fully grown? Assuming Kuhn’s holistic framework, this not a problem because one anomaly is not enough to refute a claim. Finding a skinny cow does not immediately refute the theory that all cows are heavy.

Kuhn finds the strength of science in its resistance to change of its basic ideas, without being excessively rigid. The central ideas are kept steady enough for work to be done, but not so unmoving as to prevent any progress to be made. In many ways it seems that Kuhn has simply taken Popper’s arguments and raised the tolerance of what it takes to debunk a theory.
Thus though initially Popper and Kuhn seem distinctly at odds with each other, a closer look reveals that the difference is more one of degree than of kind. Popper's eagerness to drop a theory seems irreconcilable with Kuhn's uncontested basic principles, but their general ideas of how scientific work should be done are largely in agreement. They differ only when it comes to the point of how much contrary evidence is needed before scientists should reject the theory or paradigm they currently hold and move on to find a new, more suitable one.

**Bibliography**


Abstract: I seek to show that internal to Kuhn’s thought there are positive reasons for a realist position. These positive reasons emerge from a careful consideration of two aspects of Kuhn’s thought: a) anomalies and b) the rationality of theory choice. The conclusion of this interpretation shows the strong realist intimations that can be derived from the thought of one of the great challengers of scientific realism, and examines the philosophical presupposition that blocked Kuhn from a realist position.

Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (hereafter SSR) is thought to have introduced a paradigm shift in the way science is viewed historically and philosophically. If it had been widely believed before SSR that scientific knowledge accumulated progressively, by accretion, and in a manner whereby theories map more and more accurately on to reality, then Kuhn’s work, at minimum, stirred these cognitive waters into a whirlpool of critical re-examination. Kuhn’s final position on the progressivity of science, the accumulation of knowledge, and the referential nature of scientific theoretical terms is ambiguous, or at the very least has been open to a variety of disparate and non-trivial interpretations. In the postscript to SSR, Kuhn attempts to clarify the philosophical impact of his historicization of scientific inquiry. Kuhn simultaneously backs away from radically relativistic interpretations of his work with regard to the progressivity of science, and digs his heels in on the question of whether theoretical posits genuinely or approximately refer.
One often hears that successive theories grow ever closer to, or approximate more and more closely to the truth. Apparently generalizations like that refer...[to a theory's] ontology, to the match, that is, between entities with which the theory populates nature and what is ‘really there.’ Perhaps there is some other way of salvaging the notion of ‘truth’ for application to whole theories, but this one will not do. There is, I think, no theory-independent way to reconstruct phrases like ‘really there’; the notion of a match between the ontology of a theory and its ‘real’ counterpart in nature now seems to me illusive in principle.\textsuperscript{165}

If we take the historical work Kuhn has done seriously, and assume that his description of the dynamic of scientific inquiry is correct, a further philosophical question presents itself: does Kuhn’s work necessitate his non-realist philosophical conclusions regarding progress and reference? My interpretation suggests the answer ought to be no.

As such, the present paper has a limited, though important, concern. I seek to show that internal to Kuhn’s thought there are positive reasons for a realist position (by realist position, I mean a view of the scientific enterprise as an activity the theoretical terms of which do approximately and progressively refer to natural reality).\textsuperscript{166} These positive reasons emerge from a careful consideration of two aspects of Kuhn’s thought: a) anomalies and b) the rationality of theory choice.

\textsuperscript{165} Thomas Kuhn, \textit{The Structure of Scientific Revolutions}, (University of Chicago Press, 1996) 206.

\textsuperscript{166} I acknowledge that this general characterization leaves much to be debated within the realist camp. I resist the temptation to explore in a more detailed manner the various realist positions, because it is not entirely germane to the goal of this paper. My realist position is, however, closest to Doppelt’s. Whatever importance this has will become clear later in this paper as I entertain possible objections to my interpretation of Kuhn.
The conclusion of this interpretation of Kuhn does not seek to be in any sense definitive in the realist/anti-realist debate, but rather to show the strong realist intimations that can be derived from the thought of one of the great challengers of scientific realism. Further, we will examine the validity of the presupposition that blocked Kuhn from taking the realist position.

Normal Science and Anomalies- The Case for Approximate Reference

In SSR, Kuhn does not show an interest in identifying the essential feature of science that demarcates it from other areas of knowledge and investigation. If anything, Kuhn seems to push in the other direction, repeatedly comparing the social psychology of the natural sciences to theological training and political authority. Still, Kuhn ultimately views the scientific enterprise as a distinct and distinguishable activity from theology, Marxist ideology, etc. The distinction Kuhn is interested in, however, is quite unlike the popular distinction of science as that domain of knowledge that allows for the progressive accumulation of facts about the natural world.

Kuhn gives us an intimation of his preferred zone of demarcation in a paper he delivered after the publication of SSR on the relation of his work to Popper’s. In it he explains that the

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167 I should stress from the outset that this section will not tackle the Kantian dimension of Kuhn’s thought that he has alluded to. By prefixing the term reference with approximate, I acknowledge that science does not attain direct access to a mind-independent reality (noumenon). Instead, as will become clear, I ask whether we can say of science that it approximates more closely to the noumenous by attaining to higher epistemic standards in its practice.

168 SSR, 96, 136.
basis of his distinction is, counter-intuitively, in the normal science and puzzle-solving function of mature sciences:

...a careful look at the scientific enterprise suggests that it is normal science, in which Sir Karl's sort of testing does not occur, rather than extraordinary science which most nearly distinguishes science from other enterprises. If a demarcation exists...it may lie in just that part of science which Sir Karl ignores.¹⁶⁹

This seems to contradict the ethos of the heroic vision of the scientist who is most virtuous when bravely and creatively challenging the scientific status quo. Kuhn emphasizes the intellectually heteronymous nature of scientific inquiry. For Popper, whose work perhaps epitomizes the heroic interpretation of science, the distinction between ideological knowledge acquisition (such as Adler's psychology or Marx's economic and historical theory) and genuine science is in the revolutionary stage, whereby a new theory replaces a predecessor that had been falsified. Describing revolutionary periods as the essential and distinct activity of science highlights the creative autonomy of the scientist, while demarcating science through normal science underscores the tradition-bound nature of the scientific enterprise. But though Kuhn wants to emphasize the heteronymous dimension of science, he does not attempt to deny the historically important role that revolutions have played in the development of science. By interpreting Kuhn so as to reconcile these two aspects of his thought, I develop the case for approximate reference.

Kuhn thinks the undeniable success of science is due to normal science. But the success is not logically tied so much to normal science, as to the anomalies that normal science elicits. After all, what makes normal science unique? Kuhn describes the extent to which normal science is characterized by a high degree of confidence shared by a community of investigators in

their governing paradigm. But strong inter-subjective consensus is not unique to normal science. Historically, in questions of political justification and religious beliefs, communities have experienced strong inter-subjective consensus without simultaneously eliciting the kind of success Kuhn attributes to scientific inquiry. If it is the consensus component of normal science that Kuhn is isolating as distinct from other arenas of human knowledge, then it is an odd distinction indeed. The other option, then, is that the reason normal science demarcates science from other areas of knowledge acquisition is anomalies. It will be helpful to take a closer look at Kuhn’s understanding of how anomalies function.

By anomalies, Kuhn means the awareness that “nature has somehow violated the paradigm-induced expectations that govern normal science.” Kuhn provides several examples of the emergence of anomalies, by means of which he argues that the process of discovery associated with anomalies is rarely achieved by a single scientist in one fell swoop. Rather, it typically requires a cluster of scientific investigations around the anomaly, followed by the eventual assimilation of the anomaly through an adjustment of the paradigm such that “the anomalous has become the expected.” Kuhn explains that this process is difficult and often resisted by members of the scientific community operating under the research paradigm in which the anomaly has arisen because, in their process of development, anomalies deny previously paradigmatic theories their right to that title. Whatever difficulties the paradigmatic nature of scientific investigation may create during the assimilation of anomalies, Kuhn also argues that paradigms are in some manner necessary for their emergence: “Without the special apparatus that is constructed mainly for anticipated functions, the results that lead ultimately to novelty could not occur. And even when the apparatus exists, novelty emerges only for the man who, knowing with precision what he should

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170 SSR, 52-3.
171 SSR, 53.
172 SSR, 57.
expect, is able to recognize that something has gone wrong. Anomaly appears only against the background provided by the paradigm.\textsuperscript{173}

Crises are the periods during which normal science is interrupted. Though not coterminous with anomalies, crises and anomalies are conceptually and historically related. While multiple factors can influence a period of normal paradigmatic science going into crisis, Kuhn suggests that most often the cause has been the work of scientists within the paradigm itself. Crises are caused when a paradigm begins to experience profound insecurity regarding its explanatory power as a result of anomalies that are significant and seemingly insoluble under the present paradigm. The destruction of a paradigm as well as the creation of a new paradigm are described by Kuhn as a “re-tooling” that is pure extravagance when the current tools hold out the probability or even possibility of taking anomalies into account. Only when the tools of a paradigm are insufficient to that task does it enter crisis, the fertile ground of scientific revolutions. By identifying normal science as the distinguishing activity of science, Kuhn is not interested merely in saying that science is tradition-bound, but that the bounded-ness of science is precisely what makes it conducive to crisis and revolution:

At least for the scientific community as a whole, work within a well-defined and deeply ingrained tradition seems more productive of tradition-shattering novelties than work in which no similarly convergent standards are involved. How can this be so? I think it is because no other sort of work is nearly so well suited to isolate for continuing and concentrated attention those loci of trouble or causes of crisis upon whose recognition the most fundamental advances in basic science depend.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{173} SSR, 65.
\textsuperscript{174} The Essential Tension, 234.
Normal science, it seems, has the helpful habit of self-immolating.

From what has been said we can conclude a) that normal science ought be demarcated from other realms of knowledge by its unique ability to elicit anomalies, which fuel the engine of scientific growth, and b) anomalies represent the interruption of paradigms by nature. I doubt if Kuhn would disagree with conclusion “a” as it is merely an elaboration of his view on normal science. Conclusion “b”, however, though it represents a near quotation of Kuhn, is in some potential conflict with other aspects of Kuhn’s thought. The largest interpretive obstacle resides in squaring the foregoing conclusion with Kuhn’s suggestion that we may be tempted to say when paradigms change, “the world itself changes with them” (italics mine). If this is interpreted in its most radical form, Kuhn could be read as saying that paradigms, and the theoretical posits that form and populate them, are fundamentally and exclusively constitutive of natural “reality.” This interpretation would certainly support Kuhn’s skepticism in the postscript where he deems discussions of the “really there” seemingly pointless. If this is Kuhn’s conclusion based on his description of normal science, however, I will have to suggest that it is an unnecessary conclusion, and moreover that it is an inadequate conclusion. It is unnecessary because the presence of the paradigm-driven normal science, and the pressure it exerts over the practitioners of science, does not utterly impugn the truth-claims of science. Only a further analysis of the rationality of the scientific community in the transition from one paradigm to another could answer that question. Further, the conclusion is inadequate because it cannot account for the very thing that fuels the engine of scientific development: anomalies. If paradigms were fundamentally and exclusively constitutive of natural reality, then violations of the paradigm could only arise from new and arbitrary theoretical posits, the threat of which would be swiftly

175 SSR, 111.
176 SSR, 206.
neutered by the ad hoc methods of assimilation Kuhn describes as being essential to normal science.

The foregoing discussion allows us to conclude that Kuhn’s category of normal science does not, rightly understood, necessitate an anti-realist position on the question of approximate reference. Rather, we can say that any explanation that takes into account the dynamic relationship between anomalies and normal science will be forced to concede that some “really there” natural realm is being encountered by the theories and posits that make up various paradigms. The further question, to which I have already alluded, is whether a rational process informs the encounter.

This question can be adjudicated by considering what occurs post-anomaly, in the periods of crisis and revolution. If, for instance, it could be shown that scientists, as a kind, deal with anomalies only by ad hoc methods of assimilation or, on the other hand, capriciously abandon their paradigms out of frustration for their imperfection, opting instead for a paradigm which has the opposite virtues of the prior paradigm (much like it has been speculated that the U.S. electorate chooses Presidents; by looking for the current—and unpopular—President’s opposite), then, regardless of whether the theories of a paradigm are encountering natural reality, we would have no reason to speak confidently of a rational manner by which the contours of reality were being charted. If, on the other hand, we could say of scientists, that their movement through the crisis and revolutionary periods is regulated by rational criteria such as scope, accuracy, explanatory power, predictive power, unity, simplicity, and puzzle-solving promise (fruitfulness, to use Kuhn’s term), then it seems we would have a basis for saying that science was encountering reality and charting its contours in a rational and progressive manner. It is toward Kuhn’s account of this process that we now turn.

Rationality of Theory Choice- The Case for Progress
To draw out the realist intimations in Kuhn's work, we must recognize the interpenetrating nature of the issues of progress and reference. Progress is not sufficiently substantive (for a realist) if there is not a "reality" towards which science is progressing. Likewise, our earlier discussion concluded with the observation that, on Kuhn's terms, the case for reference would depend on the attributes that characterize the scientific community as it encounters natural reality. If rational, then we are closer to being justified in believing that theoretical posits are approximately referential. If the scientific community is primarily characterized by capriciousness, then we can say, along with Kuhn, that while scientific theories encounter reality, we have little reason for believing them to be approximately referential. We will see that Kuhn's version of progress (there are good reasons for theory change; the application of those good reasons consists merely in scientists conforming to the values of their language game; thus, discussions of ontology are misguided) is still non-realist. However, I will challenge whether his descriptive account of theory choice proves insuperable for the realist account.

Kuhn's position on the rationality of theory choice is difficult to pin down. In the main text of SSR, he emphasizes the notion of a "conversion experience" that is unforced and spontaneous. After being accused of making theory choice a matter of mob psychology, Kuhn analogizes theory choice to translation in SSR's postscript, and acknowledges that paradigms are abandoned and joined for "good reasons":

Nothing about [Kuhn's] relatively familiar thesis implies either that there are no good reasons for being persuaded or that those reasons are not ultimately decisive for the group. Nor does it imply that the reasons for choice are different from those usually

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listed by philosophers of science: accuracy, simplicity, fruitfulness, and the like. What it should suggest, however, is that such reasons function as values and that they can thus be differently applied, individually and collectively, by men who concur in honoring them.\textsuperscript{178}

This view is elaborated in Kuhn’s essay “Objectivity, Value Judgment, and Theory Choice” wherein he maintains that there are limitations of communication between different paradigms:

...I simply assert the existence of significant limits to what the proponents of different theories can communicate to one another. The same limits make it difficult or, more likely, impossible for an individual to hold both theories in mind together and compare them point by point with each other and with nature.\textsuperscript{179}

The "good" reasons mentioned in the postscript of SSR do not constitute a meta-paradigmatic language, are not theory neutral, and do not function as rules that can determine the right “scientific” outcome. Rather, Kuhn argues that these criteria function as values of the scientific community that guide behavior instead of dictating it. Elsewhere, Kuhn argues that whatever scientific progress is, we can only determine it by conducting a broad psychological and sociological investigation into the values and choices of the scientific community.\textsuperscript{180}

Kuhn’s post-SSR view is that science is unidirectional and progressive, but only when measured by standards that are equivocal, sometimes in internal conflict (e.g. simplicity vs. fruitfulness) and immanent to the language game of science. By equivocal, Kuhn means quite simply that there are moments in paradigm adjudication (extraordinary science) when...

\textsuperscript{178} SSR, 199.
\textsuperscript{179} The Essential Tension, 338.
\textsuperscript{180} The Essential Tension, 290.
completely reasonable scientists can, will, and very often do disagree: “When scientists must choose between competing theories, two men fully committed to the same list of criteria may nevertheless reach different conclusions.”

The absence of an unequivocal and theory-neutral language seems at least partially responsible for Kuhn’s reluctance to grant that scientific inquiry progressively approximates to the truth of natural reality. I have been concerned to discover if, on Kuhn’s account, the process of scientific development could be described as rational. Kuhn’s description of theory choice allows us to say, at minimum, that scientific communities are not irrational when adjudicating the competing claims of paradigms. The question then becomes if the process is sufficiently rational to lend support to the realist position. The negative answer to this question has been characterized as an argument of under-determination. Under-determination critiques must have implicit or explicit standards in mind for what a sufficiently determined case would be. What are those standards if we take the case for the rationality of theory choice, as described by Kuhn, to be under-determined? It seems the standards would demand a univocal, and theory-neutral language with which to evaluate paradigms. If this standard is legitimate, then Kuhn’s account does indeed prevent us from claiming a sufficient case for the rationality of theory choice. But before we enshrine this standard, let’s consider the gains and losses its establishment would incur. Identifying that paradigm adjudication requires the judgment, expertise, and know-how of human beings situated in historical and professional environments does not seem to automatically indict the rationality of the selection that a community makes. But if we do indict the rationality of this kind of theory choice, we lose the capacity to explain something very fundamental to science: its success.

This is precisely the trade-off that Kuhn seems willing to make. Though Kuhn endeavors to explain science, his

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181 The Essential Tension, 324.
description of the activity is left with a frightful omission if it cannot explain why science enjoys the success it does. Kuhn seems oddly sanguine about his inability to account for this central phenomenon. His concluding remarks of SSR underscore this sentiment:

What must nature, including man, be like in order that science be possible at all? Why should scientific communities be able to reach a firm consensus unattainable in other fields? Why should consensus endure across one paradigm after another? And why should paradigm change invariably produce an instrument more perfect in any sense than those known before? From one point of view those questions, excepting the first, have already been answered. But from another they are as open as they were when this essay began. It is not only the scientific community that must be special. The world of which that community is a part must also possess quite special characteristics, and we are no closer that we were at the start to knowing what these must be. That problem—What must the world be like in order that we know it? —was not, however, created by this essay.  

Kuhn attempts to escape accountability for these basic questions by establishing that they pre-exist his efforts. But identifying the perennial nature of the questions does nothing to absolve him from the effort to understand a profound lacuna in his depiction of the nature of scientific inquiry.

A Kuhnian Realism

Insofar as we take seriously the task of explaining science, and are willing to shoulder the burden of attempting to render equivocal phenomena as intelligible as possible, we can

\[182\text{SSR, 173.}\]
go farther than Kuhn did without contradicting his description. Taking seriously the responsibility to explain the success of science is precisely what Gerald Doppelt does in an essay designed to defend a certain kind of realism from anti-realist critiques (in particular, the pessimistic induction). Doppelt stipulates that philosophers of science, like scientists, ought to hold themselves to the standard of inferring to the best explanation even when the evidence is equivocal. When that standard is applied to explaining the success of science, Doppelt argues that the realist position becomes the most plausible and best explanation:

...the best explanation of our best current theories' unique overall empirical success (including their explanatory power) requires the realist hypothesis that they are approximately true, and not just empirically adequate.\(^\text{183}\)

Doppelt's realism is not tied to claims of a univocal and meta-paradigmatic method for adjudicating the virtues of competing paradigms. Importantly, his realism allows the epistemic values of the scientific community to be in conflict: "Empirical success in science always involves some...trade-offs between the distinct epistemic virtues achieved by a theory."\(^\text{184}\) Like Kuhn, Doppelt acknowledges the need for judgment in adjudicating theory choice, and recognizes that judgment does not neutrally stand over and against the historical period in which it operates. What motivates Doppelt's realism—and what fundamentally distinguishes him from Kuhn—is that his realism is motivated by the question of how to explain science, and his standard for success in that endeavor is making the inference to the best explanation. Absent the realist explanation of the success of science, this profoundly important phenomenon becomes a mystery, an epistemic vanishing point, or, at best, a miracle. On Doppelt's account, we "ought not embrace any

\(^{183}\) Gerald Doppelt, "Reconstructing Scientific Realism" Philosophy of Science, 74 (January 2007), 115.

\(^{184}\) Doppelt, 107.
explanation of a theory’s success that makes it a miracle that scientists just happen to believe and employ successful theories.”

I bring attention to Doppelt, however, not just to point out the unacceptable lacuna in Kuhn’s account of science, but to demonstrate that a realism of Doppelt’s variety is, at minimum, consistent with Kuhn’s descriptive account of science. In fact, I want to argue that Kuhn’s description of theory change intimates towards the kind of realism outlined above. With this in mind, I will now draw out the overlap between Kuhn’s understanding of theory choice as guided by equivocal values of the scientific community and Doppelt’s rationale for realism on the same basis.

As noted above, I detect no significant disagreement between Doppelt’s view of theory choice and Kuhn’s as it relates to the equivocal nature of the values that guide the decisions of the scientific community. Where a disagreement emerges is with reference to a fundamental assumption about what we can say about nature qua nature. Doppelt thinks the inference to best explanation standard impels us to say that the success of science—the increasing explanatory and predictive power of theories as well as the attainment by theories of heightened standards of simplicity, scope, unity, and fruitfulness—indicates something about nature itself:

...once a current theory succeeds to a high degree in realizing stringent standards of simplicity, unification, consilience, and so forth, these standards can be reasonably regarded by scientific realists as well-confirmed empirical hypotheses concerning the structure of nature itself.

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185 Doppelt, 104.
It would be a miracle that our best current theories succeed so well in actualizing our highest standards...were it not the case...that nature itself is simple, unified, and symmetric in the ways implied by these theories.\(^\text{186}\)

This argument must be contrasted with Kuhn's unwillingness to venture into the territory of the "really there." Does Kuhn's account of normal science prevent us from coming to this conclusion? On the contrary, it seems that the presence of anomalies lends itself to a realist explanation. Does Kuhn's account of theory choice militate against this view? It seems not, as his criticism is directed toward the stipulation of a theory-neutral language from which theories would be chosen. But this is not what is presented here. In fact, Doppelt acknowledges that the stringent standards of success can be in some internal conflict. What, then, in Kuhn's view prevents us from drawing on his descriptive account in the construction of a realist position?

The final option we ought to consider is Kuhn's argument that the realist position is betrayed by the absence of a discernable pattern of ontological development in successive theories:

There is, I think, no way to reconstruct phrases like 'really there'; the notion of a match between the ontology of a theory and its "real" counterpart in nature now seems to me illusive in principle. Besides, as a historian, I am impressed with the implausibility of the view. I do not doubt, for example, that Newton's mechanics improves on Aristotle's instruments for puzzle-solving. But I can see in their succession no coherent direction of ontological development.\(^\text{187}\)

\(^{186}\) Doppelt, 102.

\(^{187}\) SSR, 207.
On first glance, this argument does not threaten the case for Kuhn's complementarity with Doppelt's realism, as Doppelt restricts his defense of approximate truth to best contemporary scientific theories that are both highly successful and well established. Thus, the absence of such a pattern is not distressing to Doppelt, as he would say that, according to our best current (approximately true) theories, past theories are false. That being said, Kuhn does seem to be indicating that the historical record makes him skeptical that nature itself comports with the scientific values employed by the scientific community, else we would see a pattern of ontological development (in accord with simplicity, unification, consilience, etc.) in successive theories.

This argument certainly has ramifications for Doppelt's position. Lack of expertise in the history of science will have to limit our response to Kuhn's argument from historical intuition. Still, a few things can be mentioned. First, while the picture of reality as a whole painted by various paradigms, taken in succession, may lack the progressively linear pattern Kuhn is looking for, this could be accounted for by the different kinds of evidence available during different periods. Secondly, it is unclear whether an ontological "picture" is what we should be looking for here. It seems the more important question is whether standards for evaluation of theories are being met and are being improved. For instance, if a development in astrophysics were to establish that the earth is approximately located in the center of the universe, one could say that the ontological picture of the "really there" had moved back closer to the Ptolemaic model. However, this would only be the case on a superficial level; our (hypothetical new astrophysics paradigm) understanding of natural reality in its totality would still have much more in common with our current theoretical apparatus than with Ptolemaic science with regard to compliance with the relevant virtues of the scientific community. Thirdly, we should just note that it is odd for a philosopher who claims no epistemic access to the "really there" to be able to criticize anything for its failure to attain to what the "really there" looks like. Fourthly, and perhaps most
importantly, even if we grant Kuhn’s point as a genuinely inexplicable oddity, it does not threaten the basic realist intimations of his work found in anomalies and in the rationality of theory choice.

Conclusion

I have sought to show that within Kuhn's description of scientific activities, there are positive reasons for a realist position. Anomalies are the interruption of a paradigm by natural reality, and the paradigm adjudication that those anomalies eventually necessitate is conducted by the scientific community in accordance with the best epistemic values available; that is, theory choice is fundamentally rational. This account, I have shown, is bolstered by the realist approach defended by Gerald Doppelt. The question of why Kuhn did not understand his own descriptive effort to have these philosophical intimations is an interesting and worthy question that could not be fully evaluated within the confines of this paper. But I have hinted at it nonetheless. My criticism of Kuhn relates not to his historical account, but to his unwillingness to venture into a reasonable explanation of the success of science. In the postscript to the SSR, Kuhn would have us believe that we lose nothing in describing science without reference to the question of ontology. For the reasons above, I disagree. For the purpose of this argument, the last word belongs to Karl Popper, who offers a philosophical vision of science motivated by the question Kuhn finally would not answer. The following quote of Karl Popper’s frames the philosophical vision of science that motivates the question Kuhn finally would not answer.

I, however, believe that there is one philosophical problem in which all thinking men are interested. It is the problem of cosmology: the problem of understanding the world—including ourselves, and our knowledge, as part of the world. All science is cosmology, I believe, and the interest of philosophy as well as of science lies solely in the contributions which they have made to it. For me, at any rate, both
philosophy and science would lose all their attraction if they were to give up that pursuit.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{188} Karl Popper, \textit{The Logic of Scientific Discovery}, (Harper Torchbook, 1965), 15.
I am interested in how postmodern interpretations of the presocratic philosophers can meet classical perspectives halfway in comprehending the beginning of philosophy. In this paper I wish to advocate an existentialist, phenomenological reading of Heraclitus hinted at by H.G. Gadamer. Gadamer observes that within the Heraclitean fragments lay a subliminal wonder at the contradiction and groundlessness of the human experience, particularly the unmediated experience of thinking. I take Gadamer to suggest in part that Heraclitus writes the fragments motivated by a sort of phenomenological disclosure, not necessarily of Being (pace Heidegger), but of the human experience as one of contradictory transitions and unrestricted movements between poles of opposition. In “On the Heraclitean Tradition” Gadamer says:

The transitionlessness of this transition from sleep to wakefulness or from life to death ultimately points toward the enigmatic experience of thinking, which suddenly awakens and then sinks again completely into darkness.¹⁸⁹

The sudden transition Heraclitus recognizes in combustible objects or phenomena such as lightning bolts parallels the changes of sleep to waking or life to death, which happen in a flash. These transformations also occur in the self-

reflective act of human thought. Thought arises as a transition from nowhere, simply from out of itself.

Gadamer suggests that at the heart of Heraclitus is an interest not in accounting for nature scientifically but instead in articulating the “incomprehensibility of the mediationless transition.” At issue for Heraclitus, as Gadamer writes in “Heraclitus Studies,” is the mystery of the self-sustaining “I.” This mystery is conveyed by the soul that increases itself and finds parallel instances of itself in the world. Gadamer says “[i]t seems that Heraclitus’ vision is a synopsis of being alive, being conscious, and being.”

I propose to engage Gadamer’s interpretation in order to unravel a lesser-discussed fragment of Heraclitus, Fragment 101, which reads “I went in search of myself.” Historically Fragment 101 has been passed over as too opaque to yield any justifiable reading, or else as simply conveying a superficial sense of world-examination. I do not purport to explain what Heraclitus meant. I take seriously Kahn’s assertion that every

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190 Ibid.
191 Ibid.
192 Ibid., 79.
194 Robinson, Heraclitus, 147.
reading of Heraclitus is explicitly hermeneutical. Instead, I wish to open inquiry into some possible existential senses of this statement of self-seeking.

Some reflection on Fragment 101’s implication is in order: one should not assume that Heraclitus’ self-seeking is the same act echoed in modern colloquial terms of alienation. Similarly it does not suffice to hold that this self-seeking embodies the later Delphic, Socratic mantra “know thyself.” Fragment 101 exhibits as straightforward a paradox as one can imagine: how can one seek oneself? For one already is present by virtue of stating the problem. The paradox only makes sense if one is absent or hidden from oneself.

The verb in Fragment 101 contains a clue that points in this direction. Heraclitus uses the verb dizesamen, which means to seek for something or someone. The other prominent place this verb appears in early Greek thought is in Herodotus, where the historian mentions the interrogation, dizesamen, of an oracle. In that context, dizesamen does not refer to looking for an oracle or asking the oracle questions. This has already been done; one consults the oracle, then one seeks or looks for the meaning of the pronouncement. Thus the vocabulary of Fragment 101 indicates a double meaning: Heraclitus looked for himself but also sought his self’s meaning.

Heraclitus uses dizesamen in one other place. Fragment 22 states “Seekers of gold dig up much earth and find little,” conveying a guiding meaning for dizesamen as self-seeking. Kahn’s observation of the distinctly modern sense yielded by Fragment 101 is also instructive. Self-knowledge is difficult

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196 Kahn, Art and Thought of Heraclitus, 88.
197 Ibid., 116.
199 Kahn, Art and Thought of Heraclitus, 309.
because the human is divided from itself. "I went in search of myself" entails not just a kind of self-separation but a tacit assumption that self is to be found principally in the world, not here in the present space. Yet the finding Heraclitus presumably arrives at must also provide insight into the difficult-to-understand oracle of self. Heraclitus' implication here parallels Gadamer's sense of the groundless outwardness inherent in this presocratic's expression of the human thought process, viz. cognition can naturally perceive its own limitations.

The Heraclitean fragments' capacity to echo one another via connected terms or phrases is an essential aspect of promoting Gadamer's reading. Compare Fragment 22 ("Seekers of gold dig up much earth and find little") alongside Fragment 9, which reads "Donkeys would prefer refuse [lit., chaff, straw] to gold." Gold mining seems metaphorical for fruitless hunts. Donkeys appear smarter than people by keeping to nature instead of digging earth to find bits of shiny metal. Yet gold possesses other true values in context. Other fragments resonate this multiplicity with a wider direction, where unity-in-opposites emerges as constitutive of reality:

**Fragment 80:** One must realize that war is common, and justice strife, and that all things come to be through strife and are (so) ordained.

**Fragment 53:** War is father of all, and king of all. He renders some gods, others men; he makes some slaves, others free.

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200 Ibid., 116.
202 Borrowing Kahn's term of "resonance," the manner in which fragments refer to one another in repeated words and motifs. Kahn, *Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 88.
204 Ibid., 37.
War (polemos) is named as an element common (zun) to all things (panta) but also as a prioritizing exemplar. It is “common” in a social, shared sense of organization and order, but is also generative (ginomena). War’s mutual creative and governing aspects echo the Gadamerian sketch of groundless, unmediated projection. This shared commonness exhibits another layer in Fragment 2, which resonantly indicates that the “account” (logos) is also common (zun) or shared.

Fragment 2: Though the account is common, the many live, however, as though they had a private understanding.205

This saying suggests that the common or shared does not refer simply to the elemental principles and governance of things. The “account” or logos is also common, but not universal in the same way as war. Human understanding can be divorced from the common despite its presumably shared permeation of the intellect. Fragments 34 and 51 characterize this separation similarly, playing the same keyword “common” (zun) but with the alpha-privative, (a-zunetoi):

Fragment 34: Uncomprehending,... they are like deaf people. Their saying “absent while present” fits them well...206

Fragment 51: They do not understand [lit., comprehend] how, while differing from (or: being at variance), (it) is in agreement with itself. (There is) a back-turning connection, like (that) of a bow or lyre.207

There are common, shared dimensions of cognitive experience and of the makeup of things, at once universal, yet potentially severed from human perception. The human being can “comprehend” the zun, the “common,” but can equally be turned from it, uncomprehending, a-zunetoi. Vis-a-vis Gadamer’s reading, these fragments express a Heraclitean

205 Ibid., 11.
206 Ibid., 29.
207 Ibid., 37.
wonder at the miracle of human insight; there is a certain existential groundlessness to the aspect in which the human being can either be attuned or totally ignorant. Moreover, as Gadamer writes, the “transitions” between these states seem to express the truth of reality, existing within the already familiar.208

Other fragments show a conceptual resonance bearing out this kind of “shared” unity, but constitutive of more mundane things:

_Fragment 61_: Sea-(water),... is very pure and very foul water – for fish drinkable and life-sustaining, for people undrinkable and lethal.209

_Fragment 36_: For souls it is death to become water, and for water death to become earth. Water comes into existence out of earth, and soul out of water.210

Things exhibit contradictory, groundless, transitional qualities. The sea is a life-force originating in water, but depending on water’s origin and who uses it, it can be healthy or toxic. Water for its part exhibits elemental transition, yet what Heraclitus does not make explicit here is water’s phenomenological givenness as a relatively fixed concept. That things possess this fixity emerges in sayings such as _Fragment_ 1: the account (logos) holds forever; words (logoi) and works (ergon) can render things distinguishable according to their nature (phusei), that is, the manner in which they arise. There are constitutions and connections among things. Things can be articulated via words, objects, and acts. Heraclitus speaks of a broader cognition into this dynamic in numerous places:

_Fragment 107_: Poor witnesses for people are eyes and ears if they possess uncomprehending (lit., “barbarian”) souls.211

208 Gadamer, _The Beginning of Knowledge_, 68.
209 Robinson, _Heraclitus_, 41.
210 Ibid., 29.
Fragment 51: They do not understand how, while differing from (or: being at variance), (it) is in agreement with itself. (There is) a back-turning connection, like (that) of a bow or lyre.  

Fragment 10: Things grasped together: things whole, things not whole; (something) being brought together, (something) being separated;...

The axial, unifying poles disclosed within the layers of cognitive experience contain their own contradiction and dispersal. Wholes consists of divisive parts; the bow and lyre work via opposing powers; knowledge is useless without the proper inward orientation of eye, ear, and understanding. There is a language of reality, presumably resonant with ours, but only if we learn its language. As Fragment 1 (above) suggests, this language likewise is our language; we can set forth words that capture how things arise. But human language and insight can diverge from the logos’ unifying center; as such, the human equally can diverge from itself.

To the extent that Fragment 101 asks after the meaning of the human self, how does the human makeup factor into these structures of Heraclitus’ thought? Fragment 107 (above) asserts that the soul by nature permeates the essence of things. Fragment 45 likewise suggests that the soul is everywhere:

Fragment 45: One would never discover the limits of soul, should one traverse every road – so deep a measure does it possess.  

Other fragments speak of soul as one of the cosmic elements and as a counterpoint within the phases of the cycle of human life:

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211 Ibid., 63.  
212 Ibid., 37.  
213 Ibid., 15.  
214 Ibid., 33.
Fragment 36: For souls it is death to become water, and for water death to become earth. Water comes into existence out of earth, and soul out of water.215

Fragment 26: A person in (the) night kindles a light for himself, since his vision has been extinguished. In his sleep he touches that which is dead, though (himself) alive, (and) when awake touches that which sleeps.216

Fragment 62: Immortals (are) mortal(s), mortals immortal(s), these living the death of those, those dead in the life of these.217

Fragment 88: [T]he same thing:... [the] living and dead and the waking and the sleeping and young and old. For the latter, having changed around, are the former,...218

Fragment 62 suggests that human life proceeds complementarily and contrariwise to the immortal. Others such as Fragment 26 indicate that fire comes into play in these exchanges. The greater context of these fragments again reflects Gadamer’s suggestion that hermeneutically fundamental in Heraclitus is the sense of wonder at the unmediated contradiction inherent in cosmic and psychic transformations. Heraclitus expresses amazement in understanding that the conscious, waking, and living aspects of the human bear out reverse asymptotes of unconsciousness, sleep, and death. The human self-aggrandizing potency to expand beyond itself appears alongside similar potencies in the basic elements of things, for instance fire.

Finally, Fragment 52 makes an even more explicit connection of the human to the kosmos:

215 Ibid., 29.
216 Ibid., 23.
217 Ibid., 43.
218 Ibid., 53.
Fragment 52: Lifetime is a child playing, moving pieces in a game; kingly power is in the hands of the child. 219

The Greek word for “lifetime,” aion, is syntactically ambiguous in this passage; it can mean either a personal lifetime, or the cosmic aion, the cycle of the universe. 220 The ambiguity of the fragment suggests that aion works in both of these directions, microcosmically and macrocosmically: play is visibly a human activity, but the course of human life and the cosmic game mirror one another. 221

Turning now to Fragment 101, there seems to be a clear connection between Heraclitus’ notion of self-seeking and the shape of the world as human. What I mean to suggest is this: that world and human are coextensive, such that the “self” contains world, but also the converse. The fragments I have cited indicate that there are outward and inward dimensions to this coextension. For Heraclitus to say in Fragment 101 that he went in search of himself means that the search was bound up with identifying and tracing the connection of the human to the all, a thread that is easily overlooked. So searching is actually a process of examining present but translucent connections. Though the logos holds forever, men are uncomprehending of it (Fragment 1); the one logos is shared despite human tendency to form one’s own logos (Fragments 2, 50). Heraclitus exhibits astonishment at the matter-of-fact-ness, which conveys the altogether unexpected, groundlessly projecting dimensions of the human experience:

Fragment 18: If (he) doesn’t expect (the) unexpected, (he) will not discover (it); for it is difficult to discover and intractable. 222

The unexpected is naturally the discovery one can least anticipate. Presumably the need to seek for oneself requires a

219 Ibid., 37.
220 Kahn, Art and Though of Heraclitus, 228.
221 Ibid.
222 Robinson, Heraclitus, 19.
disclosure of this unanticipated domain of the unexplored. Likewise, to find oneself in a process of self-seeking entails that the self is an attunement turning back on itself. Seeking leads to a discovery of the outward projection of self into world that conversely is a self-return.

In sum, Heraclitus’ statement “I went in search of myself” does not refer simply to finding the self in the world. Following Gadamer’s basic interpretation, this self-seeking expresses Heraclitus’ discovery of the externally-projected, cognitive dimensions present within himself. The act of true cognition is already a challenge to achieve, given human nature. The more significant accomplishment is this insight into the manner in which the act of thinking contains its own groundless aggrandizement parallel to the unmediated building and breakdown of the all. Soul is equally the human center, the constitution of things, and the measure proceeding along every way. Fragment 101’s connotation of “seeking the meaning of” the self reveals an experience of having a body and life that are spontaneous yet harmonic with cosmic cycles. Waking and sleeping, life and death, understanding and ignorance, manifest to the seeking agent an abyssal matrix of contrary tendencies. Yet the very insight into these various oppositions seems to yield to Heraclitus a *logos* or phenomenological disclosure in which things show the ordering of how they are and how we are.

In the spirit of Gadamer’s reading I sense the following: Heraclitus’ musings on the nature of the human and the world express a hermeneutic attunement to the existential opposition implicit in the human. The groundless transformations of the cosmic and human do not have a cause or wherefore, but simply are. The self exhibits a constant reverse directionality, embodied particularly, as Gadamer notes, in the thinking act. Despite soul’s seeming smallness, its reflection in the cosmic and back into the human shows it to be the most far-reaching thing.
Bibliography


Abstract: Ruth Millikan endorses a naturalistic theory of the semantic content of mental representations. Yet it has been argued that her account falls prey to the same objection that undermines some causal theories of representation—specifically, that if a representation's content is fixed through an appeal to counterfactuals, a regression of such counterfactuals would inherently arise. On Millikan's account, the result of such a regression would be that all representations merely contain vague and uninformative content. Thus, were this objection to succeed, Millikan's theory would have no clear advantage over the causal theories of representation she argues against. However, in this paper I argue that the objection fails. I defend Millikan's theory through an analysis of her appeal to the actual history of the system in question and, further, to the level of specificity required for that system to survive in its normal environment. If my defense is successful, then Millikan's view remains coherent without relying on an appeal to the type of counterfactuals that undermine causal theories of representation. I conclude, then, that on Millikan's account the representational content of a system remains both differentiated and informative and, as such, her account succeeds where causal theories of representation have not.

In “Biosemantics,” Millikan presents a naturalistic theory of the semantic content of mental representations. In the following paper, I defend her theory against the same objection that undermines some causal theories of representation.

theories of representation—specifically, that if a representation’s content is fixed through an appeal to counterfactuals, a regression of such counterfactuals would inherently arise. For Millikan’s view, the result of such a regression would be that all representations merely contain vague and uninformative content. Were that the case, Millikan’s theory would have no clear advantage over the causal theories of representation she argues against. However, I argue that the objection fails—that Millikan’s view remains coherent without relying on an appeal to the type of counterfactuals that undermine causal theories of representation. I conclude that, on Millikan’s account, the content of a particular system’s representations remain both differentiated and informative and, as such, her view succeeds where causal theories of representation have not.

As with causal theories of representation, Millikan’s theory is a naturalistic account of the semantic content of mental states. And like some of those alternative theories, Millikan appeals to the teleological, functional aspects of a given system to determine the content of that system’s representations. As she notes, though, when a theory relies upon a system’s functions to determine its representational content, the challenge is to determine which functions are the appropriate functions. Like the other representational theories in the literature—most notably Fred Dretske’s—\(^{224}\) the solution to this challenge is to focus on the “normal functioning” of the particular system that produces the representation. Yet Millikan argues that these other theories inevitably encounter one of two problems; they entail either that there are too many representations—since every state of a functional system has a historically normal cause—or that there are too few representations—since representations must “indicate” or “detect” something in the world and, hence, misrepresentations are no representations at all.

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While Millikan’s theory shares various similarities with causal theories of representation, her theory also differs from them in a significant way. Specifically, she proposes that the semantic content is fixed by the functions of the consumer of the mental representation, not the cause—or producer—of the mental representation. This shift is really quite intuitive. After all, it is the ability of a particular system to understand a representation that characterizes it as a representation. And perhaps more to the point, it is what the particular system understands a representation as that determines the content of that representation.

Millikan also addresses the challenge presented above—that is, as to which functions are the appropriate ones to fix the content of representations. She introduces the notion of a “proper function”\footnote{Cf. Dretske’s notion of a “natural function.”} which is any function of a system that is determined by the actual history of the system that utilizes it. Yet this does not mean that a system’s proper functions must always be functioning properly. Millikan is clear that the proper function of a system is determined solely by those occasions when the system is successful, even when such occasions are exceedingly rare. Of course, the most accessible examples of proper functions are those determined by natural selection. However, Millikan also allows both learned functions and functions adapted from structures previously selected for to constitute the proper functions of a system.

Finally, Millikan introduces two additional concepts to further clarify her notion of a proper function. A “normal explanation” accounts for how a function was “(typically) historically performed on those (perhaps rare) occasions when it was properly performed.”\footnote{Millikan, “Biosemantics,” 503.} Yet any normal explanation must also account for what conditions must be present for a system to perform its function properly—namely, the “normal conditions.” As Millikan notes, the normal conditions do not have to be the common conditions of the environment in which
a system functions. Rather, they should be understood as more like the "historically optimal" conditions for a particular function.  

With an understanding of Millikan's basic concepts behind us, we can now turn to an analysis of how the content of a representation is fixed on her view. As previously mentioned, Millikan suggests that we focus our attention on the function of representation consumption rather than production. What fixes the content of a representation should be the specific information that the representation provides for a particular system. Millikan emphasizes that there are two conditions for something to constitute a representation for a given system. First, it is necessary that a particular representation follows a particular correspondence rule with the thing being represented. But, as Millikan states, "what the rule of correspondence is, what gives definition to this [proper] function, is determined entirely by the representation's consumers." This does not mean that the content of the representation is fixed by whatever the consumer's particular function is in response to it. Instead, as Millikan explicitly states, "the content hangs only on there being a certain condition that would be normal for performance of the consumer's functions—namely, that a certain correspondence relation hold between sign and world—whatever those functions may happen to be." Regarding the second condition for something to constitute a representation for a given system, the particular system in question must be capable of understanding more than one representation. As we saw from the first condition, the correspondence rules necessitate that the representations will vary in accordance with changes in the world. As such, a given system must have more than one representation for it to be able of tracking those changes in the world in any meaningful way.

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227 Ibid., 502.
228 Ibid., 502.
229 Ibid., 503. Emphasis as in the original.
The resulting theory of representational content is not only intuitive, it also solves several of the problems that arose for the causal theories of representation. For example, Millikan contrasts her view with Dretske's to demonstrate that her theory is better able to capture our pre-theoretical intuitions regarding the representational content of very basic systems. Consider Dretske's example of a particular strain of bacteria that can only survive in oxygen-free water. Given such a requirement for survival, tiny magnets called magnetosomes have been selected to indicate the direction of magnetic north, since that is the direction of oxygen-free water. Our intuitions would tell us that the magnetosomes represent where oxygen-free water is. However, on Dretske's account, the magnetosomes only indicate magnetic north, not the direction of oxygen-free water. Thus, the magnetosomes must represent magnetic north. In contrast, on Millikan's view, in the normal conditions in which the bacteria functions, the correspondence rules for that system correlate the magnetosomes to what the system needs in order to survive and function properly—in this case, the magnetosomes correspond with oxygen-free water. Thus, as with our intuitions, the content of the representation just is oxygen-free water.

So far, we have seen the basic tenets of Millikan's view and, in particular, how her approach differs from some causal theories of representation such as Dretske's. Yet, as with causal theories of representation, it appears that Millikan's view must ultimately rely on counterfactuals to fix the content of representations. From the example above, we saw that in the normal conditions in which the bacteria functions properly the magnetosomes correspond with the direction of oxygen-free water. But why not say that the normal conditions for the bacteria's proper functioning are simply those in which the magnetosomes correspond with the direction of the center of the Earth? As we saw, Millikan's response is that the bacteria need oxygen-free water in order to survive. Yet this response appears to lead Millikan into the same regression of counterfactuals that undermines some causal theories of representation.
For the sake of clarity, let us consider the more accessible case of a frog that snaps its tongue out at flies. On a causal theory of representation such as Drestke's, the natural function of the frog is to snap out its tongue when presented with the representation of a black dot within its field of vision. Admittedly, sometimes the frog ends up snapping at things other than flies, but the representation serves to indicate flies often enough that the function has been selected for. Given the presence of such misrepresentations, though, Dreske must appeal to counterfactuals to determine whether the representation has the function of indicating black dots or flies. Consider the following pair of counterfactuals:

1) If black dots weren't flies, the frog would not snap at black dots.

2) If flies weren't black dots, the frog would not snap at flies.

Obviously, (1) is true while (2) is false. As previously mentioned, this is explained by the fact that, in the environment in which that frog evolved, black dots in the frog's field of vision indicated flies often enough that the function was selected for. But Drestke's account is now subject to a further objection; why is the normal function of the representation to indicate flies and not simply food? If we again use counterfactuals to determine the answer, we find that were flies not food, the frog wouldn't snap at flies, but were food not flies, the frog would still be snapping at food. Further, the objection could be pressed as to why the normal function of the frog is to indicate food instead of simply fitness enhancers. The result of this regression through counterfactuals, then, is that all functions that are naturally selected for have the same vague and uninformative content—e.g. fitness enhancer.

Let us now return to see how Millikan's view appears to fall victim to the same objection. Recall that Millikan claims that the bacteria’s representations have the content of oxygen-free water—instead of merely the center of the Earth—because
in the normal conditions, oxygen-free water is necessary for the bacteria to survive. Why not press the matter further and claim that the normal condition is simply that the magnetosomes correspond to the direction of fitness enhancers? After all, if oxygen-free water wasn’t a fitness enhancer, the bacteria wouldn’t need it to survive. But if a fitness enhancer wasn’t food, the bacteria would still need the fitness enhancer to survive. Alternatively, in the case of the frog, Millikan might claim that the normal conditions for the proper functioning of the frog is that the image on the frog’s retina corresponds with flies—and not simply black dots—because flies are necessary for the survival of the frog. But why not claim that the normal condition is simply that the image on the frog’s field of vision corresponds to fitness enhancers, since fitness enhancers are necessary for the survival of frogs?

As we have seen, this regression of counterfactuals undermines the causal theories of representation. Were this objection to succeed against Millikan’s account, her view would be in no better position than the alternative accounts she has argued against. As such, this objection deserves careful consideration. But before I proceed to the more nuanced and, I think, more interesting aspects of Millikan’s view that are called into question, it is important to first address one obvious flaw in this objection. Specifically, in determining the content of representations, Millikan may appeal to the fitness enhancing aspect of the normal conditions for the actual system, but she does not appeal to the kinds of counterfactuals that undermine Dretske’s view.

At first glance, it may seem as though Millikan must be appealing to the following pair of counterfactual questions to determine the content of the representation;

3) If the center of the Earth did not contain oxygen-free water, the bacteria wouldn’t move towards the center of the Earth.
4) If the oxygen-free water was not at the center of the Earth, the bacteria wouldn’t move towards oxygen-free water.

Admittedly, the same pattern seems to emerge here as with the counterfactuals on Dretske’s view. But recall that, for Millikan, how a particular system responds to a particular representation is irrelevant to the determination of that representation’s content. Instead, the content is determined by the normal conditions for a system—that is, the correspondence rules—that are themselves determined by the representation’s actual consumers. As such, she cannot be asking whether, given certain counterfactual conditions, the system would respond in such-and-such a way. Rather, she is asking what it is about the actual, normal conditions of a system’s environment that is required for the system, itself, to function properly, “whatever those functions may happen to be.” In determining what conditions “would be normal for performance of the consumer’s functions,” Millikan is merely appealing to what is required for the actual system in question to survive and function properly. In other words, on Millikan’s view, we are not forced to ask what would happen were oxygen-free water not a fitness enhancer. Such a question would be exploring the representational content of a different system with different correspondence rules and, hence, different content. This is simply not the type of question Millikan is appealing to in determining that oxygen-free water, and not the center of the Earth, is the content of the representation in question.

Yet despite the fact that Millikan does not appeal to counterfactuals in the same detrimental way as Dretske does, the spirit of the original objection remains: Why do we claim that the content of the representation is something as specific as oxygen-free water rather than, as before, simply fitness enhancer? It is a fact about the actual, normal conditions of the system’s environment that it needs fitness enhancers to survive. Thus, why not claim the content of all naturally selected representational functions is simply fitness enhancer?
Admittedly, Millikan must concede to the spirit of this objection. But in point of fact, she already has. Millikan explicitly states that such low-functioning creatures do not have mental states and are not able to think with such finely differentiated representations. As she puts it, they are incapable of identifying their representations or "knowing what [the] representations represent." In contrast, it is from our own objective, informed, and privileged perspective that we are able to identify that the content of the representation must correspond to that specific aspect of the world that allows the bacteria to survive.

Regardless, it would be overly vague and uninformative—even from the bacteria's perspective—to claim that the necessary aspect of the bacteria's normal conditions is simply the existence of "fitness enhancers." From the conditions laid out above, for the bacteria to be utilizing representations at all, it must be capable of understanding more than one representation. Hence, the content of its various representations cannot all be fitness enhancer. Instead, the system will be capable of representing—and differentiating between—all those aspects about the normal conditions of its environment that are required for its proper functioning. Admittedly, the bacteria's magnetosomes might not be representing oxygen-free water but, rather, something more general—e.g. toxin-free environment. Yet this is not a difficulty for Millikan's view. At least from the perspective of the bacteria, "oxygen-free water" is synonymous with "toxin-free environment." While Millikan may have been speaking loosely, the content of the bacteria's representation remains the same regardless of how we, from our privileged perspective, denote it.

Of course, not all representational content must ultimately reduce to such vague notions. An alternative set of examples will demonstrate this point clearly. First, consider Millikan's own example of beavers that "splash the water

230 Ibid., 507.
smartly with their tails to signal danger.” Why should we claim that the splash represents danger instead of predator? For starters, it is worth noting that, unlike the bacteria example, Millikan is rightly attributing to the beavers the more general content, here. Regardless, suppose that within the normal conditions of the beavers’ proper functioning there are no alternative dangers that they are capable of differentiating between. At least for the proper functioning of the beavers, then, predator just is synonymous with danger. As such, the intuition we have that the beavers are identifying predators is right—but only insofar as we have both a privileged perspective and a wide vocabulary. From the beavers’ perspective, whether the content of their representation is predator or danger, it is all the same to them.

Yet consider a second example that demonstrates the need for more specific content. Scientists have recently discovered that Vervet monkeys have distinct sounds to warn other monkeys of different types of predators. They use one sound to identify predators that attack from the air—e.g., eagles—one sound to identify predators that attack from the trees—e.g., leopards—and one sound to identify predators that attack from the ground—e.g., snakes. On Millikan’s account, then, the normal conditions for the proper functioning of the monkey requires that the monkeys’ semantics must be capable of differentiating between eagles, leopards, and snakes, or, at the very least, between danger in the air, danger in the trees, and danger on the ground. Thus, matching our intuitions, we find that the level of detail and complexity required for a system to function properly just is the level of detail and complexity inherent within the content of that system’s representations.

Contrary to the objection, then, Millikan’s view actually corresponds to our pre-theoretical intuitions about the content of our representations. While the content of certain

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231 Ibid., 503.
representations may strike us as rudimentary and overly vague, we must remember that such a rudimentary representation exists only for a rudimentary creature. Yet this is not counterintuitive, since such a creature does not know any better or, as Millikan succinctly put it, “it does not understand its own representations, not really.”

As we have seen, though, higher-functioning creatures naturally have more fine-grained content in their representations. And, as Millikan notes, once we include the capacity to learn and adapt to novel conditions, we are able to abstract away from our immediate environment to represent exceedingly complex concepts—to represent the nature of quantum physics and even to represent those representations, themselves. In conclusion, then, Millikan’s theory survives the objection that proved detrimental to Drestke’s view and, hence, has a significant advantage over such causal theories of representation.

Bibliography


Milos Rastovic—The Cosmological Aspect Of Nietzsche’s Idea Of The Eternal Recurrence Of The Same In Thus Spoke Zarathustra

And behold! An eagle cut broad circles through the air, and upon it hung a snake not as prey but as a friend, for the snake curled itself around the eagle’s neck. (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “Zarathustra’s Prologue,” 15)

In Nietzsche’s philosophy, the idea of eternal recurrence of the same is the most difficult and the most enigmatic thought of his philosophy. Certainly, this is his most polemical and the most far reaching thought which leads to discovering the key to his thinking. In Ecce Homo, Nietzsche refers to the idea of eternal return as “the highest formula of affirmation” (Nietzsche 1989, 295). He calls that thought “the abysmal thought,”234 “the triumphant idea,”235 “the great cultivating idea,”236 and “the hardest idea.”237 In Ecce Homo, Nietzsche says that the idea of eternal recurrence of the same “was penned on a page with the notation underneath, ‘6,000 feet beyond man and time.’ That day I was walking through the

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234 Nietzsche says: “Up, abysmal thought, out of my depths! I am your rooster and dawn, you sleepy worm: up! Up! My voice will yet crow you awake! (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 173).

235 Nietzsche says: “My philosophy brings the triumphant idea of which all other modes of thought will ultimately perish” (The Will to Power, 544).

236 Nietzsche says: “It want to teach the idea that gives many the right to erase themselves – the great cultivating idea” (The Will to Power, 544).

237 Nietzsche says: “As the hardest idea: its probably effect if it were not prevented, i.e., if all values were not revalued” (The Will to Power, 545).
woods along the lake at Silvaplana; at a powerful pyramidal rock not far from Surlei I stopped. It was then that this idea came to me” (Nietzsche 1989, 295). In this sense, Nietzsche shows us that the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same is the most pregnant thought for him.

The first appearance of the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same is in The Gay Science (aphorism 314), but its primary exposition is to be found in Thus Spoke Zarathustra and The Will to Power. Nietzsche presents the idea of the eternal recurrence in many forms and aspects. In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, one formulation of the idea of the eternal recurrence asserts that every event in the universe has a repetitive character: everything that has happened in the universe, everything that is happening now, and will happen in the future, has already happened infinitely many times before, and will happen again. According to Nietzsche, there is only one cosmic circle which repeats everything in infinity. In this sense, Nietzsche illuminates the eternal recurrence as “the fundamental conception” in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Based upon this consideration, I will clarify two things:

1. In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, an aspect of the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same is cosmological, which sets forth a theory of the universe. Everything that is happening now, it has already happened in the

238 Nietzsche's book The Will to Power was printed after his death by his sister, presumably an unreliable source. For that reason, we will not examine the idea of eternal return from Nietzsche's notes. Robert Solomon's Living with Nietzsche provides a full explanation of the book The Will to Power as an unreliable source, and an authoritative ally.

universe, and it will happen in the future *in infinitum* in a cosmic circle. By contrast, Robert Solomon argues that the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same is neither as a cosmological or metaphysical nor an ethical doctrine, but a certain attitude toward life: repeat this life, this moment again and again. In this context, Solomon says, "But Nietzsche presents eternal recurrence neither as physics or metaphysics nor as an ethical decision – making procedure but as a “test” of our attitudes toward life" (*Living with Nietzsche*, 14). Also, Bernd Magnus interprets the idea of eternal recurrence of the same as an "existential imperative" toward "affirmation of life," i.e., "to overcome passive nihilism" (*Nietzsche's Existential Imperative*, 140).

2. Time is understood as the eternal recurrence of the same. The moment of "now" is the moment that passes. According to Nietzsche, contemplation of the passing moment requires eternity. For Nietzsche, making time eternal does not mean to make it timeless, but to connect it with a motion *in infinitum*.

**Amor Fati**

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche gives us the exposition of the idea of the eternal recurrence as a cosmological idea in the following passages: "Zarathustra's Prologue," "The Convalescent," and "On the Vision and the Riddle." Before we elucidate the idea of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, it is necessary to see how Nietzsche begins to develop his “hardest idea” in *The Gay Science* (aphorism 341, "The Greatest Weight"):

What if one day or night a demon were to sneak after you into your loneliest and say to you, 'This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be
nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything immeasurably small and great in your life must return to you – all in the same succession and sequence – even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The question in each and every thing, ‘Do you want this once more and innumerable times more?’ would weigh upon your actions as the greatest stress.

How can we imagine our life recurring an infinite number of times? If human beings are finite beings, how can we live our life again? Does Nietzsche believe in reincarnation? If it is possible to live innumerable times, what does it mean to live always the same life? We cannot take Nietzsche’s aphorism “The Greatest Weight” straightforwardly. This aphorism presupposes that one has to have life toward oneself in order to accept with joy that one’s life will occur in “the same succession and sequence,” again and again. In fact, Nietzsche considers two aspects to the demon’s question: pain and joy. He is not interested in the possibility of indifference to “the greatest weight” because he stresses the joy of repetition whatever our task can be: “I teach mankind a new will: to want the path that human beings have traveled blindly” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 21). His task is to consider a possibility of living one’s life over again. In this context, Nietzsche gradually builds his fundamental conception of eternal recurrence on the hypothesis that if we were to have another life it would have to be, and it has to recur as it has already occurred, in “the same succession and sequence.” “Was that – life?” For Zarathustra’s sake, well then! One More Time!” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “The Sleepwalker song,” 258). For this reason, disciples of Zarathustra have to be faithful to the earth and warn “do not to believe those who speak to you of extraterrestrial hopes” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “Zarathustra’s Prologue,” 6).

Nietzsche metaphorically expresses his most significant thought. The answers to the adduced questions, Nietzsche gives in “Zarathustra’s Prologue” (15). When the sun stood at noon,
Zarathustra saw an eagle which cut a broad circle through the air, and a snake which “curled itself around the eagle’s neck” (15). Nietzsche says: “And behold! An eagle cut broad circles through the air, and upon it hung a snake not as prey but as a friend, for the snake curled itself around the eagle’s neck” (15). Zarathustra says: “It is my animals! May my animals guide me!” The eagle is the proudest animal, and the snake is the wisest animal. In the form of a riddle, Nietzsche implies a circle in the circling of the eagle, and a ring as a perpetual circling through the winding of the snake. Both the eagle and the snake join the circle which ascends them eternally in the universe, and the ring which also encircles them. The ring and the circle are intertwined with each other. Later, Nietzsche will call the ring and the circle the seal ring and the year of eternity: “Everything dies, everything blossoms again, the year of beings runs eternally. Everything parts, everything greets itself again; the ring of being remains loyal to itself eternally” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 175). However, the eagle and the snake do not create a cosmic circle; they are only entwined in the circling. A circle shows them where they belong: “It is my animals! May my animals guide me!” Also, a circle and its repetition determine all events in the universe that present a cosmological aspect of the eternal recurrence. Zarathustra can comply with the circle only if the animals guide him. He needs to be proud and wise because he wants to live according to the universal circle. Without eagle’s circle, the snake will be stuck forever to the earth like a “market crowd.” Zarathustra wants to be wise like the snake, but he knows that it is not possible: “But I ask the impossible” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 15). The only thing which Zarathustra can do is to follow eagle’s circle.

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240 According to Carl Jung, the eagle represents the spirit which flies in the air, and the snake, which crawls on the ground, the body, the earth (Jung, Karl. Nietzsche’s Zarathustra. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988: 18).

The first conceptions of the eternal recurrence were described in ancient philosophy. A cyclical cosmology in Heraclitus and the Stoics had a significant impact on Nietzsche’s idea of the eternal return. In the book *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche confirms his relation to Heraclitus and the Stoics.

The doctrine of the ‘eternal recurrence,’ that is, of the unconditioned and infinitely repeated circular course of all things - this doctrine of Zarathustra might in the end have been thought already by Heraclitus. At least the Stoa has traces of it, and the Stoics inherited almost all of their principal notions from Heraclitus (273-274).

According to Bernd Magnus, Nietzsche’s idea of the eternal recurrence shares the four principles with Heraclitus and the Stoics: 1) monism, 2) determinism, 3) a dialectical unity of opposites through strife, and 4) cyclicalism (Magnus 2006, 48). In order to develop this idea, we will begin with Heraclitus’ apprehension of the cosmos.

Heraclitus develops a *logos* that consists of fire: “The ordering, the same for all, no god nor man has made, but it ever was and is and will be: fire ever living, kindled in measures and measures going out” (B30). The world order has not made by a god or men, but it is “natural” and “common” order for all. If the world order has not made by a god or men, the question that poses is: Who is the creator of the world order? Heraclitus implies that the world order is a work of the universe itself. The universe is made by itself, and it organizes its order by itself. In this sense, the world order (*logos*) is generated from an eternal (“forever”) fire of which the universe consists: fire always was, it is and it will be. In fact, fire is an imminent principle from which the cosmos consists.²⁴² Fire is “the same for all,” for all

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²⁴² In Kahn’s interpretation of Heraclitus, he stresses that “insofar as the cosmos is made, it is self – made; insofar as it is organized, it is self – organized; insofar as it is generated, it is identical with its own eternal source, ever living fire” (*The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 134).
men and a god in the universe in all its transformation from “kindled in measures” to “measures going out,” and reverses. This cosmic circle is a natural movement which eternally repeats itself: “fire ever living, kindled in measures and measures going out.” In other words, the universe exists in a flux (creation and destruction). This process of transformation, upward and downward, light and dark suggests circularity and the unity of all things: “all things are one” (*hen panta einai*) (B50). Heraclitus’ fire (logos) is “one” because it expresses the structure of the universe itself: all things are occur in agreement with logos (B1).

For Heraclitus, a cosmos includes opposing transformation. In *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, Nietzsche makes the great point in his interpretation of Heraclitus’ cosmological vision: “The strife of the opposites gives birth to all that comes-to-be... Everything that happens, happens in accordance with this strife, and it is just in the strife that eternal justice is revealed” (55). For Heraclitus, there are not any particular events or things which are not identical with universal logos or fire. Nietzsche’s notion of passing away, becoming and destruction is related to the Heraclitian conception of transformation, change. In this context, Nietzsche says: “I generally feel warmer and in better spirits in his [Heraclitus’] company than anywhere else. The affirmation of passing away and destruction is crucial for a Dionysian philosophy” (*Ecce Homo*, 110). In sum, the affirmation of change is crucial for Heraclitus and Nietzsche. For this reason, we will investigate Nietzsche’s apprehension of affirmation and transformation in the chapter “The Convalescent.”

In the Stoics, as Nietzsche says, he found only minimum “traces” of the idea of eternal return. The minimum “traces” are a cyclical cosmology and the necessity to accept the natural law. Marcus Aurelius says, “Nothing will happen which is not according with the nature of the Whole” (5.10). Also, he says that “obedience,” “duty” to “reason is no burden, but even a

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243 See Heraclitus’ fragment (B67).
relief" (5.9). According to Hadot, there is no deeper connection than that between Marcus' love of Destiny and Nietzsche's idea of the eternal recurrence (Hadot 2001, 144). For Marcus, the idea of Destiny and living accord to “the Whole” is enough to justify loving acceptance of whatever comes from Nature. By contrast, Nietzsche's love of Destiny (amor fati) is not justification of life, as Marcus thinks, but rather affirmation of life. In fact, to love Destiny means to want every moment of life which is eternally repeated. In that context, Nietzsche says: “But that is the concept of Dionysius himself” (Ecce Homo, 306). His formula for Dionysius concept is the amor fati (love of fate). Dionysus says “Yes” to life in every moment which is endlessly repeated: “...The eternal Yes to all things, ‘the tremendous, unbounded saying Yes and Amen.’ But this is the concept of Dionysius once again” (Ecce Homo, 306). The crucial question under consideration becomes: what is Destiny for Zarathustra?

The Convalescent

In the passage “The Convalescent,” Zarathustra's animals tell him: “For your animals know well, oh Zarathustra, who you are and must become; behold, you are the teacher of the eternal recurrence – that is your destiny!” (177). Instead of Zarathustra saying this himself, his animals tell him that he is the teacher of the eternal recurrence. Zarathustra only insinuates the idea of the eternal recurrence in the form of metaphor. In that sense, the idea of the eternal recurrence is the “secret” knowledge, and Zarathustra presents himself as a mystagogue. The “secret” knowledge has an esoteric character because we can grasp it only in an indirect way. The key to Zarathustra's wordlessness is in its lack of transferability: “Now you bid you lose me and find yourself; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you” (59). In fact, Zarathustra tempts his disciples in order to experiencing themselves. Zarathustra's disciples can “find” themselves only if they transform their passivity into an action, Zarathustra's speech into a deed, and living with a “mob” into loneliness.
Consequently, we can get knowledge about the universe. On the contrary, based upon reading or seeing the universe, we cannot get knowledge about it. For Nietzsche, our knowledge about the universe can base itself only upon what we live out, and it means: let the experiences come through the body. In this sense, the “secret” sense of the eternal recurrence is invisible, and is not transparent. In this case, interpreters can only discover the essence of his lucid thought only by intuition?

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244 The root of obscurity of the eternal return we can find in Nietzsche's sickness. He has always used hours for thinking during the period when he had not pains. All his life was a permanent battlefield between health and sickness, ascending and descending of life, pleasure and suffering:

This dual descent, as it were, both from the highest and the lowest rung on the ladder of life, at the same time a decadent and a beginning – this, if anything, explains that neutrality, that freedom from allpartiality in relation to the total problem of life, that perhaps distinguishes me. I have a subtler sense of smell for the sings of ascent and decline than any other human being before me; I am the teacher par excellence for this – I know both, I am both (Ecce Homo, 222).

For this reason, Nietzsche's is the same as Zarathustra’s life, the life of a convalescent who “comes through alive,” andovercomes himself: “My humanity is a constant self–overcoming” (Ecce Homo, 233). The strength that he took from these moments of his life helped him to reflect his thought. Also, the motif of loneliness can be the root of the obscurity of his idea of the eternal return. For Nietzsche, loneliness fights against altruism, church, “mob,” and in that way he returns to himself, he returns to his “cave” as Zarathustra: “But I need solitude – which is to say, recovery, return to myself, the breath of a free, light, playful air” (Ecce Homo, 233). During his life, he could not find any familiar friend to whom he could utter his thought: “Among the living, as among the dead, I have nobody with whom I have any affinity” (Letter to Franc Overbeck,
Zarathustra tempted and risked himself by his “abysmal thought” for seven days (173). He is the convalescent, \(^{245}\) “the one who recovers from the universal sickness that has infected all mankind” (Lampert 1986, 211). He is on the road to himself; his aim is to return to his own home. Zarathustra is the advocate (Fursprecher) of life; the advocate of suffering: “Pain says: ‘Refrain! Away, you pain!’ But everything that suffers wants to live, to become ripe and joyful and longing” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 262); and the advocate of the circle (all things are intertwined in the cosmic circle: “Everything goes, everything comes back; the wheel of being rolls eternally” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 175)). Finally, Zarathustra says, “I, Zarathustra, the advocate of life, the advocate of suffering, the advocate of the circle – you I summon, my most abysmal thought!” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 174). After seven days he sits up on his bed, and speaks with his animals. The animals tell Zarathustra what he knows. This speech is the essence of the eternal recurrence. The animals say:

> Everything goes, everything comes back; the wheel of being rolls eternally. Everything dies, everything blossoms again, the year of being runs eternally.

> Everything breaks, everything is joined anew; the same house of being builds itself eternally. Everything parts,

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\(^{245}\) “To convalesce” (genesen) has the same meaning as the Greek neomai, nostos. It means "to return home."
everthing greets itself again; the ring of being remains loyal to itself eternally.

In every Instant being begins; around every Here rolls the ball There. The middle is everywhere. Crooked is the path of eternity (175).

This cheerful interpretation of the eternal recurrence echoes the dwarf’s assertion in the passage “On the Vision and the Riddle”: “All truth is crooked; time itself is a circle” (125). The animals make a point: they transform the whole becoming into being, time into eternity. The world is an endless game of creation and destruction: “everything dies, everything blossoms again.” In this sense, there is not anything new in the universe that has not already happened yet. If the universe were capable of something new, it would have showed already. However, the animals speak only about the structure of time and its dimensions: past, present and future. The structure of time has a repetitive and eternal character: “everything goes, everything comes back; the wheel of being rolls eternally.” Thus, the animals identify time and eternity. The content of repetition is not the same. In fact, “the same” in the eternal recurrence of the same includes differentiation and reproduction: “everything is joined anew.” The flow of things through time is “the year of being,” and the ring of being is intertwined with an eternal circle: “crooked is the path of eternity.” The universe has never begun to become nor ever ceased passing away. In other words, the universe maintains itself in becoming and being, circle and ring, time and eternity. In this sense, the idea of eternal recurrence is a synthesis of the three dimensions of time, i.e., it’s intertwines always “the same” structures of time (past, present and future). Or rather, the universe is understood as nature, and the idea of the eternal recurrence is a cosmological principle of the universe. On this view, the essential characteristic of the eternal recurrence is the closest approximation between being and becoming, circle and ring.
time and eternity what will be explicitly considered in the next section.

On the Vision and the Riddle

In the chapter “On the Vision and the Riddle,” Zarathustra presents his “abysmal thought” as a vision in the name of “all beings.” Zarathustra climbed upward on a mountain in defiance of what pulls him downward. This is “the spirit of gravity,” Zarathustra’s “devil” and “arch-enemy” which appears as a “half dwarf,” “half mole,” “lame.” Zarathustra says:

Upward – in defiance of the spirit that pulled it downward, the spirit of my gravity, my devil and arch – enemy.

Upward – even though he sat atop me, half dwarf, half mole, lame, paralyzing, dripping lead into my ear, lead – drop thoughts into my brain (124).

In fact, “the spirit of gravity” symbolizes a Socratic spirit, rational optimism which announces that there is something higher than mortal life. Zarathustra with his courage attacks “the spirit of gravity,” a lame dwarf which he is carrying on his shoulder. Zarathustra says, “Dwarf – you or I!” (125). For that fight, Zarathustra needs the courage of a lion who will slay “the dizziness at the abyss” and “pity.” Zarathustra opposes his “abysmal thought” to the dwarf’s dark thoughts, and he says:

See this gateway, dwarf!’ I continued. “It has two faces. Two paths come together here; no one has yet walked them to the end.

This long lane back; it lasts an eternity. And that long lane outward- that is another eternity.
They contradict each other, these paths; they blatantly offend each other—and here at this gateway is where they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed at the top: “Moment.”

‘See this moment!’ I continued. ‘From this gateway Moment a long eternal lane stretches backward: behind us lies an eternity.

For whatever can run, even in this long lane outward—must run it once more! (125)

According to Alexander Nehamas, this passage states the cosmological doctrine because Zarathustra implies that the history of the universe “is implicit in every moment” (Nehamas 1980, 337). Zarathustra points out the endlessness of both timelines: the past and the future. The one goes backward (“this long lane back: it lasts an eternity”), and the other goes outward (“long lane outward – that is another eternity”). In fact, the starting point is the straight, linear time, which expands backward and outward. In this context, Zarathustra understands time as a succession, a sequence of “now,” the moments; behind each “now” there is a sequence of endless past, and ahead of it, there is an endless sequence of future. “The gateway” or “the moment” is the “battle field” (“contradict” and “offend” each other) of two opposite timelines: the past and the future. In this “battle field,” linear time does not allow “affirmation” of the strict limits among three dimensions of time (past, present, future). The past is “fragment,” “riddle” and

246 Besides the cosmological aspect of the doctrine, Alexander Nehamas stresses the psychological aspect of the recurrence of one’s life (The Eternal Recurrence, 341). According to Nehamas, we cannot anticipate our experience in the future nor remember our present. In this sense, the psychological aspect of the doctrine is necessary for the possibility that my life occurs again as a matter of complete indifference to the future: I am not interested in now what will be in the future. Nietzsche misses to consider this possibility altogether.
“grisly accident” because time cannot run backward: “That time does not run backward, that is its wrath” *(Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 111). For this reason, the past needs “redemption” and “affirmation of chance”: “All ‘it was’ is a fragment, a riddle, a grisly accident—until the creating will say to it: ‘But I will it thus! I shall will it thus!’” (112). In other words, Nietzsche’s starting point of the apprehension of time is linear understanding of time which strictly divides limits among past, present and future. In *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, Nietzsche “affirms” the strict temporal limits by “forgetfulness.” For Nietzsche, “forgetfulness” is a Dionysian element which crashes every temporal hedges. Nietzsche says:

> Consider the cattle, grazing as they pass you by: they do not know what is meant by yesterday or today, they leap about, eat, rest, digest, leap about again, and so from morn till night and from day to day, fettered to the moment and its pleasure or displeasure, and thus neither melancholy nor bored *(On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life, 60).*

> “Grazing” of the cattle is the moment in which they forget yesterday, “it was” and at the same time they are opened for the future. On the contrary, a man cannot forget “it was: “That password which gives conflict, suffering and satiety access to man so as to remind him what his existence fundamentally is – an imperfect tense that can never become a perfect one” *(On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life, 61).* Death can relieve of the past which is prevailed as an “invisible burden” *(On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life, 61)* in the present. In this case, death will extinguish the present and all existence, i.e., the present will become “it was.” For Nietzsche, the hedges between the past and the future play as a “blissful blindness” in the present moment because they are determined by “forgetfulness” *(On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life, 61).*
How does Zarathustra “affirm” limitations between the past and the future in the present moment? Or, how does he transform linear time into cyclic movement? The next insert in Thus Spoke Zarathustra can illustrate this intention. Zarathustra saw a young shepherd “with a thick black snake hanging from his mouth” (127). He could not tear the snake from his throat. The snake is the animal of the eternal recurrence. In order to confirm the eternal recurrence of the same, one has to spit out the snake’s head. The moment when Zarathustra bites the snake’s head is the moment of the “big pain” and suffering, i.e., it is the moment of transformation. Zarathustra wants to live in accordance with the universe, with a cosmic circle. In the section On Great Longing, Zarathustra suggests his longing to live in accordance to a cosmic circle:

Sing with a roaring song until all seas become silent, to listen for your longing –

- Until the skiff floats over silent longing seas, the golden wonder around whose gold all good and bad and wonderful things hop –
- Even many great and small animals and everything that has light, wondrous feet, and can run on paths of violet blue –
- Over to the golden wonder, the voluntary skiff and to its master: but he is the vintner who waits with his diamond knife –
- Your great redeemer, oh my soul, the nameless one – for whom only future songs will find a name! And truly, your breath is fragrant already with future song! (180)

Later, in The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche explicitly gives an answer to the problem of a cosmic circle. “The nameless” or “the vintner knife” is the god Dionysus, who creates and destroys

247 Nietzsche says, “Or, to say it in the language of that Dionysian monster who bears the name of Zarathustra” (The Birth of Tragedy, 26).
in the game of creation and destruction behind an Apollonian veil. Dionysus is a center of a cosmic circle, the god of eternal game who, through enthrallment, allurement, and "forgetfulness," relieves a man of miserable everyday norms: "For the rapture of the Dionysian state with its annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence contains, while it lasts, a lethargic element in which all personal experience of the past become immersed. This chasm of oblivion separates the worlds of everyday reality and of Dionysian reality" (The Birth of Tragedy, 59).

Thus, Zarathustra "affirms" the limits between the timelines by choosing a cyclic movement of time. Zarathustra chooses the structure of time in which the past and the future consequently repeat in the present moment:

Must not whatever can already have passed this way before? Must not whatever can happen, already have happened, been done, passed by before?

And if everything has already been here before, what do you think of this moment, dwarf? Must this gateway too not already – have been there?

And are not all things firmly knotted together in such a way that this moment draws after it all things to come? Therefore – itself as well? (126).

Through Zarathustra's teaching of the eternal recurrence, eternal past and eternal future sit together in every present moment. It is precisely because the togetherness of the past and the future takes place in every present moment that it belongs to the moment of eternity. This moment of eternity is understood as the brightest "noon," which indicates Nietzsche's contemplation of the entire time framework as an identity "one and the same." Identity does not mean repetition in strictly defined time intervals, but infinite intertwining of the past and the future in the present moment. This intertwining consists of the following: the past can exist in the present moment only if
the future is coming again and again. The experience of the collision of the past and the future in the present moment, which has the character of the “same” in the context of their infinite repetition, can be understood as “one.” Every present moment that contains all of time is in time in which the structure of it always repeats. In other words, if the present moment contains the past and the future, then each time it is “attained,” it is always “the same.” Therefore, there is no opposition between the one moment and every moment. The eternal moment, “the great noon” is, rigidly speaking, every moment. Outside of that moment, nothing can exist. Zarathustra says: “There is no outside!” In every instant being begins; around every Here rolls the ball There. The middle is everywhere” (175). This “moment” continuously exists: it overflows with future contents and immediately sinks into the past. In other words, within the cyclic process, the past and the future transform themselves from one to another: the past attains the character of openness as the future has, and the future attains permanent character of the past. Everything in the universe is subjected to the ebb and flow of time. Zarathustra believes that if everything had passed differently, it would have passed differently; if everything passed again, it would pass again.

Time understood as eternal is influenced by neither beginning nor end. Time is connected with motion in infinitum. According to Nietzsche, eternity as “the great noon” is “time without all aim:”

Here I sat, waiting – not for anything –

Beyond Good and Evil, fancying

Now light, now shadows, all a game,

All lake, all noon, all time without all aim (The Gay Science, 371).
A cyclic movement does not have beginning or end because it has infinite character: “The wheel of being rolls eternally” (175). The eternity of time means that becoming cannot have started to become, it is not something that has become. Not having become, it is already be what it is becoming (Deleuze 1983, 47). Consequently, the present moment or “now” is not the moment in a strict sense, but it is the passing moment which cannot have started and cannot finish. The Deleuzian interpretation of Nietzsche poses the crucial question: What is the being of which neither starts nor finishes becoming? The eternal recurrence is the answer of the problem of passage: “Everything goes everything comes back; the wheel of being rolls eternally” (175). The center of the circle (“the wheel of being”) is everywhere: “The middle is everywhere” (175). The universe, whose law is the circle, cannot exist outside of the circle: “There is no outside!” The eternal circle has the character of entelechy, since it always “attains” its possibility through denial and affirmation. Saying No to existence means saying No to the temporary, to the changeable on the Earth and to the time as a circular motion. Saying Yes to existence means saying Yes to a circular motion of time. The center of a circular motion is a Dionysian source of the universe, and that is joy: “All joy wants eternity of all things” (184). That all joy wants eternity does not mean that it wants “heirs” and “children” because the who suffers says “I want heirs, I want children, I do not want myself” (262). By contrast, all joy wants itself, “recurrence” and “everything eternally the same” (262); “it bites into itself, the ring’s will wrestles in it” (263).

The moment of eternity is anticipated as “the great noon.” The “noon” is the highest moment of fulfillment, the peak that is revealed as the nucleus of time in which time reveals its face. It is “the moment” when the past and the future meet in one point; “the moment” of the shortest shadow and the highest unity when metamorphosis of before-noon and after-noon, pain and joy, the Moon and the Sun, night and day takes place. The moment of eternity indicates that Zarathustra contemplated the entire time framework as an identity (“one and the same”). In the context of infinite repetition, three dimensions of time (past,
present and future) can be understood as “one” because they repeat always "the same" structure of time. In other words, identity can be defined as infinite intertwining of the past and the future in the present moment.

Zarathustra and Dionysus

To sum up, “The great noon” is the moment in which existence is confirmed in one factual Here and Now. Saying Yes to life means saying yes to everything that was, is and will be. Zarathustra's highest formula of affirmation is revealed in amor fati. Everything in the world is subjected to the Dionysian game of creation and destruction. In Dionysus' game, the universe becomes perfect. In The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche describes the perfection of the universe as the Apollonian veil over the Dionysian foundation of the world. Apollo is the divine incarnation of the dream, appearance, deception, vision, and individuation: “Apollo, the god of all plastic energies, is at the same time the soothsaying god. He, who (as the etymology of the name indicates) is the ‘shining one,’ the deity of light, is also ruler over the beautiful illusion of the inner world of fantasy. And we might call Apollo himself the glorious divine image of the principium individuationis, through whose gestures and eyes all the joy and wisdom of ‘illusion,’ together with its beauty, speak to us" (The Birth of Tragedy, 35, 36). He represses and interiorizes “the pain” and “suffering.” On the contrary, Dionysus is the divine incarnation of enthrallment and allurement; he affirms life and overshadowed “the pain” and “suffering” by “joy.” He is the highest confirmation of the universe by making Zarathustra return to original unity. Dionysus is receptiveness; the god of eternal game who through enthrallment and allurement levitates Zarathustra above "the spirit of gravity," and "dwarf"; the god who relieves Zarathustra
of limits of time through “forgetfulness.”²⁴⁸ By contrast, the Apollonian eye gives measure to the universe, sets the limits between time dimensions, transforms insecurity into security; he is the interpreter of the Dionysian condition. Within the Dionysian-Apollonian tension, Zarathustra perceives the universe through the Apollonian eye and at the same time longs to overcome the Apollonian perception in order to reveal and experience “the secret” of the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same.

In a philosophical, poetic way Zarathustra describes the Dionysian perfect world:

Oh mankind, pray!  
What does deep midnight have to say?  
“From sleep, from sleep-  
From deepest dream I made my way:-  
The world is deep,  
And deeper than the grasp day.  
Deep is its pain -,  
Joy – deeper still than misery:  
Pain says: Refrain!  
Yet all joy wants eternity-  
-Wants deep, wants deep eternity.  

(Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “The Other Dance Song,” 183)

“The joy” is the moment of the world’s affirmation caused by Dionysus. “The joy” speaks about its experience of eternity. It is the moment of Zarathustra’s ecstatic openness towards the universe, shaking experience of eternity. The Earth eternally endures the passing winds of change. The experience of passing time gives man the awareness of his finiteness.

Whilst ruminates oneself, man is supposed to learn to withstand fear by saying Yes to life. Fear assumes pride. Pride and wisdom are present in the picture of the eagle and the snake who they fit into a cyclic movement in order to affirm themselves (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “Zarathustra’s Prologue,” 15).

The antithesis between Dionysus and Apollo is resolved in “the unity.” However, Zarathustra needs something higher than reconciliation, and that is affirmation (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “On Redemption,” 112). Affirmation is the common foundation between Zarathustra and Dionysus. Ultimately, we can pose the question:

Who is Zarathustra?

Zarathustra is the teacher of the eternal recurrence of the same.

I will ask again: Who is Zarathustra?

Zarathustra is the advocate of Dionysus.

Who is Dionysus?

He is the creator and destroyer of the eternal game of creation and destruction in the universe.

And behold! An eagle cut broad circles through the air, and upon it hung a snake not as prey but as a friend, for the snake curled itself around the eagle’s neck.” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “Zarathustra’s Prologue,” 15)
Bibliography


Marcus Shultz-Bergin—Exorcising Plato’s Homunculi

A major component of Platonic theory, as espoused in the Republic, is the division of the human soul into three distinct parts. Despite the initial clarity of Plato’s theory of the tripartite soul, many commentators have put forth the committee thesis,249 a view which argues that for his position to be consistent with other views put forth in the Republic his theory of the soul can contain no fewer than nine distinct parts, as the three parts Plato outlines are reduplicated into each of those three parts, creating what has been called the homunculus problem.250 Multiple justifications have been given for this move, and by exploring the argument from analogy in part I, the argument against perverted reason in part II and the argument from rational assent in part III, I will contend that all are motivated by a misreading of key components of the Republic and that the underlying inconsistency can be readily dealt with simply in the context of a three part soul. After refuting each of these arguments for the committee thesis, I will conclude by describing and building up a defense of the strong unity thesis, which makes sense of the seeming tensions in the Republic while maintaining no more than a tripartite soul.

249 Julius Moravcsik (2001). See p. 40 for his distinction between the Strong Unity and Weak Unity theories. Later he refers to the Weak Unity theory as the Committee thesis, which is the term I will use here.
250 This actually indicates that Plato can allow no fewer than twelve parts to the soul, as the three he explicitly adheres to have added three in each, so nine new ones on top of the three previously existing. Nonetheless, the literature suggests that this view forces Plato to accept no fewer than nine.
I. Argument from Analogy

1. A just individual must be structurally identical to a just city.

2. If a just city contains three classes, each containing individuals with three parts to their soul then a just individual must have three parts to her soul, analogous to the classes, and each of those three parts must contain three parts, analogous to the individuals within the classes.

3. A just city does contain three classes of individuals with tripartite souls.

4. Therefore, a just individual must have three parts to her soul, analogous to the classes, and each of those three parts must contain three parts, analogous to the individuals within the classes.

The argument above is a logical depiction of Annas’ defense of the committee thesis. In order to respond to this defense, I will deny the first premise, which is a very weakly defended assumption on her part. Additionally, I can grant the first premise and show an additional difficulty with her argument at the level of premise 3. According to Plato, “a just man won’t differ at all from a just city in respect to the form of justice” (435a9-b1). On this view, Annas and I agree, but a disagreement arises when exploring what it means for the form to not differ. Annas reads same form as implying structural identity, such that any structure existent in a just city must also be existent in a just individual. This is the motivation behind her key assumption, stated in premise 1 above, but I find very little evidence for this reading of same Form. Annas rightly reads into the discussion of the same Form the appeal to the Theory of the Forms, but improperly understands what that

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252 Ibid.
There is a form of a table, which all particular tables share in. A wood table, a stone table, a plastic table, a table with four outside legs, and a table with a single leg that fans out are all particular types of tables that, despite their lack of structural identity with each other all partake in the same form of a table. When deciding whether things are of the same form structural identity is not sought in any instance, but instead the focus is on necessary parallels. All tables, it seems, must have a flat surface and some sort of support system, but they do not need to be structurally identical. Plato seems to indicate as much when he tells us "we customarily hypothesize a single form in connection with each of the many things to which we apply the same name" (596a5-7). Obviously his use of "customarily" indicates that this process could just be wrong, but in the context of the beginning of book X, his statement is referring to the same process Socrates and his interlocutors have been using the whole time, as it regards the parts of the soul and justice itself.

Additionally, there is prima facie reason to reject Annas' assumption, as it flies in the face of the explicit claim Plato makes as regards the parallels between the just city and the just individual. Plato does not argue for structural identity in his link between city and soul, but rather is content that "if an individual has these same three parts in his soul, we will expect him to be correctly called by the same names as the city if he has the same conditions in them" (435b7-c). He is not concerned with the link between the city and soul being infinitely regressive so that all structures found in one must be in the other. He explicitly cuts the link off at the three parts, and does not wish to travel any further down the line, as Annas wrongly claims he must do. Thus, there is reason to both urge

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253 It has been brought to my attention by Andre Archie that Annas may be understanding "structural identity" in the Aristotelian sense of identical function and purpose rather than material structural identity. I do not see any reason to assume this in what she has written, and if this is how she understands structural identity then all the problems that she claims arise from her view wouldn't actually arise.
Annas to defend her assumption as well as deny such an assumption. But, the assumption can be granted while further problems can be found with her argument.

Premise three contends, rightly, that the city is made up of three classes of individuals each with tripartite souls. This premise, itself, is unproblematic, but it's necessary implication is troublesome. If structural identity is necessary then any structure found in the city must be in the individual. This produces a few more troublesome results. First, each class contains a large amount of individuals each with tripartite souls, so it would seem that to be structurally identical the individual wouldn't just have reason, spirit and appetite reduplicated into each of the three parts of her soul, but would instead have a tripartite soul, each part containing multiple reduplications of the three parts all working on the same level. This seems especially problematic at the level of reason, insofar as the city contains multiple philosopher-kings ruling at any given time, but to parallel that structure in the individual would imply a group of homunculi that rule by committee using their rationality, which is also perhaps made up of even more homunculi doing the same thing. Once they reach an agreement they pass it up to the larger scale Reason and then that provides psychological motivation for whatever the decision is reached. While Annas may simply agree and argue that this is precisely her point, that Plato must be committed to such odd conclusions, it is clearly not her argument that the individual soul would be this much of a mess.

Finally, if premise three is followed through and the tripartite soul is reduplicated into each part of the soul, then the city is no longer made up of three classes of individuals with tripartite souls but rather of three classes of individuals with a nine-part soul. This, in turn, requires moving back to the individual and amending his soul to take account of that change in the city, requiring an additional reduplication to maintain the structural identity. This process must continue *ad infinitum* if the goal is structural identity, but it also clearly indicates that structural identity is an impossible burden to meet. If structural
identity is *prima facie* incorrect, and there are particular reasons not to accept it based on Plato's understanding of the Forms, and if assuming it is true creates an impossible situation to resolve, then Annas's argument for the committee thesis has been defeated.

**II. Argument against Perverted Reason**

1. The rational part of the soul only has two desires: to rule, and to seek the Truth.

2. The unjust individual does not seek the Truth nor have her rational part ruling.

3. The unjust individual does require rational calculation to function properly.

4. If reason isn't seeking the truth nor ruling, then it cannot be rationally calculating for the unjust individual.

5. Therefore, each part of the soul must have its own rational capacity.

The above argument is one example in favor of the committee thesis from the argument against perverted reason. The general thrust of the argument is that since Plato does argue that reason is concerned with seeking the truth and ruling, it cannot rationally calculate towards ends that are not good. Thus, the oligarchic man cannot make use of reason to rationally calculate the correct interest to charge because that is not an end that reason would form from Truth. If reason were to do this type of rational calculation it would be reasoning against the Good, which it supposedly is unable to do. This argument assumes that an unjust person does still *have* a rational part of the soul and, therefore, it must be either inoperative, which leads to the argument above, or else it must be capable of reasoning for perverted ends, which doesn't lead to the committee thesis but is apparently a misrepresentation of
the rational part of the soul. This dilemma is justified, and my goal here will be to defend the opposing horn of the dilemma, by denying both premise 1 and premise 4, for similar reasons.

In Book IX of the *Republic* Socrates is credited as saying that “It is obvious to anyone that the part by which we learn is always wholly straining to know where the truth lies” (581b5-6). This appears to be a pretty clear indication that the rational part, that by which we learn, cannot do anything but strain for the truth. But of course if this was truly what Socrates meant, then the desire to rule, which he assigns to Reason in Book IV would be impossible, unless it could be somehow shown to not be another independent desire but rather an extension of striving for the Truth. Cooper, who inevitably supports the committee thesis, does not seem to find a tension between these two different claims, and thus understands Reason as having two desires: to seek the truth, and to rule in accordance with that truth. But this still leaves the same issue of perverted Reason. Since Reason only rules in accordance with the truth, it cannot be the case that the unjust person can make use of Reason’s desire to rule to have it rationally calculate to unjust ends, while shutting down its desire to seek the truth.

It appears that Socrates either misspoke when he said that Reason seeks the truth and rules in accord with it, or he never meant for that to be exhaustive of its capabilities. Books VI through IX seem to make a thorough case for Reason being able to calculate towards unjust ends. Before examining those key passages, however, it is important to refer back to Cooper’s discussion of Reason for additional support, in clear contradiction to his later conclusions. He argues, though without appeal to textual evidence, that “Socrates admits that not every person feels [the desire for the truth] as strongly” as others, “but it must be active to some extent in everyone’s life”. He seems to be referring to Plato’s claim in Book VI that

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254 See, e.g., 441e4, 442c5, 552c6 and John Cooper (2001).
255 Cooper (2001), 95.
256 Ibid.

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“everyone wants the things that really are good and disdains mere belief here... Every soul pursues the good” (505d8-e1). He is most certainly correct in this statement, for if Reason became inactive in anyone they would cease to be human, as human nature is defined by its tripartite soul and the desires that accompany such a soul. Nonetheless, this admission by Cooper doesn't quite get to the conclusion I want. Just because the desire is always active does not imply that Reason can rationally calculate towards unjust ends, it merely indicates that even the tyrant occasionally has the desire for the truth.

Many passages in the Republic can be appealed to in order to argue for this stronger claim. The general thrust of my argument against premise 1 is that although it may be the case that Reason only has two desires, to seek the truth and rule in accord with it, this does not indicate that Reason only has those two abilities. Just as spirit desires victory but can be subordinated to Reason so as to get angry at injustice, it is possible for Reason to be subordinated so as to use its abilities for ends not of its own making. First, while making use of the Allegory of the Cave, Plato argues that “the virtue of reason... never loses its power but is either useful and beneficial or useless and harmful, depending on the way it is turned... its sight isn't inferior but rather is forced to serve evil ends” (518e-519a4). This helps explain why the belief among common Athenians was that philosophers were either vicious or useless. It isn't that these people are true philosophers, but rather they are people with a high level of rational faculty who either haven't been nurtured appropriately or have for some reason turned away from what is best for the philosopher. Nonetheless, Plato argues that the most vicious of people must be more akin to the most just people in ability, including the rational parts of their soul, for the ability to do so much good is just the other side of the ability to do so much evil (491c-d7). Thus, it appears that it isn't merely the case that Reason can be turned towards unjust ends, but for those ends to be extremely unjust and vicious it must be Reason at work, and not merely spirit and/or appetite.
Plato additionally makes it clear that Reason is operative in the oligarchic person, working towards ends not of its own making: "He makes the rational and spirited parts sit on the ground beneath appetite, one on either side, reducing them to slaves. He won't allow the first to reason about or examine anything except how a little money can be made into great wealth" (553c7-d3). It is very clear, here, that the sort of reasoning going on is mere means-end calculation but it is certainly being done by the rational part of the person's soul, not the appetitive part. Additionally, in his discussion of the Tyrant, Plato asks "mustn't his soul be full of slavery and unfreedom, with the most decent parts enslaved and with a small part, the maddest and most vicious, as their master?" (577d2-4) This is another indication that Reason hasn't merely been made useless but in fact is working, as a slave, for ends not of its own creation. Thus, there is the clear recognition, especially throughout the discussion of the timocratic, oligarchic, democratic and tyrannical person, that Reason doesn't merely have the ability to seek the truth and rule in accord with it, even if that is what it desires, but is capable of much more.257

This argument against premise 1 should be sufficient to prove the argument from perverted reason false, but premise 1's truth can be granted and the argument defeated at the level of premise 4. Here my argument will be similar, but I will put more pressure on the notion of appetitive rationality. According to premise 4, since Reason cannot be the part of the soul doing the rational calculation it must be the case that the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul also have the ability to rationally calculate, at least at some level. This is the claim put forth by Cooper when he refers to basic means-end rational calculation taken in accord with the interest of a particular appetitive goal, such as to drink, as not arising within the rational part of the

257 For discussions of each type of person, see: 548-550c (Timocratic), 553-555b (Oligarchic), 558d-562 (Democratic) and 571-576-d (Tyrannical).
This would indicate, then, that while the appetitive and spirited parts may have no ability or desire to seek the truth, they nonetheless have some ability to rationally calculate how best to achieve the desires present in those parts of the soul, such as victory and wealth.

The first tension with this claim is that Plato explicitly denies its possibility. In his initial discussion of the tripartite soul, when referring to Reason and appetite he argues that there is “something in their soul, bidding them to drink, and something different, forbidding them to do so” and “that which forbids in such cases come into play... as a result of rational calculation” (439c5-d). His use throughout the Republic of the term rational calculation, in fact, is always the same in the original Greek (logismou), which provides prima facie reason for supposing that whenever it is used it is used in the same way, to indicate a calculation that occurs in the rational part of the soul. This is even clearer when it is realized that each time Socrates uses the phrase “rational calculation” or similar phrases based on rationality he always uses the same root of logismos. Just a few lines later he is even more explicit that the appetitive part of the soul is not merely incapable of seeking the truth, but is in fact wholly irrational: “We’ll call the part of the soul with which it calculates the rational part and the part with which it lusting, hungering, thirsting, and gets excited by other appetites the irrational appetitive part” (439d4-7, emphasis added). So, again, this does not function as a knock down argument against appetitive rationality but certainly functions to provide prima facie reason for denying it.

Past this claim of prima facie truth, additional pressure can be put on premise 4 based on what it appears to entail. If premise 4 is taken as true, it commits the theory to some kind of rational capacity in the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul. The actual kind of rational capacity is unclear, and it appears there is no principled way to determine whether it is merely some sort of means-end calculation, as Cooper argues, or if it

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258 Cooper (2001), 99-100.
actually can seek the truth in some way. Obviously if the theory of reduplication is correct then it would appear that it must be the latter, insofar as the artisans actually can seek the good as well, just perhaps not to as great of a degree as the philosopher-kings. It doesn’t seem principled in any way to give rational calculation to the appetitive and spirited parts without giving them at least some basic conception of the Good, or ability to reach such a conception. But following this path means truly going astray from what even the defenders of the Committee Thesis think Plato wants the soul to look like. Therefore, it appears that premise 4 necessarily leads to a contradiction with an assumption that my opponents still agree with – that only the rational part of the soul seeks the truth. Thus, the argument from perverted reason fails to justify the committee thesis.

III. Argument from Rational Assent

Thus far, I have shown both the Argument from Analogy and the Argument from Perverted Reason to be, at least, indefensible and most likely false. But in the process of such arguments I have also established the necessary tools to dismantle a final motivation for the committee thesis. The argument from Rational Assent makes use of the analogy as Annas does but also makes use of the defense for appetitive and spirited calculation found in the Argument from Perverted Reason. The argument can be sketched as follows:

1. Justice in the city and the individual are of the same form.

2. Adherence to the rule of the Rational class comes about through the Rational Assent of the other two classes.

3. If the individual has the same form of justice as the city, then adherence to the rule of Reason comes about through the Rational Assent of the other two parts of the soul.
4. Therefore, spirit and appetite must have rational capacities.

This argument does not necessarily rely on the assumption of structural identity found in Annas, although it may get close and as such may fall prey to some of the same arguments discussed above. Thus, I will object to premise 1 on the same grounds that I objected to premise 1 of the Argument from Analogy, insofar as it functionally argues that the structure of adherence to rule in the city must also exist in the individual. But, again, this may not be a necessary assumption of the argument, as it does appear that Plato talks as if Reason rules because the other two parts of the soul rationally assent.\textsuperscript{259} In such a case, our attack must take another route. Therefore, I will deny premise 3 on two grounds. First, I will refer back to the final claim made against the Argument from Perverted Reason, that there is no principled way to determine just how much rational capacity each part has. Second, I will examine a metaphorical interpretation of Plato’s use of assent to rule that, if true, takes account of what is said without appeal to appetitive and spirited rationality.

Against the Argument from Perverted Reason, it was argued that not only is there no principled way to determine just how much rationality the spirited and appetitive parts have, if any, but also that it appears at least more principled, based on the analogy with the city, to assign them some capacity to seek the truth. I also concluded that because even defenders of the committee thesis do not wish to assign the ability to know the truth to the appetitive and spirited parts, there is a contradiction in such an argument. Now I can strengthen such an argument to show that if appetite and spirit have to rationally assent to Reason’s rule, then they \textit{must} have an ability to know the Truth, again leading to a contradiction. According to the rational assent view, spirit and appetite are not subordinated by force but rather by recognizing that the

\textsuperscript{259} See, e.g., 437d7-c10, 437c8-10, 439a9-b6 and Moravcsik (2001), 46.
best state of affairs is one where Reason rules, just as the artisans and auxiliaries recognize that the just state requires the rule of the philosopher-kings. But it is important to remember, here, that the artisans and auxiliaries can rationally assent because they do, in fact, have a conception of the Good. Again, it may not be as great as the conception possessed by the philosopher-kings, but it must be active, as per Cooper's analysis above. The artisans and auxiliary must be able to recognize what truly is just, to some extent, to be willing to suppress their unhindered desires to the rule of the philosopher-kings. The same would have to be true of the appetite and spirit for this argument to hold. It cannot be that appetite and spirit simply agree to be ruled based on the sort of means-end calculation some would assign to them. That sort of calculation cannot alter desires but merely find a way to fulfill such desires. Thus, unless appetite and spirit have a desire to be ruled by Reason, which would completely change the entire interpretation of the Platonic soul, there is no way means-end calculation could allow appetite and spirit to assent to Reason's rule.

Thus, there is once again a clear contradiction, even for the defenders of the committee thesis. On one hand, only Reason can seek the Truth, but on the other appetite and spirit must be able to seek it to some extent, if they are to truly assent to Reason's rule. This results in a problematic position. On one hand, it is literally true that Plato says spirit and appetite agree to Reason's rule, but it is clear that that cannot be the case. To reconcile such an issue, Plato's statements can be reinterpreted metaphorically. While such an interpretation would normally require a strong defense, being prima facie wrong, if such a plausible interpretation is combined with the arguments against the presumptive right interpretation then that should suffice as a strong defense of the position. If it can capture all the necessary features of the literal interpretation, while avoiding the pitfalls, then it can be said to be strongly defended.

In Plato's discussion of the battle between appetite and reason, he makes use of the notion that Reason, at times, will
dissent to appetite's goal of achieving its particular desire (437d7-c10). It is then, if interpreted literally, Reason's job to persuade appetite to give up on the desire and assent to Reason's decision. This seems to fit well with Annas' notion of structural identity, insofar as the philosopher-kings do persuade the rest to adhere to the constitution of the Kallipolis. However, it creates an even stronger homunculi problem. Now, it isn't merely the case that the tripartite soul has been reduplicated, but that these little humans actually all have cognitive abilities and determine action for the whole human only after a mini-democratic meeting where no less than unanimous consent will do. Instead of the tripartite soul being a description of conflicting and interacting desires in a single agent, the individual is now composed of at least three separate agents. This doesn't seem to be in any way what Plato means to argue for, as his discussion about the initial conflict between Reason and Appetite seems to indicate. First, the discussion of why there are these two separate parts comes about in context of conflicting sources of desire, not conflicting agents (436b7-c). It is not as if, for instance, Leontius is schizophrenic and one personality in him wishes to look at the dead bodies and another personality opposes such a thing, it is that Leontius has conflicting desires, and since a single thing cannot will and not will simultaneously, it must be that there are two sources of desires in him that are conflicting. Nonetheless, it is always just Leontius who is the agent (439e-440b).

Reading the passages about assenting and dissenting metaphorically, the assent and dissent do not occur in any particular part of the soul, but rather in the soul as a whole. As Moravcsik argues, “the point of the metaphor is to take our ordinary narrow and purely intellectual conception of consent and widen it so as to represent the whole response of the soul” such that “it is what the soul does that is in practical contexts analogous to assenting in the purely mental, cognitive sense.” This seems to fit better Plato's overall aim with his discussion of

260 Also see Moravcsik (2001), 46-47.
261 Ibid., 46.
the tripartite soul. His aim was to explain the sources of our often conflicting desires, and if the tripartite soul is reimagined as something akin to the brain, with different parts being the sources of different desires, it isn’t the case that our temporal lobe *decides* to interpret the semantics of speech all on its own, and the rest of the brain assents. The person *decides* to interpret and the source of such interpreting is the temporal lobe. So, while this case may not hold to the literal language of Plato’s *Republic* it does appear to better fit his overall aims in the dialogue and in his theories in general. Therefore, there exists an alternative reading with good reasons for adhering to it. As such, premise 3 need not pose a problem because of its literal reading of the text.

IV. Conclusion

I have now defended the theory of the tripartite soul against three major motivations for the committee thesis, and its necessary homunculi problem. It is not the case that the just individual and just city are structurally identical, although they are nonetheless of the same Form. Additionally, such an interpretation collapses into a contradiction if structural identity is assumed. Furthermore, I have argued that even if it is the case that Reason *desires* only to seek the Truth and rule, it does not entail that Reason doesn’t have other *abilities*. As such, it can be turned towards perverted ends, and in fact in the most vicious people it is necessary that their Reason is functioning at a high level, because according to Plato no person with sub-par cognitive abilities could ever do great harm. Finally, I have shown the collapse of the Argument from Perverted Reason and the Argument from Rational Assent into a contradiction as well, while providing an alternative reading that has no such problem.

Thus, I have concluded what I am arguing *against* but it is important to reconcile the many arguments above into a thesis I can argue *for*. According to the Strong Unity Thesis,
Reason is always operative and has the ability to rationally calculate for both good and bad ends. When it is ruling it is seeking Truth, although it may also seek Truth when it is not ruling but only to a lesser degree. A part of the soul comes to rule not by assent of the other parts of the soul, but by force and subordination. Just as Reason is “enslaved” by the tyrant, among others, spirit and appetite are enslaved, but in an overall beneficial way, in the just person. Reason seeks the Truth, builds up ends for each part of the soul based on that knowledge, and then imposes such ends on the other parts of the soul. This is best fleshed out in Plato’s use of the imagery of the spirit as a guard dog, released by Reason to fulfill certain ends Reason wants fulfilled, and then again leashed as it heels at the foot of Reason once more. This leaves no more than three parts to the human soul, as rational calculation need not be transposed into the spirited or appetitive parts of the soul for any practical reasons, and the analogy with a city does not force such a transposition either.

With this conception of the tripartite soul, it gives greater defense to the view that what is at the heart of the Republic is not the ideal state, but rather the theory of human motivation. The analogy between city and individual is only beneficial insofar as it helps bring out the motivational theory of the individual, and in places where a perfect analogy may oppose the theory of motivation Plato wishes to argue for, he has taken account of it and come down on the side of the individual, not on the side of the city. The largest alteration this may make on interpretations of the Republic, however, is in its recognition that Reason most certainly can calculate towards bad ends, even if it never desires to. As such, Reason is demystified as the perfect part of the soul and put in its proper place as just another component, even if the most important one, of Plato’s theory of human motivation. Thus, in the end, the homunculi have been exorcised from Plato’s tripartite soul and returned to a single individual with multiple sources of desires.

262 See, e.g., 440a7-440b, 440c and 440d for three separate instances of spirit being unleashed by Reason.
This is an interpretation most in line with Plato’s explicit claims, most consistent with his tangential theories, and least problematic for fully understanding the Platonic theory of human motivation.

Bibliography


1. Introduction

The Supreme Court recently debated the relationship of the First Amendment to new media, specifically video games. A law in California, which instigated the Supreme Court’s debate, banned anyone under the age of 18 from purchasing certain video games. Postal 2 exemplified the kind of game that caused this decision in California. In this game, the player, acting in the first person, can choose to cause mayhem: setting people on fire, stun-gunning victims until they urinate themselves and beg for mercy, decapitating victims, and other ultra-violent acts. Many of the Justices admitted that what they saw of the game was disturbing, but the main question concerned whether or not a state can forbid the sale of violent video games to minors. The specific problem involved the ambiguity in the California law of what counts as violent enough to restrict. The more general concern was focused on the freedom of expression in reference to video games (or other new media). Of course, the representative of the video game companies held the position that video games are protected as free speech.

In this paper, I argue that freedom of expression is not the best strategy for protecting video games. Video games are not primarily concerned with the exposition of ideas; for example, people do not typically play Call of Duty to learn historical facts, ideologies, or stories about World War II. People typically play video games because they enjoy them: either just for fun or for the challenge of ‘beating the game’. Those in the natural law tradition refer to this as the basic human good of play, or sometimes more specifically as meaningful play or excellence in play. Though I do not think video games are best
protected as free speech, I think they should be protected as instantiating one of the basic human goods, play, connected with human flourishing.

2. Reasons why Video Games are Free Speech

Video games can be divided into at least two categories (probably more than two): plot-based and not plot-based. The games that are not plot based are never the subject of controversy because they usually involve solving a puzzle, more like a board game (e.g. Tetris). The plot-based games tend to be more complex, and these involve characters that the player controls to perform actions or complete objectives (e.g. Grand Theft Auto and Metal Gear Solid). The plot-based games have become the subject of controversy usually due to the extremely violent realism involved. As previously mentioned, Postal 2 was a catalyst in California creating the law to restrict the sale of video games to minors.

Though it might seem like a video game is full of senseless violence, there is a background story that guides the overall action of the game. In other words, many of the newer games are more like an interactive movie. The video game makers set up the basic situation (e.g. missions, strategy, and worlds), but the player can pursue various courses of action. So, one might even make the argument that the player of some games is the co-author (or co-creator) of the plot of the game. Furthermore, video game makers have even developed storylines for games that could probably survive without one. For example, the game Tekken is a fighting game, where two players fight each other until one wins. The concept behind the fights is that all of the characters are competing in a tournament called “The King of Iron Fist”; the creators of Tekken provide elaborate stories about how the characters came to compete in the tournament. The point here is that even in games where knowing the story is not essential for someone to play the game, the game makers have still created these stories. True fans of the game will seek out the storyline and other background information. Since there is a storyline, video game makers
contend that the games are protected as free speech, just like any novel or movie.

3. Some Problems with the Free Speech Argument

Several problems exist for the strategy to protect video games as free speech. First, though some video games have a background story that is present as one plays the game, not all video games have this kind of story. Second, to play a video game, one does not necessarily have to know the story. Third, free speech involves, at some level, the expression of ideas; however, people do not primarily play games to understand ideas but for enjoyment. I will explain these points in the following paragraphs.

Games, like Tekken and Grand Theft Auto, have a storyline, at least a basic one. But is a storyline present in all video games? And are those games without a clear storyline protected by the First Amendment? And, lastly, how developed does a storyline have to be for the game to count as free speech? As technology advances, the ability to create a complicated storyline for video games has also been advanced. Just the fact that characters in video games can move in any direction increases the possibilities for action. But not all video games have a clear storyline. For example, sports games, like football, and baseball, do not have storyline; each player picks a team and then plays the game, according to the rules of the sport. Plus, puzzle games, like Tetris, do not have a storyline. If these games do not have a clear storyline, it appears that the First Amendment could not be employed to protect them. I readily admit that puzzle games will probably never go before the Supreme Court; however, I am interested in seeing if there is a unifying element that exists in both plot-based and non-plot-based games. And if that element could be used to protect all video games.
People who play video games do so with varying degrees of interest. Some people just enjoy the activity of playing the game without all the extra knowledge that is available to them. Others want to try to understand the character that they are controlling in order to try to act like that character. This second type requires that the individual read (and even study) the background information that is provided by the manufacturer. These are the two extremes (no concern for knowledge and obsession), and there is a gradation between them. Video game purists might claim that the only way to play a video game is to be aware of the background story. However, many people are content with playing the game without doing any research into the background story. It seems clear that learning the story of the game is not essential to playing the game. If the story is not essential to the playing of the game, then the story as free speech cannot be the primary reason for protecting the game for the video game player.

Similar to the above reason, even people who care about the story do not have to be concerned with the expression of ideas as such; the story can simply enhance their enjoyment of the game. In other words, video game players are not primarily looking for the expression of any ideas; they play games for enjoyment. So, the ‘knowledge’ about the story is used instrumentally for the goal of playing the game better. If the knowledge is instrumental, then it is not a good in itself (or basic). A video game player might care to learn the storyline, but is this the goal or purpose of playing the game? It seems like the goal is more than learning the storyline; otherwise, there doesn’t seem to be any additional benefits to playing the game. But this seems contrary to experience; playing a game, for some people, is just more enjoyable than reading a story. Thus, something more than comprehending a story seems to be part of playing video games.

The only aspect of the video game that I think could be protected as free speech without restrictions is the making of the game. The creators of a game spend time thinking about a story, including plot, setting, and characters. This nicely
parallels other kinds of art, such as literature and movies. Moreover, the creators sometimes have figurative meaning that inspired the making of the game. For example, the Running with Scissors website states that *Postal 2* “was never intended as anything but a satiric look at the degree to which Political Correctness has come to dominate our society.” So, they do claim that they are doing even more than simply creating a storyline, they are critiquing an aspect of contemporary society. The storylines and possible deeper meanings contained in video games seems to provide good reasons to use the First Amendment to protect the video game makers. But the fact that the story is not essential in order for one to play the video games provides grounds for questioning whether the First Amendment provides the same protection for the video game player.

4. Meaningful Play as a Basic Human Good

If I was actually contending that the best strategy for protecting video game makers is the First Amendment, then I would be faced with a serious dilemma. Video game makers could be protected by the First Amendment to create all sorts of video games, but the video game players have no protection under the First Amendment to play these games. So, no one can stop the video games from being made, but the law could make it illegal to buy video games. Certainly, something seems wrong with this conclusion. So, I think there is a better way to protect both the video game maker and the video game players; and both the plot-based games and those without storylines. I propose the notion of ‘play’ as being a basic human good; and video games, at their most general level, are an instantiation of that good. Toward that goal, I will define what it means for something to be a basic good, and that play counts as a basic

[263](http://www.runningwithscissors.com/supreme-court-vs-postal-2)
good. Then, I will suggest why the state should be concerned about play being protected for the common good.

I will explain briefly how the notion of basic goods is employed by natural law theorists. It is important to note first that the basic human goods are not derived; in other words, as Finnis writes, “there is no inference from fact to value.”¹²⁶⁴ When people are pushed to explain why they do various activities, certain purposes will emerge. And, eventually, basic reasons for action will be disclosed for which there is no further why-question because these basic reasons are good in themselves. The basic human goods are the basic reasons for which humans act. They are not instrumental; they are activities that when realized enhance a person’s life in some way, contributing to that person’s well-being.

Various lists of the basic goods have been offered by philosophers, like John Finnis and Mark Murphy. One good that has shown up on these lists is the good of play, or, as Murphy prefers “excellence in play.”¹²⁶⁵ Play, as a basic good, can be presented alongside work; they are often thought to be complementary. Finnis describes the good of play as follows: “each one of us can see the point of engaging in performances which have no point beyond the performance itself, enjoyed for its own sake.”¹²⁶⁶ So, activities that are enjoyable in themselves count as play. Since many activities could have an element of play (enjoyment or fun) in them; Finnis clarifies that “[play] is always analytically distinguishable from its ‘serious’ context.”¹²⁶⁷ Murphy develops the notion of play with a little more qualification than Finnis. Murphy prefers the term “excellence in play” because he wants to separate the good of play from mindless frivolity. As he explains, “Unless the play activity is of

¹²⁶⁵ Mark Murphy, Natural Law and Practical Rationality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 112.
¹²⁶⁶ Finnis, 87.
¹²⁶⁷ Ibid.
sufficient complexity that the notion of excellence in that activity can have application, the acts of play that are constituted by performance of that activity for its own sake are either unintelligible or intelligible only instrumentally.\textsuperscript{268} In particular, activities of play must present some sort of challenge to the participant. It is important to note that neither Finnis nor Murphy claim that there are necessary and sufficient conditions for what counts as play. The level of complexity and challenge are relative to the individual; for example, something might count as play for a child but not for an adult. The main point, for Murphy, is that standards of excellence are part of the activity; there needs to be room for improvement.

I will now suggest why we might consider play to be a basic human good. The basic goods are categories of activities, rather than headings for specific activities. Consequently, there is an open-endedness as to what counts as play. I will suggest some types of activities in which people participate that illustrate why play should be considered a basic human good. Probably, the most obvious category of activities that fits in with play is sports. Many people participate (or have participated in) some kind of sport, officially or unofficially. But the fact that some people might have never played a sport does not discredit sports from being an example of play. One key example is soccer. People all over the world play soccer from highly funded soccer leagues (and the World Cup) to children who do not even own shoes. Since the people who play professional sports are getting paid, league play overlaps with excellence in work. Most people who play a sport, like soccer, are not getting paid. Sports meet the general notion of the good of play—they are challenging and enjoyable. However, the real question is why might the existence of sports suggest that play is a basic human good; I think there are at least 3 reasons. First, sports (aside from professional sports) are largely played for their own sake—the enjoyment that they bring to the players. Second, people who play sports usually have a drive to do so. Most people do not play sports because they hate it; they

\textsuperscript{268} Murphy, 112-113.
usually have a drive for the kind of physical activity and challenge that sports usually provide. Third, many people will express a kind of peace of mind that comes from having exerted oneself in a physical competition (even against oneself). These three reasons, I think, suggest that sports illustrate that play is a basic human good—a basic reason for action.

Another example of play is board and card games. Murphy thinks that if something counts as play, it must have a sufficient amount of complexity and challenge. Though people might differ on exactly which games satisfy this guideline, some clearly would satisfy it: chess, go, poker, and backgammon. These games include the kind of challenge that enables there to be a standard of excellence. For example, chess players can become officially ranked—master and grand master. Not all board and card games have official rankings (or would even be ranked in this way); hence, it is equally important to note that people get some amount of enjoyment out of these games. If they did not present a sufficient degree of challenge, people would find them to be boring. Murphy uses the example of tic-tac-toe because it does not present a sufficient challenge to mature adults. Two developed adults will play tic-tac-toe and always end in a tie, unless one simply stops paying attention and makes a careless mistake. Murphy goes further by claiming, “tic-tac-toe as a form of play participated in by normal, unimpaired adults is either unintelligible or instrumental. It is not good in itself.”

Another example is that people will invent ways to amuse themselves, if some other conventional way is not available. For example, if someone is waiting in an office, they might try to toss pieces of paper into a garbage can. Or, when at least two people are present, one might challenge the other to see who can get more papers in the basket. This example

269 Murphy, 113.
illustrates that people enjoy competing with themselves and with others, even in trivial ways. The point is that people enjoy playful activities with a sufficient degree of challenge, and this observation suggests that play is a basic human good, a basic reason for action.

5. Video Games Instantiate Play

Earlier I had claimed that people play video games primarily for some degree of enjoyment. I will show how video games fit into the category of play by showing how they exhibit the general characteristics of play. Video games count as play because they do present a sufficient degree of challenge to the player. Video games continue to achieve higher levels of complexity. Even just operating newer controllers can require a significant amount of practice and adaptation. Games that have a specific storyline can take many hours to complete; hence, a story-based game that most people could finish in an hour would not likely do well in sales. Video game players want to invest some effort and time into the game; in other words, they want it to present a sufficient amount of difficulty to challenge them. In fact, there are games that do not have an official end; these come in variety of types, such as RPG (role-playing games), RTS (real time strategies), and MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing games). The most popular video game in the world is World of Warcraft because of its complexity that enables players to keep doing things; there are multiple goals. The well-made video games are sufficiently challenging so that replaying the game (or section of the game) allows the player the opportunity to do better.

One possible criticism might come from someone who would claim that video games are simply a waste of time, as illustrated by those addicts who devote an incredible amount of time and energy to their games. The existence of these people, it seems to me, actually illustrates that video games are an instantiation of the good of play. These people have simply
pursued play at the expense of the other goods. For natural lawyers, pursuing all of the goods to an absolute capacity is not possible; that is merely an ideal. Necessarily, pursuing one good means that someone is not pursuing other goods. For example, by spending most of one’s energy on pursuing some kind of knowledge, one is not pursuing the good of aesthetic experience as much. All things being equal, this is fine because it is not possible to pursue all the goods to an equally high degree. To use an idea from Rawls, one should pursue the goods in line with one’s rational plan of life. And this might be where the video game addict has some trouble. It is not a problem that the video game player chooses the good of play over other goods. But choosing play to such an extreme cannot be following a rational life plan, if other goods are being damaged to a significant degree (for which there is no exact formula of measurement). If someone were to be so consumed with video games that he/she had no friends, diminishing health, and no meaningful work, then we might have reason to think that this person is not flourishing, even though he/she claims to be enjoying him/herself.

I think I have shown to a reasonable degree that video games instantiate the good of play because they exhibit the main features of play: enjoyment to the player and a sufficient degree of challenge that allows for excellence. People who would not agree, calling video games a waste of time, might have a legitimate concern for the video game addict; otherwise, they simply have different tastes or ways of pursuing the good of play. So, if the basic human good of play is the main purpose of video games, then a question arises: what should the state do about this?

6. Video Games and the State

For present purposes a full account of the common good cannot be given, but I will basically be following Finnis’ account here. Finnis, along with Aquinas, thinks that the ends of
the state are twofold: justice and peace. These are the two aspects of the common good. The aspect of peace concerns us more than justice in the present context, though ultimately both are essential for the common good. According to Michael Pakaluk, Finnis’ account of peace consists of at least three facets: (1) protection from aggressors, both internal and external; (2) things that enable trade and commerce, like roads and regulations; (3) ways to advance culture, like schools, museums, and libraries.\(^{270}\) It is clear from this explanation that peace, for Finnis, is not simply a lack of conflict; it is also the advancement of culture. Every culture has games, of some type, that they play for enjoyment on small scales (families and friends) or on large scales (national or international competitions). So, the creation of new games and performance of existing games, in a sense, advances that culture, which is made possible through peace.

Why should the state protect video games? I think the real reason is that video games are part of our culture, a part which can only be developed when there is peace. For instance, during a war, citizens of a country are not looking for new ways to instantiate play; they are trying to survive. To keep it on the national level, when a country has major internal problems, it hinders the citizenry from pursuing some of the goods that they might otherwise pursue. Not all people have to like or respect video games, but people should like the peace of the common good that enables other people to like and enjoy video games. Imagine a country where the citizens work up to 16 hours a day; this is a reality in many parts of China. In this society, these citizens would not have as much time (or energy) for play. I am assuming that most people (if not all) would find a society, like this one, very bleak. Suppose that this society changed a little for the better. Now, the citizens have a little more time and energy to devote to play, but the only game available is chess. There might be a handful of people who would love a world

with only the game of chess, but I suspect that most people, even chess enthusiasts, would like more options than just one. So, I think this example illustrates that people flourish more in a society that, through promoting the common good, allows them to have the opportunities for play.

7. Conclusion

To summarize, many people think that the best (or only) protection for the playing of video games comes from the First Amendment. I have raised sufficient doubt that video games always count as an instance of free speech for the video game player. The primary purpose of video games, I have argued, is that they provide an enjoyable challenge for the player. Therefore, video games are an instance of the basic human good of play. I have claimed that this fact is why the state should protect video games because they are a part of culture, which is protected under the notion of peace. The state exists to create an environment that promotes the common good of its citizens, which allows each citizen to pursue the basic goods, according to their rational plan of life. Still remaining is the issue of whether or not there are video games that should be censored or restricted in some way. However, these preliminary ideas are necessary to be able to answer that question; therefore, it will have to wait for another time.

Bibliography


Alonso Villarán—Kant’s Idea Of The Highest Good: Its Ethical Importance For The Overcoming Of Evil And To Answer The “Whither” Question

The goal of this paper is to defend Kant’s idea of the highest good (das höchste Gut, a world in which virtue will be rewarded with happiness, one which is both a duty and an object of hope for humans, individually and collectively) against one of the more popular criticisms raised against Kant's inclusion of it in his ethical system, namely the problem of irrelevance, this time with special focus on what he says in Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Bloßen Vernunft (in what follows, the Religion). Concretely, it will be argued that the highest good is important, among other reasons, both for the overcoming of evil and in order to answer the “whither” question.

Considering that a defense of Kant's idea of the highest good is not exhausted by a response to the problem of irrelevance, and that the defenses unfolded in the secondary literature since Beck’s attack to the concept in 1960 can be classified in different groups, I would like first to outline the way in which this discussion, known as the “Beck-Silber controversy,” has been developed so far. This will helps us to

271 The concept of the highest good is especially developed in the Kritik der reinen Vernunft, the Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, and Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Bloßen Vernunft.

contextualize the defense contained in this paper, to classify it, and to set up its limits.

This paper is divided in four sections. The first section contains the promised outline of the discussion around Kant's concept of the highest good in the English-speaking world. The second section is devoted to the defense of the ethical importance of the highest good for the overcoming of evil, followed by a third, in which its ethical importance for the answer to the "whither" question is explained. The fourth and final section contains some brief conclusions.

The Beck-Silber Controversy: An Outline

An exhaustive revision of the criticisms pointed out against Kant's idea of the highest good in the English-speaking world since the second half of the last century, reveals Beck as the critics' champion. In fact, what other commentators sympathetic to Beck's critical approach have done later is to empower his inaugural claims. In other words, we have not found other substantial criticisms besides the four that Beck presented in his referred to work, but only reinforcements of these.

But to which four criticisms are we referring to? Beck, we have to clarify, neither presents these criticisms in an individualized way, nor gives each criticism a name. What he does is to present the problematic of the highest good by assessing two questions, which are answered negatively, namely: Is the highest good the determining ground of the will? Is there a duty to promote it? Now, while answering these two questions, we find him positing four problems that can be named as those of heteronomy, unsuitability, impossibility, and irrelevance.

According to the problem of heteronomy, the highest good cannot be the determining ground of the will without undermining the principle of autonomy, insofar as the concept of the highest good is an object that, moreover, has happiness as
one of its components. Only the moral law can be regarded as determining ground of the will, Beck argues, if we follow what Kant's says in the *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* and in the Analytic of the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (in what follows, the *Second Critique*). In Beck's words, "it is only the law as a necessary component of the highest good that is the determining ground" of the will. The highest good "is not an independent determining ground of the will in addition to or in place of one of its components." 273

According to the problem of *unsuitability*, there cannot be a duty to promote the highest good, which Beck reduces to a duty to crown virtue with happiness, insofar as this idea is neither contained in any of the formulations of the categorical imperative, nor in those ends that are also duties in *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*. In other words, Beck is claiming that the highest good does not fit in Kant's ethical system, being something more like an arbitrary later addition to it, from which an unjustified duty to reward virtue will follow.

According to the problem of *impossibility*, there is nothing we can do to reward virtue with happiness, being a task reserved, in the best case, to a Supreme Being.

Finally, according to the problem of *irrelevance*, since the highest good cannot be considered the determining ground of the will, and since it does not add new duties, it must be regarded as irrelevant for ethics.

As mentioned, these criticisms have been later reinforced by other commentators, making any attempt of defense even more challenging. Nonetheless, since the focus here is the problem of *irrelevance*, one that has not been especially strengthened after Beck, it seems useless to present these extensions. But what this outline gives us so far is a sense of what a complete defense of Kant's idea of the highest good requires, namely a response to each of these four criticism, and

not only a response to the problem of *irrelevance*, as some commentators seem to believe.

Let that be said in relation to the work of the “critics;” but what about that of the defenders? As Caswell\(^{274}\) has helpfully distinguished, the defenders of Kant’s idea of the highest good—an effort that started with Silber\(^{275}\)—can be divided in three groups: the “revisionists,” the “secularizers,” and the “maximalists.” The “revisionists” consider that the highest good is morally important since it corrects some supposed problems found in the rest of Kant’s ethics (for instance, the so-called problem of “formalism” of the moral law [Silber]). The “secularizers” also try to save the highest good as part of Kant’s ethics, but argue that it only makes sense in a secular version, i.e. without the religious elements that Kant attaches to the concept (the postulates of God and immortality). Finally, the “maximalists” defend the highest good in its theological version, but without assuming that Kant introduced the concept in order to solve some supposed problems found in the foundations of his ethical system, as the “revisionists” do.

Our defense, one that exceeds the limits of this paper in its scope, claims to be a “maximalist” one, and in this opportunity focuses its efforts in the problem of *irrelevance*, with special emphasis on what Kant says in the *Religion*.

**The Highest Good and the Overcoming of Evil**

If the highest good does not add new duties, and if it cannot be considered the determining ground of the will, it must be regarded as *irrelevant* for moral purposes, Beck claims. But is this conclusion accurate? Kant himself asserts, in the

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Religion, that the highest good does not add new duties (R 6: 5)\(^{276}\) and he clarifies, in the Second Critique, that the highest good can be thought as the determining ground of the will only insofar as it has the moral law as its supreme component (PrR 5: 109). But does it follow from this that the highest good is irrelevant for ethics, as Beck asserts? It does not seem to be the case.

In Book III of the Religion, as has been explained in different terms by Anderson-Gold and by Caswell, Kant argues that the highest good (which now is also named the "ethical community" or "ethical commonwealth" [das ethische gemeine Wesen], name that resembles that of the "moral world" [die moralische Welt] found in earlier works such as the Kritik der reinen Vernunft [in what follows, the First Critique]) is necessary for the overcoming of evil. In Anderson-Gold’s words, “the ethical commonwealth is the ideal that individuals must propose to one another as the means for overcoming the ethical state of nature.”\(^{277}\) where the evil principle is constantly attacking the good one. For Caswell, in turn, “only the adoption of the highest good as a complete object, as the perfect synthesis of both perfect virtue and complete happiness, is sufficient to overturn evil.”\(^{278}\) Now, here I do not want to enter into the detail of how their approaches differ. Instead, I will go directly to Kant’s work and give my account of Kant’s own explanation of how it is true that the highest good is necessary.

\(^{276}\) In this paper, the following acronyms for Kant’s works will be used. All references are to the volume and page of the “Akademie-Ausgabe” (Kants gesammelte Schriften, ed. Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 29 vols. [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902]).

PrR--Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, trans. by Gregor.
R--Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Bloßen Vernunft, trans. by


\(^{278}\) Caswell, “Kant’s Conception of the Highest Good,” 188.
for the overcoming of evil. The reader will realize by herself to what extent this defense differs from those of Anderson-Gold and Caswell.

Kant starts Book III of the Religion by recalling the daily battle, within each individual, between the good and the evil principles. In this struggle, he adds, the most we can attain is freedom. Nonetheless, this battle is never-ending, so we are called to be constantly ready for the clash. Now, in Kant’s search for the causes of the evil principle, he finds that it arises in community, i.e., the evil principle emerges when an individual finds another, and not when she is in isolation. As he explains,

he [the human being] is poor (or considers himself so) only to the extent that he is anxious that other human beings will consider him poor and will despise him for it. Envy, addiction to power, avarice, and the malignant inclinations associated with these, assail his nature, which on its own is undemanding, as he is among human beings (R 6: 93).

Moral dispositions, hence, get corrupted when humans are among humans according to Kant. But that the evil principle arises in community opens the door for its solution at the same level, i.e., at the communitarian level, particularly through the establishment of a society unified under the good principle or, in other words, under the laws of virtue. Otherwise, the individual will never be able to completely supersede the attacks of the evil principle. Kant is convinced, therefore, that unless a society united by the laws of virtue is established –an ideal that constitutes a duty for humans– the evil principle will never be superseded. In Kant’s words, “only in this way can we hope for a victory of the good principle over the evil one” (R 6: 94).

Later in the same section of the Religion, Kant makes a distinction between the ethical state of nature (der ethische Naturlzustand) and what he calls the ethico-civil state (die ethisch-bürgerliche Gesellschaft, a society united under the laws of virtue). According to Kant, it is in the ethical state of nature
that ethical dispositions get corrupted. And this is true, for Kant, “even with the good will of each individual” \((R 6: 69)\). And why is this? As he asserts, “because of a lack of principle which unites them,” which cause them to deviate “through their dissentions from the common goal of goodness” \((R 6: 69)\). Now, a community under the laws of virtue, thanks to which the evil principle can be superseded, is also called by him the ethical community \((das ethische gemeine Wesen)\), and is equated with the highest good by Kant \((R 6: 97)\). So what he is arguing is that the highest good is necessary for the overcoming of evil, which displays its moral importance.

Whether it is true or not what Kant (like Rousseau) presupposes, namely that, in isolation, moral dispositions remain pure, the thesis according to which in an ethical community, i.e. in a community united under the laws of virtue, the attacks of the evil principle can be superseded, is strong. As it has been quoted, many evils arise in community, such as “envy, addiction to power, avarice” \((R 6: 93)\). Now, we can individually try as much as we can to not fall prey to these “passions” \((Leidenschaften, as Kant also calls them)\); nonetheless, we will always be in peril of relapsing. So unless we and our fellow humans get engaged in the common project of constructing the highest good, i.e. of creating an ethical community, one unified under the good principle, that risk will always be at hand. We are corruptible, so insofar as there are other humans disrupting our originally good moral disposition, instead of helping us in our strivings to become better, we will (individually) never be able to emancipate ourselves from the attacks of the evil principle.

Here we have, therefore, a strong reason that explains the ethical importance of the highest good: it is necessary for nothing less than the overcoming of evil, insofar as, unless an ethical community is established, the evil principle will never be superseded.
The Highest Good is the Answer to the “Whither” Question

The other reason that Kant gives for the ethical importance of the highest good in the Religion is found in its Preface. There we find Kant saying how morality needs neither religion nor any end (i.e., no material determining ground of the will) “either in order to recognize what duty is or to impel its performance” (R 6: 4). In this sense, he is being consistent with what he said, for instance, in the Analytic of the Second Critique. Nonetheless, he adds, it may be the case that morality has a necessary reference to an end, “not as the grounds of its maxims but as a necessary consequence accepted in conformity with them” (R 6: 4). But why would that reference be necessary? In Kant's opinion, because without such an end the moral agent would be instructed merely “as to how to operate but not as to the whither (wohin)” (R 6: 4); and, he adds, if that were the case, the moral agent, and moreover, reason itself, would never obtain satisfaction. This end is the highest good, so we can say that this idea is also ethically important insofar as it is the answer to the “whither,” i.e., the “where to” question, which is a fundamental moral question for humans (something that, it is important to highlight, has been previously remarked, in different terms, by “maximalists” such as Wood,279 Godlove,280 Engstrom,281 and Wike282).

What Kant is saying here is fundamental. He is establishing, in simple terms, that ethics is not only about

282 Wike, Kant on Happiness in Ethics (Albany: Suny Press, 1995).
duties, as many commentators believe, but also about a horizon, a destination. In Kant’s opinion, we cannot do without an answer to the “where to” question. As Kant develops further this idea, morality does not need an end in order to determine what the right conduct is; nonetheless,

an end proceeds from morality just the same; for it cannot be a matter of indifference to reason how to answer the question, what is then the result of this right conduct of ours? nor to what we are to direct our doings or nondoings, even granted this is not fully in our control, at least as something with which they are to harmonize (R 6: 5).

And this end, we already know, is the highest good, for whose possibility it is necessary to postulate the existence of God and of a future life, for the reasons he gives in the First and Second Critique. In sum, as Kant says, “it cannot be a matter of indifference to morality (...) whether it does or does not fashion for itself the concept of an ultimate end of all things” (R 6: 5). The highest good is, for him, this final end, one that, moreover, rises out of morality, i.e. is an idea that can be constructed out of the moral law.

Let me at this point return to what has been briefly referred before, namely the tendency, among Kant scholars, to reduce ethics to the dimension of duties. That is precisely the reason why the “critics” disregard the highest good as an ethical concept. The highest good could serve, some of them admit

283 Here Beck is representative of such a view, since for him, insofar as the highest good does not add new duties, it is irrelevant for ethics.
284 The unfolding of such thesis, namely that the highest good can be constructed out of the moral law, is not developed in this paper due to lack of space, and because it is the heart of the response to the problems of heteronomy and unsuitability, which are not approached here.
(Murphy, for instance), for religious purposes, since it is a matter of hope, but not for ethical ones. In relation to this I do not think that this is the case or that for Kant this was the case. It is true that the principle of autonomy and the moral law together constitute the keystones of his moral system, but the latter is not completed by them. As Phillip Rossi says, “there are (...) good reasons for thinking that autonomy is not the whole story of moral personhood for Kant.” In fact, Kant’s ethical system is completed with the inclusion of the highest good as our final destination. Otherwise, we could not make complete sense of our life.

The Preface to the First Edition of the Religion shows how, for Kant, morality is also concerned about the results of moral actions, and particularly concerned about the highest good as the final end of all things. It is an illusion, he would say, to think that we can live without asking ourselves about the results of our actions and, more precisely, about our final destination. His genius consists in presenting an end that proceeds from morality, which allows him to avoid bringing heteronomy back to his system. Now, since that final end which is a duty for us can only be thought as possible through the postulate of God, it turns out to be also a matter of (reasonable) hope. That explains how the question of hope is also practical, as he states in the First Critique, and how morality leads to religion.

The highest good, then, as the final end of all things, allows us to answer the unavoidable and dramatic question of our final destination. The highest good is nothing less than the ultimate goal of our lives. It is hard, then, to figure how this idea would not be fundamental for ethics. Thanks to the idea of the

285 J.G. Murphy, “The Highest Good as Content for Kant's Ethical Formalism (Beck 'Versus' Silber),” Kant-Studien 56 (1965): 102–110.
highest good we can complement what we had first, namely a duty (established by the moral law), with a horizon, a destination, an end, a final and overarching goal (which is grounded on the same moral law, constructed out of it). Thanks to this, the picture, the moral panorama is complete, and our moral life without doubt enriched.

The ethical question, then, is not only a question of duties, but also a question of destination (the “whither” question). The highest good in Kant’s ethical system appears precisely as our individual and collective destination, something that we must promote and, moreover, can hope for; another reason that shows its relevance for ethics.

Conclusions

In this paper I have worked out two reasons for proving the ethical importance of Kant’s idea of the highest good, which are found in the Religion. There are, in Kant’s works, other ones that show its moral relevance. For instance, in the First and Second Critique, we find Kant arguing that without the highest good the moral law will be pointless, and that it serves as a proper incentive for the moral agent (without bringing heteronomy back to the stage). To unfold these two other reasons, and to give a response to the other three problems (those of heteronomy, unsuitability, and irrelevance), is a task exceeds the limits of a presentation like this one. Nonetheless, we have attained at least two things. First, we now know what an overarching defense of the concept requires, namely a response to the four referred to problems. Second, we also know that the claim according to which the highest good is irrelevant for ethics is ungrounded, a defense that can even be extended with a future explanation of what Kant means when he says that, without the highest good, the moral law would be pointless, and that it serves as a proper moral incentive.
Bibliography


Murphy, J. G. "The Highest Good as Content for Kant's Ethical Formalism (Beck 'Versus' Silber)." *Kant-Studien* 56 (1965): 102–110.


Abstract: In this paper I discuss Ernest Sosa's distinction between animal and reflective knowledge from his *A Virtue Epistemology* and how he uses it to argue for the possibility of knowledge against the skeptic. Sosa claims that, if we are to prove to the philosophical skeptic that high-level, reflective knowledge is possible, then we must show that the various ‘sources’ of our beliefs are reliable. This poses problems, however, because it is thought by many that the attempt to prove the reliability of a belief source necessarily causes one to reason in a circle. This paper focuses on Sosa's interesting answer to this problem, which states that such necessary and circular reasoning is in fact virtuous and not vicious. I explain why this is the case for Sosa as well as draw out some implications of another, related claim of Sosa's; that, given the kind of beings we are, we necessarily assume that the sources of our beliefs are reliable in the first place.

One of the main driving forces behind Ernest Sosa's relatively recent book *A Virtue Epistemology* is the attempt to account for how knowledge is possible in a way consistent with both our common sense and everyday use of the word ‘know’ as well as with the demands of philosophical skepticism with respect to the possibility of knowledge. This is what Sosa's distinction between animal and reflective knowledge hopes to accomplish. Animal knowledge, for Sosa, is the correct acceptance of what he calls the ‘deliverance’ of a source resulting from and due to the exercise of an intellectual virtue or competence. In order for one to have higher-level, reflective...
knowledge, however, one must have animal knowledge that one has animal knowledge, for Sosa. As we shall see, this is to say that in order for us to have reflective knowledge we need to know that the sources of our beliefs are reliable. It has been extensively argued that proving the reliability of a source necessarily causes one to reason in a circle, thus making it impossible to prove the reliability of a source in an epistemically permissible way. This paper is an attempt to reconstruct Sosa’s response to this problem, with which he ends the first volume of *A Virtue Epistemology*, by capturing his somewhat complex position on the matter. Sosa argues that arguing in a circular way to prove the reliability of our sources is unavoidable but is ‘correct and legitimate procedure’ and, as such, is a competence or virtue, the exercise of which can result in knowledge. Sosa also argues that to be an animal which desires coherence among its beliefs, and that has certain general ways of forming beliefs, and to be such an animal that can actually function in the world in which it lives, is to be an animal who must assume the reliability of its sources of beliefs anyways.

**Animal Knowledge, Sensitivity, and the Principle of Exclusion**

As stated, Sosa is interested in accounting for how knowledge is possible in a way consistent with both our everyday use of the word ‘know’ as well as with the demands of philosophical skepticism. In order for a belief to count as what Sosa calls ‘animal knowledge’, the belief must be apt. A belief is apt if the belief is true, if it manifests some epistemic competence or virtue, and if the truth of the belief is due to or because of the exercise of such a competence or virtue. Sosa claims that what the skeptic sometimes requires for knowledge is that a belief be ‘sensitive’. In order for belief P to be sensitive, one is required to show that it is not the case that ¬P. In *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge, Volume 1* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 23.

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Epistemology and in ‘Reflective Knowledge in the Best Circles’ Sosa similarly claims that skeptics of knowledge claim that, in order for a belief to be knowledge, the belief must abide by what he calls the ‘principle of exclusion’. The ‘principle of exclusion’ is the following: “If one is to know that \( h \), then one must exclude (rule out) every possibility that one knows to be incompatible with one’s knowing that \( h \)”. What Sosa is attempting to do with the stipulation of ‘animal’ knowledge is allow for the possibility that there are some beliefs which count as ‘knowledge’ yet do not meet what for him are the traditional demands of ‘sensitivity’ nor do they respect the principle of exclusion.

Sosa claims that, in contrast to the traditional requirements of knowledge, “[w]hat is required of one’s belief, if it is to constitute knowledge, is at most its having some basis that it would (likely) have had only if true” i.e. what Sosa calls ‘basis-relative safety’, rather than sensitivity. A belief \( P \) is safe “provided it would have been held only if (most likely) \( p \)”. Sosa’s animal knowledge does not even need to meet this requirement, however. Even if unsafe, i.e. even if a belief is held while it is unclear that the belief is true, or that it has some basis it would likely have if true, Sosa claims that as long as the belief is apt, it counts as animal knowledge. This is all well and good and indeed does account for some of the ways in which we commonsensically use the word know, but Sosa also wants to account for a higher form of knowledge above the animal level, otherwise the skeptic who doubts the possibility of real, high-level, enlightened, human knowledge, wins. Sosa call this latter type of knowledge reflective knowledge.

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290 Ibid., 25.
Reflective Knowledge

High-level 'reflective' knowledge, for Sosa, is not only apt belief but defensibly apt belief, i.e. “apt belief that the subject aptly believes to be apt, and whose aptness the subject can therefore defend against relevant skeptical doubts”\textsuperscript{291}. Sosa provides a helpful way to understand this: “If \( K \) represents animal knowledge and \( K^+ \) reflective knowledge, then the basic idea may be represented thus: \( K^+ = KKp \)\textsuperscript{292}.

If reflective knowledge is apt belief that we aptly believe, i.e. animal knowledge of which one has animal knowledge, then, according to Sosa’s characterization of animal knowledge, one must exercise a 'meta-competence' such that its exercise causes a belief about an apt belief to be, itself, apt. To understand this better Sosa presents us with the following scenario: “Traditionally our knowledge is said to have ‘sources’ such as perception, memory, and inference. Epistemic sources issue ‘deliverances’ that we may or may not accept”\textsuperscript{293}. To reiterate, correctly accepting the deliverance of a source due to the exercise of a competence is animal knowledge, for Sosa. If to have reflective knowledge is to aptly believe one’s apt belief, then, in order to have reflective knowledge, one must aptly believe that one correctly accepted the deliverance from a source, and that this correct acceptance is attributable to a competence. What one must do before one can know the two things just mentioned is know that the source of one’s deliverance is in fact reliable and that it is operating in its appropriate normal conditions, given that the truth of these two things is what fundamentally allows an acceptance of a deliverance to count as knowledge. Knowing that a source of belief is reliable is problematic however. As Noah Lemos rightly notes, "[t]he problem of epistemic circularity arises when we

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{291} Ibid., 24.
\item \textsuperscript{292} Ibid., 32.
\item \textsuperscript{293} Ibid., 101.
\end{itemize}
consider how we know whether our sources of belief are reliable”\textsuperscript{294}.

**Epistemic Circularity, Internalism and Externalism**

Different from logical circularity, where the conclusion of an argument appears as one of the premises, *epistemic* circularity is where the attempt to justify the belief that a particular source is reliable relies upon or assumes that that same source is reliable somewhere within the justification process. In order to see how this is the case it will help to illustrate how Sosa views the situation of epistemology in general.

In ‘Philosophical Scepticism and Epistemic Circularity’ Sosa divides various epistemological positions into two camps: (1) ‘formal internalism’, which holds that “a belief can be justified and amount to knowledge only through the backing of reasons or arguments”\textsuperscript{295}, and (2) ‘formal externalism’, which is simply the denial of formal internalism, i.e. the denial that a belief can be justified and amount to knowledge *only* through the backing of reasons or arguments\textsuperscript{296}. Sosa states that an acceptable internalist epistemological account of all one's knowledge in some domain D would be a ‘legitimating’ account in the following sense:


\textsuperscript{296} Sosa acknowledges that he uses these terms in a special sense. I adopt his usage because I am only concerned with *his* characterization of our general epistemological situation here. It should therefore be noted that I acknowledge that the way in which Sosa uses these terms is not necessarily consistent with the way in which they are generally used in epistemology.
A is a legitimating account of one's knowledge in domain D IFF D is a domain of one's beliefs that constitute knowledge and are hence justified (and more), and A specifies the sorts of inferences that justify one's beliefs in D, without circularity or endless regress.\textsuperscript{297}

Sosa claims that this cannot be attained, however. He says that if we adopt the position of the formal internalist,

\[\text{[i]t is impossible to attain a legitimating account of absolutely all one's own knowledge; such an account admits only justification provided by inference or argument and, since it rules out circular or endlessly regressive inferences, such an account must stop with premises that it supposes or 'presupposes' that one is justified in accepting, without explaining how one is justified in accepting them in turn.}\textsuperscript{298}

Given that such a situation does indeed seem unsatisfactory and unobtainable on its own terms, Sosa believes we ought to be epistemological externalists (according to his definition) if we have any hope of showing that we (animally) know the reliability of a source of belief\textsuperscript{299}. Indeed, providing reasons, arguments, etc. could be a competence to which the truth of a belief in the reliability of a belief source can be attributed. The question now, then, is the following: How does Sosa believe we can use reasons and arguments to justify our belief in the reliability of an epistemic source?

\textsuperscript{297} Ibid., 267 emphasis mine.
\textsuperscript{298} Ibid., 267-8 emphasis mine.
\textsuperscript{299} It should be noted that this makes Sosa sound like he has very strong ‘internalist’ commitments, which is not necessarily true. What should be kept in mind throughout the following is that when dealing with ‘the skeptic’ and arguing for the reliability of our sources, Sosa grant’s “the skeptic’s internalist assumption...for the sake of argument”. Sosa, Ernest. \textit{A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge, Volume 1} (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 27.
In ‘Philosophical Scepticism and Epistemic Circularity’ Sosa identifies coherentism, foundationalism, and reliabilism (broadly construed) as the most viable alternatives to his ‘formal internalism’. Sosa’s virtue epistemology has a ‘reliabilist’ commitment in that proving the reliability of the sources of our beliefs would make reflective knowledge possible. It should be noted, however, that Sosa’s sees problem with both foundationalism and coherentism and, understanding these in a general sense, rejects the way in which they account for the justification of a belief. This poses a problem, however, because Sosa thus has limited options when it comes to justifying a belief through inferences, arguments, etc. Sosa puts the general situation thus:

Sometimes a justified belief is justified because supported by reasons; reasons that the believer not only could have but does have...Justifying beliefs need to be justified in turn. And now we have three possibilities. As we consider the reasons for one’s belief, and the reasons, if any, for these reasons, and the reasons, if any, for these in turn, and so on, either (1) some ultimate reasons are justified noninferentially, are justified in some way that does not require the support of some ulterior reasons, or (2) there are no ultimate reasons: further reasons always justify one’s reasons, at every level, no matter how remote the level, and these further reasons always go beyond any reason already invoked at earlier levels, or (3) there are no ultimate reasons: further reasons always justify one’s reasons, at every level, but these further reasons need not go beyond reasons already invoked at earlier levels.300

Option 1 is foundationalism, which Sosa does not entertain as a live possibility in A Virtue Epistemology and reduces to reliabilism in ‘Philosophical Scepticism and Epistemic Circularity’; option 2 is that of infinitism or the infinite regress which is ultimately unsatisfactory because belief

can never ultimately attain justification; and option 3 “is that of the circle. One’s justifying structure of reasons circles: some reason for a reason at a given level returns us to an earlier level”\(^{301}\). Given that foundationalism and the infinite regress are out, for Sosa, as possible ways of justifying belief essentially through reasons and argument, the only option seems to be circular reasoning, which has traditionally been understood as ‘vicious’. This is so because it has been generally understood as incapable of providing any sort of justification given it is self-supporting and will show its conclusion to be justified no matter what. Sosa claims epistemically circular reasoning is virtuous and not vicious, however. As such, he claims that it is a viable way for one to argue for the reliability of a source through argument and he agrees that arguing for the reliability of our sources is necessarily circular.

**The Necessity of Circularity**

If I wanted to justify belief P based on the fact that it came from a reliable source, the belief in the reliability of that source would have to itself be justified if ultimate justification for belief P is to be obtained. Proving the reliability of a source involves justifying a belief like Q: ‘Source X is reliable’ by using other beliefs. If one is a reliabilist (as Sosa characterizes himself, although indeed is a very general and broad sense), then the only way for me to prove Q via argumentation, reasoning, etc., is if I use a belief to justify Q that is itself attained through a reliable source. Therefore, it seems that the reliability of a source of belief cannot be argued for based purely on argumentation using beliefs without falling into circularity. Even if I could argue for the reliability of one source by assuming the reliability of another, I would eventually have to justify my belief that that other source is reliable, and doing so would require that I assume some other source is reliable and so on until I must eventually assume the reliability of the source in question and, again, enter into a circle.

\(^{301}\) Ibid., 123.
Coherence, the Assumption of Reliability and Virtuous Circularity

If falling into circularity is inevitable when attempting to prove a source of belief is reliable, does this mean that the skeptic wins and high-level reflective knowledge, knowing full-well, is impossible? Sosa argues it does not. Sosa believes it can be shown that our sources are reliable and that we can aptly believe our apt beliefs. Sosa’s argument for this has two elements: he argues 1 – that it is more coherent for us to believe a source is reliable if such a source is in fact one of our sources, and 2 – that there is a virtuous form of circular reasoning which we can legitimately use to justify our belief in the reliability of a source. I now go into these two elements in more detail.

First, Sosa argues that it is more consistent of us, more coherent for us, to believe a given source of belief is reliable if that source is in fact one of the ways in which our beliefs are formed. In *A Virtue Epistemology* Sosa claims that “[p]rominent among things we hold dear…is the coherence of our minds. When constituted by inter-belief explanatory relations, such coherence goes with the value of understanding. We want our beliefs to be so integrated as to enable answers for our many and varied whys” 302. In ‘Philosophical Scepticism and Epistemic Circularity’ Sosa says something akin to the following: ‘Suppose (e) B(elief): [W is my overall way of forming beliefs]. And compare (f) B:[W is reliable], (g) B:[W is not reliable], and (h) B:[One is unsure whether or not W is reliable] 303. Sosa claims that it is “more satisfyingly coherent” for us to believe (e) & (f), than it is for us to believe either (e) & (g) or (e) & (h) at the same time. Being charitable, his point seems to be that if we are necessarily bound to form beliefs in certain ways, i.e. due to the

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302 Ibid., 113.
303 In the article Sosa does not believe that all these are ‘beliefs’ per say, but for the present purpose I assume that they are to make his point and not get into irrelevant details.
beings we are, we necessarily have certain sources that provide us with ‘deliverances’ that we may or may not accept. We are either forced or drawn to assume (perhaps because we seek coherence) that such sources are (generally) reliable. This is perhaps a very questionable assumption to make but it seems as if it is one we all make, for otherwise we would not generally trust our sources of belief and would be less able to function in the world (if at all) than we do on an everyday basis. To try and capture the heart of Sosa’s position, it could be said that he believes that we all assume that the ways in which we actually do form beliefs (not all the ways in which we can potentially form beliefs but the ways we in a sense must due to the kind of beings we are) are (at least partially) reliable ways of forming beliefs because if we did not assume this, then we would in some sense be incoherent given the ways we actually do function in the world. In that we seek coherence, i.e. we seek to be in the best possible epistemic situation, we all ought to make this assumption.

The second element of Sosa’s position, which shows that we can legitimately show our sources to be reliable, is his argument that epistemically circular reasoning is not vicious, but in a sense virtuous. To see why he believes this is the case, let us first consider the following scenario:

Suppose W is our total way of forming beliefs. If we believe that W is reliable, R(W), our belief B:R(W) is itself formed by W. And if a belief is justified iff formed in a reliable way, then our B:R(W) is justified iff W is reliable (given that it is formed by W). B:R(W) is justified, therefore, iff W is reliable.304

This seems straightforward, but indeed very circular. Sosa’s point here is that given we necessarily form beliefs in certain ways, the only way we can justify B:R(W) is by using beliefs

which come from source W. While it is the case that all we can do is use the ways of forming beliefs (the sources of beliefs) that we necessarily have given the kind of beings we are, isn't it the case that all this shows is that, as is evident from Sosa's wording above, if a source is reliable it can be shown to be reliable using beliefs attained through that same source?

William Alston argues that this poses a problem because we cannot therefore prove the reliability of our sources outright and, as such, this does not help us determine which sources of belief are unreliable and which are reliable, i.e. what we were presumably attempting to accomplish in the first place. Sosa captures the dissatisfaction well so I do well to quote him here:

If we justify our belief in the reliability of our \( W \) – \( B:R(W) \) – by noting that \( W \) itself yields \( B:R(W) \), then anyone with a rival but self-supporting method \( W^* \) would be able to attain an equal measure of justification through parallel reasoning. They would justify their belief \( B:R(W^*) \) by noting that \( W^* \) itself yields \( B:R(W^*) \). So are we not forced to conclude that someone clever enough could attain a measure of rational justification equal to ours so long as their way of forming beliefs, \( W^* \), turned out to be, to the same extent, coherently and comprehensively self-supporting?\(^{305}\)

The often quoted example is that one could potentially use beliefs attained through the use of a crystal ball to prove that 'crystal ball gazing' is a reliable source of belief. Sosa's answer to this is interesting.

Sosa claims it is a serious mistake to assume that "all self-supporting arguments are on par"\(^{306}\). Take \( T \) to equal 'A belief X amounts to knowledge if and only if it satisfies

\(^{305}\) Ibid., 284.
\(^{306}\) Ibid., 289.
conditions $C^{307}$. Sosa says that if we are to explain how we 'know' $T$ itself, we would have to appeal to theory $T$, for it explains what something must be if it amounts to knowledge$^{308}$. $T$ is therefore 'self-supporting' in that, given it explains what something must be to amount to knowledge, it explains how it itself can be known. Sosa says something important about this, however. Sosa says:

It is not just in virtue of being self-supporting that our belief in $T$ would acquire its epistemic status required for knowledge. Rather it would be in virtue of meeting conditions $C$. And conditions $C$ must not yield that a belief or a system of beliefs has the appropriate positive epistemic status provided simply that it is self-supporting. For this would obviously be inadequate. Therefore our belief in $T$ would be self-supporting, as had better be any successful and general theory of knowledge, but it would not amount to knowledge or even to a belief with the appropriate epistemic status, simply in virtue of being self-supporting.$^{309}$

Sosa’s point is that, in the above example, $T$ would still need to satisfy conditions $C$ on top of the fact that $T$ supports itself. Sosa does say that “[w]e shall never be able really to have an explanation of anything without our having some knowledge” and therefore “$T$ is something we must know if it is to give us real understanding [of how our beliefs can be of the PES ‘knowledge’], and in offering it we are perhaps, in some sense, ‘presupposing’ that we know it”$^{310}$. It seems that the case is similar when it comes to reliability: although it seems to be the case that we have to presuppose that we know what conditions a source must satisfy if it is to be a reliable source, even though we can only show a source to be reliable through epistemically circular reasoning, a reliable source can, on top of

$^{307}$ See ibid., 287.
$^{308}$ See ibid., 289.
$^{309}$ Ibid., 289.
$^{310}$ Ibid., 288.
this, satisfy the conditions necessary for it to count as a reliable source. Presumably, doing so would then distinguish between the reliable and the unreliable sources. Perhaps this does not meet the demands of the skeptic but, if one recalls, one only need to have animal knowledge that a source is reliable for one to reflectively know a belief attained through such a source, for Sosa.

**Higher-level Reflective Knowledge**

In ‘Reflective Knowledge in the Best Circles’, Sosa applies the animal/reflective knowledge distinction he develops more fully in *A Virtue Epistemology* to the case of knowledge about the reliability of one's source of belief. He claims there that reflective knowledge does “not require infallible reliability, but only a high level of reliability”\(^{311}\) (RKBC 282). Indeed, to have animal knowledge that a source of one's belief is reliable is for it to be true that one's source is reliable and that the truth of this is attributable to the exercise of an epistemic competence or virtue. At the end of ‘Philosophical Scepticism and Epistemic Circularity’ Sosa argues that once it is understood that the only way to justify our belief that a source is reliable is to argue in a circle “what option is left to us except to go ahead and ‘beg’ that question...(though ‘begging the question’ and ‘arguing circularly’ may now be misnomers for what we do, since it is surely no fallacy, not if it constitutes correct and legitimate intellectual procedure)” (PSEC 289). Indeed, since to argue in a circle in the way described above to prove the reliability of a source is the only and best thing we can do to justify the belief that a source is reliable (above and beyond the reliability we assume such sources have simply in virtue of them being our sources), it is indeed ‘correct and legitimate intellectual

procedure’, an intellectual virtue or competence which results in our having the true belief that a given source is (likely to be) reliable and thus results in such a belief being an apt one, animal knowledge. In that showing we can have animal knowledge of the reliability of a given source is what was required for the possibility of reflective knowledge, Sosa shows that his virtue epistemology (coupled with his explanation of the virtue of circular reasoning) explains that there is a sense in which we have higher-level, reflective knowledge, and the skeptic is, in a sense, defeated.

Conclusion

We have seen how Sosa attempts to explain both our common sense use of the word ‘know’ which does not seem to meet the requirements of the skeptic, as well as the possibility of higher-level reflective knowledge. Reflective knowledge was seen to depend upon showing that the sources of our beliefs are reliable but that proving this through reason and argument, when one has reliabilist commitments, necessarily enters one into a circle. Sosa argues that not only are we drawn to assume the reliability of the sources of belief we have in virtue of being the kind of beings we are, but that if circular reasoning is unavoidable when proving the reliability of our sources then it is ‘correct and legitimate intellectual procedure’ to reason circularly. Such circular reasoning is therefore a competence, and if we can attribute the true belief that a source is reliable to the exercise of such a competence, then we can have animal knowledge of an apt belief, i.e. we are capable of aptly believing that we correctly accept the deliverance of a source due to the exercise of a lower-level competence – of having reflective knowledge. While this may be the case, as Peter Klein points out, Sosa’s argument may rest on his belief that we are in a sense first and foremost permitted to assume the reliability of our sources of belief, something which is surely questionable and worth serious consideration. If Sosa is right, however, our epistemic situation is an interesting one where, if we desire to
be coherent beings, not only must we justify beliefs only with other beliefs that are attained through a reliable source and therefore engage in circular reasoning, but we are in a sense determined to have certain beliefs, i.e. the beliefs that our sources are at least somewhat reliable. As such, Sosa seems to believe that, given the kind of beings we are, i.e. reflective beings who have certain belief sources, it is unavoidable to reason circularly and there are some beliefs or assumptions which cannot be removed from a human’s coherent understanding of the world.

Bibliography


As has just been said, my topic is Reading Thomas Aquinas. And that’s exactly what I want to do – read some Thomas Aquinas with you. Why do this? What’s special or different about Thomas Aquinas? I suggest that what causes problems in reading Aquinas results from the type of profession he exemplified, the different types of works he published, and the differing sorts of audiences he envisioned for different types of works. As well, in some cases, one finds his thought develops or evolves from one work to another.

Accordingly, if we search for what he thought about a particular topic by only turning to one of his works – and that appears to happen in all too many cases – we run the risk of getting not only an incomplete view, but a distorted one.

Before we look at the first example, I want to stress that Thomas Aquinas was a theologian. While he may have written works that should be styled philosophy, he was solely a theologian. Everything he wrote, he wrote for a theological goal.

As a professor of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, his title, like that of all the other professors, was Magister in sacra pagina, literally, ‘Master in the Sacred Page’, or in more familiar terms, a Master of Scripture. As such, his major duty was to read the Christian Scriptures, that is, to explain the text of individual books of the Old and New Testaments. In practice, this meant that during each academic year, he lectured on a book from the Old Testament one semester, and on one from the New Testament in the other semester. Among Aquinas’ works that have come to us are his lectures on the Books of Job, Isaiah, and the Psalms, as well as on the Gospels of Matthew and John, in addition to the Epistles
of St. Paul. His method in lecturing was to present only the literal sense, since any attempt to see in a particular text a spiritual or mystical sense must presuppose a correct grasp of the literal sense.\textsuperscript{312} The second duty was to dispute, that is, to solve by discussion questions raised by the text of Scripture. I’ll return to that later. But first, I want to examine the selections from TEXTS # 1 below, one of which is from a scriptural lecture and the other from one of this theological syntheses.

Lecture on John, ch. 1, lect. 1:

"In the beginning was the Word"

In order to understand this name 'word' one must know that according to the Philosopher (I. Perh. 2) those things spoken are signs of things in the soul. Necessarily, what is within our souls that is signified by an external word is called a word.

It is obvious that what is signified by an external word - that signified thing existing internally in the soul - is prior to the word spoken externally, prior as its existing cause. If therefore we want to know what is the internal word of the mind, let us see what it is that the externally produced word signifies.

In our intellect there are three things, i.e., (1) the potency of intellect, (2) the species of the thing understood, which is its form as related to the intellect itself, just as the species of color is related to the eye's pupil, and (3) the activity of the intellect which is intellection. None of these is signified by the external, spoken word. (For example) this name 'stone' does not signify the substance of the intellect, because this isn't what we intend to say in using the name. Nor does it signify the species, which is the means by which the intellect has its intellection, since this also in not what is intended when the name 'stone' is spoken. Nor does it signify the very activity of intellection, since that activity is not one proceeding externally from the mind that intellects; but remaining in the mind. Therefore that properly is called internal word that is formed by the one intellecting as he intellects.

What is expressed as formed in the soul is called the internal word. It is compared to the intellect, not as that by which the intellect intellects, but as that which it intellects, since it sees in what it expresses the nature of the thing intellected.

Summa of theology, I, q. 34:

Art. 1: "Is 'word' a personal name when said of God?"

On the contrary, Augustine says in De Trin. VII: "Just as the Son is referred to the Father, so 'word' is referred to that whose word it is." But 'Son' is a personal name, because it is said relatively. So, too is 'word'. I respond that the name 'word' as used of God, if taken in its proper
sense, is a personal name, not in any way an essential one.

In evidence of this, know that in us ‘word’ is said properly in three ways...The most evident and most common use is when ‘word’ is that which is proclaimed vocally, or as a sound. Insofar as the external word proceeds from within, two things are found in it, the sound itself and its signification. For a sound signifies what is conceived by the intellect, according to the Philosopher in I Perh; also, the sound proceeds from the imagination, as is said in the De anima. The sound that does not signify cannot be called ‘word’. Therefore, ‘word’ is said to be an externally spoken word, because it signifies an internal conception of the mind.

Thus, first and principally, the internal conception of the mind is called ‘word’. Secondarily, that sound signifying the internal conception is called ‘word’. Third, the imagination of the sound is called ‘word’.

Properly, word is said to be in God insofar as a word signifies the concept of the intellect. Augustine says in De Trin. XV, “One can understand a word, not only before the sound is spoken, not only before the imagination of the sound is had, already one can see some resemblance of the Word of him of whom it is said, “In the beginning was the Word.” Thus, it belongs to the reality of the concept that it proceeds from something else, namely, from the knowledge of the one conceiving it.

In TEXTS # 1, paralleling the selection from the lecture on St. John is a selection from the Summa of Theology where a similar topic is treated. A comparison of the two selections reveals most obviously a difference in detail which can be explained by the difference in intended audiences. In lecturing on the Gospel, Aquinas spoke to students of superior ability who were themselves intended to become Masters of Scripture. In contrast, the Summa of Theology, as Aquinas explains in its Prologue, was written for “beginners” in theology. In undertaking the composition of this Summa, Aquinas envisioned the sort of students under his charge at the Roman house of studies he had founded and was governing. It was not foreseen that these students would attend a university, but rather they were being
prepared to become ordinary, but competent preachers of Christianity. Before we look at these examples, we should realize that the selection from the lecture on John's Gospel is less than 1/3 on the complete explanation of the term 'word' that Aquinas as he considers the first sentence of that Gospel.

I suggest we look first to the passage from the Summa. In this case, despite the difference in audience, the presentation from the Lecture on John is perhaps no more difficult, but I wonder whether, if we were to read only the passage from the Summa, we would arrive at the same conclusion, the same understanding of Aquinas' position.

The Summa's question is: "Is 'word' a personal name when said of God?" What Aquinas is asking is this: In speaking of the Christian Trinity, 'Son of God' is a clear reference to the second person of that Trinity; but does 'Word of God' also name that same person?

The expression, On the Contrary, presents the authority whose answer to the question will influence Aquinas' response. "Augustine says in De Trin. VII: "Just as the Son is referred to the Father, so 'word' is referred to that whose word it is." Aquinas then draws out what is implied: 'But 'Son' is a personal name, because it is said relatively. So too is 'word'.' That is, to refer to someone as 'son' is to imply a father; similarly, to refer to 'word' is to refer to the person who produced the word. And so, since Christian scriptures identifies the 'Son of God' and the 'Word' of God, and since 'Word' is produced just as 'Son', 'Word' can be taken as a name of the second person of the Trinity.

In the response that then follows, Aquinas explains an internal word as resulting from the mind's activity of intellecting or understanding something. Accordingly, his goal is to show his reader why something in the mind can be called a 'word' and why Christians therefore have in this notion of 'word' a conception enabling them to talk about the second person of the Trinity.
He begins by stating that the name ‘word’, when predicated of God, does not signify the divine essence, but only one of the divine persons. (See the second paragraph: “I respond that...an essential one.”) To substantiate this point, he will distinguish between the mind’s activity and the internal word. The mind’s activity of understanding is implicitly taken here as a resemblance of God the Father, and since the internal word is produced the mind’s activity, ‘word’ is not to be used as a name for the Father, and so not for the essence shared by all three persons. Note then, in the long paragraph beginning, "In evidence of this..." how Aquinas points out first, that ‘word’ is said of the spoken word. Then he explains, that “Insofar as the external word proceeds from within, two things are found in it, the sound itself and its signification. For a sound signifies what is conceived by the intellect...” And so, in the final sentence of the paragraph, he remarks that we only call the spoken sound that has a significance a ‘word’ because it signifies an internal conception of the mind.

In the next paragraph, he summaries the uses of ‘word’, once again using the expression “internal conception of the mind.” But in the final paragraph comes the application to the Trinity. He begins with Augustine, whose statements on the resemblance of human mental activity to the Trinity are classic for all Christian theology. In effect, Augustine is saying that, if we examine the things we name ‘word’, we see why the internal word is “some resemblance” of the Word spoken of in Scripture - and he refers to the opening of St. John’s Gospel. Following this, Aquinas sums up the notion of the internal word: “Thus, it belongs to the reality of the concept that it proceeds from something else, namely, from the knowledge of the one conceiving it.”

As I noted before we looked at the passage from the Summa, I wonder if a reader would understand from it what is to be found in the passage in the left column of TEXTS # 1, that from the Lecture on John’s Gospel. A not unrelated question might be: On the supposition that the reader of the passage from the Summa knew Descartes’ Meditations, would he see any connection between Aquinas’ internal conception of the mind and Descartes’ ideas open to the mind’s inspection?
I turn now to that passage from the Lecture. Aquinas begins here with a reference to Aristotle that brings out the relation of spoken words and "things in the soul": spoken words are "signs" of those internal things.

The second paragraph then points to the cause-effect relation between something in the soul and spoken words. (See: "It is obvious that...") The relation consists in the fact that only because we have thoughts do we bother to develop spoken words to signify them to others. Accordingly, Aquinas suggests that to discover what is the internal word that a spoken word signifies, we should ask what internal reality an external word can possible signify.

In the long paragraph following (See: "In our intellect..."), points out first, three obvious things or realities within the mind:

1. "the potency of intellect," that is, the mind as an ability to develop or grasp a general understanding, such as 'man' or 'goodness';

2. "the species of the thing understood..." Here, Aquinas, the metaphysician is speaking. Since the mind 'moves' or goes from a condition where it only potentially understands to one where it is actively or actually understanding, this new situation, this new reality which is the mind as actually understanding, is to be explained by the presence of a form as the source of the reality that is the mind that is now actually understanding. And so, he refers to a species as a second thing within the mind when understanding occurs.

3. "the activity of the intellect which is intellection." This third thing must be introduced by the metaphysician, because only in an infinite, absolutely simply mind, can the mind AS actually understanding be identical to intellection itself. Another way of stating this is: Only in a God can the activity of understanding be the understanding itself.

Now, as Aquinas then explains, a spoken work such as 'stone' does not signify any of the above-mentioned things. 'Stone' does not signify a
potency to understand, nor a mind in the act of understanding, nor the activity itself that is understanding. ‘Stone’ as a spoken word must refer to a fourth thing, which is then called the ‘internal word’.

Of this fourth thing that is called ‘internal word’ Aquinas writes in the last sentence of the final paragraph: “It is compared to the intellect, not as that by which the intellect intellects, but as that which it intellects, since it sees in what it expresses the nature of the thing intellected.”

Let raise again the question I mentioned at the end of our look at the passage from the Summa. In reading the text from the Summa, would you conclude that the internal word is a fourth thing within the mind? The Summa calls the internal word a “concept” as refers to it as proceeding “from the knowledge of the one conceiving it.” That knowledge would certainly be identical to the intellection referred to in the Lecture as the third to be distinguished within the mind. But how likely is it that the reader of the Summa might see the distinguish between the intellection itself and the internal word?

Or to ask the other question I also raised earlier. Would someone knowing Descartes’ Meditations, find in the Summa something resembling the ideas that Descartes proposes to study?

Obviously, my point in reading together the two passages from TEXTS # 1 was this: In reading any passage from some work of Aquinas, it is safest to be search for parallel expositions of the same doctrine, while being aware of possibly different audiences and different goals of different passages.

The second principal duty of a Master of Scripture was the solution of disputed questions. Under this rubric would fall the discussion of issues related to Scripture, but not ones that could be appropriately discussed in the process of lecturing on Scripture. For instance, many Scriptural texts refer to divine knowledge; or, in relation to the notion of a mental word such as Aquinas proposed in the Lecture on John’s Gospel, there were a
variety of views. These Aquinas could not discuss when his main task was, as in the Lecture we considered above, offering an interpretation of a verse such as “In the beginning was the Word.” But such issues as divine knowledge and the mental word merited discussion. The merited discussions can be found in the work of Aquinas entitled, Disputed Questions on Truth.

Aquinas’ disputed questions are collected under 11 titles, such as On Truth, On Potency, On Evil, On the Soul, and so on. Perhaps the most important is the Disputed Question On Truth which comprises 253 separate articles, each treating a separate question. The only linkage uniting these questions is that they all have something to do with truth, such as divine knowledge or providence, with the concept of truth itself treated only in the initial 12 questions. Much the same can be seen in the disputed questions On Potency, where the topics are the absolute potency of God, creation as related to God’s power, miracles, and so on. In the form in which we have these works, they are the highly polished, and almost certainly, amplified records of what went on in Aquinas’ classroom.

The practice guiding the holding of a disputation was as follows. Aquinas’ better students would develop objections to the position that Aquinas was to adopt in the discussion. Often these objections were taken either from opinions circulating at the time in Paris, or those proposed earlier by a theologian or philosopher with some authority. After these objections had been presented before fellow students and of course, before Aquinas himself, the latter would defend his position on the question, and then answer the objections one by one. As mentioned earlier, the records we have of these disputations are Aquinas’ highly polished and often modified versions.\footnote{Cf. Chenu, Toward Understanding, pp. 280-285; 85-91. Torrell, Initiation, pp. 87-97.} As such, they often represent more fully Aquinas’ presentation of a doctrine proposed with less detail in one of his Scriptural...
lectures or even in one of his theological syntheses, such as the Summa of Theology. 314

Below in TEXTS # 2 is found Aquinas's solution of a question concerning the number of esse in Christ. Esse – literally, the infinitive ‘to-be’ – is for Aquinas one of the constituting principles of an ens, that is, of a substantial being. However, for Aquinas the Latin ens, or in English, the substantive term ‘being’, is predicated both of an individual substance, and of each of the nine accidents – quality, quantity, relation, and so on. But to these two uses of ‘being’, most English translations of Aquinas add a third by also translating as ‘being’ the Latin esse when Aquinas uses it to signify the constituting principle of an individual reality. This seems to me to make unnecessarily confusing what is already such to readers not accustomed to Aquinas' thought. To avoid that confusion, I will leave the Latin esse untranslated when it signifies the constituting principle of a being.

In TEXTS 2, Aquinas is in effect asking how many principles of esse, that is, principles constituting a being, are there in Christ, a topic of importance to Masters of Scripture. An examination shows that the two texts offer different answers.

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Q.D. On the Union of the Incarnate Word

Art. 4: Is there only one esse in Christ?

I respond...esse properly and truly is said of the subsisting supposit. Accidents and non-subsisting forms are said to be insofar as something subsists in them, just as whiteness is being (ens) insofar as by it something is white. We must recognize that there are some forms by which a being exists, not simply, but under some condition, as is true of all accidental forms. However, there are some forms by which a thing subsisting simply has esse because the substantial esse proper to a subsisting thing constitutes it.

In Christ, the subsisting supposit is the person of the Son of God, which is substantiated simply by the divine nature, but not substantiated by the human nature. Because the Son of God was prior to his assumed humanity, there is no increase in any person by this assumed nature, nor is there any increase in perfection. However, the eternal supposit is substantiated by the human nature insofar as it is this man. Just as Christ is simply one because of the unity of the supposit, and two according to a certain condition because of the two natures, so too he has one esse simply because of the one eternal esse proper to the eternal supposit. There is another esse of this supposit, not insofar as the supposit is eternal, but insofar as temporally speaking it is made man. This esse although it is not an accidental esse, because 'man' is not predicated accidentally of the Son of God, is yet not the principal esse of its supposit, but a secondary esse. If in Christ there were two supposits, then each supposit would have its proper principal esse. And thus in Christ there would be simply two esse

[The truth of a contingent predication of God is constituted by the being of God, but there is needed, as a condition, something created that is external to God.]

Summa of Theology, III, q. 17:

Art 2: Is there more than one esse in Christ?

I respond that because there are two natures in Christ and one hypostasis, necessarily whatever
p pertains to a nature in Christ are two; however what pertains to the hypostasis in Christ is only one.

Esse pertains to both the nature and the hypostasis; to the hypostasis, as to that which has esse; to the nature, as to that by which something has esse. Now a nature is signified as a form that is called a being (ens) because by it something exists, e.g., just as by whiteness something is white, and by humanity something is a man. However, it must be kept in mind that, if some form or nature is what does not pertain to the personal esse of a subsisting hypostasis, that esse is not said to be simply the esse of that person, but only according to some condition, e.g., the to-be-white (esse album) is the esse of Socrates, not insofar as he is Socrates, but insofar as he is white. Nothing prohibits an esse of this type from being multiplied in a hypostasis or person, since the esse by which Socrates is white is one thing, and the esse by which he is musical is another. But the esse belonging of itself to that hypostasis or person cannot be multiplied in that person or hypostasis, because it is impossible that there not be only one esse of one thing.

If human nature comes to the Son of God, not hypostatically, but as an accident, then necessarily we propose in Christ an esse insofar as he is God, and another insofar as he is man. Therefore, since human nature is joined to the Son of God hypostatically or personally...it follows that a new personal esse does not come to him according to human nature, but only a new relation of the pre-existing personal esse, so that the divine person subsists in two natures.

As noted, Aquinas approaches this topic as a metaphysician asking about esse. It will perhaps be easier to understand, if we rephrase the problem in terms of a contingent proposition. That is, let's ask what is needed for the truth of this contingent proposition: “God has become this man.” Now for this proposition to be true requires something in God. However, by definition, God is totally one - no aspects, no parts - his wisdom is his power which is his goodness, and so on. And so, because God is identical to his action, we must say that for that proposition to be true, there must be the being of God. Next, for the truth of what is said about humanity, there must be a condition in creation, namely, a created
humanity external to God. This created humanity would only be a condition of the truth, not a cause of it, for God is the total cause of whatever is true concerning creation. The article on the right, that from the Summa, implies that with this the discussion of the proposition is complete. But in the Disputed Question, Aquinas’ position implies that something additional is required. It is as if he said, “We have not yet accounted for the fact that God became this man.” God did not become man in general. Perhaps the only way to speak of this issue is by approaching the entire topic from a metaphysical perspective. Thus, he asks in both texts about the metaphysical principles of being required to explain the fact expressed as “God has become this man.”

In the opening paragraph of the disputed question above, Aquinas distinguishes between the ways we can state that a supposit is real and that an accident such as white is real. Thus, he writes in the initial sentence: “Esse is properly and truly said of the subsisting supposit”; that is, it is both proper and true to say that Socrates is a being subsisting of itself. In the next sentence, when he speaks of accidents such as white, he says in effect: “White or whiteness is real or exists, but not because it makes a substance like Socrates be something real rather than nothing; rather, whiteness is real only insofar as it gives to him that accidental or incidental reality signified by the term ‘white’.”

Now that he has made this distinction between the being of a supposit and an accident, in the second paragraph, he will distinguish between accidental and substantial forms. Speaking of accidental forms, he writes: “We must recognize that there are some forms by which a being exists, not simply, but under some condition. This is true of all accidental forms.” Then, he turns to ‘substantial forms’, that is, the form by which a substance is some definite type of thing, even though he does not use the

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title 'substantial form'. Thus, he writes: “However, there are some forms by which a thing subsisting simply has esse, because the esse proper to a substantial thing constitutes it.”

To recapitulate: Supposits, that is, substances, but also accidents are being or real, even though in different ways. Further, an accidental form, such as ‘whiteness’, is real because it is a condition of a substance. Contrasting with an accidental form, there is the substantial form to which there is joined the constituting principle of esse. In the final long paragraph, the doctrines he has just proposed are applied to Christ as God-man. I will examine that paragraph sentence by sentence.

1) By “subsisting supposit” is meant the divine person. As stated it is “substantiated simply” or made something substantial by the nature of God. Aquinas supposes his reader is aware of the treatment of the doctrine of three persons in one God from Part I of the Summa, according to which the three persons are three hypostases or grounds of being, not three distinct beings. And so, he refers to the second person as a supposit, or what stands under the activities of that person. As he says, “but not simply by the human nature”: that is, the divine nature, not the human nature, is the basis of the reality of Christ.

2) The second sentence simply means that, since the second person of the Trinity was the all-perfect God before he became man, the adoption of human nature could bring no increase in power, in goodness, nor in anything else.

3) Here, he refers to the fact that the second person is this man, not just man. It is the reality proper to the human nature that has a role in making the eternal person this man.

4) The eternal person is one supposit in two natures. The person as God-man, has the same principle of esse that he would have were he not man. That esse is the divine esse shared by all three persons.
5) Here is the conclusion which states the need for the principle of esse because of which, the divine person is temporally speaking - that is, beginning at a certain moment in time - a man. This esse has to be different from the divine esse which is the eternal esse of God.

6) Aquinas elaborates on his conclusion by explaining the this esse - a secondary esse - is not the same as an accidental esse, that is, one had by an accident such as whiteness. Hence, there is the one divine esse, and a secondary esse that makes the adopted human be this man.

In comparison with the above, the text from the Summa is quite clear. In it, Aquinas points to the existence of two natures in Christ, the human and the divine. There is, he explains, one principle of esse, the divine esse, by which the second person of the Trinity one person with two natures. When the second person become man, only a new relation was established between person and the human nature. Hence, only one metaphysical principle, but two natures. Once again, the value of looking beyond a text of the Summa of Theology is clear.

The third division of Aquinas’ works comprises his three theological syntheses. The first, the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard is the polished version of his two years of teaching that served as the final stage in his work toward the degree of Master. It is a extremely detailed commentary on the Sentences, that is, on Lombard’s arrangement of patristic and biblical authorities around the Christian Creed. Teaching Lombard’s Sentences had become required in the Faculty of Theology, and both Aquinas’ approach in the classroom and in the published version of his teaching was dependent on the order imposed by Lombard. Aquinas’ earliest thought on many theological issues is found in this work, yet it ought not to be studied apart from a comparison with his later works.316

The second of his theological syntheses is the Summa against the Gentiles. Presumably, the 'gentiles' of the title were principally the Spanish Moors. This work was written at the request of a higher ranking member of the Dominican order to which Aquinas belonged. In it Aquinas offers a melange of theological and philosophical discussions on topics that one imagines might be discussed between Christians and Moslems. The implied polemical nature of the work should be kept in mind when reading it.317

Finally, there is the Summa of Theology which contains Aquinas' Neo-platonic organization of Christian doctrine. Starting from God, his nature and attributes, he treats the procession of creatures from God in Part I, while Part II examines dispositions by which human beings can move toward the goal God designed for them, that is, the virtues and their perfection by grace. Finally, in Part III, left unfinished at the time of Aquinas' death, the topic is Christ, his nature, his life, and his role in the return of creatures to God.318

In regard to reading the Summa, the following points are important: each article is part of a larger whole; each article cites an authority having some influence on the response Aquinas gives to the article's question; Aquinas always has in mind the views of others who may have spoken of the same subject; the audience of the Summa is 'beginners' in theology; finally, Aquinas' thoughts in his other works may develop or even reject what he says in any given text of the Summa. In TEXTS # 3 below, all these points must be taken into account.

Summa of Theology, I, q. 2, a. 2-3:

Art. 2. Is it possible to demonstrate that God exists?

On the contrary there is what the Apostle says in Romans 1,20: "The invisible things of God are seen through the understanding of things that have been made."

Art. 3. Does God exist?

On the contrary is what is said in Exodus 3,14 by the person of God: "I am who am."

I respond that the existence of God can be proved in five ways. The first and more evident way is from motion... The second is based on agent causality... The third is taken from the notions of possible and necessary... The fourth is taken the grades of perfections found in things... The fifth is taken from the governance of the world.

Lecture on the Epistle to the Romans, VI,

115; 117-121

Rom. 1,19: What is known about God is evident to them, for God has shown it to them.

115: principle as if to a cause univocal to creatures, for example, as man generates man, but traced back to a cause of all that is superior. From sensible creatures, man can know God in three ways as Dionysius says...

One way is through causality. Because sensible creatures are defective and can be changed, it is necessary to trace them back to some immobile and perfect principle. In this way, it is known that there is a God.

Second, by way of excellence. All things are not traced back to a first to all. From this, God is known to be higher than all other things.

Third, by way of negation. If God is so superior to his effects, nothing in creatures can be proper to God... According to this, we say that God is immobile and infinite and perhaps other similar things.

Rom. 1,20: The invisible things of God, his eternal power and divinity, can be known through the
117. When he says "the invisible things of God from what has been made," he shows through what mode this type of knowledge is had.

First, we must consider what are those things that are known concerning God. He proposes three.

The first is "the invisible things of God," by which is to be understood the essence of God, which, as was said, we cannot see...

'Invisible' in the plural is said because God's essence is not known by us according to what it is, that is, insofar as in itself it is one...However, what is one in God is made known to us through certain resemblances had in creatures; creatures participate in many ways in what is one in God. Accordingly, our intellect considers the unity of the divine essence from the perspective of goodness, wisdom, power, and other such things, which in God are one.

These things are called "invisibles" because that one, which in God corresponds to these names or meanings, is not seen by us.

Another thing known of God is his power by which reality proceeds from him, as from a principle... and so Paul says "his eternal power:"

There is a third thing known that he calls "divinity," to which is related our knowledge of God as the end to which all things tend...So Paul speaks of "divinity," which signifies participation, rather than "deity" which signifies the essence of God.

The three things known correspond to the three modes of knowing spoken of earlier. The invisible things of God are known through the way of negation; eternal power by the way of causality; divinity by the way of excellence.

The above text from the Summa is preceded by Question 1’s brief discussion of the nature of theology, or as Aquinas terms it, ‘sacred doctrine’. Then, in Question 2, he announces that "the principal intention of sacred doctrine is to offer knowledge about God.” So, first of all, he will
speak of the divine essence, and the first thing to consider about that essence is whether it exists. That is, “Does God exist”

It might appear strange, and scarcely serious, to begin a theological synthesis by asking whether God exists. However, in Christian revelation there is contained a passage where God gives his name to Moses. God said, in responding to Moses’ question of “Who shall I say sent me?”, “I am who am.” That statement has always meant to Christian theology that being is the very nature of God. Enter Anselm with his ontological argument, and a new emphasis is placed on human knowledge of the existence of God. As Anselm pointed out, Scripture offers this verse: “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’.” Anselm explains that, as this verse says, it’s a foolish thing to deny God’s existence; as his basis for this, he asserts that when we think of God, we conceive of the necessarily existing being. Hence, to say, “There is no God,” is to say, “The existing being called God does not exist.” Foolish indeed to say such a thing!

Now because Aquinas recognizes that the human mind is incapable of understanding an all perfect being - that is, a God - Anselm’s argument fails. In Aquinas’ mind, the atheist is foolish because he doesn’t see what the world around him shows, namely, the existence of God. Accordingly, since it’s appropriate to begin theology by discussing the divine essence, Aquinas prefaced the discussion with an examination of what we can naturally know about that nature - ‘naturally know’, that is, independent of any revelation.

Thus the Summa asks: “Does God exist?” But the discussion begins with Article I’s question: “Is it known of itself that God exists?” In other words, is Anselm correct?

In reading an article of the Summa, it is important to note the section coming immediately after the objections to Aquinas’ position, and immediately before Aquinas’ answer to the article’s question. In that section, whose initial words are usually translated in English by something like, “On the contrary,” Aquinas will give the view of an authority.
Sometimes, as in the three articles of the question about the existence of God, the authority involved is Scripture: each article cites some verse from Scripture. In Article I, where the question is whether the existence of God is known of itself, the verse is the favorite of Anselm, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” In the presentation of his answer to the question, it’s clear that Aquinas takes that Scripture verse to mean that atheism is possible. His answer to the question offers, in effect, what he believes you will find if you look at the requirements of self-evident knowledge. Thus, he concludes that we do not have the understanding of God needed to recognize the necessary existence of God.

In Article 2 in TEXTS # 3 above, Aquinas asks, “Is it possible to demonstrate the existence of God?” His authority here is a verse from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans: “The invisible things of God are seen through the understanding of things that have been made.” In his answer to the Article’s question, it is as if Aquinas looks around the world asking, “What can it mean to say that, if we understand the world, we’ll see there is a God?” His answer is only partial insofar as he says, if you find things in this world that seem to require a divine cause, then you can conclude that there is a God. Subsequently, he asks the final question in Article 3: “Does God exist?” Clearly, he is asking whether we find anything like what Article 2 said was needed. Do we find anything that can only be explained as the effect of a divine cause?

In TEXTS # 3, I have given only a sketchy outline of the five ways found in Article 3, for I assume they are more or less familiar to us all. Given the way these five ways are generally treated in introductory philosophy classes, I suggest we ask ourselves some questions.

First, would Aquinas, composing his theological synthesis, think he needs to offer a detailed proof or proofs for the existence of God, when there appear to be no atheists around? Second, in the Summa against the Gentiles (Bk. I, ch. 13), Aquinas presents the first two ways at considerably greater detail; approximately ten times as much space is given to these two ways here. Given this fact, how seriously should we take the presentation
Third, since all these arguments can be found in earlier authors well known to Aquinas—for instance, the argument from motion is found in Moses Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed (II, 2)—why not conclude that in offering these proofs, Aquinas merely show what others have found when looking around the world? Then too, in the same chapter of the Summa against the Gentiles mentioned above, Aquinas notes that another argument besides those he’d just proposed, namely, the fifth way from governance of the world, is found in John Damascene (John of Damascus, c. 674–c. 749). Finally, there is the problem raised by the Scriptural authority cited in this Article 3: the words giving God’s name, “I am who am.” Do any of Aquinas’ five ways show us a God in the sense of one known as “I am who am”, or as pure being? Only in the case of the fourth way does the God of the conclusion even begin to approach the God of Moses. Of course, from the type of being called ‘God’ that concludes the five ways, we can reason further to a God whose name could be phrased as “I am who am.” Surely, Aquinas would realize the five ways haven’t done that.

Hence, when I am suggesting is that what are called “Aquinas’ five ways” should not be considered to be Aquinas’ philosophical proofs of God. Instead, let’s regard them as summary statements of what others have proposed as proofs of God.

Above in TEXTS # 3 are had two excerpts from Aquinas’ commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, the epistle from which he quoted in Article 2 of the Summa’s discussion of God’s existence. Looking at these excerpts, we see more clearly what it is about God that Aquinas thinks creation will reveal to the human mind. We should ask whether Article 3 of the Summa appears to have the intention of proving the existence of what Aquinas proposes in his Lecture on Romans.

Note Verse 19, the verse preceding the one cited in the Summa: “What is known about God is evident to them, for God has shown it to them.” About this, Aquinas offers three ways in which men attain knowledge of God. First, through causality. The point seems to be that from changing and defective creatures—that is, less than perfect—we will recognize the need for an immobile and all perfect principle or cause.
The second way we are to know God is "by way of excellence. This appears to indicate that when we consider God, we ought to be aware that the names we predicate of him do not retain the identical meaning they have when used of changeable and defective creatures. The names said of God are not "univocal" with the same name as said of the world of our experience. Hence, we recognize that God is a higher being than creatures.

Finally, Aquinas states that we know God through the use of terms such as 'immobile' and 'infinite'. In other words, we known him in a negative sense. Instead of knowing what God is, the best we can do is know him in terms of what he is not, such as 'not mobile' and 'not finite'.

In the other excerpt dealing directly with verse 20, Aquinas explains its individual words and phrases. Thus, he begins by stating that the expression, "what has been made," gives us the source from which we will gain knowledge of God.

The remainder of the text, excepting the final paragraph, enumerates what it is that we can know. These are the three: first, the "invisible things; second, God's eternal power; and third, God's divinity. - These final two items, 'power' and 'divinity', were not mentioned in the Scriptural verse as cited in the Summa.

By "invisible things," Aquinas understands first, God's essence, something we cannot understand in this life. However, other invisible things that we can discover about God are known through certain resemblances to God found in creatures; insofar as a creature has one of those resemblances, it is said to "participate" in the absolute unity of God. Emphasized here is that we should realize that the possession by creatures of perfections such as goodness, wisdom, and power are pointers to the existence of God. The multiplicity of perfections in creatures is to be seen as creatures' sharing in the absolute oneness of God.

Although "power" was mentioned just above, Aquinas focuses on it again in explaining the second thing that we can know of God. In this latter
case, “power” is taken in the sense of the divine power to create. Above, the reference was to a creature’s power as a resemblance to God. ‘Power’ there is the creaturely ability to effect something.

The third and final thing that we are said to know of God is “divinity.” Here, Aquinas’ meaning is not clear, but he appears to be thinking of another Christian notion, namely, that when in striving toward happiness, we strive toward a divine being, for only such a being can satisfy human desire. Perhaps then, Aquinas’ thought here is that of Augustine, who famously said in the Confessions, “The human heart is restless, Oh Lord, and it will not rest until it rests in thee.”

In the final paragraph, the three items in verse 20 as what we can learn about God, are related by Aquinas to the three ways of knowing him mentioned in relation to the preceding verse 19. The invisible things of God are known through the “way of negation.” Thus, we know God’s goodness, power, wisdom, and similar things as not like human goodness, human power, and human wisdom. Do any of the five ways of the Summa conclude to such knowledge? Perhaps the fourth way.

According to the interpretation of Verse 19, the second mode of knowing God is “through the way of causality” and this corresponds to Verse 20’s mention of knowing God’s power. All but the fourth way conclude to a God as the power or cause behind some effect found in creatures.

Finally, Aquinas relates knowing God’s divinity to knowing him “by the way of excellence. Verse 20 had related knowledge of divinity to knowing God as the end of creaturely striving. The Summa’s fifth way of proving God was based on the orientation of creatures to their end by an intelligence. However, in interpreting Verse 20’s reference to our knowledge of divinity, Aquinas refers to the attractive power of the end toward which creatures tend, rather than the intelligence directing creatures toward their end. Accordingly, I suggest Aquinas might be open to the possibility of constructing a proof on the basis of the human desire to
happiness, even though that is not among the five ways to God he offers when he asks, “Does God exist?”

What I conclude from this reading of the Summa’s treatment of ways to proof God, is that in the Summa of Theology Aquinas did not intend to offer a philosophical proof of God, but only to outline, in accordance with his reading of the Epistle to the Romans, how it is that Scripture says man can know God.

The fourth major division of Aquinas’ published works comprises the commentaries on Aristotle, Boethius, and Pseudo-Dionysius. The works of these philosophers were not topics on which he ever lectured. Of these commentaries, those on Aristotle are both most important and numerous. Historical evidence leads to the conclusion that Aquinas saw Aristotle’s philosophy, as he found it in the various Latin translations he knew, as fundamentally correct. As such, he saw it as supplying the philosophical conceptions of the world with which to interpret Scripture. That is, when Scripture refers, say, to the morality of action, or to human knowledge, or to the distance of the world from God, Aquinas saw in Aristotle’s thought the most fruitful aid to understand what revelation meant. Accordingly, it appears very probable that the commentaries on Aristotle were composed to counteract other, and in Aquinas’ eyes incorrect, interpretations of Aristotle, but also to offer his own understanding to his contemporaries. The commentaries on Aristotle appear then to be Aquinas’ statement of what is best in philosophy. It does not follow, of course, that Aquinas considered Aristotle to have said everything there is to say in philosophy.

In TEXTS # 4 below is a text from the Sententia on the Ethics. In the Leonine critical editions of Aquinas’ works, instead of speaking of a ‘commentary’ on Aristotle, the term sententia is used. A sentence or ‘sentence” was understood in Aquinas’ time as a statement representing the considered position of its author.

Implied in what I said earlier about the relation of Aquinas’ sententiae on Aristotle to other interpretations of the same text is the need
to be aware of those other interpretations. Also, implied is the possibility
that what Aquinas writes in one of the sententiae may be helpful in
understanding what is meant when he cites Aristotle in his theological
writings.

The Sententia on the Ethics has an especially unusual relation to
the other writings of Aquinas. Part II of the Summa of Theology is devoted
to the topics Aristotle discussed in the Ethics. Yet evidence shows that
Aquinas began the composition of the Sententia on the Ethics after he had
completed the first half of the Summa's Part II, and when he was
approximately 1/3 through the second half of that Part.

A bit of history here. Aquinas' initial intense study of Aristotle's
Ethics most likely began when, as a student of Albertus Magnus in Cologne,
he took notes on the lectures Albertus delivered on the Ethics to his
students. Those notes, polished and expanded, became the work of
Albertus known as Super Ethica, or, On the Ethics. Quite a few years later,
perhaps before Aquinas began composing Part II of the Summa, he had his
secretaries develop what is known as the Tabula libri Ethicorum, the Table
of the Book of the Ethics. The Tabula consists of individual statement
grouped under principal ideas found in Aristotle's Ethics. The Tabula
appears unfinished since the alphabetical listing of the ideas is not always
consistent. Under this idea are found some statements taken directly from
the Ethics, others taken from the Super Ethica of Albertus, and still others
that combine words and phrases from both sources. This last type
comprises the majority of entries in the Tabula.

When the Tabula, the Super Ethica, Aquinas' Sententia on the
Ethics, and his Part II of the Summa have been read side by side, some
interesting conclusions have been drawn. Through these comparisons, the
following sequential stages of the composition of Aquinas' Sententia on the
Ethics have been proposed. (1) Aquinas' secretaries drew up the Tabula,
only occasionally receiving input from Aquinas on this or that statement.
(2) Aquinas composed most of Part II of the Summa. (3) Aquinas once again
studied Aristotle's Ethics. (4) Aquinas composed his Sententia on the
Ethics. (5) Aquinas finished the writing of Part II of the Summa. Of course, such historical proposals are only offered as possible and perhaps, somewhat probable. As well, complicating the historical picture is the fact that Aquinas could have finished and then revised either of his two works on ethics, rather than have written them in the order suggested. But what is clear is that on at least 8 issues - among which are the virtues of prudence and generosity, and the disposition toward continence - Aquinas’ Sententia offers doctrines showing an evolution over what is proposed in Part II of the Summa.319

While the Sententia on the Ethics poses a unique problem for readers of Part II of the Summa, the study of any doctrine found in the Summa should not overlook what Aquinas might have to say in any other of his commentaries on Aristotle where the same doctrine is discussed.

Let us look now at the texts below, both in effect asking, “What is prudence?” We will find that they differ in their understanding of the subject of the virtue of prudence. In the Summa, prudence is a virtue of reason; in the Sententia, as well as being especially a matter of sense cognition, it involves what Aquinas names “rectitude of appetite.”

TEXTS # 4

Sententia on the Ethics. Bk. VI

(What is prudence?)

c. 1, 203-211: The expression, 'particular things that happen', can be taken in another way, and thus Aristotle refers to things that are variable. These, the intellect does not know except by means of sensitive potencies. Hence, among the parts of the sensitive soul there is proposed a potency which is called 'particular reason' or 'cogitative power', which is a potency that gathers together particular intentions. This is how the Philosopher speaks here of 'things that happen', for deliberation and action concern them when they are understood in this sense.

c. 4, 178-196: Then...he shows what is the subject of prudence. He says that, since there are two parts of the rational soul, one called the scientific part, the other the ratiocinative or opinion-forming, it is clear that prudence is the virtue of one of these, namely, of the opinion-forming, since opinion concerns what can be other than it is, just as does prudence. Yet, although prudence is in this part of reason as in a subject - because of which it is called an intellectual virtue - it is yet not, as is art or science, with reason alone, but it requires the rectitude of appetite.

c. 7, 255-63: Prudence especially belongs to this sense, that is, to the interior sense through which particular reason is perfected as regards estimating rightly of individual intentions of actions to perform. Hence, also brute animals that have a good natural estimative power are said to share in prudence. But their power concerns the proper objects of their senses, and in them is a different type of perfection, for instance, a certain skill in discerning colors, odors, and similar things of this sort.

Summa of Theology, II-II, q. 47

Art 1. Is prudence in a cognitive power or in an appetitive one?

On the Contrary is what Augustine says "Prudence is the knowledge of things to be desired or to be fled."

I answer that Isidore says, as if prudence looks from far off, "It is sharp-sighted, and it sees the chances of uncertain things." Moreover, sight does not belong to an appetitive power, but to a
cognitive one. Hence it is evident that prudence belongs directly to a knowing power, but not to a sensitive one, because through sense are known only objects that are near and are offered to the senses. For to know the future on the basis of the present or the past— and this is an act of prudence—p pertains properly to reason; such knowledge involves some type of gathering things together. Hence, it follows that prudence is properly in reason.

To the 3rd objection...the praise of prudence is not because of its consideration of action, but because of its application to it, which is the goal of practical reason. Hence, in Ethics VI, the Philosopher adds that prudence is not with reason along, as is art, for prudence has, as has been said, an application to activity which happens through the will.

Art. 3. Does prudence know singulars?

To the 3rd objection...as the Philosopher says in Ethics VI, prudence does not consist in an external sense by which we know proper sensibles, but in an internal sense that is perfected by memory and experience to judge promptly particulars that have been experienced. Not that prudence is in an internal sense as in its principal subject, for it is chiefly in reason, and by a certain application it belongs to this type of interior sense.

I begin with the text of the Summa. From the “On the Contrary,” we see that prudence is knowledge concerned with action. It is this doctrine that Aquinas will explain in his answer to the question he asks.

Taking Isidore’s notion of prudence as ‘sharp-sighted’, Aquinas asserts that sight belongs to a cognitive power, not to an appetitive one. So, prudence belongs to a knowing power. But of the two knowing powers, prudence must belong to reason, since it isn’t confined to knowing objects located near the cognitive power as is sense.

The answer to the 3rd objection contains Aquinas’ comments on Aristotle’s words, “But yet it is not a habitus with reason alone.” (VI, 5, 1140b28) In the view Aquinas expresses here, the negative “not only” means that in exercising prudence, reason follows the will’s choice of
activity. In the brief selection from Article 3 of the Summa, Aquinas reiterates the view that prudence is in reason; additionally, he states that, although not in an internal sense, prudence “belongs” to an internal sense because it is applied to activity. Further, this internal sense is somehow enriched or perfected in memory and experience. By this characterization, Aquinas appears to be speaking of the sense that in the Sententia he names ‘cogitative power’ or ‘particular reason’, which is “a potency that gathers together particular intentions.” But prudence is not, he says explicitly, in that sense.

With this understanding of the Summa’s doctrine of prudence, let’s turn to the Sententia’s differing view. The text from Ch. 1 deals with the interpretation of the phrase “particular things that happen.” In its broader context, this expression intends human actions for which the person acting is responsible, that is, actions a person knowingly and freely performs. Because these actions are particular or singular realities, the knowledge involved belongs to what is called “particular reason” or “cogitative power.”

Note that while the Summa’s text from Article 3 speaks of this same internal sense, there prudence is said not to be in that internal sense as in a subject. Yet in the text from Ch. 4 of the Sententia, Aquinas speaks of the “ratioinative or opinion-forming power,” which is clearly the cogitative power of Ch. 1. It is this opinion-forming power or cogitative power that is the subject of prudence. The virtue of prudence is found in that power. This is re-iterated in the lines from Ch. 7, but before looking at that paragraph, note the ending of Ch. 4: “It” - prudence - “is yet not, as is art and science, with reason alone, but it requires the rectitude of appetite.” In other words, prudence is a virtue perfecting the internal sense called cogitative power or particular reason, yet accompanied by an orientation of the person’s desires toward what is truly good for a human being.

There’s a danger here of being distracted by the fact that Aquinas implicitly introduces the doctrine of the one, objective goal of human living. Let us not be distracted by that topic. Instead, let us note how the text in
Ch. 7 offers a common way of speaking as confirming the assigning of an internal sense as the subject of prudence. In the opening sentence, Aquinas speaks of prudence as the sense of “estimating rightly of individual intentions to perform. Then, he writes: “Hence, also brute animals that have a good natural estimative power and said to share in prudence.” Thus, even though an animal’s only cognitive powers are its senses, and hence, deliberation on activity is not possible, we sometimes regard animals as being prudent. Granted this, why should anyone object to placing the human person’s prudence in one of his senses?

Here then, in the Sententia on the Ethics we have an instance where Aquinas has evolved beyond his position in the Summa of Theology. Yet aside from that, note also how the audience of the Sententia is given more detail on prudence than are the ‘beginners in theology’ for whom the Summa was written.

We have now seen an example of each of the four major types of Aquinas’ works: a lecture on Scripture, a disputed question, a theological synthesis, and a commentary. As concerns reading Thomas Aquinas, they point to the need of being aware that:

- Aquinas, by profession a theologian, always wrote for the sake of interpreting Scripture
- the Summa of Theology, despite its value as illustrating philosophical doctrines he considered correct, offers simpler, less detailed explanations
  - passages in his other works often serve to illuminate or to develop what is found in the Summa of Theology
  - differences in what is proposed in different works may be the sign of an evolution