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Introduction
Todd D. Janke

In keeping with the spirit of the Southeast Philosophy Congress, 2012’s iteration was marked by a wide variety of papers in many distinct areas of philosophical study—from ancient philosophers like Heraclitus and Plato, 19th and 20th century philosophers like Nietzsche and Gadamer, to current debates in 21st century Ethical Theory. 17 graduate and undergraduate papers appear here, from students representing nearly every part of the United States, and Switzerland as well.

Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

There were four papers in the area of Ancient and Medieval philosophy. Shawn Loht, a postdoctoral researcher teaching at Mercer University, argues in On the Concept of the Human Body in Heraclitus, that despite the (correct) assertion that the soul as presented in Heraclitus’ work is much better understood than the body, there is, in his work, nevertheless, a rudimentary picture of body in distinction to soul. Loht suggests that body, for Heraclitus, is a form of “soul’s self-differentiation.” Loht’s argument demonstrates a deft handling of Heraclitus’ necessarily fragmented work, making a persuasive case for an account of the body in the Pre-Socratic philosopher’s work that has been underexplored.

Luca Pitteloud, of the Université de Fribourg, tackles the question of the paradeigma, or “model,” in Plato’s Timaeus. His paper, “What is the Model In Plato’s Timaeus,” offers a novel and suggestive reading, arguing that the paradeigma, the model the demiurge consults to guide the fashioning of the cosmos, should be understood as “an optimal realization of a function,” and not a platonic Form in the traditionally understood sense. Indeed, Pitteloud’s claims depend up noting that, contrary to a typical reading of the Forms in Plato where the forms cannot be “described, qualified or referred to in using the categories of the
spatiotemporal reality,” when it comes to the model the demiurge uses, this is exactly what Plato does.

Stephanie Vogel, an undergraduate at Clayton State University, in “Aquinas’s First Way,” canvasses the literature on the question whether, in the context of St. Thomas Aquinas’s “First Way” in Book I of the Summa Theologiae, one can prove the existence of God through pure actuality. Vogel, in the end, sides with Etienne Gilson and Joseph Owens, arguing that “God exists as a purely actual unmoved mover which serves as the first and constant cause of all events which ultimately manifest themselves in our human point of view.”

**God/Free Will**

There were also a handful of fine papers presented on issues concerning free will. In “The Power to Will,” Camille Byrd, an undergraduate at Clayton State University, noting that the question of human freedom has often and consistently been linked to theological questions, argues that, in the end, any theological view which accepts the postulate of an omniscient creator cannot at the same time argue for the existence of freedom in its creation. Further, she argues, such omniscience also rules out the possibility of freedom in the creator itself.

John Paul Regan, Graduate Student at the University of Tennessee, in “I Need Your Help to Become Autonomous,” argues that autonomous human behavior requires both rational, critical reflection, and social motivation. The latter is understood primarily by Regan in the context of what he refers to as a “clashing of values.” That clashing of values occasions a kind of shift in perspective which calls forth the manifestation of autonomous human behavior.

Lonnie Richards, an undergraduate at Clayton State University, offers a free-wheeling meditation on the venerable “problem of evil” entitled “Free Will: An Illusion of Liberty,” in which he
argues that a creator who is all-powerful and all-knowing leaves no room for human freedom.

**Modern and 19th Century Philosophy**

Daniel Collette, a graduate student at the University of South Florida, aims to correct an entrenched misunderstanding concerning the relationship between Pascal and Descartes. In “Pascal’s Cartesianism: The Influence of *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* on Pascal’s Minor Work *De L’esprit Géométrique*,” Collette argues that, in fact, Pascal’s work is more convincingly read as an “intentionally and wholly” Cartesian undertaking. In addition, Collette address the perceived anti-Cartesianism of Pascal’s famous *Wager*, arguing that a more perspicuous grasp of the intellect/will distinction will show that Pascal’s views are consistent with those of Descartes.

Cody Craig, of Clayton State University, argues in “Kant’s Response to Hume on the Cognition of the Phenomenon,” that Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, should be read directly as a critique of David Hume, and as a completion, in some sense, of Hume’s epistemological project. Craig covers the shortcomings of Hume’s and Kant’s views on cognizing objects, and argues that Kant’s project is needed to address the shortcomings of Hume’s empiricism.

Aaron Dopf, a post-doc teaching at Clayton State University, in his paper “Nietzsche Contra the Apostle Paul,” offers a critical re-reading of the relationship between Nietzsche and the Apostle Paul. Dopf argues that the Apostle Paul is a kind of nagging *thorn in the flesh* for Nietzsche, the fact and significance of which is evidenced in Paul’s not being the meek, ascetic, cowering monk he is sometimes caricatured as (see Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morals*), but rather just the sort of creator of new values Nietzsche praises and pushes for.

Jessica Konig, a graduate student at Duquesne University, tackles Nietzsche’s work from a different angle. In “The
Dancing Philosopher,” Konig highlights the persistence of metaphors of dance in Nietzsche's work, and argues that more than being just a handy rhetorical or philosophical trope for Nietzsche, Nietzsche's aphoristic style is, in form, itself akin to dance. In the end, Konig argues, “Nietzsche becomes a dancing philosopher.”

Bryant Lin, a graduate student at Loyola Marymount University, discusses the political implications of Nietzsche's thought in his essay “The Democratic Nietzsche.” The central claim of Lin's essay is that Nietzsche's illiberalism, rather than being an endorsement of a certain kind conservative political agenda, instead amounts to a sustained cultural or aesthetic critique. He goes further, as well, and suggests that Nietzsche’s critique of liberalism can put to work in developing an account of democracy that resists Nietzsche's critique of equality while complementing his claims about nobility.

**Ethics/Moral Theory**

Amanda Gorman, an undergraduate at the University of Mary Washington, in Close Calls and Gamble Scenarios, offers a direct challenge to Eddy Nahmias's “Confident Agent Thought Experiment.” Gorman argues that what she calls a "gamble scenario" can serve to undermine the intuitive appeal of Nahmias-style thought experiments. According to Gorman, a "gamble scenario" occurs when “an agent is faced with a choice between an option of which she knows the outcome and one of which she does not know the outcome.” After presenting her challenge to Nahmias, Gorman considers responses and shows how each undermines the original thought experiment.

In Moral Worth and Other-Regarding Inclinations: Revisiting Kant's Views of Beneficent Actions, Trevor Hedberg, a graduate student at the University of Tennessee, tries to correct what he sees as a misperception in Kant studies, to the extent that commentators often accuse Kant of failing to address the moral worth of beneficent actions. Hedberg argues that Kant, pace
these commentators, in fact does offer what he calls “plausible assessments” of these actions’ moral worth. He offers three distinct arguments in support of that claim, the first directed at distinguishing moral worth from praiseworthiness, the second dealing with inclination, and the third dealing with the vagaries of psychological dispositions.

Ronald Reha, Jr., an undergraduate at the University of Pittsburgh, argues in On the Compatibility of Utilitarianism and the Christian Religious Ethic, that from a philosophical standpoint, the question we ought to be asking ourselves vis à vis the relationship between Christianity and the State is not, Are we a Christian Nation?, but rather whether it is practical for the United States, a democratic, self-governing society to be a “Christian Nation.” In making his case, Reha discusses several related question, namely, what is the ‘Christian religious ethic?’ What is the ideal ethical system in a democracy? If not the Christian religious ethic, are the two ethical systems logically compossible? In the end, Reha claims that it is “the utilitarian ethic rather than the Christian ethic that best represents the values of a democracy.”

**Epistemology**

In Quantifying Qualifiers; Restricting Lehrer’s Coherence Theory of Justification, Jeffery Pretti, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison argues against the account of Justification proposed by Keith Lehrer’s coherence theory. He goes further, in fact and argues against any “arbitrary threshold of probability” as a basis for epistemic justification. In place of such a threshold, he proposes “that we can intuitively restrict completely justified beliefs to those that are necessary within one’s doxastic set.”

Alex Richardson, an undergraduate at the University of West Georgia argues in Perniciously Relative - A Critical Analysis of Dewey’s Account of Truth, that Dewey's account of Truth is
vulnerable insofar as it leaves open the possibility of a certain kind of relativism. Richardson further claims that Dewey’s theory is also susceptible to the very criticism that fellow pragmatist C.S. Peirce once leveled against Descartes.

**Continental Philosophy**

In our lone paper on 20th Century Continental Philosophy, University of Idaho undergraduate Daniel John Carroll points up what he takes to be two major shortcomings of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s application of hermeneutics to music in his *Two Flaws in Gadamer’s Hermeneutical Principles: An Incorrect Distinction and the Interpretive Anomaly of the Musical Work*. The first, according to Carroll, is that Gadamer makes an infelicitous distinction between “vestiges” and “sources.” Second, Carroll argues that Gadamer’s “insistence on theunnecessity of a historical consciousness” for the purposes of engaging in the hermeneutical project seems to fly in the face of the need for a complex understanding of a work’s historicity in order to grasp the work’s meaning.
Camille Byrd: The Power to Will

The conception of “God” in North America generally coincides with the God of the Judeo-Christian faiths, who is believed by his worshipers to be omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and generally omnibenevolent. There is, however, a not-so-immediate problem with the idea of an all-knowing god being able to control its actions; that is to say, there is a problem with an omniscient god’s own free will. In this essay I will present this problem from two slightly different angles, and I will present the counterargument which illustrates the fragility of a world in which such a god exists.

Other religions across the globe have different definitions of their god(s), but the consensus seems to be that the powers that be (whatever those powers may be) are in control of themselves. In fact, this seems to be a prerequisite to being accepted as any kind of anthropomorphic deity (note that for the purposes of this paper, “anthropomorphic” simply means human-like thought processes and not necessarily physical form) – not only should you have control over what happens in the universe, but you should by all means have control over yourself. It only stands to reason that a god worth believing in is a god with the power to make trouble for non-believers (historically speaking, at least). Therefore the model of an omnipotent, omniscient god (omnipresence and omnibenevolence aren’t quite as relevant here, though they are important) is the model which is destined to have the most success – and it has. Judaism, Islam, and Christianity are three of the most popular religions in the world, and they all believe in the same all-powerful, all-knowing God.
These religions are also those of the kind which claim that their God has graciously chosen to give humankind the gift of free will, which is to say that we can freely make choices without having those choices dictated to us directly by God. It's the image of God-as-bystander, having created everything and letting the universe run through its motions with a watchful eye. Philosopher and biblical scholar Michael Carasik writes extensively on this subject in his essay, “The Limits of Omniscience.” There are, according to Carasik, several instances in the Bible in which God does not seem to know what one of his human creations is thinking or feeling.

The unspoken assumption that implicitly underlies this repeated focus on God's testing the heart is that when God wants to know what is in a particular human being's mind, God cannot sense it, but must deduce it. [...] Rather, the standard biblical imagery describing God's awareness of human thought depicts God as examining it from the outside, not comprehending it directly. (Carasik 223)

The story of Job is a famous example of God's apparent ignorance in this field. Satan made a wager with God that one of his most righteous followers, the wealthy, happy Job, would curse God's name if his good fortune were taken away from him. God agreed to let Satan harm first Job's possessions, and then, seeing that Job's conviction never wavered, Job's health (but not his life) merely in order to test Job's faith. The near-sacrifice of Isaac by his devout father, Abraham, is another such instance. God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son in order to test Abraham's faith, and stopped his knife only at the last moment, when he was sure that Abraham would complete this terrible deed if his God commanded it. A passage from the book of Genesis in the King James Bible, where God finally stays Abraham's hand, reads, “He said, 'Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me’” (Gen. 22:12). The words with which Carasik is concerned are “for now I know” – more specifically, “now,”
which implies that God did not know before. If this is true, then all these instances in the Bible directly contradict the belief that this God is omniscient. We will come back to this problem later; for now, the illustration of human free will is all we require.

Objections to the compatibility of God’s omniscience and human free will have been raised by several philosophers, one of whom is Nelson Pike. Pike’s famous argument states that because God is all-knowing, free will cannot exist for humans. “This claim seems intuitively false,” admits Pike in his essay “God’s Foreknowledge and Human Free Will Are Incompatible” (Pike 249). At first, the idea that God’s foreknowledge alone negates even the possibility of human free will may be difficult to grasp, but essentially the argument is this: if God knows all, and if God is never wrong, and if no outside force could ever change what God knows, then nothing but what God knows could ever be. No choice we make is truly free because God has always known exactly which choices we will make.

John Shook recognizes this sort of incompatibility in his own essay, published under a similar title: “God’s Divinely Justified Knowledge is Incompatible With Human Free Will.” His analysis of the problem, however, leaves more room for compatibility to wriggle its way in. Shook insists that there are multiple conceptions of both God’s omniscience and human free will, and focuses his essay on the incompatibility of only one conception of each topic. He argues that “depending on the definitions of both omniscience and freedom,” the compatibility of God’s omniscience with human free will may be indeterminable (Shook 141). The type of free will Shook concerns himself with is what he calls the “alternative possibilities” type, in which “for any free action performed by an agent, it must have been possible for her to instead do something else” (Shook 142). Note that this is the same type of free will that Pike uses in his own argument for incompatibility. The difference in these two essays comes when Shook declares his definition of divine knowledge. Shook focuses on divine knowledge as being clearly above and beyond the reasoning available to humans by means of science and exploration, but as
also requiring justification. The line that Shook draws between predictability and free will is what makes his essay so outstandingly different: he argues that whether or not an omniscient deity really exists isn’t the crux of the matter; rather, the free will of anything depends on whether or not that thing’s behavior is perfectly predictable. Giving an example of a wind-up toy like Thomas the Train, Shook demonstrates this link.

Imagine an intelligence with perfect knowledge and calculating ability. If such a being were to exist, and to possess that degree of knowledge and calculating ability, then that being could perfectly, infallibly, and justifiably predict Thomas’s behavior in such situations. From that being’s perspective on Thomas and his situation, Thomas lacks free will. [...] Let the possible existence of such a super-intelligent being be only a theoretical possibility. Then Thomas’s behavior is theoretically perfectly predictable, and we human beings cannot predict Thomas’s behavior only because of our ignorance. (Shook 145)

This opens the door to the possibility that not only is free will a debatable subject, but that it’s a debatable subject no matter what a person’s religious beliefs are. Such an idea is fairly controversial, considering that many people who hold no religious beliefs immediately associate not having free will with a necessary deity of some kind. Shook mentions this link to predictability because human justification of knowledge is based entirely on how well we can predict; if God can predict perfectly, then his justification of his own knowledge must also be perfect. According to Shook, a person who accepts that God’s knowledge has existed forever (that is to say, that God has perfectly predicted everything which will ever happen and not that God’s knowledge comes from his jumping around in a linear sense of time to see what happens later) can either recognize that God’s knowledge is fact (and so acknowledge that the alternative possibilities definition of free will is impossible) or that it is not fact (which should bring on a sort of
crisis of faith and several questions regarding the truth of God's omniscience and what limits, if any, it has).

I have mentioned these arguments for the sake of stretching the line of reasoning just a little further. If Pike and Shook and all those who agree with them are correct, then the existence of an omniscient God makes human free will an impossibility (at least by most definitions of those two terms). However, if we accept that humans have no free will because God has known “from eternity,” as Pike likes to put it, what we will do, then we can also use this logic to question whether or not God himself has free will. If God has known everything forever, and knows everything which will ever come to be, then he must know everything about himself, too. He must know everything he will ever choose to do – that, for instance, in two thousand years he will call another great flood, or that tomorrow he’ll get so fed up with this world that he creates an entirely new universe to watch. Given that God knows everything about his own choices (from either the Boeotian standpoint where God sees every point in time simultaneously or from the linear standpoint in which his knowledge is preexisting), and given that he cannot be wrong, then it follows that God does not have free will so long as he is omniscient.

A question of some significance which stems from this discussion is whether or not we can be held responsible for our actions (or whether God can be held responsible for his) if we accept the given premise that God’s divine foreknowledge makes free will for humans (and quite possibly for God) impossible. Deane-Peter Baker asks, "does this not imply that if in fact God is in control of our lives, we are not responsible for our behavior, and that perhaps the blame shifts to God" (Baker 61)? This question is a gentle transition into the counterargument for the statements made until this point in this essay. Baker’s question leads to the examination of foreknowledge with relation to control: Baker states that "I may be able to 'foreknow' what will happen to the person currently free-falling off a high cliff without a parachute or any other safety device, but that in no way means that I have control over
her destiny” (Baker 61). While this statement does demonstrate that control is not necessarily included in the foreknowledge package, it misses the point of the free will argument. Active control is not the subject of this debate; the perfection of God’s knowledge is. If the knowledge is perfect, and not simply a strong belief based on past experiences (which is, ultimately, the only type of “knowledge” human beings can have), then what happens to the free-faller could not have happened any other way than it did. However, the introduction of control as a factor in this debate cannot be ignored, and so we come to Frederick Sontag’s counterargument.

If God is omnipotent, then all his other powers are secondary to this overriding one – after all, if he is all-powerful, then he must have the power to know all and to be everywhere, etc. Sontag maintains in his essay, “Omnipotence Need Not Entail Omniscience,” that God’s omnipotence does not necessarily require that he possess every one of those secondary powers; omnipotence merely requires that God could possess any power if he wanted to. With regards to omniscience and free will, Sontag’s argument is that “[God’s] power must be unlimited (omnipotent), except as it is bound by its choices once made in order not to be quixotic, since this is an aspect the natural order does not exhibit” (Sontag 2). Essentially, if God is all-powerful, then he must have the power to impose limits on his own powers. This seems to ensure that God’s omniscience and human free will are compatible, since God could merely limit his knowledge in order to not know what choices a human (or God himself) will make. This solution to the free will dilemma throws the stability of the world into question, however. If free will of any kind – most importantly, of God himself – depends solely on God’s limiting his own power of omniscience, then we enter into a kind of vicious circle. Did God know that he would place limits on his power? If he did, does he know now that he has placed those limits, or does he know if he will ever remove them? Which came first, the knowing or the limit? Fortunately for us, Sontag’s argument fails on its face: if God limits his knowledge to any degree, then he is no longer omniscient, and so the conflict itself dissolves.
Only when God is an omniscient being does the conflict between his omniscience and free will of any kind exist.

The Judeo-Christian God is certainly not the only one touted as being omniscient, but his followers are some of the most conflicted people in the world. Many groups believe vehemently that humans were given free will by God and that God is omniscient, arguments against which have been presented in this essay. Even in these people's religious texts (the Old Testament of the Bible, the Koran, etc.) reports of God's level of omniscience seem to be in conflict with one another. God's own free will has been called into question, following from a line of reasoning loaned to us by Nelson Pike and expanded upon by John Shook. Finally, I presented a would-be solution to this dilemma, however short it ultimately falls. Perhaps we are wrong to think of any God as anthropomorphic, since most of the problems we encounter with God seem to stem from anthropomorphic theories of God's existence. This essay can only ask questions of or serve answers in regards to a God whose thoughts are more or less understandable by human beings; if God is in no way anthropomorphic, then we can in no way understand him.

Works Cited


Daniel John Carroll: Two Flaws in Gadamer's Hermeneutical Principles: An Incorrect Distinction and the Interpretive Anomaly of the Musical Work

In his essay “Aesthetics and Hermeneutics,” Hans-Georg Gadamer, as his title implies, promotes the idea that the work of art naturally lies within the province of hermeneutics. He claims that this is so because of the natural derivation of a meaning of some kind from a work of art by its viewer. Of hermeneutics he wrote that it "acquires a domain that in principle reaches as far as the expression of meaning as such." Having also written that “hermeneutics operates whenever what is said is not immediately intelligible,” one can get an appreciation for Gadamer’s inclusiveness of so many seemingly disparate activities within the realm of hermeneutics. However admirable his concession that the work of art is open to hermeneutics, his underlying principles contain two major flaws that I shall address. First, he erroneously separates “vestiges” and “sources,” this distinction including the contradictory simultaneous maintenance of the inherent linguistic mediation of the experience of the entire world, and the denial of this quality, within “vestiges.” Second, by his rejection of the necessity for an identification with the historical circumstances of a work of art, he poses a significant dilemma for those who believe in the necessity of historical research about the surrounding conditions of the creation of a work of art to create a tenable interpretation of it.

In order to more clearly present the objects of his hermeneutical efforts, Gadamer draws on the work of Droysen by distinguishing two kinds of interpretable objects: “vestiges” and "sources." Gadamer defines "vestiges" as "fragments of a past world that have survived and assist us in the intellectual

2 Ibid., 98.
reconstruction of the world of which they are a remnant.”

“Sources” are defined as those objects which “on the other hand, constitute a linguistic tradition, and...thus serve our understanding of a linguistically interpreted world.” He then asks “where does an archaic image of a god belong, for instance? Is it a vestige, like any tool? Or is it a piece of world-interpretation, like everything that is handed on linguistically?” By specifically using the phrase “on the other hand” to separate “vestiges” from “sources,” and by excluding the example of a tool from the category of objects of “linguistic world-interpretation,” Gadamer implies that “vestiges” do not bear this same linguistic capability. This poses a problem for his own claim that “the entire experience of the world is linguistically mediated.” (The vital significance of this as a condition of hermeneutics is apprehended by noting that it is the second of Richard Palmer’s “Thirty Theses on Interpretation.”) This is because in order for a “vestige” to be determined to be and examined as a “vestige,” the linguistic mediation of a “source” is essential.

Gadamer states that any tool is an example of a “vestige,” but by separating these from “sources,” implies that they are not “world-interpreting.” This cannot be true, since in order for a “vestige” to lead one to the “intellectual reconstruction of the world of which they are a remnant,” linguistic mediation must be used for this purpose. For instance, suppose you are an archaeologist who is conducting an excavation in a hitherto unexplored area. You extract a stone object with sharp edges. While examining it, you are initially puzzled as to what its function was. Shortly thereafter, you

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3 Ibid., 99.
4 Emphasis added. Ibid., 99.
5 Ibid., 99.
6 Ibid., 99.
uncover a remarkably well-preserved buffalo hide that has been noticeably sliced into multiple smaller sections. You place the stone edges on the edge of the buffalo hide and notice a perfect match; the contour of the stone fits exactly within the contour of the edges of the hide. You can thereby reasonably determine, under the auspices of a "hypothetico-deductive method" whereby the physical characteristics of an object lead to a prediction of its function which is then confirmed or disconfirmed by placing the item in that function to determine its conduciveness to it; that this stone was a tool used for the purpose of cutting hide, and was actually used on this particular hide. However, in order to determine the nature and function of this object, and in order to correctly classify it as a tool, linguistic mediation is required. You and your fellows must come to mutually understand the natural fit of the stone within the contour of the hide—an understanding arrived at by the use of language, whether spoken out loud or simply conceived internally. Either way, language must be used to ascribe this or that particular role to the object based on various contextual factors. As Palmer writes, "every object of knowledge is encompassed within the world horizon of language," and thus "vestiges" bear the linguistic capability of sources, under Gadamer’s distinction, after all. Limiting ourselves to the sheer existence of the object and not to its external function, a function reserved by Gadamer to "sources," prohibits the recognition of the "vestige" as a "vestige."

Furthermore, the distinction between them may not have been performed correctly by Gadamer. Droysen’s document states “historical material is partly what is still immediately present, hailing from the times which we are seeking to understand (Remains), partly whatever ideas human beings have obtained of those times, and transmitted to be remembered (Sources), partly things wherein both these forms

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10 Palmer 1969, 206.
of material are combined (Monuments)." Thus, Droysen himself refers to "sources" as ideas formulated about the function and nature of the "vestige," not as objects that bear a capacity for "world-interpretation" that is supposedly not possessed by "vestiges," from which the "sources" are allegedly qualitatively distinct. It therefore appears that "vestiges" remain "vestiges" and do not become "sources" once their function or significance for the time from which they emerge is determined, since they cannot change from objects to ideas. One corroborating example is the fact that "constituent materials of the Earth," "secondary rocks," "animated tribes," and "animals," while interpreted to be such things in the matter of Gadamer's "sources," remain "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation."

Another example merits attention to show the "world-interpretativity" of "vestiges" which Gadamer attributed only to "sources." Take a textless piece of instrumental music, on which the remainder of this paper will focus. This certainly qualifies as an artifact of a previous generation. Its conduciveness to hermeneutic scrutiny on the order of revealing significant facets of the surrounding culture that produced it seems dubious given its lack of a written text. Its musical notation contains no syntactical proclivity; it cannot "say" anything. It stands as a "text without a text," or, to categorize it using Patrick Heelan's analogy, it is a text, a physically existing body of notation, without a text, a readily apparent meaning. Yet, its structure can reveal highly significant insights into the philosophical

12 These are from the titles of some of the chapters in Chambers' book.
currents of those in its time and place, standing as a “symptom or token of some contextual element.” For instance, the neatly organized form of a piece from the Classical era mirrors the prevailing philosophical tendencies for reason and order during the age of the Enlightenment. To use a more specific example from a genre, I have argued in another paper that the musical structure of *Rex caeli domine* from the ninth-century musical treatise *Musica enchiriadis* was reflective of the philosophy of the then contemporary philosopher John Scotus Eriugena, particularly the doctrine of the beginning from, separation from, and ultimate return to God of all life. However, in order for such comparisons to be drawn, and in order for the influence of the philosophical system on the musical work to be established, one must be familiar with those philosophical systems. It does not matter whether it is before or after the acquaintance with the music, so long as it occurs at all. Even if one attempted to construct a hypothetical philosophical climate based on the forms of the music composed, one would still, in order for the interpretation to be credible, have to research those philosophical climates in order to confirm or disconfirm this connection since such construction would constitute “highly contextualized knowledge-claims whose truth [are] never beyond dispute.”

This requirement leads me to the second of the two problems with Gadamer’s beliefs.

Gadamer states that a consciousness of the historical situation in which the creator of the artwork existed is not necessary for a determination of what the work “says.” He writes that

it would be an inadmissible abstraction to contend that we must first have achieved a contemporaneousness

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with the author...by means of a reconstruction of his historical horizon before we could begin to grasp the meaning of what is said. The anticipation of meaning guides the effort to understand from the very beginning.\textsuperscript{16}

The often unpalatable dichotomy between objective, historically verifiable circumstances that govern interpretation and the desire to exercise the imagination that the interpreter is confronted with notwithstanding,\textsuperscript{17} the supposed un-necessity of confinement within historical boundaries fosters the unrestricted exercise of the imagination and allows for the downright whimsical interpretation of an art work. If one is considering a painting or sculpture, then perhaps its more or less obvious visual representations of scenes or events of great historical significance renders a preemptive immersion in the historical situation unnecessary for its apprehension and appreciation. For instance, a painting of two masses of people on either side of the canvas armed with weapons and bearing different flags, seemingly advancing towards each other, is illustrative of a war or battle of some kind. Its representational clarity obviates any familiarity with the specific historical details about the particular case in order to determine that it is this kind of situation. Delacroix's \textit{Liberty Leading the People} or Leutze's \textit{Washington Crossing the Delaware} are "self-explanatory" in that regard. Therefore, while I emphasize the importance of respectable boundaries of interpretation, I do not mean that works of all media require a deep familiarity with the represented historical circumstances. It is significant that when David Weberman poses to his reader the challenge of "understand[ing] a cultural or historical phenomenon...without

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{16}Gadamer 1976, 101.\\
\textsuperscript{17}Trietler refers to such an impasse as "a three-legged race in which the partners impede each other's progress." \- Leo Trietler, \textit{Reflections on Musical Meaning and its Representations} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 236.}
having any sense of their aesthetic or ethical values.”\textsuperscript{18} The two examples to which he refers are “[a] Chinese opera or the actions of Japanese soldiers in World War II,”\textsuperscript{19} examples for which a familiarity with historical circumstances is required for its appreciation and comprehension as a cultural or historical phenomenon. However, a textless musical work is not of the same character. Of it, Stephen Davies wrote that “it is not true that Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is about the invention of the coffee percolator.”\textsuperscript{20} This is so because some kind of boundaries of interpretation must be in place, that they may not become, literally, in-credible. While James Risser has rightly observed that “because of the finitude of our historical existence, the possibility of the one, final, objectively correct interpretation must be deferred,”\textsuperscript{21} implying that the finitude of existence and its consequent experience does not just include one possible experience (though it could) but a series of such experiences, thus negating the possibility in those cases of only “one, final, objectively correct interpretation,” the lack of infinitude of experience proscribes excessive interpretive capriciousness such as that to which Davies refers. As Weberman writes, “such differences about the actual realization of objectivity might well coexist with a consensus about objectivity as an appropriate meta-theoretical ideal.”\textsuperscript{22} Furthermore, such an exercise would not even qualify as interpretation if the definition of E. D. Hirsch is considered; that “significance,” such as that which would be derived from the symphony by the person who felt that it

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{22} Weberman 2000, 48.
signified the invention of the coffee percolator “is the proper object of criticism, not of interpretation, whose exclusive object is verbal meaning.”

This lack of infinitude thus renders hermeneutics, even of artworks, an act of historical reconstruction, since the interpreter is operating with a finite range of historical entities such as dates and artifacts. Thus, the “line separating objective from speculative interpretation” must be cautiously treaded.

Even Gadamer admits this in his essay when he writes

the claim of historical hermeneutics is legitimated precisely by the fact that while the work of art does not intend to be understood historically and offers itself in an absolute presence, it nevertheless does not permit just any forms of comprehension. In all the openness and all the richness of its possibilities for comprehension, it permits—indeed even requires—the application of a standard of appropriateness.

Furthermore, Gadamer admits this in a previous work, thus rendering his subsequent position in “Aesthetics and Hermeneutics” contradictory:

Hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond with the subject matter that comes into language through the traditionary text and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which the text speaks...Here too there is a tension. It is in the play between the traditionary text’s strangeness and familiarity to us, between being a historically intended,

23 Quoted in Ibid., 57.
distanced object and belonging to a tradition. The locus of hermeneutics is this in-between.26

One may be not unjustifiably convinced by the preceding passage that “Gadamer clearly does want to distinguish better from worse and right from wrong interpretations and thus avoid a pernicious relativism.”27 But it appears that such a situation is more probable in that Gadamer allows for the historically uninformed interpretation when he affirms, five pages later in his essay and in the quote mentioned above, that an appreciation for the historical surroundings is not necessary for a tenable interpretation of the artwork. By this position and through the “ontological vehemence [and] sensuous abundance”28 of the work of music which Gadamer believes contribute to its multiplicity of meanings, Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony could rightly be interpreted as being about the invention of the coffee percolator. The tempestuousness of the first movement could be interpreted as descriptive of his frustration over the inadequacy of the current modes of coffee production and the final movement as descriptive of his jubilation of having invented the machine and rescuing mankind from further subjection to sub-standard coffee. But the sheer anachronism of situating the invention and development of the coffee percolator in the early 1800s when Beethoven was composing his Fifth Symphony violates the cardinal hermeneutical principle that “what appears is not...a discrete entity which is imagined to give off a meaning somehow outside of time and history.”29 Furthermore, such an interpretation would be discounted under Gadamer’s own method, since his method “requires a differentiation of standpoints so that any particular interpretation of a subject matter encounters alternatives against which it may be compared...[and] the

27 Weberman 2000, 62.
ongoing critical transformation of the initial standpoints involved."\(^{30}\) Once more plausible interpretations of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony are presented and evaluated in the “dialogical mode of inquiry”\(^{31}\) that he advocates, the absurdity of the one to which Davies and I refer is immediately apparent, resulting in its just as immediate discarding. This is because when more plausible interpretations are offered, the one of the invention of the coffee percolator, or one of equal invalidity, would, by its incompatibility with the other interpretations, disrupt the “unity of the meaning” that Gadamer attributes to the variety of appropriate interpretations that emerge from a given artwork.

While Gadamer’s hermeneutical principles are well-conceived and thoroughly explained, they contain two tenets of questionable validity. The first is that “vestiges” and “sources” are distinguished by a linguistic capability of explanation that is supposedly absent from the former but present in the latter. However, as I have demonstrated, it would not be possible to recognize a “vestige” as a “vestige” if the ascription of a function and purpose to the object was not performed by the use of language. The second is that an identification with the historical circumstances of a work of art are not required to offer a tenable interpretation of it. However, as I have also demonstrated, such a relaxation of the requirements of interpretation leads to an inappropriate liberty in which nearly anything can go. Boundaries of interpretation must be in place and governed by just those historical surroundings which Gadamer believes do not need to be considered in one’s interpretation.


Bibliography


Often times Blaise Pascal's ideas are depicted in tense opposition to those held by Descartes: Pascal is the irrational religious mystic and Descartes is the rationalist anti-religious skeptic. However, a closer examination shows that this story is neither convincing nor correct. As a prominent Parisian intellectual trusted by Arnauld, it would be shocking if Pascal was unaware of Descartes's works. In fact, there is no doubt that he had knowledge of Cartesian thought that went beyond a mere superficial familiarity. For instance, the two were in correspondence with one another and there is good reason to believe that Pascal also knew of well-guarded unpublished works by Descartes. Although Pascal is certainly critical of Descartes at points, such critiques are not mutually exclusive to being a Cartesian.

32 In 1647, Descartes wrote Mersenne concerning a letter that he received from Pascal concerning vacuums. In it, Descartes accuses Pascal of attacking him on "the subtle matter." (CSM, 327)
33 In the Pensées (S794/L957), Pascal references the eucharist in what seems to be a direct reference to Descartes's 1645 letter concerning the eucharist. If Pascal did not have the trust of Descartes's circle of intellectuals, it is doubtful that he would have seen this potentially incriminating letter. (Ariew, 402-4) At the Council of Trent, it was declared that anyone who denied or altered the doctrine of transubstantiation was anathema. It is sensible, for his life's sake, that Descartes was secretive about this document.
34 Pascal is critical of Descartes's plenism and he believed that Descartes should have taken his skeptical project further, relying less on scientific knowledge. To this latter point, Pascal writes that, "[w]e must ... know when to doubt, when to affirm, when to submit...There are some who fall short of these three principles, either by affirming everything as demonstrable,
I hope in this paper to help correct a small part of this misunderstanding by looking at Pascal’s minor work on method, *De L’esprit Géométrique (The Geometric Mind)*. By showing the influence that Descartes’s posthumously published *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* had on this work, I will argue that there are good reasons to believe the method which Pascal uses in *De L’esprit Géométrique* is intentionally and wholly Cartesian. Finally, I hope to address a common objection to Pascal’s Cartesianism, that his Wager is anti-Cartesian. In spite of apparent tensions between Pascal’s popular argument and Cartesian philosophy, a careful distinction between the roles of the intellect and the will make it clear that there is no tension between these two.

Pascal’s minor work *De L’esprit Géométrique* is his attempt to offer a method for demonstrating knowledge. He argues that there are two natural ways that a person can come to hold “knowledge”: the understanding and the will. We form beliefs in the understanding through rational demonstration; we form beliefs through the will by pleasure, *i.e.* how a person feels about a claim, rather than through rational proof. The will provides a person with beliefs that are “base, unworthy and odd” and are not necessarily warranted or true. Although most people’s beliefs originate from their will, “...everyone disavows it. Each claims to believe only and even to love only what he knows deserves it.”

Not only are beliefs formed from the will “base,” but formulating the rules for convincing someone of a truth through her will is difficult, if not impossible. Pascal argues that for every type of pleasure a person may have, there is another lacking knowledge about demonstration; or by doubting everything.” (*Pensées*, S201/L170); Also, Ariew, 397.

Richard Serjeantson is currently researching a newly discovered manuscript of Descartes’s *Rules for the Direction of the Mind (Regulae ad directionem ingenii)*. Though it seems too early to draw any conclusions, it will be interesting to see how future scholarship on the *Regulae* impacts this paper’s thesis.

Pascal (1989), 186.

Ibid.
person that has a contrary pleasure—a rich person's pleasures differ from a poor person's and a well person's compared to the someone sickly, and so forth. Even the same person's pleasures vary according to her circumstances such as her present health, age, and mood. In order to find knowledge that “once ... accepted [will] remain firm and never [be] denied,” and demonstrate the “connection of truths to their principles”, one must turn to the faculty of understanding.38

Pascal begins this minor work by stating that, “[g]eometry ... has explained the art of discovering unknown truths” and it “excels in [the] three aims” of studying truth: discovery, demonstration, and distinguishing from error.39 The focus of his work is the latter two of the three aims. The first half of his work, On the Method of Geometrical Demonstrations, concerns proving individual propositions while the second half, The Art of Persuasion, concerns arranging propositions in a correct order.40 He says that most other philosophers (i.e., the scholastics) unsuccessfully try to define terms that cannot be defined, but geometry (meaning geometric method) embraces simple self-evident truths that can establish an apodictic and indubitable foundation for knowledge. The point that these foundational principles cannot be defined is not a defect, but it is the result of their extreme clarity; they have the certitude of demonstrations, even if lacking the conviction of them.42 To demonstrate knowledge from first principles, i.e. to form beliefs through the understanding, he gives a method in which the following rules are absolutely necessary:

38 Ibid, 188.
39 Ibid, 173. Here he also writes that geometry, “is almost alone the sole human science which produces infallible ones, because it alone observes the true method....”
40 Ibid.
41 He gives an example of the scholastics defining light as, “luminary motion of luminous bodies”; as if the words 'luminary' and 'luminous' could be understood without that of light...” (Ibid, 176.)
42 Ibid, 179-180.
(1) **Rules for definitions**: Define only clear, not ambiguous, terms and when offering a definition, only use ideas self-evident or that clearly follow from self-evident ideas;

(2) **Rules for axioms**: Only accept clearly evident ideas as axioms; and,

(3) **Rules for demonstrations**: Prove all propositions that are slightly obscure, using only axioms as determined by (2) and always conceive of an actual object when considering a definition, with restrictions that come from (1), to avoid confusion arising from poorly defined terms.  

By following these rules, Pascal says that proofs for all demonstrable knowledge will be made “convincing, immutable, and, to say it all, geometrical.”

So far, Pascal hardly seems to be the irrational religious mystic that he is sometimes portrayed as. However, his logic or method appears in tension with many of his thoughts that seem less rational, such as The Wager. In this famous fragment, Pascal suggests that someone ought to reflect upon the arguments that come before it earlier in the *Pensées*. Upon this reflection, she will realize that God’s existence (as understood by Pascal) is probable. Then, she ought to consider the possibility of eternal reward vs. eternal punishment; the unbeliever has little to lose and everything to gain by believing, while she has everything to lose and little to gain by not believing or acting as though she did. However, believing that reason is inadequate to prove God’s existence in any way that will lead people to conversion, he suggests that people accept the terms of the Wager—habitual pious behavior—in hopes that by acting religious, it will make the unbeliever susceptible to receive God’s grace.

To evaluate Pascal’s less rational points and answer the objection that they are anti-Cartesian, I would like to first turn to Descartes’s *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*. In the *Rules*, Descartes lays out the philosophy that he continues to develop

43 *Ibid*, p. 189-190; These rules are also nearly identical to the list of rules that Descartes gives in his *Discourse on Method* (See PEC, 54.)

for the rest of his life. He neither published nor completed this work due to its scandalous content such as suggesting the motion of the earth. He claims in the *Rules* that the end of human studies is to find "solid and true judgment." Typically, instead of making careful distinctions between different objects that have some similarities, people tend to mistake partially similar objects as completely similar. In order to discern true judgment, someone must first realize that all knowledge is related; then, to gain certain knowledge, one must seek an indubitable apodictic foundation on which to build all other knowledge claims. Truth, defined as freedom from errors, is found from systematically combining intuition with deduction. Intuition is knowledge that is gained not by the senses or imagination, but is self-evident to the "pure and attentive mind." A person should turn her mind towards one small and simple thing at a time because, like vision, she can only focus on one particular object at a time with any clarity. All other knowledge should be deduced by inferences made from intuitive truths, analogous to a geometric demonstration that starts with axioms. This is not a process of discovering new knowledge. By utilizing the imagination, it is extending intuited knowledge to consider things of other natures than were originally intuited. Hence, one must reduce involved and obscure propositions to simpler ones in order to analyze them in one of these two ways: intuition or deduction. If one properly and carefully uses this method, then she will never suppose false things are true.

He refers to the learning and perfection of practicing these rules as the "art of method." Analogous to a blacksmith who first must make or find tools such as an anvil and tongs before he takes on the task of producing in his craft, one must

45 PEC, 2.
46 Ibid, 6.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid, 20.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid, 25.
51 Ibid, 11.
acquire and learn to use the tools of reason before he is able to demonstrate knowledge with certainty. While intuitive knowledge is self-evident, like geometry deduced knowledge should be enumerated and orderly—by doing this, when someone is pondering more complex ideas, she is able to rely on simple and prior ideas without needing them to be immediately present in her mind. Furthermore, if someone is able to repeat these steps of deduction, through habit, deductions can become like intuitive knowledge: deduced knowledge itself becomes more self-evident and clear. In this work, Descartes also makes a clear distinction between the intellect and will. Although his *Rules* are how one must learn truths of the intellect, he notes that faith comes from the will and not from the intellect. Thus, his rules for finding indubitable knowledge cannot apply in cases to encourage religious belief.

Thus far, some similarities are probably evident between these works by Descartes and Pascal. Beyond a general knowledge of Descartes’s philosophy, Pascal embraces specific important Cartesian ideas novel to Descartes and makes specific references to the *Rules* in *De L’esprit Géométrique*. Here, Pascal addresses the problem that Descartes laid out in Rule 1: “It is the custom of people, whenever they notice any

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54 He also makes explicit reference to the *Discourse on Method*. In offering an example during his discussion on what it means for two things to say the same thing, he quotes the *Cogito* from Descartes’s *Discourse on Method*. Pascal defends it as original. He argues that although a *Cogito* has also been presented by Augustine—“I think; therefore, I am”—the intentions of each was very different. Although they sound identical, their similarity is one of form, not meaning; hence, they do not say the same thing. (CSM, 159) This passage shows that not only was Pascal aware of the *Discourse on Method*, but that he also knew enough about it to make a substantial claim about the nature of Descartes’s philosophy—specifically that the *Cogito* is unique and thus a distinct statement from Augustine’s. (Ariew)
similarity between two things, to attribute to both of them, even in those respects in which they differ, whatever they have found to be true of either one.\textsuperscript{55} Pascal suggests that in order to gain certain knowledge, one must be able to distinguish between ideas. It is not careful reasoning to say that two things are the same thing because they are similar to some degree; two objects are identical if and only if they are completely similar.

Also, as shown earlier, both Pascal's and Descartes's works begin with similar intentions to determine good sense from bad reasoning. By bad sense, they share a not too implicit target of unclear reasoning: the scholastics who they believed were proponents of notoriously unhelpful and unclear definitions. Before the triumph of Cartesian philosophy, Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophy dominated the schools and philosophical discourse. Both Pascal and Descartes aim to rid their projects from careless mistakes and false appeals to uncertain terms and definitions. Rather than relying on unclear definitions as a ground for philosophy, by applying geometric method Descartes and Pascal try to gain demonstrative epistemological certitude.\textsuperscript{56} Although since Euclid philosophers had studied geometry, Descartes's application of geometric method to philosophy was revolutionary and Pascal applies the geometric method to philosophy in the same way. Their methods are basically identical: first, find a few clear and distinct (\textit{i.e.} self-evident) ideas to function as axioms or first principles; then, build a system of knowledge from this foundation by applying these axioms to derive other clear and distinct ideas, and so forth. Finally, one will arrive at clearly defined terms and demonstrable knowledge. It is not uncritical to suggest that these similarities in method between the two

\textsuperscript{55} PEC, 2.

\textsuperscript{56} This is even more evident in Descartes's \textit{Discourse on Method}, which Pascal also seems to have read. (See n.23) In the \textit{Discourse}, Descartes utilizes Phyrhronian skepticism in his rejection of the primacy of non-geometric disciplines to find knowledge.
works are not merely incidental, but that Pascal embraces certain elements essential to Descartes’s thought.  

Furthermore, there are several stylistic similarities between Pascal’s and Descartes’s works. While each similarity may be incidental on its own, the sum of them combined with philosophical similarities and historical context makes a stronger case that Pascal was including these by Cartesian influence, intentionally or not. One example is that the title given to the second half of Pascal’s minor work is *The Art of Persuasion* which he begins by stating: “The art of persuasion has a necessary relation to the way in which men consent to what is proposed to them, and to the conditions of the things which it is desired to make them believe.” Since Pascal is concerned with separating opinions from truth, or, separating beliefs formed by the understanding from beliefs formed by the will. It seems that Pascal picks up on both Descartes’s metaphor of an artisan forming tools before he practices his trade and Descartes’s claim that proficiency in his method is an art: “the secret of the whole art consists in this: that we notice carefully in all things what is most absolute in them.” The illustration is too close, and applied too similarly, to treat it dismissively. Thence, since Pascal was among an intellectual circle trusted by Descartes, there was direct correspondence between these two, and that there are extremely close similarities in the content and style of their works, Pascal appears to be more Cartesian than not in *De L’esprit Géométrique*. There is sensible reason, textually and contextually, to believe that Pascal had access to,  

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57 Since Pascal wrote *De L’esprit Géométrique* after Descartes’s death (Descartes died in 1650 and Pascal’s minor work was written over the course of 1657-1658), it is possible that the influence on this work is not limited to the *Rules* and *Discourse on Method*. However, due to the scope of this paper (and that Pascal’s method seems most explicitly similar to these), the *Rules* is my focus.  
58 Pascal (1989), 185.  
59 PEC, 12; 19, 20.
read, and was influenced by Descartes's works, including his guarded *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*.\(^{60}\)

So, finally returning to The Wager, the apparent discontinuity between Pascal's *Pensées* and *De L'esprit Géométrique* is further complicated by the apparent tension between the *Pensées* and Pascal's Cartesianism. In the second of Descartes's *Rules*, he states that, "we reject all knowledge that is only probable, and we declare that only those things ought to be believed which are perfectly known and of which there can be no doubt."\(^{61}\) This could not seem further from Pascal's Wager, whose common title comes from its being a bet. It is a *wager for the odds* of eternal happiness and *against the odds* of eternal punishment. Pascal believes this wager must be made since God cannot be proven in any useful way through metaphysical argument.\(^{62}\) Rather, than rejecting knowledge that is probable, he says probability is the best we can achieve in matters of faith. Since a reasonable objection is that here Pascal is anti-Cartesian, that the *Pensées* were a more mature and developed version of Pascal's thought, it will be helpful to look at how these two viewed the understanding and the will.

Descartes and Pascal share a belief that there is a distinction between the intellect (or the understanding) and the will. The intellect is the mode for demonstrating indubitable knowledge while the will lacks this certainty of geometric demonstration. Although for Descartes the aim of his work is to demonstrate that "solid and true judgment" can be found free from errors, religious faith is a matter of the will. Descartes is

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\(^{60}\) If he had access to letters as potentially incriminating as the eucharist fragment (See n.2), this is not an unreasonable suggestion. Similarities in content and language seems to only further support this suggestion. He also read and generally understood Descartes's *Discourse on Method*. (See n.25)

\(^{61}\) PEC, 3.

\(^{62}\) Pascal refers to Descartes as "useless and uncertain" twice in the *Pensées*. It seems that by useless, he means useless for conversion and uncertain, it is uncertain in a way that can convince someone to believe in the way that leads to conversion. See Ariew.
certainly a rationalist—he is concerned with finding apodictic grounds for the intellect—but he is also making every effort to clearly maintain Roman Catholic orthodoxy. Hence, in his third rule from the *Rules* he writes, although intuition and deduction are the two most certain paths to scientific knowledge, “this does not ... prevent our believing those matters which are divinely revealed to be more certain than all knowledge. For faith in these, although it concerns obscure matters, is not an act of the intellect but the will.”

Similarly, Pascal writes concerning the will in relation to the intellect in his *De L’esprit Géométrique*: “divine truths,” are knowledge, “which I should be far from letting fall under the art of persuasion, for they are infinitely above the soul, and by whatever means He pleases.”

There are several points worth noting about these quotes. First, Descartes saves his apodictic rigor for demonstrating the type of knowledge where he believes it is appropriate, the intellect. He believes that matters of faith should be treated separately. Second, this implies that Pascal’s focus in the *Pensées* is on a dilemma that Descartes does not generally address in his works. In the *Pensées*, Pascal is concerned with the question of how one can find truth and certainty in faith if matters of religion cannot be demonstrated with geometric certainty. For Descartes, the answer concerning these matters is brief: he appeals to the authority of the church for certainty. But as a Jansenist, Pascal believed that, “one [the intellect] is human; the other [faith] is a gift of God. ... It is this faith that God himself puts into the heart, and proof is often its instrument. ... this faith is in the heart and makes us say not I know, but I believe.”

This is the point of distinction between Pascal’s minor work and the *Pensées* (as well as between these and Descartes’s philosophy)—not that they are in contradiction, but that the

63 This point stands regardless of whether his orthodoxy was sincere or disingenuous.
64 PEC, 7.
65 Pascal (1989), 186.
66 Ibid, 8.
Pensées generally focuses on different modes of knowledge. Through the will, the most certainty one can obtain is probability; yet, this is not mutually exclusive to the certainty that can be found in the intellect. Since the intellect is useless for bringing people to conversion, Pascal makes persuading the will the focus of his Pensées. As deduced knowledge can become intuitive by practice, so when one believes through her will that something is probable, this belief can be secured by habit by attending to religious duties.\textsuperscript{67}

Just as Descartes's Rules and Pascal's minor work acknowledge the role of the will but focus on the intellect, in the Pensées Pascal acknowledges that matters of the intellect—such as metaphysical proofs for God's existence—are demonstrable (recalling geometric certainty). His point is never that they lack truth, clarity, or certainty for the intellect, but that they lack the certainty to persuade a person to a belief by moving her will and are hence useless.\textsuperscript{68} By useless, he is not referring to matters of intellectual certainty or soundness but to the level of importance or urgency. In the Pensées, Pascal writes that:

\begin{quote}
A man is in prison, not knowing whether his sentence has been passed, with only an hour to find out, this hour being sufficient to obtain its repeal if he knew that it had been passed. It would be unnatural if he spent the hour not finding out whether his sentence had been passed, but playing piquet.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{quote}

Pascal's concern is to persuade people towards religious faith which cannot be done through intellectual demonstration alone; the intellect is useless to create religious belief or certainty in a way that moves the will. Conversion is a matter of

\textsuperscript{67} A person's belief in religion is not the be confused with that person's having faith, given Pascal's Jansenism.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, 55.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid, 51. (S195/163)
the will, where beliefs are formed by much more base methods like passions and habits. He focuses little on intellectual certainty and method in the *Pensées* fragments because he sees questions of that sort equivalent to someone playing cards when her death may be just an hour away. It is not that the intellect is unimportant, but it is only so comparatively to eternity and the rewards or punishments awaiting each person there. Upon deciding that the Christian faith offers the most probable outcome for happiness, he encourages a person to do all that an unbelief seeker is able to do—enter into a context where he will be ready to receive the divine gift of faith if God chooses to bestow it upon him. Since all of us are that prisoner with an hour left to live, Pascal urges his reader to accept the Wager. The Wager, if accepted, becomes a mechanism for making the will conducive to belief through habit.70 Until then, all intellectual knowledge and proofs concerning religion are useless to achieve what Pascal believes is most urgent and important.

So, now that I have distinguished between the modes of forming beliefs, I have also explained the *Pensées* in terms of Pascal’s Cartesianism. The apparent contradiction of non-rational and rational belief, probability and certainty, and of demonstration and habit are reconciled by acknowledging that both Pascal and Descartes make a distinction between two modes of forming beliefs—the intellect (or understanding) and

70 Some translations of the *Pensées* (Ariew’s translation from Hackett, for instance) translate the Wager as the Machine. I think this captures the essence of Pascal’s argument well—given the possibility or even probability of God’s existence, the unbeliever should “calculate” those beliefs through the Machine, and decide that it is more reasonable to believe than not believe. Then, the argument is more of a mechanism (a machine) to make the will conducive to religious belief through probability then forming beliefs through habit. The Wager (Machine) is intended for the unbeliever who has reached the limits of the intellect—she is sympathetic to the religion, is close to believing, but has not been persuaded towards that final step of believe just yet (since that is a function of the will).
the will. With this distinction in mind, it is evident that one faculty is rational, the other non-rational; one utilizes geometric certainty, the other probability; one calls for demonstration, the other one relies upon habitual behavior. The apparent contradiction lies in that the Pensées tends to focus on the will, while Descartes and Pascal’s minor work tend to focus on the understanding or intellect. With this tension reconciled and the similarities shared by De L’esprit Géométrique and Rules for the Direction of the Mind, Pascal’s Cartesianism is evident. Pascal’s embracing of Descartes’s philosophy as his own does not mean that Pascal’s work cannot be appreciated in its own right as a positive contribution to early modern philosophy. Even if it is not entirely unique, Pascal did not always agree with Descartes. Instead, he applies Cartesian philosophy to make something uniquely Pascalian.

Bibliography


Cody Craig: Kant’s Reply to Hume on the Cognition of the Phenomenon

Each day we go about our way doing what we normally do. We wake up, go to work or school, eat, sleep, and enjoy ourselves. We interact with each other such as our friends and family, and we interact with objects such as our laptops, phones, iPods, and so on. But have you even wondered how we could cognize objects and events? We go about our day fully convinced that we cognize things as they are in front of us and fully determined that they are as they appear. The question I call to mind, “how is it possible that we cognize objects and events around us?” is all philosophical.

There are many philosophers, such as the celebrated Descartes, Locke, and Leibnitz, who contributed to the foundation of epistemology or the study of the theories knowledge on the cognition of objects and events. In this paper I am only going to focus on two philosophers who are essentially most important on the philosophical topic at hand, and they are David Hume and Immanuel Kant. Kant’s profound theory of knowledge on the cognition of objects is widely used today in the many fields of empirical sciences, such as Mathematics and Biology, consciously or unconsciously. Kant’s theory of knowledge, found in his Critique of Pure Reason and Prolegomena, was a reply to where David Hume left off in his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. The purpose of this paper is to explore where David Hume left unanswered on the cognition of object, where Immanuel Kant picks up, and how Kant completes the theory by replying to Hume.

A brief introduction to the philosophers at hand, David Hume (1711-76) was a Scottish philosopher, essayist, and historian. He is arguably the greatest British philosopher after Locke, and aimed at the foundation of science in his philosophy. Hume published his first work, A Treatise of Human Nature

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71 Cognize means to perceive consciously, not to be mistaken with recognize which means to identity with something prior.

72 Empirical is a philosophical term that means ‘pertaining’ to the physical and sensible reality.
(1739-40), at the age of 26, but it was neglected in both academic and popular sense. He trimmed his Book I of the Treatise down to a shorter and concise version, the Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (1748/1758). Hume’s Enquiry gets translated over to German and appeared as the second volume of the Vermischte Schriften in 1755, which happens to be the same year that Immanuel Kant started his position at the University of Konigsberg as a lecturer. Kant (1724-1804) is perhaps the most important philosopher of modern Europe. He spent his whole life in the city of Konigsberg in East Prussia. Known for his stoic nature to take a leisure walk around the city at the exact time of day, people often set their clocks to the exact time as he passes by. Immanuel Kant familiarizes himself in Hume’s philosophy along with the growing German popularity of Hume’s philosophy, and for a while he adopted Hume’s way of thinking. Building up to some point around 1770, Kant finally broke from the Humean tradition, and went into his ‘silent decade’ where he devoted his time in reflection. Breaking out of his ‘silent decade’ and confessing that Hume woke him up from his ‘dogmatic slumber,’ Kant published the first edition of Critique of Pure Reason in 1781. Since it was a difficult book ‘to crack,’ Kant wrote and published the Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics (1781), a shorter and concise approach to the Critique. Both of these works contain Kant’s reply to Hume on the theory of knowledge concerning cognition of objects.

To the main topic at hand, David Hume, in Section II of his Enquiry, states that when we cognize objects and events we have two distinct perceptions in our mind, one is lively and

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73 It was originally titled Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding. After 1758, it became known as Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. See The Oxford Companion to Philosophy.

74 See Kuehn, Manfred “Kant’s Conception of ‘Hume’s Problem.’”

75 I synthesized information from both The Oxford Companion to Philosophy and Manfred Kuehn’s “Kant’s Conception of ‘Hume’s Problem.’”
immediate and one that is just a mere copy after the experience is over. Hume states this in his *Enquiry* as follows:

Everyone will readily allow, that there is a considerable difference between the perception of the mind, when a man feels the pain of excessive heat, or the pleasure of moderate warmth, and when he afterwards recalls to his memory this sensation, or anticipates it by his imagination. These faculties may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses; but they never can entirely reach the force and vivacity of the original sentiment. Here therefore we may divide all the perceptions of the mind into two classes or species, which are distinguished by their different degrees of force and vivacity. The less forcible and lively are commonly denominated *thoughts* or *ideas*. Impressions, then, I mean all our more lively perception, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will. And impressions are distinguished from ideas, which are less lively perceptions, of which we are conscious, when we reflect on any of those sensations or movements.

Hume calls the perception of the mind when we cognize objects and events through sensuous experience that is lively and immediate *impressions*, and the perception which is a mere copy left over after the experience, *thoughts* or *ideas*. Impressions are our ‘vivacious’ sensations, emotions, and passions and we obtain them through our senses as sense data, and impressions are not to be confused as the our senses themselves, such as taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell. *Thoughts* or *ideas* are mere copies of the sensations that we experienced through our faculty of the senses. They are the sensually fleeting memories,

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76 Sentiment can be used here as sensation.
77 See Hume's *Enquiry* pg. 10.
78 This is also referred as the philosophical term, ‘Hume’s Fork.’
thoughts, and ideas of the feelings and sensations of a past experience. The cognition of objects can be categorized by the human reason according to Hume into two kinds of categories, Relations of Ideas and Matters of Fact. Relations of Ideas concern cognitions of things such as mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, and formal logic where when we cognize the mathematical propositions such as $5+7=12$, it is “intuitively or demonstratively certain.” Cognitions of things belonging to Matters of Facts are contingent to the objects and events acting upon another and contraries of Matters of Facts are possible such as “My pen is on the table” and “My pen is not on the table.”

David Hume contributed something profoundly true through his observations and philosophizing. I can take my pen for instance since it always seem to be around where ever I go, and observe it. When the pen is in my presence directly in front of me, its impressions are real; I can feel all the sensations of it through my faculty of senses. I can see it along with all its intricate design, its form, its curvature, and the unique colors of the patterns on the wooden body distinguishable from the metallic ends. I can hear a noise if I tap on it or when I write with it, and when I smell it gives off an odor of being in a wooden pen case. I am not going to taste it, but you can get the idea that the impression I get from my pen which is directly in front of me is vivacious and real to its fullest extent. But when I put my pen away from my presence, all I am left with is the thought or the idea of my pen. The thought of my pen is not as vivacious as when it was directly in front of me. I can only vaguely see it in my mind as a grey mental picture of a pen that was in my presence just a few moments ago. I have to think hard to try to remember the fine details of its intricate patterns and designs. So what I am left with is a mere mental copy, which is a memory or an idea of my pen, and might not even be at all accurate to my real pen. In order to make sure that my idea of my pen is accurate to my real pen, I have to put it back directly in front of me to make sure. The question that comes to

79 See Hume’s Enquiry pg. 15.
mind now is, “How is it possible at all that I can even cognize my pen that is directly in front of me at all?”

David Hume, through his naturalistic observations, gave us his cognitive philosophy of impressions and ideas through which our minds can perceive them, but Hume did not give us an answer to the "how" we can perceive objects and events of the external empirical world. It is as though Hume just assumes that we just merely perceive objects and events of the external world through our given faculty of senses as sense data. The questions of, “How is it possible at all to cognize objects and events at all?” is a question of 'Critical Philosophy' introduced by Immanuel Kant. Although it is commonly noted by many people that Kant came up with the 'Transcendental Idealism,' Kant himself thinks that it is more of a 'critical philosophy' in that its objective is to distinguish the two ways our reasoning tend to mix up and cause errors, and that is looking at things by which they appear and by what they are themselves. Kant does not reject Hume's epistemology of impressions and ideas. Instead, Kant takes it further by giving us the answer to how it is possible that we cognize objects and events of the empirical world. Hume’s inability to answer this question, according to Kant, was that he attacked metaphysics by calling it 'abstruse' as seen in Section I of his Enquiry, appealing his philosophy to common sense or popularity, and overlooking a priori cognitions which makes metaphysics possible. All in all, Hume's nature as an empiricist, caused him to overlook metaphysics, and thus he could not answer the question to how is possible for us to cognize objects and events.

80 See the introduction of Kant's Prolegomena.
81 In Schmidt's "Psychologism and Cognitive Theory in Hume and Kant: A Response to Kitcher," Schmidt argues that Kant did not reject Hume's epistemology of impressions and ideas. Kant just gives another name for them like 'matters of intuition.'
82 Abstruse means difficult to grasp or understand.
83 A priori means knowledge that is prior to experience.
84 See the Preamble of Kant's Prolegomena. Kant does also give him credit for being such a great and elegant writer.
Kant’s answer and his reply to Hume on the critically philosophical question, “How is it possible that we cognize objects and events of the empiric reality?”, is this: We cognize objects and events in the empirical reality as *phenomenon* as they appear to us as synthetic *a priori* cognitions, not as *noumenon* or as things-in-themselves, through our *faculty of sensibility* which includes our senses in the forms of intuitions and the forms of pure *a priori* intuitions of space and time.

To know what synthetic *a priori* cognitions are, we must explore Kant’s categories of judgments which are analytical judgments and synthetical judgements. Analytical judgments are, in a sense, always *a priori* and are explicative where the predicate adds nothing of content to the subject such as in the cognition of “A pen is a writing utensil.” Kant’s category of analytical judgements on the cognition of things is in Hume’s terminology as *Relations of Ideas*. Synthetic judgements are generally *a posteriori*, but in the case that I am speaking on Kant, I will clarify as using Kant’s terminology as *synthetic a posteriori* judgements. Synthetic *a posteriori* judgements are ampliative cognitions where the subject and the predicate are independent of each other and the predicate actually adds content to the subject. An example cognition of this sort is such as, “The pen is on the table,” where he predicate, “on the table,” is independent on the subject, “the pen.” How the predicate adds content to the pen is that it can be contingently observed that the pen is on the table, and the two are acting upon each other as the table supports the weight of the pen. This is the same as Hume’s terminology as *Matters*.

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85 Pure *a priori* means prior to any and all possible experience.
86 See Kant’s *Prolegomena* pg. 12.
87 *A posteriori* means knowledge after or required through experience.
88 See Kant’s *Prolegomena* pg. 12.
89 Analytical and Synthetical judgements of cognitions are not to be confused with analytical and synthetical propositions. Analytical propositions are true by definitions such as “my pen is a writing utensil,” where the predicate is contained in the subject. Synthetical propositions are true by contingency such
of Facts. These categories of cognition however, along with Hume’s, does not entail the explanation of how we cognize things in space and time, but that we just do. Kant adds a third category of cognition, the synthetic a priori cognition, to show how it is possible we cognize objects and events in space and time and how it is possible to do things such as mathematics, geometry, and arithmetic.

Kant, going back to metaphysics, implements a priori principles to the cognition of objects a posteriori. In a sense, he ‘transcends’ these objects a posteriori by arguing for the theory that we have to see objects in space and in time. Space and time are pure a priori principles and cannot be felt through empirical sensations; they are pure a priori intuitions subjectively innate in all of us. Kant gives an example that if we were to look at an object and completely remove everything about it and around it in our minds, we would be left with the intuition of space and time in which the object belongs. Assuming that this is possible, it logically follows that our a priori intuition of space and time must come prior to our cognition of objects a posteriori. Thus, according to Kant, synthetic a priori cognition is possible.90

Synthetic a priori cognitions are cognitions of objects and events belonging to the empirical reality, and it is only possible through our pure a priori intuitions of space and time and our sensuous intuitions. According to Kant, intuition is distinctively different and independent from understanding, in that it even precedes the understanding of an object or event. The understanding of objects and events belongs to their concepts. If intuitions were to belong to the concepts of the objects, then we would always need the immediate presence of the objects to intuit the objects, but then that means that intuitions would not be intuitions anymore. Hence, the pure a priori intuitions of space and time would only be relative to the objects and events themselves, and they would not be a priori at all as experience is necessitated through objects and events.91

as “my pen is on the table” where we have to observe to see if it is true or not.

90 See Kant’s Prolegomena pg. 25.
91 See Kant’s Prolegomena pg. 23-24.
This would be Hume’s point of view, an error that Kant is addressing, because in this viewpoint we would not be able to cognize objects and events in space and time individually but only relative to each other.

Kant, in defending his theory of intuitions being prior to all experience of objects and events allowing us to cognize them in space and time, states:

Therefore in one way only can my intuition anticipate the actuality of the object, and be a cognition *a priori*, viz., *if my intuition contains nothing but the form of sensibility, which in me as a subject precedes all the actual impressions through which I am affected by objects*. For that objects of sense can only be intuited according to this form of sensibility I can know *a priori*. Hence it follows that propositions which concern this form of sensuous intuition only are possible and valid for objects of the senses; as also, conversely, that intuitions which are possible *a priori* can never concern any other things than objects of our senses92.

What Kant is saying is that priori to any cognition any object or event of the empirical reality, our intuition must contain nothing but our faculty of sensibility. Our *faculty of sensibility* is a subjective and categorical system in the mind including the pure *a priori* forms of space and time which allow data of the external world to be packet. This has to follow as logically *a priori* to any cognition of things in the empirical reality. Because things can only appear to us through space and time and our senses, we do not know anything else other than the way objects and events appear to us.

Back to using the example of my pen in the context of using Kant’s cognitive theory, I know nothing of my pen, but only how it appears to me as a phenomenon and not as a thing-in-itself. I can only know how it is as appears to me through space and time. Prior to any cognition of my pen, my subjective

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92 See Kant’s *Prolegomena* pg. 24-25.
mind supplied me with categories in which data can be packet and stored. This is the faculty of my sensibility which includes my forms of intuitions and the pure a priori intuition of space and time necessary for me to do any and all cognitions of my pen. Similarly it is like being completely unable to see anything at all because I am nearsighted and I must put on my glasses every day in order to see things clearly. Analogically my glasses would be my faculty to sensibility in order to see anything at all, but even then I am limited by how much I can see, because I cannot see everything.

Cartesian skeptics often like to raise the question and test a Kantian on his views that our senses often deceive us and we make errors because of it such as if my pen was across the room along with many other pens how would I know which one is my pen? I would answer, given that my pen is an appearance to me along with any other pens around it, if I were to make an error in identifying my pen, it is not the cause of my senses being deceived, but the faculty of my judgment on which pen is really mine. I cannot know which pen is exactly mine, given if all the other pens look very similar; that would require that I know my pen as a thing-in-itself. I can only identify a pen that looks as close as possible in resemblance as my pen, and there is no error given that I can only judge by what appears to me. Kant states in regards to this type of objection, "When an appearance is given us, we are still quite free as to show how we should judge the matter. The appearance depends on the senses, but the judgment upon the understanding; and the only question is whether in the determination of the object there is truth or not."

Those of the Humean tradition who thinks cognitions of objects and events are merely impressions and ideas have a difficult time inferring on the objects because their ideas of them are not as lively as the impressions often fall into skepticisms. David Hume in his Treatise of Human Nature thought that we observe objects only by their qualities by our imagination if we granted the observed qualities are qualities of the objects themselves. Therefore, any observation could be a

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93 See Kant's Prolegomena pg. 31.
truth property of an object or an illusory property we give to an object. Kant reconciles this by stating that objects and events of the empirical reality are just “things as objects of our sense existing outside use are given, but we know nothing of what they may be in themselves, knowing only by their appearances... all the properties which constitute the intuition of a body belong merely to its appearance.” So when we try to infer objects and things as things in themselves we could fall into doubt that it might not be what it really is like David Hume.

According to Patricia Kitcher, the difference between Kant and Hume was that Kant was willing to go beyond the Empiricist viewpoint that of Hume, redefine the metaphysics that Hume calls ‘abstruse’ to consider the necessary faculties for the cognition of objects. Kant believed it was possible and necessary to reestablish a priori principles even for objects that are known synthetically. In doing so, he establishes the synthetic a priori cognition through a critical method of philosophy, which is commonly called ‘Transcendental Idealism.

In conclusion, the celebrated David Hume was a significant figure in that he established a great foundation in the epistemology of cognition. His philosophy was that the cognitions of objects and events in the empiric reality are impressions and ideas, where impressions were immediate and vivacious while ideas where fleeting memories of the impressions. Hume never mentioned, however, the establishment of how cognitions of objects are possible. Immanuel Kant picks up through the establishment of his critical philosophy, in turn the establishment of synthetic a priori cognitions. Through synthetic a priori cognitions, we cognize phenomenon as they appear to us and not as themselves in space and time through our faculty of sensibility. We do so, in that our faculty of sensibility anticipates the

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94 See Peter Mittelstaedt’s “Cognition versus Constitution of Objects: From Kant to Modern Physics.”
95 See Kant’s Prolegomena pg. 30.
96 Quoted in John H. Zammito’s “Kant and Naturalism Reconsidered”
cognition of objects through the sensuous forms of intuitions and pure *a priori* intuitions of space and time. With closing remarks, Kant believes skepticism such as the Cartesian and Humean Skepticisms are the “Scandals of Philosophy!”

References


Aaron Dopf: Nietzsche Contra the Apostle Paul

In terms of the psychology of slave moralities, the Apostle Paul is a unique and fascinating case study. Paul represents a particularly complicated and vexing individual for Nietzsche, and one can palpably sense that Nietzsche's vehement criticism of Paul in The Antichrist and Dawn is tinged with frustration. The problem for Nietzsche is that Paul was not a meek ascetic monk teetering on the brink of suicidal nihilism. Rather, he was an itinerant and prolific creator of new values who also pursued and obtained much power. He is nothing like the sick ascetic ideal of Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals. In fact Paul himself repeatedly boasted about gaining power through his special abilities to tap into 'the Spirit' and demonstrate great 'signs and wonders'. I find it surprising, unfortunate, and somewhat embarrassing that the topic of the Apostle Paul has been so neglected when it comes to Nietzsche's critique of morality. The purpose of this paper is to offer a much needed analysis of Paul in the context of Nietzsche's revaluation of values.

Despite being the grand architect of Christian slave morality according to Nietzsche, Paul exhibited numerous Übermenschean qualities. Moreover, Paul was not a group, class, or herd but an individual – perhaps, in terms of Nietzsche's own values, even a free spirit of sorts. For lack of a better way to put it, he was an elite who utilized and manipulated the herd. So on what grounds then does Nietzsche have the right to so vehemently criticize Paul? Paul, it seems, was somehow sick and powerful at the same time.

Bracketing these questions for the moment, one thing is immediately clear: through Paul a new type of person became valued and a new way of life was established – ones which

97 In particular A 41-45 where Nietzsche describes Paul as a tyrant and villain; and also D 68 where he sharply criticizes Paul.

98 See Romans 1:16, 15:19, 8:38, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, 2 Corinthians 12:12, Galatians 3:5, 1 Corinthians 5:3-5.
Nietzsche found no value in. Interestingly, Nietzsche attacks Socrates for very similar reasons – he too tried to promote a new way of life that Nietzsche also rejects. I submit that there are some interesting parallels between Nietzsche’s critiques of Paul and Socrates. According to Alexander Nehamas in his book The Art of Living99, Nietzsche criticizes Socrates for three primary reasons: first, he disregarded the importance of instincts and other drives in favor of rationality; second, he was the first great ‘moralizer’; and third, he dismantled the early Greek’s views of human nature, suffering, and tragedy100. Like Socrates, Paul revalued old values in ways that established a new type of individual and new way of life that Nietzsche rejects as sick and unworthy of value.

This understanding will allow us to better understand the nature of the Nietzsche’s ‘slave revolt’ in morality. Moreover, an examination of Paul will provide insight into the psychology of the ascetic ideal discussed in The Genealogy and it will also allow us to understand what Nietzsche is attempting to do in The Antichrist. I firmly maintain that The Antichrist and Dawn (which contains the bulk of Nietzsche’s critique of Paul) should be read, not as an objective historical analysis, but rather as Nietzsche’s attempt to establish a philosophical and moral nemesis. I do not think Nietzsche is trying to rewrite history to accomplish this, but many of the generalizations and claims of The Antichrist highly suggest a pre-established motive and bias in Nietzsche. This may seem a provocative claim but consider initially that Nietzsche came to refer to himself as “Dionysus versus the crucified” – and ”the crucified” was Paul’s term for Jesus Christ.

Let’s begin by addressing Nietzsche’s own words on Paul. Nietzsche devotes a sizable portion of The Antichrist to discussing Paul. There he states: “At bottom he [Paul] had no

\[\text{99} \text{ Nehamas, Alexander. } \text{The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault, London: University of California Press, 1998 [AL].} \]
\[\text{100} \text{ Nehamas AL 335.} \]
use at all for the life of the redeemer – he needed the death on the cross and a little bit more” (A 42). Essentially Nietzsche argues that Christ was the invention of Paul and had little to no connection to the historical “gentle Jew from Nazareth”. As Nietzsche provocatively put it: “there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross” (A 39).

Paul comprehended that the lie – that “faith” – was needed; later the church in turn comprehended Paul. The “God” whom Paul invented, a god who “ruins the wisdom of the world” ... is in truth merely Paul's own resolute determination to do this: to give the name of “God” to one's own will, torah, that is thoroughly Jewish. Paul wants to ruin the “wisdom of the world” (A 47).

This passage strongly suggests that Paul's invention of Christ was an intentional and even vengeful project. I think it is crucial however to point out that this in no way entails that Paul was lying and merely trying to control the people (as Nietzsche claims). Rather, he could have been motivated to challenge the “wisdom of the world” and Christ was his vehicle for doing so. Accordingly, perhaps Saul's conversion to Paul was the result of an enlightened epiphany in which he sincerely saw the need to challenge the old world values and establish new ones. So Paul could have conspired to promote these new values not merely to control people and gain power but because he genuinely saw a vacuum in traditional theology which he filled in with a radical reinterpretation of the life and death of Jesus and the creation of Christ (A 24, 40-42, 46, 51-52). According to Nietzsche's historical view (D 68); in light of his revelation on the road to Damascus, Paul simply appropriated the crucifixion of Jesus, attached the message of his revelation to it, and thereby created the notion of Christ.

101 See also WP 171, 177.
102 See also A 24, 27, 35, 39
103 Galatians 1:13-17.
Let us bracket these historical issues for the moment and turn our attention to both the fairness as well as the consistency of Nietzsche’s critique of Paul – specifically the lengthy discussion of Paul in Dawn 68. To sum up, Nietzsche argues that Paul simply appropriated the notion of Christ in order to vicariously and disingenuously promote his values. As Nietzsche puts it, the ‘Holy Spirit’ was in truth just Paul’s spirit (D 68). “Without this remarkable history, without the storms of confusions of such a mind [Paul’s], of such a soul, there would be no Christianity” (D 68). As we will discuss in detail, Nietzsche also argues that Paul secretly hated the law because it could not be fulfilled; so he plotted its destruction through the figure of Christ.

This raises two big issues in need of resolution: first, on what grounds can Nietzsche criticize Paul when he in fact pursued and won considerable power? In Paul’s words, “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works”\(^{104}\). Second, on what grounds can Nietzsche fault Paul for consciously attempting to modify the values of first century Jews and Christians? Was Paul not, like Nietzsche, just another re-valuator of values? Here again, these two aspects of Paul are in concert with Nietzsche’s own notion of the will to power as well as Nietzsche’s Übermenschian ideal. In this light, Nietzsche’s critique of Paul comes off as not only hypocritical, but petty, and even ad hominem in nature.

First let’s consider Nietzsche’s provocative claim that Paul was really motivated by a secret desire to destroy the old laws of Judaism. “The ‘God’ whom Paul invented, a god who ‘ruins the wisdom of the world’ is in truth merely Paul’s own resolute determination to do this” (A 47). In Dawn 68 Nietzsche argues:

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\(^{104}\) 2 Corinthians 12:12. See also Romans 1:16, 15:19, 8:38 1 Thessalonians, 1:5, Galatians 3:5, 1 Corinthians 5:3-5.
And then he [Paul] discovered in himself that he himself – fiery, sensual, melancholy, malevolent in hatred as he was – could not fulfill the law, he discovered indeed what seemed to him the strangest thing of all: that his extravagant lust for power was constantly combating and on the watch for transgressors and goad... However much he tried to relieve this conscience, and even more his lust for domination, through the extremist fanaticism in revering and defending the law, there were moments when he said to himself: 'It is all in vain! The torture of the unfulfilled law cannot be overcome' (D 68).

So according to Nietzsche, Paul was so frustrated by his inability to fulfill the law that he decided to destroy it and replace it with mere faith. As an added bonus Paul would gain considerable power by filling in the vacuum left by the law with his own message – which goes beyond just the Jews and actually wins authority for Paul over the Gentiles as well. This, I take it, was Paul’s ‘lust for power’ – he desired to control the masses. “In Paul the priest wanted power once again – he could use only concepts, doctrines, symbols, with which one tyrannizes masses and forms herds” (A 42). Nietzsche calls this Paul’s ‘perfect revenge’ and calls him the “teacher of the destruction of the law (D 68).

But here is where things get really confusing. Nietzsche seems to be criticizing Paul for no other reason than that he pursued and won power. Consider this description of Paul “The law was the cross to which he felt himself nailed: how he hated it! how he had to drag it along! how he sought about for a means of destroying it” (D 68). Assuming Nietzsche’s interpretation of Paul’s motives is accurate, this was no easy task; and yet: Paul accomplished it according to Nietzsche. Moreover, wouldn’t the personal nature of this project amount to an act of self-overcoming in Nietzsche’s view? But here is perhaps the most confusing fact of all; despite the previous statements about the
law, despite Paul’s criticism of the law he claimed that he was actually blameless under the law \(^{105}\). This inconsistency in Paul’s message has been one of the biggest and most complicated issues in the history of Paul scholarship. And yet Nietzsche fails to even acknowledge this statement, despite the fact that it flew directly in the face of his thesis. Was Nietzsche somehow ignorant of this issue? And what do we make of all this?

It is hard to believe, given what a scholar Nietzsche was, that he was somehow ignorant of Paul’s conflicting statements regarding the fulfillment of the law. I think it is more likely that Nietzsche considers the single passage in Philippians a fluke compared to the numerous other passages where he argues that Christ was necessary because no man could fulfill the law. In Paul's words, “God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do”\(^ {106}\). Whatever the explanation is, for our purposes, not nearly as much turns on this issue as the question of Nietzsche challenging Paul for his pursuit of power. Once again I maintain that Paul in fact desired power over the masses – not merely the Jews but also the Gentiles. Paul obsessively traveled to his various congregations in order to continually reassert his authority.

I maintain that Nietzsche is not criticizing Paul for his pursuit of power at all. In fact, if Nietzsche were pressured to say something positive about Paul, I am confident he would concede respect for Paul’s itinerant lifestyle\(^ {107}\) and commitment to a difficult and complex project. What Nietzsche objects to is the moral values that Paul was promulgating. After Paul and the emergence of Christianity a new kind of person came to be valued and thus a new morality – both of which Nietzsche objects to. However, I do not think this in any way makes

\(^{105}\) Philippians 3:6.
\(^{106}\) Romans 8:3. See also Romans 3:21, Romans 10:4, Galatians 5:18, Galatians 2:21, Romans 7:4.
\(^{107}\) It is perhaps worth noting that Nietzsche himself lived an itinerant vagabond sort of existence.
Nietzsche a hypocrite. From Nietzsche’s perspective Paul was not a re-valuer of values like himself but a destructive ‘improver of mankind’ (TI “Improvers”) who promoted sick and unhealthy values. I maintain Nietzsche regards revaluation as good only when it is to reverse sick and unhealthy values and promote healthy ones (which he of course saw himself doing). Moreover Nietzsche thinks that Paul’s attempt at ‘improving’ mankind resulted in the slave revolt that brought down Rome and supplanted the morality of good and bad, with the morality of good and evil.

I submit that Nietzsche’s distinction between master and slave morality must be understood in terms of active versus reactive processes. The nobles simply assert themselves as actively defining what the good is for humans. This is why Nietzsche argues that their master morality applied first only to individuals – specifically the noble types in contrast to the plebeian types. The concept ‘good’ originally, according to Nietzsche, was simply a description of this distance. In Beyond Good and Evil he states:

The noble human being separates from himself those natures in which the opposite of such exalted proud states find expression: he despises them. It should be noted at once that in this first type of morality the antithesis ‘good’ and ‘bad’ means the same thing as ‘noble’ and ‘despicable’ (BGE 260).

Thus ‘good’ was initially defined by distinguishing it from ‘bad’ in the non-moral sense of ‘noble’ versus ‘despicable’ – a definition based on a “pathos of distance” (BGE 257).

It is therefore the high-stationed, powerful, and noble themselves who determine what the concept ‘good’ means. According to Nietzsche they are the first to take ownership of the term and adopt the role of value creation. “The noble type of man feels himself to be the determiner of values... he knows himself to be that which in general first accords honor to things,
he creates values” (BGE 260). Originally the nobles define ‘good’ independently of the common or plebeian – they simply are good themselves. However, when they encounter the common or plebeian and recognize a marked difference they label them ‘bad’ in the sense of contemptible. In other words, ‘bad’ is defined in relation to ‘good’ not ‘good’ in relation to ‘bad’ – the concept ‘good’ therefore has etymological primacy according to Nietzsche. Again, however, it is important to emphasize the non-moral sense of this distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’. Originally, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ are distinguished in a non-moral sense in terms of quality. In other words, Nietzsche’s point is that ‘good’ for the nobles means excellence in one or more of uniquely human activities, be it physical, intellectual, artistic in nature. The nobles are ‘good’ simply because they are the ones that take ownership of human nature and actively define it. Anything that does not fulfill that actively defined essence subsequently becomes ‘bad’ by comparison in terms of an “pathos of distance” (BGE 257).

The story does not end there however. As one would rightly expect, the plebeian class is not content with the pejorative label ‘bad’, and they become frustrated with their lack of power and ability to resist persecution. The plebeians also seek to express their will to power but are faced not only with physical and violent oppression at the hands of the masters, but also the psychological oppression of master’s moral categories that labels them inferior, weak, and powerless. This leaves them frustrated and discontent resulting in what Nietzsche refers to as ressentiment. They want to challenge the authority of the nobles but lack the resources to do so. As a result: “the slave [plebeian] is suspicious of the virtues of the powerful: he is skeptical and mistrustful, keenly distrustful, of everything ‘good’ that is honored among them” (BGE 260).

I think Paul witnessed this tension (between the Jews, Gentiles, and newly emerging Christians) reach a fever pitch in first century Palestine. Thus the plebeian class seeks to find a way to exert power over the noble class and challenge their authority, but they lack just such power. Therefore, according
to Nietzsche, they would have been very susceptible to the introduction of new moral concepts that empowered them (i.e. ‘good’ versus ‘evil’) in place of those that rendered them powerless (i.e. ‘good’ versus ‘bad’). So Paul opportunistically posited a radically different system of morality, insisting that his values were not created but revealed. His values were a higher type of ‘absolute’ values that were metaphysical in nature. They were too attractive to be ignored by the plebeians because they also promised to resolve suffering. Accordingly the lynchpin to the whole doctrine was its realism.

This extreme form of moral realism armed the plebeians with the necessary tools to ‘retali ate’ – or more precisely empower themselves by devaluing the noble’s status. According to Nietzsche, this reorganization is the origin of morality in the sense of slave morality – which is first and foremost a response, a reaction, a retaliation. Once again it is important to highlight the reactive nature of the slave revolt. In Nietzsche’s words, “Its action is fundamentally reaction” (GM I 10). Just as the plebeians began to define themselves in antithesis to the nobles (they are evil therefore we are good), so too did they define their values simply in antithesis to the nobles’ values. The implicit logic is: “the oppressive values of the nobles are conditional and created, therefore ours’ are absolute and real”.

Nietzsche observes that, with their power, the noble class exerts a degree of fear over the plebeians – and it is precisely this fear that gives rise to the plebeian’s re-valuation of the ‘good’ in contrast to the imposition of ‘evil’. It is this ‘degeneration of life’ that eventually gives birth to the ascetic ideal (GM III 13). In Nietzsche’s words:

According to slave morality the ‘evil’ inspire fear; according to master morality it is precisely the ‘good’ who inspire fear and want to inspire it. The antithesis reaches its height when, consistently with slave morality, a breath of disdain finally also comes to be
attached to the 'good' of this morality' (BGE 260).

Therefore, the plebeians, due to their powerless state, define themselves, and likewise the 'good,' in contrast to the nobles by labeling the nobles 'evil' and, subsequently, themselves 'good' (GM I 10, 13). As Clark puts it in her article "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality," "Good versus evil, however, is clearly supposed to be a moral distinction. Like good versus bad, it distinguishes superior from inferior people"\textsuperscript{108}.

According to Nietzsche, slave morality introduces the term 'evil' for all things powerful, and redefines 'good', this time in a moral sense as the antithesis of 'evil' (i.e. meek). Thus, where the nobles defined 'good' in a creative and positive sense, the plebeians now define it in a negative sense – that is, in contrast to 'evil'.

This, then, is quite the contrary of what the noble man does, who conceives the basic concept 'good' in advance and spontaneously out of himself and only then creates for himself an idea of 'bad'? This 'bad of noble origin and that 'evil' out of the cauldron of unsatisfied hatred – the former an after-production, a side issue, a contrasting shade, the latter on the contrary the original thing, the beginning, the distinctive deed in the conception of a slave morality – how different these words 'bad' and 'evil' are, although they are both apparently the opposite of the same concept 'good.' But it is not the same concept 'good': one should ask

rather precisely who is 'evil' in the sense of the
morality of ressentiment (GM I 11).

Thus, where the nobles gave conceptual primacy to the concept
'good' by actively defining it, the plebeians grant conceptual
primacy to 'evil', and define 'good' only in contrast to it. It is
therefore defined in negation – articulated by the declarative
syllogism: “I am not that [noble], that is evil, therefore I am
good”. 'The good' becomes anything weak or humble (i.e. the
plebeians) while 'the evil' refers to anything powerful or
threatening (i.e. the nobles) (GM I 7). In Nietzsche's words:

“The enemy” as the man of ressentiment
conceives him – and here precisely is his deed,
his creation: he has conceived “the evil enemy,”
“the Evil One,” and this in fact is his basic
concept, from which he then evolves, as an
afterthought and pendant, a "good one" –
himself! (GM I 10).

It is crucial to note that this process of appropriation and
reorganization is itself a creative process. To reiterate a point
I've made previously, an underlying and somewhat undecleared
theme of Nietzsche's entire analysis of morality is that morality
is always a creative endeavor. Therefore, just as the morality of
the nobles was a creative process of actively defining what it
was to be a human, so too is the retaliatory slave morality of the
plebeians a creative process. Slave morality's " 'No' is its
creative deed" (GM I 10).

So what exactly constitutes this reactive process of
appropriation and reorganization? I maintain that it is still an
expression of the will to power – the satisfaction and expansion
of drives. It however can be done in a positive way or negative
reactionary way. According to Nietzsche, slave morality is
fundamentally reactionary and projects a realm above the noble
class – above the 'good' – in order to challenge and critique it.
For, if the noble class simply is the definition of good, the
plebeians have no recourse but to establish something higher
than the noble class in order to challenge that definition. They must reclaim the ‘good’ from the nobles by somehow projecting the ‘good’ over and above the nobles. Accordingly, they establish the universal, absolute, realm of the “moral world order” (A 25) in order to accomplish this. Slave moralities’ values become viable precisely in so far as they are presumed to exist in themselves and are thought not to be created. Therefore, any morality that acknowledges itself as ‘self-created’ becomes, ipso facto, ‘immoral’ by contrast Paul’s slave morality was the product of divine revelation\textsuperscript{109}. And this now provides the grounds for the plebeians to be critical of the nobles on the grounds that their morality is manufactured (i.e. its values do not exist in themselves), and simultaneously elevate their own morality above it by maintaining that theirs is absolute and real. As the architect Paul then invests this universal moral realm with values that serve the interest of the plebeian herd. “Slave morality is essentially the morality of utility” (BGE 260). Slave morality proceeds by redefining the concept ‘good’ by conceiving it in a negative sense.

So the reason Nietzsche approves of the noble’s values and disapproves of slave morality is that the latter is a retaliation against the former. While some of these values may in fact benefit the weak and certainly the needs of the herd, the cost is that their insistence that all are equal in every significant way undermines the noble types. Accordingly it is not the case that Nietzsche thinks the noble’s values were somehow more real or true compared to slave morality and therefore more worthy of belief. Since he denies the very existence of any moral properties independent of our attitudes and opinions, a value just is a value in so far as it’s affirmed according to Nietzsche. It all comes back to the will to power for Nietzsche. So the difference is, where the noble’s values are in concert with the will to power and promote growth and strength, slave morality is hostile to the will to power and promotes values that undermine individual strength and growth while at the same time promoting the strength and influence of the herd. In his

\textsuperscript{109} 2 Corinthians 12, Galatians 1:12.
article “Vengeful Thinking and Moral Epistemology”\textsuperscript{110} Sinhababu points this out and argues that “Nietzsche approves of the noble morality not because it is true or because the nobles are epistemically justified in accepting it, but because it promotes the active, proud, strong-willed lifestyle that the nobles enjoy”\textsuperscript{111}. In support of this Sinhababu refers to BGE 4 where Nietzsche says, “The falseness of a judgment is to us not necessarily an objection to a judgment... The question is to what extent it is life-advancing, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-breeding” (BGE 4).

Sinhababu also argues that “vengeful fury of oppressed classes in ancient Rome caused them to invert the value system of their rulers and embrace slave morality”\textsuperscript{112}. I think Sinhababu rightly identifies ressentiment as the primary cause of this value inversion. In his words, “the slaves' powerlessness and inability to act causes their ressentiment to build up inside them until it begins to reshape their beliefs and values”\textsuperscript{113}. Sinhababu then goes on to argue that there was no priestly conspiracy at all – that it was all a passive and subconscious phenomenon\textsuperscript{114}. Essentially Sinhababu argues that one cannot simply change one’s beliefs and values by mere conscious force of will. Ressentiment however can be a powerful value changing force on a passive and subconscious level.

I think however that Sinhababu has oversimplified the nature of the slave revolt that was Christianity according to Nietzsche. I think Nietzsche believes slave revolts are as inevitable as human conflict. That being said I maintain that Nietzsche thinks the Christian slave revolt was a special case given its scale and the near perfect storm of conditions that gave rise to it. Part of what made it unique and special is that it

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{111} Sinhababu VTME 267.
\textsuperscript{112} Sinhababu VTME 263.
\textsuperscript{113} Sinhababu VTME 264.
\textsuperscript{114} Sinhababu VTME 267.
\end{footnotesize}
was the product of both a priestly conspiracy as well as historical conditions. I fail to see why the slave revolt must be either passive or conscious as Sinhababu argues. Why can’t it be both? Nor do I see why the active and conscious interpretation of Nietzsche’s analysis makes less sense. I would argue that it’s just the opposite. The biggest reason for this is Nietzsche’s discussion of Paul in The Antichrist. “Paul comprehended that the lie – that ‘faith’ – was needed; later the church in turn comprehended Paul. The ‘God’ whom Paul invented, a god who ‘ruins the wisdom of the world’ is in truth merely Paul’s own resolute determination to do this” (A 47). Whether he is right or wrong it’s clear that Nietzsche sees this as an active and conscious development in the case of Paul. According, to Nietzsche Paul was unquestionably the grand architect of the slave revolt and the new moral schema of good and evil. However, its spread and success was not itself a conspiracy; rather, it was due to the fact that it tapped into universal features of human psychology in a highly manipulative way. This accounts for not only its spread but its longevity.

In his book The Tipping Point Malcolm Gladwell sets out to explain the ways in which trends, values, and ideas, can “tip” – which is to say, spread rapidly like an epidemic. He argues that the key to a message’s successful spread throughout a society is a combination of three factors in the messenger: a connector (people who are good social networkers who know the right people in the right places – i.e. people that serve as hubs of information), a salesman (a charismatic person with the ability to capture an audience’s attention), and a maven (a knowledgeable expert trusted by many who passes vital information on to others). In addition to these factors the message itself also has to be “sticky” according to Gladwell – namely, an attractive idea that is also memorable and significant. This he argues is what explains the wild success of Paul Revere’s midnight ride in getting the word out that the British were coming, and the failure of several others who also went out on their own midnight rides that night but did not make it into the history books. Paul Revere had the key
ingredients. Likewise I would argue that what caused Paul’s version of Christianity to win out over others and spread like wildfire is that he was, like Paul Revere, a well-connected maven who was also a good salesman with a very “sticky” message to spread.

I think Sinhababu, though in different terminology, correctly identifies what made Paul’s message so “sticky”. He argues that vengeful thinking towards the nobles is a kind of wishful thinking. In his words, “As is the case with all varieties of wishful thinking, vengeful thinking disposes the slaves to believe that the states of affairs which they desire will come to pass. The more satisfying a kind of revenge against the nobles would be, the more powerfully vengeful thinking will dispose them to believe in it”\(^{115}\). Paul’s message of unorthodox empowerment of the plebeians, coupled with a reclaiming of the notion of ‘good’ that is now rooted in the plebeians and the promise of justice for the weak and powerless (even if it is put off to the next world), would be very attractive to the plebeians. This made it a very sticky message and Paul’s itinerant lifestyle along with his connector, salesman, maven qualities almost guaranteed that his slave morality would quickly become an epidemic. What Gladwell’s model points out is that the messenger is every bit as important as the message itself in terms of its ability to tip. So even though Paul’s competitors like Peter tried to make their messages even more attractive and sticky by catering even more to the desires of the plebeians, theirs did not win out in the end because they could not compete with the three key ingredients Paul had, by all accounts, in spades as a messenger.

I think the other helpful model for understanding why the slave revolt happened is Richardson’s reactive account of the corrupted expression of the will to power involved in a slave revolt. In his book Nietzsche’s System Richardson distinguishes between the ‘man-of-resentment’ form of this corruption and the ‘herd-animal’ form. “He [Nietzsche]  

\(^{115}\) Sinhababu VTME 264.
distinguishes (we might say) two main species of reactivity: the herd animal and the person of resentment, the former obeying by following the latter obeying by reacting against. Although Nietzsche pays much attention to the herd instinct, he takes far more interest in resentment.\textsuperscript{116} I maintain that the slave revolt that is Christianity according to Nietzsche was in fact a perfect marriage of these two forms made possible by specific historical conditions. Specifically, Paul embodied the ‘man of resentment’ while the oppressed masses of the time embodied the ‘herd animal’. After Paul and the emergence of Christianity a new kind of person came to be valued and thus a new morality. Given the historical conditions of the oppressed during this time, Paul’s slave morality tipped and became an epidemic. In other words, in contrast to Sinhababu, I maintain that the slave revolt was both an active and conscious phenomenon as well as a passive one.

To return specifically to Paul, while he may not himself have been an ascetic, he set the stage for, and established the psychological mechanisms of, slave morality. I maintain that from Nietzsche’s perspective Paul did this in two primary ways. First, his conception of selfhood and the will. He more or less posited a Cartesian/Kantian view of the subject, arguing that will is singular and distinct from actions. In Romans Paul offers his famous “I” and “sin” passage: If I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me (Romans 7:14-20). This kind of moral scapegoating, and the conception of the subject it presupposes, is clearly at odds with Nietzsche’s views. Not only is there no singular will operating behind all deeds (GM I 13) there is no single will at all – rather a complex economy of wills (BGE 36). I don’t think this view of the pure subject behind the will was original to Paul but I would argue that the coupling of it with the flesh/spirit dichotomy and the disassociation of the ‘I’ and actions were his invention. In fact Nietzsche himself blames Socrates for first articulating the

singular will/soul model of human nature. As Alexander Nehamas argues in his book The Art of Living Socrates was:

The first to establish the notion that the soul (which he identified with rationality) is fundamentally different from the rest of us – from everything that according to Nietzsche in reality constitutes the human individual. He was not only the first modern but also the first Christian (Nehamas AL 140).

In this regard Socrates and Paul have a lot in common. Paul's claim that the old Jewish law no longer had authority, and that it had been replaced with the universal judgment of God in Christ, mirrors Socrates' claim that moral judgments are rational and therefore apply universally – without regard to individuals, circumstances, or instincts. Whether it was in the context of Socrates, Paul, Christianity, or Kant, it is this universalizing aspect of morality that was clearly the common denominator in Nietzsche's comprehensive critique of morality (TI 2, BGE 188, GS 335, D339, GM II 6). However, according to Nietzsche, Socrates and Paul were the original moralizers. Where Paul invented the notion of spirit, Socrates privileged rationality, but both attempted to define the essence of human nature in contrast to other competing instincts, wills, and drives. Nietzsche absolutely rejects this disregard for all the other significant human drives and instincts. On this point Nehamas says the following of Socrates, but I submit that it would (substituting "spirit" for "rationality") apply equally to Paul:

By giving it [rationality] absolute preeminence, Socrates convinced us not to think we comprise many things, all of them equally part of what we are. Instead, he persuaded us to identify ourselves with this one impulse, to consider it the seat of the self, the mark of the human, and to distrust everything else about us as lower, degenerate, as features simply of the body or our fallen nature. Instead of
integrating our various capacities, he convinced us to try to subjugate, perhaps even to destroy them (Nehamas AL 139).

What Paul and Socrates have in common then, according to Nietzsche, is that they are both sick, and viewed, not only human nature, but life itself as a disease in need of a cure.

Second, Paul was attempting to “improve” mankind with his dichotomy of flesh and spirit. According to Nietzsche however this results in a non-integrated self that goes to war with itself and pits drives against one another, creating chaos and sickness in the subject. With his spirit/flesh distinction, Paul was exploiting a psychological need to be commanded and creating a profoundly sick subject. The more the agent tries to isolate the fictitious ‘spirit’ and subdue the fictitious ‘flesh’ the more sick they become. This results in a perpetually escalating sickness according to Nietzsche. To accomplish this, Paul employed the moral schema of good and evil, and the profoundly manipulative narrative of an alleged “present evil age”\textsuperscript{117} and ‘spirit/flesh’ dichotomy\textsuperscript{118}. In Paul’s words, “walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh”\textsuperscript{119}. Accordingly, the form of Christianity that emerged under Paul’s influence is essentially a war against the ‘higher type of man’ and his ‘basic instincts’ – which are considered evil (A 5). Paul’s answer to suffering is that someone must be to blame, someone is guilty, and that person is you yourself. According to Nietzsche cruelty and punishment, which are normally directed externally, turn inward towards oneself. The new vision of man became one of existential and perpetual guilt, which can only be resolved by an outside force. But believers were not motivated by the truth about suffering but the attractive promise of an ultimate

\textsuperscript{117} Galatians 1:4.
\textsuperscript{118} Galatians 5:16.
\textsuperscript{119} Galatians 5:16.
resolution of suffering – perpetually promised but never delivered. This, I would argue, is the essence of *resentiment*.

In an effort to ‘improve’ mankind, Paul launched an all-out war on the flesh. Paul’s worldview was essentially that there were powerful oppressive elemental forces that he had the power to overcome through his unique access to “the Spirit”\textsuperscript{120}. The “thorn in his side” described in 2 Corinthians 12:7 and Galatians 4:12-13 represented his “weakness” in the flesh; his strength, by contrast, resided in his spiritual possession of Christ. Put simply, the flesh was the battleground of spirit. In Nietzsche’s eyes, however, Paul’s war on the flesh amounted to a war on the passions and the instincts – on the will to power itself. Nietzsche argues:

> People like St. Paul have an evil eye for the passions: all they know of the passions is what is dirty, disfiguring, and heartbreaking; hence their idealistic tendency aims at the annihilation of the passions, and they find perfect purity in the divine (GS 139)\textsuperscript{121}.

Rather than improving or liberating people, Nietzsche maintains that Paul’s views in fact enslaved the individual by chaotically pitting drives against each other in an futile attempt to shut down all drives (a.k.a. the ‘flesh’) so as to liberate the fictitious notion of ‘spirit’. Thus, while it is true that Paul sought power and the creation of new values, his values were sick, unhealthy, and at odds with the will to power. In the end all Paul really achieves is the redirection of drives – a destructive attempt to ‘improve’ mankind. According to Nietzsche however the only way to truly control drives is to organize and exercise them.

One final point on the subject of destructive “improvers” of mankind, Hurka, in his article “Nietzsche:

\textsuperscript{120} See Romans 1:16, 15:19, 8:38 1 Thessalonians, 1:5, 2 Corinthians 12:12, Galatians 3:5, 1 Corinthians 5:3-5.

\textsuperscript{121} See also WP 155.
Perfectionist," offers two interpretations. First, he argues that if one's activities stem from weakness and/or resentment they are corrupted expressions of the will to power and not worthy of value since they are reactive in nature; second, he argues that the activities are not worthy of value if their intent was to undermine the best and noble. Hurka is indifferent with respect to these two views. I however am decidedly in favor of the former. In the Antichrist Nietzsche does not seem to be very concerned with Paul's intentions. Maybe they were more to empower one group rather than undermine another. Either way Nietzsche's real concern with Paul is that if Abraham was the father of faith, Paul was the father of resentment. As Nietzsche argues in the Genealogy, the act of punishment is just an action – what is more interesting is the various ways it can be interpreted (GM II 12). Paul offered a specific interpretation of the crucifixion and its meaning that systematically reoriented the focus of all valuing from this world to some imagined world to come, and the fictitious notion of the 'Spirit'. “Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like a glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself”\(^{122}\). At this point Paul's morality became entirely misinterpretation according to Nietzsche.

Allow me to summarize Nietzsche's critique of the Apostle Paul. Right or wrong from historical perspective, Nietzsche claims that Paul designed the psychology of slave morality and introduced it to the priestly class and the masses. He perceived a need to challenge the old world theology and created a savior figure (Christ) who would accomplish this and would be attractive to the masses. Paul was simply opportunistic and took advantage the confusion of his day surrounding the life and death of Jesus to promulgate his new system of values. As Nietzsche puts it: the disciples were left confused by the death of Jesus and asked "who was this, what was this?" (A 40). Paul simply answered these questions for them in a way that could both make sense of his untimely death

\(^{122}\)Philippians 3:20-21.
and still preserve his redeemer status. The notion of a risen savior that serves as a metaphysical messiah made perfect and obvious sense. In Nietzsche's estimation Paul didn't need to know anything about the historical Jesus except that he was believed to be the messiah. As he put it in A 42 "he needed the death on the cross and a little bit more". I maintain that in Nietzsche's view Paul and the priestly class represent the "men-of-resentment" and the followers the "herd-animal". Paul's resentment stemmed from his inability to fulfill the law – in changing the fundamental nature of the law he also satisfies his lust for power (D 68) over others by exploiting a theological and moral vacuum.

In the final analysis, Nietzsche was not an historian. But, in his defense, he never claimed to be one. He clearly also had the tendency to treat historical individuals (i.e. Socrates, Jesus, Goethe, Napoleon, etc.) as token psychological types for the sake of his various philosophical purposes. Moreover, the real focus of works I have focused on like The Genealogy, The Antichrist, and Dawn was the psychological mechanisms involved in value processes. Accordingly, historical issues served a secondary role and simply provided the framework for his analysis. A consequence of this method is that Nietzsche has a tendency, not only to paint in broad generalizations, but he also tends to treat historical figures like Socrates, Jesus, Caesar, Napoleon, Goethe, and of course, the Apostle Paul as token types rather than as unique historical individuals. In particular, in the cases of Paul and Socrates Nietzsche's categorical typecasting forces Socrates to play the role of intellectual foe, and Paul the role of moral nemesis. Accordingly, my final point is that Nietzsche's critique of Paul is in no way hypocritical. To be sure, the Apostle Paul was a re-valuer of values and he did pursue power. However, he did so in the service of values that Nietzsche considered reactionary, negative, and unhealthy. Under the influence of Paul a new vision of man and new system of values were established. In sum, the Apostle Paul

123 Richardson NS 42.
represented the antithesis of Nietzsche’s positive, life affirming, and healthy revaluation of values.

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All translations are by Walter Kaufmann except Beyond Good and Evil which is translated by R.J. Hollingdale and The Birth of Tragedy which is translated by Ronald Speirs.
Bibliography


Amanda Gorman: Close Calls and Gamble Scenarios: A Response to Nahmias’s Confident Agent Thought Experiment

In “Close Calls and the Confident Agent: Free Will, Deliberation, and Alternative Possibilities,” Eddy Nahmias draws awareness to the tension between the two conditions that often divide intuitions on what is required for an agent to have free will: the ‘Deliberation and Control’ (DC) condition and the ‘Alternative Possibilities’ (AP) condition. The DC condition mandates that “free will...requires that an agent can determine what she really wants, that she is not compelled by external or internal forces to act against it, and that she can control her actions accordingly.” The AP condition, on the other hand, requires that “for an agent to act of her own free will, she must be able, when she acts or chooses, to act or choose in more than one way.” These two conditions appear to conflict, according to Nahmias, because it seems that having alternative possibilities, real chances that an agent will do something else given the same circumstances, is a threat to the control aspect of the DC condition. When the DC condition is met, and the agent arrives at a very clear answer, it seems that she does not, in that case, have or desire to have alternative possibilities, since what she must do given the circumstances is clear to her.

Nahmias locates a major source of intuition for the relevance of the AP condition in the presence of what he calls ‘close call’ situations. A ‘close call’ situation is one in which an agent is deciding between two or more perceived courses of action, and even after deliberating about her choices she does not know which choice represents what she really wants to

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124 I am indebted to Robert Pasnau for his extremely helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.
126 Ibid., 628.
127 Ibid., 628.
The sense of having alternative possibilities in such a close call situation is a vivid one; the agent feels she could justifiably choose one course of action or she could choose the other. In fact, many libertarians have embraced the connection between close call situations and the AP condition, arguing that an agent only exercises her free will when she is faced with close call situations. This view that we only exercise our free will in close call situations is known as 'restrictivism,' and is the view that Nahmias argues against in his paper. He does this by proposing a thought-experiment in which we are to imagine an agent that never faces close calls. Rather, she continuously maximally satisfies the DC condition such that all of her choices are always clear to her, and she never feels pulled in more than one direction. He says that such a hypothetical agent, the 'confident agent' as he dubs her, still intuitively seems to have free will, yet she also has no need or desire to fulfill the AP condition. Nahmias poses the following challenge to the restrictivists: "explain...why, despite initial appearances, the confident agent does not have free will precisely because she fails to satisfy the AP condition." In this paper I will take on that challenge by pointing to a kind of common scenario that leads to close calls, which I call a "gamble scenario." I will show how gamble scenarios problematize Nahmias's thought experiment, making his conclusion ultimately invalid.

A 'close call situation' is defined by Nahmias as any situation that follows the following 'close call formula':

1. An agent is trying to decide what to do.
2. She deliberates about her (two or more) options.

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128 Ibid., 630.
129 For example: C.A. Campbell, David Vander Laan, and Peter van Inwagen, Robert Kane, Tim O'Connor
130 Ibid., 642.
3. Even after deliberation, she is still unsure about what to do.
4. The agent acts on one of her options.\textsuperscript{131}

Many, perhaps most, instances of decision-making do not follow the close call decision process. In most situations, even if there is initial hesitation or confusion about what is best to do, deliberation helps us pick out the best option. What is of particular interest about close call situations is the gap between Step 3, the uncertainty after deliberation, and Step 4, the acting, as this is where free will restrictivists locate the truly free act of the will. Peter van Inwagen in his paper “When is the Will Free?” lists only three kinds of decision-making scenarios that can lead to close call situations: situations in which the agent finds no discernable difference between her choices, situations in which reason and desire conflict, and situations in which the choices are incommensurable.\textsuperscript{132} 133 Whereas he believes this list to be exhaustive, I think that gamble scenarios also fit the formula. A “gamble scenario” is any case in which an agent is trying to decide between (at least) two options, one of which she knows the outcome, and one of which she does not know the outcome.

Consider the following case: An agent is going to order a pizza for delivery, and is trying to decide between two different pizzerias from which to order. The first pizzeria is her trusted standby. On a scale of 1-10, she would rate the pizza from there a ’7’. The second pizzeria is fairly new in town, but she’s gotten reviews of the quality of the pizza there from two of her friends, whose judgment she trusts equally in all respects. The first friend has told her that the pizza from the second pizzeria is just a ’5’, whereas the second friend has told her that


\textsuperscript{132} Peter van Inwagen, "When is the Will Free?" \textit{Philosophical Perspectives} 3 (1989): 399-422.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 416. Van Inwagen credits Robert Kane for first suggesting that cases of incommensurable values might lead to close calls.
the pizza there is a ‘9’. Which pizzeria should she choose? This scenario can lead to a close call situation because the agent cannot reach a clear choice after deliberation because she does not know the outcome of one of her potential choices. If there is any case in which it intuitively feels like we have alternative possibilities, I claim it is in such gamble scenarios, which often take the form “should I continue what I am now doing, or should I try something different?” It is in these types of scenarios that we so often find ourselves saying with much zeal, after we have made one choice or another, that we wish we had chosen otherwise.

Before examining the threat that gamble scenarios pose to Nahmias’s Confident Agent thought experiment, it will be important to take a look at the way Nahmias sets up the thought experiment. The only thing that differentiates the confident agent from a normal person is that she does not face close calls. However, she is equipped with everything else one might need to have free will: she both has the need to deliberate and does in fact deliberate though she always reaches a clear answer in which she is confident, she always acts on the decisions she makes and never suffers from weakness of will, and she is not a fatalist; she believes she has alternatives for her action and that her deliberation and decision makes a difference insofar as it directly lends itself to one of her choices being actualized. One aspect of the thought experiment that Nahmias leaves open to the imagination, though, is whether the confident agent confronts the kinds of scenarios that usually lead to close calls, but because of her confidence after deliberation they do not result in close calls for her, or if by design she never finds herself confronted with the kinds of scenarios that have the potential to lead to close calls.

Because of this ambiguity, I imagine there are four major strategies that Nahmias might use to respond to gamble scenarios. If he means to take the first approach, to argue that

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134 Nahmias, 634.
135 Ibid., 636.
136 Ibid., 636-637.
137 Ibid., 637.
the confident agent faces the kinds of scenarios that for others lead to close calls but they do not become close calls for her because of her confidence, in order to circumvent the problem, he would have to either 1a) claim that the confident agent never feels uncertain when gambling or 1b) claim that the confident agent just has no desire to gamble at all. If he means to take the second approach, to argue that it is possible to imagine an agent who never encounters the kinds of scenarios that lead to gamble situations, he would have to either 2a) give the agent the ability to foresee the outcomes of all of her (potential) choices or 2b) account for how the world in his thought experiment is set up specifically to ensure that this particular confident agent does not encounter any close calls. All four of these strategies, I contend, will in some important way undermine the thought experiment.

The First Approach: General Concerns

Taking either line of argumentation within the first approach, in which he would argue that the confident agent faces the kinds of scenarios that for others lead to close calls but they do not become close calls for her because of her confidence, would cause “the problem of regret.” This is the problem that Nahmias addresses in his paper when he considers the possibility that even if the confident agent does not wish for alternate possibilities before or during decision making, she will wish she could have chosen otherwise after the fact. However, he dismisses the potential of regret to show a desire to have had alternative possibilities by explaining regret instead as wishing “that things could have gone differently.” He gives the example of the confident agent getting rear-ended on her drive home, and wishing she had taken another route:

If she wishes she had chosen to drive home a different way – a rational wish given the accident that occurred – what she really wishes is that she’d not been so unlucky. But for all she knew, a truck might have killed her if she had

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138 Ibid., 640-641.
139 Ibid., 640.
driven home by the other route. She, like us, should not wish for something impossible – that is, the ability to choose based on better reasons provided by unforeseeable future outcomes. Rather, we can only hope to do (or choose) the best we can given what we know, and the existence of AP alone does not help us know more or choose better.\footnote{Ibid., 641.}

But the pizza case and other gamble scenario cases are importantly disanalogous to the driving home case. In the driving home case, the agent has not taken account of nor should she reasonably have been expected to take account of the fact that she might get rear-ended during her drive. That is why it does not make sense for her to rationally regret her decision to drive home that way. In the pizza case, if the agent decides to go with the pizza from new pizzeria and it turns out to be marginal at best, merely a ‘5’, she may rationally regret her choice to order pizza from there. Not only was she aware of the possibility that things would turn out as they did, but she also was directly responsible for bringing that state of affairs about. Whereas she might also wish that the pizza from the second pizzeria had turned out to be better than it was, she would also surely regret her choice. A similar story can be told of a confident agent who regrets having not gambled, perhaps when she finds out that had she gambled she would have had a significantly better outcome than had she chosen to play it safe. Nahmias rightly acknowledges that the problem of regret would undermine the confident agent thought experiment. He cannot merely postulate a confident and optimistic agent who never regrets her choices so long as they are well-thought-out because such an agent “might never feel the need to consider the reasons and desires (the ‘standards’) on which she acted” and, on his own view, “such considerations seem essential to be a free and responsible agent.”\footnote{Ibid., 661-662.} The regret that gamble scenarios would bring about for the confident agent would undermine the thought experiment in this way if Nahmias were to take the first approach. Yet there are even more serious concerns for this approach when one considers the two ways that Nahmias could
try to make a confident agent who experiences gamble scenarios coherent.

1a) The confident agent never feels uncertain when gambling.

In this line of argumentation, Nahmias would say that even though the confident agent experiences gamble scenarios, she never feels the uncertainty after deliberating that is characteristic of close calls because she always reaches a clear answer in which she is confident. But this may not be possible, however, given the nature of gamble scenarios. Imagine the confident agent is presented with the pizza case as described earlier. Should she pick the pizza that is a known ‘7’ or should she order the pizza that might be either a ‘5’ or a ‘9’? If she decides to take the gamble and go for the pizza of unknown quality, which might be either a ‘5’ or a ‘9,’ it would be strange to say that she feels confident of this decision. If she did feel confident, however, we might imagine her justifying the decision to herself by, for example, following the train of thought that even if the pizza only turns out to be a ‘5’ it will still have been worth it to have tried something new. But if the decision can be made on grounds like this, then it turns out not to have been a gamble at all. All things considered, the new pizza was clearly the best option for her to take. It does not make sense to say she is confident about the risky choice without there being some sort of rationalization like this. Even if the confident agent loves taking risks and this factors in to her decision-making, there will still be some situations in which she will encounter close calls, the risks will just be much higher and the regret more frequent.

It cannot be that she will take any risk available to her because this would determine her course of action for her. She would have no need to deliberate or consider situation-specific details and therefore fill neither the AP nor the DC conditions. The only other possibility I can imagine that would lead to the agent being certain despite facing a gamble scenario is that when she faces such a scenario, she is deluded about the risk. She believes, falsely, that a better outcome is guaranteed by
taking the risk. But if every time she encounters a gamble scenario she believes that it is not a gamble scenario, then this is equivalent to saying that she never encounters gamble scenarios since it is only how the situation appears to her that is relevant to the decision making process. For a gamble scenario, the presence of the gamble seems to actually necessitate uncertainty, even after deliberation.

1b) The confident agent has no desire to gamble at all.

There is a chance that Nahmias could say that the confident agent is just uninterested in gambling at all. Perhaps the confident agent always picks the safer of the two choices; she picks the clear ‘7’ over the risk every time. Unlike us, she is able to be confident about her choice to not take a risk, every time. If this is the case, then it must be universally true that the confident agent is incapable of taking serious risks when one of her options is to play it safe. Surely, this by itself undercuts the agent’s freedom, though, since gambling scenarios are so frequent. She is destined to continue all of her old habits if there are no other options that guarantee higher success rates. In this case it would be exactly her lack of alternative possibilities, the possibilities that she might take risks and try new things in at least some situations, which would hinder her freedom.

The Second Approach: General Concerns

The second approach, which would be to conclude that the confident agent by design lives in a world in which she just does not encounter gamble scenarios at all, is generally

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142 For evidence that we often are not confident about our choices to not take risks, consider game-show contestants. Contestants on shows like Deal or No Deal frequently choose to “play it safe” and accept a smaller sum of money, rather than trying their luck at winning bigger prizes. The hosts often ask them whether or not they are sure of their decisions, and their reactions often indicate that they are rather torn about what the proper course of action is.
problematic because this addendum would drastically change the thought experiment. A lot of the appeal of the “Confident Agent” thought experiment is the fact that even though we are not confident agents, we can imagine that we are. In the beginning, Nahmias guides the reader through the steps:

...try to remember some specific examples of confident choices you have made in your own life...now imagine going through a whole day like this, or even a week, fortuitously facing choices where, once you consider what you value, believe, desire, and care about, you feel certain about which option to take...now imagine an agent who happens to live her whole life this way.\(^{143}\)

By having the reader extrapolate from stretches of time like this from her own life in which she feels like she has free will, she is eased in to the intuition that the confident agent has free will.

Evidence from our own experience tells us that gamble scenarios occur rather frequently, at least frequently enough that it would not be possible to never experience one just by chance. To rule out the possibility of the confident agent experiencing gamble scenarios would be to set the thought experiment in a world very different from our own, which would involve giving up a lot of the intuitive pull of the thought experiment. Additionally, the two ways that Nahmias could go about constructing such a world will both seriously undermine the thought experiment.

2a) The agent has the ability to foresee the outcomes of all her (potential) choices

This strategy will affect the thought experiment differently if we imagine the agent living in a deterministic or an indeterministic world. If the confident agent lives in an indeterministic world, then she would have to have the phenomenal ability to see a large, perhaps infinite, number of futures, each influenced by a variety of choices and factors. Her deliberation process would be very different from our own, so

\(^{143}\) Nahmias, 635.
different, in fact, that I do not think we can have clear intuitions about whether or not such an agent would have free will. It also causes a problem for Nahmias because he would have to agree that the confident agent does, in fact, have alternative possibilities despite not encountering any close calls.

If, on the other hand, she lives in a deterministic universe then she can foresee her unique future, and would have no need to deliberate since she can merely look ahead to determine what she is, in fact, going to do. This agent would lack not only metaphysical freedom, but also epistemic freedom. Nahmias considers it a virtue of his thought experiment, however, that "both the confident agent and non-confident agents like us rightly value epistemic freedom – that is, the sense of AP involved in justifiably believing (in many cases) as we deliberate that we are free to do A if we choose to do A and we are free to do B if we choose to do B."\(^\text{144}\) If he was forced to accept that the confident agent lacks epistemic freedom it would simply be untenable to uphold that she has free will of any sort since she can see the future laid out before her and has no need for reasons or deliberation.

### 2b) The world is set up so that gamble scenarios never come up for the confident agent.

The other option that Nahmias has is to conclude that the confident agent lives in a world that is set up in such a way that gamble scenarios never come up. This would mean that she would never have the experience of questioning her current way of going about things and wondering if she should try something new with uncertain outcomes. What is strange about this situation is that there would need to be something in the confident agent’s world that actively prevents these kinds of situations from coming up for her. It could not be merely a world full of confident agents, because that kind of world would have nothing to prevent situations like the pizza case from occurring. It would have to be a world specifically designed so that the confident agent did not encounter gamble scenarios. This would ostensibly require some foresight on someone's part.

\(^{144}\) Nahmias, 652.
(the world-designer's, God's?) into what the confident agent will do and the ability to control the confident agent's choices or at least severely limit her options, given that information.

This is a problem because it casts serious doubt on the autonomy of the confident agent in determining her course of actions. Nahmias would be forced to consider an objection similar to what he calls “Objection 1” to his original thought experiment. This objection raises the question of whether or not “the clearest real life examples of confident agents are brainwashed or indoctrinated agents, who are 'programmed' to go through the motions of deliberating so as to always arrive at a confident decision that accords with the appropriate doctrines.”

He responds by saying that in his thought experiment, the confident agent's confidence issues from her own well-thought-out reasons, and so is not compromised in the way that an objector might find troubling. But in this new version of the thought experiment there would be more at play than just her reasons in determining her course. Reasons of a different sort, the kind of reasons that would ensure that her actions do not lead her into gamble scenarios would also have to somehow come into play. Though it is hard to speculate about how this would work, ostensibly, she would have to be brainwashed to have limited epistemic and metaphysical access to many possibilities that require gamble scenarios to be actualized. The intuition that the confident agent has free will would no longer be coherent given the presence of these additional barriers to free choice.

With this I believe I have now exhausted the ways that Nahmias could incorporate gamble scenarios into his thought experiment, and have shown how each is problematic. This means that gamble scenarios, insofar as they represent a distinct class of scenarios that the restrictivist can point to as leading to truly free acts of the will that intuitively require alternative possibilities, provide a legitimate challenge to Nahmias's thought experiment.

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145 Nahmias, 647.

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**Trevor Hedberg: Moral Worth and Other-Regarding Inclinations: Revisiting Kant's Views of Beneficent Actions**

**Section I: Introduction**

A notable objection to Immanuel Kant's account of moral worth is that it fails to adhere to our intuitive judgments about beneficent actions. Kant claims that when one helps others because she derives enjoyment from others' happiness, these other-regarding actions are not actions which have moral worth. Many recoil from this assessment, thinking that such kind and beneficial actions surely have moral worth. In what follows, I come to Kant's defense and argue that he posits plausible assessments of the moral worth of these altruistic actions.

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147 Kant, G 4:398.
This defense requires several steps. Initially, I revisit Kant’s account of moral worth and elaborate on an important insight offered by Thomas Hill that makes Kant’s account more plausible. Afterward, I summarize Kant’s remarks about beneficent people. I then present three arguments which explain and defend Kant’s reasoning about both moral worth and how we ought to appraise beneficent actions. First, I argue that much of the intuitive recoil from Kant’s view of beneficence rests on either mistaking an intuition about moral worth with an intuition about praiseworthiness or misunderstanding Kant’s portrayals of beneficent individuals. Second, I defend the view that we can still, on Kant’s view, attribute moral worth to some beneficent actions that are primarily motivated by an inclination. Third and finally, I argue that Kant’s assessment of what gives actions moral worth is accurate because the moral worth of an action cannot vary based merely on one’s fortune (or misfortune) regarding her psychological dispositions.

Section II: Kant’s Account of Moral Worth

Before analyzing how Kant appraises the moral worth of beneficent actions, we must get clear on his general account of moral worth. Kant makes a distinction between two types of motives for action: duty and inclination. The concept of duty includes the concept of a good will, the only thing Kant considers “good without qualification.” Acting from duty consists in adhering to the moral law for its own sake, and only acts done from duty have moral worth. In other words, for an act to have moral worth, it must both adhere to what the moral law requires and be motivated by a devotion to the moral law. Acting from inclination consists in pursuing one’s

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148 Ibid., 4:393.
149 One might wonder why an act done from duty but not in accord with duty—that is, when one strives to adhere to what duty requires but is mistaken about what that requirement is—does not have moral worth. More generally, one might wonder
immediate desires (including both one’s self-interest and other-regarding desires), and an act performed out of inclination, even if the act accords with duty, does not have moral worth because it is not done from duty. An act must be performed for the right motivating reason—a commitment to doing what duty requires—to have moral worth. Thus, the moral worth of an action is determined by the basis of one’s decision to perform the action along with the features of the action itself and is not determined by the action’s consequences.

Now even if the prior statements are clear, we are still left with an important question: what exactly does it mean to perform an act from duty? One possibility is that a person rationally considers what duty requires when making any moral decision. Initially, this kind of introspection might seem ideal, but reflection on it reveals some severe difficulties.

The first difficulty is that this introspection will seem morally repulsive in many cases. When given a choice between saving one’s wife or a complete stranger from drowning, Bernard Williams famously accuses moral theories of causing us to have one thought too many.\textsuperscript{150} The reason why one can be justified in saving his wife is simply that she is his wife. If the individual begins to contemplate what the moral law requires and only then comes to the conclusion that it is permissible to save his wife instead of the stranger, his deliberation is not praiseworthy. We could imagine a spectator shouting at him: “What are you doing!? She’s your wife! Get in the water and save her!” In such a situation, consciously reflecting on what duty requires does not seem at all admirable.

The second difficulty is that a requirement this rigorous will have some fairly implausible consequences for many actions that ordinarily seem to have moral worth. For instance, imagine that someone does a favor for a coworker. As why Kant does not explicitly address this type of action. For a discussion of both these questions, see Hardwig 1983.\textsuperscript{150} Williams 1981, 17-19.
it happens, she made a promise to do this favor and would have done it out of duty, but her main motivation when doing this favor is that she wants to promote cooperation in the office and worries that not doing this favor might send the wrong message to her coworkers. Since her primary motivation is not to adhere to duty's requirements, it appears her keeping her promise has no moral worth. This conclusion has a troubling implication: it suggests that an uncooperative employee who reluctantly fulfills her promise to a coworker performs an act that has moral worth whereas a cooperative employee who would perform the act out of duty if she were tempted not to keep the promise does not perform an act that has moral worth when other (seemingly good) motivations are present. Since the cooperative employee appears to be a better exemplar of morally good person, we have a strong reason to think this verdict is mistaken.

To avoid this second difficulty, we might posit that acting from duty only requires that we reflect on the demands of the moral law when we are tempted to act immorally; on this account, our actions could be done from duty in many situations (including the example of the cooperative coworker) provided that we would perform our action out of duty if our other motivations were not present. Unfortunately, this account is hard to reconcile with Kant's sentiment that we must try to cultivate virtue (“a moral strength of the will”) in ourselves and that its perfection “consists subjectively in the purity (puritas moralis) of one's disposition to duty, namely in the law being by itself alone the incentive...and in actions being done not only in conformity with duty but also from duty.” As Thomas Hill observes, if each person has a duty to “carry the cultivation of his will up to the purest virtuous disposition,” then striving for virtue means striving to have duty as our immediate conscious motive whenever possible. But as

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151 Kant, MM 6:405.
152 Ibid., 6:446. Original emphasis.
153 Ibid., 6:387.
earlier analysis has shown, having duty as our immediate motive is not always desirable and often seems unnecessary to an action having moral worth. Thus, if we earnestly believe that this is what Kant means by “acting from duty,” we might be content to reject Kant’s notion of moral worth immediately, without even considering how it applies to beneficent individuals.

This dismissal, however, would be far too hasty. There is an alternative interpretation of acting from duty which accords nicely with both our commonsense convictions and Kant’s remarks. Thomas Hill summarizes this interpretation as follows: “We should strive always to count the moral law as a sufficient overriding constraint and guide as we shape our plans, policies, and characters, and then we should try to live our everyday lives according.” 155 Call this the Duty as a Guide (DG) interpretation of what “acting from duty” means. According to DG, the moral law is our foundation for making life choices. While it structures our commitments in fundamental ways, it is possible for other motivations—namely, those consistent with the moral law but not necessarily derived from it—to be added to this foundation. The moral law provides the motivation to resist inclinations that would cause us to act against what duty requires, but it need not eliminate or overshadow inclinations that are consistent with what duty requires. As long as the moral law is established as the basis for the ends we adopt as part of our ongoing life plans, we need not regard all instances in which inclinations are the salient reason for our actions as examples of morally defective behavior.

If we adopt DG, then we avoid the difficulties associated with the first two proposed interpretations and can also refute William’s objection. According to DG, provided that the husband has adopted the moral law as an appropriate foundation for determining how he should live, he can very well act from duty in saving his wife even if the reason for choosing to save her is simply that she’s his wife. Such an act has moral worth even

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155 Ibid., 251.
though it is primarily motivated by an inclination. With DG in hand, we can now proceed to Kant’s remarks about beneficence.

Section III: Kant’s Two Portrayals of Beneficent Individuals

We can describe an act as beneficent if it aims to promote another’s happiness.\textsuperscript{156} Beneficent actions include (among countless similar actions) volunteering to work in a soup kitchen, donating to charity, and performing favors for friends and family. An action need not feature an extreme sacrifice or affect a large number of people to be beneficent. For Kant, being beneficent also entails adopting the promotion of others’ happiness as one of our ends.

Kant offers two distinct portrayals of an individual who performs beneficent actions. The first may seem rather harsh: It is a duty to help others where one can, and besides this many souls are so compassionately disposed that, without any further motive of vanity or self-interest, they find an inner pleasure in spreading joy around them, taking delight in the contentment of others, so far as they have brought it about. Yet, I maintain that, however dutiful and kind an action of this sort may be, it still has no genuine moral worth. It is on a level with other inclinations...\textsuperscript{157}

Kant characterizes these beneficent actions as “dutiful and kind” but thinks they have no moral worth because they are motivated by an inclination—the desire to bring joy to others. Further, he claims this beneficent motive should be evaluated (with regard to moral worth) in the same way as all other inclinations, including those which are positively heinous.

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\textsuperscript{156} The word “aims” is important here: actions are beneficent if their intent is to make others happy even if the results of the actions fail to achieve this goal.

\textsuperscript{157} Kant, G 4:398.
Nevertheless, we should not conclude that Kant’s outlook on beneficent individuals is callous until we examine his second portrayal:

Suppose then that the mind of this humanitarian were overclouded by sorrows of his own which extinguished all compassion for the fate of others, but that he still had the power to assist others in distress; suppose though that their adversity no longer stirred him, because he is preoccupied with his own; and now imagine that, though no longer moved by any inclination, he nevertheless tears himself out of this deadly apathy and does so without any inclination, solely out of duty. Then for the first time his action has genuine moral worth.\textsuperscript{158}

Kant holds that beneficent actions only possess moral worth when one’s reason to perform them originates from a motivation to do one’s duty. In this second case, the person performing the beneficent actions lacks compassion for others and only helps them because she regards it as her duty.

At this juncture, we ought to draw a distinction between the two types of beneficent people that Kant presents. Call the first the \textit{naturally beneficent person} (NB). She performs other-regarding actions because she possesses a strong inclination to bring others happiness; helping others is natural for her. Call the second the \textit{reluctantly beneficent person} (RB). She does not possess any natural disposition to help others but still performs beneficent actions because it is what duty requires.\textsuperscript{159} According to Kant, RB’s altruistic actions have moral worth, NB’s actions do not.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{159} In Kant’s example, RB lacks this inclination because he is too overwhelmed by his own miseries to feel compassion for others, but a person might struggle to be beneficent for many
Section IV: Vindicating Kant's Portrayals of Beneficent Individuals

Many consider Kant's conclusion counterintuitive, although some may agree with Kant that RB's actions have moral worth. Minimally, we can admire her for not allowing her personal disposition to prevent her from helping others. Nevertheless, we will likely be more reluctant to say that NB's actions have less moral worth and might adamantly resist claiming that her actions have no moral worth at all. In fact, NB seems to epitomize the morally praiseworthy person—one who takes great joy in doing good deeds. Surely, we would not suggest she try to become more selfish so that helping people was more difficult for her (like it is in RB's case). Moreover, we might think that RB's reluctance to help others reveals a flaw in her character and that NB's disposition is the one we ought to try to emulate. As Philippa Foot suggests, "Pleasure in the good fortune of others is, one thinks, the sign of a generous spirit; and small reactions of pleasure and displeasure often the surest signs of a man's moral disposition." Given these worries, how could we consider Kant's judgment plausible?

First, some of the unfavorable reactions to Kant's analysis can be explained by making a distinction between moral worth and moral praiseworthiness. For Kant, an action which is morally praiseworthy does not necessarily have moral worth. The difference between the two concepts is revealed by Kant's remarks about the inclination to pursue honor, which he describes as one of the "other inclinations" that is "on a level" with what motivates NB: "[T]he inclination to pursue honor, which if fortunate enough to aim at something generally useful and consistent with duty, something consequently honorable, deserves praise and encouragement but not esteem." Kant

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Foot 2003, 108.
Kant, G 4:398.
acknowledges that in some cases we ought to praise and encourage a person to pursue honor, but he denies that actions motivated by this inclination have moral worth: the person should not be esteemed for performing them. Presumably, Kant would evaluate NB the same way: we should (sometimes) praise and encourage NB’s behavior, but we would be wrong to claim that NB’s actions have moral worth.

Once we recognize that moral worth and moral praiseworthiness are different concepts, Kant’s assessment of NB does not seem nearly as peculiar. This observation can also help us correct an improper appraisal of why Kant claims RB’s actions have moral worth. We might think that RB’s behavior is morally praiseworthy (perhaps substantially so) because acting morally is harder for her than it is for NB. RB has to struggle to do what duty requires, and her determination to prevail in this internal struggle is admirable. But the praiseworthiness RB earns from fighting the temptation to abandon her duty is not what gives her actions moral worth. Moral worth is simply a special value that an action has when it accords with what duty requires and originates from a steadfast commitment to fulfilling this duty. An action can certainly meet these conditions without being difficult to perform. Returning to DG can help us explain why Kant’s appraisals of NB and RB are actually quite palatable, and an illustration of a third type of beneficent person will help illuminate this claim.

Imagine for a moment that RB gradually transforms into someone who is less reluctant to help others. Perhaps her repeated giving causes her to recognize the social impact of her actions and take satisfaction in her making the world a better place. As this feeling grows, it slowly overshadows her commitment to doing what duty requires. Her commitment to doing her duty was her original motive for being beneficent, but as her other-regarding feelings grow, this motive is covered up by these feelings, which then become the most salient reason for her actions. Thus, she becomes similar to NB in an important way; call the RB who completes this internal transformation NB*.
According to DG, the actions of NB* have moral worth even though those of NB do not. Although both NB and NB* have an inclination to help others as their primary motivation for acting beneficently, there is an important difference between them: NB* has a fundamental commitment to the moral law underlying her inclination while NB does not. In fact, we might say that it was her adherence to the moral law that caused NB* to develop this inclination. Previously, when she possessed an inclination toward selfishness, her commitment to the moral law demanded that she resist it, but since her inclination is now permissible, the moral law no longer demands that she fight it. In this way, the moral law directs what inclinations may grow in us and which ones we should uproot (or at least try to uproot). Thus, even though NB* no longer struggles to help others and no longer has her adherence to duty at the forefront of her mind when she does so, we can still ascribe moral worth to her actions.

Our reflections on NB* also reveal more explicitly why NB’s actions do not have moral worth: her inclinations are not kept in check by the moral law. Kant states that virtue “contains a positive command to a human being, namely to bring all his capacities and inclinations under his (reason’s) control and so rule over himself... for unless reason holds the reins of government in its own hands, his feelings and inclinations play the master over him.” In other words, being virtuous on Kant’s account requires that we not allow our inclinations to dictate our actions. Of course, according to DG, this does not mean we stifle our inclinations such that our duty is always at the forefront of our mind; it only requires that our adherence to duty serves as a fundamental guide to our actions and prevents our inclinations from leading us to perform immoral actions.

We can clearly see that NB does not have any constraint on her inclinations. While RB and NB* have engaged in a process of reflective deliberation about what morality

162 Kant, MM 6:408.
demands and structured their lives accordingly, NB neither engages in this reflective deliberation nor makes a commitment to doing what duty requires. In this instance, her cognitive disposition guides her to perform actions that are in accord with duty, but this outcome is merely the result of good fortune. Had she been born more selfish or callous in nature, her inclinations would have led her to perform deplorable actions. The precariousness of how her actions accord with duty is objectionable, and Kant identifies an important way in which these actions do not demonstrate the proper adherence to the moral law: her actions, no matter how well they match what the moral law requires, are not observed according to the spirit of the law, which "consists in the law being of itself a sufficient incentive" for our actions.\textsuperscript{163} Kant also specifically identifies actions motivated by other incentives as improper, even when they do not result in morally wrong actions:

\begin{quote}
For whenever incentives other than the law itself (e.g., ambition, self-love in general, yes, even a kindly instinct of sympathy) are necessary to determine the power of the choice to lawful actions, it is purely accidental that these actions agree with the law, for the incentives might equally well incite its violation.\textsuperscript{164}
\end{quote}

It would be troubling if an action's moral worth (or lack thereof) were determined largely by accident. That would mean that two individuals, each motivated solely by inclinations, could differ in whether their actions had moral worth merely because one was blessed with dispositions toward kindness and reciprocity while the other was not, even though neither of them have any moral reflection underlying their actions. Hence, Kant's account seems plausible because it grounds moral worth entirely in a factor we can control (i.e., whether our actions are motivated by a devotion to the moral law) and does not allow luck-based factors (e.g., our innate cognitive dispositions) to affect whether an action has moral worth.

\textsuperscript{163} Kant, R 6:30.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 6:30-31.
We can summarize our findings with some reflection on NB, NB*, and RB. NB’s actions accord with duty only accidentally. If NB possessed different inclinations, her actions would be morally bad because her inclinations are not constrained by any adherence to the moral law. In contrast, there is nothing at all accidental about NB* and RB’s beneficence. NB*, if her inclinations were different (and they once were), would still do her duty strictly from duty, and RB performs her duty from duty while lacking any inclinations to do so. Thus, if we adopt DG, Kant’s overall appraisal of whether beneficent actions have moral worth is not nearly as unreasonable as we might have thought when we first encountered his remarks in _Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals_. We might even argue that the complete disconnection between NB’s actions and a commitment to the moral law reveals an important flaw in her character, even if her actions are praiseworthy.

**Section V: Concluding Remarks**

In the preceding paper, I defended Kant’s appraisal of when beneficent actions have moral worth. I argued that accepting DG—the view that acting from duty consists in accepting the moral law as a guide and constraint on our behavior and not in having duty at the forefront of our minds at all times—enables us to make Kant’s account largely consistent with our ordinary intuitions about whether beneficent actions have moral worth. Notably, DG provides a means for Kant to attribute moral worth to the beneficent actions of some individuals who perform the actions primarily because of an inclination to help others.

I have defended Kant’s claim that the acts of NB lack moral worth. However, given that the important trait that separates NB from NB* (whose actions do have moral worth) is a foundational commitment to doing what duty requires, we
may rightly wonder how frequent beneficent actions like those of NB really are. I suspect that very few who perform beneficent actions do so in the impulsive, unreflective manner that NB does. Most decisions to help others involve some reflective deliberation like that of NB* or RB—an acknowledgement that these beneficent actions should be performed because they are morally required (or at least morally good). Therefore, those who are still reluctant to accept Kant’s appraisal of NB can take solace in knowing that such individuals are rare. Kant can rightly acknowledge that the great majority of beneficent actions have moral worth, and disagreement about the case of NB is not as problematic as has often been thought.\footnote{I am indebted to Professor Adam Cureton for providing helpful criticisms of earlier drafts of this paper.}

**Bibliography**


Jessica Konig: The Dancing Philosopher

Throughout Friedrich Nietzsche’s corpus there are consistent allusions to dance, to the dancing philosopher, and to those who can learn to read, see and write in the form of dancing. There is something about the movement, the embodiment, and the rhythm of dancing that appeals to Nietzsche; but more than this, there is something about dancing that can push philosophers to a level that transcends previous epistemological and metaphysical boundaries, something that can cut through straight philosophical exposition and touch those that encounter it in a palpable and transformative way. Yet Nietzsche himself is not a dancer, so we must conclude that dancing is employed as a metaphor for something else, for another kind of philosophizing that has similar effects. In this paper I will argue that Nietzsche’s aphoristic style is akin to dance; indeed, that dance is a metaphor for the aphorism. I will do this by first examining Nietzsche’s treatment of dance, then his understanding of metaphor and finally his use of aphorism.

The Dancing Philosopher

Nietzsche ends aphorism 381 in The Gay Science by calling for a particular type of philosophizing; indeed, by calling for a philosopher who longs to dance. He says, “I would not know what the spirit of a philosopher might wish more to be than a good dancer. For the dance is his ideal, also his art, and finally also his only piety, his ‘service of God.’”166 Two interesting things immediately jump out of this passage: first, there is something about the art of dancing that the philosopher should strive for, and second, that this goal is not simply

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intellectual, but rather something more, a "service of God." I will examine both of these in turn.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche makes it clear that there is something inherent to the pursuit of a goal that requires one to dance:

But whoever approaches his goal dances. And truly, I have not become a statue, I do not yet stand there stiff, stunned, stony, a column ... And even though there are bogs and thick depressions on earth, whoever has light feet runs over and past the mud and dances as if on clean-swept ice.

Here we see one of the reasons why Nietzsche advocates a dancing philosopher. A dancing philosopher is one that is not content, one that does not close off possibilities, one that does not freeze. A dancing philosopher is one that is constantly shifting and creating anew. The light feet of a dancer, in other words, have the ability to navigate over that which seems impossible to traverse, creating possibilities of which the heavy-footed philosophers are incapable. For this reason he implores, "Lift up your heart, my brothers, high! Higher! And don’t forget your legs either! Lift up your legs as well, you good dancers."

Lifting up one’s legs in the form of dancing is placed alongside lifting up one’s heart; the dancing philosopher pursues his art and his goals with a spirit of joy. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche highlights the joy with which he wants philosophers to approach life, saying, “And let each day be a loss

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167 Of course it is also worth mentioning that it is not solely an intellectual pursuit because dancing, by its very nature, is embodied. This will be explored later in the paper.


to us on which we did not dance once! And let each truth be false to us which was not greeted by one laugh!”

Again, dancing is an expression of joy, of pleasure, of delight: “If my virtue is a dancer’s virtue and I often leaped with both feet into golden emerald delight... and if this is my alpha and omega, that all heaviness becomes light, all body dancer, all spirit bird – and truly, this is my alpha and omega!”

From beginning to end, the philosopher’s goal should be to approach her art with a lightness; not a lightness which fails to take its task seriously, but rather one that understands the seriousness of the task and pursues it with delight. In Ecce Homo, Nietzsche indicates that at times when he is inspired – indeed, when he was gaining new insights and reaching some of his goals – he in fact dances. He says, “The body is inspired; let us keep the ‘soul’ out of it. - Often one could have seen me dance.”

Beyond the delight with which he dances, it is also interesting to note that it is through the body that Nietzsche finds inspiration. Through bodily movement, he is able to express this inspiration. He claims, "Only in dance do I know how to speak the parables of the highest things." And moreover, “In song and dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher communal nature: he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is well on the way to dancing himself aloft in the heights.”

It is here that we catch a glimpse of the almost spiritual nature of dance for Nietzsche. It is through dance that one is able to express philosophical inspiration. Recall, furthermore,

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170 Ibid, 169.
171 Ibid, 186.
that it is also through dance that one is able to provide some sort of "service of God."\textsuperscript{175} This theme is examined in Thus Spoke Zarathustra when Nietzsche says:

\begin{quote}
I would only believe in a god who knew how to dance. And when I saw my devil, there I found him earnest, thorough, deep, somber: it was the spirit of gravity – though him all things fall. Not by wrath does one kill, but by laughing. Up, let us kill the spirit of gravity! I learned to walk, since then I let myself run. I learned to fly, since then I do not wait to be pushed to move from the spot. Now I am light, now I fly, now I see myself beneath me, now a god dances through me.\textsuperscript{176}
\end{quote}

Dancing, then, can be viewed as a kind of worship, a worship of a god of joy. Viewing god in this light, Nietzsche views the devil as the opposite, as the spirit of gravity which brings a dancer down. The fight against this spirit of gravity is a consistent theme in Zarathustra. At one point he describes the spirit of gravity as "my supreme highest and most powerful devil" to which he will dance and sing "a mocking song."\textsuperscript{177} The joyful, dancing philosopher is the one that fights against the spirit of gravity, the one that approaches her art with a light step and a song.

Nietzsche paints Zarathustra as an exemplar of this dancing philosopher, calling him, "Zarathustra the dancer, Zarathustra the light one who waves with his wings, the flightworthy, waving to all birds, worthy and ready, a blissful lightweight."\textsuperscript{178} Moreover, when he emerges from the mountains at the beginning of the book, he is recognized by an old man as the one who moves like a dancer. "Yes, I recognize Zarathustra," says the old man: "His eyes are pure, and no disgust is visible around his mouth. Does he not stride like a

\textsuperscript{175} See footnote 1.  
\textsuperscript{176} Nietzsche 2006, 29.  
\textsuperscript{177} Nietzsche 2006, 83.  
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid, 239.
dancer?" That is to say, he moves with a lightness and a joy, like a dancer. Such lightness has the ability to combat the spirit of gravity and the tendency toward disgust in the world. Zarathustra also self-identifies with the light-footed dancers, aligning himself against the spirit of gravity. Indeed, in “The Dance Song,” Zarathustra comes across some dancing girls who stop dancing when they realize that they are seen and he reminds them why he is not an enemy of dance:

Do not stop dancing, you lovely girls! No spoil sport has come to you with his evil eye, no enemy of girls. God’s advocate before the devil am I; but the devil is the spirit of gravity. How could I be hostile toward godlike dancing, you light ones?

Again, dancing is seen as an almost worship-like experience, or at least one that is used to fight evil, in this case the evil of gravity and seriousness, the type of seriousness that weighs one down. Importantly, fighting against this spirit of gravity lends itself to the possibility of a mystical union of sorts, again emphasizing the spiritual nature of dance:

In song and dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher communal nature: he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is well on the way to dancing himself aloft in the heights. His gestures communicate an entranced state... something supernatural sounds forth from him: he feels himself a god, now he himself strides forth as enraptured and uplifted as he saw the gods stride forth in dreams. Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: the artistic force of the whole of nature, to the most intense blissful satisfaction of the original Unity...

179 Ibid, 4.
180 Ibid, 83.
In this sense, dance can be transformative. Forgetting how to walk and speak, the dancing philosopher can soar to new heights and gain new freedom. The dancing philosopher, in other words, can transform the fateful facts about her existence (gravity) into an art whereupon she is not only an artist, she becomes a work of art. This is not a freedom of the unconditioned will, nor a freedom to depart from universal laws. Dancers, in fact, do not have the ability to defy the laws of gravity. They do, however, have the ability to play with their limits and to stretch them in creative and powerful ways, ways that make them feel almost godlike.

**Truth, Metaphor, Style**

Clearly Nietzsche views the dancer as the one who has the ability to transform the everyday into something extraordinary, indeed, through the physical Nietzsche seems to suggest that one can gain greater insights and reach god-like levels (or at least fight against the spirit of gravity in a way that is transformative). Yet, Nietzsche himself is not a dancer, he is a philosopher. So it is worth questioning exactly what he means by this; or rather, in what ways he understands himself to be a dancing philosopher. In order to do this I will turn to Nietzsche's discussion of truth and metaphor.

Philosophers are typically concerned with gaining insight into the nature of truth. The primary assumption that grounds this drive is that truth is somehow accessible. Aristotle, the founder of logic, sets up the conditions that must be met in order for any claim to be considered valid. In *Nietzsche and Embodiment*, Kristen Brown explains the way in

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182 Validity is not to be conflated with truth. For the purposes of this discussion, however, I mean to point out that Aristotle, as a philosopher who is concerned with finding truth, worked to set the parameters and conditions for what is acceptably considered philosophical.
which Aristotle distinguishes between concepts and metaphor in order to demonstrate this point. She says:

Aristotle writes in *Poetics* that the concept is logically "proper" and the metaphor “improper.” Metaphors, says Aristotle, compare items that belong to one category of being to items housed in a completely different category. Because metaphor involves carrying an item out of its allegedly proper sphere into an improper sphere, metaphor is logically improper.\(^\text{183}\)

Hence, Aristotle sets up the rules and conditions for how philosophy ought to be done; namely, asserting that explications of concepts alone are philosophically legitimate and metaphor, the art that compares two dissimilar concepts, is not.

In *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, Nietzsche sets out to demonstrate, contra Aristotle, the way in which any truth claim (made) is essentially metaphorical. He begins this analysis by asking what a word is, answering, "It is a copy of a sound of a nerve stimulus." Having established this account of words and their meaning, he argues that, "the further inference from the nerve stimulus to a cause outside of us is already the result of a false and unjustifiable application of the principle of sufficient reason.”\(^\text{184}\) In other words, there is no reason to believe that the copy of the sound is in any way related to the thing of which we speak. He continues:

If truth alone has been the deciding fact in the genesis of language, and if the standpoint of certainty has been decisive for designations, then how could we still dare


to say “the stone is hard,” as if “hard” were something otherwise familiar to us, and not merely a totally subjective stimulation!\textsuperscript{185}

Put differently, the word “hard” bears no relation to the physical object that it is supposed to describe. Instead, it is a designation that tells us more about the subjective experience of the one who speaks than it does about the object of which she speaks. Indeed, Nietzsche claims, “With words it is never a question of truth, never a question of adequate expression; otherwise, there would not be so many languages.”\textsuperscript{186} Given the variety of ways in which we can talk about a singular object and given the various arbitrary designations that we to assign objects, it is clear to Nietzsche that these words do nothing to shed light on the essence of the objects they designate.

In that the words that we use do not correspond to the objects that they designate, Nietzsche is left to conclude that all truth is metaphor. He explains:

The creator only designates the relations of things to men, and for expressing these relations he lays hold of the boldest metaphors. To begin with, a nerve stimulus is transferred into an image: first metaphor. The image, in turn, is imitated in a sound: second metaphor. And each time there is a complete overleaping of one sphere, right into the middle of an entirely new and different one.\textsuperscript{187}

In \textit{Words in Blood, Like Flowers}, Babette Babich picks up on this metaphorical leap. She says, “The active leaping over that is metaphor is the transfer from one sphere to another, all the while simultaneously forgetting that one has made any transfer

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
at all.“ We forget because we believe, in Nietzsche’s words, that “we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers; and yet we possess nothing but metaphors of things...”

Nietzsche then asks how we ought to define truth, answering:

A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which have been forgotten are illusions: they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.

In this sense, there is no right perception of an item, no proper object, nor any proper sphere; nothing, in other words, that we can justifiably call “true.” According to Brown, “All phenomena could be said to be metaphors in the sense that they are translations of or stand-ins for an item.” Moreover, “For Nietzsche, human experiences yield only imagined, apparent identities constituted by metaphors. And so Nietzsche judges the concepts metaphorical.” Nietzsche himself says, “A word becomes a concept insofar as it simultaneously has to fit countless more or less similar cases – which means, purely and simply, cases which are never equal and thus altogether unequal. Every concept arises from the equation of unequal

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190 Ibid, 117.
191 Ibid, 16.
192 Ibid, 98.
things." For Nietzsche, concept and metaphor are one in the same.

In his essay *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, Nietzsche makes it clear that "[m]etaphor starts at the level of the word." While Aristotle worked to distinguish between concept and metaphor, deeming the first proper and the second improper, Nietzsche breaks down this distinction. A simple concept, i.e., a word representing an object or idea, is already a metaphor. Recall, Aristotle defines metaphor as "transferring to one thing 'a name that belongs to something else.'" Here it is clear that metaphor, for Aristotle, is always secondary to concept. Yet according to Nietzsche, concept is really just a metaphor that has become worn out. Given this, truth-telling becomes nothing more than "employ[ing] the right metaphors." Nietzsche extends this beyond the epistemological or logical, to the moral realm. In the latter, he claims, one feels that one has a "duty to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone." Yet, one is under no obligation to "lie according to fixed convention," and given Nietzsche's insistence that we re-value all values, clearly he does not feel the need to bow to such convention. So what then does this discussion of concept and metaphor bring us? For Nietzsche, it brings us to the insistence that one ought to work to tell better lies. In that all "truth-telling" is really only metaphorical construction, we ought to work to construct meaningful, interesting and worthwhile lies rather than retelling the same tired and worn out ones.

In "The Meaning of Every Style': Nietzsche, Demosthenes, Rhetoric," Kathleen Merrow points out that this insistence on the telling of better lies and the construction of better metaphors is consistent with Nietzsche's joyful

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193 Nietzsche 2006, 117.
194 Babich 2006, 42.
195 Brown 2006, 98.
196 Nietzsche 2006, 117.
197 Ibid.
philosophy, saying, "Nietzsche's texts present a playful, cheerful affirmation of the world as appearance, dissimulation – an artistic, creative attitude toward life and reality once it is grasped that values, truths, and selves are made, not found." With the realization that the values and truths once considered absolute are in reality constructed, i.e., metaphorical, the philosopher is freed from the need to relentlessly pursue truth and can instead focus on style. Indeed, "style is necessarily related to the question of truth for Nietzsche." While Aristotle wants to make a distinction between style and substance, indeed claiming the primacy of substance over style, Nietzsche reduces substance to style: every philosophy is just a type of poetry. Style, in other words, "is not form over against content," it is content itself. The joyful philosopher, the philosopher who knows how to dance, is "no longer committed to any so-called perception or best metaphor presupposing an underlying will." Instead, "the various layers of human experience are determined by an artistically creative subject according to an 'aesthetic way of relating.'" So, how in particular is Nietzsche the philosopher who dances? In order to resolve this issue I now turn to Nietzsche's particular style: the aphorism.

The Aphorism

In "Nietzsche and the Art of the Aphorism," Jill Marsden tells us, "the term 'aphorism' is used to denote a short expression of a general truth or pointed assertion." This is

199 Ibid, 301.
200 Ibid, 300.
201 Brown 2006, 100.
202 Ibid.
interesting given that Nietzsche does not believe it is possible to make truth claims. Hence, he is doing something entirely other than this with his aphorisms. Marsden explains:

> While the maxim or adage is typically characterized as an aptly worded truism or commonplace, in Nietzsche's hands bold assertion is coupled with the expression of uncommon or inverted reasoning to create a novel experience in the provocation to think.

This inverted reasoning is one of the ways in which he breaks with the philosophical tradition. Indeed, “If philosophy has a tendency to negate problems by representing them as propositions to be conceptually prodded, the aphorism is a bastard species of philosophical assertion, allergic to intellectual resolution.” The aphorism, in other words, is a style that defies the laws of standard philosophical argumentation, and hence has the unique ability to generate something entirely new and creative. The aphorism, then, destroys commonly accepted values. The style of Nietzsche’s aphorism is, in Marsden’s estimation, “A weapon of critique... [and] escape route from convictions.”

Marsden poses an interesting question pointing to the necessity of this stylistic shift, namely, “One must ask whether it

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204 At least he does not think it is possible to make truth claims in *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*. In later works, particularly *Ecce Homo*, this changes. In fact, he describes a battle between truth and lie in “Why I am a Destiny:” “For when truth steps into battle with the lie of millennia we shall have convulsions, an earthquake spasm, a transposition of valley and mountain such as has never been dreamed of.” (Nietzsche 2006, 515).

205 Marsden 2009, 25.


207 *Ibid*. 

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is enough to challenge the dogmas of metaphysics at the level of ideas while continuing to remain uncritical of stylistic values at the level of the text.”

Given Nietzsche’s use of the aphorism, one must conclude that he would answer this question negatively. Moreover, there is something about this shift in style that allows for a more pointed critique of metaphysics. One of the ways in which the aphorism is different from straight philosophical exposition is explained in the following way: “The short, one-sentence utterances violate the ‘habits of the senses’ by expropriating the reader from the learned passivity that comes from familiarity with the tone, syntax, and subject matter of an author or genre.” That is to say, reading philosophical exposition and logical arguments has become such a commonplace activity that it hardly elicits a response from the reader; the reader can do this passively. While logical arguments and philosophical expositions build ideas and arguments on top of one another, thus doing the work for the reader, “the aphorism is a refusal to elaborate, to build.” It instead requires a response from its reader, and not simply an intellectual one. It often has a way of cutting straight to the heart in a way that is more difficult in traditional prose, “The ‘sense’ of the aphorism – as both affected and significance – cannot be assimilated by the active reader without registering a palpable, material difference.” Said differently, the aphorism has the capacity to embody the spirit of inspiration that connects with readers on a physical level. Marsden says:

Nietzsche appears to use the aphoristic form to convey a transpersonal affectivity, uniting the singular and the universal in a unique aesthetic judgment. In this way, the aphorism strikes a powerful chord but the melody is not of our making. Through isolating the impersonal core of raw feeling at the heart of experience,
individual testimony becomes a means for the production of something more perfect than itself.\footnote{Ibid, 25.}

The aphorism requires a response from the reader, and the response is something greater than the aphorism itself, it is an aesthetic merging of meaning from both the author and the reader.

Indeed, Nietzsche employs the aphorism because he does not just want to be read, he wants to be learned by heart, he wants the reader to incorporate his ideas into their very being. Nietzsche employs aphorisms to "manipulate and unsettle embodied assumptions about what it means to 'read' and to 'digest' philosophy."\footnote{Ibid, 30.} To simply assume that the ideas expressed in the aphorisms are supposed to be read and pondered in the way that other texts are is to fail to feel them in their rich, embodied fullness. It is akin to seeing someone dance, feeling music pulse through you, and yet not being affected by it; indeed, not responding with physical movement of your own. Again, the style of the aphorism creates the possibility for give and take, for response, for embodiment in a way that other styles do not, "By virtue of its brevity and lapidary prevision Nietzsche's aphoristic style constitutes a particular provocation to the reader. While complete in itself, the aphorism seems to command a response."\footnote{Ibid, 30-31.}

Conclusion

Nietzsche, as we have seen, repeatedly appeals to analogies of dance. He longs for the dancing philosopher and advocates an educational process whereby one learns to read, see, write and speak as a form of dancing. In contrast to this, the problem with
traditional philosophy is often couched in terms that suggest the philosopher’s lack of ability to dance; philosophers are clumsy, heavy footed, etc. The metaphor or analogy of dance is clearly important for Nietzsche, for a number of reasons.

First, dancing is an activity that requires the constant shifting of position and in this sense accords with Nietzsche’s criticism of dogmatic attempts to secure truth. Insofar as he advocates for a perspectival approach to philosophy – indeed, a willingness to experiment with new perspectives, to construct better metaphors, to tell better lies – Nietzsche’s dance metaphor is clearly apt. Further, it accords with his demand for more levity, more gaiety, more playfulness and joy in the pursuit of our philosophical interests. Insofar as we can no longer legitimately invest ourselves seriously and tenaciously in one view claiming absolute authority (indeed, in that truth is metaphor), Nietzsche suggests instead that we approach our philosophical investigations with a certain amount of playfulness. Lastly, dance is a way of transforming the fateful facts about our existence (gravity) into art. Indeed, the artist becomes a work of art. In that Nietzsche is not a dancer we must assume that the dancing philosopher is a metaphor. In Nietzsche’s case, it is a metaphor for the stylistic shift that he enacts with the aphorism. Through his aphorisms, which require an embodied, palpable response from the reader, Nietzsche becomes a dancing philosopher.

Bibliography


Bryant Lin: The Democratic Nietzsche: A Defense of Illiberalism in the Liberal Order

Michael Allen Gillespie, in his essay “Towards a New Aristocracy: Nietzsche contra Plato on the Role of a Warrior Elite,” argues that Nietzsche was in favor of the “destruction of liberal democracy and hoped to foster in its wake a martial aristocracy out of which his Superman might arise.” The argument that Nietzsche was in favor of a martial aristocracy to foster the coming of the Superman rests upon the assumption that Nietzsche’s critiques against democracy are solely political in scope and that anti-liberal attitudes are contradictory to a democratic order. This essay contends that Nietzsche’s anti-liberalism is conducive to democracy. I attempt to draw a middle ground between the absolutely political and the apolitical interpretations of Nietzsche, by arguing that Nietzsche’s critiques of equality and his praise for aristocratic ideals have a stronger interpretive tenor in the context of an affective state rather than a distinct political class, in a manner which is reconcilable with a popular understanding of democracy.

216 Although much could also be said on the topic of Nietzsche’s presumed militancy this essay will focus only on sculpting the nascent political implications of his thought. For an extended discussion on Nietzsche’s conception of war, see Rebekah Peery’s Nietzsche and War (New York: Algora Publishing, 2009).
I. Gillespie’s Aristocratic Nietzsche and the Nietzschean Critique of Democracy

Gillespie links Nietzsche’s desire for a martial aristocracy with the vacuum created by the death of God. He argues that, without the absoluteness of a metaphysical order to nature or a God, individuals lose their understanding of themselves as being within a teleological chain-of-being. This top-down relationship between humanity and God provides a fixing point in which the state can be articulated in times of unrest.\(^{217}\) The loss of this hierarchy is highly threatening for Nietzsche, who fears the collapse of humanity to nihilism. Gillespie identifies this loss from Nietzsche’s concept of individual self-hood. For Nietzsche, the individual is not simply a rational being, but comprised of a myriad of instincts that are competing for dominance.\(^{218}\) The ordering of these passions within the development of the subject is a function of socio-cultural context.

One of the clearest places where Nietzsche describes the developmental stages of humanity is in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.\(^ {219}\) The three stages of development are illustrated in the spirits of the camel, the lion, and the child. The camel, bearing the burden of existence, represents humankind’s

\(^{217}\) Nietzsche notes in epigram 472 of the Eighth Division of *Human, All-too-Human* that: “So long as the state, or more properly, the Government, regards itself appointed as guardian of a number of minors, and on their account considers the question whether religion is to be preserved or abolished, it is very highly probably that it will always for the preservation thereof. For religion satisfies the nature of the individual in times of loss, deprivation, fear, distrust, in cases, therefore, where the Government feels itself incapable of doing anything directly for the…the individual…religion gives the masses an attitude of tranquility and confiding expectancy.

\(^{218}\) Gillespie, “Toward a New Aristocracy”, 28

adaptation to living under slave morality. The dependency on the self-negating tendencies of Christianity has made humanity prone to obedience. The spirit of the lion is the vengeful spirit that seeks to destroy the previous order. However, since the lion is merely reactive to past injustices, it can never move beyond the pain of the past. Since Nietzsche praises the active rather than reactive affects, the spirit of the child is essential for the process of forgetting that is endemic to creativity. The child is employed by Nietzsche to symbolize the creation of a new aesthetics and system of values. This camel-lion-child transition is meant to lead us to the crucial stage in which we can become either the Last Man or the Superman.

Nietzsche’s Superman, upon a first reading, is usually interpreted to be the “inventor” of new values and redeemer who moves humanity mores to a further stage. Gillespie understands the Superman as a literal person, as evinced in his indictment of Nietzsche for not providing “an account of the...system of education to civilize these blond beasts” and in his questioning of the actualization of the Superman.

Yet, in my view, the figure of the Superman is not a domineering figure impressed upon humanity, but a concept that “we are invited to consider imposing upon ourselves.” In Zarathustra, Nietzsche writes that the Superman is an idea to be

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221 Gillespie, “Aristocracy.”, 31
222 Gillespie notes that, curiously, these stages of development represent a teleology, which necessarily occurs in sequence, because of its actual occurrence in the sequence of history: “Each new stage of human existence is possible only on the basis of the establishment of a different hierarchy of the passions and drives.” Ibid.
223 Nietzsche, Zarathustra, 171
224 Gillespie, “Aristocracy”, 35
225 Ibid, 36 Gillespie asks “[I]s such a being possible? And even if he is possible, is he likely to come into existence?”
taught (as opposed to foisted upon) to humanity, as the embodiment of man's self-overcoming: "I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him? The Superman provokes us and invites us to move beyond ourselves and to embrace our creative potential. Rather than engaging the possibilities that the death of God presents humanity, the Last Man has no interest in overcoming him or herself, and "pursues a narrow egalitarian happiness that puts him beyond love, creation, and longing, beyond exertion and distinction." Where the Superman embraces the pain and the uncertainty of the undetermined future, the Last Man turns away from such difficulties and is resigned and satisfied with the present.

**A: Nietzsche on Freedom and Equality**

Gillespie duly notes that Nietzsche was suspicious of the 'democratization' of the affects. The leveling of passions without any sort of hierarchical organization mires the individual in a sort of incoherent state of being that is indicative of the Last Man. If all passions were completely equal then individuals would not be able to distinguish and choose between any desires. This is a significant element of Nietzsche's critique of democracy. Egalitarianism, not only being a product of herd morality, negates the differences that each affect have from one another. Equality is undesirable for Nietzsche because it, by destroying our ability to distinguish, renders everything and everyone small, vapid, and trivial.

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227 Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 124
228 Bruce Detwiler, Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990) 72
229 Gillespie, "Aristocracy", p. 29
from embracing differences (a feature emblematic of the Superman) egalitarianism produces conformity. Equality is closely related to liberalism or the “commitment to individuals as free and equal persons and a commitment to individual diversity.”

Nietzsche’s criticisms of democracy are situated within his critiques of liberalism. Nietzsche is critical of liberalism for its negative conception of freedom, or the idea that an individual is free when unhindered from outside forces. Negative freedom can also be expressed as an “opportunity-concept” of freedom. In my estimation, Nietzsche adopts a more positive account of freedom, in that freedom is realized in action. Since Nietzsche insists that humans are a product of both will and fate, the freedom from determinations is impossible. Moreover, Nietzsche holds that the political aim of liberalism to maximize freedom from restraining conflict is actually deleterious to freedom: “Liberal institutions cease to be liberal as soon as they are attained; later on, there are no worse and no more thorough injurers of freedom than liberal institutions.”

To elaborate upon this reinterpretation of freedom, I draw from “Homer’s Contest”, where Nietzsche maintains that individuals in antiquity were freer then modern man because his or her “aims were nearer and easier to achieve.” The modern notion of freedom, which occurs irrespective of conflict, is nebulous and ultimately destructive of freedom itself.

233 Ibid, 443
234 Ibid.
Nietzsche likens modern man to Zeno’s paradox of Achilles and the Tortoise.\textsuperscript{237} If freedom was something infinite and indeterminate in scope, one must perform infinite tasks to attain freedom, which is impossible. Instead of seeing freedom as the absence of conflict, a task that is necessarily infinite, Nietzsche views conflict as essential to freedom itself. Freedom stems from the overcoming of obstacles and the resistance against external forces. Ironically, he says, it is the illiberal and aristocratic attitude that ensures freedom, because it instills the instincts to overcome uniformity and complacency by driving us to better ourselves.\textsuperscript{238, 239}

Nietzsche would also object to a liberal account of pluralism following his criticisms of equality. Pluralism is rooted in some notion of equality. Differences are respected because all individuals have an equal claim to rights because of some shared quality or membership.\textsuperscript{240} Nietzsche is critical of this substantive basis for pluralism. For Nietzsche, there is no ‘individual’ prior to social influences. Hence, there was never an a priori basis for equality to exist outside of practice and conflict. Equality also neglects the implicit antagonism of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{237} Nietzsche, “Homer’s Contest”, p. 98 \textquotedblleft[I]nfinity impedes him [Achilles], he cannot even overtake the tortoise.\textquotedblright
\item \textsuperscript{238} Siemens, “Nietzsche Contra Liberalism on Freedom”, 448 \textquoteleft{His argument is that the institutionalization of liberal values-we may think here of the protection of equal rights to basic liberties against external constraints (à la Rawls)- leads in practice to the breeding of uniformity among herd animals; that is, it leads to unfreedom”\textquoteright
\item \textsuperscript{239} Nietzsche, Fredrich. Beyond Good and Evil. p. 366. Powerful instincts drive individuals to continually use the \textquoteleft{power of adaptation” in every changing conditions. Whereas democracy leads to the \textquoteleft{production of a type that is prepared for slavery in the subtlest sense…"
\item \textsuperscript{240} Often equality is rooted in appeals to things like citizenship or human rights. Because individuals are free to pursue their own interests and are subject to differing circumstances, difference still remains.
\end{itemize}
passions that are contained within each person by presuming there is an essential core 'individual.'

Thus, Gillespie interprets Nietzsche's aristocratism from two vantage points. The first is his proclamation that conflict and disorder is necessary to usher in the Superman; destruction (the spirit of the lion) creates the necessary environment for the Superman.\textsuperscript{241} Secondly, the aristocratic-warrior class is meant to provide the hierarchical order for the Superman to arise.\textsuperscript{242} The following sections complicate the Nietzsche's critique of democracy and implicate aristocratic attitudes (as opposed to aristocratic political structures) as being healthy to a functioning democracy.

II. An Etymological Reading of Nietzsche's "Democracy"

As stated, Gillespie argues against the purely apolitical readings of Nietzsche's critique. Though I agree with this interpretation, I do challenge his assertion that Nietzsche's criticisms of democracy and praise of aristocracy are solely political. In both cases, Nietzsche refers to nobility and democracy as physiological and psychological dispositions rather than political institutions of their own right. By couching Nietzsche's critiques of democracy as critiques of egalitarian and liberal attitudes, one can extrapolate a more robust understanding of democratic politics.

With regards to Nietzsche's critiques of democracy, his usage of the word 'democracy' is subtle. Rather than plainly referring to democracy simply as practice of government, Nietzsche makes various allusions to democracy as a "disposition, attitude, or type that flourishes and dominates under those values."\textsuperscript{243} In many instances, Nietzsche explicitly confronts the issue of "democratic taste and its modern ideas" as needlessly the development of humanity by taking "suffering

\textsuperscript{241} Gillespie, "Aristocracy", p. 31. This militaristic critique of Nietzsche will be addressed later.

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., 31-33

\textsuperscript{243} Herman Siemens, "Nietzsche's Critique of Democracy", in The Journal of Nietzsche Studies. 38 (2009). p. 21
itself [as] something that must be abolished.”

H.W. Siemens identifies the context of the word democracy as consistently emerging alongside the term “‘taste’ (Geschmack) in connection with democracy.” Further evidence of the importance of seeing democracy in terms of cultural, rather than solely political impact, is reflected in Nietzsche’s opposition between culture and politics.

In the *The Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche insists that in order to understand him, “One must be skilled in living on mountains—seeing the wretched ephemeral babble of politics and national self-seeking beneath oneself.” One ought to view politics with contempt because culture (which according to Nietzsche is tied to the elevation of humanity) is inherently anti-institutional. The individualistic aspects of human creativity are often in conflict with the realist and “prudential” aspect of politics. Politics stems from the need to organize energies, peoples, and resources towards some practical goal. Nietzsche describes the State as a “New Idol”:

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244 Nietzsche, *BGE*, p. 244
245 Herman Siemens, “Critique of Democracy”, 21 Siemens notes that Nietzsche typically refers to democracy as “‘der demokratische Geschmack’ or ‘der demokratische Grundgeschmack aller Wertschätzung.’”
248 Guay, “Nietzsche, Contingency, and the Vacuity of Politics” in *Nietzsche, Nihilism and the Philosophy of the Future* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009) 20. Note Guay goes into further detail over the various categories and subcategories he identifies within Nietzsche’s thought with respect to different political orders. For example, the “Tragicomic” operates “between possibility and aspiration, it best constitutes the possibility of agency and thereby to what Nietzsche calls ‘Life.’"
State is the name of the coldest of all cold monsters. Coldly it tells lies too...: "I, the state, am the people." That is a lie! It was creators who created peoples and hung a faith and a love over them: thus they served life. It is annihilators who set traps for the many and call them "state"...It [the people] has invented its own language of customs and rights. But the state tells lies in all the tongues of good and evil; and whatever it says it lies—and whatever it has it has stolen.249

The state is incapable of producing the new values and ideas, partly because of politics’ concern with power and money.250 Since Nietzsche sees the state as parasitic upon the inventiveness of individuals, culture is something that is distinct from the political order.251 Moreover, politics is secondary to culture in the production of strong individuals. In other areas, Nietzsche’s admires the Roman Empire252 or the exploits of Napoleon253 not based on their totalitarian tendencies, but their advancement of new aesthetic visions and creative values. Nietzsche praises the creation of the Roman Empire is not for its military conquests or imperial nature, but its development of “the most grandiose form of organization under difficult

249 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 161
250 Ibid, p. 162. Nietzsche refers to politicians “clambering monkeys” and those who seek fortune as “impotent paupers.”
251 An objection to this is that the state can be instrumental in either inhibiting or permitting the creative and active affects, thus culture and politics are still interrelated. While this is true, my argument is that Nietzsche is supportive of institutional politics only insofar that it fosters a healthy culture.
252 See Joe Ward’s “Nietzsche’s Value Conflict” on a further explanation of Nietzsche’s support of *Imperium Romanum*
253 See Paul F. Glenn’s “Nietzsche’s Napoleon: The Higher Man as Political Actor.” Both pieces dedicate sections to emphasize Nietzsche’s recognition for the innovative and aesthetic cultures that each has forged.
conditions” and the cultivation of the "most admirable of all works of art in the grand style."254

Gillespie admits that the Superman will utilize violence not for its own sake, but for the sake of creative and active reasons.255 This still does not dispel with Gillespie's thesis, since perhaps a non-democratic aristocratic government can still be justified as long as it provides for active culture that praises the noble affects. In the following section, I shall argue that a democratic framework is better at producing a stronger citizenship (compared to an aristocracy) and is amenable to Nietzsche's critiques.

III: The Democratic Agon

Even if my understanding of democracy as rightly existing within a narrative of competition is correct, the exercise of democracy must still to be reconciled with Nietzsche's critiques of egalitarianism and liberalism. Egalitarianism is often seen as a foundational principle to democracy. The idea of one vote for one person256 suggests that each individual has an equal voice and worth under the eyes of the law. If some citizens were 'more equal' than others, by having exclusive voting privileges for example, then this would justify the existence of an aristocratic ruling class. Worse yet, if some individuals possessed more intrinsic worth than others, then this could possibly justify the subjugation of those 'lesser' individuals.

With regards to the latter, the auspices of the competition, as developed in "Homer’s Contest", can prevent that sort of sectarian violence from occurring. Nietzsche refers to the drive to compete as being possessed by the two goddesses: ‘Erises.’ The bad or wicked Eris is the goddess who drives men to kill his neighbor in jealousy.257 The good Eris, channels the same jealous and envious energies to do good;

254 Ward, Joe. “Nietzsche’s Value Conflict.”, p. 7
255 Gillespie, Michael. “Aristocracy.” p. 33
256 However personhood is defined is a separate issue.
257 Nietzsche, “Homer’s Contest”, p. 96-97
“She drives even the unskilled man to work; neighbour competes with neighbour for prosperity. This Eris is good for men.” Nietzsche acknowledges the dangers of jealousy and envy. To temper the ‘bad Eris’, which may lead some exceptional individuals to try to destroy or control the polis, other individuals are to keep those parties in check. Inherent to a competitive culture is a fear of “...monopoly of predominance and...it desires, as protective measure against genius – a second genius.”

Again, the agon is indicative of the social requirement for both genius and freedom. Opposition is the engine that drives development, since the self is not developed in a vacuum and then exposed to external and social forces. Instead, the individual is constructed through “what it opposes and what opposes it.” Debilitating or killing your opponent goes against the spirit of the agon, since it eliminates all further and future conflict. What distinguishes competition from other forms of conflict (like a military operation) is that the rules and the antecedent conditions matter more than the end result. Whether or not an enemy was adequately prepared or strong enough to resist an assault is irrelevant to the aims of warfare. Whereas, if a team won defeated a team with a serious handicap (e.g. playing with fewer players then the opposing team or outmatched in terms of skill), then the victory meaningless.

Historically speaking, the agon was an activity only open to the aristocratic class to compete for cultural and political status. Some scholars contend that since the agon was historically anti-egalitarian, then it is inhospitable to a democratic framework. Interestingly, while Nietzsche

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258 Ibid., p. 97
259 Ibid, p. 98.
261 Ibid, 133
262 See Fredrick Appel’s Nietzsche Contra Democracy. Appel interprets Nietzsche as suggesting that the aristocratic class live separate from the masses and engage in artistic or creative competition. Lawrence J. Hatab, in “Prospects for a Democratic Agon” has an extensive reply against this.
recognized the political or social utility of the contest (to channel the destructive drives in beneficial manner), “Homer’s Contest” also touches upon the artistic innovations brought about by such rivalries. Nietzsche does describe the virtues of the agon as benefiting the entirety of society, as opposed to a select group of individuals, since he praises igniting of the passions of the everyday individual to seek self-improvement. Moreover, the ‘virtues’ of competition are conducive to democracy.

In section 2 The Anti-Christ, Nietzsche advocates “Not contentedness but more power; not peace but war; not virtue but fitness (Renaissance virtue, virtù, virtue that is morale-free).” David Owen in Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity, notes that virtù or the Renaissance virtue that Nietzsche advocates actually refers to virtuosity. To be a virtuoso at an activity presupposes both a degree of authority, along with a notion of truthfulness and judiciousness. Recognizing excellence requires the acceptance of some sort of standards that are grounded in a historical backdrop. For example, to recognize the virtuosity of Michael Jordan in basketball, we would have to know the rules of the basketball, possess some understanding of proficiency, and know of other players as a basis of comparison. If Michael Jordan’s achievements were attained by breaking the rules, then Michael Jordan’s basketball skills cannot be

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263 Nietzsche, “Homer’s Contest”, p. 98-99
264 Nietzsche, “Homer’s Contest”, 98 “[T]he youth thought of the good of his native city when he ran a race or threw or sang; he wanted to increase its reputation through his own; it was to the city’s gods that he dedicated the wreaths which the umpires placed on his head in honour.”
265 Nietzsche, Anti-Christ, p. 570.
266 David Owen, Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity, 140. In this book, Owen dedicates a section on examining the etymology of virtù.
267 Owen, Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity, 140-143. Owen appropriates both these terms from MacIntyre’s After Virtue and reinterprets MacIntyre’s standards of excellence to elaborate on Nietzsche's agonal perspectivism.
considered excellent. Similarly, if we did not understand the
difficulties of basketball or how he compares to his peers, then
his achievements would be meaningless. It is important to note
that without the milieu of competition we do not have a context
to judge virtù.

Virtuosity implies the practice of honest self-reflection.
To achieve mastery, one must be able to honestly reflect on
one’s performance, and be “able to entertain the possibly plural
perspectives on the standards of the practice.” Justice and
truthfulness are interrelated in this regard, because engaging in
a competition is a tacit acceptance of both the authority of the
competition and the authority of the community. In
Nietzsche’s agon, competitors seek glory and recognition.
Neither is attainable if the accomplishments were deemed
unworthy of accolade. If the competition did not entail some
level of skill or worthy competitors, then any meaningful sense
of honor from winning is lost. Similarly, from the perspective of
the competitors, he or she must deem the community to be
worthy of receiving acclaim from. This demands a mutual level
of respect, since prestige comes from corresponding levels of
competition. If an individual does not see his or her
competition as being ‘worthy’ and/or the approval of the
community worth obtaining, then there is no incentive to
compete. Justice, truth, and authority in the agon, while not
rooted in any explicitly transcendent or metaphysical origins,
exhibits how from something aristocratic in principle or
attitude can emerge from or even flourish in something that is
democratic or egalitarian in practice.

Although we have seen how aristocratic and
competitive virtues can lead to democratic practice, in order to
adequately address Gillespie’s thesis, we must see how
democracies are comparatively better than aristocracies at
fostering competition.

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268 Ibid, 143
269 Community refers to the social context in which the
competition emerges within such as the fellow competitors or
judges that forms the competition.
A: Democracy as Complementary to Competition

The flexibility of the democracy can better accommodate for competitive drives than the static nature of aristocracy. The essence of democracy is competitive. The results of a democratic election or decision is “not preordained or dictated; outcomes depend upon a contest of speeches, where one view wins and other views lose in a tabulation of votes.”

While the government still remains the guarantor on the results of a democracy, by retaining a monopoly on violence to prevent civil unrest or a coup d’état, the structure of a democratic government is predicated on a system of “temporary control and subordination.” Nietzsche describes the participants of the agon as filled with mutual distrust.

Democratic governments are often structured with distrust by preventing one element or branch of government from possessing too much power. A key example of this is the separation of powers in the United States, which diffuses power in a way between the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative Branches of government. Ideally, each branch of government maintains scrutiny over the other to inhibit abuses of the law.

Democracies are subject to constant structural changes and revisions in a similar manner to Nietzsche’s camel-lion-child triad and the Superman. Nietzsche speaks negatively of the unrestricted creative drives and impulses, calling it “most intolerable” to live a life of utterly without restraint or habits.

Nietzsche’s polemics against anarchism also denote the impossibility of a libertarian notion of freedom, and demonstrate the necessity of structure and norms to creativity. Meaning, the type of governance that Nietzsche would be in favor was one that best articulated the tension between creative change and structural stasis in the domain of culture.

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270 Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*. 63
271 Ibid.
272 Nietzsche, “Homer’s Contest”, 99
274 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 290-291
Hence, Nietzsche would not be in favor of aristocratic governments because the essential structure (i.e. the dominion of the aristocracy) is never subject to change. If, as some interpreters of the ‘Aristocratic Nietzsche’ suggest, only the aristocracy has creative license while nihilistic narratives are utilized to prepare the masses for slavery, then this would necessarily lock the ability of the strong to actually “employ democratic Europe as their most pliant...instrument for getting hold of the destinies of the earth, so as to work as artists upon ‘man’ himself.”275 The creative instincts of the aristocratic ruling class cannot be used in any truly active manner, for any creative projects are reactive to the need to maintain hierarchical rule. Typically, aristocratic designations of worth are dependent on static and atemporal distinctions like class, race, or lineage. The need to maintain the “fixed” distance between classes would drastically restrict the way the aristocrat can interact with his or her peers and the masses.

Arguably the aristocrats can employ creative means of propaganda in placating the masses. However this expression is co-opted by a political hierarchy, which requires the repression and complacency of the masses. Abbey and Appel insist that only the aristocratic can enjoy their own inventiveness and lord over the masses:

[W]hile forces like industrialization, democratization, the growth of mass politics and nihilism contribute to the leveling of European society, Nietzsche discerns in them a double movement. They weaken the majority, whose power should be diminished, while creating circumstances propitious for the mobilization and ascent of a minority of strong individuals...From a political vantage point then, Christianity has redeeming features: it offers a new ruling élite a means for making

275 Ruth Abbey and Fredrick Appel. “Nietzsche and the Will to Politics”, p. 105. Abbey and Appel use this quote from Nietzsche’s Will to Power as proof that the aristocratic ruling class will use the by products of nihilism, like Christianity or democracy to manipulate the masses.
what it wants of the masses and for legitimizing the massive subordination of the majority demanded by Nietzsche’s politics.\textsuperscript{276}

In my estimation, it seems a bit inconsistent to suggest that Nietzsche was provisionally accepting of democracy (because it produces a strong minority to ‘rise through the chaff’ so to speak), yet insist that only the aristocracy was allowed to flourish and rule, since without a social mechanism to allow the strong to arise from the herd, then there will be no way for the new elites to move upwards. What can potentially resolve this antinomy is that if the aristocracy itself was subject to change through the democratic process and not based on some essentialist basis of membership (like blood lineage, ethnicity, or class).

Democracies, because they permit the shifting of power structures (through elections and appeals for example), provide a reliable platform for creativity that is imbedded within the structure itself. By employing rhetoric, aesthetic imaginings, or charisma, the ‘aristocracy’ of democratic societies is given a direct channel for creative expression. More importantly, democracy is better than a political aristocracy at preserving and cultivating a true aristocratic ideal. One problem with a martial aristocracy is the feelings of complacency it breeds amongst the populace and the members of the elite. Nietzsche contends that the spirit of the healthy, good Eris is derived from the principle of ostracism, which removes the preeminent individual “so that a new contest of powers can be awakened: a thought which is hostile to the ‘exclusivity’ of genius in the modern sense.”\textsuperscript{277}

Nietzsche warns against any party from attaining absolute dominance\textsuperscript{278} He cites the example of Militiades, who

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{276} Ibid, 107-109.
\item \textsuperscript{277} Nietzsche, “Homer’s Contest”, 98.
\item \textsuperscript{278} “Almost without exception the effect is terrible...we should, perhaps, say more exactly that he was not able to bear fame without further competition or fortune at the end of contest” Ibid, p. 99
\end{itemize}
after obtaining what he thought to be the pinnacle of his military achievements redirected his lust for glory to petty and destructive avenues. In competition, one’s desires are transformed into healthy forms envy, jealousy, and ambition. Without competition, these same desires lack a healthy outlet for release or direction. Nietzsche’s use of ostracism in “Homer’s Contest” is used against the individuals that exceeded the field of competition. In the context of democracy, it can serve a similar function by making room for new competitors. Democracy can provide a mechanism of determining who is worthy or unworthy of comprising the elite. A political framework that allows for social mobility, best ensures the drive to competition by setting goals and pitfalls for everyone. With the social permeability of democracy, the ‘aristocracy’ would have a stronger and consistent desire to compete, since in any moment, other strong individuals may rise from the mass to replace them.

B: Competition as Complementary to Democracy

Similar to how democracy drives competition, competitive and aristocratic instincts are in turn, beneficial to democracy.

279 Ibid, “There is no clearer example than the ultimate fate of Miltiades. Placed on a lonely pinnacle and carried far beyond every fellow competitor through his incomparable success at Marathon: he feels a base lust for vengeance awaken in him against a citizen of Para with whom he had a quarrel long ago. To satisfy this lust he misuses his name, the state’s money and civic honour, and disgraces himself...After the battle of Marathon he became the victim of the envy of gods. And this divine envy flares up when it sees a man without any other competitor, without an opponent, at the lonely height of fame. He only has the gods near him now – and for that reason he has them against him. But these entice him into an act of hubris, and he collapses underneath it.”
Echoing Nietzsche's sentiments in Beyond Good and Evil, the maintenance of democracy is best served by aristocratic instincts. First, agonistic conflict is healthy to the functioning of democracy, because having a plurality of viewpoints that cannot be absolutely resolved is why controversial issues are subject to the polls. Aristocratic attitudes motivate disagreement. A belief that one's ideas or principles are the best (an aristos) is inherent to disagreement because two opposing beliefs cannot be the 'best' simultaneously. Strong opinions (which are aristocratic by nature) sharpen interests in politics and stimulate voter participation.

Secondly, the suspicion towards fellow 'competitors' in the democratic agon is the best check against abuses of the democratic process. By being incredulous towards the mass and government and seeing how either can be subject to corruption, the individual can best articulate his or her distrust by advocating for a transparent political process. While elected leaders and other members of the democratic 'aristocracy' may advocate for less transparency, their political challengers would hinder these pushes. Moreover, the best interest of the 'aristocracy' is to retain some degree of political transparency to insure their competitors do not circumvent the rules to depose them of power.

Finally, aristocratic instincts produce a richer sense of equality than the egalitarianism that Nietzsche critiques. Like

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280 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 366-367. Here Nietzsche argues that democracy, far from producing free subjects, actually produces tyrants. Nietzsche also argues that the leveling conditions of democracy will simultaneously give birth to the most useful herd animal and the most exceptional individuals. This implies that Nietzsche recognizes democracy as a historical and political event that cannot be undone. Lawrence Hatab in A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy, argues that while slave morality might have been historically necessary for the onset or development of democracy, it is far from necessary for its maintenance.

281 Hatab, A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy, p. 70
Nietzsche’s account of positive freedom, an account of equality can be inferred from his agonistic conception of freedom. What Nietzsche finds problematic, is the blanket universalization of equality as a foundational principle. Although the claim that all individuals are born equal may seem uncontroversial, the consequence of unequivocally accepting equality has vast complications. Once we take into consideration factors such as economic disparity or ethnic discrimination, equality as denoting equal opportunity becomes muddled. Nietzsche even regards equality as “good manners” provided the individuals are similar in “strength and value standards and belong together in one body.” As mentioned previously, the spirit of competition implies a semblance of equality, since equal or comparable ability is necessary for competitiveness. Thus, competition needs to be scaled in accordance to ability and activity.

If we took seriously Nietzsche’s insistence that equality is meaningful only in similar context, it would undermine the spirit of the democratic agon, to have the weak (like a solitary individual) to compete directly against the strong (like a multinational corporation). Instead, agonistic equality, which demands a merit based leveling, would require another actor (e.g., government or labor union) to check the power of the preeminent. Here, democracies have a distinct advantage over an aristocracy by having competition through the electoral process. Competition in its truest sense is not permitted within an aristocracy since the divisions are dependent on immutable and non-competitive features.

By seeing individuals as potential competitors, we can have a practice of equality without the essentialist language. Given the fluidity of various types and

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282 Ibid.
283 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 393. Equality in this section is defined roughly by Nietzsche as “Refraining mutually from injury, violence, and exploitation and placing one’s will on par with that of someone else…”
284 For example, many aristocracies use an idea of lineage or royalty to decide membership. This type of membership is automatic; it does not require the agon to decide who should be a member at all.
milleus of competition, aristocratic attitudes permit us to respect all individuals as possible competitors in an arena that we ourselves might not be successful in.\textsuperscript{285} Admittedly, politics has never been the primary focus of Nietzsche’s thought. But in agreement with Gillespie, I believe that a political reading of Nietzsche has been largely undervalued. Contrary to the fears of many Nietzsche scholars, the political implications of his aristocratic and anti-liberal attitudes are commensurable and even complimentary to a democracy. On the other hand, a strict political aristocracy actually \textit{undermines} aristocratic values by fixing the self within an essentialist framework. Although an agonistic democracy may not represent the most ideal form of democratic governance, it still elucidates how, if read as psychological arguments, Nietzsche’s critiques of democracy can strengthen the actual practice of democracy.

\textbf{Bibliography}


\textsuperscript{285} Hatab, \textit{A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy}, 117. Lawrence Hatab puts this in more eloquent terms in saying that “the recognition of excellence will continually fluctuate within and between domains-on a given day in a given context, for example, a good locksmith is far superior to a President of the United States (or even a Zarathustra, for that matter.”


Nietzsche, Fredrich.


Shawn Loht: On the Concept of Human Body in Heraclitus

Introduction. Historians of Greek philosophy alternately regard Heraclitus as the philosopher of flux, fire, and the *logos*. But the notion of human life in Heraclitus equally provides an interpretive rubric for the hundred-odd fragments. Charles Kahn has argued that Heraclitus’ philosophy concerns “not the physical world but the human condition,” such that the fragments exhibit “a meditation on human life and destiny in the context of biological death.” Similarly, Hans-Georg Gadamer has written that fundamentally at issue for Heraclitus is the paradox of the self-sustaining human “I.” Gadamer suggests that the thought of Heraclitus sketches the hermeneutic of this mystery, providing “a synopsis of being alive, being conscious, and being.”

Typically, scholars engaged with Heraclitus’ conception of human life look to what he says about the soul. This is certainly a fitting approach. In Heraclitus, soul comprises both the *what* of the human and the *how* of human cognitive connection to the world. It’s both a substance, elemental in the cosmos, and the substance of human life, and not an immaterial substance or disembodied spirit as the Platonic tradition would have it. It is

286 Alternate versions of this paper were read at meetings of the Georgia Philosophical Association and the North Texas Philosophical Association in March and April 2012, respectively.
very difficult to argue that Heraclitus' thinks any notions of immateriality in the human or of anything else.\footnote{289}

In contrast, in the present work I aim to develop Heraclitus' understanding of human life from the side of the human body (hereafter I will simply use the term “body”). I don’t wish to sidestep the place of the soul in Heraclitus so much as to work out how soul’s depiction may help lead to a conception of body. Now, to inquire of body in Heraclitus certainly poses interpretive stumbling blocks. For one thing, Heraclitus has no explicit word for "body." The later Greek word \textit{soma} is altogether absent from the extant fragments, and there is little reason to suppose Heraclitus would have used this word in the later senses of Plato or Aristotle.\footnote{290} So my study must be something of a backward, reverse-directed reading that engages the fragments using present-day language. Not to mention – my starting point hermeneutically supposes Heraclitus to allow a body-soul composite, when I have already said that this intellectual model has not solidified in Heraclitus historically. On the other hand, because soul comprises such a large portion of Heraclitus' extant sayings on the human constitution, the positive contribution of the thesis I will argue for stems from examining soul in Heraclitus specifically with a view toward the manner in which Heraclitus speaks of soul’s self-differentiation or dispersion in what we might call the “body.”


\footnote{290} The best evidence that Heraclitus possesses a notion of anything resembling body as such comes from an account of Aristotle (Fr. A15), according to which Heraclitus says the soul consists of “exhalations” and is “distinct from the body.” But the merit and wording of this testimony are shaky at best and sharply out of step with what the authentic fragments speak about body and soul. Probably Aristotle’s testimony does not portray the words of Heraclitus with accuracy, at least in regard to Heraclitus speaking of "body."
Greek Anthropology. Heraclitus’ philosophical thought relating to the human soul and body does not take place in a bubble. One can gain some comprehension of how Heraclitus enters the conversation about human life from earlier Greek thought, particularly Homeric views. Heraclitus’ understanding of human nature shows an implicit basic continuity with Homeric conceptions of anatomy and physiology. The foremost intellectual inheritance informing the fragments here is the traditional Homeric conception of soul as “breath” or “blow,” and the related view of personal identity as coextensive with the soul.

When the soul departs, the person dies, and the body becomes carrion. As Homer says of Achilles’ rage in the opening lines of the *Iliad*, “Many a brave soul did it send hurrying down to Hades, and many a hero did it yield a prey to dogs and vultures.” But what present thought would label as the human body, Homeric thought, and likely Greek thought up through the time of Heraclitus and Xenophanes, merely calls

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“limbs” or “organs.” This early Greek view of human bodily life is more localized, seeing the human physical aspect not as an organic whole but rather in terms of small systems or networks: the head, the hair, the chest, and alternately, phren, thumos, and psyche.

Richer clues for Heraclitus’ understanding of the human physical makeup come with his engagement of classical physiological concepts such as thumos and aion. His talk of thumos in Fr. 85— the traditional organ of heart, courage, or strength — for instance illustrates some continuity with earlier Greek conceptions of human organs in metaphorical terms that join corporeal mechanism with emotive function. Thumos is an anatomical body part, but also the seat of emotional resolve. Similarly, the ancient Greek word aion Heraclitus employs in Fr. 52 originally denotes not the life-cycle of the kosmos but instead the watery makeup of the human person, whereby one’s psychic being is thought to originate in liquid composition. This last feature is exemplified in various passages from the Homeric works, where death is occasioned by the liquid spilling of soul out of the body.

Thematically more unique and groundbreaking in Heraclitus vis-à-vis the earlier Greek conception of the human makeup is his identification of physiological aspects of the human with cognitive capacities of the soul. Souls are said to “smell in Hades” (Fr. 98); soul can “speak” the language of nature (Fr. 107); when drunk, a man is “led by a beardless boy,” his soul being “moist” (Fr. 117). Heraclitus describes experiences that, while not characteristic of earlier conceptions

296 Snell, The Discovery of Mind, 15-16.
of the soul, portray soul as possessing a cognitive terminus. In this depiction, the bodily accessories of smell, language, and other media of sense perception provide a vessel or locus through which the soul has cognition.298

Natures – Theoretical Ideas about the Human. Heraclitus’ conception of nature or phusis also lends insight for the present inquiry. Heraclitus writes in Fr. 1 that his book’s accomplishment consists in setting out “words and works” that distinguish things “according to their nature.” Of note is this fragment’s existential implication regarding natures. The reference to giving words and works that distinguish things “according to their nature” entails the seeming truism that there are natures or that things have natures. Two other apparently connected fragments suggest a similar reading:

Fr. 123: A thing’s nature loves to hide.

298 M.L. West, Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient, 149-50. “So in Heraclitus…psuche has become the seat of feeling, and the entity of which moral and intellectual qualities are predicated. In Heraclitus it appears as the organ of understanding that interprets the information received by the senses.” Also see Nussbaum, “Psuche in Heraclitus I,” 9. In connection with these observations, Nussbaum writes that in general, what is new in Heraclitus’ understanding of the human is his view of the soul as a fundamentally, positive, life-giving entity, relatively independent of the body and thus self-moving; moreover, she adds, these features indicate Heraclitus’ insight into the principle of unity of the individual.

299 Fr. 1: “Although this account holds forever, men ever fail to comprehend, both before hearing it and once they have heard. Although all things come to pass in accordance with this account, men are like the untried when they try such words and works as I set forth, distinguishing each according to its nature and telling how it is. But other men are oblivious of what they do awake, just as they are forgetful of what they do asleep.”
Fr. 112: To act and speak what is true, perceiving things according to their nature.

But it is uncertain whether this conception of a “nature” of a thing includes the human makeup, or whether Heraclitus means only “things.” Regarding the former, a very large number of the extant fragments speak of patterns of human behavior. Various other fragments describe the human makeup from a rather theoretical-sounding perspective. On the whole, it seems untenable to suppose that Heraclitus would hold human life to have no nature, no basic makeup, or to be entirely subject to flux. Following a view advocated by Martha Nussbaum and Malcolm Schofield, it seems, rather, that one of Heraclitus’ unique intellectual contributions to the history of early Greek thought is the very notion that the human being does have a nature; this notion is betrayed in Heraclitus’ extended explorations of human life’s unity-within-diversity.

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300 Fr. 2: “[M]ost men live as though thinking were a private possession.” Fr. 17: “Most men do not think things in the way they encounter them, nor do they recognize what they experience…” Fr. 19: “Not knowing how to listen, neither can they speak.” Fr. 87: “A fool loves to get excited on any account.”
301 Fr. 119: “Man’s character is his fate.” Fr. 85: “It is hard to fight against passion; for whatever it wants it buys at the expense of soul.” Fr. 77: “It is delight, not death, for souls to become moist.” Fr. 118: “A gleam of light is the dry soul, wisest and best.”
Heraclitus speaks of the natures of things as "at variance" and inwardly divergent, "back-stretching, like the bow and the lyre" (Fr. 51). This doubling, inward differentiating of a thing's nature represents its *logos*, the structure allowing it to diverge from itself while maintaining its identity. How would this *logos* structure play out for attempting to comprehend the body-soul makeup in Heraclitus? It allows for thinking of body as a kind of self-differentiation of soul. Insofar as Heraclitus’ conception of soul includes some physiological processes of body, soul would seem to contain a kind of harmonic yet tenuous dispersion of itself into physiological, bodily extension.

is increased understanding of the human in terms that may be called biological, involving man viewed as a specific type of being.

304 Also: Fr. 88: “The same: living and dead, and the waking and the sleeping, and the young and the old. For these transposed are those, and those transposed again are these.” Fr. 62: “Immortals are mortal, mortals are immortal, living the other’s death, dead in the others’ life.” Fr. 10: “Graspings, wholes and not wholes, convergent divergent, consonant dissonant, from all things one and from one thing all.” Fr. 50: “It is wise, listening not to me but to the report, to agree that all things are one.”

305 Eva Brann, *The Logos of Heraclitus* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry, 2011), 85-86. Also see Schofield, “Heraclitus’ Theory of Soul and its Antecedents,” 20. Schofield writes “we may suppose Heraclitus to have approached the job of understanding the soul in a properly modest and agnostic frame of mind, tempered by one or two convictions: first, that it is reasonable to suppose that human nature will be subject to the fundamental *logos* of opposition in unity like everything else in the universe; second, that since man is part of the natural world, his soul will be subject to the same physical laws embodying the universal *logos* as obtain elsewhere in it. These ideas amount to the thought that the same general form of explanation will apply to soul as to other things.”
Disconnect of Soul and World via the Bodily Medium. Some other themes in Heraclitus’ depiction of human life amplify the reading I have sketched thus far. Many fragments indicate that, although the cognitive dimension of human soul has no limits (Fr. 45), the human physical makeup can help to obstruct cognition. For instance, the human facilities for hearing and seeing are not infallible: most men are “like the untried,” failing to understand the logos “both before and after they have heard it” (Fr. 1, 34). Similarly, “eyes and ears are poor witnesses for those whose souls do not understand the language” (Fr. 107). “Much learning does not teach wisdom” (Fr. 40); otherwise the world of experience would be a sufficient teacher for all.

Similarly, a reading of some other fragments suggests that the human makeup naturally lends itself to misinterpretation. Most people do not think things in the way they encounter them, nor do they recognize what they experience (Fr. 17); they are at odds with that with which they constantly associate (Fr. 71-73); they are deceived in the recognition of what is obvious (Fr. 56). Admittedly, Heraclitus’ words in these last passages do not refer specifically to embodied human life. But all together, the implication of these epithets for embodied human nature is that human behavior illustrates ignorance of its own vessel. And alternately, confinement to a finite bodily space creates a disconnect between human and world.

Perhaps the strongest evidence that Heraclitus makes a tacit distinction of soul from the embodied human aspect is Fr. 85. In this fragment, Heraclitus sets soul apart from thumos:

Fr. 85: It is hard to fight against passion (thumos); for whatever it buys is at the expense of soul.

It is difficult to know exactly how Heraclitus understands thumos and its relation to soul outside of the clues provided by anthropological history. Is thumos fundamentally distinct from the soul or part of it? The obvious temptation here is to assume thumos to be part of the soul, as one sees in Plato’s later tripartite model. But the earlier anthropology Heraclitus
appropriates would favor the opposite view – soul and thumos in that picture are two different things. Thumos is equally passion, courage, heart, or manly anger and a physiological phenomenon occasioned by boiling blood and the exhalation of steaming vapors.\textsuperscript{306} It has nothing materially or logically to do with psyche. Similarly, in Fr. 85 Heraclitus evidently holds thumos as part of the human makeup that is at the very least other to soul, if not entirely non-psyhic, to the extent that it can compete with or otherwise compromise soul.\textsuperscript{307}

\textbf{The Relativity and Instability of the Human Bodily Makeup.}
In step with the preceding indications of how body and soul may diverge for Heraclitus are fragments related to the aesthetic dimensions of the human makeup. These sayings show a sharp formulation of physical forms as unstable and impermanent. Beauty and other kinds of physical excellence

\textsuperscript{306} Kahn, \textit{The Art and Thought of Heraclitus}, 237.
\textsuperscript{307} Cf. Nussbaum, "Psuche in Heraclitus I," 8. This raises an interesting question: could Heraclitus conceive of thumos as nonetheless part of the soul, though still distinct from soul in some way? A possible explanation lay in conceiving of soul as a kind of self-propagation of human physicality in the spirit of Fr. 115: “To the soul belongs a report [logos] that increases itself.” Reading “report” or logos in this fragment in terms of soul’s material growth rather than simply as its capacity for knowledge or learning, it follows to suppose that human features such as thumos illustrate in Heraclitus a kind of self-differentiation of soul into forms that in the present we conceive as bodily. I believe one must remain agnostic on this question of whether soul relates to thumos as a self-differentiated part of itself, or whether thumos is a self-standing human component originating entirely outside of soul. But a larger tension inherent in reading Fr. 85 concerns precisely how soul relates to bodily phenomena that grow out of it. For an account of soul as the principle of bodily growth in Heraclitus, see Kahn, \textit{The Art and Thought of Heraclitus}, 237.
are situational and relative, in such manner that nonhuman animal life makes particularly evident:

Fr. 82-83: The most beautiful of apes is ugly in comparison with the race of man...

Fr. 13: Swine delight in mire more than clean water; chickens bathe in dust.

In the case of human life specifically, the body is just a body:

Fr. 96: Corpses should be thrown out quicker than dung.

Two parallel fragments indicate a similar dynamic of aesthetic opposition amidst the human makeup. I cite them together in order to highlight a tension in how they depict the body-soul composition.

Fr. 58: Doctors who cut and burn and torture their patients in every way complain that they do not receive the reward they deserve.

Fr. 110-11: It is not better for human beings to get all they want. It is disease that makes health sweet and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest.

First, Fr. 58 is as vivid as any fragment in Heraclitus regarding the unity of opposites bound up with embodied human life. It is the physical human aspect – i.e. skin, limbs, joints – that receives cuts and cauterization; but presumably the point of Heraclitus’ contrast in this fragment is the difference of bodily pain versus soul’s rational comprehension of pain as a good. In Fragments 110-11 we see a similar relationship between the physical locus of the body and the sensible experiences it engenders for the soul’s rational cognition. There is a rational good applying to the person as a whole – not getting all one wants – and there is also disease, hunger, and weariness, which
Heraclitus seems to be thinking of on the micro level of the body. On the whole I suggest that this relationship portrays the human body as a locus of impermanent and unpredictable tendencies, where Heraclitus is motivated to show that the stability of psychic cognition contrasts with the relativity and flux of bodily conditions. The picture I want to sketch here is one of the body as a dynamic center of unstable otherness and contrariety, the reconciliation of which only occurs via soul.

**Body and Soul in the Cosmic Life-Cycle.** Particularly thematic in Heraclitus, though not new within early Greek thought, is the relationship of the human and cosmic life-cycles. Heraclitus explicitly identifies the human composition as consisting of specific cosmic elements, where the poles of birth and death are occasioned by transformations or “turnings” of these elements:

> Fr. 36: For souls it is death to become water, for water it is death to become earth; out of earth water arises, out of water soul.

Under the assumption that the fragment’s reference to “soul” means human soul, this fragment suggests that when human death occurs, one’s soul becomes water. Other fragments (e.g. Fr. 117) second this view, holding that a healthy soul requires a dry, fiery aspect, viz. it suffers or is destroyed by wetness.

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309 Cf. Fr. 26: “A man strikes a light for himself in the night, when his sight is quenched.” Fr. 118: “A gleam of light is the dry soul, wisest and best.” Fr. 117: “A man when drunk is led by a beardless boy…not perceiving where he is going, having his soul moist.”

It’s unclear whether Heraclitus means that death is actually caused by soul becoming water, or whether soul’s transition to water happens during death or as a result of it. For instance in the case of violent death in battle, certainly the
Assuming Heraclitus identifies death with a passing of soul into water, how does this sketch render the human being at death? What about the no-longer-living corpse? One assumes that soul and body ultimately proceed into the procession of cosmic elements although along different paths. If so, what cosmic element does the corpse, no longer ensouled, belong to? The Greek funeral rite of burning suggests that body is an “exchange for fire.” This last suggestion is an idea echoed in Fr. 30.\textsuperscript{310}

An essential point, though delicate, is that Heraclitus depicts soul as separate from body, at least at the point of death. But separation here does not entail immateriality; it simply implies that soul is a separate, somewhat independent substance outside of its embodied occurrence. The scholarship is somewhat ambivalent regarding immortality of personal identity or transmigration of individual souls in Heraclitus.\textsuperscript{311}

dead comes from wounds. Does Heraclitus therefore mean that every instance of human death is followed by a return to water? An answer in the affirmative is reinforced by older Greek comprehensions of the psychical component of the human makeup as essentially liquid or housed in liquid. See Onians, \textit{The Origins of European Thought}, 108-09.

Conversely, the doxographical evidence gives equally strong support for the notion that human death can eventuate in soul returning to atmospheric air, water, or fire, with fire representing the best state of the soul at death; the most noble, fiery souls may return to the fires of the heavenly sphere. See Kahn, \textit{The Art and Thought of Heraclitus}, 252; G.S. Kirk, “Heraclitus and Death in Battle: Fragment 24D,” \textit{American Journal of Philology} 70 (1949): 389.

\textsuperscript{310} Fr. 30: “The ordering, the same for all, no god nor man has made, but it ever was and will be: fire everliving, kindled in measures, and in measures going out.”

\textsuperscript{311} Kahn, \textit{The Art and Thought of Heraclitus}, 251-53; Robinson, \textit{Heraclitus}, 188-89. Cf. Schofield, “Heraclitus’ Theory of Soul and its Antecedents,” 25-27. Schofield maintains that Heraclitus not only aims to combat the Homeric conception of the soul that survives bodily death and proceeds to Hades, but also the
The scholarly evidence suggests more strongly that soul in Heraclitus is simply a substance and no more, i.e., not an immaterial ghost like one sees in the instance of Plato’s conception from the *Phaedo*.\(^{312}\)

As for the status of soul before conception, Heraclitus does not specifically address how soul and body come to be co-instantiated – or how soul becomes embodied. Fr. 36 is the strongest evidence suggesting anything like the existence of soul prior to birth. This fragment speaks of the singular “soul” generically – from water arises soul, entailing that it’s not individual souls that arise from water, but simply the protosubstance soul.\(^{313}\) In this last case, one assumes that individual human conception comes sometime after this larger process of soul’s material origin.\(^{314}\) In other words, one must surmise that Heraclitus envisions the human body as a feature of differentiation only developed by an individual soul after the point of conception.

**Conclusions.** The judgment I wish to make regarding body in Heraclitus centers in how soul presents for him definite aspects of self-divergence. I suggest that what Heraclitus says about soul logically entails a differentiation of soul into forms or media of extension that we would today characterize as bodily. Thus, the embodied human soul in Heraclitus manifests determinate modes of extension and otherness that we can loosely characterize as physical. But the human lifetime equally

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Pythagorean cycle of rebirth according to which the mortality of the human soul is nothing but immortality.


\(^{313}\) On the other hand, there is reason to suppose that the watery origin of soul that Heraclitus thinks of is the male semen. This “watery” substance may, according to Fr. 36, be said to originate in earth, that is, food, or other earthly, solid parts of the body. See M.L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*, 151.

\(^{314}\) Regarding soul as the generating principle of bodily growth, see my discussion above in footnote 20.
comprises a “turn” or moment in the cosmic cycle of elements to which soul belongs. So one would want to conclude that the eventuation of embodied human life occurs for Heraclitus as a special instance of soul’s logos. Soul’s manifestation in human life would be one stop along its course of cosmic transformations. This period of stasis in soul’s cosmic sojourn is unique in that it’s where soul comes to contain a uniquely self-augmenting, differentiating power.  

315 Cf. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 237. “This expanding *logos* of the soul would be something quite different from the *logos* or measure of the sea, which remains constant despite its transformations.”
Works Cited


Luca Pitteloud: What is the model in Plato’s *Timaeus*?

0/ Abstract

What is exactly the nature of the model (*paradeigma*) in Plato’s *Timaeus*? I shall first make a few comments about the context in which the model is introduced in the *Timaeus* as a component of intelligible reality. Second, I would like to point out what is the exact extension of the intelligible in the *Timaeus* and what is precisely the model in such a context. Finally I want to suggest that the safest way to understand the model is as an optimal realization of a functionality. This, I shall argue, is how Plato wants us to understand Forms.

1/ a particular point of view

Plato’s *Timaeus* presents a discourse about the coming to be of the universe: the exact expression is “the birth of the universe” (τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως)\(^{316}\). The most important consequence of this statement is that the *Timaeus* is a dialogue about physics and not metaphysics. This means that the primary objective of the *Timaeus* is to develop an understanding of how things come to be in our world; this explicitly includes the world itself, as the question of its birth is asked. The *cosmos* is the result of a work, which a divine demiurge has undertaken by looking at a model (29d-30d). The action of this divine figure is described as the persuasion of necessity by his intelligence (47e-48a).

Before trying to characterize the model, it has to be said that this description of the universe is explicitly recognized as a problematic one for Plato. The *Timaeus*’ discourse about the origin of the becoming is neither qualified as a myth or as a rational discourse, but as an *eikós mythos*, which could be

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\(^{316}\) *Timaeus* 27a2-6.
rendered either by likely myth or reasonable story\textsuperscript{317}. If Plato 1) distinguishes between intelligible and sensible objects, 2) only applies the category of knowledge to perception of intelligible objects, and 3) offers a discourse about the \textit{cosmos}, hence the becoming, then, since intelligible objects don’t change and sensible do, it follows necessarily that the \textit{Timaeus} cannot pretend to represent a secure and certain (two adjectives exclusively exemplified by knowledge in Plato’s epistemology) description of reality. This is why Plato can only offer his reader the best possible account of \textit{physis}. But this account could always be revised and has to be analyzed with care. The \textit{Timaeus} does not provide us with a rational argumentation, since the \textit{cosmos} cannot be grasped with intelligence (\textit{noesis}). It is a dialogue which takes the point of view of the sensible and not of the intelligible. With regards to nature, what can be said of it is limited, but at least \textit{some} truth can be found. This is why the \textit{Timaeus} is said to be an \textit{eikôs mythos}. If Plato’s distinction between sensible objects and Forms is still present it the \textit{Timaeus}, this dialogue deals with particulars only. What can be said of the Forms in such a dialogue? The answer seems to be quite simple: nothing, for they are not the subject of the investigations. Since it is made clear by Plato that the \textit{Timaeus} is about \textit{physis} and not about metaphysics, Forms should not appear in this dialogue. But in fact, they do.

\textbf{2/ the intelligible and the model}

Not only Forms appear in the \textit{Timaeus}, but they are referred to in various ways. Now, it may seem surprising that in a dialogue about the \textit{cosmos}, Forms would be so present, but if we remember that in Plato’s metaphysics particulars are images or

\textsuperscript{317} For a recent debate about the possibility of linking this distinction between likely myth and reasonable story see Burnyeat (2005) and the answer of Mourelatos (2010).
imitations of Forms, then it seems clear that nature (cosmos), as a whole, is an imitation of all the totality of Forms. This point is tricky, and I shall return to it later, but for now, it has to be made explicit that a discourse about the cosmos will be de facto a discourse about the Forms, since sensible reality which participates in Forms is, in a sense, a manifestation of the intelligible. When we look at the nature, we look in fact at the intelligible appearing in a milieu. It is for this reason that Plato has to introduce the Receptacle as a topos in which Forms can appear.

As Forms are what are always stable and identical to themselves, they are what a demiurge would look at when he aims to fabricate an object: Forms are a model for demiurgic creation. This idea, which will guide the entire development of the Timaeus, is not without difficulty: why use a metaphor of fabrication when it comes to describe the origin of the universe? After all, it is not self-evident that a demiurge has to be

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318 In 27d5-28a1 a distinction is drawn between i) what is that which is always real and has no becoming (τί τὸ ὁν ἀεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον) and ii) what is that which is (always) becoming and is never real (τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν ἀεί, ὃν δὲ οὐδέποτε). This seems to be a distinction between the sensible, which changes and is in a perpetual state of becoming, and the intelligible, the realm of eternal Forms. In this way, Plato maintains here his metaphysical hypothesis, namely the distinction between two levels of reality. This hypothesis is assumed insofar as it helps to explain the coming to be of the universe. Forms are presented in the Timaeus but from a physical point of view. This will be clear when we turn to the nature of the model.

319 “Now whenever the maker of anything looks to that which is always unchanging and uses a model of that description in fashioning the form and the quality of his work, all that he thus accomplishes must be good.” Timaeus 26a6-8: «ὅτου μὲν οὖν ἃν ὃ δημιουργὸς πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ταύτα ἔχον βλέπων ἀεί, τοιούτῳ τινὶ προσχρώμενος παραδείγματι, τὴν ἰδέαν καὶ δύναμιν αὐτοῦ ἀπεργάζεται.»
hypothesized as an external cause of the becoming. Forms seem to play this role in middle dialogues in which the becoming was simply explained away as an imitation or an image of the intelligible. Why does Plato introduce a third metaphysical principle in the figur of the demiurge? His answer is that if there is a distinction between intelligible and sensible, and that the latter has to be identified with becoming\textsuperscript{320}, then it is necessary to suppose a cause at the origin of the sensible objects because they come to be and pass away. Thus, it can be claimed that all that becomes, becomes by the agency of some cause: for without a cause nothing can come to be. Here the becoming has to be understood both as a class of many individual objects and as a whole constituted by these objects. However, the whole cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts, otherwise the argument would not hold. If each sensible object needs a cause (let’s say, for instance, a table would need a carpenter), then Plato seems to assume that the world, not as a sum of every individual objects, but as an object considered somehow as having its own nature, would also need a cause. This is why the demiurge as an external cause has to be supposed\textsuperscript{321}. Once the metaphor of the demiurgic action is assumed, it is necessary to affirm that any demiurge must have in mind a model before making his work. If there are two kinds of being: 1) what is and never changes and 2) what changes and never is, the model must belong to one of the two classes. Why then choose what is and not what becomes? Plato’s answer is quite simple: for it will produce a better result. A creation according to being will be good. However, it has to be noted that Plato does not justify this claim. After all, it would not be absurd that a model for the sensible

\textsuperscript{320} It is clear that, in the Timaeus, becoming is understood both as each single individual object which changes, and as the whole set of these objects, namely the universe.

\textsuperscript{321} Note that in Plato’s mind, the World Soul cannot be this cause, since it seems that its role is to explain the change within the becoming and not its origin. Furthermore, the World Soul is an internal cause, since it is unified with the body of the world, both combined in what we call the cosmos.
could be a sensible entity and that precisely because the model and the creation would belong to the same ontological order, and so share proximity, the result would be best\textsuperscript{322}.

3/ what is the model?

If 1) the demiurge is looking at a model in order to fashion the cosmos, and 2) if the model has to belong to the realm of Forms, then the model of the cosmos to which the demiurge must look must be an intelligible reality. This argument seems safe enough, but Plato continues his developments with a problematic claim: the model of the universe is the Form of the Living Creature (30c-d). The fact that Plato posits here an ideal Living Creature might seem surprising since the other examples of Forms he gave are of different types. They are three types of Forms in Plato’s metaphysics: Forms of moral and aesthetic standards (Just, Beautiful), Forms of relatives (Small, Equal) and Forms of artifacts (Bed, Shuttle). It is a problem in itself to discuss and justify these different categories. and it has to be remembered that in the Timaeus Forms of Elements (Fire, Water) will also appear. Plato also asks in the Parmenides if the extension of Forms has to be limited (130d), and this seems to be a genuine difficulty he recognizes. It is important to note that the ideal Living Creature might after all not be too puzzling, especially in the context of Forms of artifacts\textsuperscript{323}. Why then is the

\textsuperscript{322} For instance, the demiurge would have to replicate the cosmos in looking at another cosmos. This might seem absurd, but at least we should ask if there is a reason to suppose that the result would be worse than if the model was some kind of an intelligible Form.

\textsuperscript{323} Without assuming the existence of such Forms. The hypothesis of Forms of artifacts constitutes such a problem in Plato’s metaphysics that Aristotle believed that Plato could not be serious in assuming such Forms. See Metaphysics 1.9.991b6-7, 13.5.1080a4-6. Let’s simply recall that the description of the coming to be of the universe with the action of a demiurgic
Form of the Universe identified with an ideal Living Creature?
Plato is very clear about that:

a/ the demiurge is good

b/ the result of his work has to be good

c/ a whole, or any other complex entity, can only be good if it possesses intellect (noûs)

d/ intellect is a part of the soul

→ i) the creation of the demiurge has to possess a soul

But

1/ what possesses a soul, also possesses a body

→ ii) the world is a living creature constituted by a soul and a body if it has to be good

This is a straightforward deduction, which takes place within the demiurge’s mind (30b). The last step of this reasoning is the following:

e/ if there exists a particular x, there has to be a corresponding Form F of x\(^{324}\) (if there are beds, there must be a Form of Bed)

→ iii) there is a Form for the cosmos understood as a living creature, hence there is an ideal Living Creature.

Plato can conclude:

character is absolutely compatible with the development of Book X of the *Republic*, 596a-597e, where a Demiurge is introduced in the context of the Forms of artifacts. In both cases, we have a description in which an external cause (the demiurge of a bed or of the cosmos) will realize its work in looking at a model (the Form of Bed or the Form of the Universe).

\(^{324}\) This claim can be found in 51b7-c5.
If it is right to suppose that for any $x$, it is necessary to suppose the existence of a Form $F$, then in each case of such configuration, we may have many different particulars $x$, which will participate in the Form $F$. So then, why wouldn't we have a variety of living creatures participating in the intelligible Living Creature? In other words, why is the world unique? The argument does not rule out the possibility of a multiplicity of cosmoi. However, it is clear that the demiurge only produces one universe, because it is the best option\textsuperscript{325} according to his reasoning: 2) the development of Plato’s argumentation seems to contradict the way he usually describes Forms. As Forms are non-dependent abstract entities, every human should aspire to recollect them when he aims to access knowledge of reality, it is assumed that Forms and particulars possess a whole range of completely different properties. In this way, Forms are said to be eternal nonphysical entities, whereas particulars are objects of perception. If one wants to know what the Form of, for instance, Man is, if such a Form were to exist, one should not imagine an everlasting perfect human being\textsuperscript{326}. Forms belong to another level of reality and cannot be described, qualified or referred to in using the categories of the spatiotemporal reality. Then, it would be a mistake to start from the sensible properties in order to infer the characteristics of the Form in question. Nevertheless, this is precisely what Plato does here when it comes to the Form of the Universe. Indeed, calling it an ideal Living Creature implies that the properties of the cosmos, as a living creature constituted by a soul and a body, are the decisive characteristics which have to be taken into consideration in qualifying the intelligible corresponding Form. This is the reason Plato focuses on the living aspect of the cosmos. All this argumentation, in other words, seems to be brought about by the fact that the universe is itself a living creature. As it would be absurd to think of the Form of Man as a concrete exemplar of

\textsuperscript{325} Plato feels the need to add that the demiurge could not produce a second world since he has used all the stuff available for his creation and there is nothing left outside the cosmos (33a).

\textsuperscript{326} See for a defense of this view Grabowski (2008).
a man (a kind of a superman), since the Form and the particulars would belong to the same ontological category\textsuperscript{327}, then the ideal Living Creature cannot be a kind of super-animal containing in itself in a very puzzling way, all the different species\textsuperscript{328}. Indeed, Plato attributes different properties to the Form of Living Creature: i/ it contains in itself all the intelligible creatures, as parts of a whole, ii/ it is complete and iii/ it is good. All these properties are given in order to understand what this Form is. Now, there are two ways of understanding what Forms are and, we shall argue, only one is correct.

Forms are \textit{paradeigmata}: this means they have to be seen as models. A model can be understood in two different ways. It can be an original as in a case of an image of an object. Forms would be in this way models reflected into a mirror and their images would be the particulars. This is a visual representation of the relationship between Forms and particulars that Plato himself uses in the \textit{Timaeus} at 48c-52d, where he describes the Receptacle as a sort of mirror. However, it should be noted that it is \textit{only} a metaphor and as such it cannot be used in an argument that would represent Forms as \textit{super-concrete} exemplars. This metaphor is rather introduced in order to explain a \textit{relationship} between two entities (Forms and particulars) and not their respective natures. This is why it might not be absurd to understand \textit{paradeigmata} as optimal realizations of functionalities. Think of the example of a bed: what is the model of a bed for a carpenter? Is this another physical bed? It is not clear that the answer to this question should be positive or negative. The model could be another bed, but it also could be a scale model, which, it is the fundamental point, need not be a physical entity. For instance, a model can be

\textsuperscript{327} Similarly it is wrong to compare Forms with ideal concrete exemplars. They are not paradigms like a concrete standard meter is with regards to the many concrete exemplifications of it. Forms and particulars cannot belong to the same ontological category.

\textsuperscript{328} As it was admitted by some Neo-Platonist: see Broadie (2004).
a catalog of prescriptions, which are necessary in order to achieve the fabrication of an object. For a bed, the most important prescription would be to possess the ability of being an object human beings could sleep in. Each particular object which would satisfy this criterion would be called “a bed”, no matter if it has some physical figure which makes it similar to what we, nowadays, call a bed. In this way, if a functionalist vision of reality is endorsed, models of concrete objects would necessarily be optimal realizations of certain functions. Without any doubt this is a possible way to understand the concept of paradeigma, but is it possible that Plato conceive such an alternative when he speaks of the ideal Living Creature in the Timaeus?329

Imagine that engineers working on the A380 airbus would take as a paradigm a scale model of such an aircraft. Then, we could ask, what would be the difference between such a mode of construction and a simple duplication of a plane, copying another instance of an A380. A scale model is after all a sort of a replica of an airbus. This would certainly not seem the correct way of working: if engineers were to produce a simple copy of another aircraft, no matter the size and the complexities of its

329 If we look at the properties of the model, is seems that the functionalist approach is not only compatible with such characteristics, but, it may be added, is the only viable option. As we have argued, for Plato, Forms and particulars belongs to two different ontological categories. For this reason, Forms cannot have any of the sensible properties of their instances. For example, the Form of Living Creature will not have the property of being alive. This property can only be attributed to the cosmos itself, but not to a Form, otherwise both would share the same sensible property insomuch as “to be alive” is a sensible characteristic. Then, if a model has to be radically different from its exemplifications, the relationship between Forms and particulars cannot be the same as the one between a physical replica of a bed, serving as a model, and some other physical beds, precisely because they would share the same ontological status.
framework, one would argue that the replica is not a proper plane. Imagine, someone informs the passengers about the way the airbus they are about to embark has been constructed, it would not seem surprising that the most reasonable of them would refuse to get in it. Furthermore, if the pilots were informed that this aircraft is merely a copy, even a very detailed and precisely fashioned one, no doubt they would not enter into the cockpit. Would such reaction be legitimate? Of course it would, for the simple reason that what they have in front of them is not really an Airbus A380, it is only a copy of one. What is the criterion, which could allow such an argument? Well it is not an Airbus because it might not be able to fly since as it has not been constructed as an exemplification of a functionality. This plane may not work or function, since its objective was to replicate (superficially or not) another plane and not, one could say, to embody the function that is expressed by the phrase “to be an Airbus A380”\textsuperscript{330}. The important point to keep in mind is that there is a close link between “to be good” and “to function”. If an object \( x \) functions, then it can be qualified as a good \( x \). Thus functionality justifies goodness. This might be Plato’s point in the \textit{Timaeus}. Consequently, we shall argue that the properties, which are found in the model, are best captured if the model is understood in terms of functionality. The ideal Living Creature, represented as an ideal function, has to be complete and good precisely because, in order to be a model, nothing can be missing in it, and as the \textit{cosmos} has, up to a certain extent, a degree of goodness, this very Form has to be good. In this way, the fact that the intelligible Living Creature is presented as a whole, constituted by the different individual intelligible living species, becomes clear: those parts are parts of a function (the function of being a living creature) and can be divided by various sub-functionalities as, for example, “to be a human being”. It follows that the Form of Man is not some Superman, but the function of being human, which can be defined as: \textit{a being in which a soul can be accommodated as a principle}. The

\textsuperscript{330} And which can be expressed in a catalog of written prescriptions or indications with regards to different sub-functionalities.
Demiurge, when he fabricates human beings (40d-47e) has to look at an ideal function and he decides then the best way to make them, as creatures, which will be rational. In this sense, human beings must have a body and a soul, and, most importantly, the soul has to be able to act upon and guide the body. This explains why the soul is divided and allocated to different parts of the human body.

If this view is correct, it presents an important advantage: Plato can use Forms as objective principles of explanation of the becoming. Forms explain why $x$ are $F$. This seems obvious when it comes to the Form of Man. However might this be more complicated concerning values? How can Plato justify that some things just are beautiful and that they won’t, as Protagoras would certainly affirm, appear beautiful for some people and ugly for others? There is only one option, I would suggest, to justify objectively values, namely identifying Forms as ideal functionalities. This might seem absurd, but if we remember the definition that Plato gives of the Form of Justice in the Republic (Book IV, 434c), it might help make sense of my claim. A just $x$ (a city or a human being) is just, according to the Republic, if and only if it functions: a just city would be a city in which each social body occupies the optimal position in order to make the city work. If philosophers have to be the dominant class (473d), it is only because they can guarantee that a harmonious city will be preserved. The same line can be adopted for human beings: when reason guides the soul, then human beings will be good and just. They will live happy lives, plausibly in being parts of a community, in other words, by being optimal functioning creatures, they will make a polis function\textsuperscript{331}.

\textsuperscript{331} Finally the Timaeus will end up describing the four elements in terms of geometrical properties (53b-61c). The Fire itself will be reduced to certain mathematical properties, which are exemplified in the sensible realities by twenty four scalene triangles (58c-d). The mathematical structure of reality is a characteristic of sensible objects and not of Forms. Mathematics indeed is a scientific translation of the intelligible but should
not be identified with it. One could ask the following question: if
Forms are optimal functions, how can this alternative be
understood when applied to the four elements? It is certainly
easy to pin down what is the functionality of a city, or of a bed,
or even of a man, but what about fire? And more precisely, how
can the model of fire be defined if its mathematical
exemplification in terms of triangles is merely a scientific
translation of the intelligible? We shall conclude by
remembering the status of the Timaeus as an eikōs mythos.
Some matters, as the question of the model of the elements, are
more difficult to investigate than others and satisfying answers
cannot really be given. This is precisely what Plato recognizes in
the following lines:

“This we assume as the first beginning of fire and of the other
bodies, following the account which combines likelihood with
necessity: the principles (archai) yet more remote than these are
known to Heaven and to such men as Heaven favours.”

(The Timaeus 53d4-7: «ταύτην δὴ πυρὸς ἁρχὴν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων
σωμάτων ὑποτιθέμεθα κατὰ τὸν μετ’ ἀνάγκης εἰκότα λόγον
πορευόμενον· τάς δ’ ἐπὶ τούτων ἁρχὰς ἀνωθέν θεός ὀιδέν καὶ
ἄνδρῶν ὃς ἂν ἔκεινοφιλὸς ἤν.»)
The archai mentioned here can probably be identified with the
model of the universe. Its mathematical expression can only
manifest it but will never be identified to it. If this idea is
correct, then it clearly becomes impossible to identify the model
with any sort of concrete paradigm, whether an everlasting man
or a Living Creature. We should say goodbye to Superman and,
more importantly, to Super Living Creature.
3/ references


Jeffery Pretti: Quantifying Qualifiers; Restricting Lehrer’s Coherence Theory of Justification

In “Knowledge” Keith Lehrer proposes a classic coherence theory of epistemic justification. Within his account of epistemic justification, he attempts to remove reliance from quantitative measures of justification. However, implications of his view arise that prove not only a reliance on quantitative measures, but the acceptance of a very low level of quantitative probability as sufficient for a belief to be completely justified. To rectify the low probabilities necessary for a belief to be completely justified within his theory, further restrictions must be implemented. In the course of this paper, I will argue for a handful of small revisions to his account, but the main divergence I propose is to simply place modal restrictions on the type of beliefs that may be completely justified. Admittedly, the resulting theory will be more restrictive of completely justified beliefs, but I also argue that this will not be detrimental to our ordinary and everyday types of knowledge claims.

For Lehrer, a completely justified belief must be supported only by the other beliefs within the agent’s corrected doxastic system of beliefs. While he does not refuse the agent the right to have absurd beliefs or even beliefs that simply make the agent feel better, all beliefs that exist within this corrected doxastic system must be beliefs “in an impartial and disinterested search for truth that sustain justification aimed at veracity” (1978b, p. 291) Our primary interest, then, is for those beliefs intended to be used in a more scientific approach to understanding the world around us). Within this corrected doxastic system, then, the level of justification given to a certain belief is based merely on that belief’s probability of being true. However, since we generally claim knowledge for many beliefs which do not have a probability equal to one, a standard must be set for the probability of a completely justified belief. But as we also claim knowledge in a variety of circumstances, no minimum level of probability may be universally appropriate. So the question, here, is “how do we determine, within a given context, what level of probability is sufficient for knowledge?” In an attempt to resolve this problem, Lehrer places one belief
against another to qualitatively determine which has a greater probability of being true.

Of course, not all the beliefs held within an agent's corrected doxastic system may be practically pitted against a belief in question. First, only those beliefs which are relevant to the belief in question, q, should be considered; these comprise the epistemic field for the agent (1978b, p. 297). Further, only those beliefs within the epistemic field which are negatively relevant to the probability of q must be considered as competing beliefs. For a belief, r, to be negatively relevant is to say that if r is true, the probability of q being true decreases; p(q,r) < p(q). Finally, Lehrer provides partitions within the epistemic field such that beliefs do not acquire a higher level of negative relevance through irrelevant disjunctions. As such, a competitor to q must be strongly negatively relevant; a disjunction is not strongly negatively relevant to q when the assumption of any subset of that disjunction, d, does not alter the probability of q; p(q,d) = p(q). In other words, here, we find that (p ∨ d) is not a relevant competitor to q since the probability of q, given the disjunct d, is equal to the probability of q alone. This lays the foundation for a completely justified belief:

(cj) S is completely justified in believing that p if and only if, within the corrected doxastic system of S, p is believed to have a better chance of being true than the denial of p or any other statement that competes with p. (1978a, p. 198)

Unfortunately, Lehrer must still appeal to mathematical probability theory to demonstrate how a belief may "have a better chance of being true." To spare the reader unnecessary computations, let us assume that 1) each belief contains a value specific to the agent in achieving either a truth or falsity, and 2) that Lehrer's own computations of the expected value of a belief
are correct. Thus, we arrive at the expected value of some belief, \( q \), as equal to the probability of \( q \) minus the probability of the greatest competitor to \( q \), noted as \( \bar{q} \); or, in short order, 
\[ e(q) = p(q) - p(\bar{q}). \]
For a belief to be completely justified it must have a positive expected value; put alternatively, it must have a higher probability than its strongest competing belief.

Of course, given Lehrer’s own assumption that each belief contains a level of probability specific to the agent, the question still remains as to how that probability is, at least sometimes, sufficient of knowledge claims. Lehrer fails to make explicit that the strongest negatively relevant belief is the cumulative effect of all independent, competing propositions compiled together as a disjunction. He comes close to stating this in proposing his attribution restriction, wherein he offers us the example of the urn full of marbles, 60% of which are black. (1978b, p. 298) In this example, he states that the belief that there are marbles in the urn that are not black \( \neg b \) has a higher probability than the belief that a randomly selected marble is black \( b \); \( p(\neg b) = 1 \) whereas \( p(b) = .6 \) Here, though, our belief in pulling a black marble does not have a positive expected value and, hence, it is not completely justified. Alternatively, as Lehrer puts it in his attribution restriction, one is “not completely justified in believing that a randomly selected member of a class has a certain attribute unless it is more probable that the member in question has that attribute than that there are members of the class not having that attribute.” (ibid.)

If the reader is interested, the following justifies these assumptions; Let \( \bar{vt}(q) \) be the value of \( S \) believing that \( q \) when it is true that \( q \) and \( \bar{vf}(q) \) be the value of \( S \) believing that \( q \) when it is false that \( q \). Thus, according to Lehrer, if we note probability as ‘\( p \)’, and the expected value of \( q \), \( e(q) \), we have 
\[ e(q) = p(q)\bar{vt}(q) + p(\neg q)\bar{vf}(q). \]
Since the occasions on which \( S \) may believe \( q \) yet \( q \) is false are those occasions on which the negatively relevant beliefs are true, \( \bar{vf}(q) = -p(\bar{q}) \). And, since a belief is either true or false, leading to a probability of 1, \( \bar{vt}(q) = 1 - p(q) \). When these are substituted into the previous equation, we arrive at 
\[ e(q) = p(q)(1-p(\bar{q})) + ((1-p(q))(p(q))). \]
Following cancellations, we arrive at 
\[ e(q) = p(q) - p(q^*). \]
However, if the proposition that “there are members of the class not having that attribute” is understood to simply mean that there are other possibilities besides a black marble being chosen, unexamined existential problems arise. Though Lehrer claims that his perceptual belief of a red apple is completely justified, the *attribution restriction* appears to contradict this claim. Consider assigning the attribute in question to “is a red apple” and the class of members as the set of all possible causes eliciting the perception of a red apple. Since there remain undefeated skeptical hypotheses which entail the perception of a red apple—e.g. seeing a wax apple on the table—it follows that the belief that there are non-red-apples in our metaphorical “perception-of-a-red-apple-urn” has a probability equal to 1. Thus, contrary to Lehrer’s claim, his attribution requirement prevents the agent from being completely justified in the perceptual belief of a red apple or, for that matter, any everyday belief for which undefeated skeptical hypothesis exist—and, just as importantly, it doesn’t matter how low the probability of the skeptical belief being true is: Just so long as the probability that there are such skeptical hypotheses remains, the attribution restriction seems to entail that the competing belief has a probability of 1 and, hence, the expected value of our everyday beliefs would be negative. If I am a veracious inquirer who has taken an epistemology course with these skeptical hypotheses within my epistemic field, the probability that it is a red apple causing my perception is necessarily less than 1. Thus, it cannot be greater than the probability that there are members in the class without this attribute.
disjunction. As an example, let us alter Lehrer’s urn such that it contains 40% black marbles (b), and 20% yellow (y), 20% red (r), and 20% green (g) marbles (y, r, and g, respectively). This example allows us to see that the strongest competing belief to drawing a black marble cannot simply be that one has drawn a green marble (mathematically, the expected value of such a belief would be .6 - .2, which would, of course, give us a positive expected value). Instead, Lehrer’s objective to account for members of a class without a chosen attribute is accomplished with the cumulative disjunction of all non-black colors, or p(y v r v g), as the strongest competing belief. Unsurprisingly, then, we find that we cannot reasonably expect to draw a black marble and, more to the point, that our belief that we will draw a black marble is not completely justified within our corrected doxastic system.

While the 40% probability of drawing a black marble is unsurprisingly not completely justified, what is surprising is just how low a level of probability we need to classify a belief as complete justification—which, again, is sufficient for a knowledge claim. Consider pushing this thought experiment a bit further by altering our analogy from marbles in an urn to a single lottery ticket amongst 1,000 equiprobable tickets, wherein there is exactly one winner. The belief that my ticket will win, t₁, is in competition with the belief that my friend’s ticket will win, t₂. Though t₂ a competing belief to t₁, both t₁ and t₂ have the same probability of being true; specifically, .001. As such, the strongest competing belief is not that any individual ticket will win, but the disjunction (t₂ v t₃ v ... v t₁₀₀₀) with the probability .999. Thus, t₁ is not completely justified. However,

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334 For mathematical simplicity, I shall describe this problem with winning tickets as opposed to the common paradox of losing tickets. However, note that by negating the following beliefs, the greater-than sign is reversed. After negating the disjunctions and driving the negation in using DeMorgan’s, it is possible to argue this case with losing tickets. However, as losing tickets would be mathematical taxing for both the author and the reader, I have utilized the winning lottery ticket as a clear example.
what of the disjunctive belief "Either $t_1 \lor t_2 \lor \ldots \lor t_{501}$ will win" which has a probability of .501? When the agent's reasoning about the strongest competing belief leads him to the proposition that "Either $t_{502} \lor t_{503} \lor \ldots \lor t_{1000}$ will win" he will have accounted for every possibility distinct from his original belief. As the probability of $q = .501$ while the probability of $q^* = .499$, it appears that—if the rejection of the attribution restriction is conceded—the belief that one of the first 501 tickets of the lottery will win is completely justified.335

Before I proceed, let me address a concern on whether the belief that "Either $t_{502} \lor t_{503} \lor \ldots \lor t_{1000}$" is actually the strongest competing belief to $q$. Perhaps the strongest competing belief to $q$ in this example would be the exhaustively complete disjunction that "Either $t_1 \lor t_2 \lor \ldots \lor t_{1000}$." So, why shouldn't we simply use an exhaustive disjunction? Well, the problem is that this results in the same existential problem as the attribution restriction. Following this reasoning, for any belief, $j$, (such as, "there is a red apple in front of me") which has any negatively relevant alternatives, $k$, (e.g. "there is a red wax apple in front of me") the exhaustive competing belief would be that $j \lor k$. Where $k$ expresses the disjunction of all negatively relevant alternatives to $j$, the probability of $j \lor k$ is equal to 1 whereas the probability of $j$ must be < 1. As such, no belief that has negatively relevant alternatives may be completely justified. As seen in our metaphorical perception-of-a-red-apple-urn, this includes the entirety of our ordinary knowledge claims—at least those that contain skeptical hypotheses.

335 An issue of consistency arises here. As "Either $t_2 \lor t_3 \lor \ldots \lor t_{502}$", "Either $t_3 \lor t_4 \lor \ldots \lor t_{503}$", etc. are all completely justified, the set of all 501 potential ticket combinations would not be consistent once the belief that "Either $t_{502} \lor t_{503} \lor \ldots \lor t_1 \lor t_2$" is incorporated into the set. While each belief is, independently, consistent with every other belief of this sort, as a set they derive an inconsistency. This problem will be further address as I argue for a modal restriction below.
Okay, but why shouldn’t we use an almost exhaustive disjunction? For example, the belief that "t₂ v t₃ v...v t₁₀₀₀," does not result in an exhaustively complete set of disjuncts. Hence, it does not fall victim to the same existential problem as above. Of course, while no disjunct within this competing belief is irrelevant to q, it may be noted that several disjuncts, namely t₂ thru t₅₀₁, are positively relevant to q; for example, the probability of q given t₂ is actually equal to 1. In other words, this latter disjunction contains disjuncts that actually entail q. In fact, it’s quite the pyrrhic victory if this latter disjunct counts as a competing belief: the probability of q being true even given the truth of the latter disjunct is actually greater than .5, which is better than even odds! While Lehrer does not explicitly address the issue of a belief in question, q, being a disjunction, I contend they require what I term the Competing-Entailment Restriction (CER); that "no disjunct of q may entail q.

To make this point more clearly, let’s consider an example with simpler mathematics: There exists within the agent’s corrected doxastic system—our metaphorical urn, here—a justified belief, q, with the disjuncts m and n, each with a probability of .3. The propositions s and t are in competition with q, each with a probability of .2. By adding either m or n in disjunction with s v t as above, this new competing belief is now only slightly negatively relevant to q but its probability is much higher. Again, the result seems to be a Pyrrhic victory for the competing belief. The success is offset by a potentially staggering loss; in fact, there exists a 42% chance that if the competing belief is true that q is true as well! However, the reader may consider any victory a success in competition with q, even if that victory might cause q to be true, as well. As such, the reader need not agree with my proposal that CER be incorporated into a coherence account of justification. I have

336 This belief could have as few disjuncts in common with q as necessary so long as its probability is greater or equal to q. Consider that "Either t₁₄₉₉ v t₁₅₀₀ v...v t₁₈₀₆."  
337 p(m) = .3 while p(m v s v t) = .7; p(m v s v t) = .42. 
338 If the reader is not convinced by the winning lottery ticket example, a mathematically painless example shall suffice to
merely utilized the winning lottery ticket example to show what level of quantitative probability Lehrer is willing to accept as sufficient for a completely justified belief; namely, \( p > .5 \).

Oddly enough, Lehrer nearly admits as much, stating that, “recent work in the theory of subjective probability suggests that under certain conditions we may derive a quantitative measure of subjective probability from the comparative beliefs, but our coherence theory of justification will assume no more than comparisons.” (1978b, p. 293) In other words, although Lehrer utilizes only qualitative comparisons, they must still rely on underlying quantified probabilities. So, were an omniscience being to assess a set of beliefs, each proposition would receive an exact numerical probability. And while we are finite beings, our comparisons are also, ultimately, based merely on approximations of an actual numerical value. Thus, even if we were to restrict Lehrer's account such that a belief must exhibit a sufficiently stronger probability than .501, the reliance on quantified probabilities remains arbitrary and, as such, a problem.

Fortunately, a solution presents itself within Lehrer's own theory. Though any belief, \( q \), retains the same quantitative probability of being true even after it has undergone Lehrer's comparison, the process is not in vain. The end result is that a new belief regarding the expected value of \( q \) is attained and incorporated into the agent's corrected doxastic system. This new expected value belief, being certain within the agent's corrected doxastic system, removes any reliance on an arbitrary numerical value of probability. In fact, the non-arbitrary probability of 1—that is, the "sticking point" at the end of the demonstration of the low minimum of probability necessarily for a belief to be completely justified. Statistically, the probability that my unborn child will be a boy is slightly higher than that it will be a girl. Thus, if the argument against the attribution restriction is conceded, I am completely justified that my unborn child will be boy. While the actual probability of having a boy may be around .56, the reader can imagine a binary choice in which one option is only barely above .50. This leads us to the minimum probability being \( p > .5 \).
probability spectrum—allows the agent useful knowledge; namely, that \( q \) is more probable than \( q^* \). As a result, I propose the further restriction that a belief may be completely justified if, and only if, it is necessary relative the agent’s corrected doxastic system.

In fact, there exist two types of necessary beliefs relative to the agent’s corrected set; beliefs about the expected value of a belief—or modally restricted beliefs—as above, and beliefs which have no other competing beliefs other than their own negation. In the first case, at any time, \( t \), the agent’s set of corrected beliefs either supports or refutes this expected value. If the expected value belief becomes inconsistent due to further beliefs having been incorporated into the agent’s doxastic set by \( t^1 \), then it should be refuted. In the lottery example above, it should be noted that the set of all the different combinations of 501 winning ticket possibilities is inconsistent. This is a consequence of the Competing-Entailment Restriction I have argued as a necessary addition given the potential for a belief, \( q \), which exists in the form of a disjunction. But I am not arguing that it be accepted alone. After incorporating the further modal restriction of necessity on completely justified beliefs, we no longer have the problem of inconsistency. As an agent is completely justified that any combination of 501 or more tickets most likely contains the winning ticket, all of these beliefs are true under any interpretation.\(^{339}\) And, so long as the agent’s system of beliefs continues to support the calculated expected value of \( q \) (i.e. no beliefs that an outlying ticket has won the lottery are formed at time, \( t \)), \( q \) remains necessary in relation to the agent’s corrected doxastic system. Similar formulations would follow for our everyday beliefs, as well.

\(^{339}\) Even if \( t_{745} \) were to win, without the belief derived from this information, it is still most probable that tickets 1 thru 501 should have won. All combinations remain completely justified because what actually obtains does not alter the truth value of a probabilistic statement.
The second type of necessary belief is that which has no competing beliefs other than its own negation. Up until this point, the examples I have utilized have all assumed the agent accounted for skeptical alternatives. But, as we all have experienced when talking with friends and loved-ones, many agents do not have beliefs regarding skeptical alternatives. As such, they have no competing beliefs to simple propositions such as "I see a red apple in front of me." Thus, as the expected value of these beliefs without opposition equals 1, they remain completely justified. Alternatively, some individuals simply remain unaware of the mathematical near-impossibility of winning the lottery. Perhaps they could not adequately be characterized as individuals "in an impartial and disinterested search for truth," but regardless, they might still hold an undefeated belief that they will, in fact, win the lottery this time around.

Prima facie, it may appear as though the cost of restricting Lehrer's liberal criteria for complete justification results in an infallible, impractical, and counterintuitive theory for epistemic justification leading to knowledge of mere probabilities. First, it does not follow that this modal restriction results in an infallibilist account of justification. While the objective of the corrected doxastic system is a strong correlation with the actual state of the world, it is not a set of true propositions about the state of the world. Hence, the completely justified beliefs, while necessary within the doxastic set, are merely possible to the actual state of the world. And this possibility is only in-so-far as the individual beliefs from which it is formed are strongly correlated with the actual world. In essence, then, it is still a fallible justification towards the actual state of the world.

The second objection is that the resulting necessity of a completely justified belief, and the knowledge derived from that

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340 Technically, this may also be viewed as an expected value belief. For any belief, \( q \), which has no competing beliefs, the expected value of \( q \) is equal to one; \( e(q) = 1 \). As this is equivalent to simply stating that \( q \), \( q \) alone suffices to clearly demonstrate the utility of the necessity requirement.
justification, gives us an impractical form of epistemic justification. I contend there are two substantial reasons to believe this form of justification is beneficial for the agent. First, it provides the agent with everyday knowledge such that she may operate in the world. Though it is fallible, the agent may act in approximations to what she is completely justified in holding as most probable in the actual world. Further, if the agent is a veracious inquirer, as her corrected doxastic system gains refined semblance to the actual world, her completely justified beliefs will likewise gain accuracy to the actual world.

The second practical benefit of this restriction is an inherent defense against the skeptic. As seen above with the agent fortunate enough to have no skeptical beliefs, she may be completely justified in her belief that “there is a black eraser in front of me” simply because she has no beliefs regarding skeptical alternatives to there actually being a black eraser in front of her. As soon as the skeptic presents a suitable hypothesis, though, the agent would be correct in denying the previous belief’s status as completely justified. However, even after a suitable skeptical hypothesis is presented, the agent is still in a practical doxastic position. This is because, in the resulting expected value belief that “It is exceedingly more probable that there is a black eraser in front of me rather than that my brain, floating in a vat of nutrients, is stimulated to perceive a black eraser,” she is not denying the remote skeptical hypotheses explaining her perception. Instead, she has determined that they are insignificantly likely in comparison to there actually being a black eraser in front of her and, thus, this strength of epistemic justification is still quite practical.

Finally, the probabilistic form of justification may strike the reader as counterintuitive. There is an understandable Moorean desire for an agent to claim he is completely justified that he has hands. As above, if the agent is unaware of the skeptical alternatives to having hands, or if the context of the conversation allows that he may restrict his epistemic field to be insensitive to those skeptical hypotheses, he would then be completely justified in claiming he has hands. Yet when the skeptical hypotheses cannot be properly ignored, the agent—as a veracious inquirer—must deny his certainty of having hands.
Still, a virtue of the probabilistic account of justification can be seen in that, since it is still exceedingly probable that he has hands, he may still operate in the world as though he has such hands. In essence, a belief may be completely justified, unjustified, or merely probabilistically justified depending on the beliefs held within his corrected doxastic system and, further, within the epistemic field dictated by the situation in which he finds himself.

If the reader is a skeptic, you may embrace the attribution requirement which I have argued against. And, though I feel the CER principle is necessary to account for disjunctive beliefs, it does not play a significant role in my further argument towards removing a reliance on quantitative measures from a coherence account of epistemic justification. However, I believe the modal restriction of necessity on a completely justified belief is essential in advancing Lehrer's coherence account of justification. In confining complete justification to only those beliefs with a probability equal to 1, it may first appears as though our everyday knowledge claims are also confined. However, I contend the intuitive appeal added to Lehrer’s theory actually increases the intuitive appeal for our everyday perception of knowledge.

Bibliography


An autonomous\textsuperscript{341} individual is self-governing. Autonomous people think for themselves, decide for themselves, and choose what direction they want their life to take. This is in stark contrast to our childhood, however, wherein our decisions, direction in life, and value system are chosen for us. How, then, does one \textit{become} an autonomous agent? Some theories of autonomy account for this change through the development of critical reflection – the internal capacity to understand, analyze, and evaluate a situation or issue. Critical reflection, in this sense, is a necessary component in assuring that one's thoughts, decisions, and actions are one's own and are not motivated by external influences. Other accounts of autonomy find this capacity lacking in its failure to accommodate the role that socialization plays in shaping one's desires, beliefs, and values. For the sake of this discussion, I wish to assume that personal autonomy can be accounted for by the interplay of one's critical reflection and the effects of socialization upon one's inner affectations. Thus, as I wish to understand it, this entails that the autonomous agent must act in accordance with their inner affectations, and that this system may result, wholly or in part, from external influences. A more detailed account will be developed as we move forward. Proceeding from this standpoint will shed light on whether or not the move from non-autonomous to autonomous behavior can be accounted for from a social and internal perspective. That is, can autonomous behavior be \textit{triggered}\textsuperscript{342} by some integration of critical reflection and socialization? Furthermore,

\textsuperscript{341} Here and elsewhere I use the word autonomy to refer to personal autonomy.

\textsuperscript{342} It should be noted that the triggering of autonomous behavior may mark the switch from completely non-autonomous behavior, as the word most obviously implies, but also an enhancement of autonomous behavior in already autonomous individuals. Enhancement, as used in this paper, refers to an increase of autonomous actions within the scope of one's own system of values.
if this argument obtains, then we can assume that any account of personal autonomy explained in terms of the integration of social and internal influences will involve a trigger of the sort I propose here. To accomplish this task I wish to explore the role that cooperative efforts play in triggering autonomous behavior.

The Role of Cooperation

There are many different types of cooperative behavior, but it does not appear that anything inherent in cooperation alone triggers autonomous behavior. After all, many people partake in cooperative activities every day, and yet we cannot readily admit they are all autonomous agents. If an individual’s inner affectations are sufficiently subverted by external forces - say due to inculcation - or their actions are not willfully performed - say due to coercion - then they are non-autonomous agents in the relevant situation regardless of what sorts of activities they engage in. With this in mind, I wish to explore whether or not there is some other aspect or experience in cooperative activities that triggers autonomous behavior beyond mere cooperation.

At its base, cooperation is an interpersonal activity. It may involve shared activity oriented towards some common end, such as any team sport. Cooperation may also be defined in terms of negative freedom\(^{343}\) – that is, not interfering with others in the pursuit of their goals – and the sort of shared activity this entails. We may speak of simple things, like staying to one side of the sidewalk on a crowded street so that others may freely pass moving in the opposite direction, as one token of this type of cooperation. Also, cooperation may only involve shared activity between people with no defined end; for example, when individuals come to live together as roommates. It may be objected that this sort of cooperation is toward a common goal: to live amicably together or maintain a household. However, these goals arise in order to sustain the cooperative effort – in this case living together – rather than

providing the primary motivation for cooperation. When people come to live together, there need not be any primary motivation or goal for doing so. Cooperative efforts need not be aimed at any one particular end, though they may pursue certain subsidiary goals or use individual means to maintain cooperation without losing their status as a cooperative activity.

In all of the above forms an individual may cooperate without ever being triggered to think for oneself or critically reflect upon one’s held values. However, if in the course of cooperation one comes to be acquainted with a new value system through a clashing of one’s system with another’s, such an experience could trigger autonomous behavior. A clashing of value systems involves the interaction of people with differences in their held beliefs, values, or preferences. This does not imply that such systems must be contradictory or even largely in conflict. They merely must have differences that are expressed in the resulting actions the opposing parties choose to take. For example, one’s system of value, say in a matter of taste, may lead them to choose apple pie, while leading another to choose pecan pie. Even in trivial matters, such as this, the two individuals’ value systems have come to clash.

The sort of clashing involved in cooperative activities is clearly different than what we intuitively think of as a clash. When two value systems come into contact outside the boundaries of cooperation, no shared goal or activity frames the relationship of the individuals. Without any shared activity there may be no standard for comparison between value systems, or no reason to explore and compare them in the first place. Furthermore, cooperative activities provide the grounds for one’s will to be expressed and justified. Outside of this foundation, individuals may find no reason or need to justify their actions. The two systems may clash (in the common sense), but such clashing can be accompanied by a desire to retain one’s own system at all costs, without reflection upon the reasons motivating the other’s system. In certain settings one may never come to know why their friend has chosen pecan rather than apple pie, maintaining their belief, unquestioningly, that apple is the far-superior type of pie. However, in a cooperative effort the shared goal, or in the least the shared
activity, provide ample grounds and opportunity for the exploration and understanding of one another's value system. Such exploration and understanding of another's value system marks the triggering of autonomous behavior if it is bolstered by an exploration and evaluation of one's own value system through critical reflection. This critical reflection is motivated by a clashing that challenges and calls into question the adequacy of one's own value system. Such a clashing provides the grounds to examine one's belief system from an outsider's perspective, as one now has a standard for comparison (i.e. effectiveness in bringing about a shared goal or the ability to continue a shared activity, etc.) based on the other's value system. This sort of clashing is necessary in triggering autonomy. Thus, cooperation as a social activity is integrated with critical reflection motivated by the clashing of separate systems of value to bring about autonomous behavior. This is, in its simplest form, cooperation's role. However, the clashing of values can only be one step along the way to triggering autonomy. Perhaps, it will be easiest to clarify and expand upon this account by exploring two cases involving cooperative activity.

**Case 1: Small Town High School Buddies**

A group of young men in a very small town decide to move out of their parents' houses and rent an apartment together. Due to the town's diminutive size the young men continue to interact with the same group of people, including their regular attendance of services at the one and only small church in town. This church has played a large part in shaping the community's values and the young men are expected to be in attendance every Sunday, as they are thought of as "good Christian boys." Furthermore, the young men have grown up together, playing on the same sports teams, and have been raised based on the same system of values. In part due to these deep ties, both to the community and each other, the young men get along well enough and room together quite amicably. For the duration of their time in the apartment, the young men regularly attend church services, get jobs at the local mill, and seek out good Christian girlfriends, all in accordance with the expectations of
the community and their families. Doing otherwise would bring certain shame and disproval against the young men. However, each believes this is how a man ought to live and gladly accepts his role in the variety of cooperative activities available in this small community.

In this case, it seems whether or not the young men are behaving autonomously, the social constraints on their autonomy have not and (most likely) will not be challenged. We can imagine that opportunities for their value systems to clash with another value system do not arise often in this small town, and not at all as described above. In these circumstances one could argue that the constraints bearing on the young men are various and strong enough to call into question the autonomy of their behavior. The value system that each man has taken up may very well be inculcated\textsuperscript{344} or the result of oppressive socialization\textsuperscript{345}. However, the point is rather that this sort of experience does not seem to include any experience that would trigger autonomous behavior. If the men are autonomous they will continue to be, and if they are not, they have no obvious reason to become so. They may continue to sustain their existence, meeting the expectations for behavior imposed upon them from the community without ever having to question whether or not this truly results from their own system of values.

\textsuperscript{344} Christman discusses the role one's history bears upon one's development, including the effects of inculcation on autonomy, in “Autonomy and Personal History”, \textit{Canadian Journal of Philosophy} Vol. 21 No. 1 1991, pgs. 1-24

\textsuperscript{345} Benson discusses the failure of critical reflection in determining autonomous behavior due to what he calls "oppressive socialization" in "Autonomy and Oppressive Socialization", \textit{Social Theory and Practice}, Vol. 17 No. 3, 1991, pgs. 385-406; although Benson's aim is not to specify the conditions in which socialization becomes oppressive, he does hope to shed some light on the topic by discussing one such way in which autonomy is impaired as a result of the oppression.
Case 2: Small Town High School Buddies and the Out-of-Towner

Imagine this same group of young men, in the same exact circumstances, and introduce into the mix a young pregnant woman down on her luck. The woman has arrived in town with no place to stay. Although the men realize that living with an unwed woman may be inappropriate according to their system of values, this same system also puts a higher emphasis on always doing the “Christian thing.” Thus, the men agree to let the woman stay in their spare bedroom until other arrangements are made.

The woman assents. Accommodations for the woman are hard to come by, and the young men acquiesce to the woman’s continued stay, being unable to put a poor, pregnant woman on the streets to fend for herself. In the course of this stay, the men come to discover, through open and cordial conversation, that the woman is an atheist and her pregnancy is the result of a sexual assault. She ran out of money (due to some unfortunate event) and found herself stranded in this town. The young men come to know the woman as a loving, caring, and honest woman despite her current inner turmoil (psychological aftershocks of her recent trauma). They also come to learn that the woman became stranded in this town en route to an abortion clinic a few towns over. Furthermore, she firmly believes this is the right thing to do, and the reasons she gives for thinking so are the result of a rational deliberation on the facts of the situation, un-biased by the strong emotions involved in her dire circumstances. Although the men have been taught that abortion is always a sin, the young men come to see upon reflection that the woman’s reasons have practical appeal and are in accordance with her value system, even as it conflicts with their own. In the course of these discoveries the men have different reactions to this new value system.

We can imagine the different sorts of reactions the young men may have to this clashing of value systems. One man might staunchly refuse to accept the validity of her system of values proclaiming the woman to be wrong despite the practicality of her reasons. Another might deny her as well, but come to understand that his own system is not perfect, that her reasons for acting somehow fall out of the purview of his faith.
and may even have some use in future dilemmas. However, he does not believe they are so detrimental as to call into question the validity of his own system of values. Another may come to realize these same flaws, and in doing so, embrace the woman's value system due to the inability of his current system to account for this very real ethical dilemma. How the men react, in terms of the final outcome – whether they accept, reject, or integrate her value system – is unimportant. What is important is that this case is the clear clashing of values inherent in the situation.

As stated above, such a clash is not in itself autonomy triggering, but stands rather as a necessary aspect of the situation as a whole. Not only is an individual's value system challenged by another in the second case (which is lacking in the first), but also the opposing individuals come to respect the other's system as a valid alternative. Although the example centers on the men's experience, it is certainly the case that if the woman respects the men's value system in a similar way, she too may be on her way to having an autonomy triggering experience. In this case, respect of another's value system results when the opposing sides view the other's reasons for acting as practically reasonable.\footnote{Respect in reference to another's value system could also result from reasons that are persuasive, attractive, or in some other way reasonable.} In this sense, the sort of cooperative activity that may trigger autonomy must also foster a culture of openness, wherein the agents involved are not only engaged in some shared activity, but are also unguardedly exposed to one another's system of value. If one were to participate in a cooperative activity with the motivation to do only those actions that are acceptable according to one's own value system, and fight any attempts to subvert these actions, it seems unlikely that such behavior would trigger autonomous action. Thus, being open to another's system of value is required to trigger autonomous behavior. Such openness gives rise to a shifting of perspective, as one comes to reflect on one's own value system from the standpoint of the other's. This new, 3rd person perspective allows one to critically reflect upon one's
own value system, exposing it as faulty in handling certain situations, or boosting one's confidence in the stability of the system as compared to the other's. The outcome of such reflection may either give one reason to accept one's own values as proper given the circumstances, or expose it as in need of correction. In either case, the additional reasons one gains through critical reflection from a 3rd person standpoint provide the grounds for an individual to take ownership\(^{347}\) of their inner affectations.

As noted above, the 3rd person perspective is also important in evaluating the constraints acting upon one's autonomy. If one comes to recognize the viability of an alternative value system, then one may come to understand that previously held inner affectations do not constrain one's actions to the extent one previously believed. Further, if this understanding frees one's will so that certain actions are no longer confined to the narrower scope of one's existing belief system, but rather are performed in accordance with the wider field of possibility awarded by the 3rd person perspective, then autonomous behavior has certainly been triggered. It should be noted that being able to act within this wider field of possibilities is not a necessary component of autonomous behavior, but rather provides an obvious external method of determining that autonomy has indeed been triggered. Again, if the 3rd person perspective gives one a reason to take

\(^{347}\) Benson introduces the concept of “taking ownership” in “Taking Ownership: Authority and Voice in Autonomous Agency”, from Anderson and Christman, eds. Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism, Cambridge Univ. Press 2005, pg. 101-125. I am employing this phrase in Benson's sense, wherein agents actively “take ownership of their actions and wills by claiming authority to speak for their intentions and conduct.” (Emphasis added) pg. 102. It seems to me that this active claiming can result from critically reflecting upon one's values and intentions from a 3rd person perspective. One has gained authority (that is, become autonomous) by being able to provide justifiable reasons for action in light of the clashing value system.
ownership of one’s existing system of value, then such a wider range of alternatives becomes unnecessary. One must only be able to recognize, through critical reflection, that one’s action results from one’s own wholehearted willingness and desire to perform it in the face of viable alternatives.

In Case 2 above, an argument can be made to the effect that all three of the possible responses noted (they are not exhaustive, of course) reflect autonomous behavior. The cases are not meant to imply that this is the only sort of cooperation capable of triggering any sort of autonomy. Nor must it always include such strong social constraints acting upon the individuals, as in the above cases. These cases are meant to provide a clear and distinct account of one possible avenue in which autonomous behavior is triggered.

Conclusion

In summary, these cases are meant to portray a scenario where the trigger of autonomy and the resulting autonomous behavior are clear and distinct. By assuming an integrated internal and social account of autonomy, I have shown the role that critical reflection plays as a mechanism to ensure one’s will is one’s own, thus giving rise to wholehearted behavior. Furthermore, cooperative efforts that foster openness in its participants are needed to produce a 3rd person perspective. Such a perspective can bring the constraints acting upon one’s value, beliefs, and desires into stark relief. From this vantage point one has the opportunity to evaluate one’s own value system based on a standard of comparison previously unavailable. If one were to take ownership of the resulting inner affectations, then autonomous behavior has been triggered.

"If it be a true belief that God desires, above all things, the happiness of his creatures, and that this was his purpose in their creation, utility is not only not a Godless doctrine, but more profoundly religious than any other."

John Stuart Mill

Introduction
Are utilitarianism and the Christian religious ethic (CRE) logically compossible? Can an action be rationalized as both "good" in terms of New Testament ethics and "good" in the utilitarian sense? In this paper, I seek to analyze these questions as well as determine the relationship between these two ethical systems within a democratic society. After defining terms, I plan to use an example to evaluate each system within a democracy. From there, I plan to show how, within a democracy, only one of these two competing moral sets can prevail. Finally, I plan to show how, when blended together, the terms constitute a logical inconsistency.

This is an important issue because if they are not compatible, utilitarianism and the Christian religious cannot coexist as modalities for moral agents within a democratic society. That said, I make two arguments: (1) utilitarianism and CRE are inherently and diametrically opposed ethical systems and, therefore, cannot coexist, and (2) CRE is not a viable ethical decision-making model in a democratic system.

General Stipulations

I must first note my argument’s dependence on moral agency. To be clear about what exactly I mean by a moral agent, I turn to Aristotle: “The agent must be in a certain condition when he does them [actions]: in the first place he must have knowledge; secondly he must choose the acts, and choose them for their own sakes; and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character.”

Aristotle’s definition of moral agency limits the framework of my argument to those capable of moral agency, thus eliminating all those incapable of exhibiting the stipulated criteria. From there, we can say that the extent to which one acts as a utilitarian within the parameters of moral agency, he will generate utilitarian decisions. Complications arise, however, with the introduction of multiple decision-making models within the same ethical framework, such as in the case of ‘Christian utilitarianism.’ And, as I will show, these internal complications denote a logical inconsistency and, consequently cannot be dually applied in ethical decision-making.

Definitions

I should first clarify what I mean by ‘utilitarianism.’ To best understand this ethical system, I turn to John Stuart Mill, who defined utilitarianism as the principle that: “actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.” While this definition outlines the manner by which a utilitarian would come to a certain decision, it fails to shed light on what exactly is meant by a ‘utility,’ the root of ‘utilitarianism.’ For this corollary definition, I turn to Jeremy Bentham: “that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage,


pleasure, good, or happiness...or...to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness.” 351

Having explicitly defined ‘utilitarianism,’ we can safely infer that since: (a) utilitarians are solely concerned with a given choice’s utility and (b) utility is measured only by its outputs rather than its inputs, a utilitarian is solely concerned with a certain choice’s end, rather than its means. Moreover, this is what is meant by the use of the word “good” by the utilitarian. In essence, a choice is “good” if it offers the most utility to the most people.

If we define democracy in the classical sense, it literally translates to people’s (demos) power (kratos) 352 in ancient Greek, the language of its origin. In more recognizable terms, Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” 353 From this, we can say that participants in a democracy engage in a system of self-rule. We can then deduce that the ideal ethical decision-making system for any individual within this structure must consider most heavily that option which does the most good for the whole of society. Therefore, the best decision results in the greatest utility for the greatest amount of citizens. In this light, we can safely assume that the utilitarian model best reflects the definition of democracy.

Next, we must consider the Christian religious ethic. I do not intend to imply an explicit framework that rigidly defines the whole of Christendom with the phrase ‘Christian religious ethic.’ Rather, I mean to indicate the general collection of morals among the various sects of Christianity united under the

umbrella of Christian scripture. From there, we can derive the intrinsic values to the Christian's journey, ergo, their ethical decision-making system.

Even though the various sects of Christianity may differ regarding the most effective route to heaven, they all share one common ideal. These groups jointly accept the premise that the road to heaven is just that, a road. In other words, come the day of reckoning, individuals, according to the Christian tradition, will be judged based on the spirit of their deeds, rather than the impact of those deeds as a whole. Moreover, this shared premise of the 'Christian journey' undoubtedly stems from coordinated acceptance of New Testament (NT) writings. From this coordinated acceptance of the NT, we can define CRE as the undertaking of the Christian journey under the auspices of New Testament ethics. According to the Christian tradition, Jesus best defines and exemplifies the spirit of NT ethics in The First Epistle of Peter:

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.354

We see the inherent value of a journey, a procedure, and the perceived traits of the God according to Christianity who rules as king spelled out most clearly in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. He writes: "As many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else

354 1Peter 4:1-4:4 (KJV)
excusing them; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ.”

Based on the above passage one can, with relative certainty, assume certain characteristics of the Christian God it describes. We can broadly assume that God is omniscient, or at the very least, a Betazoid telepath. We can also assume God’s omnipotence in his seat as the sole judge of individual humanity. We cannot deduce, however, from this passage above God’s omni-benevolence.

Paul instead chooses to emphasize the just—in this sense as “of treatment deserved or appropriate in the circumstances”—nature of his God. It would follow than that those who act antithetically to CRE would be treated in such an “appropriate way.” Jesus reinforces the idea of a just God in the following passage from the Gospel of Matthew: “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Thus, within CRE, “good” is derived from alignment with God’s law and is wholly objective. In a democratic society of self-rule one can see how an unwavering ethical system may fail to encompass a variance of opinions and ideals, especially in any type of pluralist environment.

A Tangible Example

I would now like to pose a scenario that should, given its context, ground the topic of our discussion in the tangible.

Smith receives an envelope from his mail carrier with $5,000 cash, but after opening it realizes the envelope has been delivered to the wrong address. Being a utilitarian, he decides to give the money to his neighbor, Pastor Jones who generally follows CRE,

355 Rom. 2:12-2:16 (KJV).
356 An alien race in the Star Trek: Next Generation television series.
358 Matt. 7:1-7:5 (KJV).
realizing that he has access to the greatest amount of the area's neediest individuals. Smith gives the money to the Pastor, fully disclosing its source, leaving him to decide what to do with the contents of the envelope.

Upon receiving the money, Jones faces a moral dilemma. We will assume that the Pastor has only two options:\footnote{We could say, for example, that the Pastor, disregarding the whole of his moral code, decides to take the money and buy a plane ticket to Mexico, but this scenario leaves our question unanswered.}

1. He could keep the money. (And use it to improve the lives of the multitude of poor within the parish and perform several key repairs to the church in order to better serve the congregation as a whole.)
2. He could return it to the post office, noting the mistake.

This returns us to our central question: are utilitarianism and CRE logically compossible? This is the heart of the dilemma above. In this section, I will show how the Pastor's two choices represent what I argue are the fundamental differences between utilitarianism and CRE. Moreover, I will show that the ideal of Christian Utilitarianism, advocated by Mill in the opening quotation, is logically unfeasible.

The Options
The Christian Religious Ethical Choice

Within the framework of CRE there is no choice to be made at all. All things considered, acting within his established moral framework, the Pastor is obligated\footnote{By his definitive thought pattern associated and already established by CRE.} to mail the money to its rightful owner. Seeing that taking the money is stealing, and that the Christian God commands Pastor Jones not to steal,
choosing the utilitarian option would be violating God’s will and therefore is unethical.

The Utilitarian Choice

Living in a democracy, the utilitarian option must weigh strongly on the Pastor’s conscience. In the mind of the utilitarian, if working toward or yielding the most good, an action’s ends justify its means. Within this framework, Jones must act as a utilitarian.

Should he choose to walk this path, however, there are serious considerations within his already established moral code. First, and perhaps most egregiously aversive, the Pastor must contend with the knowledge that he is willfully breaking what he believes to be a direct Commandment from God. This conscious violation of a divinely attributed moral principle: “Thou shalt not steal” is, in fact, a de facto example of the very nature of sin as defined by Jesus himself.

He defines sin in the following passage: “But he that doeth Truth cometh to the Light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.” Stealing, in the Pastor’s case, directly defies God’s truth, regardless of the utilitarian good that may result.

Consequently, the following logical inconsistency arises: in what way can any act that helps the greatest number of people, regardless of its conflict with divine law, be unethical?

Utilitarianism concerns itself with the greatest good to the greatest number, an inherently collectivist philosophy. Antithetically, CRE advocates an intimately personal journey, requiring privately overcoming trials and tribulations according to the laws set down by God. Moreover, from these laws and their interpretations we garner the moral code that, due to its individualist nature, discourages any deviations from the divine law that holds constant among all sects. With this frame of mind, one can see how any sort of straying from the light of the

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361 We must stipulate that the Pastor represents CRE and holds no personalist or otherwise contrary views.
362 Ex 20:15 (KJV).
path, regardless of the outcome of the action, would be contrary to any NT principle and, therefore, unethical.

**Considering “Christian Utilitarianism”**

As I have shown, it is the utilitarian model rather than the CRE model that best reflects the definition, and therefore the institution, of a democracy.\(^{364}\) With this in mind, Christians must find a way to reconcile their own dogmatic ethical system with that most conducive to the governmental and legal system to which they are bound, should they live in any sort of democratic, secular state. With this spirit, we see the attempted blending of CRE with utilitarianism into what I call ‘Christian Utilitarianism.’

Regardless of the logical inconsistency in the phraseology of the title of this section, many—perhaps including the likes of our Pastor—choose to act in a way that we can now call a “sin” and unethical, both tantamount in CRE sense. From here, the question evolves from considering the logical viability of ‘Christian Utilitarianism,’ to evaluating how a Christian may validate this position within a democracy. For the purposes of this paper, I define Christian Utilitarianism as the doctrine that maximizes the greatest good for the greatest amount of people without acting contrary to God’s will as defined by scripture (e.g. the Ten Commandments).

Within the context of CRE, one must choose to alter the primary characteristics of the Christian God in order to, as a moral agent, come to the decision of the utilitarian. In this case, the individual is left with a doctrine that no longer matches the ethical system necessary to accurately self-identify as a Christian, seeing that the associated moral code is directly related to God’s perceived characteristics.

A primary manner in which Christian Utilitarians defend their decisions is by altering the characteristics of the Christian God. This is done most often through including omnibenevolence among the essential characteristics of their God. In fact, it is in this way that Mill—in the opening quotation—

\(^{364}\) See paragraph 5 under the ‘Definitions’ section
attempts to validate the compatibility between Utilitarianism and CRE.

Omni-benevolence, though, contradicts key principles that make up the definitive Christian moral set. For one, should God be omni-benevolent, he would not be able to objectively judge humanity based on the law he created. To be truly all good and yet to still punish for shortcomings—whether they be in moral judgment or otherwise— is logically inconsistent. If we use the same definition of just, in what manner could any temporal act be appropriately responded to by an eternal punishment or reward? Moreover, should God be all loving, how could he deny any man that love? For, in the now seemingly contradictory words of John “He that not loveth not knoweth God, for God is love.”

Furthermore, if God were omni-benevolent, the premise of Hell, or eternal damnation as the ultimate punishment, would contradict God’s presupposed nature. The “problem of hell” is most famously defined by philosopher of religion Marilyn McCord Adams. Assuming the following set of propositions:

(I) God exists, is essentially omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good.
(II) Evil exists.
(III) Some created people will be consigned to hell forever.

She formulates the following logical argument:

(1) If God existed and were omnipotent, he would be able to avoid (III).
(2) If God existed and were omniscient, he would know how to avoid (III).
(3) If God existed and were perfectly good, he would want to avoid (III).

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365 John 4:7-4:9 (KJV)
Therefore, if (I), not (III).

Both of these features – the ability of God to punish eternally for temporal acts and the existence of Hell – are not only strongly rooted in the formal dogma of Christian faith, but also serve as centripetal factors in deciding to follow one of the many Christian paths to heaven, at all.

We can now see that an attempt by Christians to blend an ethical system that synthesizes both their religious and civic moral obligations into a consistent framework falls short of that goal. This new blended ethic fails to maintain the core principles of its constituent systems (i.e. favoring either the centrally minded CRE principles or the universally minded utilitarian principles) as a result of the contrariety of each component. In this way, we can safely say that neither CRE nor Christian Utilitarianism are applicable systems (in that they are not logically compossible with utilitarianism) in any sort of democratic state.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have argued that Utilitarianism and CRE are antithetical to one another. Furthermore, I demonstrated that Christian Utilitarianism is a logically inconsistent position. Via the veil of Pastor Jones, I was able to exemplify the tension between the two belief systems and prove how the two are in binary opposition. Moreover, based on Lincoln's definition of 'democracy' and Mill's definition of 'utilitarianism,' I was able to prove that in a democracy utilitarianism is the ideal ethical system. I argued then, that based on those premises:

1. Democracy is "government of the people, by the people, for the people."
2. Utilitarianism is the principle that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness."
3. Thus, the utilitarian model best reflects the definition of democracy.
(2) CRE and Christian utilitarianism are both logically inconsistent with utilitarianism (this being the focus of the body of the paper).
Thus, CRE and Christian utilitarianism are logically inconsistent ethical systems (Christian utilitarianism in itself, as well) in a democracy.

Finally, regardless of the logical considerations behind choosing one's ethical system, a central question remains: How—without empirical evidence of God, heaven, or hell—does one come to a decision in the Pastor's scenario? For this answer, all I shall say is this: in a system of self-rule, "We are our choices."³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007)
Bibliography


Lonnie Richards: Free Will: The Case for an All-Encompassing God

The intention of this paper is to prove that the definition of free will, as a notion that man has the ability to make choices free from the constraints of God, is both a contradiction of faith and a theory with conflicting premises. We accredit God with the creation of all that is known and unknown and we give him the responsibility of keeping all of this in a perfect balance. Yet we also subscribe to the notion that the problem of evil can be explained by the existence of our “free will”, acting outside of the plans of God. This is a contradiction. If God is all-knowing, all-powerful and has a will of his own, of which we are never superior to, than there must be no free will or God would not be all-knowing or all-powerful.

I assume we would agree at this point that God must be all-knowing and all-powerful for him to be God? By the very meaning of the adjective all-powerful we believe nothing is more powerful and in the same light we proclaim all-knowing to be the complete absence of ignorance. Can we say the same about man? Can we point at one man in the course of human history that knew everything there was to know and whose physical power was unmatched by any and all opposite forces? Even if we were to consider the life of Christ we would have to agree that God is even more powerful and knows even what Jesus didn’t know. We could simply use the words of Christ himself when he said,” For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of he who sent me.”(John 6:38). So we are forced, as believers, to answer both of these questions with a stern no and admit man’s inferior nature to the all-encompassing God. This brings us to the first major question. How could man, who is neither all-knowing nor all-powerful, delay or veto the plans of a God to whom he is inferior? In fact if the plans of God were dependent on man accepting them those plans would fall under the prudence of human freewill and not an all-encompassing god. We shall then conclude that there is either no free will or God is not a deity that we can call all-knowing and all-powerful.
Is it safe to conclude that there is a will present in this world? For us to witness birth and death and everything in between, we must agree that there is a "will of action", even if it is beyond our understanding some of the time. We would agree that there are things that happen outside and beyond our control would we not? Coming to this agreement, we are presented with the second major question. Is there ever a time when the will (actions) of man are more powerful than the will (actions or plans) of God? As believers we would agree that God is always superior to the power of man. In fact, we have incorporated this principle into most of our religious doctrine. If we are to attribute even a small portion of what happens in this world to the free will of man than we are essentially saying that there is a moment when we are more powerful than God. This is an obvious contradiction of faith, yet this is the underlining notion of "free will." The will of man is focused on what gives him happiness and very rarely on that which is necessary. Death is sometimes necessary, according to the laws of nature, but we do not favor those who will for death. We will or desire for one thing over its opposite yet when we have that thing, we will or desire for its opposite. We have already agreed that things indeed happen outside of our control. Can we also agree that there can be nothing out of the control of an all-powerful god? Assuming this all to be true, we must conclude that God is always in control and there is no free will. Especially the pleasure based will of man.

If, as believers, we place our faith in an all-knowing and all-powerful god we are forced, as believers, to shed the notion of free will. The fact that a will exist beyond our powers proves our will is not dominate. Our will is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. Therefore, I believe that there is no human free will and our choices are merely illusions of liberty predetermined even before we think to preform them.

In conclusion, I wish to address the idea that human free will is to blame for the existence of evil on earth. If we truly believe in the existence of an all-knowing and all-powerful god we would by the gift of logic see no need in the notions of hell, Satan, sin or any other proclaimed demonic oppositions to an all-encompassing god. I realize this is a tall statement to make.
However, I don’t believe that it is logically possible to anger an entity that knows everything nor is it possible to outflank an entity that has unlimited powers. For example, we would call it irrational for the computer programmer to become angry at the computer for doing what it was programed to do. This being said, we are forced to swallow our own words and hold dear to our claimed dominance over Satan and his objectives as did Christ during his temptation in the Judean desert. When we finally extinguish these notions, made out of confusion, we come to realize that it is our confusion that we have been labeling all along. It is out of our fear of what happens after death and on earth that we created these notions, including the notion of ‘freewill’. We created them long ago to establish an answer to our many questions about the unpredictability of life and the irrational will of God’s plan. However, no matter how logical this may all sound, I have found among the believers in the all-encompassing god the largest number of conspirators for the preservation of human freewill over the power of an all-encompassing god. In finding this fact I also found the audacity to point out this obvious contradiction of faith and reason.
Alex Richardson: Perniciously Relative: A Critical Analysis of Dewey's Pragmatic Account of Truth

Introduction/Abstract

In his 1911 publication “The Problem of Truth,” John Dewey criticizes the long-standing and traditional correspondence and coherence theories of truth, while also proposing his own positive theory concerning the nature of truth. In this paper, I will argue that Dewey's theory is flawed in that it allows for a kind of relativism about truth. Further, I will argue that in doing so, Dewey's theory may fall prey to precisely the kind of criticism that his fellow pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce once leveled against the rationalist philosopher René Descartes. To make this argument, I will first examine Dewey's own theory of truth. I will then show how, on my view, Dewey's pragmatic theory of truth “opens the door” to a kind of relativism that philosophers find objectionable. Finally, I will compare my own criticisms of Dewey's theory to the criticisms that Peirce leveled against Descartes’ assertions on certainty, and show that in allowing for relativism, Dewey's theory of truth is, as Peirce himself once said of Descartes’ methodology, “most pernicious” where inquiry is concerned.369

I. Dewey's Pragmatic Theory of Truth

Early in “The Problem of Truth,” Dewey criticizes traditional theories concerning truth, such as the correspondence and coherence theories, and in doing so he highlights for us the need for a third theory. In the subsequent section of the article, he posits his own theory. His method of explaining such a theory begins with a description of three steps we must take in our reflections on truth in order to share his pragmatic understanding of it.

First, Dewey states that a truly intellectual judgment does not imply its own truth, but instead implies doubt

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369 Peirce, 71.
concerning its truth or falsehood, prompting further inquiry. In his view, a judgment that does imply its own truth is either “a sheer prejudice, a congealed dogmatism,” or a “memorandum to serve as a direct stimulus of further action.” To illustrate these ideas Dewey tells us first of the dogmatism of common sense, describing it as “an embodiment of custom and tradition... on statements that have been so completely and repeatedly verified in the past [that] they have no longer intellectual quality at all.” He might illustrate this with a statement such as “The sky is blue,” in that this proposition implies its own truth, i.e., the proposition: “It is true that the sky is blue.” Dewey might say that we have judged the sky to be blue so repeatedly in our past, that it is now a mere dogmatism to point out the fact. On the other hand, Dewey shows us that statements can be mere “linguistic memorandums,” or encouragers of further action. For example, if I were to tell my neighbor that his home is afire, this may indeed have once involved an intellectual proposition, but now it is said simply to direct further action, e.g., my neighbor ensuring that his loved ones have escaped from the burning house. Dewey tells us that, for a proposition to be truly intellectual in nature, it must imply further inquiry or investigation into a matter, there being sincere doubt concerning the proposition pending such inquiry. For Dewey, a proposition effectively becomes a hypothesis, dependent upon further testing and observation: “Truth, then, can exist only in the testing of the claim, in making good through the subsequent acts it prescribes.”

The second step toward a pragmatic understanding of truth builds upon the first. According to Dewey, the change made in our first step, in considering propositions as hypotheses, gives intellectual judgments “a future outlook and reference,” rather than having them refer to antecedent

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370 Dewey, 345.
371 Ibid.
372 Ibid.
373 Ibid.
374 Ibid, 346.
conditions. On Dewey’s view, a proposition’s truth is a matter of its future undertaking: its truth or falsehood depends on the process of fulfilling its own proposal. He tells us that this follows naturally from the first step, and that no one who takes his first step will have a problem with the second.

Building on the notion that a proposition is an instrument in the achievement of a desired goal, Dewey explains how a proposition performs such a future office. He tells us that “any device that brings the desired end into the means and enables it thereby to function as one of the means of its own attainment is an extraordinary gain.” In other words, a true judgment makes its goal part of the means of attaining that very same goal. To illustrate this, Dewey provides the example of a compass guiding a ship to its desired location. In his example, the captain of a ship has a specific port in mind as a goal. Anything that improves control over the means of achievement of this end is, as Dewey tells us, a desideratum, or something to be desired. This, in Dewey’s illustration, is precisely the role of the needle on the compass: “What it ‘presents’ is not its own antecedents; what it ‘presents’ is the port that is to be attained.” To clarify, by “presenting” the port to the ship’s helmsman, who makes course corrections (judgments that can be true or false) based on the needle’s readings, the needle has aided in incorporating the goal itself (the port) into the means of its attainment (the helmsman’s steering of the ship).

After posing and demonstrating his three steps toward a pragmatic understanding of the concept of truth, Dewey clarifies for us precisely how he would define truth. He first notes that his pragmatic theory “locates and describes
correspondence as a mark of truth." At first glance, it may seem as if Dewey is invoking the very theory of correspondence that he objected to earlier in the very same paper, but such is not the case. Within the context of his paper, Dewey tends to use the word "correspondence," not in reference to the traditional theory of truth, but with reference to a more typical sort of "correspondence," that is, the way friends or parts of a machine might correspond. In other words, Dewey intends "correspondence" in the sense of an attuned interaction in order to reach a desideratum. With the qualification of the role of correspondence in his theory, among his aforementioned stipulations, Dewey’s theory defines truth as the "way of presenting things which is actually, not merely potentially, effective in securing the consequences with reference to which the things are causes."

II. Relativism and Opening a Door

In my view, Dewey’s theory of truth encounters a huge shortcoming in allowing for a certain kind of relativism. Dewey, in defining truth through reference to consequences, leaves the door wide open, so to speak. If truth, as Dewey tells us, boils down to what is "effective in securing consequences," the concept itself does serious damage to the notion that there are objective truths (things that are true independent of our thought about them) in the world. The idea that truth, which I would take as a central concept to the discipline of philosophy, is a relative matter implies an often undesirable tentativeness to our sense of reality, as humans. Thus, relativism is often, and perhaps even generally, rejected and refuted by philosophers.

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380 Ibid, 352.
381 Ibid, 353.
382 Ibid, 354.
383 This statement is an adoption of C.S. Peirce’s definition of reality: “There are real things, whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them.” (Peirce, 122.)
Factors that can influence a proposition in fulfilling (or frustrating) a desired end are never the same for everyone that may be involved. It stands to reason that, considering the definition that Dewey provides, truth can be relative to persons, i.e., what is true and therefore effective in securing desired consequences (according to Dewey's definition) for one person may not work in the same way for another.

To illustrate this, I will return to Dewey's own example of the ship's compass, while making some adjustments of my own. Let us suppose that the compass's needle “presents” a particular port as an end, just as it did in the original example. But, for the purposes of illustrating a true (or false) judgment relative to the person making it, let us say that it is an unskilled cabin boy, having no knowledge of the ship's workings (navigation, steering, etc.) who is charged with making the course corrections to attain the end (port) presented by the compass. Considering this example, the course corrections made by the cabin boy, as opposed to the skilled helmsman in the original example, will be quite different, even if all other conditions in the example (the port, the reading on the compass, etc.) are constant. What was true for the helmsman, namely, that the compass aided his judgment in securing its goal (reaching port), will not be true for the cabin boy, simply based on who he is, i.e., the fact that he is part of a different group of people. The point to take away from this example is that, by Dewey's definition, what is true for one person or group of people can be totally untrue for another, even if the proposition's other conditions are unchanged between the two cases.

III. On Peircean Perniciousness

So, what does this tell us about inquiry? Why does it matter? To answer these questions, I would like to compare my criticism of Dewey's theory to a similar criticism raised by another pragmatist, Charles Peirce, against the rationalist philosopher René Descartes. In his paper "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," Peirce objects to Cartesian philosophy at
length, paying special attention to what he considers a critical mistake that Descartes makes in allegedly making individuals absolute judges of certainty with respect to their own beliefs. In "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," Peirce calls Descartes' description of certainty as relative to individuals "most pernicious," or destructive, toward inquiry at large. If each individual is capable of judging his or her own certainty about his or her own beliefs, as Descartes seems to assert, then there is no need for collaboration in inquiry, and there is no hope of ever reaching a consensus about anything.

While positing his theory in "The Problem of Truth," Dewey has opened himself to the same sort of criticism. In defining truth as simply what is effective in securing desired consequences, Dewey can be taken as rendering an individual as the judge of absolute truth in much the same way Peirce accused Descartes of rendering an individual as absolute judge of certainty. If truth is a means of securing a desideratum, its efficacy in doing so will depend upon the situation an agent finds himself in: a situation which is relative with respect to people from differing groups, with differing experiences, etc. Dewey seems to suggest with his definition of truth that people will not utilize the same truths in securing desired consequences. In this sense, each agent is an arbiter of his or her own particular truth, and Dewey's theory of truth and Cartesian methodology seem to be guilty of the same destructive flaw. In the same way that Peirce asserts that Descartes' philosophy damages it, Dewey's theory renders inquiry, philosophical or otherwise, as a completely individual venture, requiring no collaboration or recognition between members of the community of inquiry at large.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, I believe that John Dewey's theory of truth, in allowing a proposition to be true for one person and

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384 Peirce, 71.
385 Ibid.
untrue for another when all other conditions remain constant, is equally pernicious to Peirce’s reading of Descartes’ methodology where inquiry is concerned. If truth boils down to simply what is effective or useful in attaining a desired consequence, inquirers will likely always encounter differing results from their investigations. If one’s hypotheses are fulfilled effectively (and are thus true, according to Dewey) one can rest on this individual conception of truth, and there would be no reason to pay any mind to the inquiry of others. Just as Peirce shows us in his criticism of Cartesian philosophy, Dewey’s theory, if true, would imply no need for cooperation in inquiry, and any possibility of agreement or consensus would be doubtful, if not altogether impossible.

Bibliography


Stephanie Vogel: Aquinas’s First Way: Can One Prove the Existence of God through Pure Actuality?

Does God exist? Is there some higher power that set the universe in motion? These questions have often eluded some of the world’s greatest thinkers over the centuries. As time passes, there has been almost equal evidence presented on both sides concerning the existence of a higher being called God. One of the most notable proofs in favor of God’s existence was put forth by St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*. In this book, Aquinas presents five proofs; all of which arrive at the conclusion that a higher being must be in existence. For the ease of explanation as well as overall brevity, this essay will focus only on Aquinas’s first way. First, I will explain Aquinas’s first proof in detail drawing from both what is written in the *Summa Theologiae* as well as scholarly commentary. Secondly, I will present scholarly opinions regarding the validity of Aquinas’s first proof and finally, I will conclude with my own thoughts on the matter by synthesizing information provided in previously cited, scholarly literature.

Aquinas begins his first proof by writing, “The first and more evident way is drawn from motion. For it is certain and firmly established by the senses that some things in this world are moved” (Aquinas 22). Aquinas chooses motion as the starting point for his proof because it is the force most evident to people no matter where they are. It is also simple for a person to understand the first major piece of Aquinas’s proof which is that all things which are moved were moved by another.

Before continuing his proof, Aquinas must now define what he means by “motion” or “motus” in Latin. Drawing influence from Aristotelian physics, Aquinas reduces motion down to terms of “potentiality” and “actuality”. Potentiality is an object’s
“capacity to undergo change” (Shanley 93) whereas actuality is that same object’s state once it has undergone that change. Therefore, motion is the transition of an object from potentiality into actuality. The motion is complete once the object has actualized its potential. At this point, Aquinas continues by saying that this object with the potential to be moved can only be brought into actuality, or put into motion, by another object already in actuality with respect to the terminus of the motion. Here, Aquinas offers an example of wood and fire to help convey his reasoning. A piece of wood is potentially hot. Due to the inherent nature of what it is, it has the capacity to become hot and be lit on fire. Since the wood cannot actualize its own potential to become hot, a cause must be added by another being already in an actualized state which is relevant to the wood’s motion. This cause is the fire. When these two things meet, the fire helps move the wood from its potential state into its actual state and the motion is complete because the wood has actualized its potential.

Next, Aquinas offers that it is impossible for any given object (we’ll continue to use wood and fire as an example) to be both in potentiality and actuality at the same moment and in the same respect. To continue with Aquinas’s example, fire, which has already actualized its potential to become hot, cannot be considered potentially hot at the same moment in time and in the same respect. This statement leads to Aquinas’s next point that, just as a being cannot be both actual and potential at the same time, a being cannot be considered both the mover and the object which is moved at the same time and in the same respect. By this statement, Aquinas suggests that beings are incapable of moving themselves and must rely on a being already in actuality, or in other words a cause, in order to be moved.
Now that Aquinas has laid down the preliminary explanations for his proof, he must complete it by tying his statements about the motions of objects in the world to the existence of God in order for his proof to be considered valid. Using his example of the piece of wood and fire as a starting point, Aquinas then states that since all objects which are moved are caused to move by another, there exists a kind of chain of motion which stems back to the first mover. If it were not for this first mover, there could be no other subsequent movers “just as a stick moves another only as it is moved by the hand” (Aquinas 23). The previous example highlights a small chain of motion. The human brain causes the hand to move a stick which in turn can move something else such as a stone. “The stone is moved, but not itself moving” (Shanley 194). Therefore, the stone’s potential to be moved was actualized by the stick which was brought into actuality by the hand and so on. This series of “moved movers” according to Aquinas, “cannot proceed infinitely” (Aquinas 22). He says this because it is impossible for the causal series to regress indefinitely to moved movers. There must be an originating first cause that put those beings into motion. Aquinas asserts that there must be some being that “is not put in motion by anything” (Aquinas 23) and is existent only of itself. This unmoved, first mover is the cause of all subsequent movers’ causality. If the first mover were to stop moving, all the subsequent, secondary movers would also cease to move. If we go back to the above example of the stick which moves the rock, the first mover is the human brain. If the brain were to stop functioning, the hand could no longer move the stick and the stick would, in turn, lose its power to move the stone. If we expand this example, we will see that since there is motion evident in the world, there must be a first mover which is itself unmoved by any other. This first mover, is what Aquinas says that “all understand to be God” (Aquinas 23); A purely
actual, unmoved-mover which began the ceaseless chain of motion which we see in the world today.

As one might have guessed, Aquinas’s proof has come under criticism by others since the time of its publication. Aquinas’s statement that “whatever is moved is moved by another” (Aquinas 22) has been considered the weak link in his proof by many critics purely because, according to Wallace, “it conflicts with Newton’s law of inertia, it does not explain projectile motion, and it does not account for living beings’ self motion” (qtd Shanley 194). On the topic of Aquinas’s proof failing to acknowledge the self movement of living beings, one can look to the arguments structured by both John Wippel and Anthony Kenny. In order to note that Aquinas’s first proof cannot extend to include the motion of both humans and animals, Wippel cites Henry of Ghent “who maintained that a freely acting agent can reduce itself from a state of not acting to acting” (Wippel 448). Kenny, in his book The Five Ways uses this counter example of the human free will in his refutation of the first way as well. Kenny maintains that there are plenty of things in motion in the world which do not seem to be moved by anything else (Kenny 13). Instead, it appears that these things move by actualizing their own potential without help from something which already embodies this quality of motion. Kenny uses several examples evident in everyday life such as weeds growing, a dog running, and himself (a free-willed human) typing in order to better illustrate his point (Kenny 13). These objects used in Kenny’s examples are not being put into motion in the way that Aquinas suggests they should be. There is no actual being passing on the will to run to the dog that is running or the will to grow to the weed that is growing, instead these things behave in this manner due to the nature of what they are. A weed is a weed which has the potential to grow and therefore actualizes this potential when it grows. Similarly, a dog is a dog with the
potential to run and therefore actualizes this potential when it runs because of the nature of what it is. Kenny then goes on to extend these examples to the free willed human. Kenny, as a human being, embodies the nature of a free will and is able to reduce himself from a sedentary state into a state of motion without taking on the will to move from an already actual being. As he types, Kenny actualizes his own potential to move his fingers across the keyboard and is not moved into action by a being which already embodies that action.

After citing these everyday examples, Kenny delivers a final blow to Aquinas’s argument referring to the point where Aquinas claims, in essence, that whatever object is being moved is moved simultaneously by a being already in motion (Aquinas 22). Kenny suggests that since the sought after unmoved mover at the end of Aquinas’s proof is by definition not moving, it is not simultaneously in motion with the secondary mover to which that motion is ultimately communicated and therefore cannot be included in Aquinas’s proof (Kenny 13). At this point, the whole proof crumbles because the God whose existence the proof set out to provide evidence for has just been contradicted from the theory.

Despite Kenny’s seemingly airtight refutation of the first way, some scholars still suggest that parts of Aquinas’s first proof are valid. For instance, one may look to a portion of Etienne Gilson’s book, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. In his article explaining the first way, Gilson notes multiple similarities between Aristotle’s demonstrations of motion and Aquinas’s use of motion in his first way. Gilson explains that Aristotle, in his publication of Physics, sets out to prove a theory which Aquinas draws inspiration from. This theory supports the idea that everything which is put into motion is caused to move by another being. Gilson cites Aristotle’s second demonstration
of this principle in order to prove that Aquinas's proof, contrary to Kenny's beliefs, does in fact include human free will and the "self-motion" of animals. Gilson writes, "this [motion] is also evident in anything which is moved by nature and contains within itself the principle of its movement, like animals who are moved by their soul; and remains true in anything which is moved by nature" (61). In this quote, Gilson, echoing Aristotle's writing, concludes that while it is not blatantly evident that animals are caused to move by an already actualized force, nature becomes the first mover; much like the human brain becomes the first mover in Aquinas's earlier example which references the stick moving the stone. If one adds this information to Kenny's argument referenced above, one can see that his examples no longer refute, but instead enforce Aquinas's proof. If nature can be counted as a mover in this situation, Kenny's example of grass growing due to nature or the dog running due to its nature serve as examples of this proof in action.

Owens also provides support for the purely actual God referred to in Aquinas's first proof in his article entitled, "Comment: Effects Precede Causes". During his discussion, Owens suggests that since this higher being named God is purely actual and is by definition unchanged by any other previous cause, "the effects [which one sees as motion] precede the temporal causes that produce them" (Owens 21). Owens, in the above quote, is suggesting a view of the first proof in which the motion of secondary movers is, in a sense, predestined by the first mover. Instead of looking at the unmoved mover as a first cause which only begins a chain of actions each one becoming the cause of the next and so on, Owens claims that this cause should be looked at as a continuing cause which predetermines all future effects found within the series of events which will ultimately transpire from this first cause. Owens clarifies the above
statement with an example of air and ground traffic on a radar screen. To quote Owens, "On this radar screen, on which the air levels as well as the ground level of traffic are made manifest simultaneously, the effects are shown to be eternally preexistent while their production is taking place over time" (Owens 21). Owens is describing a way to look at events which happen from the viewpoint of a purely actual being. The effects of the causes that this being will implement are already known to him (the dots on the radar screen). However, we as humans are limited in our understanding and only see the effects of these purely actual causes when they manifest themselves over a long period of time. To continue the analogy, just as people travelling in a plane from one place to another do not know the whereabouts of the other planes around them or traffic on the ground, so too are we limited in seeing the causes implemented by a higher being. From this vantage point, the only things we may truly know for certain are ultimately the effects from which have already been predetermined.

After considering ample support on both sides concerning the validity of Aquinas's first way, one is able to see that there is a clear divide and both sides provide excellent evidence to back up their arguments. As far as my thoughts on the matter are concerned, I find myself agreeing with Gilson and Owens in favor of the validity of Aquinas's first way. Gilson, by referencing an Aristotle, presents an argument that Aquinas would have used as inspiration when he was writing his proof. By allowing nature to be seen as a mover in the causal chain instead of a way to invalidate Aquinas's first way, Gilson's article brings to light the notion that nothing moves itself and is instead prompted to move by another being. Similarly, I agree with Owens's statement about preexistent effects. The idea that the purely actual unmoved mover which we call God is the first and continuing cause of events which have not yet manifested
themselves in time is easy to grasp once one has come to terms with just how limited a human's understanding is. We are not able to see what actions a higher being takes or the secondary movers it employs to enact "motions" which are evident to us in our frame of reference. Finally, Kenny's claim that the unmoved mover is by definition in a state of rest and therefore must be removed from the proof is incorrect. I interpret Aquinas's "unmoved mover" in the same light as Owens. In his article, the unmoved mover is not moving in the sense that it is not changing. The unmoved mover is purely actual by definition and therefore is not affected by any outside force. Instead, it is the first cause of all secondary effects. It is the hand to the stick which ultimately moves the rock in Aquinas's example. Aquinas is not looking for a stationary being which simply sets off a chain of motion. Instead, Aquinas seeks to uncover a being which is not changed or moved by anything other than itself; hence the term purely actual. The being which we call God is no way in potentiality at any point in time. Therefore, it requires no other source to bring it from potentiality into actuality. God exists as a purely actual unmoved mover which serves as the first and constant cause of all events which ultimately manifest themselves in our human point of view.

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