

ESSAYS IN PHILOSOPHY

Robert R. Wadholm



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Grace Publications
Ellendale, North Dakota

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First Printing: 2014

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INTRODUCTION

There are times in a person's life in which they ought to write. A possible time for writing is when we are reflective. Another is when we are done being reflective, and want to store the reflections in the external world. Another is when we want to share our reflections with others. This collection of essays comes from the years 2005-2014, a period in my life filled with education and doing, as well as reflection on my education and doing. During this time I was involved in two Master's and two Doctorates (one unfinished), which took up considerable hours of my life, not only in reading and writing, but also in thinking (we hope that thinking goes on while reading and writing, but sadly this is not always the case). These years were filled with new ideas about how the world might be, and I was exposed to a fair amount of ideas shared by others. In this collection, I have tried to capture some of my more cogent thoughts regarding philosophy that are not already book length or that are not so short as to be insufficient in the context of a book of essays. The collection is thus a kind of summary in book form of what has been going on in my mind for the last nine or so years. I

wrote each essay as a result of reflection, or in the midst of reflection, or as a means of sharing reflection. Please share your own reflections back with me.

I will warn the reader here that my writing, my reflections, my critiques are from an unapologetically belief-centric perspective. I am first a person before God, and only next a philosopher, and only after that a scientist (information science and learning technologies). My answer to “Who exists?” flavors my thoughts about “What exists?” as well as “What can be known and how?” and “What ought to be and what is valuable?” This collection deals with tiny aspects of each of these lesser questions in turn (metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics), often from an analytical bent and with as much confidence as I could muster (given my exceedingly low status in academia), before turning to a few small questions in various fields of science. Please forgive me for my brash remarks throughout, and I will forgive you for reading such a work. Remember that reflections come from people, people are not always right, are generally not all-knowing, and are often confused. I am no exception. But without sharing this collection, how will I ever discover what is lacking in my thoughts? How will you ever reflect with me? How will these reflections

survive me in the world? And if there is truth here, let it be known, not hidden.

METAPHYSICS

W.V. Quine's "On What There Is"...Knock, Knock?

The ontological problem, according to W.V. Quine, is simply contained in the question "What is there?" Quine posits that the answer is "Everything", and further, that "everyone will accept this answer as true." Thus begins a lengthy exposition about how the ontological problem has been framed and answered historically, with particular focus (strangely, to me) on what is not (nonbeing). What may and what may not be counted in our answer "Everything", and how may we judge our dialogue about existence and nonexistence (and through what conceptual schema)? In Quine's words, "...there is what there is. There remains room for disagreement over cases...." Simple question, simple answer, just disagreement over cases and methodologies.

Here I will argue that Quine's framing of ontology glosses over the complexity of the fundamental first (or at least earlier) question(s) of ontology, and provides an answer that is at first blush self-evident, but upon further investigation may be lacking in universal acceptance. I hope that this attempt is not

merely argument or squabble over words just for the sake of interest (or entertainment), but is a simplification of what for me is meaningful about the quest for existence. How we frame the quest, and the basic building blocks of that quest need attention. While for Quine this discussion is a mere appetizer to the meat of an argument about Plato's unkempt beard (the problem of nonbeing), I find it hard to get past the question and answer:

The Question: "What is there?"

The Answer: "Everything."

I'm interested first in the composition of the question. Forgive me if I take the words out of order as I explicate – it seems somehow easier for me to understand.

If Quine means by **there** "What is there?", rather than "here", his question doesn't include the existence of the perceiver/questioner, perhaps creating a subject/object duality in ontology (a problem, since then "Everything" would not seem to include the questioner, who is "here"). Given his answer, I doubt that he means "there" in that way. If Quine is using "there" as in the title of the piece (*On What There Is*), as merely the beginning of a clause (as in "There is what?"), then we must look at his usage of the word "is", because that is

where the meaning in the question seems to lie (and we could perhaps dispose of the word “there” as an extra syllable).

Use of “**is**” rather than “are” seems to assume that reality is singular rather than plural, and thus that we should speak of it that way. If we were to assume that reality is plural (realities instead of reality, or things instead of a thing), we could ask “There *are* what (realities/things)?” rather than “There *is* what (reality/thing)?” Better yet, could we not ask “What are/is there?” to be fair? We could further simplify, since “there” seems to be used superfluously as the mere beginning of a clause, and ask “What is/are?” or even “What exist(s)?”

What could perhaps be substituted for another question word with equal substantiveness. We could ask “Why exist(s)?” or “When exist(s)?” or “How exist(s)?” or “Where exist(s)?” But these questions do not seem to be as central to the problem of ontology (and “Why” is more teleological than ontological). But what about “Who exist(s)?” This is a question that is very central to ontology. Some philosophers have said that it is the only important question, and the only way to truly get at “what” exist(s). For myself, it is the starting point of ontology (and a basis for epistemology), and represents perhaps a bigger “problem of ontology” than “What is there?”

Here we see that the simple question of ontology as Quine has framed it is not simple, and is not universally agreed upon. If we cannot see eye to eye on the question, we may not be able to agree upon an answer (if there is one).

Further, the problematic question “What is there?” is a question about existence. If we hold a question about existence as the container of the ontological problem (or problem of ontology, or problem of the study/knowledge of being/existence(s)), we seem to assume that the problem of ontology would not exist if there were no one around to question existence. Is the problem that something exists that asks “What exist(s)?” Or is the problem ontology itself (i.e., that we ask, or study, or presume to know anything about “What exists?”)? Is the problem the questioner, the question, or the act of questioning “What exist(s)?” It seems from a simple reading, Quine means the question itself, as he points to the problem as being identified/identical with “What is there?” In this case, where/whom did the question come from, and upon what is it based/constructed? Also, is the question of the existence of the question of existence (i.e., the existence of the question “What exist(s)?” under the purview of ontology? From Quine’s answer, we can assume that it is. That doesn’t sound simple to me.

Leaving the seething complexity of the question itself, what can be said of Quine's universally acknowledged answer "**Everything**"? Is there no one who has ever answered "Nothing" (whether they were wrong or right or whether we can even judge their wrongness or rightness)? Is there no one who has ever answered "Someone" (as in "There is no everything, only a person or persons")? Is there no one who has ever answered "Everything other than nothing" or "Everything other than nonexistent things" (as he later discusses)? Is there no one who has ever answered "Some one thing" (perhaps in contrast to Everything)? Or has no one ever turned the question into the answer ("What is there?" "What there is." "What exist(s)?" "What exist(s).") as Quine himself does later in the same paragraph? Is "What there is" identical with "Everything" in every way?

This brings us, I think, to some of the complexity of ontology: questioning existence, question(s) about existence, and questioner(s) of existence. Does questioning existence (ontology) exist? Of what does questioning existence exist? Does at least one question of existence exist? Of what does the question of existence exist? Does at least one questioner of existence exist? Of what does the one questioner of existence exist? Of what (or whom) are we questioning, and how? For me it

doesn't seem to be a simple three-syllable question or one word self-evident answer. The questions of ontology remaining to be answered satisfactorily are more complex than "What is nonbeing?" (as important and worthwhile as that is). And perhaps the fundamental question is not as simple as "What is there?" ...and maybe the answer could be a personal question turned into an answer: "Who's there." This would make knock knock jokes central to the complexity of the ontological problem.

Arguing Ontology in Analytic Metaphysics

Arguments about ontology in general (not to be confused with ontological arguments for the existence of God) in contemporary analytic metaphysics are typically composed of multiple parts: quantification (numbers/enumeration), thing(s) (whether composites or simples), and predicates (claims made about things). Pieces of arguments from various analytic metaphysicians are briefly identified and incorporated into a simple inquiry into the ontological makeup of metaphysical and specifically ontological argumentation in the analytic tradition. It is argued that the ontological makeup of these arguments about ontology seems to require the existence of abstract composite objects. To deny this fundamental nature of ontological arguments brings the validity or existence of that denial into question in some substantive way.

Of what do ontological arguments exist? Here I ask not about the nature of ontological arguments for God's existence, but about the nature of arguments concerning existence in general (arguments about ontology). In contemporary analytic metaphysics, philosophers have put forward a multitude of arguments about existence. What is the ontological makeup of these arguments about ontology? Of what do they exist?

Quantities

For Quine (2012a), the problem of ontology is simple: "What is there?" (21). The answer: "Everything." Disagreement only arises from what we count as making up "Everything." For Quine and many of his successors in analytic philosophy, ontological claims are made up of existential quantification. We all agree that the set of everything exists. Now we just need to enumerate over that set. Our best theory (often physics plays the role) will provide the tools (Soames 2009). The important question is "How many things (of this or that nature) are there in the world?" Zero, or one or more? In the end, we are left with a flat structure of items that we can number. Specific arguments about ontology are bent on the question "Can I count this?" (van Inwagen 2009, 498). Existence of things like dogs (or holes or numbers or fictional objects) are treated as identical with

“There are dogs such that there are one or more of them” (or negatively put, “There are dogs, such that there are not zero of them”) (Soames 2009).

This reliance on existential quantification finds a predecessor in the predicate logic of Frege (van Inwagen 2009, 483). For Frege, existence claims are quantification over things (Zalta 2012). Can you count over an item? If you cannot (i.e., the number is zero when you count over it), it does not exist (van Inwagen 2009, 483). The philosopher’s job is to use logic (as well as the best theories of scientists) to derive the full flat set of things in the world that can be numbered. Quality is not a question. Quantity is. And so the mereological universalists are permissive of every sum and composition, and nihilists only accept simple objects and no composites, nominalists accept concrete objects but not abstract entities, and conceptualists hold that abstract entities exist, but are mind-made. The arguments are over what is worthy of entry into the Great Big Book of Everything.

This quantification over things, though often mentioned, is as often as not overlooked in my estimation. To quantify over something is to count it. To number it. To note that there is one or more of it (or if it does not exist, zero of it). Quantification requires numbers (try quantifying without them sometime). In order

to get to 1, 1 must exist. What I am saying is that **existential quantification seems to require numbers**. Now there are plenty of philosophers who follow the way of existential quantification and make it the central feature of ontological argumentation, but who also deny the existence of numbers (Quine was in this camp for a while). I do not see how they can. If the point is to be able to count over the things that are, we must presuppose that we can count; and that with numbers! While Quine came to acknowledge quantification over (i.e., existence of) numbers, based on the fact that physics required them, he does not seem to have acknowledged that quantification itself requires numbers. We may argue that there is quantifier variance at the heart of the disagreement between mereological universalists and nihilists (McDaniel 2009), but in the end they both include quantification. If we deny the existence of numbers, we destroy our framework of existential quantification (Fine 2009). If we deny the existence (at least in some sense) of zero in predicate logic, we deny that there are things (like Pegasus) that do not exist (because there are zero things that do not exist in the Great Big Book of Everything, but if there is no zero, then it has no meaning to say that Pegasus does not exist). In which case there are numbers, because they must exist if they fail to not exist (after all, there is no zero to discount

them). More problematically, if there is not 1 or larger, how do we enumerate over what exists? If we deny numbers entry into the list of things, we break existential quantification (because now our existential quantification does not exist).

I must admit here that I do not particularly see the value of existential quantification, and agree with Fine (2009) that we should “give up on the account of ontological claims in terms of existential quantification” (9), and should instead be asking with Aristotle “What grounds what?” (Schaffer 2012). While I admit that quantification is necessary, not only in philosophical discourse, but in scientific inquiry as well (Sider 2009), I do not think that existential quantification is substantive—it is trivial (Fine 2009). Nevertheless, I acknowledge that many analytic philosophers hold to existential quantification (and to some form of predicate logic) in their arguments about ontology. What I would like to say to them is that “Your ontological claims and arguments are based on numbers.” And these same numbers are non-physical (Fine 2009). Ontological arguments based on abstract entities? God forbid!

Objects

Arguments about ontology in analytic philosophy by-and-large require numbers/

enumeration (through predicate logic and existential quantification). They are also built using references to things. What kinds of things (if there are indeed “kinds”) (Quine 2012b)? Quine’s (2012a) philosophical arguments include Pegasus, Plato (and his beard), Occam (and his razor), the Parthenon, a round square cupola, Berkeley College, the King of France, the Evening and the Morning Star, houses, roses, sunsets, dogs, Naples, and a penny, not to mention prime numbers larger than a million. Carnap (2012), who argues that ontological questions are meaningless, argues using a piece of paper, Chicago, a stone, a house, gas, fingers, and books. Arguments of others include cheese and crackers (Lewis & Lewis 2012), a lump of clay, a statue of Goliath (Gibbard 2012), unicorns, golden mountains, a round square, God (Chisholm 2012), make-believe games, mud pie, London, a tropical jungle, clouds, stars, planets, animals, parades, the earth, Nixon (Yablo 2012), Sherlock Holmes, keys, a battleship (Thomasson 2012), the big bang, tables, chairs, people, horses, apples, pebbles, hands (Schaffer 2012), black ravens, green emeralds (Quine 2012b), the Sydney opera house, scales, circles, the space-time world, heaven (Armstrong 2012), ships, cats (and their tails), atoms, bricks, tinker toy parts, a watch, particles of wood, cells, Tully and Cicero, the Colosseum, Salisburg Cathedral,

cars, and pieces of chalk (van Inwagen 2012), a park, a mob, a baseball, a window, a sofa, and the number 7 (Merricks 2012), clouds, droplets, electrons, a cathode, dead skin, the *Enigma*, cat hairs, Tibbles (the cat), 1001 cats, Fred's house, a mat, a lump of feline tissue, a river, and a garage (Lewis 2012). We have here a list of things. Large and small. The great inventory of the furniture of the world (or at least the furniture of the arguments of several analytic philosophers). But who is keeping track?

As philosophers, we were supposed to be enumerating what was in the list, right? So the end of our labor will be a list like the one above, full of things, but much, much longer? That does not sound very interesting. An itemized list is also not sufficient for clarification or analysis (McDaniel 2009). And how much larger will the list be? Let's see, we could start with the enormous list of "moderate-sized specimens of dry goods" (Austin 1962, 8), since that is what we deal with in our everyday lives. We will need to identify and list every one of them. But that is a pretty large list already. And what if we are deceived in our thinking and those things do not actually exist? Perhaps we are mereological nihilists, and we do not believe any of them exists (and thus cannot be counted). Instead, we will just say "simple 1", "simple 2", "simple 3", ... until we have listed every single mereological simple.

The only problem: no one has actually identified a mereological simple yet. Scientists do not know if they have found “the bottom”, and some philosophers have argued that there might not be one. That is a big problem. Mereological simples are supposed to fill the list, but we have no access to them to enumerate over them. Do we leave the list blank for now? In addition, the list cannot be a simple if it is (eventually) filled with simples. So the list (the sum total of the furniture of the world) cannot exist. Pop! There goes existential quantification. The baby is literally thrown out with the bathwater (both are composite objects).

Maybe we could try on universalism for size. In universalism, we will fill the list with everything (and then some). And by everything, I mean all those dry goods, wet goods, non-goods, summed goods, and counterpart goods, as well as anything (or nearly anything) anyone can think of besides. We will be permissive (actually, downright slutty) with what we allow in our list—not just “normal” objects like cats and books, but also my counterparts, numbers, Sherlock Holmes, holes, and the like. But that is not all. We will also add in all sums of all parts of all objects throughout all of time and space (like objects made up of Plato’s nose and the Eiffel tower). With each of these sums of all object parts, we find that they too can be summed, and summed, in infinite varieties of

sets, all enumerated in our list. That is a *lot* of counting (infinite). I don't want a job as an ontological auditor.

Can't we just go back to the good old days when stuff was stuff? Strange to say, but it seems as if philosophical arguments are still living in those good old days, because we find their arguments full of familiar objects (even when their arguments also include unfamiliar objects, impossible objects, possible objects, or when familiar objects are used as examples of things that do not exist). What is my point? Arguments about ontology talk about stuff. They count stuff (even when the philosophers who create them do not). Inside the Very Slim Booklet of Everything, or the Great Big Book of Everything, or the Infinitely Large Book of Everything, according to many analytic philosophers, there is at least a thing. Or maybe many. Or maybe infinite things. But there are not zero things in that list: there are one or more. Ontological arguments are fascinating stuff.

Predicates

Ontological argumentation boils down to a number of things in a list? Is there no more to it? What about predicates? Fine (2009) argues that existence is a predicate, not a quantifier. But even if you do not find Fine's arguments convincing, you are still going to need

predicates for your arguments about ontology. You need at least “exists”, and possibly “is composed of”, “roots”, “depends on”, “grounds”, “commit”, “quantifies”, “constitutes”, “is a function of”, “is”, “caused”, “contains”, “designates”, as well as (probably) many others. Predicates are necessary for predicate logic, because predicates are the claim, while things are what the claim is about (and besides, without predicates, “predicate logic” would be just ... well ... “logic”). More importantly, predicates are necessary for ontological argumentation. Without them, we only have things (or worse: letters, symbols, and/or numbers that designate thing-ness). Or perhaps our argument could consist of {thing 1, thing 2, thing 3, ...} (this sounds like a page from a Dr. Seuss book). Just a list. But not very convincing or cogent without knowing what the list means or is about. A grocery list is not an argument (although it can be used in one, for instance, if you forget to bring home the milk).

Predicates may be said, when paired with things, to compose claims for which you can test truth value. There is nothing testable about a list of items in itself. For instance, the following list has no truth value:

People,
New York,
Last name,
Byron,
Rollie,
Grace,
Emily

Nothing is claimed. You can enumerate over items in the list, but you cannot argue against it because it claims nothing. There is no truth-maker. It is not only boring; it also cannot be tested or confirmed (or denied). However, the following can be tested:

The only people with the last name of Byron in New York are: 1- Rollie, 2- Grace, and 3- Emily.

Here I make a claim (that we can argue for or against, and provide evidence for or against) about a list of things. We have a list of things, as well as a predicate that claims something about those things (and a restrictor that tells us the bounds of the claim). If there is no Grace

Byron in New York or if there is a Charlie Byron in New York, this proposition is false and the argument fails. Similarly, if I argue that:

Properties are merely essential valuations of a knower (like price tags), not existent qualities of the thing known.

We can argue for or against the claim. We can compose counter-claims. We can build an argument to support the claim using propositions composed of things and predicates (as well as other elements of language and logic), and argue for the truth value of the propositions, and therefore the truth value of the conclusion made regarding properties. And others can judge the argument. They can argue that properties, in some way, can be listed as things that exist, and that can be quantified over. A list is not enough for ontological argumentation, but once we have a claim, we can argue.

The Existence of an Ontological Argument

Arguments about ontology in the analytic tradition are typically made of quantification (numbers/enumeration), thing(s) (whether composites or simples), and predicates (claims made about things). Sometimes the quantification is the predicate (i.e. exists). Sometimes

the quantification is only implied in the argument. I think it would be acceptable if the quantification were absent entirely. If you think existential quantification is the keystone of analytic philosophical argumentation, feel free to keep it (remembering that it seems to require you also to be committed to numbers and thus to abstract objects). But the things and predicates must remain, or we have no argument. And arguments about ontology should at the very least *exist*.

Another thing that is important is to be able to argue. If your philosophical assumptions disallow you from committing to the existence of arguments (as abstract, composite things), you are at a disadvantage (because you have no argument). Even if you admit to things (of some sort) and predicates, you will still have quite a time getting off the ground if your ontological argument does not exist.

Here is one ontological argument I would like to make in this regard as a necessary presupposition to ontological argumentation:

Composite abstract objects exist.

By “exist”, I do not mean merely “can be counted over”, but you can take me as meaning that if you wish. A loose statement of my argument would be that composite abstract objects exist because ontological arguments are

abstract composite objects, and this ontological argument exists, and therefore abstract and composite objects exist. This is true even if you begin with thinking that no object in the list of “Everything” is a composite or an abstraction. If we wanted a formal argument to defend our original argument, the propositions and conclusions of the new argument might be something like:

P1- This is an argument.

P2- Arguments exist.

P3- Arguments are composite objects.

P4- Arguments are abstract objects.

C1- Composite objects exist.

C2- Abstract objects exist.

Let us walk through my argument. *This is an argument.* This statement is similar to “I am a man,” in that it is indexical. You can take it to say “These ideas or words here are an argument” or “The thing of which this proposition is a part is an argument.” A part of the argument points to itself (as a whole) as an argument. This specific argument is an

ontological argument (an argument about existence, not an argument about God).

Arguments exist. If you do not believe this is true, I do not care, because you have no argument. Argue with me that arguments do not exist, and I will not be able to hear you, because I cannot hear things that do not exist. I do not have to worry about non-existent arguments that others make. Any argument against the existence of arguments is a non-starter (because if it is true, it does not exist). You must either add arguments into the list of things that exist, or not have an argument. Either way, this proposition is true. To deny it is to deny your denial.

Arguments are composite objects. I usually use phonemes, words, phrases, sentences, etc. I use multiple ideas with meanings. Sometimes I also structure these things into propositions and conclusions. Do you? Do most philosophers? That sounds like parts and composition. If an argument has more than one thing of which it is composed, it is a composite. My argument has four propositions and two conclusions. I could probably reorder it so that it had more or fewer propositions or conclusions, more or fewer words, and more or fewer phonemes. But it is one argument. And it is made up of more than one thing. Some might argue that composite things do not exist, only mereological simples. But they would be making this claim in the

midst of an argument. And that argument is either: 1- not an argument, but a mere argument-wise arrangement of objects (perhaps phonemes, as the smallest divisible units of meaning in all languages: but are those simples—phonemes are abstract, so perhaps not), 2- an argument, but not existent (and I have already stated that I do not respond to non-existent arguments because they do not exist), 3- or a single thing (an argument is a simple itself). If their argument does not exist, but is rather an argument-wise arrangement of simples, how can I respond to it, since it is not one thing but many? They have no one argument. If their argument does exist, but is said to be a simple itself, where did it come from? If they created the argument, did they create it all at once as a simple? When they wrote it down, did it all get written at one time? Or was it composed? When they said it, was it spoken all at once as a simple, or was it put together one or more pieces at a time? Perhaps their argument is “So?”, in which case it could be considered a simple. But this is not very convincing, and in practice many would say is not an argument at all (as it makes no claims about anything, unless its meaning is drawn out into multiple parts, which makes it not a simple). Ontological arguments themselves, we have seen earlier, include things and predicates (and often quantification). Multiple parts. If an

argument is to exist, and it has parts, it is a composite object.

Arguments are abstract objects. I could think my argument in my brain. I could write my argument down. I could speak it out loud. I could sign it with sign language. I could finger paint it in Hebrew. I could use interpretive dance...you get the picture. These are physical things, but are they my argument? So I could transfer the message of my argument to different forms of communication. But the idea of the argument is abstract. It can be translated because it is not merely a linguistically bound mess of phonemes, or a compilation of electrical signals in my brain, or red paint on a canvas, or a hip pivot. Arguments convey meanings, ideas, claims. For example, existential quantification itself is not a physical thing, but an abstraction about how enumeration relates to existence. I have argued earlier that the existence claims of many analytic philosophers are themselves dependent on abstract objects: numbers (through predicate logic and existential quantification). Existence itself is an abstraction. I have never seen an existence. If an argument is merely an abstraction (or is a predicate), but not an object, I do not think I can respond to it because there is no object to respond to. If someone says that abstract objects do not exist, of what is their argument composed? If it is a concrete object,

the argument disappears once its physicality is gone. Not only that, if my argument is a concrete object, at the very least, composite concrete objects exist.

But I think it is necessary for your argument to be abstract in order for you to communicate it to me. If you think that arguments are concrete objects, when you construct your argument in your brain, your argument is made up of electrical pulses in brain tissue. But to express it, you have to write it down, speak it out, or in some other way communicate it to me or others. When you do that, if your argument is concrete, it is actually still in your brain, not on paper or in reverberations in the air. You can never communicate that argument you have in your brain (because communication requires media change and thus rearrangement). You are merely constructing completely different arguments (or simples arranged argument-wise). If you think it is the same concrete argument (or simples arranged argument-wise) you are sadly mistaken, because each instantiation is arranged differently. I can never hear or read your original argument, because it is forever trapped inside your head (at least until you forget it). I can only come into contact with other simples arranged argument-wise, but not arranged at all like the argument you are thinking. You could say “I can construct the

argument outside of myself (on paper), so I can give you that paper.” But that paper does not tell me anything about what was in your brain (concretely) when you wrote on it. What was in your brain was a totally separate and different construction (it was a totally different physical arrangement). You *do* think you have an argument? And that you can communicate that *same* argument? Then the argument itself must be abstract.

In order for your argument to exist outside of you (and for me to come into contact with it) it must be abstract. If you want to argue **with me** (and not just in your brain), you require an abstract object. So for any argument that is communicated we can be sure that it is either: 1- abstract, in which case my argument is correct, or 2- concrete, in which case it is not an argument that corresponds to what is in your brain—what you were thinking was your argument (because it is not the self-same concrete object, or argument-wise arrangement). So I have no reason to respond to it, as it is not the argument you are thinking you have. Any defeater of my argument that is presented seems to be a defeater of itself.

It follows that if this is an argument, and it exists, and arguments are composite abstract objects, both composite and abstract objects exist (as this is one).

Any argument given against the one above must show either that a) their argument does not exist (in which case we should not listen to their non-existent argument), b) their argument is a simple (in which case it is not an argument, as arguments about ontology are multi-part), or that c) their argument is not abstract but is rather concrete and physical (in which case they cannot communicate it).

When you make arguments, it seems best to start with presuppositions that arguments can exist, can be constructed, and can exist outside of you and still be your same argument. If the ontology of your ontological argument is in question, the content of your ontological argument is in question. Your argument will fail to be proved true or false if it does not exist, is not composite, and/or is not abstract.

.....

Of what do arguments about ontology exist? It seems many are made of quantification, things and predicates. I have also argued that arguments about ontology are composite abstract objects, and that to deny this is to bring the validity or existence of your denial into question in some substantive way. Even if I have been unsuccessful, I still hope to have brought to the fore the importance of the ontological makeup of arguments about

ontology. Take care what you commit to, as it may have a catastrophic effect on the existence of your own argument. While Carnap seems to disagree, it seems to me that at the very least arguments about ontology should **exist**.

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W.V. Quine's "Natural Kinds": The Dubiousness of Similarity & Kind and the Induction of Grue Non-Ravens

Is the notion of kinds and similarities a dubious concept? Are the natural kinds ultimately reducible and superfluous? Can we inductively arrive at grue non-ravens (and what in the world is a grue or a non-raven)? In this paper, I wish to critique W.V. Quine's argument regarding the puzzles about non-black non-ravens and grue emeralds put forth in his essay "Natural Kinds".

Non-black non-ravens

Hempel's puzzle of non-black non-ravens suggests that "each black raven tends to confirm the law that all ravens are black," and further that "each green leaf, being a non-black non-raven, should tend to confirm the law that all non-black things are non-ravens, that is, again, that all ravens are black." This is said by Quine to be "paradoxical". Quine posits a solution to this puzzle by stating that the "complement of a projectible predicate need not be projectible". So a green leaf counts toward

“All leaves are green”, but not toward “All non-black things are non-ravens”. Quine’s argument for rejecting the projectibility of complements of a projectible predicate seems to be based on a distaste for the idea that looking at one kind (or non-kind) can help us confirm projections about another kind (because for him, kinds are too messy). However, if we take Hempel’s puzzle at face value, there is not much of a puzzle, and no paradox, and our notion of kind/similarities does not seem to be put into doubt.

If there are one million ravens in the world, and I have examined 800,000 of them, and every one of them has been black, we can use induction to predict that the next raven I examine will be black, and further that it is likely that all ravens are black. When I examine raven number 800,001 and it is black, I get closer to confirming this prediction based on induction. Let us say, for the sake of argument, that there are 10^{82} other objects in the universe (other than ravens). If I examine a green leaf (which is both a non-raven and non-black), I show that one of those many other objects in the universe that is non-black is also a non-raven. While we don’t usually do things this way, we can see that it is just a question of statistics. One in 10^{82} is very small, and thus is not much of a confirmation of our hypothesis that all non-black things are non-ravens (and

thus that all ravens are black). However, one in one million is statistically larger, and thus is more of a confirmation of our hypothesis that all ravens are black. As long as there are more things that are non-ravens than there are that are ravens, it is exceedingly more easy (and intuitive) to confirm that all ravens are black on the basis of seeing ravens than on the basis of seeing non-ravens. That's not a paradox, that's just statistics. And it doesn't seem to be much of a puzzle. There is a puzzle, however, involving induction from kinds related to this: If we only had an idea of a raven, and no one had ever examined a raven's color, could we examine every non-black non-raven in the universe and confirm that ravens are always black (or say anything about what ravens are, based on what other things are not)? Or does the notion of kinds (like black things or ravens) require at least one example (and not merely non-examples) to uncover the nature of the kind?

Grue emeralds

Quine asks us to picture Goodman's "grue" emerald puzzle as an example of the "dubious scientific standing of a general notion of similarity, or of kind." So what is the puzzle? Goodman creates a universe in which emeralds are being examined to see what color they are. As we examine each emerald, we notice that all

the emeralds we have examined thus far are green. So far so good. We would use induction to predict that any emerald we examine tomorrow will likely be green (they have all been green so far, so that would be a good hypothesis about the state of things, unless we know that the emeralds will change color overnight, or we have examined emeralds that are not green, which is not the case).

However, Goodman proposes a new idea in the form of a proposition: “Call anything *grue* that is examined today or earlier and found to be green or is not examined before tomorrow and is blue.” Let’s think a little about Goodman’s proposition. He is asking us to create a new naming convention whereby we name emeralds based on color and examined date (green and examined today or earlier, blue and not examined before tomorrow). So any emeralds before this specific date in time are green, because they are green, correct? They are also *grue*, because they are green and were examined today and earlier. So this state of affairs seems to imply that inductively we should hypothesize that an emerald examined tomorrow will have the same likelihood of being green as it does of being *grue*. Or that induction based on kinds of things is dubious, because the notion of kinds and similarities is dubious. That seems to be the way that Quine

deals with the puzzle, but let's take a closer look.

I have a daughter named Emily that turned 10 on July 15, 2012. On July 14, I could have said "9 is the age of Emily Wadholm today or 10 is the age of Emily Wadholm tomorrow." But in this case, Emily is in fact 9 today *and* 10 tomorrow (because it is her birthday tomorrow). Emily was 9 every other day of the year before July 15, so we should predict that she will still be 9 years old on July 15 and after. Unless something happens. Something did happen—she changed from 9 to 10 because July 15 was her birthday. Let's propose, then, to call *nen* any Emily Wadholm that is 9 on July 14 and earlier *or* is 10 on July 15 and after. I'm okay with that. We can predict on July 14 that Emily will be 9 on July 15 based on her being 9 years old for so many days previously, but we'd be wrong (she's going to change ages). If we knew anything about aging and birthdays, we would be able to use inductive reasoning to say that Emily would be 10 on July 15. Good thing we have the number *nen*. We can instead predict that Emily is *nen* years old, and we'll be right! Emily is *nen*: she is 9 on July 14 and earlier or 10 on July 15 and after. But wait...if we're correct, that means that we have misdefined *nen*; *nen* should be "9 on July 14 and earlier **and** 10 on July 15 and after." If our prediction about *nen* is correct, we are forced to get rid of

the “or” and replace it with an “and”. If nen is correct, nen needs redefined (as both statements are true, and no disjunctive is needed). If Emily is nen tomorrow, she is 9 today and earlier **and** 10 tomorrow.

Let’s look back at grue and imagine, for the sake of testing the argument, that Goodman and Quine are right in suggesting that it seems to be equally plausible (inductively) that an emerald we examine tomorrow will be green and that it will be grue. (For Quine, an intuitive notion of similarity between green emeralds makes them more likely intuitively, though not necessarily inductively). After all, all of the other emeralds were green in the past, leading us to make a prediction that all emeralds are green (even the emeralds we have not yet examined). And as we examine more emeralds, we may find ourselves closer to being statistically able to predict that all emeralds are green (as the unexamined emeralds near 0) as we did with ravens earlier. However, we also find that all the previously examined emeralds seem to point to a prediction of a grue emerald tomorrow, despite the fact that a grue emerald is nonsensical and smelling of philosophical trickery. So how do we choose between green and grue? On the basis of the intuitiveness of similarity/kind, as Quine seems to suggest? If we allow ourselves to be drawn into the puzzle, we may have to admit the equal likelihood of

either green or grue, or like Quine, to speculate about projectible predicates and question the scientific standing of the idea of similarities and kind. But let's not give up yet. Maybe Emily being nen is a clue to emeralds not being grue. Let's look ahead to tomorrow when our predictions about the color of previously unexamined emeralds will be tested, and see what the results are, then use a time machine and come back to today to make our decision about the color of emeralds that will be examined tomorrow (we'll be testing the nature, value and validity of a proposition based on its results).

Let's take the simple choice first: we say that emeralds examined tomorrow will be green based on inductive reasoning that seems to suggest that as we experience more green-only emeralds we are more likely to experience green-only emeralds in the future. If an emerald we examine tomorrow is green, we were right about our prediction (for the time being). If an emerald we examine tomorrow is red, we were wrong. But we based our hypothesis on past empirical data, so we were right to hypothesize that based on our previous research, all emeralds are green. It is just a matter of an incorrect hypothesis. We merely need to adjust our hypothesis about the future to account for our experiences in the past. Tomorrow we will

adjust our hypotheses if need be. That's how science works.

Now let's take the more difficult choice: we say, based on the grue proposal, that emeralds examined tomorrow will be grue (and thus blue). If an emerald we examine tomorrow is green (or red, or purple, etc.) we were wrong. If an emerald we examine tomorrow is grue (and thus blue), we were right. Unfortunately, if we were right, grue is not what we thought it was. Grue was supposed to mean any emerald that is "examined today or earlier and found to be green *or* is not examined before tomorrow and is blue." But we find that if an unexamined emerald is blue tomorrow after examination (and thus, grue according to our proposed prediction), then grue actually means any emerald that is "examined today or earlier and found to be green *and* is not examined before tomorrow and is blue." If the prediction about grue is true, grue is not a disjunctive proposition. True grue as it was proposed satisfies both sides of the disjunction, meaning that there is no disjunction (and we may infer no intended disjunction). May we infer from this that the nature of grue is nonsense (and mere philosophical gobble-dee-gook) or that it has been miscommunicated? If it is nonsense (which I think it is), let's get rid of it as a proposition. If it has merely been miscommunicated, then let's be more clear about

what grue means (“and”, not “or”). So if we will be right about grue tomorrow, then grue is a bad (non-inductive) option. Without the disjunction, grue is a green emerald examined today or earlier **and** is predictive of a blue emerald tomorrow. But based on inductive reasoning, we have already stated that it is most likely that an emerald examined tomorrow will be green—after all, all of the earlier examined emeralds were green. We have no good reason to choose grue (there is no evidence for unexamined emeralds to be blue), and subsequently no puzzle over kinds or similarities. Grue is not equal to B or C, it is equal to B & C, and thus not a good choice (unless, like nen, we know beforehand something about the rest of the emeralds or about a change that will take place in the unexamined emeralds overnight, but if that is so, we should have entered that into the proposal concerning grue). Inductively we should hypothesize today that tomorrow’s examination of emeralds will yield similar results to what we have observed thus far, and they will be green, not blue or grue. Further, if we find that all non-green things are also non-emeralds, and we have at least one example of an emerald and it is green, we could hypothesize that all emeralds are green. Consequently, we could also say that all ravens

are non-grue (but could we say that all non-grue things are non-ravens?).

Can we infer from the non-raven and grue puzzles that the notion of similarities or kinds is dubious in its scientific standing? I think the reasoning behind this inference has been dissipated. The kinds seem to have stood their ground. Even if science advances and posits reduction of kinds into superfluity (as Quine asserts at the end of his argument), still humans and animals seem to make use of kinds and similarities at every point in their lives, causing recognitions of kinds and similarities to proliferate. They are now richer kinds, but they are nevertheless persistent and useful (and made use of by even the scientists and philosophers who wish to deny them validity). Another question might be “Does a study of kinds belong to ontology, or to epistemology?” An answer to that, I fear, could be full of unending puzzles, though perhaps not of the grue non-raven variety.

Gideon Rosen's Modal Fictionalism: Counterparts, Fictional Counterparts, and Fidelity Constraints

It was the best of times, it was also the best of times, it was the age of foolishness, it was also the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was also the epoch of belief... This is a tale of two possible worlds, an exploration of two specific incarnations of theories about "possible worlds" (one of which is unambiguously parasitic), and an exploration of how counterpart theory might break fidelity constraints. And this is not fiction.

Modal Realism & Fictionalism

David Lewis' modal realism (elucidated in his *A Philosopher's Paradise* and other writings) proposes that talk of possibilities, like "I could have eaten a hamburger for breakfast this morning," are truly just talk of possible worlds that really exist in some concrete way. What the proposition means is that I (actually, my counterpart in a possible world, not me) *did* eat a hamburger for breakfast this morning in some possible world. And there are perhaps infinite

possible worlds, where every thing or event that was possible in our world actually occurred in theirs. Perhaps I ate a unicorn hamburger for breakfast in one of them. In this form of realism, modal language ("possibly", "necessarily," etc.) is about other worlds, not our own.

Second, Gideon Rosen's modal fictionalism (expounded upon in the clearly titled *Modal Fictionalism*) points out that philosophers (and even normal people) are a bit incredulous concerning the concrete existence of all of those possible worlds. They are too messy ontologically, and more profoundly, they are just too hard to believe in. Rosen suggests a seemingly more palatable (yet parasitic) mutation of Lewis' realism, by positing that possible worlds, and modal language about them, are actually about stories/fictions concerning possible worlds. Rosen gently wraps most of Lewis' realism inside of a book jacket, and declares the piece "fiction". As long as the worlds are merely in fictional stories, we may be more likely to buy them. All the suggested benefits of realism, without the greatest weakness: unbelievability. Sure to be a bestseller.

The Argument from Concern

In *Modal Fictionalism*, Rosen presents a powerful argument against both kinds of

possible world talk; what he calls the argument from concern, built from Kripke's objection to Lewis' counterpart theory. The argument goes something like this:

In realism, when I say "I could have eaten a hamburger for breakfast," I really mean "My counterpart in a possible world did eat a hamburger for breakfast."

This counterpart to me is never identical to me.

Someone else ate the hamburger, not me.

I couldn't care less if someone else ate a hamburger, no matter how much like me they are. I'm still hungry.

Rosen admits that this objection applies to both realism and fictionalism. In realism, why should I be concerned about my counterpart, and in fictionalism, why should I be concerned about my fictional counterpart? Here, Rosen points out that fidelity constraints may be broken or mangled: my speech (and caring) about myself in modal language seems to be incompatible with the ideas that I am just talking (or caring about) my counterpart in another world. Fidelity to my original modal beliefs is gone.

Rosen responds to Kripke's objection by pointing out that maybe if we accept realism (or his more charming and elegant fictionalism) we will start to care about our counterparts in other worlds and the fidelity will reemerge (whether in the form of realism or fictionalism). Rosen admits that Kripke's objection is a strong one, though perhaps not undefeatable. I will suggest what in my mind seems to be a stronger argument based on the beginning of Kripke's objection.

The Argument of Identity in Modal Language

The central thesis of counterpart theory seems to be that counterparts are not *identical* to the objects or people in this world of which they are counterparts (as opposed to the idea of trans-world individuals). I think *that* is the argument. When I say "I could have," I don't mean "My counterpart did." I and my counterpart are not identical. If we were identical, I would have a hamburger in my stomach. I would live in a possible world other than this one. I would have higher cholesterol levels than I do right now. If we say that my proposition "I could have" really means "my counterpart did," there is no fidelity to the subject of the sentence, namely *me*. The only reason I don't care about the breakfast of my counterpart (following Kripke) is because it

was not *my* breakfast, it was that of a stranger. The not caring is important, but the identity of who I am not caring for is more so.

If I say “Socrates was bald,” I do not mean a stranger to Socrates was bald. This non-modal proposition is about Socrates, not a stranger to Socrates. Similarly, if I say (using modal language) “I could have eaten a hamburger for breakfast,” I do not mean “A stranger to me ate a hamburger for breakfast.” If I exist, and at least one other thing besides me exists as well, when I say “I am”, I do not mean “That other thing is.” I am me, that thing is that thing. Both realism and fictionalism (if tied to counterpart theory) seem to have snuck in someone else into my proposition about me (and left me out of it entirely!). No wonder I don’t care: it wasn’t me that the proposition was about. Realism and fictionalism have broken fundamental fidelity constraints: propositions about one thing (me) are changed to mean propositions about a completely different thing (not-me). This is not merely a “substantial revision” of modal belief, as Rosen suggests. It is a substantial revision of the original proposition.

When I say “I could have eaten a hamburger for breakfast” is true, I say it is true about *me*. If we change who the proposition is about, we must reevaluate whether the new proposition is true (because it is a new

proposition, not the same one). In realism and fictionalism, we would change the proposition to “My counterpart (or my fictional counterpart, or fictionally my counterpart) ate a hamburger for breakfast.” This is a different proposition. Because we cannot verify that my counterpart even exists (we have no way of knowing about him for sure), we can’t say whether this is a true or false statement. On the other hand, my fictional counterpart does exist (I just made him up), and he did eat the fictional hamburger for breakfast (and it was fictionally delicious). However, the two propositions “I could have” and “My (fictional) counterpart did” are fundamentally different propositions, and other than similarities concerning details, don’t say anything about the other (or depend on the truth of the other, or constitute the truth-maker for the other). It is my belief that part of the utility of realism is undone by Lewis’ counterpart theory, if not by other objections (like unbelievability). Fictionalism may still stand (and truthfully, I think it is a beautiful idea), but if counterpart theory is applied, it says nothing about me or propositions about me, and thus fails to address modal language about persons or specified individuals (like I, Socrates, that horse, the Pacific Ocean, and my hamburger). That kind of modal language seems to be out of bounds (as far as applying analyses go) as long as counterpart theory is held.

Rosen (or Lewis) might respond to such a critique with a simple assertion: counterparts, while not identical, are equivalent to individuals and are not merely comparative. Equivalence may be construed to mean that two things or persons may be interchangeable now (or in the past), but at some point may diverge. I could have been substituted for my counterpart before breakfast (and that fateful hamburger) and no one would be the wiser (even me or him). So my counterpart would not have the same identity as me (we are not the same person), but would be equivalent to me in the past though not in the present. So we could swap “I could have” in my proposition with “My counterpart did” since the two are equivalent.

This assertion of equivalence, however, suffers the same problems as identity: the person we are talking about is still not me. Even if $x+2=5$, and thus $x=3$, we cannot always say in every equation that $x=3$ (x does not equal 3 in many equations—just this particular x equals 3). We mean *this* x equals three (in this context). Similarly, if $x=3$ and $y=3$, we cannot always say that in every equation $x=y$ (in some equations $x=10$ and $y=2x$). In general, two individual things may be equivalent at some point, but they might not be identical, and if we speak about specific things in specific contexts they are not necessarily equivalent outside of those contexts. If we specify *this* thing or

person, equivalence just will not do. *Specific things and individuals are not equivalent indexically.* The realist's proposition about my counterpart and his hamburger is not equivalent to me and my hamburger. I am in this world, and I am referencing myself and my own hamburger. A possible hamburger just will not do for breakfast.

And Bob and his hamburger lived happily ever after...

Trenton Merrick's Epiphenomenalism and Eliminativism: Causality Large and Small

A baseball shatters a window. Or is it that atoms arranged baseball-wise cause atoms arranged window-wise to scatter? Do baseballs and windows even exist? In “Epiphenomenalism and Eliminativism” Trenton Merricks argues that composites (macrophysical objects) do not exist. I will here display a bit of modern metaphysical theatre and ask whether objects small (even simple) and large (even composite) exist; but first, let us set the stage for our drama.

The Characters, Plot and Setting

The Characters

O (an object, in this case a baseball)

X (a single object, in this case an atom of the Democritian small indivisible-unit variety, not the physicists' composite object)

Xs (a chorus of many single objects, in this case all atoms that are said to compose the baseball)

W (the window or atoms arranged window-wise, a victim, or victims, of violence)

P (a human, in this case a philosopher who argues about causality with Trenton Merricks)

M (a human, in this case a philosopher named Trenton Merricks who is somewhere off-stage, heard but not seen)

The Plot

E (an event, in this case the violent crash of a window, or for Merricks an atomic collision and scattering). E has occurred before the drama begins.

>>> (a causal relationship, in this case O >>> E would be read O caused E, and O !>>> E would be read O did not cause E—this is one of the points in question)

The Setting

No mention is made about the events leading up to the violence of our drama. The dark stage is set with broken glass scattered on the ground, beside what looks

like a baseball. A philosopher enters the stage.

Scene 1: Causal Irrelevance

- W. (The broken glass gasps its last breath and lets out a mortal sigh)
- P. What have we here? What is the cause of this violent act? What thing through yonder window breaks? O, are you to blame? (P points his finger at O)
- M. No! (M speaks from off-stage) O may not even exist. It was the Xs of which O is constituted. O is causally irrelevant as to whether Xs (its constituent atoms) caused E.
- P. What? (Looks startled.) What was that voice just now?
- M. It was me, Trenton Merricks.
- P. I think I've heard of you before... "The Phantom of the Ontology"... but what is causal irrelevance?
- M. Four things: (He whispers as a chant)

- O is not one of the Xs ($O \neq X$),
- O plus Xs do not cause E ($O + Xs \not\ggg E$)
- None of the Xs cause O to cause E ($X \not\ggg (O \ggg E)$)
- O does not cause any single X to cause E ($O \not\ggg (X \ggg E)$)

Do you see now why I said O (the baseball) is causally irrelevant as to whether Xs (its constituent atoms) caused E (the event or events)? For the baseball is not any one of the atoms. It is numerically distinct. And the broken window was caused by the atoms. Thus, the baseball didn't have anything to do with it. In fact, the baseball does not even exist, only atoms arranged baseball-wise, and the window is actually...

- P. But wait! With the baseball and its atoms, we do not usually hold that the baseball is one of the parts of the whole, but is the whole itself. Instead, in some views (and I'll enumerate three), the baseball is all of its atoms together ($O = Xs$) and thus "baseball-wise" is a thing, or in another view the baseball is something but the Xs do not

exist as distinct entities any longer (O is, but there are no distinct Xs), and in yet another view the baseball is all of its atoms together plus something else, like organization, form, complexity, information, design, function, or something of the like ($O = Xs + ?$). In those views, O is still not one of the Xs for one reason or another, but does that make it causally irrelevant to E? After all, in those views O directly caused E.

- M. For the sake of argument, let us imagine that O (as you variously define it) is still causally irrelevant to E. The Baseball plus its atoms did not cause the window to shatter ($O + Xs \not\gggg E$).
- P. But if the baseball is the atoms, we are not adding anything to the Xs or O ($Xs = O$ and so $O \gggg E$). Or if the atoms do not exist as distinct things, but only the baseball, then we cannot add the atoms to the baseball because they do not exist (O and so $O \gggg E$). Or if the baseball is its composite atoms plus something, we could say that the baseball that is partially composed of atoms caused the window to shatter ($O = Xs + ?$ and so $O \gggg E$). The baseball is not in addition to its atoms. Rather,

the baseball is the atoms and something else (it is not merely some distinct thing; it is the composition of the atoms plus something else).

M. What about the third and fourth lines of my causal irrelevance chant?

P. If none of the atoms cause the baseball to cause the window to shatter ($X \nrightarrow (O \rightarrow E)$), and the baseball does not cause atoms to cause the window to shatter ($O \nrightarrow (Xs \rightarrow E)$), we might still have options other than causal irrelevance open to us.

M. Like what?

P. Well, let us say that in option one the atoms cannot cause the baseball to cause anything, or vice versa, because the composition of the atoms is the baseball ($O = Xs$). Rather, the baseball (or, equivalently, the composition of all of the baseball's atoms) causes the window to shatter.

Our second option: the atoms do not exist, and so cannot cause the baseball to cause anything, or vice versa, because they do not exist (only O, no more single X). Rather, the baseball

(that fiendish devil) causes the window to shatter all on its own.

In option the third, the atoms cannot cause the baseball to cause anything, or vice versa, because the atoms all together, plus something, equals the baseball. Rather, the baseball (all of the atoms plus something) causes E. In this view, one single X of the baseball might cause E, and we could still say "O caused E," because, although it was not the baseball in each of its parts that caused the event, it was part of the entirety that caused the event, and thus the whole caused the event.

- M. But the part does not equal the whole (O \neq X), as in what I said first about causal irrelevance.

- P. You speak truly. (ponders...) But...in your view all of the atoms that were arranged baseball-wise did not cause the event either, only the ones that were involved in the shattering. If we can subtract even one atom from the many and the window still shatters the same, we have proved that not all of the atoms were necessary for the event to occur, and thus that some of the atoms

that were arranged baseball-wise were “causally irrelevant”. So the Xs did not cause E, only this X and that X, and it is likely that those ones weren’t even arranged baseball-wise (if we deleted all of the causally irrelevant atoms from the mix). So the baseball-wise-ness is causally irrelevant as well.

- M. That is good, because I do not think that “baseball-wise-ness” is a thing, rather it is just an arrangement.
- P. But if the baseball-wise-ness is causally irrelevant and not a thing, why do you refer to the atoms as being arranged baseball-wise as if it were important to this case?
- M. It is important. It helps us identify which atoms I am talking about.
- P. But we do not know which atoms you are talking about. (points at Xs) Perhaps only some of those atoms caused E, not all of them. And if that is true, your use of “baseball-wise” does not help us identify which ones those are. Don’t we need the real culprits, and not just atoms acting in concert in

which some might have been the culprits?

Or do we?

If the baseball is a true composition, as in two of the views I mentioned earlier, we may be able to posit that while $O \neq X$ (and thus some of the atoms do not equal all of the atoms, or some of the atoms do not equal all of the atoms plus something), still $O = Xs$ or maybe $O = Xs + ?$. If a part of O is guilty, O is guilty. Not guilty by association, but guilty because it is composed of the guilty (at least in part). Each X does not have to be guilty for Xs to be guilty. Like a composite statement, in which one part is false, and thus can make the entirety false. It may be that applying causal irrelevance to a composite is never quite appropriate for this reason.

- M. Why would you say that?
- P. Because if O is a composite, made up at least partially by Xs , then what Xs do in concert, so does O , for O is made up of Xs . O (if composed of Xs) is not an X itself (and it might be irrational to suppose it was), and so is counted

differently (it is not one among the many, it is the many, or the many plus something). In the additional view, if O is a unity, Xs do not exist in and of themselves, and O is the cause (for lack of other causer). So it seems that O is responsible for E in all three of these other views, in spite of positing causal irrelevance (because causal irrelevance may not apply to them).

(grabs O from the ground and binds him to take him to prison)

- O. Noooooo!
- P. Silence! There is only one thing I still wish to know. What about the existence of our phantom? If it is a macrophysical object, made up of atoms, does it exist? I guess we will never know, for only M's words entered this show.
- M. Hmmm.
- P. And there the phantom speaks again! And is he causally relevant and able to speak, or is it his atoms that speak? Further, if the argument for causal irrelevance is a composite (and it seems

to be made of at least four parts as enumerated), does it exist in his view?

(Silence)

(Another baseball is thrown from offstage and hits P on the head, knocking him to the ground and killing him instantly)

M. (Merricks enters from offstage, looking at the dead body of P aghast, then turns and whispers to the audience) I didn't do it!

(M exits)

Scene 2: Conclusions Large and Small

(The first baseball, amongst the wreckage of the glass and the broken philosopher at its feet, rises and begins to sing as in a Greek chorus)

Xs. Though many, we are one. Though I
 am small, we are large. Are we ulti-
 mately one, do we cease to exist if we
 are, or are we many and parts of
 something grander than us all together?

X. I am one.

X. Me too.

X. Yes, and me.

Xs. But are we part of something more than
 us?

X. I am guilty.

X. I didn't do it.

Xs. Together, we are guilty.

O. As am I.

X. Bummer.

(The curtain descends)

EPISTEMOLOGY

The Skeptic's Dream

Introduction

As I slept, I dreamt of a world like our own. My thoughts slipped from one scene to another, and I found myself, in the end, in front of a computer setting out to construct a philosophical paper on epistemological skepticism. I formulated my thoughts carefully, and turned over in my mind what I thought were convincing arguments on behalf of Descartes' skeptical hypothesis that I may be merely dreaming, and thus that I cannot have certain knowledge through the senses. As I began to type, I slowly realized I was indeed dreaming. I became convinced that my hands, the keyboard, the mouse, the computer, even the chair on which I was sitting were not part of external reality. And because I was dreaming, there was no need to continue writing (since no one but me could read what I wrote). So I sat and thought. I was utterly convinced, totally believing now that I was in a dream. Why? Because I could not be certain that I was not. I believed because I was convinced that the disbelief required by the skeptical argument was not mere assent to a lack of knowledge

about external reality, but was an admission of belief in a different reality. That reality *was* the dream world in which I had no true knowledge of external reality. I had slipped into the skeptic's dream. I was not the first to have done so.

I was following on the heels of Rene Descartes, long dead. Descartes' dream argument, recorded in Meditation I, presents a strong skeptical case that leads from belief in certainty of the external world, to disbelief via doubt, to belief in the skeptical alternative of the dream world (and not mere uncertainty). The argument addresses certainty, not mere knowledge, and is made thus more convincing and effective than current typical skeptical arguments. Descartes uses doubt to argue toward belief. But are there reasons to doubt Descartes' doubt, his principle of prudence applied to the senses and the mind? Can Descartes be certain about the nature of a dream? Am I trapped forever in this skeptic's dream? Descartes' dream argument, while it is in my estimation the strongest and most convincing skeptical argument concerning certainty of knowledge, is subject to weakening of its own foundations if it is taken for its word, and thus offers escape from the dream through dissolution of the argument.

The Doubter's Paradise: Reasons to Disbelieve

The Dream Argument: Descartes and Certainty

Descartes' dream argument begins with a principle about prudence. We might formulate it as a premise something like:

- 1- We are prudent not to be certain of (or place absolute belief in) what has once deceived us.**

We are certain in our opinions that we perceive the external world as it is. But if our eyes have deceived us, we cannot always be absolutely certain in what we see, because we use our eyes to see, and they may be faulty from time to time. If we have been insane in the past (or have known of those who are so), we may not be able to be certain in the future in what our minds represent to us as reality. This is where the dream argument arises: dream worlds can at times be just as irrational as the perceived waking worlds of the insane. I may be Napoleon in my dream, I may fly, I may see squirrels turn into kites and eat a car. So:

- 2- Dreams have deceived me regarding the external world.**

Past circumstances of deception (or uncertainty) in a core faculty may (and should) lead us to uncertainty in future perceptions of that faculty and uncertainty in all beliefs founded on those perceptions. I may be fooled by a dream into thinking I am experiencing the external world, and I may come to find out that it was a mere “illusion” later. Descartes’ advice: don’t put confidence in your perceptions of the external world if they are arising from the same mind as that which gave you dreams. Note that one may still act as if things were certain even in the absence of belief: even though we may have been deceived by our vision in the past, we may still trust perceptions based on vision in the present and future, but it would not be prudent to *absolutely believe* in the certainty of what is given through them (this is an important distinction, because it gives proponents of Descartes’ kind of skepticism the ability to go on living as if they were not skeptics, at least at this point in the argument). I may have a horse named Wilma that is usually gentle when I ride it. But if Wilma has bucked me to the ground out of disobedience in the past, I am not prudent to place absolute belief in the certainty that she will be true to me now or in the future, though I may still be prudent to ride Wilma every day and trust (though not absolutely) that she will not hurt me.

So if in the past I have been wrong about dreaming (I have thought I was awake when I was actually dreaming):

3- I cannot be certain I am not dreaming now.

Why can I not be certain? While Descartes admits that events and objects in dreams may not be as distinct as what I am experiencing right now, and while it is not reasonable to think that I am now dreaming, still I have been deceived in the past. Prudence dictates that we not think anything is certain that has deceived us in the past. If we have been deceived into thinking we are awake and experiencing the external world in the past when we were actually dreaming, we should not be certain that we are awake now (we could be wrong). If there is the slightest crack in my foundation of knowing the external world right now, the smallest doubt that I may be currently dreaming, I am no longer certain I am not dreaming.

Descartes takes this argument further to posit that if it is possible that God is an evil demon bent on our deception, even our certainty in math or other non-external facts is put into question, and thus:

4- If there is a God who allows me to be deceived, I cannot be certain of anything I receive from the senses or the mind.

After all, if God allowed us to be deceived even once (and Descartes takes as a given that he has allowed us to be deceived at least about dreaming and the like), it might also be possible that he would allow (or cause) us to be deceived in every other thing. He may in fact be an evil demon who seeks to deceive us in all things. He may be the dream-maker, the great illusionist, the father of lies. What is the result of these premises?

I am certain of only my uncertainty.

If we are to dispel the dream-world and the demon, Descartes argues, we must go on to believe in the skeptical hypothesis to get at the end of our doubt to obtain certain knowledge (or at least the suspension of belief in what is not). But this believing in the skeptical hypothesis (that this is merely a dream, a deceitful illusion of an evil demon) is difficult to maintain. I am easily distracted by the day-to-day, the potentially illusory external world of my perceptions. I seem to fight within against this dark belief. If this is a dream, I want to stay in my dream and never awaken to the reality that I am actually just dreaming. Under

Descartes' tutelage, we have come from belief, through disbelief, to belief. Belief in the certainty of my knowledge of an external world, through disbelief (using the metaphor of dreams) in my certainty, to (provisional) belief in the skeptical hypothesis to test it and see if we can come to the end of our doubt if we embrace it fully and without reserve.

Dreams of Certainty or Knowledge

I believe it is in our interests here to point out that while some, like Stroud (2008), have taken Descartes' argument to be centered on knowledge (as justified true belief), it is not in Descartes' purview to analyze what we commonly take as knowledge, but rather to focus on certainty of knowledge (knowing for certain). In Meditation I, Descartes tells us of the things of which we may doubt: opinions—beliefs that are uncertain and that are not perfectly justified. Descartes' focus is on certainty, not mere knowledge but *perfect* knowledge. Pryor's (2000) immediate justification has no place here—Descartes is not looking for justification good enough for knowledge, he is looking for absolute certainty, and immediate justification will not provide that given the principle of prudence (in the past I have been immediately justified that I was experiencing the external world when I was

actually just dreaming). I may be immediately justified that I am experiencing the external world at present, via Pryor's (2000) dogmatism, and yet not absolutely certain. Descartes sets out to overthrow all such opinions in order to get at a true foundation: that which is perfectly known and cannot be doubted, now or in the future. To do this, he develops a criticism based on doubt. If a foundational principle (that on which our other beliefs rest) has any grounds for doubt (no matter how small), this doubt destroys the certainty of the whole edifice. The justification for doubt does not have to be as strong as the justification for belief: for Descartes, the tiniest crack of uncertainty at the foundation is enough to warrant the rejection of the whole. Here certainty is in view, not merely justified true belief. When I kiss my wife in the morning on the way to work, I close my eyes. I cannot see her when I kiss her. I am not certain that I am kissing her (I have been deceived before). But I can still know that I am kissing her (in the sense of having justified true belief). I am justified in thinking that I am kissing her, it is true that I am kissing her, and I believe I am kissing her. But I may still not be certain (there could be some kind of trick going on, or I might be dreaming).

Because mere knowledge is not in view here, Descartes' dream argument is not as convincing or effective when used as a

skeptical argument against any kind of knowledge. While Stroud (2008) argues that certain knowledge about something requires knowing that possibilities incompatible with your knowledge of that thing on that basis do not obtain, he applies this to mere knowledge: in order to know the world through the senses, you have to know you are not dreaming. You do not know you are not dreaming, so you do not have knowledge of the external world on the basis of your senses. The problem here is that if mere justified true belief were in view, Descartes might have ceded the point that his argument was not fully applicable. If I hypothesize that I am having a dream right now, Descartes would allow that I know some things about the external world still. I can know (but not be certain) that I have a hand, because when I am awake I always have hands. I have never experienced being deceived about having a physical body that included a hand (so the prudential basis of Descartes' argument does not apply here). I can be uncertain (because my mind has played tricks on me before, and because I cannot disprove all alternative hypotheses), but still know that I have a hand even though I am dreaming. I may have a true justified belief that I have a hand right now (even though I may be dreaming), but my true justified belief may not be absolutely certain. In addition, the dreaming hypothesis is just one

scenario out of many other possible skeptical hypotheses (making it less convincing) and while my certain knowledge of the external world is in peril with any one of them, this particular scenario is exceedingly improbable (meaning more work on the part of the skeptic to convince people that they know nothing about external reality based on this hypothesis). In contrast, certainty that I am not in a dream right now is a much more difficult hill to climb. I have experienced dreams, I know a lot about them, and I have represented to myself false worlds in dreams before (so perceptions in my mind are not a *certain* foundation for knowledge, though most people, including myself and most skeptics, must believe they are some kind of foundation for knowledge, or we would stop creating interesting skeptical arguments using our perceptions). I find fault in current skeptical arguments surrounding knowledge or justification: they are difficult to live with, and remain highly improbable. In contrast, Descartes' dream argument, if the premises are given, has me convinced: absolute certainty is outside our grasp if we are prudent not to absolutely believe what has ever deceived us. While Stroud argues that absolute certainty is required for sensory knowledge, Descartes' argument is more elegant and powerful: absolute certainty is required for certainty of knowledge.

Descartes goes beyond the typical epistemological skeptic of our day, and does not end with an admission of uncertainty or lack of knowledge of the external world. Instead, he takes his argument through skepticism in order to dispel doubt rather than leaving it entrenched. Doubt is used here to establish certainty. Doubt in most skeptical arguments is meant to merely engender more doubt (or at best to leave one uncertain). When confronted with a typical skeptical argument, I often think: "If this is true, what am I to do?" Does the typical skeptic want me to believe them and their particular hypothesis (that I am a brain in a vat, that I am dreaming, or that I am in the Matrix)? Do they want me to live as if I knew nothing? I doubt either of these is the case. The typical skeptic does not believe their own hypothesis (they probably do not think it is true, but are just using it to engender doubt in knowledge), so why should I believe it? The skeptic does not live as if they knew nothing, so why should I? Typical skeptics, then, live as if both their hypotheses and conclusions are false (they live as if they were not in a dream and as if they knew something). Descartes' argument is a different animal. He asks not me, but himself, to fully believe his skeptical hypothesis. He takes up his own dream world of the demon and becomes his own deceiver. He fully intends to live as if he had no certainty. Of

particular interest is that his argument does not mean we do not merely know anything, but rather that we do not have certainty. And further, that embracing this uncertainty should aim at exposing true certainty. Doubt toward belief.

Paradise Lost?: Responsibilities of the Disbeliever

Reasons to Not Disbelieve

If we follow Descartes in his dream, in his doubt, in his upheaval of certainty, isn't it possible that we could lose our touch with external reality, the paradise of existence (I like this dream-world after all)? Shouldn't we rather address his argument at its fount? What if we could argue for reasons to not disbelieve—reasons why we are more justified in our certainty than we are in believing in his doubt? Is it true, as Descartes claims, that “some ground for doubt” is “sufficient to justify the rejection of the whole”? Rather, should we not say that the justification for doubt should have to be greater than the justification for belief if we are to be justified in rejecting the whole? That it is the responsibility of the disbeliever to give sufficient justification for their disbelief?

For instance, some of the ideas presented in the Meditations are ahead of their times. Based on their incongruity with the period (or perhaps for some other reason), I doubt that they could have been written by Descartes, but instead believe they were created by later redactors (and/or translators). I have doubt that Descartes thought or wrote the foundational ideas contained in the Meditations. Must I then, on that basis, reject that Descartes wrote them (in spite of the much larger amount of evidence that is contrary to my doubt)? Should we always give preference to the justifications for doubt (and on what basis can this claim be made)?

Further, can *any* grounds for doubt destroy certainty? If so, when Descartes posits that “we are dreaming” (at the beginning of section 6), I could respond that I have a justification for doubting that I am dreaming –sometimes when I am awake I think that I am dreaming, and thus have been deceived into thinking I was dreaming when I was really awake. Further justifications for my doubt are that I actually see and feel the things around me (the external world) in a fully conscious way. Descartes may have a stronger argument for me dreaming than I have for me being awake, but if he is right about doubt, then my doubt overrides all of his other justifications for believing we are dreaming. This works even with the idea of certainty: Descartes notices the possibility for a

small crack in the foundations of my certainty, but I notice the possibility for a small crack in the foundations of his certainty that I am uncertain (I will spell this out in the next section when dealing with the principle of prudence). Unfortunately, if he doubts my doubts, and has any justification for doubting my doubts, then his doubting overrides my doubting, and this process of doubting can be carried on *ad infinitum*. I think this shows the unsupportability of holding that any small amount of grounds for doubt is sufficient to reject justifications for belief, no matter how great. But what about Descartes' prudence principle?

The Prudence Principle

The fundamental basis of Descartes' dream argument is his prudence principle: "All that I have, up to this moment, accepted as possessed of the highest truth and certainty, I received either from or through the senses. I observed, however, that these sometimes misled us; and it is the part of prudence not to place absolute confidence in that by which we have even once been deceived" (Descartes, Meditation I, 3). According to his prudence principle, we are not prudent to be certain in our senses, because they have misled us in the past. This prudence principle is at the heart of the dream argument:

it provides a way to get to disbelief in our senses. If it fails, we no longer have the doubt that Descartes requires to crumble our certainty that we are not dreaming.

Before we address the prudence principle directly, let us ask the question “Do the senses mislead us?” Surely we can be said to misperceive. But can we be said to be misled *by our senses*? Is it the senses which we should doubt? Should we not rather doubt our minds that are decoding what our senses are telling us about the outside world? Our senses are merely doing their jobs and communicating data from the outside world to our minds where we put together understandings about those data. We put together and understand that which we are given using reason (among other things). In that case, is not reason (which Descartes uses throughout his arguments) “that by which we have been deceived”, and therefore should have no confidence in? If so, that is the end of the argument, because that is the end of reason if Descartes is to be taken for his word. It is not prudent to place absolute confidence in reason any longer if we are once deceived by it. Descartes’ issue should not be with the senses, but with reason itself, and if it is with reason, we no longer have a basis for a reasonable argument (it would be imprudent since we have been deceived by reason).

In his dream argument, Descartes implies an analogy of misled senses with dreaming (through the example of insane persons whose senses are thought to be at fault for their insanity). Though Descartes may not be misled by senses as much as insane persons, still he has dreams in which crazier things happen than what the insane perceive in their waking moments, and because he is unable to be certain about when he is dreaming or awake, he may actually be dreaming currently. (Ironically, by us reading his sentence in which he thinks he might be dreaming we show that he is not: that is, unless we are all mere projections of a dreaming mind). What Descartes here confuses is the senses with the mind. In all of the cases given, it is the mind at fault for misperception, and not ever the senses. It is not the senses in waking life that are like the mind in a dream: it is the mind in waking life that is like the mind in the dream (which is sometimes like the mind, not the senses, of the insane). Descartes does indeed get to overthrowing the certainty of that given by the mind (when dealing with math and geometry), but as we have seen, his argument does not actually show that the senses are misleading, only that our minds are misled. Unfortunately, if our minds deceive us, we cannot continue on our journey. The prudence principle destroys the certainty of the prudence principle—the crack in our certainty has a crack

in its certainty. How do we know what is prudent except through the mind? We justify prudence based in part on reason. Both the mind and reason are uncertain, so the prudence principle (a belief based on a reasonable mind) is uncertain. If we cannot be absolutely confident that the prudence principle is true, how can we be certain that it will lead us to certainty? It seems that there are only deeper dreams waiting for us on the other end of the argument.

The Impossible Dream

If Descartes were at all times dreaming (and never awake to the external world), his analogy of the dream breaks down: he has never been awake in the dream of his life, so he cannot be said to have slept or to have dreamt (any differently than he was already dreaming). There is no distinction between a dream and “being awake” if we are all in a dream. But Descartes acknowledges that in waking life, he can perceive distinctions between waking and dreaming. This would presumably not be possible if there is no distinction between a dream and “being awake” if we are all in a dream. If Descartes were in a dream his entire life, he would not know with certainty what a dream is like. But Descartes seems to suggest that even though he is uncertain about his senses and his mind, he still is willing to

believe he is dreaming, and to be certain that he knows what dreaming is. The question becomes “How does Descartes know for certain what a dream is, or what it entails, if he cannot trust his senses or his mind, and if he is uncertain that he has ever been awake?” In that case, it is impossible for him to be certain. The dream and the argument dissipates: it is no longer prudent to believe that we are certain about the nature of dreams, and so we cannot infer with certainty anything about our present skeptical hypothesis based on them.

What Dreams May Come: Reactions of Disbelief

Descartes' Reaction

Descartes might respond that his justifications for uncertainty do not require certainty for their application to still hold. We may be merely prudent (and not have absolutely certain prudence), and this may still serve to bring us to the dream world. Further, prudence does not make prudence uncertain, only the senses, Arithmetic, Geometry, and the sciences that regard “merely the simplest and most general objects”—those are uncertain given that we may be deceived by God. If reason or prudence

are given up to the dream, we are without any certain principle to even continue the dream argument (or any other argument). With regard to knowing the nature of a dream, Descartes might respond that he may know the nature of a dream, but not have certainty in his knowledge of what a dream is (and all that is required for his argument is some kind of analogous knowledge of dream states, not perfect knowledge).

My Own Reaction of Disbelief

But on what basis can we argue for prudence if we believe we may be in a deceiver's dream (because we are not certain we are not)? Is it not possible that prudence may deceive us? On what does prudence rest but reason or some other faculty of the mind (which we have admitted can deceive us)? If we come to the end of the dream argument, and we believe in the skeptical hypothesis with Descartes in order to get at certainty, what happens if we look back at the beginning of our argument? If we are being deceived by an evil demon, and all of our beliefs and senses are subject to deception, is not the principle of prudence cracked at its foundations? How can we argue for prudence if we are not certain of what prudence is any longer? How can we be certain that the idea of prudence is not a deception of the demon that

he used to draw us into believing in this dream state in the first place? I doubt this doubt. Certainty is sterner stuff than this. Not merely any grounds for justification of doubt are needed to bring down all certainty. Greater justification for doubt must be given than the justification I have in my certainty if I am to give up my certainty. I know what a dream is because I have experienced them before. And this is no dream—of that I am certain.

Appendix:
How I Know I Am Not Now Dreaming

One basic formulation of the dreaming argument might go like this:

1. In order to know anything through the senses, you have to know you are not dreaming.
2. You do not know you are not dreaming.
So,
3. You do not know anything through the senses.

I believe we can address the first two premises with various tests that help to show that I am not dreaming, and others that show that if I am dreaming I can still come to know things about the external world based on my sensory experiences. As long as I can know what dreaming is (and the skeptic presupposes in their argument that they know what dreaming is, so I will take that as a given), I can use my knowledge about dreaming to provide justification that I am not now dreaming:

1. **The test for lucidity.** I cannot fly. I cannot make you disappear. I cannot

see through walls. In a dream, when I realize I am dreaming, I am all-powerful and can do some or all of these things. I am not all powerful now, even if I think I might be dreaming. Therefore, I am not now dreaming (or am at least not lucidly dreaming—perhaps I should try harder and make my desk disappear: if you don't think I can make my desk disappear just by thinking about it, then you don't think I am dreaming).

2. **The dream-like quality test.** My experiences right now are not dream-like in quality. Dreams are dream-like in quality. Therefore, I am either not dreaming, or this is the most realistic dream I have had and is not like other dreams I have (and if it is not like other dreams, does the analogy with dreams break down?). This test is directly related to other later tests.
3. **The death test.** I could try killing myself. In a dream I can kill myself and start over or wake up. If I kill myself right now, I can directly test whether I am in a dream or not. At that moment I

can know I am not now dreaming (this test is a bit dangerous—we will leave it to a more dedicated skeptic to try it out).

4. **The distracted test.** In my dreams, when I am distracted my world often changes. I look away from a person, and when I look back they are a turkey wearing a hat. I am distracted right now, yet my wife continues to be my wife, my daughter continues to play on the computer, and there is no wacky transitory-ness in my experiences.
5. **The outside observer test.** If there is a God, or even just an evil demon, controlling my dream state or at least outside of my dream state, they may reveal themselves to me (given that they are persons with agency). If they have agency, they can show themselves and the true nature of the world outside of my limited experiences by using my current sensory experiences (they could talk in my ear). Even if I am dreaming, they can show themselves to me. If God (or a demon) exists, they can observe my state and tell me if I am

dreaming. If God exists, I can come to possibly know I am not dreaming, or if he is actually an evil demon, there is the possibility of my gaining knowledge about him so that I can know something about the outside world (even if I am dreaming). Therefore, even if I am dreaming, I can still come to know something about the world around me based on my current sensory experiences if God (or a demon) chooses to reveal himself or true reality to me (because they would be outside observers).

6. **The weight of justification test.** Am I more justified to believe I am dreaming or that I am awake?
7. **The outside of myself test.** In dreams I can experience watching myself in a situation from outside of myself (as if I am behind a camera watching myself act in the situation—but I am actually in both places). I am not now outside of myself and cannot see and experience myself from outside of myself right now.

8. **The switching of characters test.** I cannot switch who I am except in a dream. I can become anyone in a dream just by willing it. I cannot now become President Obama just by willing it.
9. **The physical body wearing out test.** The physical body that I seem to have is slowly and continuously wearing out and I also heal through time slowly and continuously. Neither of these happens in my dreams. Does your physical body wear out or heal in your dreams the same way it seems to right now? If not, chances are you are not now dreaming.
10. **The malady test.** I have a physical malady that makes me wear corrective lenses. When I take them off, I cannot see. In my dreams I have never had vision problems as I have awake right now. I see perfectly in my dreams (or at least not in the same blurriness variations I have right now). I cannot now see perfectly, and need corrective lenses. Again, either this is not a dream, or I don't know about dreams. If I (and the skeptic) don't know about dreams, then we cannot use them in our

arguments (i.e., we could not know if they were deceptive or not).

11. **The eat-to-survive test.** I have to eat and drink and breathe and use the restroom when I am awake. I have to do these things or I will die. If I am now dreaming, I can stop eating now and never eat again. I may get hungry, but I can never satisfy myself by my own agency if I am merely dreaming (unless I am sleepwalking?). If I want to test if I am dreaming, I should stop eating, drinking, breathing, etc. If I am unable to do this indefinitely, then I can be justified that I am doing real things when I eat, drink, breathe, etc. If I am really breathing (in the real world) when I breathe in my dream, then I can have some knowledge of the external world. I can know that I breathe in some way (even if I am dreaming). I can know I am not now dreaming because I can satisfy myself when I eat and stay alive. But in the slight possibility that I am actually just dreaming this, I can still know something about the world around me based

on my current sensory experiences—I can know that I have to eat.

12. **The travel test.** I have to travel to get to my house at the end of the day. In my dreams I can get to new scenarios without traveling between places just by thinking about the other place. I cannot do that now (I wish I could).

So, either we know something about dreams (as the skeptic suggests) and what we think we know may actually hold true of dreams, or we cannot use dreams as a skeptical scenario because we have never experienced "dreams" so we do not know what a dream would entail about reality or irreality. If by "dreams" we mean those things that we have when we are sleeping, then we can apply everything we know about dreaming to our current scenario, and use some of the tests above (some are stronger and/or more dangerous than others) to see if we are now dreaming. It seems I am not. Are you?

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Options for the Dogmatist: A Reassessment of the Cognitive Penetration Problem

The cognitive penetration of perceptions, which is said to occur when a person's moods, beliefs, desires, or traits penetrate (influence in some way) their perceptions, is a problem for dogmatist and other internalist epistemological approaches. In dogmatism, a person is immediately justified in their perceptual beliefs merely by having an experience or perception that there is a specific state of affairs. Lyons argues that without reliabilism (which is a non-internalist account) the possibility of cognitive penetration is fatally problematic because the dogmatist has no way to tell which kinds of cognitive penetration are acceptable and which are not. I offer three additional options for the dogmatist: internally accessible defeaters of immediately justified beliefs, irrational etiologies of experience that are discoverable, and a reassessment of the problem in terms of relationships of different kinds of truth and the mediation of truth. These alternative options provide room for further conversation.

When I experience eating bacon and eggs for breakfast, am I immediately justified in my resulting beliefs that “I see bacon and eggs,” “I seem to taste something salty and fatty,” “I seem to feel warm solid objects in my mouth and throat,” and “I seem to be having irregular heart palpitations”? And if I am so justified, what if I merely wish this broccoli in my mouth tasted like bacon, and for a moment I convince myself that I am eating bacon? Am I still justified in my belief (based on an experience that happened to be caused by my prior desire for bacon)? If not, are notions of reliability the only way to identify bad cognitive penetration? Must dogmatist internalists bite the bullet (or the bacon in this case) as a result, as Lyons (2011) suggests, in the light of cognitive penetration? I will here provide a brief outline of dogmatism, which holds that having the experience of tasting bacon immediately (though defeasibly) justifies me in believing “I taste bacon.” I will then address the problem of cognitive penetration, and consider Lyons’ (2011) claim that the concept of reliability is the only live option for solving the problem. Finally, I will present three other possible options for further conversation. The central thrust of this argument is to show that reliability is not the only way to distinguish good from bad cognitive penetration, and that dogmatism

may yet have several lines of defense against the criticisms of Lyons.

Dogmatism

Pryor's (2000) dogmatism begins with an admission to epistemological skepticism: perceptions give us no absolute certainty, and our perceptual justifications for the beliefs that we hold about the external world are always defeasible (p. 517). It is possible that all of the experiences we are having right now are false. I could be dreaming right now. However, because dogmatism is a fallibilist position, it asserts that we can still have justification for our beliefs, even if those justifications do not guarantee true beliefs. Further, we can have knowledge based on this kind of defeasible justification. Following G. E. Moore, dogmatism is based on the anti-skeptical idea that we can know (or have justifications for belief that) some propositions are true without being able to prove them. We can know our beliefs are true, even without offering non-question-begging arguments.

Experience immediately, though defeasibly, justifies a belief. If *p* seems to you to be the case, you are immediately (not based on other justifications or beliefs) justified in believing *p*. All you need for justification in believing *p* is an experience that represents *p* as being the case. "Experience" is here used in a

different sense than most epistemologists use it — instead of being entirely subjective or sensational, experience is defined as many philosophers of mind would have it, as states with propositional content (independent of beliefs) (Pryor, 2000, pp. 518-519). You have access to the propositional content in your mind by just having the experience. You do not need to have beliefs about it that are reliably connected with the external truths that they represent. Not only is this justification belief-independent, it is defeasible (for instance, beliefs you have might override this justification). Additionally, awareness of your experience is not necessary; you just need to *have* the experience. In dogmatism, your experiences are not evidence for believing *p* — the thought is that you do not need evidence for perceptual beliefs, you just require justification (for the dogmatist, justification and evidence are two different things). Introspective awareness about your experiences and background beliefs might give you *more* reasons to believe *p*, but there is an immediate justification outside of this, and we can have justified belief (and sometimes also knowledge) that *p*, without offering non-question-begging evidence for the belief that *p*.

When Pryor (2000) asks what makes perceptual beliefs justified (the central question of his argument), he means to ask “What

propositions can we be justified in believing?” not “What makes beliefs in those propositions well-founded?” (p. 521). He is here concerned with the kind of justification you have, not the belief. You may have good reasons to believe that a man was sent to the moon (video, newspapers, pictures, artifacts), but you may believe a man was sent to the moon based on bad reasons (you saw it on a science fiction movie once). Pryor’s focus is on the fact that you have justifications for believing a man was sent to the moon, rather than on the fact that your belief was unjustified or not well-founded. Your belief was not well-founded because you failed to believe in the good reasons you had (the justifications and other beliefs you had access to). Pryor is not concerned with what makes your belief ill-founded or unjustified, but rather what makes for a good reason for you to believe.

Dogmatism’s central thesis is that when you have any experience that *p* is the case, you are immediately justified in believing that *p*. But the idea of immediate justification is not immediately understood—it requires some nuanced explanation. Immediate justification does not strengthen the quality of your justification, it is just that there is no mediating justification or belief (it is *prima facie* justification). Immediately justified beliefs are not always self-evident, they are not self-

justified (they have actual justifications), and they are not epistemically autonomous (your belief could require many other additional justifications and beliefs, but your justification requires none – your justification is immediate, not necessarily your belief). Your justified perceptual beliefs can be evidentially overdetermined (including both mediate and immediate justifications), but do not require reasons or justifying arguments, and do not act as further justification for believing that the belief is justified.

Not every proposition that I believe on the basis of perception is immediately justified, but a great many propositions are. So which of our perceptual beliefs are immediately justified? Only perceptually basic propositions, “propositions that our experiences basically represent” (Pryor, 2000, p. 539). We may not end up believing these propositions (for instance, we may pass on to more sophisticated mediately justified beliefs), but they nonetheless offer justification that can be believed. In the recent past, I was walking on the sidewalk of my University campus, and I heard a rhythmic noise and thought to myself “It sounds to me like there is a drum band practicing in one of the performance areas nearby.” I had seen and heard similar performances nearby at earlier times in the semester, and it had always sounded the same. I

continued to walk and listen, and the rhythms began to be off-beat, and seemed to me to follow a strange progression. As this continued, I thought “It seems to me like this is a very post-modern piece.” I knew the music school was nearby, and the quality of the artists who study there is quite high. As I walked further, I saw a man pushing a large blue trash bin over the sidewalk in the direction where I perceived the sounds to be coming from. As the bin’s wheels slid over the sidewalk, they let out a “thud, thud” each time they passed over a crack in the pavement. My expert post-modern drum performance was a trash bin.

In this instance, I was immediately justified in thinking “I seem to hear a rhythmic sound” but passed over this simplistic justification for a more sophisticated belief (based perhaps in part on that immediate justification). I was immediately and defeasibly justified to believe “I seem to hear a rhythmic sound,” but I instead believed “It sounds to me like there is a drum band.” Based on beliefs, justifications, and experiences that I brought into this experience, I constructed a belief about what I perceived. In the end, my perceptual belief that I heard a rhythmic sound was immediately (though defeasibly) justified, though evidentially overdetermined (I included outside beliefs and justifications). I had a perceptually basic proposition that then became

part of the justification of a perceptual belief (a false belief in this case).

The Cognitive Penetration Problem & Dogmatism

One perceived problem with dogmatism (as with all forms of epistemic internalism) is that it may not track with external reality. By seeming to see a blue garbage bin in front of me, I may be immediately *prima facie* (at first blush) justified in believing a garbage bin is in front of me, but this could be occurring for me in the context of a dream (I may be dreaming that I have a garbage bin in front of me). I am just as justified in my dream as I am when I perceive the garbage bin in waking life. So my justification is not tracking with the truth (it does not change when the truth changes, so I may end up equally justified with both true and false perceptual beliefs). If dogmatism is correct, I may be in a skeptical scenario right now (I may be a brain in a vat) yet I may still be justified in thinking that it seems to me that there is a garbage bin in front of me, and this provides the same amount of justification as it would if I were not in a skeptical scenario and actually had a garbage bin in front of me.

Siegel takes a slice of this issue with internalism to address what she sees as the death of dogmatism—cognitive penetration. Cognitive penetration is said to occur when a

person's moods, beliefs, hypotheses, knowledge, desires, or traits penetrate (influence in some way) their perceptions or experiences. Everything in the grocery store may look delicious when you are hungry. The world may look grey when you are depressed. When you have a belief in a specific scientific hypothesis, you may fail to observe counterevidence or you may even have a perception of confirmatory evidence that is caused by your previous hypothesis. Your beliefs may invade your perceptions. Not all cognitive penetration, however, is epistemically illicit. Sometimes cognitive penetration can be epistemically beneficial, as when an expert's previous knowledge informs or adds to her experience. Other instances of cognitive penetration may be epistemically neutral, as when a person freely interprets what a piece of art means to them and their mood penetrates into the experience, coloring their perceptions, and does not justify further beliefs about the external world, but only feelings of pleasure and personal understanding. But there are still possibilities for epistemically illicit cognitive penetration (which sounds like a rock album title): most instances we will deal with here are of this illicit variety, the kind that unduly influences the content of one's experiences, creating an insensitivity to stimuli in the form of indifference or selection bias.

The problem with epistemically illicit cognitive penetration, according to Siegel (2012), is that it introduces a circular belief structure. Jill believes (for no good reasons) that Jack is angry with her, and when she sees Jack, she perceives that Jack looks angry (regardless of how Jack actually looks, because her perceptions are being cognitively penetrated), and now she has *prima facie* justification for her belief that Jack is angry. Jill's experience was perceived as justification of her belief, even though it seems that it may have been caused by that belief. Can a belief provide further justification for itself? Jill is no longer checking her beliefs against reality—she seems to rather be checking reality against her beliefs, or as Siegel (2012) puts it in this instance, checking her beliefs against her beliefs (p. 202). Dogmatism seems to predict that a cognitively penetrated experience can bring Jill from an unjustified belief that Jack is angry with her to a justified belief that Jack is angry with her. The question is “Is such epistemic elevation plausible in cases like this?” Can your belief become justified as a result of cognitive penetration? The target of this problem is dogmatism's claim that having the perceptual experience “It seems that I see a garbage bin” is enough to give a person defeasible justification for believing “There is a garbage bin.” Or in this instance, that having

the cognitively penetrated experience “It seems that Jack is angry” is enough to give Jill defeasible justification for believing “Jack is angry,” even if she was not justified to believe this before the experience.

Lyons’ Solution to the Problem: Reliability

Lyons’ (2011) response goes even further in its ramifications for dogmatism (which he refers to as “Seemings Internalism”), bringing against the problem of cognitive penetration not a charge of circularity (which he argues against), but of diminishment of the reliability of perception. Cognitive penetration threatens not just perceptual knowledge, but justification of beliefs that rest on it. Not all forms of top-down influence, or cognitive penetration, are epistemically problematic, however, and therein lies the rub. For instance, Lyons is not interested in cases where subjects are aware of their own cognitive penetration (and leaves it to such persons to modify their beliefs accordingly), nor is he interested in the problem of consensus (i.e., that lack of consensus caused by theory-laden observations might trap us in a relativistic undermining of justifications of perceptual beliefs). Further, Lyons does not think circularity is the answer to the problem of cognitive penetration: he rebuts Siegel’s claim of the circularity of belief structures with an argument of his own. Epistemic circularity

involves improper basing, but experiences are not *based* on things like beliefs or experiences. Prior beliefs or experiences may *cause* or *influence* experiences or perceptions, but circularity only occurs when something is based in some way or other on itself. Similarly, the cognitive penetration of a perception by desire is not circular, but is instead just wishful thinking (still a vice, but a different one). Lyons argues that memory has the same structure as cognitive penetration, but that we would not say it is illicit or circular. For example, Jim has a belief that some flowers are yellow, which triggers (causes) a remembrance of a perception of yellow flowers, which in turn causes Jim to have a further belief that some flowers are yellow. Cognitive penetration of beliefs on remembrances are epistemically okay. So what is the difference between memory and perception as far as cognitive penetration goes?

Illicit cognitive penetration seems to involve prior unjustified beliefs: maybe that is the answer to why some kinds of cognitive penetration are bad while others are not? But what about prior desires? And what about unjustified prior beliefs that seem to cause good epistemic outcomes (like when I am not justified in my belief that there are snakes by the hiking trail, but I believe anyway, and this causes me to be more attentive to the presence of snakes, which helps me to see the snake that

actually is there)? This is where reliabilism comes in. Instead, we could say that “the good kinds of cognitive penetration are the kinds that increase reliability” (Lyons, 2011, p. 300), while the bad ones decrease reliability. The expert uses cognitive penetration to inform their later beliefs, but the novice fails because their processes are not reliable.

Lyons here offers a refutation to dogmatism: the possibility of cognitive penetration is problematic because the dogmatist has no way to tell which kinds are acceptable and which are not. He thinks this puts internalism itself in jeopardy. In cases of bad cognitive penetration, a person’s beliefs may perfectly match their perceptual experiences (they might seem to be immediately justified in their beliefs), but the experiential state is where the problem occurs: it does not match the external world, and makes a person insensitive to the surrounding environment. This insensitivity is to blame for the resulting bad cognitive state, and Lyons thinks a purely internalist answer is not possible, and that reliabilism is the only way to solve the problem of cognitive penetration. The penetrator or the locus of penetration does not matter: what matters is the mode of penetration (whether or not it is a reliable process, with true/justified inputs).

A Brief Detour

Before I attempt to address this issue head on, I would like to offer a short detour around the problem. While the focus of this paper is on the truth value of Lyons' proposition that reliabilism is the only way out of the problem of cognitive penetration, I would like to interject that dogmatism may not even require a way out of the problem, because the problem might not exist. It should be noted that both Siegel (2012, p. 207) and Lyons (2011, p. 290) admit that the existence of cognitive penetration of perception is a mere assumption, something for which there is no clear empirical evidence either for or against (though there is evidence for cognitive penetration of perceptual beliefs). What is interesting is that if a strong kind of illicit cognitive penetration were actually the case in our world (such as it might be in a skeptical scenario), scientists who "discovered" this might merely be expressing their wishful thinking or their unfounded beliefs (for instance, what if the scientists performing these empirical studies were cognitively penetrating their experiences with their previous beliefs about cognitive penetration?). We should not say with absolute certainty that any argument that merely presumes the existence of a phenomena as the basis for a refutation of another philosophical view (in this case

dogmatism) is without possibilities for error itself. If this is the case, dogmatism is not refuted, it is only conjectured that dogmatism might be refuted if such and such were the case.

Further, we must not only accept that cognitive penetration actually happens for these arguments to gain traction, but that it is actually happening in the cases in question. Siegel (2012, p. 209) stipulates that her two central cases (Jack and Jill, and preformationism) are genuine cases of cognitive penetration, and cannot be mere cases of introspective error, influence limited to states downstream of experience, or selection effect. They are genuine cases of cognitive penetration *by her stipulation* (we have to accept this before we move on with her argument, and we are not allowed to deny her this admission). Are we forced here to accept the conclusion before we are given the premises? Might it be possible that these cases could be redescribed as something other than cognitive penetration, contra Siegel? If so, the force of the argument is diverted. I will not here elucidate an argument against the existence of cognitive penetrability of perception, nor will I offer a reanalysis of Siegel's cases. Rather, I am here concerned with whether Lyons has correctly stated the case that, given cognitive penetration and valid cases, reliability offers the only escape. And with that, our detour is over.

Is Reliability the Only Solution?

Assuming that cognitive penetration of perception occurs, and that it is a problem for dogmatism, must we accept Lyons' claim that reliabilism is the only solution? There are at least three avenues we might pursue as we seek to answer this question. First, Pryor's (2000) argument on dogmatism offers interesting conclusions regarding the perceived problem of theory-laden observations that apply to the problem of cognitive penetration. Second, Siegel (2013) and McGrath (2013) maintain that the etiologies of experience might be a possible basis for further conversation. Third, I will argue that the nature of cognitive penetration, dogmatism and different kinds of truth might offer us interesting possibilities for reassessment of the problem.

Pryor's Option

First, Pryor's argument about theory-laden observation. Pryor (2000) argues that dogmatism is concerned only with transitions from experience to belief that result in justified belief; it is not concerned with how experiences come about in the first place (what caused them). So pre-perceptual beliefs do no harm to dogmatism according to Pryor. Sunglasses that pre-perceptually tint a subject's view of the world might be analogous (Pryor, 2000, p. 540).

Sunglasses do not justify the subject's perceptual belief that "I seem to see a hand is tinted." Rather, the experience/perception is what immediately justifies the subject in their perceptual belief about the hand, not the sunglasses (or if cognitively penetrated by a prior belief, not the prior belief). But what if two different people are looking at a scribble on a chalkboard and their perceptions (due to cognitive penetration) are leading to two mutually incompatible beliefs about what they see? One seems to see the letter "p", while the other seems to see a sideways mouth and tongue. They both are immediately justified, but how can this be? Pryor argues that each subject is having different experiences, so of course they might both have different perceptual beliefs, and still both be justified (based on their varied experiences) (p. 547). And further, they might both be wrong (their perceptions might not line up with the external truth), and yet they might both still be *prima facie* justified. But only *prima facie* justified, and this justification might be defeated or undermined by evidence that prior beliefs (or moods, knowledge, hypotheses, etc.) played a role in skewing their experiences in a bad way.

Where might that evidence arise? Must we depend on reliabilism here? It could be argued that possible sources of evidence for "skewed" experiences might arise from experiences of

interaction with other people (and either you experience them telling you that their experiences are different than yours, or you experience them presenting evidence that you are skewing your experience), through remembering other times when a person (you or someone else) has skewed their own experiences, and through introspection to reassess the experience for traces of bias. That sounds like reliability, since these all seem to be ways of getting at reliability, and seem to be outside the scope of dogmatism. However, dogmatism allows for other kinds of justification and belief different than *prima facie* which may offer defeaters, and each of these proposed sources of evidence are internal in scope. They each require internal access to one's experiences as further justification for perceptual beliefs rather than focusing on reliable processes (so we may not require reliabilism). We can thus distinguish between good and bad cases of cognitive penetration by focusing on defeaters that are potentially available internally to the perceiver (through their perceptions).

Let's apply this to one of Siegel's cases of bad cognitive penetration to see how this might work. Jill has a prior (though unjustified) belief that Jack is angry, and when she sees him, she perceives that "I seem to see Jack is angry," and forms a justified perceptual belief based on her

(cognitively penetrated) experience. How can Jill tell if this is a case of bad cognitive penetration? She could ask Jack. She could ask Phil (Jack's best friend). If she does, she might experience them telling her that Jack is not angry, and that Jill seems to be penetrating her beliefs into her experience. Jill could also remember that she was wrong about Jack being angry with her last week, and remember that she had skewed her own experience with her prior beliefs before. And she could remember back to the experience of Jack's face, and perhaps identify some sort of bias in her analysis based on her prior belief (she could notice that she biased her internal beliefs over the external facts). Does Jill have to do all of these things to be justified in her resulting belief? Not according to the dogmatist. But these methods might further justify her belief (or in this case, defeat her earlier belief). Might Jill cognitively penetrate each and every one of these experiences in a bad way (even Jack telling her that he is not angry seems to her like Jack really is angry)? This is a possibility, but there is also still the possibility that Jill might have an experience of a defeater (that is internally available) in the future that she does not cognitively penetrate, and this potential defeater allows us to still distinguish between good and bad cases of cognitive penetration. If the possibility exists that Jill may come across

defeaters, then she is still *prima facie* justified, while also having the possibility of uncovering her cognitive penetration (and judging whether it is good or bad).

The Etiology Option

Siegel (2013) argues that in cases of bad cognitive penetration, what makes them bad is that they have irrational etiologies/causes/origins that seem to resemble bad inferences (McGrath calls these “quasi-inferences”) and that take place in the “basement of the mind,” beneath the subject’s recognition of them (McGrath, 2013). These irrational etiologies make it so that cases of bad cognitive penetration downgrade the justification of a belief. Because Siegel (2013) argues that the problem is partially a result of a circular belief structure (bad beliefs being based on bad beliefs), she maintains that the beliefs involved in bad cognitive penetration are later used as bases of further “perceptual” beliefs, and if the previous beliefs are unjustified, the latter are as well. McGrath (2013) disagrees with this assessment, and finds the justification in the experience itself (and its etiologies) rather than in the causality of a previous unjustified belief. In this manner, the internalist may remain an internalist and not be forced to rely on externalist options like reliability to explain the problem—the problem of cognitive penetration

is re-envisioned as being an internal process that can be internally assessed.

At least one problem remains, though. It seems that for both Siegel and McGrath, experiences with illicit cognitive penetration do not justify a person in their perceptual beliefs. This leaves some forms of mentalism intact, but not dogmatism, which rises or falls with the concept of immediate justification of perceptual beliefs by perceptions of whatever variety—even in cases of bad cognitive penetration. However, we could revise the distinction of what kind of justification is downgraded in order to spare dogmatism, yet keep the argument about etiology. Dogmatists argue for *prima facie* justification of perceptual beliefs, and we could posit that this kind of immediate justification is still supplied even in cases of cognitive penetration (note that this is not the view of either Siegel or McGrath—it is a potentially heretical revision). *Ultima facie* justification may or may not result from this (and the discovery of quasi-inferentials might provide defeaters against the *prima facie* justification). The basement etiologies could then be used as defeaters if they are uncovered (as in the previously elaborated option derived from Pryor) and the presence of quasi-inferences could downgrade the justification of the perceptual belief (but not erase the *prima facie* justification unless they act as defeaters by

being discovered). While McGrath (2013) argues that what is quasi-inferred cannot be said to be foundational (or for Pryor, justification for basic perceptual beliefs), because it is not the “given”, dogmatists could argue that the perception, whether cognitively penetrated or not, and whether connected with the “given” in the external world or not, *does* provide justification, which is foundational and can lead to immediately justified beliefs. And using the revised version of the etiology argument, dogmatists could distinguish between good and bad cases of cognitive penetration (bad cognitive penetration involves irrational etiologies). While this proposal is a revision of Siegel and McGrath’s proposed solutions, it might yet be used as an additional option to reliabilism, as a kind of pro tanto thesis: to the extent that the etiologies in a case of cognitive penetration are irrational, they are also bad (and if these etiologies are uncovered, they may become a defeater of the perceptual belief).

The Reassessment Option

Finally, let’s take a look at how the nature of cognitive penetration, dogmatism and different kinds of truth might offer us further interesting possibilities for reassessment of the problem. Dogmatism is about immediate justification of perceptual beliefs, and finds such justification in experiences of perceptions themselves.

Cognitive penetration involves penetration of these experiences, and some of those penetrations might be illicit (as in the case of Jack and Jill). What if we bring illicit cognitive penetration to its most extreme, and say that the entire perception is being caused in some way by previous beliefs, moods, desires, and knowledge? Then we could compare this with a more typical case of cognitive penetration and with memory to see if we can identify some elements of this problem that might provide keys to its solution. Let us examine the case of sleepy Fred.

Fred is always sleepy—except in bed. In school, at work, at home, and even while watching TV he is prone to nod off and start dreaming. But when Fred is in bed, he stays awake all night thinking about his day. In the dark he reconstructs his previous day's events in the recesses of his mind. Roughly half of those events are actually dreamed, and did not happen to Fred in waking life. But because his dreams are realistic (or at least very clear), and Fred dreams so often, he regularly has trouble telling the difference in the dead of night between what were his previous day's dreams, and what were the events in his waking reality. It seems as if some of Fred's perceptual beliefs about events in the previous day may not be true in the external world. Dogmatism seems to imply that even while Fred sleeps in the day,

the experiences and perceptions he has while dreaming in his sleep give him immediate justification for perceptual beliefs, even though these perceptions seem to be wholly (or very nearly wholly) caused by Fred's own beliefs, moods, desires, and knowledge (rather than the outside world).

One day, Fred is watching Jeopardy on television, and he realizes that he is floating in the air instead of sitting on the couch in his living room (actually, Fred has slipped into a dream). As he experiences floating in the air, he thinks "I seem to be floating in the air," and is immediately (though defeasibly) justified in believing that he is levitating (he did perceive that, so he is *prima facie* justified in believing it for the time being). The television flips to a commercial, and Fred wakes up.

In his newly awakened state, Fred has the perception that he is still floating. He thinks "I seem to be floating" and is immediately justified (in his awakened state) that he is floating. He then looks around and thinks back to his dream. Now that he is awake, that experience of floating seems a bit weird. In fact, he has had dreams like this before. Fred thinks that his childhood desire to be Superman may have impacted his perceptions, and that he was probably just recently dreaming (he falls asleep so often that he sometimes has trouble telling the difference between being awake and

asleep). More than that, his earlier dream experience of floating impacted his wakened perceptions and may have caused him to think that he was still floating.

Fred's wife Martha, sitting on the ottoman near him, looks up from her knitting, and gives him a knowing glance. "Fall asleep?" "I can't tell. Was I just now floating in the air above the couch?" "Nope. But you might want to see a doctor about that prob...," and off Fred falls yet again into another slumber as his wife realizes he is no longer listening, and goes back to her yarn.

Later, as the two get into bed and turn off the lights, Fred lays awake wondering about the events of his day. He thinks back over what he did at work, the lecture he attended, and the television show he watched with his wife. And he remembers that he floated in mid-air at one point during the Daily Double. But wait, did that really happen? Will Fred be able to identify his illicit cognitive penetration?

Dream states could be reassessed as (nearly) pure cognitive penetration. Instead of most of the information of a given perception being caused by an external world, most of the information is provided internally from previous beliefs, knowledge, desires, etc. For dogmatists, immediate justification may still work in dream states (though defeasibly), even though the perceptions could be said to be

nearly completely cognitively penetrated. Can Fred identify that his dream experience of floating was cognitively penetrated in a bad way (that led to a false belief)? Fred still has (limited) access to his mind. He can remember that people don't generally fly like comic book heroes (based on his failed childhood attempts to soar off the roof). Fred might even think of other defeaters (or evidence for cognitive penetrators) while he is still sleeping. Fred might realize he is in a dream. This might turn into a lucid dream where Fred knows that he is purposefully penetrating his perceptions (and can distinguish that he has been illicitly doing so while he was floating). If a person knows they are dreaming, they also know that their perceptions of the external world (or at least most of those perceptions) are not actually perceptions of the external world, and that their *prima facie* justifications about the external world have been defeated because of the evidence for illicit cognitive penetration. (It should be noted here that while skeptics argue that you cannot know you are *not* dreaming, they generally do not argue that you cannot know you *are* dreaming. They do not argue this because it is possible for people to know that they are dreaming—for instance, in lucid dreams.)

If Fred fails to experience a lucid dream, when Fred wakes up, his previously justified

belief may still be found to be a false belief, and be defeated (for instance, by his wife's comments in this regard). Lacking defeaters, that previous belief might also affect a perception in waking life that justifies Fred in a further belief (that he is floating). Here Fred's waking perception is cognitively penetrated by a belief that is justified by his dreaming perceptions. When he remembers these experiences later that night, maybe he additionally forgets all of the defeaters, and in his memory perceives the dreaming and waking experiences of floating in mid-air, and thinks once again "I seem to have floated" and gains further justification in his belief that he floated that day. So Fred might come across defeaters throughout his day and night, but might also fail to use or remember them to defeat his false belief, or the justification that gave rise to the belief.

Here is where the reassessment begins. Let us say that while Fred was in the dream world, he was justified in his belief that he could float. It was true, he could float in that world (at least, as long as he perceived that he could): that is the nature of dreams—their realities consist of a person's perceptions, regardless of how they line up with external reality. However, when Fred woke up, it was no longer true that he was dreaming, and it was no longer true that he was floating. But as far as he had evidence from his

perceptions, it seemed true that he was floating (he could be justified in a belief in as much). Without defeaters, he could remember this later, and it could still seem true to him that he could float, and it would be a justified belief. What makes cognitive penetration illicit? When the justification is not based on the truth (where the proposition does not obtain in reality). But for the dogmatist, external truth is not *immediately* in focus—only justification is, and justification can arise from perceptions of what is true externally *or* internally. Immediate justification does not always lead Fred to beliefs that are true about the external world, but it does often lead Fred to believe what he seems to see. For the dogmatist, all of the truth may not be immediate—truths about the external world or Fred’s own internal states that relate to the external world are mediated by his perceptions, while Fred’s perceptions can immediately justify his perceptual beliefs.

This reassessment may come down to how justification, perception, and the truth work together. Let us say that the truth is merely “what obtains.” Not just in the external world, which we will call “external world truths” (EWT) (like it is the truth that a particular cheese is yellow), but also in internal mental states, which we will call “internal world truths” (IWT) (like it is the truth that I believe that a particular cheese is yellow). IWT may or

may not consist of true beliefs, moods, or desires (i.e., they may not match EWT), but may still be truly believed, felt, and desired (and thus may still be IWT). If “I believe I am floating” is a truth about an internal state for Fred, then when that belief penetrates his perceptions, we could say that now both a truth about the external world (Fred has a body or there is such a thing as floating, etc.) and a truth about his internal states (Fred believes he is floating) are influencing/causing his experience (or if in a dream, Fred’s experiences might be purely cognitively penetrated by his IWT). Both Fred’s IWT and the EWT are mediated by the perception “I seem to be floating,” but both may not *ultima facie* justify Fred’s beliefs about the external world. However, both can come together in perception to immediately justify Fred’s belief about his perceptions, and *prima facie* justify Fred’s beliefs about either his internal states or the external world (depending upon the content of the proposition that is perceived). In addition, there is a possible third kind of truth we might identify here — perceptual world truths (PWT). PWT are what dogmatists are immediately justified in believing (IWT and EWT are mediated by perception in their journey toward perceptual beliefs, and come together to make up in some way PWT that may or may not be cognitively

penetrated in an illicit, beneficial or neutral way).

Several clarifications are in order. First, how can a mood or desire or other possible cognitive penetrator be said to be true? It can be true in my current mental state that “I have a mood of depressed” or “I am in a depressed mood.” It can also be true in my current mental state that “I have a desire for seeing and tasting candy.” All cognitive penetrators could be dealt with in this manner as IWT acting on PWT, which would immediately justify a person to have a true or false perceptual belief about EWT. Second, you will notice that dogmatism in this scheme still has a problem (as does internalism) with tracking with the external world. IWT may not match with EWT. An immediately justified belief might be dead wrong about the external facts and yet still be internally consistent. Third, cognitive penetration is still a problem for dogmatism because immediately justified beliefs may not match up with EWT as a result of the influence of a specific kind of IWT (those that do not match with EWT). Fourth, immediate justification of perceptual beliefs is still possible. So dogmatism can still work, still have a problem with cognitive penetration and tracking of the external world, and yet be able to distinguish between good and bad cognitive

penetration of perceptions (without the help of reliabilism).

Bad cognitive penetration is where the content of IWT do not obtain in EWT (there is a mismatch). Good cognitive penetration is where the content of IWT do obtain in EWT. Fred's perceptions are cognitively penetrated in a bad way when his penetrating beliefs about the external world do not obtain, or when his penetrating moods do not obtain in the external world (the world is not grey even though he is depressed), or when his desires do not obtain in the external world (the world is not actually meeting Fred's desire for bacon). Fred's perceptions are cognitively penetrated in a good or helpful way when his previous beliefs about the external world do obtain, or when his moods do obtain in the world (his wife really is depressed, and is wearing grey), or when his desires do obtain in the external world (his desire for bacon and eggs is met by a world where bacon and eggs obtain for him). If Fred's belief about the external world (such as that he is Superman) just happens to obtain in the external world (for instance, if he really is Superman, but has forgotten his true identity, and has no other justification other than his immediate justification provided by his cognitively penetrated perception of floating in the air), this is still a case of good cognitive penetration (because his IWT obtain in EWT).

Peter Markie's (2006) gold prospector counter-example might be worth examining here. There are two gold prospectors panning for gold, one an expert, one a novice. As one is panning, they find a gold nugget, and both look at the nugget. To the expert, it seems like it is a gold nugget (and she is penetrating her experience with previous knowledge to recognize it). To the novice it also seems like a gold nugget (and he is penetrating his experience with a desire for gold). Are the resulting beliefs of both prospectors identical in epistemic status? Perhaps not. But in the reassessment I have presented here, a dogmatist could say that both prospectors are cognitively penetrating their experiences in a good way (the IWT of both match the EWT). While both may have slightly different PWT (i.e., different experiences), they are both still immediately justified in their perceptual beliefs, though the epistemic status of those beliefs may vary between the two—one person's perceptual belief may be more justified because it has additional coherent previous beliefs and knowledge by its side (but it is not more immediately justified). If the nugget turns out to not be gold after all, both are having perceptions that have cognitive penetration of the illicit variety (the IWT of both fail to match the EWT), but both are still immediately (though defeasibly) justified in their beliefs.

Some Conclusions about the Problem

I have presented here three possible options in addition to reliability that may offer dogmatism an answer to the problem of cognitive penetration (though the problem may not be fully dissolved). First, it is possible that evidence could arise for a person from experiences of interaction with other people, memory of past cognitive penetration, and introspection looking for bias of internal influence over external. This would allow defeaters of immediately justified perceptual beliefs coming from cognitive penetration through access of internal states and perception. Second, Siegel and McGrath's arguments regarding etiology could be used to posit an internal basement of irrational etiologies of experience that could be employed to distinguish bad cognitive penetration from good cognitive penetration (though their proposed downgrade in justificatory force of experiences with irrational etiologies is problematic without revision). Third, we could reassess the problem in terms of relationships of different kinds of truth (EWT, IWT, and PWT), and the mediation of truth, and posit that cognitive penetration of the illicit variety is a result of a mismatch between IWT and EWT. These three options for disarming the problem of cognitive penetration might be interlinked in some way,

incorporated together into a more holistic framework, or used in isolation. For instance, while the third option provides a framework in which to understand how dogmatism and cognitive penetration might work together, the first option helps to explain how a person might come to discover their own cognitive penetration, while the second option provides an origin story for where cognitive penetration of the illicit variety may arise from. Lyons' reliability option is neither defended nor refuted in this: the question addressed is whether or not his option is the only one available. Each of the present options might provide a possible avenue to disarm Lyons' thesis that reliability is the only option that is open for the dogmatist, and might afford material for further conversations regarding the dissolution of the problem of cognitive penetration of experiences.

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ETHICS

An Introduction to *The Ethics of the New Testament*

Wolfgang Schrage, a contemporary German theologian, has written an insightful work on New Testament ethics entitled *The Ethics of the New Testament* (1988). The text was originally written in German in 1983 and was later translated into English by David E. Green. Schrage attempts to identify and analyze the ethical concepts presented in each book of the New Testament using higher critical methods of biblical interpretation. Schrage denies the existence of a single New Testament ethic (2) or any static universal rules or detailed moral descriptions, yet argues that the New Testament presents several dynamic moral “criteria” (10). Criteria are non-static substantive norms (11). Schrage focuses primarily on “the theological motivation and justification of New Testament ethics, its basic criteria and concrete requirements” instead of the “practical realization of ethical principles” (4). What is important is what Christians are told they must do in the New Testament and why they are told to do these things, not what Christians actually do. Schrage focuses more on New Testament

reflection upon conduct than on actual conduct. He warns contemporary Christians of the dangers of situationism and conformity to modern secular ethical formulation, and maintains that while love is at the center of New Testament ethics, this love has content and criteria (substantive normativeness) (11). Schrage properly emphasizes the eschatological, Christological, and charismatic basis of New Testament ethics, but overlooks the importance of authorial intent and literary explication, and fails to systematically synthesize or apply the concepts or precepts that are discovered.

A Critique of The Ethics of the New Testament

Methodology

Schrage's (1988) methodology may be broken into six component parts. First, the works of each New Testament author (or source of tradition) are analyzed individually. New Testament ethics, Schrage contends, is often fragmentary and unsystematic, and must be analyzed in this light (5), though he warns against viewing New Testament ethics too atomistically or situationally (7). Second,

Schrage seeks to discover the historical presuppositions and influences of each biblical writer. Early Christian parenesis evidences ancient Hellenistic and Jewish ethical overtones. Similarities and differences with these traditional sources of ethics are identified and analyzed. Third, Schrage uncovers the theological and practical foundations of New Testament ethics. Fourth, Schrage identifies central ethical concepts, themes, motifs, and words used by each New Testament author. The New Testament is “not a handbook or compendium of Christian ethics” (2), but it is a source of particular ethical criteria. Fifth, Schrage utilizes the exegetical methods of higher criticism (form, redaction, and historical critical methods) in order to explore the original and transformed intents of each passage examined, as well as how the original intent and the transformed intent relate to one another. Sixth, Schrage identifies and analyzes concrete moral precepts that are revealed in the texts. Precepts should be thought of paradigmatically, not casuistically (7). Schrage’s methodology includes no synthetic or application components, and does not embrace literary explication as a valid means of exegesis.

Several criticisms may be leveled against Schrage’s methodology. Schrage (1988) argues that there is no single “New Testament ethics” just as there is no single New Testament

theology (3), yet he enigmatically titles his book *The Ethics of the New Testament*. Perhaps a more accurate title would have been *The Plurality of Ethics in the New Testament* or *Heterogeneous New Testament Ethics*. Schrage claims that there may be a single guiding principle and several points of convergence and confluence, but that all New Testament ethical criteria and concepts are in flux (3). Schrage rightly argues that the New Testament is not a textbook for ethics, but he comes dangerously close to assuming that the New Testament is a collection of textbooks for ethics. Schrage often neglects the literary nature of the texts being analyzed and fails to appreciate properly the importance of original authorial intent.

Structure

The structure of Schrage's (1988) analysis follows from the presuppositions of his methodology. If the exegete uses the "proper methodology" each individual writer's voice will be heard and no "imaginary New Testament ethics" will be constructed (3). Schrage does not attempt to systematize the ethical criteria of the New Testament writers into a synthetic construct. Rather, care is taken to identify and analyze contradictions and congruencies between the various authors' ethical stances. Thus, the works of each New Testament author (or source of tradition) is

evaluated separately. Schrage's analysis naturally deals most heavily with the ethics of Jesus and Paul, the two most fruitful theologians and ethicists of the New Testament. Schrage's structure follows: 1. Jesus' ethics, 2. early Christian ethics, 3. ethics in the synoptic Gospels, 4. Paul's ethics, 5. ethics in the Deutero-Pauline Epistles, 6. James' ethics, 7. Johannine ethics, 8. ethics in Hebrews, 9. ethics in Revelation. The following critical review of Schrage's work employs the same structure. A concluding valuation of the substance of Schrage's endeavor will be given after the critical review.

Critical Review

Schrage (1988) spends more time on the ethics of Jesus than on any other New Testament author. Schrage focuses on the theological foundation and distinctiveness of Jesus' ethics. Jesus' ethics were based firmly in his eschatology (24–25). In Jesus' preaching the imminent coming of the kingdom of God fills a central role in determining the actions of humans (37). The kingdom of God brings with it rewards and punishments. Good actions are a consequence, not a condition, of the establishment of God's kingdom, and bad actions lead to divine punishment (28). Jesus is the person who brings this new kingdom, and powerfully

represents and preaches what human conduct must look like. Jesus' ethics are essentially Christocentric eschatology.

According to Schrage (1988), Jesus' ethics were distinctively hostile to traditional interpretations of Old Testament law and were based in the supremacy of his own covenant-making. Schrage holds that Jesus criticized the Torah itself in his Sermon on the Mount "with no exegetical basis in the Old Testament itself" (65–66). The phrase "but I say to you" occurs in Matthew several times in Jesus' antitheses. Schrage argues that for Matthew this meant that Jesus was cautioning against misinterpreting the law, and that this revealed no real conflict between Jesus and Mosaic Law. Schrage goes on to assert that Jesus actually claimed "authority equal—and sometimes contrary—to that of Moses" (66). Jesus does not speak like a rabbi interpreting Moses' law. He speaks like God, and the result is a destruction of the Torah. Schrage maintains that Matthew did not intend this view to come out in his writing, but that Jesus did intend this view to come out in his preaching. Schrage's interpretation is highly suspect when he separates the content of Matthew's writings from Matthew's intentions, especially when the material is entirely Matthean (not Lukan or Markan or even a part of the theoretical Gospel of Q). Schrage comes close to saying that he, as a modern interpreter,

can interpret Jesus' sayings recorded in Matthew better than Matthew can. The idea of authorial intent breaks down completely.

According to Schrage (1988), another distinctive aspect of Jesus' ethics is his idea of the relationship between the Mosaic Law and the "law of love." Jesus abrogates the *lex talionis* and replaces it with the commandment of love (65, 68). However, while Jesus says that there is no greater commandment than love, he does not say that no other commandments exist. Schrage argues that love is the first commandment, not the only one (87). The other commandments were not thereby null and void: "The relative scarcity of texts citing the law of love in comparison to the wealth of specific commandments conveys a clear message" (81). That message, according to Schrage, is not that Jesus' ethics are situational or existential. Jesus' ethics are also not merely a "system of legalistic casuistry" (80). Jesus' imperatives are not vague, colorless, non-substantive, or merely formal maxims. Jesus' law of love points *back* to himself, *up* to a person's relationship with God, and *out* toward others. The "clear message" of Jesus' ethics is theological and Christocentric, and is clear and concrete in its application (81).

Schrage (1988) affirms that after Jesus ascended back to heaven the early Christians began to formulate ethical criteria based on the

significance of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ (119). The content and bases of early Christian ethics were transformed as the cultural milieu of Christianity changed from Judaism to Greco-Romanism. Schrage asserts that the pre-Pauline Hellenistic Christian communities borrowed from traditional ethics “because the extant sayings of the Lord no longer sufficed for guidance in the new situation and the larger environment” (128). Schrage finds evidence of early Christian ethics primarily in redactions in the Gospels, but he complains that “it is often very difficult to decide which are Jesus’ own words and which are the product of the community” (125). Though Schrage acknowledges the great difficulties involved in differentiating Jesus’ authentic words, actions, and thoughts from those of the early Christian community, he nevertheless accepts without argument the legitimacy of Q and other theoretical Christian oral traditions or complexes of sayings (123). Note Schrage’s concession that he *decides* what is or is not Jesus’ original words, he does not *discover* them. Further, Schrage attempts to exegete the original intent of these sources in the area of ethics. The problem is that if a modern scholar cannot be sure of the existence of a document or tradition (with no more than circumstantial evidence to support his theories) no hermeneutic (no matter how “proper” the

methodology) can discover the original authorial intent concerning any topic (including ethics) except by conjecture. Any conclusions drawn from such speculation are at best highly questionable.

Not only does Schrage (1988) presuppose the legitimacy and historical accuracy of theoretical oral or written traditions, he also discredits the legitimacy and historical accuracy of actual New Testament writings. Schrage discredits Luke's narratives concerning the communal sharing of the early Christians (Acts 2 and 4) and calls Luke historically inaccurate in this instance (126) and in Luke's later statement concerning the respectability of Barnabas in Jerusalem (127–128). Is authorial intent even in view here? Schrage aims to get beyond the author's intent to what really happened, and develop ethical criteria from the actual circumstances. Unfortunately, Schrage ignores the fact that the original authors are our best witnesses to the actual circumstances. When Schrage states that what Luke claims about Stephen's blamelessness (Acts 7) is in fact a falsification (126), he does away completely with the primacy of original authorial intent and the historical reliability of Scripture is seriously questioned. One might well ask if valid moral precepts may be derived from historically inaccurate or intentionally falsified accounts. Can authors who intent-

ionally falsify accounts be good sources of moral criteria? In the end, Schrage's wholesale acceptance of theoretical Christian traditions and criticisms of writers of Scripture rests on the same grounds as the 19th century quest for the historical Jesus—modern conjecture and eisogesis.

Nevertheless, Schrage's (1988) analysis of the general shape of ethics in the synoptic Gospels is outstanding. Schrage affirms that in the synoptic Gospels ethical obedience has "missionary implications" (145). For Mark, discipleship becomes the key concept of Christian ethics. Christ-centered obedience and imitation mark the Christian life. Matthew emphasizes a better righteousness, a new and more complete ethic than the Old Testament can offer. This higher truth is based in Jesus' admonitions and life. Luke centers on the lives of prophets, apostles, and Jesus, presenting paradigms for Christian living based in Christocentric pneumatology (153). The Christian witness broadens as disciples are made, as Christ's righteousness is obeyed, and as humble servants follow the Spirit's leading.

Schrage (1988) also gives an exemplary analysis of Pauline ethics. The primary conceptual bases of Pauline ethics are eschatology, Christology, pneumatology, and the idea of judgment. Christians are presently changed in the light of future judgment (reward or

punishment), and find identity in Christ and transformation in the Spirit. Schrage argues that the imperatives (ethical admonitions) and indicatives (descriptions, dogma, and assurances) in the Pauline epistles are not contradictory to each other but are complementary (168). The moral imperatives are based in the indicatives. For instance, Christians are sanctified in Christ, and are told to be holy like Christ. Schrage also takes a compatibilist view of love and the commandments. Love is not all there is, but it does say what is most important and what is the highest (though not only) criterion for Christian conduct (217).

Schrage (1988) denies the Pauline authorship of most of the epistles traditionally attributed to Paul. He states no technical arguments for dismissing traditional ascriptions of Pauline authorship (though his assumptions probably rest on the higher critical conclusions of liberal or neo-orthodox theologians and Bible interpreters). However, Schrage explicitly claims that there are minor theological and ethical differences between the “Deutero-Pauline” epistles and the authentically Pauline epistles. Schrage matter-of-factly states that “both Colossians and Ephesians were written by disciples of Paul who considered themselves bound by the theological heritage in a new situation” (244). He acknowledges that these two books evidence the same quality of

theological and ethical thought as the genuinely Pauline epistles (244). The ethical exhortations are what distinguish Colossians and Ephesians from Paul's letters (251). Colossians and Ephesians include formal analogies instead of ad hoc formulations of ethical criteria made to fit specific situations (as in Paul's letters) (251–252). First Thessalonians has a different author than Colossians, Ephesians or the Pauline letters (256–257). The Pastoral letters are likewise denied Pauline authorship, on the grounds that their pneumatology and eschatology differ greatly from Paul's letters (258). The specific difference noted is the supposed deficiency of the pastoral letters in these areas. The Petrine epistles are likewise relegated to the category of Deutero-Pauline letters because of their marked similarities and congruencies with Pauline thought in the areas of ethics and theology. Schrage concludes that the ethics of the Deutero-Pauline works are compatible with the Pauline corpus in most respects, but too often fail to attain to the deep theological foundations established by Paul.

The ethics of James, John, the epistle of Hebrews, and Revelation are criticized by Schrage (1988) for their essentially legalistic or dualistic tendencies. Schrage argues that James “considers the ethical law of the Old Testament, but not the cultic law, to be the guideline and criterion of Christian ethics” (288). James' ethic

often verges on legalism, according to Schrage, and invokes heavy criticism in the light of Paul's Christological foundation for ethics. James' moral imperatives find their basis in the moral indicatives, but not as forcefully or convincingly as in Paul's writings. Johannine ethics, on the other hand, are intensely theological and Christocentric, yet fall prey to the charge of dualism (308–314). Christ-like love steals the spotlight from concrete ethical duty in the Johannine corpus. Hebrews, like Johannine literature, emphasizes the other-worldly nature of Christian ethics and its superiority to Old Testament law. Revelation depicts present Christian ethical conduct against the backdrop of wider historical and spiritual conflict. Contrasts abound. Triumph comes through suffering, life through death, peace through war, purity through bloodshed, reality through proclamation. These contrasts verge on dualism, while the concrete ethical admonitions or lists of virtues and vices come close to establishing a legalistic basis of salvation.

Schrage's (1988) criticisms reveal a profound exegetical problem. Schrage begins his work by seeking to identify and analyze the various ethics of the New Testament, but ends his work by presenting value judgments on the work of the Bible writers. Schrage effectively creates a canon within a canon. Paul and Jesus represent the highest rung of ethical form-

ulation, with succeeding authors degrading the power and purity of the earlier superior ethics. Perhaps the greatest indictment that could be given against Schrage is that he judges the value of the ethical formulations of biblical authors. The Bible has become less a source for ethical criteria than an object of ethical criticism. As would be expected, Schrage (1988) gives no conclusion to his work (he states in the introduction to the book that there can be no systematic ethics of New Testament). There is no synthesis of the data. No expounding on the ethical criteria of the New Testament. Not even a note on how the plurality of ethical criteria discovered in the heterogeneous ethics of the New Testament might be applied to contemporary life. William W. Menzies (1987) has argued convincingly that exegesis and biblical theology must be verified in the life of the exegete and be applicable to the wider Christian experience if the hermeneutical process is to reach its completion (1–14). Schrage's methodology never clearly touches on the applicability of specific New Testament ethical criteria, nor does he ever get around to attempting an application of each particular biblical author's ethical criteria.

A Valuation of The Ethics of the New Testament

Positive Aspects

The value of Schrage's work lies primarily in its careful theological exposition. Central to all New Testament writers is the idea that ethics is worthless outside of theology (Houlden, 125). New Testament ethics are constructed on theological foundations. Schrage (1988) rightly emphasizes the importance of eschatology in New Testament ethical formulation. New Testament ethics might be described as "The 'ought' of God's kingdom", in the light of the here and now and the age to come. Similarly, New Testament ethics grows out of New Testament Christology and pneumatology. It is Jesus that is at the center of the Christian life. Jesus died so that people could escape from sin and be born again into a new life of love. It is the Spirit of God that controls the Christian and enables him or her to overcome sin in the here and now. The Spirit empowers Christians to be a witness through their life of love. New Testament ethics might be described as "The Spirit-empowered Christocentric 'ought' of God's kingdom." Schrage is a clear-sighted and careful biblical theologian. His use of texts to support his main theses nearly always follows

generally accepted rules of proper exegesis and theological synthesis. His explanation of the influences of ancient Hellenistic and Jewish culture on New Testament ethical formulation is superb. Schrage does an excellent job relating major biblical themes and motifs to ethics. He keeps generalizations to a minimum, and presents logically coherent arguments.

Negative Aspects

Schrage's (1988) work has several shortcomings closely related to his presuppositions. First, Schrage never explicitly delineates his presuppositions, nor does he argue for their validity. Several important (and questionable) presuppositions that affect his views on New Testament ethics are: 1. higher critical methods of biblical exegesis are necessary to understand the New Testament; 2. the conclusions of higher critical methods are more accurate than the conclusions of biblical authors, early church tradition, or the biblical texts; 3. a biblical writer may be inaccurate (even intentionally inaccurate), yet be dependable for correct ethical formulation; 4. formulation of contemporary applications is not the job of the exegete; 5. no general or specific conclusions need to be reached concerning New Testament ethics; 6. biblical authors may contradict each

other; and 7. synthesis of ethics in the New Testament is impossible.

Second, Schrage (1988) entirely neglects the literary contexts in his interpretations, and fails to appreciate the weaknesses of his higher critical approach. While he recognizes that the New Testament is not merely a textbook on ethics, he never takes the time to value the literary quality of many of his proof-texts (many, if not most, theologians are guilty of this at some time or another). For instance, Jesus' parables are not mere sources of ethical or theological instruction. New Testament ethical teaching is often embodied in stories. And stories require the interpreter to recognize and assess the importance and meaning of the setting, viewpoint, selectivity, arrangement, drama, narrative, plot movement, dialogue, characterization, and commentary, which are employed by the author in order to lead the reader into an experience not a case (Ryken 1984, 35, 62–63; 1992, 43, 85). Several weaknesses are inherent in the higher critical approach. A biblical author's redactions of sources may in fact reflect particular interests and purposes in writing, but it is the finished work as a whole that the exegete must seek to understand, not just the parts. Christians consider the canon of Scripture to be normative, not the sources used. The interpreter can only know for sure what a biblical author actually

said, they cannot know for sure what sources or redactions were involved. The only thing that interpreters have to work with is the finished product. Higher critical methods often give a higher role to modern human reason and analysis than to original authorial intent. Higher critical methods also tend toward reductionism.

Third, Schrage (1988) concludes that no synthesis can or should be made of New Testament theology or ethics. Schrage bases this conclusion on the presupposition that such a synthesis is impossible. As a result of Schrage's higher critical methods, he finds a distinction between the ethics of Jesus on the one hand and the early Christians, the synoptic Gospels, and John on the other. These plural ethics are not only different, they are incompatible and contradictory. Schrage compares and contrasts the ethical formulations of biblical writers (and even uses one writer's work to critique another's), but never gives a full account of ethics in the New Testament. Each individual tree is examined, but the forest is lost completely.

Fourth, no general or particular contemporary applications are explored. This may be due in part to Schrage's (1988) pluralistic view of New Testament ethics. If there are many different ethical criteria presented in Scripture, and they are ultimately disjointed, then no coherent conclusions or

applications can be formulated from them. Schrage does not explicitly reject the continuing value of New Testament ethics for contemporary Christians, as does Sanders (1975, 129–130), but he does explicitly limit their particular applicability in today’s world based on situational and theological differences between the ancient world and today (Schrage 1988, 2). One might ask what motivates a person to write a comprehensive book on New Testament ethics if no static ethical criteria can be uncovered. Is Schrage interested in debunking traditional Christian beliefs and practices? Does he have a passion for the dynamics of transitory human moral precepts? Are New Testament ethical formulations merely historical curiosities? Schrage identifies his motivation when he states that it is the ethical “direction established by the New Testament” that interests him (2). Schrage’s fractured New Testament ethics present no “ought” to the contemporary Christian reader, only several different and sometimes contradictory directions in which “ought” might be found.

Conclusions

Schrage properly emphasizes the eschatological, Christological, and charismatic bases of New Testament ethics, but overlooks the

significance of authorial intent and literary explication. He fails to fully appreciate the import of identifying and analyzing one's own presuppositions. Schrage's work is full of insight and passion, but falls short in its analysis of New Testament ethics because he neglects to systematically synthesize or apply the concepts or precepts that are discovered. Schrage's text is a great resource for theological reflection on New Testament ethics, but it fails to live up to its title. Holistic or practical conclusions regarding New Testament ethics as a whole must be found elsewhere. Still, Schrage's work holds value for those who wish to explore the bases of early Christian ethical formulation and the dynamic quality of ancient and modern parenesis based on Divine revelation. While Schrage's methods and analyses are not wholly satisfactory, his investigation into the "who," "what," "when," "where," and "why" of New Testament ethics is admirable and essential. Schrage's principal failure is his neglect of "how" we are to understand and apply New Testament ethics as a whole. Heterogeneous New Testament ethics without coherence or application is not a viable alternative to traditional biblical Christian ethics. Such a pluralistic ethic is in the end impracticable and arcane.

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Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics

Situation ethics, formulated by Joseph Fletcher in the middle of the 20th century, is an account of ethics that attempts to combat both legalism and antinomianism in Christianity. Based on pragmatism, relativism, positivism and personalism, situationism is a methodology that centers on ends, means, motives, and consequences. Fletcher reformulates moral principles in a thoroughly person-centric fashion, and the law of Moses is reread in a relativistic and pragmatic light. A norm of love is the only ethical imperative in situationism. It is here argued that Fletcher's statements concerning love are at times incongruous, unbiblical, simplistic, and dubious, and that several glaring inconsistencies or ambiguities arise in Fletcher's arguments. Fletcher's *Situation Ethics* (1966) and *Moral Responsibility* (1967a) are used as primary sources for understanding his formulation of situationism.

Joseph Fletcher (1905-1991), an American Episcopalian priest, was perhaps the most influential advocate for situation ethics in the 20th century. Fletcher had a long career as a professor at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard Divinity

School, and the University of Virginia and wrote ten books, two of which are his *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (1966) and *Moral Responsibility: Situation Ethics at Work* (1967a). These two books found large audiences but were widely criticized. Later in life Fletcher left the Christian faith and became a self-proclaimed humanist and agnostic. At the University of Virginia, Fletcher turned his focus to bioethics, and is now known as the “Patriarch of Bioethics” for his foundational work in that emerging field. In this article, I will describe and then analyze Fletcher’s situationism, its positionality with regard to other ethical formulations, its fundamental bases, its methodologies, its principles, its view of the Law of Moses, and its norm of love. We will find that Fletcher’s situationism is perched between the ethical approaches of legalism and antinomianism and is a pragmatic and relativistic methodology of ethics that makes moral principles or laws subservient to the one absolute moral law of love. His formulation, however, leaves many unanswered questions, contains inconsistencies, and is problematic in its application.

Three Approaches to Ethics

Fletcher (1966) maintains that there are only three main Christian approaches to moral decisions: legalism, antinomianism, and situa-

tionism (17). Legalism searches nature and Scripture for moral principles that are universally applicable. Fletcher (1967a) condemns legalists for “idolatrously” making their many rules absolute (31). While Fletcher (1966) makes no room in his analysis of different methods of ethics for conflicting or qualified absolutism (26) he nevertheless acknowledges that the idea of “greater good” morality makes sense (1967a, 173). Antinomianism, according to Fletcher (1966), is lawless and completely relativistic, relying “upon the situation of itself, *there and then*, to provide its ethical solution (emphasis his)” (22). Situationism is, in contrast with legalism, methodological not substantive, and is, in contrast with antinomianism, norm-based not *Laissez Faire* (15). Legalists and situationists concur that contexts (situations) and principles (generalizations) are essential ingredients of ethical judgments (1967b, 156), though situationists generally focus more on relativity and pragmatism than on normative behavior. Several situationists from Europe who greatly influenced Fletcher were Bonhoeffer, Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann (Fletcher 1966, 33). In America, H. R. Niebuhr, Joseph Sittler, James Gustafson, Paul Lehmann, Gordan Kaufman, Charles West, and Paul Tillich were Joseph Fletcher’s fellow spokesmen for situationism (34). Paul Ramsey (1965) applauds Fletcher’s

personalism and contextualism (474). In Fletcher's (1966) opinion, "modern Christians ought not to be naïve enough to accept any other view of Jesus' ethic than the situational one" (139).

The Basis of Situation Ethics

Fletcher (1966) argues that in reality most humans are situationists in practice already (147). However, Fletcher's situationism is in explicit opposition to the ethics of Biblicalist Protestants, Muslims, "Natural Law" Catholics, followers of Confucius (140), and Buddhists (143). One might rightly ask "Are only theologically liberal or neo-orthodox Christians and secular humanists formal situationists?" If so, what are some central presuppositions held by these two broad groups that possibly sways them toward accepting situationism as a formal methodology in the first place? Fletcher asserts that the four modern presuppositions of situationalism are: 1. pragmatism; 2. relativism; 3. positivism; and 4. personalism (40–52, 147).

Pragmatism, according to Fletcher (1966), expresses that "the good is what works, what is expedient, what gives satisfaction" (42). In pragmatism, the ends justify the means, but for Fletcher not even this maxim is universal or absolute (121). The means are the ingredients to the ends, and we should choose them carefully (121-122). Means and ends are not

independent entities but “are *relative* to each other. In any course of action it is the coexistence of its means and ends that puts it in the realm of ethics (emphasis his)” (121). It is the intended end not the actual result that matters the most to Fletcher (152). Thus, situationism’s pragmatism would say: “The intended ends justify the means relative to the ends.” For Fletcher (1968), misdirected action is cause for regret but not remorse, but unloving action is cause for remorse and regret (256).

Fletcher (1966) claims that situationism “relativizes the absolute, it does not absolutize the relative” (45). It is true that Fletcher makes good or evil actions (means) relative, yet he seems at one point to absolutize the good or evil of ends (123). If his relativity were taken seriously, might not the goodness or evilness of the end also depend upon the situation? In which case one cannot know what is a good or evil end purpose outside of particular situations. Fletcher comments on this problem when he says that “*Not only means but ends too are relative, only extrinsically justifiable* We cannot say anything we do *is* good, only that it is a means to an end (emphasis his)” (129). Ends and means are both relative in that they are “related to each other in a contributory hierarchy” (129) and all ends are means to some higher end. Love is the “only one end,

one goal, one purpose which is not relative and contingent, always an end in itself” (129). Everything else is relative. Even Fletcher’s (1967a) own analyses and conclusions on various moral problems are acknowledged to be relative (8). Situationists are free to make their own conclusions because “the openness and nonlegalistic strategy of situationism allows for differences of judgment” (8).

Situationism is positivistic. Fletcher (1966) claims that ethics (love especially) must be believed not proved. There are no proofs or logical arguments that can deduce ethical methods. Norms are nonrational (or transrational, or superrational) and must be chosen not discovered (46–50). In situationism, “a man decides on his values; he does not deduce them from nature” (Geisler 1989, 46). Humans must have faith that God is love, and base their actions on that faith. Philosophy is of no use in bringing a person from doubt to faith.

For situationists, personalism is the key to what is good: that which leads to “human welfare and happiness (but not, necessarily, pleasure)” (Fletcher 1967a, 33). Persons are the most important thing. We love other persons through God who is the person of love. “Personal interests come first, before the natural or Scriptural or theoretical or general or logical or anything else” (34).

The Methodology of Situation Ethics

Situation ethics is a methodology of ethics not a system of ethics. Systematizing moral theology is a futile effort, and every individual “must decide for himself according to his own estimate of conditions and consequences” what is right to do in any particular situation (Kirk 1927, 375–376 qtd. in Fletcher 1966, 37). Fletcher goes so far as to say that ethical systems are unchristian or sub-Christian, no matter how orthodox they seem (12). For Fletcher, four core questions affect our moral decisions: “What is the end?” “What means can be used to get there?” “What is the motive?” and “What are the foreseeable consequences?” (127-128). The methodology of situation ethics centers on the ends, the means, the motives, and the consequences. Fletcher (1966), borrowing from Tillich, suggests following a formula for ethical decisions (33). First, the only law is love (*agape*). Second, the wisdom (*sophia*) of the church and culture provide generally applicable rules or guidance. Third, the time of decision (*kairos*) occurs “in which *the responsible self in the situation* decides whether the *sophia* can serve love there, or not (emphasis his)” (33). In Fletcher’s (1968) words, “the imperative (love) combined with the indicative (empirical data) determines the normative (the good thing to do)” (260).

Situation Ethics and Moral Principles

Fletcher (1966) deliberately avoids words like “never,” “perfect,” “always,” “complete,” and “absolutely” (43–44) when speaking of moral principles, and states that Christians “are commanded to love people, not principles” (239). Here situationism’s personalism is seen most clearly. People, circumstances, and particulars are more important than general principles that are derived directly or indirectly from natural law, Biblical imperatives, or rational theories (1967a, 35). Fletcher (1966, 28) agrees with Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s (1955) assertion that “principles are only tools in God’s hands, soon to be thrown away as unserviceable” (8). In fact, principles take such a back seat to circumstances that Fletcher (1966) insists that “circumstances alter rules and principles” (29). Fletcher quotes Cicero’s *De Legibus*, I.17, 45: “Only a madman could maintain that the distinction between the honorable and the dishonorable, between virtue and vice, is a matter of opinion, not of nature” (77) and goes on to affirm that this is “exactly what situation ethics maintains” (i.e. that the distinction between virtue and vice is only a matter of opinion) (77). A person cannot prove what is right or wrong. Our moral judgments are decisions not conclusions (1967a, 13). Fletcher focuses on the “response” in

“responsibility,” and asserts that only a personal and autonomous individual in an actual situation can respond to a moral dilemma (235). However, situationists do not individually choose their own norms (1967b, 165). Norms are a part of each person’s moral “heritage,” yet they are not absolute. Each individual must decide in the situation whether or not to follow the principles (165). Situationists dare to “sin bravely” (1966, 135-136).

One of the differences between situationism and legalism is this: moral principles to the situationists are generally valid maxims, while to the legalist moral principles are universally normative, regardless of the situation (1967a, 31). Fletcher is willing to “suspend, ignore, or violate any principle if by doing so he can affect more good than by following it” (31–32). Contextual appropriateness is the goal of situationism, not what is good or right but what is “fitting” (1966, 28). Fletcher refuses to add content to his methodology, but recognizes that he would personally accept most of the principles of Christian ethics as generally valid (1968, 252), though these norms, Fletcher argues, are relative, or as he puts it, they are “advisors without veto power” (252).

Situation Ethics and the Decalogue

Fletcher (1967a) explicitly calls law ethics the “enemy” (241) and calls for a relativistic and pragmatic approach to the Decalogue (1967b, 151). The Ten Commandments are not always valid in every situation. We should add “ordinarily” to each commandment: thou shalt not kill ordinarily, thou shalt not commit adultery ordinarily, thou shalt not bear false witness ordinarily, etc. (151). The only way a rule is valid is if it is good in the situation to follow it (151). In Fletcher’s hands the Ten Commandments given by God on Mount Sinai become mere avuncular advice. However, Fletcher wavers at this point. Fletcher (1966) speaks as if idolatry were a true universal moral evil that legalists have blundered into (25, 31, 33, 160), yet he affirms that the second commandment might be broken for love’s sake (72). While he asserts that “there is nothing forbidding premarital acts. Only extramarital acts, i.e. adultery, are forbidden” (1967a, 134), he goes on to state that “sex is not always wrong outside marriage, even for Christians” (138).

What makes masturbation, homosexuality, adultery, or extramarital sex good is love, and what makes these actions evil is unlove (Fletcher 1966, 139). “Deviant” forms of sexual conduct are permissible for individuals “unless

they hurt themselves, their partners, or others” (140). Fletcher concludes that this would be enough reason for many people to abstain from sex outside of marriage (140; Smedes 1983, 271). Fletcher (1966) argues that we cannot know if prostitution (146), bribery (1967a, 179), lying, family desertion, corporate espionage, tax fraud, or premarital sex are wrong in advance of the situation because these actions have no “substance” or “living reality” outside of the particular situation (1966, 142–143). The law and love are usually not in conflict, but sometimes they are, and when they are the commandments must be set aside for love (1967b, 169). Situationism rejects all norms or laws (in their absolute sense), whether natural or revealed, except the one command “to love God in the neighbor” (1966, 26).

Situation Ethics and the Norm of Love

Fletcher’s situation ethics centers on the idea of love. This section will explore the norm of love in situation ethics, and discuss several glaring inconsistencies or ambiguities that arise in Fletcher’s arguments. Fletcher (1967a) argues that it would be best if people never used the word “love” in ethical discussions (because of its misleading connotations) but instead used the word “justice” (57). Situationism’s love is identical with justice, yet it is primarily the word love that is used by Fletcher to describe

the one norm of Christian situationists (contrary to his own advice). Fletcher (1966) allows for other standards for those of different belief systems (30). Regardless of what the one norm is, for situationists every other law or norm is “contingent” relative to this necessary norm (30). No one can know for sure what love is—it is not a law, only a rule-of-thumb (1968, 254). Not only is love the norm only for Christians, it is also only a faith proposition that decides that God is love and therefore love is good (1967a, 13, 173). In Fletcher’s words: “There is no way to reach the key category of love, of *agape*, as the primordial or axiomatic value . . . except by an act of faith” (13). This faith is not in nature, law, God’s revelation, reason, theological formulation, or conscience. Fletcher calls for faith in a proposition—that God is love—and we must believe Fletcher’s assurances that this proposition, as he understands and formulates it, is correct. In effect, Fletcher calls for blind faith in the utterances of Christian situation ethicists.

Fletcher (1967a) opposes those who would “thing-ify” love or justice, or give them any ontological status (with the exception of God’s love and justice, which for Fletcher is God’s very identity and substance) (55). Fletcher goes on to state in the very next paragraph that “in the simplest and most direct language . . . love and justice are one and the same *thing*

(emphasis mine)” (55). While his central purpose in making this statement seems to be to equate love and justice, he casually refers to love and justice as a *thing*. The word “thing” occurs in a sentence that is consciously “in the simplest and most direct language” (55).

What is love for the Christian situationist? Fletcher (1966) asserts that love is justice, and love is God (51). “Love is not the work of the Holy Spirit, it *is* the Holy Spirit working in us (emphasis his)” (51). Love seeks “the best welfare and deepest happiness of the most people in the situation” as justice demands (Fletcher 1968, 254). Fletcher (1967a) contends that when we help others, we are only giving them what they justly deserve (210). According to Fletcher (1966), personal love effectively takes the place of personal faith in salvation. An individual may love and be an atheist, yet be saved by faith in love, which for Fletcher *is* God (52). However, obedience to love does not bring salvation; rather, love is part of our human vocation (157). The uniqueness of Christianity lies in its Christocentric faith and love (156–157). Loving does not save us, faith in love saves us. Conversely, unfaith or disbelief does not condemn us, unloving does (52). Love has no content or substance outside of God, because God is love (62). Fletcher elucidates the pragmatic nature of love when he states that “our task is to act so that more good

(i.e. loving-kindness) will occur than any possible alternatives” (61).

Fletcher presents six main propositions concerning love. First, only love is intrinsically good (1966, 57). Every other action is only relatively or extrinsically good or evil. Second, the only ruling norm is love (69). All other moral principles are hierarchically subordinated to love. Third, justice and love are identical (87). What can be said about one can equally be said about the other. Fourth, love is distinct from sentimentality (103). Love is cold and calculating not warm and brotherly, willful not emotional, charitable not self-seeking. Fifth, the end justifies the means (120), and because love is the ultimate end, love justifies any means. Pragmatism reoccurs here as a proposition where before it was a presupposition (42). Sixth, love is situational not prescriptive (134). Love has no content outside of actual circumstances. A person cannot know what is the loving thing to do in any situation until an actual situation occurs.

A Critical Evaluation of Fletcher’s Situationism

A critical evaluation of Joseph Fletcher’s situation ethics will now be made, following the order in which his work was earlier reviewed. First, Fletcher’s analysis of the three main ethical approaches will be evaluated.

Second, the theoretical basis of situationism will be scrutinized. Third, the methodology of situation ethics will be questioned. Fourth, Fletcher's ideas concerning moral principles will be analyzed. Fifth, the relationship between situationism and the Law of Moses will be assessed. Sixth, Fletcher's norm of love will be evaluated.

Fletcher's situationism often falls prey to the same weaknesses that he attributes to legalism and to antinomianism. Fletcher (1966) condemns the logic of legalistic ethicists who derive universals from universals (32), but fails to realize that his own ethic derives the universal norm of love from the universal nature of God's love. There is no necessary connection between a many-norm ethic and legalism (Geisler 1989, 58). A one-norm ethic might also be called legalistic. In practice, Fletcher's situationism calls for absolute obedience to one moral law, regardless of circumstances (situations determine the shape of love but they do not ever allow for departure from love). Fletcher (1967a) criticizes natural law theory, but like natural law theory situationism's main precept is platitudinous, it has been used to defend anything and everything in particular circumstances (murder, adultery, lying, stealing, idolatry, etc.), it offers no consensus on what "love" might mean in real circumstances, and its conclusions are built

into its premises which are based on faith assertions (71). Fletcher also fails to realize that there are three general positions within what he terms “legalism”: nonconflicting absolutism, conflicting absolutism (“lesser evil” ethics), and qualified absolutism (“greater good” ethics) (Geisler 1989, 58–59). Only the first and second of these three positions are subject to Fletcher’s criticisms of legalism.

Fletcher (1967a) categorizes Christian antinomians as those who dismiss all moral norms and who “claim to be above any moral law (since they are ‘saved’ or guided directly by the Holy Spirit)” (30) and differentiates antinomians from situationists in this regard. But the distinction between the two groups is very subtle, for Fletcher (1966) himself claims to be above any moral law other than love, and for him love *is* the Holy Spirit (51), so that Christian advocates of both approaches (situationism and antinomianism) claim to be saved or guided not by any moral law but only by the Holy Spirit. The difference lies in the terminology and in their understandings of what the Holy Spirit is and does.

Norman Geisler (1989) points out that situationism is a normative position (love is the norm) (54), it is absolutist in its prescription of the what, why, and who of ethics (55), it resolves conflicting norms (55), it values differing circumstances (56), and it focuses on

love for persons (56). However, Geisler concludes that “situationism reduces to antinomianism, for one empty absolute moral law is in practice no better than no absolute moral law” (61). In addition, Fletcher does not prove that only one universal norm exists, nor does he disprove that many others exist; he only postulates “faith” in a singular moral law (59). We must simply believe Fletcher when he claims that situationism is the only approach to Christian ethics that is not naïve (1966, 139).

The theoretical basis of situationism is highly questionable from a Christian standpoint. Fletcher (1966) asks the question: “If the end does not justify the means, what does?” (120). He replies that the only answer can be “Nothing!” (120). Geisler (1989) offers a different answer: “The means justify the means” (75). Geisler quotes Romans 6:1 in response to pragmatism: “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means!” (75). Situationism rightly focuses on the importance of persons (above things) in moral decisions, but improperly establishes the individual human autonomy (and his situational decision of love) above the autonomy of God and his person. Fletcher’s (1968) personalism admits human fallibility (255), yet denies a literal fall of humanity (1966, 81; 1967b, 159).

The methodology of situation ethics seems to be misrepresented by Fletcher. Situation

ethics does well to take into account (at least theoretically) the importance of motives, means, ends, and results in moral decisions (Fletcher 1966, 142), but Fletcher's relativistic holism breaks down entirely at the point of situationism's methodology. No longer are the motives, means, ends, and results codependent. The motives and ends dominate the means and the results, and all four (motives, means, ends, and results) are merely intentional, not actual (i.e., no individual motives, means, ends, or results are absolutely right or wrong, they are only right or wrong as they relate to the one universal and non-substantive norm of love through their intentions). Fletcher (1968) applauds the fact that modern pluralism, empiricism, and relativism "have sloughed off the classical metaphysical apparatus of *a priori* assumptions and ontological 'grounded' axioms and norms. We just do not reason deductively or syllogistically anymore" (256). It is true that Fletcher (1967b) rarely reasons deductively or syllogistically (168), but he states four *a priori* assumptions (pragmatism, personalism, relativism, and positivism), and grounds his axiom and norm of love in the ontology of God. The "classical metaphysical apparatus" (256) seems to still be leading his methodology, though not explicitly or consistently.

Fletcher's treatment of moral principles is unbiblical and inconsistent. Fletcher (1967a)

incorrectly claims that Christians and non-Christians alike can agree on the maxim “We ought to love people, not rules or principles; what counts is not any hard and fast moral law but doing what we can for the good of others in every situation” (137). Psalm 119 is an ode of love to God’s laws, word, testament, and precepts, which seems to give a precedent for loving God’s rules and principles. However, loving God’s laws is not in conflict with loving persons, for a love of God’s law is a love of God’s justice (if, as Fletcher claims, love and justice are identical), and is a love for God’s establishment of just and loving purposes with people. Fletcher (1966) argues that “apart from the helping or hurting of people, ethical judgments or evaluations are meaningless” (60). This assertion sharply contradicts the tenth commandment which forbids coveting (an act that is entirely internal) and Jesus’ strong words concerning the immorality of lusting after a woman (again, an act that is entirely internal, and that therefore might not naturally harm or hurt anyone in Fletcher’s view). Jesus considers extramarital lust a sin that will condemn a person to hell (Matt. 5:27–30). Fletcher’s ethics has no room for internal sin. If situationism were consistent, Fletcher would have to say that Jesus’ ethical judgments or evaluations of internal sins are meaningless.

Fletcher's inconsistency in the area of moral principles carries over into his evaluation of particular actions in relation to his conclusions regarding the Decalogue. Fletcher (1967a) states that "high-pressure advertising is an unethical form of forced feeding" (213). He later asserts that to say that God takes sides in civil wars, strikes, "or any other complex 'gray' area . . . is plainly demonic, idolatrous, or psychotic" (1968, 254). Fletcher's two statements express a fundamentally intrinsicist view of good and evil actions, yet Fletcher states elsewhere that *no* act is immoral in itself; it is only wrong in particular situations in which love is not followed. Fletcher allows for love-motivated adultery. Why can he not also allow for love-motivated high-pressure advertising? Or love-motivated statements of God taking sides in civil wars, strikes, or other complex gray areas? Fletcher asks two questions concerning the seventh commandment: "Should we prohibit and condemn premarital sex?" or "Should we approve of it?" (137). "To the first one I promptly reply in the negative. To the second I propose an equivocal answer. 'Yes and no—depending on each particular situation'" (137). For Fletcher premarital sex may or may not be immoral depending on the situation, but the prohibition or condemnation of premarital sex is *always* wrong, regardless of the situation. Fletcher treats the prohibition or

condemnation of premarital sex in an absolutist and legalistic way. If Fletcher were to stay true to his fundamental position (nothing is wrong in and of itself) the most he could say would be “The prohibition and condemnation of premarital sex is right or wrong depending on the situation.” Fletcher has effectively established three unalterable laws in place of the tablets of Moses: “Do not say that God takes sides, do not high-pressure advertise, and do not condemn or prohibit premarital sex.”

Fletcher’s exposition on the unsentimental character of *agapeic* love is insightful, but his statements concerning love are sometimes incongruous, unbiblical, simplistic, and dubious. Fletcher (1966) draws sharp distinctions between *eros*, *philio*, and *agapeic* love, yet allows that they are not exclusive of one another (102–110). Only *agapeic* love for our neighbor is commanded by God, and this kind of love is perhaps the only one of the three that is universally possible (we cannot be close or intimate with everyone, but we can choose to work for the good of everyone).

Fletcher makes several incongruous remarks concerning love. Fletcher (1966) states that the only thing that is “intrinsically good” is love (57), yet goes on to assert that love “is not a good-in-itself” (61). If the second statement is true, what does Fletcher mean by “intrinsically good?” Fletcher (1966) comments that love “is

not a virtue at all; it is the one and only *regulative principle* of Christian ethics (emphasis his)” (61). Love “is not a virtue at all” (61), yet it is the only thing that is “intrinsically good” (57). Fletcher’s contradictory remarks continue when he declares that “Love does not say to us, ‘*Be like me.*’ It says, ‘*Do*’ what you can where you are (emphasis his)” (62). This not only contradicts Jesus’ words concerning the imitation of God’s perfection (Matt. 5:48), it also contradicts Fletcher’s later statement that “God *is* love. Men, who are finite, only *do* love. That is, they try in obedience to obey love’s command to be like God, to imitate him (emphasis his)” (62–63). Further, Fletcher claims that “*agape* is what is due to all others” (95). This not only contradicts the charismatic nature of love (while love is a duty because God gave his love freely, love is a gift not a reward or something that people deserve), it also contradicts Fletcher’s later statement that *agapeic* love “is for the deserving and the undeserving alike” (105–106). If not everyone deserves love, love is not merely what is due them. Fletcher (1967a) asserts that love is God’s being and justice is doing God’s will (57). Fletcher thus separates the existence and property nature of love with the purposive or predicate nature of justice. That is an unfair distinction since his

thesis is that love is justice. If the two are identical they are also inseparable.

Fletcher's views of love and justice often contradict Scripture. Fletcher (1967a) says of love and justice that "what may be said properly of either of them applies to the other" (54), but Scripture claims that while all humans deserve God's justice for what they have done (Rom. 6:23), no humans deserve God's love for what they have done (5:8). Fletcher's (1967a) discussion of the identity of love and justice fails to give reasons to believe that love and justice are identical instead of similar or overlapping (42–47). If a person could show that there are areas where justice is not love, or loving is not just (or is beyond justice), Fletcher's whole theory of love/justice identity would fail. This very disproof exists in the crucifixion of Jesus, the just for the unjust in God's supreme act of love. That is not justice (or it at least goes beyond justice), it is mercy. Justice and love are separable according to the gospel itself. Fletcher's (1966) argument that love and justice are identical (95) ignores the fact that God loved the world and sent his Son so that whoever believed in him could escape from justice in him (all humans deserve to perish) (John 3:16). If love and justice were identical, then either: 1. God would destroy all humans because justice demands it (and love is justice); or 2. God would not have to sacrifice

his Son because his love requires no penalty for sin (and justice is love), making Jesus' death unnecessary. Instead, it should be said that from a biblical standpoint love is just (and merciful, gracious, etc.) and that justice is loving (and pure, and demanding, etc.). The two are separate, yet complementary. Love is a gift, not a right. Justice is a right, not a gift. Everyone deserves justice. Love is often undeserved. God loves people not because they deserve it, but because God chooses to love them. People don't deserve Christ's sacrifice, they deserve God's judgment. Every human has a right to claim justice from every other human, but not everyone has a right to claim love from everyone.

Fletcher's one norm of love is overly simplistic and dubious. "Always act with love" is the one absolute, universal, formal ethical imperative, "but it is not substantive, i.e., it does not say what love is. It does not tell us how we are to do it . . . It is not prescriptive" (1968, 259–260). Geisler (1989) comments that Fletcher's norm of love is too general to be of any good (57). If love is truly without content outside of particular situations, where does the person in an actual moral situation look to tell them what to do? Not within themselves, not in nature, not in Scripture, not in reason. Geisler mistakenly argues that for Fletcher the situation itself provides the person with ethical judgment

and determines the content of love instead of affecting it (58). But Fletcher holds that faith in love provides the content of love in the situation. Fletcher's position is difficult to understand or believe. Fletcher argues that lying is good when good ends are intended. When Fletcher tells the reader to have faith in what he says (that love is the only universal ethical norm) the reader has reason to doubt Fletcher's integrity (because he could be lying to the reader to achieve some end that he perceives as good). Fletcher gives no proof that one or many different universal norms are possible, or even defensible, and bases his own situationism purely on faith (58–60). Further, Fletcher implies that God can *only* be loved through one's neighbors (57).

Fletcher's situationism is precariously perched between the ethical approaches of legalism and antinomianism and is a pragmatic and relativistic methodology of ethics that makes moral principles or laws subservient to the one absolute moral law of love. Fletcher's situationism falls prey to the same weaknesses that he attributes to legalism and to antinomianism. The theoretical basis of situationism is highly questionable from a Christian standpoint, and the methodology of situation ethics seems to be misrepresented by Fletcher. In addition, Fletcher's treatment of moral principles and the Decalogue is

unbiblical and inconsistent, and while his exposition on the unsentimental character of *agapeic* love is insightful, his statements concerning love are sometimes incongruous, unbiblical, simplistic, and dubious.

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The Christian, Abortion, and War: An Argument for Life

Introduction

The two ethical topics of abortion and Christian involvement in war are interrelated (Zahn 1973, 132). A person's right not to be killed and the obligation not to kill other people are "the same concept viewed from two different standpoints" (Dombrowski 1991, 99). Don Marquis (1998) asserts that killing other humans is immoral because every person has a future—potentially a life like our own (339). For the Christian, killing is wrong because humans are made in the image of God. God cares for all His creatures and He loves humans so much that He gave His own Son to redeem them (John 3:16). Killing breaks God's law (Ex. 20:13), and incurs God's judgment (Gen. 9:5–6; Rev. 21:8). God, not man, has the right to ultimately judge and kill humans. Jesus' Golden Rule compels Christians to love others as themselves. These are a few of the biblical bases for the sacredness of human life. For a Christian the circumstances surrounding war and abortion may present compelling arguments in favor of exceptions to the law against killing. However, the arbitrary

and unjustified destruction of human life is always wrong. The thesis of the present evaluation is that abortion is always arbitrary and unjustified, and that Christian participation in war is never justified, and current justifications of war are arbitrary.

Various Christian assumptions and theological implications enter into the debates over abortion and war. For instance, Christians believe that death and the non-existence of a human being are not necessarily evil (Dombrowski 1991, 99). However, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1955) affirms, “bodily life, which we receive without any action on our own part, carries within itself the right to its own preservation” (154). Christians view bodily human life as both an end and a means to an end (155). John Klotz (1973) presents several theological implications that should be considered in a Christian analysis of abortion and war (34–37). First, God created human life, and is ultimately sovereign over human life. Second, God’s providence must be trusted but never tempted. Third, death and killing are a result of original sin (Gen. 2:17; 4:8). Fourth, humans bear God’s image and are stewards of their lives before God, but are bound to die. The biblical doctrines of creation, divine providence, evil, and anthropology are all foundational to the development of a Christian ethical position on abortion and war.

A wide variety of Christian ethical positions on abortion and war have been advanced. A systematic methodology is useful in evaluating and valuating these ethical positions. In the present essay, the abortion debate and the war debate will be analyzed as separate, yet connected, issues. A brief history of ethical approaches to war and abortion will be presented. Following the example of Cahill (1994), the various Christian (and secular) approaches to abortion and war will be tested for internal consistency and coherence, scriptural warrant, precedent, and prescription, uniformity with the understanding of the “community of faith,” and experiential validation (210). Christian ethical positions must be Christocentric, biblical, rational, consistent, and experientially verifiable. A further criterion for a Christian position on war or abortion is “analogous conformity to the paradigmatic social challenges that the first Christian communities presented historically” (244). In the present essay, a Christian ethical approach to abortion will be developed, followed by a Christian ethical approach to war, with a few summative conclusions on both issues.

The Christian and Abortion

The modern abortion debate centers on two important, yet distinct, questions. Is abortion

moral, amoral, or immoral? Should abortion be legal, illegal, or beyond legal (Boonin 2003, 3–4)? The present essay focuses primarily on the first of these questions. This is because the social criminality of abortion is in part contingent upon the personal immorality of abortion (Smedes 1983, 125). Two extreme positions in the debate are conservative anti-abortionism and liberal abortion advocacy. The traditional anti-abortion argument may be formed into a syllogism:

Killing innocent humans is immoral.

The fetus is an innocent human.

Therefore, killing fetuses is immoral
(Gensler 1998, 325).

The liberal position offers four arguments for abortion rights. First, due to the subjectivity and personal nature of the issue, abortion is a relative good or evil based on the circumstances in individual situations. Second, women have an absolute right to privacy and a right to deal with their bodies as they see fit. Criminalizing abortion infringes upon these rights. Third, quality of life issues sometimes necessitate abortion to avoid abject poverty, emotional and psychological distress, or even the possibility of neonatal deformation or disability. Fourth, the

personhood of the fetus is questionable at best, and this requires us to think of the fetus as not possessing any rights (or at least possessing less rights than the mother) (Pojman 1998, 277). Generally abortion advocates conclude that abortion is moral or amoral, but is perhaps immoral in certain late-term abortions.

At the heart of the issue of abortion is the conceptualization of homicide. The question is “Who is protected against homicide (i.e. who has a right to life)?” Philip Devine (1998) enumerates three possibilities that have been proposed by both sides of the debate: 1. Homo sapiens as a species are protected; 2. individuals with actual capacities such as reason, experience, feeling, memory, etc., are protected; and 3. individuals with potential capacities are protected. Possibilities one and three are held primarily by anti-abortionists, while abortion advocates usually argue for some form of the second possibility. Michael Tooley (1998) takes the second possibility to its extreme conclusion when he argues that mental interest in one's continuing existence is necessary for having a right to life (230). This leads Tooley to embrace the inviolability of some adult animal life and the amorality of destroying human fetal and infant life.

A Brief Historical Review

In analyzing the ethics of abortion it is instructive to briefly review historical secular and Christian views on abortion. Kapparis (2002) argues that abortion was not a crime in antiquity because fetuses were generally not held to be truly human in Greco-Roman culture and pro-abortion laws were "consistent with the religious, political, ethical and philosophical beliefs of the ancient world" (194). However, the idea of personhood has not always been tied to the sacredness of the life of the unborn. Socrates believed that the fetus was a living being from conception, but still allowed for abortion in his ideal republic (201). In contradistinction to the general Greco-Roman acceptance of abortion, the Hippocratic Oath (influenced heavily by the philosophy of the Pythagoreans) rejected abortion practices outright. While the oath was not universally accepted in its own time, its anti-abortion stance later took on new significance. Harold Brown (1975) comments that "in all countries, in all epochs, in which monotheism, in its purely religious or its more secularized form, was the accepted creed, the Hippocratic Oath was applauded as the embodiment of truth" (1). Jews, Christians, Arabs, medieval doctors, men of the Renaissance, scholars of the enlight-

enment, and scientists of the nineteenth century "embraced the ideals of the oath" (1).

Early Christian writers argued that abortion was unloving (Gardner 1972, 134). Condemnations of abortion are found in the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Apocalypse of Peter (Noonan 1970, 9–11). The Epistle of Barnabas specifically relates abortion to the Golden Rule, and thus also rejected abortion in circumstances where the mother's life was in danger (10). Clement of Alexandria, Mirucius Felix, Athenagoras, Tertullian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Basil of Cappadocia all publicly denounced abortion practices (11–14). Tertullian argued in *Apologeticum ad Nationes* that "to prevent being born is to accelerate homicide" and commented that "he who is man-to-be is man, as all fruit is now in the seed" (qtd. in Noonan 1970, 12). When the ancient eastern and western churches began to divide, both continued to excommunicate women who had abortions (14). In modern times Roman Catholics have utilized the philosophical principle (developed in part by Thomas Aquinas) called "double-effect" to allow for circumstances to affect the abortion decision. In order to be right in a situation in which good and evil will probably result, the ultimate good must be intended, and the evil must be unintended. This argument has been used to

justify self-defense and abortion when mothers' and/or babies' lives are in extreme danger (Rudy 1996, 23–26). In conclusion, there has been nearly universal disapproval of abortion in Christian history, though there has been debate over the question of when the fetus is made alive, at quickening/animation (following Aristotle), or at conception (Horan and Balch 1998, 79).

While the politics and legality of abortion are not the central focus of the present essay, it is nevertheless helpful in a historical review of the abortion debate to understand the reasoning behind the landmark *Roe v. Wade* (1973) U.S. Supreme Court decision. Justice Harry Blackmun, author of the *Roe v. Wade* (1973) majority opinion, states in that document that “the right of personal privacy includes the abortion decision” (28). But the right is qualified and not absolute, and at some point involves state interests in the “protection of health, medical standards, and prenatal life” (28). Justice Blackmun refers to viability as the defining moment of possible state protection of the fetus, and allows that if the fetus’ “personhood is established . . . the fetus’ right to life would then be guaranteed by the (Fourteenth) Amendment” (29). The Due Process Clause is in view here, which declares that no State shall “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of

law.” Unfortunately, according to Blackmun the actual personhood of the fetus or embryo is debatable, and thus cannot be absolutely established, because personhood is a historically dynamic concept. Justice William Rehnquist, author of the *Roe v. Wade* dissenting opinion, denies that the right of “privacy” is even involved in *Roe v. Wade* (33), and accuses the court of creating “judicial legislation” rather than interpreting the intent of the drafters of the Fourteenth Amendment (34). The U.S. Supreme Court interprets personhood as the legal justification for protection and social rights, and distinguishes personhood from life. The mother’s rights are definitive in cases of early abortion (before viability). The legality of abortion in the U.S. is tied to the ideas of personhood, the beginning of life, viability, and the mother’s rights to privacy and liberty. These and other similar principles are at the center of the moral debate over abortion.

The legalization of abortion in the United States has had profound effects on that nation’s abortion practices. In 1988 Paul Sachdev, editor of the *International Handbook on Abortion*, concluded that “as legal abortion becomes more accessible and acceptable, more women are likely to use this method as a supplement to, if not a substitute for, contraception” (15). In 2000 Richard Land estimated that almost a third of every pregnancy in the United States ended

in abortion. Land argues that “there is loose in the West a culture of death . . . in which death is increasingly perceived as a cure for all manner of human problems and challenges” (206).

Principles and Circumstances in the Abortion Debate

Most of the age-old abortion debate has centered on *principles*, but in practice abortion has been centered on *circumstances*. Kapparis (2002) concludes that moral issues are still important, but alongside these principles one must “remember the gravity of circumstances, because in this instance it might be the most decisive factor” (199). Adverse circumstances may form a powerful and pragmatic argument for abortion in spite of principles to the contrary. Historically there have been three varieties of allowances for abortion: 1. abortion on demand, 2. abortion on certain indications, and 3. abortion to save the mother’s life (Davis 1984, 9–16). All three of these varieties combine principles and circumstances in unique ways in an effort to justify actions that would otherwise seem to be against human nature (killing other humans).

The Debate over Circumstances

Kapparis (2002) comments that “abortion is an issue inextricably linked to personal, emotional, religious, cultural, political, social and economic circumstances” (195). Circumstances for which abortion has been justified include rape, incest, early teen pregnancy, anticipated birth defects, unwanted pregnancies, possibility of death for the mother and/or child, and social and/or economic hardship. A survey of 1209 abortion patients conducted in 2004 by the Domestic Research Department of the Guttmacher Institute of New York found that economic hardship and time/social pressure are the two most common reasons given for abortion (Finer, et. al., 110–118). Nearly 40% of the women surveyed said that they had completed their childbearing and desired no more children (and were thus using abortion as a contraceptive). Cases of rape, incest, anticipated birth defects, and the possibility of death for the mother and/or child were relatively rare. For most of the women surveyed, the pregnancy was only unwanted because of social and/or economic hardship.

Women who become pregnant at an early age or as a result of rape or incest are bound to be confronted with adverse personal, emotional, religious, cultural, social, and economic circumstances. However, the fetus’ life is not intrinsically devalued as a result of terrible

circumstances surrounding its conception. If the value of the human life is weighed against the adverse circumstances, the human life should be found to be of greater importance in the abortion decision. No one has the right to kill the mother for getting pregnant under such bad circumstances, and similarly no one has the right to kill the fetus for being conceived under such bad circumstances. Anticipated birth defects do nothing to alter this conclusion. If the “defective” fetus is a living human, it has a right to life the same as the mother. The “defective” fetus has a right to life the same as a handicapped adult.

What if the mother is in danger of losing her life? Bonhoeffer (1955) comments that in that circumstance “the life of the mother is in the hand of God, but the life of the child is arbitrarily extinguished” (174). Humans do not have the right to decide which life is of greater value. Nevertheless, throughout history maternal life has been weighed against fetal life. From 1450 to 1895 casuists judged the mother’s life as more important. Since then, the allowances for abortion in individual cases has been narrowed, and then fully liberalized in early pregnancy (Noonan 1998, 208). Abortion advocates attempt to compare this valuation of the life of the mother and baby with the valuation of survivability employed in the medical field. The person most likely to be

helped by medical means must be given first priority over a “hopeless cause,” even if the “hopeless cause” is left to die. In order for this comparison to be analogous to abortion, however, the medic would have to kill the “hopeless cause” and take necessary organs from them in order to use them in treating the more promising patient who needs the organs to live. That is not valuation of survivability, it is valuation of life. Gensler (1998) offers a “Golden Rule” argument against abortion in these circumstances (334). The mother’s Christian duty is to love the child as she loves herself, and the greatest love is to sacrifice oneself for another.

Social and economic hardships must also be taken into account in an evaluation of circumstances. These circumstances may be of such a nature that they seem to necessitate abortion. But this argument for abortion, and those presented earlier, ignores the value of the unborn fetus. It ignores the fact that in the face of adverse circumstances adoption is an alternative. It ignores the fact (mentioned earlier) that more than a third of women who have abortions admit that they do so as a contraceptive measure (i.e. they have finished child-bearing). Thus, the adverse circumstances were known to the mothers before the pregnancies, and the pregnancies could have been avoided (through voluntary contraception,

sterilization, or abstinence). It has been argued that “forcing” mothers to birth unwanted children may lead to child abuse. But since the liberalization of abortion laws (specifically since *Roe v. Wade*) there has been a 700% increase in “serious child abuse,” that is, child abuse that requires treatment by a physician (Land 2000, 206–207).

It may seem unfair that principles (such as the personhood of the fetus) are being allowed to enter into a discussion of circumstances as the more important criteria for judging the morality of abortion. But it is impossible to evaluate circumstances in the issue of abortion without valuating the circumstances through the lens of principles. At the heart of the argument in favor of abortion in adverse circumstances is the utilitarian argument for abortion. The utilitarian argument is itself a set of principles, not a mere evaluation of circumstances. The utilitarian argument for abortion can be formulated as a syllogism in the following way:

The most good for the most people is the best.

Abortion of unwanted fetuses is often (or sometimes) the most good for the most people.

Therefore, abortion of unwanted fetuses is often the best way, or at least may be morally justified in certain cases (Gensler 1998, 327).

This argument fails at several points. First, utilitarianism is a fatally flawed ethical position (Geisler 1989). Second, the destruction of unwanted fetuses for the good of the most people ignores (or denies) the personhood of the fetus. Circumstances surrounding conception or the situation of the parents of the fetus are not necessarily valid if personhood can be established for the fetus. If the fetus is a person, it has a right to life that is equal to the mothers, and that is morally inviolable (Smedes 1983, 127). The question must be asked “If you were in the same circumstances as the unborn fetus, would you say it would be permissible to kill you?”

The Debate over Principles

Circumstances surrounding abortion may only be properly valuated through the lens of ethical principles, and the evaluation of circumstances requires principles as a theoretical foundation. Yet in a world of multiple and contradictory conclusions about the ethical principles concerning abortion, how is a person to decipher which principles are the most

consistent with a Christian worldview? More specifically, what do human rights, human reason, empirical evidence, and divine revelation have to say about the status of the unborn, and what is human and divine society's proper relationship with the fetus?

Ruth Ginsburg (1998) argues that the right to abortion gives women the equality and autonomy that are their constitutional rights (105–113). It is claimed that men have natural social and political advantages over women because men cannot get pregnant, give birth, or be mothers. Abortion does its part to balance the power of women with men. Abortion is a natural right that finds its basis in the rights to human autonomous freedom and equality. However, in order for Ginsburg's argument to work, the fetus must not be a living human. If the fetus is a living human, it is also endowed with natural rights to autonomy and equality, which the woman would have to deny in destroying the fetus. Destroying an unborn human, it could be argued, is the ultimate form of oppressing the politically and socially disadvantaged. If the fetus is human, inequality is fostered by its arbitrary destruction. Women's right to equality has natural boundaries, namely that equality cannot be created by oppressing other more disadvantaged individuals. A Woman's natural right to autonomy likewise involves boundaries. According

to Land (2000) it must be acknowledged even by abortion advocates that humans do not have complete rights to do whatever they want with their own bodies. Murder, prostitution, and public indecency could rightfully be legalized if that were the case (209). If individual freedom were an absolute unrestricted right, it would involve the right to dispose of others (Noonan 1970, 2). If the fetus is a living human, no man or woman has a natural right to destroy it.

The question of personhood and human life has become paramount in the abortion debate. There are three historical views of when personhood or human life begins for the individual (Klotz 1973, 43–45; Kapparis 2002, 39–52). In the first view, a human comes into being at conception. This position is based on biblical, religious, philosophical, and/or genetic arguments. The fertilized human egg is considered to be actually or potentially a human person. In the second view, human life begins at birth. This position is often based on the social consequences of birth and societies' accepted norms. A fetus may potentially become a human being, but it is not until birth that the new individual is accepted as part of society and believed to be endowed with certain inalienable rights. In the third view, human life develops (whether in stages or along a continuum). This position is usually based on philosophical, psychological, and physiological

arguments. Personhood is a dynamic, not static, concept. Personhood and humanity grows with each individual. Bonhoeffer (1955) considers the personhood debate to be a confusion of the issue, and instead opts for a “nascent life” argument (174). But his view is actually nothing more than a permutation of the conception/potentiality view and the developmental view, and will thus not be dealt with separately.

Persons who hold some form of the second and third views of personhood (human life begins at birth, and human life develops) often develop criteria to distinguish between humanity and non-humanity. The most common criteria are viability, visibility, experience, feeling (parental sentiment and sensation), and social visibility (Noonan 1998, 204–205). Some argue that the fetus is not human until after viability. Unfortunately, viability is not a static criterion (viability occurs earlier in pregnancies as medical technology advances). This criterion is also highly arbitrary. Infants are dependent upon their guardians for food and shelter, and could therefore be considered unviable like fetuses. Survivability outside of a human womb is likewise a dynamic concept as technology increases the likelihood that humans might someday be capable of being conceived and grown in artificial environments with minimal safety issues.

Some abortion advocates argue that the fetus is not a human until it is visible. There is a marked difference between the unborn (especially early in the pregnancy) and adults (Davis 1984, 58). However, if a child were born into a society of blind (or deaf) individuals, would it therefore never be able to become a human? This hypothetical situation points to the arbitrary nature of the visibility criterion. Also, visibility is a dynamic, not static, concept. Parents can now look at their fetuses (in 3-D) at an earlier age than was ever before possible due to advances in technology.

Some abortion advocates argue that the fetus is not human until it has a chance to experience or cogitate. It is argued that early fetal life has no present conscious awareness or memory, and therefore has no truly human experiences (Davis 1984, 5). This argument relies heavily on an intellectual definition of personhood. The embryo experiences change, though it may not be aware of it. Fetuses have experiences in the womb that are unique to themselves, though they may not be remembered. A sleeping adult does not lose personhood from lack of conscious awareness. Likewise, individuals who lose their memories are not thereby deficient in personhood. Anti-abortionists contend that potential future conscious awareness and memory are in the same category as actual conscious awareness

and memory. The actuality/potentiality argument is unnecessary, however, if it is recognized that intellect cannot be the sole criteria of personhood (unless we are willing to admit that adult chimpanzees or dolphins are persons as well). To murder someone is not to merely take a person's intellect (or television would be illegal) but is rather to arbitrarily separate an individual's biological self from their immaterial self, which includes, but is not limited to, the intellect. Joseph Fletcher (1974) takes the experience criterion one step further and argues that in order to be considered a "person," a being must be able to score above a predetermined point on an I.Q. test (thus negating the personhood of infants and many mentally handicapped individuals) (137). An identification of personhood with an arbitrary level of intellect is elitist and discriminatory.

Some abortion advocates argue that the fetus is not human until other individuals actually feel its existence (whether emotionally or physically). This argument is bound up with the subjective experience of the parents. The fetus is living and moving around in the womb long before its movements are felt by the mother. Some parents never feel sentimental for their children (even when they reach adulthood), but this fact does not affect the personhood of the children (the children are

legally protected from being abused or murdered by their unsentimental parents).

Some abortion advocates argue that the fetus is not human until it obtains some form of social visibility, whether by birth or by some indication of the parents. The problem with this argument is that in order for the abortion to occur, someone (whether the doctor or parent) must know or suspect that a fetus exists in the womb. Such knowledge of the fetus' existence is impossible if the fetus is "socially invisible." Americans do not normally use the term "person" to refer to the unborn, but social norms must not be taken for moral absolutes (Davis 1984, 59). The Nazi's rejection of Jewish personhood did not negate the actual personhood of individual Jewish people.

The rational arguments for the non-personhood of the fetus have been found to be lacking in objectivity. The second and third views of personhood presented above (human life begins at birth, and human life develops) seem to be based on faulty criteria. The criteria for personhood appear to be too arbitrary or dynamic to be of any use in determining personhood. This by itself does not prove that the unborn are persons; it merely suggests the hopelessness of reasoning away the personhood of the unborn. The first historical view of personhood that was presented earlier (human

life begins at conception) will now be evaluated.

Conception is not an arbitrary criterion for personhood. From a scientific viewpoint, “fertilization constitutes the coming into being of an individual human organism” (Horan and Balch 1998, 89). Humanization occurs at conception because the genetic code is created (this is sometimes referred to as the DNA argument, named after the chemical compounds that make up the physical genetic code). This biological blueprint is human (not duck, worm, amoeba, or even maternal organ). Conception is the point at which the organism may be said to be first “alive.” The DNA argument does not posit, as Smedes (1983) suggests, that the genetic code encompasses all a person will ever be (129), but instead that the DNA proclaims the fertilized egg to be *human* (it is a member of the human species). A zygote does not merely contain the ingredients of being or becoming a human—it is a human. The fetus is not, as Smedes puts it, “*only* potential (emphasis his),” it is actually a human. We recognize humans because humans have human potential and actual human attributes. Even the most materialistic concept of humanity as machine or organism is still compatible with the actual humanness of the fetus.

There exists no biological “personhood” criterion. It can be scientifically verified

whether or not an individual organism is a human or not, but personhood is beyond the scope of science. However, what is a human if not a person? Can humanity and personhood be reasonably separated? Can a human cease to be a person or a person cease to be a human? It is true that Christians believe that people leave their physical bodies after death, but they also believe that God will reunite persons with newly transformed immortal physical bodies at the resurrection. Christians do not believe that the disembodied spirits are anything but humans (they retain their human identity). In Christianity, people remain human without their bodies, though God's perfect plan is psychosomatic unity. If the fertilized egg is a living human organism, it is a person.

Smedes (1983) argues forcefully that humans are not necessarily persons. He points out that the Christian doctrine of human immortality rejects the identification of personhood with biological life (the soul is the person, not the body) (126). Unfortunately, Smedes earlier qualifies the sixth commandment as a condemnation of arbitrarily killing *persons*. If true personhood is to be identified with the soul, as Smedes asserts, then it is *impossible* to kill a person (because the soul is immortal). All that can be killed is a human biological body. The sixth commandment can refer to nothing but the

killing of a biological human body, which is at the very least what a fetus is! The ideas of human non-persons or becoming-persons are wholly extra-biblical. Personhood does not need to be established to protect the fetus from physical death. To make a lack of personhood (if that lack can actually be established) the criterion for destroying the unborn ignores the physical nature of murder. It is the human physical organism, as such, that is legitimately spared from destruction in the biblical commandment.

There is also biblical evidence that the unborn are indeed human persons. The Christological argument may be formulated as a syllogism:

Jesus is said to be fully human like us (Heb. 2:17).

Jesus was incarnated at conception according to Luke 1:31 (meaning that God became a human at that moment, beginning His human life at conception).

Therefore, humans begin their lives at conception (Crum and McCormack 1992, 59).

There is also a biblical anthropological argument for the personhood of the unborn (Davis 1984, 40–55). Personal pronouns or proper names are used to refer to the unborn (Gen 4:1; 5:3; Psalm 34:9; 51:5–7; 52:9; 94:12; 139:13–16; Prov. 6:34; Luke 1:44). God is concerned about the welfare of the unborn (Ex. 21:22–25). Linguistic evidence points to the application of the *lex talionis* to the unborn in the Torah (Davis 1984, 49–52). God is also said to have personal relationships with unborn children (Gen. 25:23; Judges 13:2–7; Job 10:8–12; Psalm 51:5; 58:3; 139:13–16; Isaiah 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:13–17; Gal. 1:15). To take one example, the prophet Jeremiah was said to be known and consecrated by God in the womb and before birth (1:5). Smedes (1983) interprets this scripture in light of Ephesians 1:4 (God knew Christians before the earth began) and Revelation 13:18 (Jesus was slain before creation), and concludes that Jeremiah 1:5 speaks only of God’s transcendent omniscience, omnipresence, and eternity, not the state of personhood at conception (128). However, while the Jeremiah passage may in fact speak of God’s knowledge and consecration of Jeremiah as a person *before* conception and birth (from God’s point of view), the passage also explicitly refers to the identity of Jeremiah as being formed by God in the womb (“before I formed *you*”), and this forms a parallel with

“before you were born.” If Jeremiah could be identified as himself after birth, as the end of the verse affirms, Jeremiah was himself after conception, as the beginning of the verse affirms. Jeremiah does not say that his zygote would “one day become me,” but rather seems to affirm that he was conceived as an “I.”

There is also biblical evidence that supports a theological argument for the personhood of the unborn. Humans were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Humans were created a psychosomatic unity. Whatever the nature of God’s image in man is (physical, mental, emotional, volitional, and/or spiritual), it must be admitted by Christians that God created Adam and Eve in His own image, and that this *imago dei* is the foundation of the inviolability of human life (Gen. 9:6). The image of God was later passed from Adam and Eve to their son Seth (“he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image”) (Gen. 5:3). Every human can trace their own lineage back to Adam and Eve, and before that, to God (Gen. 9:6; Luke 3:38; Rom. 5:12–19). All members of the human species are paradoxically sinners (due to original sin) and God’s image-bearers. If fetuses are of the human species, it seems that they also bear God’s image, and should be protected from arbitrary destruction.

The “community of faith” has been nearly universally consistent in condemning abortion

(though the issue of the personhood and life of the unborn has found some debate in the church since the later part of the middle ages). Adverse circumstances and maternal rights are of less importance than the fetus' right to life. Rational, theological, and biblical arguments point in the direction of the personhood of the unborn. Fetuses are human, and should be protected from violence and destruction.

The Christian and War

If the fetus is protected from bodily violence and destruction, what about the military combatant? Does the life of a soldier also contain the right not to be killed by another person? To be satisfactory, a Christian ethic concerning war or violence must be historically, theologically, and biblically informed (Cahill 1994, 1). Absolute pacifism has its roots deeply embedded in the Christian tradition. "There is no known instance of non-vocational conscientious objection to participation in war, and no recorded advocacy of such objection, before the Christian era," and pacifism was confined to those influenced by Christianity until the 19th century (Dombrowski 1991, xi). A presentation of the history of the debate over the morality of war is thus mainly confined to a review of Christian approaches to war.

A Brief Historical Review

For two centuries after Christ's death many Roman soldiers who were converted to Christianity refused to carry weapons any longer, and were often martyred for their refusal (Clark 1976, 44). Christian pacifism was so widespread by the end of the second century A.D. that Celsus complained that Christian pacifism would leave the Roman Empire defenseless and would lead to barbarian triumph (44). On the other hand, by A.D. 173 one particular Roman legion was composed of mostly Christian soldiers, who as well as is known, were not criticized by the church (Nuttall 1958, 7). Before that point there is no direct or reliable evidence of Christian involvement in the military other than Cornelius (and perhaps his fellow soldiers with him) and the Philippian jailer (7; Acts 10:47–48; 16:34). In the early Christian era Roman military service was often by conscription. The *only* recorded objectors to such service were Christians (Teichman 1986, 17).

Cahill (1994) concludes: “The early church was not unequivocally pacifist in practice, but major theologians did see military life as a threat to Christian ideals” (55). Tertullian (A.D. 160–220) taught that Christians should not enlist or continue to serve (if they are newly converted) even in

peacetime, even if no killing was directly involved, because soldiers wore the sword that was condemned by Christ (Cahill 1994, 41–47). Origen (A.D. 185–254) taught that Christians should refrain from violence and military service, but should support governmental and societal necessities (48). Christians support their leaders better than troops through spiritual devotion (Christians fulfill the role of priests) (53). Augustine (A.D. 354–430), influenced heavily by Ambrose of Milan (A.D. 339–397), borrowed from Cicero’s doctrine of just war, and developed a convincing argument for Christian participation in war. Augustine’s just war theory became the backbone of medieval thought concerning Christian social responsibility in war (72). Augustine’s just war position went so far as to justify the forceful abolition of heresy by violent means if necessary (79).

As the Roman Empire became more “Christianized,” the mainstream Christian position on war changed. By A.D. 403, only Christians could be soldiers in the Roman army (Dombrowski 1991, 13). Before Constantine, most Christian authors taught that Christians should not perform military service in times of war or peace. After Constantine, the general Christian consensus was that Christian involvement in war was not only moral, but was also a duty in some cases (following just war

theory). Table 1 below shows contrasts between the early Christian pacifists and just war positions.

Early Christian Pacifism	Early Christian Just War Theory
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The New Testament proscriptions against violence should be practically applied. 2. The sayings apply to a defense of oneself and a defense of others. 3. The sayings apply to inner intentions and outward actions. 4. The sayings apply to Christians in public service or as private citizens. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The New Testament proscriptions against violence only define a higher life but are not literally applicable to normal Christians. 2. The sayings apply to actions on one's own behalf, but not to a defense of others. 3. The sayings apply to inner intentions but not to outward actions. 4. The sayings apply to private citizens but not to Christian public servants.

Table 1. Early Christian pacifism contrasted with early Christian just war theory (Cahill, 1994, 56; Russell, 1975, 69).

During the middle ages there was an ongoing debate about the morality of clergy involvement in war. When clergy participation was forbidden or condemned, the justification usually centered on the transcendent and ideal nature of the clergy's (or layman's) occupation or Christianity (Christian spiritual ideals applied more fully to the clergy). During this time, Augustine's criteria for a just war were held in high honor (while usually ignored in practice). "Christian" nations attacked other "Christian" nations, and the Crusades were initiated in the name of Christianity.

Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225–1274), influenced heavily by Augustine and Aristotle, attempted to base his arguments about war on scripture, natural law, and reason (Cahill 1994, 87–88). He taught that peace is a result of love—justice merely removes obstacles that block peace (85). Aquinas further refined Augustine's just war criteria. Martin Luther (A.D. 1483–1546) interpreted Jesus' words "Do not resist evil" as applying only to personal lives. In the secular sphere Christians have a duty to defend against injustice and punish wrongdoers (106), violently if need be (108). Franciscus de Victoria (ca. A.D. 1492–1546) provided "the first clear and complete statement of what has come to be conceived as the classic requirements of the doctrine of just war"

(Johnson 1974, 95). John Calvin (A.D. 1509–1564) taught that Christian soldiers do not offend God by such service and anyone who reproves such a service blasphemes God (Calvin 1982, 73). The early Christian position that war was immoral had by the 15th century become transformed into the Calvinist position that pacifism was immoral.

Some forms of pacifism have in modern times been formulated by materialists and individuals not associated with Christianity. Mahatma Gandhi is a supreme example of a modern day non-Christian pacifist. Other modern pacifist ideas of less reputable character may be pointed to as well. According to modern Marxist thought, “men are causally responsible for harm they could have prevented,” and harm is a form of violence (Childress 1982, 43). Violence performed in the cause of social transformation is beneficial, while social oppression of the lower classes is a reprobate form of violence that is inhumane. Violence is redefined in order to prescribe war and revolution, and condemn economic and social subjugation. Non-Christian forms of postmodern pacifism often center on individual human rights to life, freedom, and happiness.

In the contemporary Christian arena, it is a rare occurrence to find a scholarly ethical treatise that supports absolute pacifism. Just war theory (or a modified form of it) continues

to find able advocates (Geisler 1989; Smedes 1983). Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Ramsey establish love as the only just motive for violence, and focus this love on serving the innocent victim (Cahill 1994, 94). Niebuhr makes a sharp distinction between personal and social ethics (Childress 1982). Persons may justly sacrifice themselves, but societies may not. Persons must be responsible and peaceful. Societies must be just and orderly. The just war argument for allowance of Christian participation in war has, since its inception, been the major alternative to pacifism for Christians. While pacifism was a widely accepted approach to war among early Christians, just war theory seriously jeopardizes the “Christian” status of pacifism. Are just war criteria valid?

An Analysis of Christian Just War Theory

Just war theory begins with the inquiry into whether or not wars may be morally acceptable or obligatory for Christians, and goes on to formulate criteria which must be met in order to provide justification for war and Christian participation in war. Just war theory is “an attempt to understand war as a moral enterprise” (Hauerwas 1984, 4). Just war theorists generally propose seven core criteria for just wars:

1. The war must be declared by a legitimate authority.
2. The war must have a just cause.
3. The nation must have a right intent (to right injustice).
4. War must be a last resort.
5. There must be a reasonable hope of success.
6. There must be a right proportion of means used to procure the desired ends, and the good of the war must outweigh the evils.
7. The war must be conducted justly.

The first six criteria deal with the right to go to war, while the last deals with right conduct in war after it has begun. Several other criteria have been proposed for admission to the list: 8. The warring nation must have the greatest amount of justice on its side (Childress 1982, 64–65); and 9. There must be an announcement made of the intention to go to war (Hitchcock 1983, 90).

Some ethicists prefer to translate *justum bellum* (the Latin words used for “just war” by

the original developers of just war theory) as “justified war” instead of “just war” because meeting all criteria does not make one side just and the other unjust, it merely justifies the war effort (Childress 1982, 83; Ramsey 1961, 15). Just war theorists take five different approaches to the just war criteria (Childress 1982, 82). First, some believe that if all criteria are not met, war is unjust. Second, some assert that all criteria should be followed, but if necessary they may be overlooked. Third, some judge that the criteria need only to be approximated. Fourth, some argue that the criteria are only rules of thumb, not prescriptions. Fifth, some claim that several of the criteria must be met before the others are even considered (hierarchy of criteria).

Legitimate Authority

Augustine, Aquinas and Calvin’s justifications of war are in part based on a justification of punishment (Dombrowski 1991, 8). A just state punishes criminals (internal violence) (Rom. 13:4) and in the same way the state justly (and lovingly) punishes national wrongdoing (external violence) (Teichman 1986, 38–39). The idea of legitimate authority is frequently understood differently in modern times than it was in ancient times. Clark (1976) concludes that “to obey the State in all circumstances

would be contrary not only to Christian pacifism but also to the doctrine of the just war” (35). This conclusion leads to the military selectivism of Geisler (1989), which holds that Christians must independently judge the justice of each particular war or act of violence and not merely follow the orders or wishes of the State. Otherwise, Christians would be required to fight for what they knew was unjust. Karl Barth (1981) goes so far as to argue that insofar as the fallible exercise of the imperfect laws of the State “rests on force; we cannot rule out, as a last resort, in opposition to it, violent revolution on the part of the rest of its citizens” (520). However, Augustine, the founder of Christian just war theory, taught that Christian soldiers are just in serving an evil and unjust king who orders them to do unjust things in war because it is the king that has the responsibility and authority to determine just and unjust causes (Cahill 1994, 72).

Augustine and Luther also denied the individual Christian’s right to self-defense but upheld the nation’s right to self-defense (and the Christian’s role in such service) (Cahill 1994, 12). Many modern Christian non-pacifists would make a pressing case for personal self-defense (even to the point of killing the aggressor). Unfortunately, it might also be argued that individual Christians are not legitimate authorities of just reciprocation.

Regardless, it may be concluded that the idea of legitimate authority has been transformed from an absolute to a relative criterion, and the application of the principle has been broadened to include the individual Christian and not merely the State.

If the criterion of legitimate authority is relativized or individualized, however, a significant practical problem arises. Ultimately, individual selectivism is not possible in the modern American military, and it is questionable if selectivism could be possible in any State's military at any point in history. Military service is not built on democratic principles of egalitarianism. The individual soldier must obey his/her commanding officer, in times of peace as in times of war. The individual American soldier takes a solemn oath when he/she is processed into the military, and vows to protect and defend his/her country "against all enemies, foreign and domestic." Questions of justice do not enter into the individual soldier's duties (except perhaps in cases of gross misconduct ordered by commanding officers). If he/she is a soldier, he/she must be willing to perform violent actions on behalf of a potentially unjust State. If he/she joins the military in the hopes of righting injustices in a particular "just war," chances are that in the space of his/her career he/she will witness or be a part of violent actions that

contradict the just war criteria in some way or another. After joining the military, the soldier risks imprisonment and death if the legitimate authority of the State (in America the ultimate authority is the President in the role of “Commander in Chief”) is not absolutely and unquestioningly obeyed. Soldiers cannot be selectivists, and thus selectivism has no practical individual application (other than conscientious objection, which must be absolute for selectivism to be consistent, and which, therefore, is not selectivism—it is pacifism). Military activism (which espouses absolute corporate sovereignty of the State) is more congruent with the original formulation of the criterion of legitimate authority and is the only possible position of individuals actually involved in military service.

Just Cause

Augustine’s definition of the just war was “*iusta bella ulciscuntur iniurias,*” (just wars avenge injuries) (Russell 1975, 18). Examples of injuries that should be avenged in the just war are an authority’s neglect to punish subjects for criminal activity, refusal to restore stolen goods, and unjust attacks (63–65). Just causes would thus include rectifying injustice in another State, enacting retributive justice on another State, and defending, repelling, and/or

punishing another State for wrongful aggression. Francis Schaeffer (1983) tells a story that illustrates this criterion well. If an individual Christian encounters a man beating an innocent child on the sidewalk, the Christian duty to love should be actualized by pleading with the aggressor to stop, attempting to remove the victim from the situation, and finally violently beating the aggressor, if this is necessary to stop the aggression. Such actions are “humanitarian” and fulfill a Christian’s duty to obey Christ’s commands to love one’s neighbor (23–24).

Right Intent

In war, the only right intent is to rectify injustice. Love and war are paradoxical yet dialectical when the motive for justice is love (Cahill 1994). Just war theory seeks to limit the Christian obligations to love, forgive, and serve—at least in the arena of positive action. Personal brotherly love becomes social sovereign judgment. Augustine asserts that the New Testament moral prescriptions to act lovingly and nonviolently are only practically applicable to private citizens. As for Christian public servants or soldiers, who must punish wrongdoers or enemies, “what is required is not bodily action but an inward disposition” (in *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon*, 22.76). Both

Augustine and Aquinas posit that love for enemies is a state of readiness in the mind, not necessarily an active practical love for enemies (Cahill 1994, 89). It is no wonder that just war theory has been criticized for being a historical foundation for the rationalization of self-interested national violence (221) if the intent of a just war is not active and practical love of the enemy, but bringing the enemy to justice and perhaps death. If love *is* justice, as Joseph Fletcher (1966) asserts, then bringing justice by all means necessary *is* loving. However, is this brotherly love or is it condemnatory reciprocation? Is this the kind of gentle and active love described in 1 Corinthians 13 or in the Sermon on the Mount?

Last Resort

The criterion of last resort is inexact and can only be approximated in practice. Can it ever be fully known if every other alternative to war has been exhaustively explored and attempted? Exactly when does it become apparent that no other means will work? And how can a State know if in the future the circumstances will not be able to be resolved without physical aggression? In cases of national “self-defense,” nonviolent resistance may be a more effective means to reassert national sovereignty. Pacifists would argue that Christian participation in war

or violence is *never* necessitated (or at least not in this age). The criterion of last resort merely states that “it is only necessary to go to war or commit violent actions when it is necessary to go to war or commit violent actions.” The criterion is at its base a tautology that is assumed.

Reasonable Hope of Success

A reasonable hope of success is at best a questionable criterion for justifying Christian participation in war. A reasonable hope of success does not justify war or violence any more than the ability to win a fight justifies hitting a person. A reasonable hope of success merely ensures that no desperate attempts will be undertaken. But if it is believed that a cause is just, and if the intent is to right injustices, why does the desperateness of the situation discredit the justness of the action? To say that an action is good only if it has a good chance of bringing about the intended results is a utilitarian argument. Using the same argument it might be argued that most of the actions and prophecies of the Old Testament prophets were not justified because there was little chance of success. Often the intended result was national repentance and redemption, and corresponding prophecies were given concerning the failure of the prophet’s ministry in bringing about the

intended results (Is. 6). Also, true success in war is peace. But war cannot procure peace—that is the ministry of Jesus.

Proportionality

Proportionality is “a reasonable balance between probable good and evil” (Childress 1982, 67). There must also be a proportionality of military means to political ends (Webster 1986, 343–344). Aquinas’ argument was that just wars avoided or inhibited greater evils and fostered greater goods (Russell 1975, 283). According to Augustine, war is both a consequence of sin and a remedy for sin (16). It is commendable that the proportionality criterion is concerned with setting boundaries for warfare and seeking to better human welfare. However, if the ends sought are political, why cannot the solution to the problem (and means used) also be political? It seems that comparing political ends to military means is akin to comparing apples and oranges. The criterion of proportionality seeks to provide a balance between the good and evil of war and justice. Does it not seem more reasonable for a Christian to add more good (and no evil) to the equation, and thus overcome evil with good (Rom. 12)?

Just Conduct

Bonhoeffer (1955) concludes that killing the enemy in war is not arbitrary, but that deliberate killing of innocent life is always arbitrary (158). This seems to mean for Bonhoeffer that enemies in wartime are not innocent. How might Christians act in times of war toward their guilty enemy? Christians, or individuals concerned with justice, can endorse only “rationally beneficent, not irrationally malevolent, armament” (Ramsey 1961, 273). The primary object in a “just war” is not to kill or injure the enemy, but to incapacitate or restrain the enemy, and to return to peace (Childress 1982). It is unjust to attack noncombatants (presumably because they are innocent). If it is wrong to injure humans unless absolutely necessary (including in times of war), it is also wrong to inflict unnecessary suffering (80). The just conduct criterion opposes killing (or harming) innocent persons. However, as Dombrowski (1991) suggests, “modern warfare *depends* on weapons that either kill or threaten to kill innocent persons (emphasis his)” (25). Christian just war theory cannot justify the construction or use of such weapons. The construction and use of nuclear and biological weapons “shows a willingness to use people as means only to an end” (26–27). Is it possible in our modern sinful world to wage a war in which noncombatants are never in

harm's way (or are never intentionally harmed)?

Just war theory's seven core criteria are impractical and can only be approximated at best. If they may only be approximated, does this mean that justice in war is merely approximate justice, not absolute justice? Also, if the first criterion of legitimate authority is admitted to the list (and is found to be an absolute principle, as was argued earlier), then a hierarchy of criteria is necessary, in which legitimate authority takes the primary position (and is allowed to veto the conclusions of the other criteria). If this is the case, Christians must obey their leaders, be they just or unjust in their commands. The only possible way to put just war theory into practice (as it is presently formulated), that is, to apply just war theory to actual military life, is to absolutize legitimate authority, which puts the justness of the entire enterprise into question. Just war is justified only because State leaders tell their citizens to engage in it.

An Analysis of Pacifism

According to Jenny Teichman (1986) the term pacifism is a modern invention that merely means "anti-war-ism" (2). There are numerous varieties and degrees of pacifism. Pacifism is viewed as: 1. permissible, 2. a Christian's duty,

or 3. above and beyond the Christian's duty (Dombrowski 1991, 88). Early just war theorists allowed for pacifism as permissible or above and beyond the Christian's duty, while many modern just war theorists (Childress 1982; Geisler 1989; Martin 1965; Neibuhr 1960; Weigel 1987) absolutely condemn Christian pacifism as social irresponsibility. Three distinct types of pacifism are nuclear pacifism (opposition to the construction and use of nuclear weapons), pacifism as anti-war-ism (opposition to war), and pacifism as opposition to violence against humanity (opposition to violence, also known as complete, total, or absolute pacifism) (Dombrowski 1991, 88–89). Many Christian just war theorists are also nuclear pacifists due to the criterion of just conduct, although some still defend the construction and use of such weapons as deterrents to world war (Geisler 1989; Francis Schaeffer 1983).

Nuttall (1958) presents five central arguments for pacifism that have been developed throughout the history of the church. First, in order to be a soldier, a Christian must commit idolatry (military commanders have often commanded absolute obedience, claimed absolute sovereignty, or even demanded worship). Second, the law of Christ is love, not justice or *lex talionis*. Third, Jesus' cross is our example of submitting to injustice and suffering

on behalf of others. Fourth, the dignity of man (based in the idea of *imago dei*) requires Christians to proclaim the inviolability of human life. Fifth, pacifism can be seen as an active means of redemption (through witness, example, and love). Christian pacifism may be presented as a syllogism:

God is love.

God loves everyone in His will and actions (not merely inwardly), and went to the point of sacrificing His Son in order to save humans from death and punishment.

Engaging in contemporary wars denies the love that God shows.

Therefore, war (in the present age) is contrary to God's nature and action (2).

As children of our Father in heaven, Christians are called to love their enemies self-sacrificially.

Pacifist Responses to Just War Criteria

Erasmus (1466–1536) offers three criticisms of just war theory (Cahill 1994, 155). First, war is naturally wrong. It occurs nowhere in the

natural order. This puts the legitimacy of the authorities of the State into question, particularly in their role as declarers or conductors of war against other sovereign States. Second, Christianity forbids war. Christ prescribed loving action, and was our example. The only conduct in war that is just is Christ-like love, which does its neighbor no harm. Third, “just cause” can be claimed by both sides in a war, which calls into question the “justness” of the war itself. Changing the term “just war” to “justified war” merely changes the focus from the intrinsic justice of the war effort to the subjective opinion of the authorities of the State. The intent of pacifism and just war theory may also be contrasted. While both pacifism and just war theory seek to base intentions on love and obedient fidelity, it should be asked “Who is the rightful object of love?” “How should love for my neighbor/enemy be realized?” and “Who am I ultimately obeying?”

One central doctrine of Christian pacifism as anti-war-ism is the role of God in the world. Paul Tillich (1990) points out that if the Christian praises God for being “all powerful,” power is not evil in itself (88–89). God’s power and authority are supreme, while human power and authority are founded in and delegated by God’s own power and authority. The Christian pacifist’s hope in God and His justice is not

unrealistic or utopian, but is rather a recognition of the ultimate divine, not human, rule of the world (Hauerwas 1981, 119). Only God has the legitimate authority to wage war against a sovereign State. States and their leaders have authority. Yet their authority is neither absolute nor universal. States and their leaders have no legitimate authority over other sovereign States. Each State has sovereign rights. If one State perpetrates crimes or injustices against another State, reparation should be made. But who has the right to demand or force reparation from an unjust state? A “meta-State” like the United Nations might possibly enforce such restrictions, punishments, or reparations, but on what grounds? If the offending State is not under the United Nation’s direct authority, it lies outside of the United Nation’s (or any other “meta-State’s”) jurisdiction. “Holy war” is the only wholly just war, but without a modern theocracy “holy war” is impossible.

Means of non-violent resistance may fulfill more effectively the criteria of proportionality and just conduct than means of violence, allowing for Christian non-violent just war/resistance. According to Childress (1982) non-violent resistance in conflicts involves personal risks, recognition of boundaries set by God for human action, and realization of equality (17). Non-violent resistance expresses trust in the autonomy and dignity of the enemy.

By resolving not to use violent measures against the enemy, non-violent resistance evokes trust in others and their control of themselves (12). Good means are used in the face of evil circumstances to procure good ends (proportionality). If only good means are utilized in resisting evil, there is no morally questionable conduct in war/resistance (just conduct).

Modified, Transitional, and Absolute Pacifism

There are three discernible approaches to war and violence among Christian pacifists who oppose Christian participation in violence: modified, transitional, and absolute pacifism. Following Origen, modified pacifists recognize that violent force is sometimes a necessary evil (at present). War is justified by public order, but Christian participation in war is never justified. Thus, war is only to be “executed by non-believers, until Christ’s return” (Wadholm 2005, 2). This may be termed pragmatic pacifism because it continues to allow States to defend justice against aggressors. Richard Wadholm concludes that “it would be ridiculous to propose that order could be maintained without some force to carry out that order” (2). In contrast, absolute pacifists hold that the use of violent force against humans is

intrinsically evil (at present) and that war (at present) is never morally justifiable.

Transitional pacifists are either modified or absolute pacifists who believe that universal absolute pacifism (peace) is a future goal that can be attained, but is temporarily impossible and thus impractical. Leyton Richard, an early 20th century congregational minister, advocated a stepping-stone modified pacifism utilizing the League of Nations' International power (Martin 1965, 176). He believed this international military cooperation could provide a deterrent to future wars while transitioning to an absolute pacifism sometime in the future. In recent years this view has been adapted to include the role of the United Nations. In the 21st century twenty-three modern Christian ethicists and international relations scholars came together to develop "just peacemaking theory" (Stassen 2000, 216–217). Just peacemaking theory is a combination of the following ten peacemaking initiatives: 1. sponsoring Democracy, human rights, and religious liberty, 2. developing cooperative military forces, 3. assisting grass-roots groups in their non-violent resistance, 4. increasing the power and authority of the United Nations and other international organizations, 5. supporting sustainable economic development, 6. reducing offense weapons and weapons trade, 7. encouraging nonviolent direct action, 8. supporting inde-

pendent initiatives (like cold-war era disarmament treaties), 9. seeking non-violent conflict resolutions, and 10. acknowledging the significance of individual and societal moral responsibility, repentance, and forgiveness (216–217). These ten peacemaking initiatives cannot abolish war, but they may weave a “web of peace” (226).

Christian absolute pacifists are not opposed to violence or killing absolutely, or even supportive of non-violent actions absolutely. Geisler (1989) incorrectly states that absolute pacifism’s position is that “War is always wrong” (221). Many absolute pacifists believe that the Old Testament wars were just, and that the war at Armageddon at the second coming of Christ will also be just. “The central conviction regarding violence is that violence (in the present age) is inconsistent with Jesus’ life and person (at His first coming), and Jesus’ life is the life of the church” (Cahill 1994, 233). Christian absolute pacifists affirm that sin, violence, and war are inevitable in a fallen sinful world (as are disease, suffering, and pain). But sin and its results are not necessary and should not be intentionally brought on or engaged in by the Christian. Zahn (1963) comments on what nonviolent action is: “[Nonviolent action] is not to be dismissed as a passive surrender or a defeatist compliance with the putative violent aggressor; instead, it is a

form of concerted activity which is intended to generate the power to compel an opponent, negatively, to desist from an actual or anticipated program of action (“passive resistance”) or, positively, to institute a program of action desired by the party utilizing it” (10).

For the secular pacifist, this might take the form of civilian-based defense (like the actions exemplified by Ghandi or Martin Luther King, Jr.), which is less destructive than war, and focuses on political struggle (Dombrowski 1991, 52). For Christian pacifists, nonviolent resistance should be centered on benefiting the enemy through redemptive actions (witnessing, praying, self-sacrificially loving, and performing tasks that benefit people regardless of their relation to us, such as providing medical help, and meeting basic necessities like food, water, shelter, and clothing). In this view, Christians should involve themselves in civilian-based defense initiatives only as a secondary outflow of the central intent of redemption.

Objections to Pacifism

George Weigel (1987) insists that pacifism is a nonintellectual enterprise that subsequently lacks a developed theory to support it (145, 330). Franky Schaeffer (1983) accuses pacifism

of offering “simplistic utopian solutions to the problem of war” that most often results in the opposite of the intended results (i.e. more wars are caused because of pacifism) (8). Francis Schaeffer comments that he is a non-pacifist because of God’s love in him. “Only an unbiblical, fuzzy, soft-soaped view of love is incompatible with a strong stand for justice and liberty. . . . Consequently, love sometimes necessitates war” (Geisler 1989, 231). Schaeffer (1983) concludes that pacifism in a fallen world “means that we desert the people who need our greatest help” (23). Geisler (1989) comments that “it is evil not to resist evil; it is morally wrong not to defend the innocent” (232). Martin (1965) and Neibuhr (1960) argue that pacifism is only logically possible if the world is rejected to some degree (201), and if responsibility for justice in the world is denied (Childress 1982, 38). Modified pacifism seems to set two separate standards for conduct—one Christian and another secular. It has also been argued that modified and absolute pacifists are parasitical. They do nothing to defend justice while at the same time they enjoy the benefits of justice which costs others their lives. Absolute pacifists accept secular protection, and modified pacifists expect secular protection, while both groups deny their own civil duties to assist in procuring and defending the freedoms enjoyed. Geisler (1989) concludes

that pacifism (in all its forms) is an unsatisfactory “naively passive attitude that would permit a Hitler to attempt genocide without lifting a gun in resistance” (225).

However, Christian pacifism is not merely an attitude about war; it is a belief in God’s historical redemption of humanity (Hauerwas 1984). It is a denial of the “assumption that we have no moral alternative to war” (9). Pacifism has been widely criticized for being impractical. However, it should be asked if there is one clear example of a war in the last two thousand years that meets just war criteria? If not, does that not bring just war theory’s practicality into question (Dombrowski 1991, 25–46)? Likewise, is there one clear example of a war in the last two thousand years that was caused by Christian pacifism? Conversely, how many wars in the last two thousand years have been justified wrongly (even in the estimation of just war theorists) on the basis of Christian just war theory? Pacifism is not a passive permission of injustice, war, violence, genocide, etc. Instead, it is an acknowledgment that the Christian duty is to bring God’s redemption to the world, not world peace or justice through violence.

The question in Christianity is not “Did Jesus establish peacemaking (positive) and nonviolence (negative) as norms and moral criteria” (Cahill 1994)? Even most just war theorists would admit that Jesus did that. Just

war theory presupposes a bias against violence or killing (Smedes 1983). The question is “How absolute, ideal, or practical are those concepts, and do they apply to societies or only individuals?” If the peacemaking and nonviolence that Jesus established is idealistic, the idealism does not negate the practicality or absoluteness of the actions prescribed. Considering the Christian pursuit of perfection in Christ, Erasmus acknowledges that Christian perfection is not fully attainable in this world, yet “this does not mean we should stop trying, but, on the contrary, it means that we should come as close to them as we possibly can” (qtd. in Bainton 1969, 137). If Christians are individually responsible to follow Christ’s example and words, they are similarly responsible to follow Christ’s example and words in a social or community setting. If the community of believers as a social complex makes up the body of Christ, should not the body of Christ act in the same way as its members? Absolute pacifism is not utopian, but it does embrace the idealism of Christ and the gospel. It is in Christ, not arms or force, that Christian hope finds its rightful place.

Are Christian pacifists world-rejecting parasites? The Christian hope in the world to come brings with it the faith that, by the Holy Spirit, the tools of the world to come may be used in the present fallen world to redeem and

transform this evil world so that it reflects more clearly God's original created order. Total transformation is not probable or possible outside of Christ's return. Nevertheless, God calls us to be lights in a dark world, and to be ministers of His Kingdom and gospel. The weapons of Christian warfare are not physical, but are God empowered and spiritual. Peace and salvation do not depend upon worldly weapons or force. Also, it must be remembered that political, religious, and physical freedom are not the greatest goods to be gotten. Christians enjoy freedom, but do not reject suffering. If enemy soldiers attack the land, the enemy will come into contact with a world-transforming faith through Christian pacifists led by the Spirit of Christ. The theological argument for pacifism seems to answer some of the critics' questions, but what do the scriptures seem to say?

A Scriptural Analysis of War

The Old Testament and War

The Old Testament is full of God-ordained killing and violence. Violence and war are so common in the Old Testament that some well-meaning Christian pacifists have discounted the

Old Testament examples as inferior to and at odds with the New Testament revelation of God in Christ. However, a close inspection of Old Testament examples of God-ordained war and violence reveals a rich tapestry of God's care and judgment of humans.

When God marked Cain after Cain had killed his brother, we find that God's purpose was to have mercy on a sinner and to save Cain from just punishment (Gen. 4:13–15). The story seems to legitimate the claim of pacifists that violent retaliation by equals and by personally involved parties is immoral. At the very least, the story is an example of God's mercy toward a violent aggressor.

After the world-wide flood, God allowed animals and humans to eat meat, but all creatures received a stern divine warning to abstain from killing humans and from eating blood. Life and blood are sacred (Gen. 9:3-7). "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man" (Gen 9:6 NIV). Leviticus 17:11 reaffirms that the life of a creature is in its blood, and that it is blood that makes atonement for sin. If animal blood is precious, though animals are not God's image bearers, how much more precious is human life and blood? It is human blood that purchased the Christian's salvation.

Part of God's plan for His people in the Promised Land included due process of law and protection from retaliation for individuals who were suspected of accidentally or intentionally killing another human (Ex. 21:12–14; Deut. 19:1–13). It is the power that is possessed by the judges of the land that may rightly prosecute judgment on the wrongdoer (Numbers 35:10–12). Violent illegitimated “justice” is condemned.

For Augustine, the Canaan wars became a loving Father's punishment resulting in the procurement of the best interests of the enemy (Russell 1975, 17). However, the point of the wars was to destroy the sinful Canaanites, not benefit them. The Canaan wars are examples of God's wrath and ultimate judgment of sinners, yet pointed to the great patience of a God who would wait for hundreds of years until the sins of Canaan had reached their limit (Gen. 15:16). Might this not also teach Christians to be longsuffering in waiting for God's ultimate judgment at the second coming of Christ? War in the Old Testament was “used by God as an agent of destruction” (Clark 1976, 25), even when Israel itself was in need of judgment (Lev. 18:28). God used Babylon and Assyria as His "servant" and "rod of anger" against Israel and Judah (Jer. 25:9; 27:6; Is. 10:5; Clark 1976, 25). It may be concluded from the Old Testament accounts of divinely commanded

human killings that God's will sometimes includes war and killing as a result of sin (Clark 1976, 31). But God does not find pleasure in anyone's death (Ez. 18:23, 32; 33:11). He wants everyone to repent and live, and He is patient in bringing about His judgments.

It is inconsistent to defend modern war or violence on the grounds of Old Testament allowances or commandments regarding such actions, and yet forget the particular conditions and purposes of Old Testament war and violence (27). In the Old Testament, the criteria for justified war or violence were based on divine knowledge. The legitimate authority was God Himself. God's actions toward and with His "redeemed community" are experiential and active examples for us, not to mimic as if we were still under the old covenant, but to understand as revelations of God's character and nature as a just and patient Judge. God's "last resort" often did not come for hundreds of years (as in the cases of Canaan, Israel, Judah, Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt). God's purpose in war and violence in the Old Testament was to punish wrongdoers, reveal His holiness, power, mercy, and patience, and to bring sinners to redemption and repentance. If we do not have a modern theocracy, if we do not have God's patience, knowledge, or authority, and if we do not have God's intention to save the sinner, can we claim to justify war on the basis of Old

Testament examples? What can be said of New Testament examples?

The New Testament and War

Let us begin with an admission that, based on explicit New Testament prescriptions against violence, the burden of proof is on the person who attempts to formulate a Christian just war theory, not on the pacifist (Dombrowski 1991, 5). Just war theorists have developed several arguments which justify Christian participation in war and violence based on New Testament scriptures. First, New Testament authors use numerous military or violent analogies, parables, or illustrations. Second, Jesus, His disciples, and Paul recognized the authority of governments to kill. Third, Jesus, John the Baptist, the disciples, and Paul all recognized that individuals could be both soldiers and believers at the same time. Fourth, Jesus violently resisted wrongdoers (when He cleared the Temple) and told His disciples to buy swords. Fifth, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is understood as spiritually idealistic or nonliteral, and Jesus presents a love that is not passive but forceful in defending the innocent.

The use of military means, force, or violence in analogies or parables in the New Testament does not advocate Christian participation in war or violence any more than

comparisons of God with a thief (Matt. 24:43; Rev. 3:3) and an unjust judge (Luke 18:6), and the commendation of an unjust steward (Clark 1976, 34) advocates Christian (or divine) participation in stealing or injustice. Does God really commend or endorse thievery, or unjust judging and stewardship? The use of violent actions or articles of war in scripture as illustrations does nothing to commend them for Christian endorsement.

Jesus accepted Pilate's authority (based on God's ordination) to judge and kill Him. Paul declared explicitly that "the authorities that exist have been established by God" and that the ruler, as "God's servant . . . does not bear the sword for nothing" (Rom. 13:1, 4). Governments are ordained by God to punish wrongdoers and uphold social justice. However, while the ruler is called "God's servant" (like unrighteous Babylon and Assyria in the Old Testament), it is never implied that the Christians are the ones who are ruling or bearing the sword. Rather, the opposite is the case. Also, the authority of the ruler is over his own sovereign State (and citizens), and does not pertain to any other State (or citizens). The authorities must be submitted to because "there is no authority except that which God has established" (13:1). If the sovereign State is God-ordained, it should not be fought against except by God's command (Clark 1976, 68–

69). In the verses preceding and following this passage Christians are admonished by Paul to “not repay evil for evil” (12:17), to give food and water to their hungry and thirsty enemy, to “overcome evil with good” (v. 21), to “love your neighbor as yourself” (13: 9). Paul concludes that “love does no harm to its neighbor” (v. 10), while just war theorists conclude that legitimate authorities love their enemies by killing them. What greater harm could people do to their neighbors than to kill them? Pacifism does not necessarily reject the authority of rulers to punish the citizens of their own States (in fact, it embraces this authority as biblical). Instead, pacifism rejects the notion that any rulers have jurisdiction over other sovereign States, or that Christians can overcome evil enemies with the “good” of harming or killing them.

John the Baptist allowed soldiers to continue in their professions. Jesus commended the faith of a Centurion (Matt. 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10). Peter recognized the salvation of a group of Gentile soldiers (Acts 10). Paul baptized a Philippian jailer (16:25–34). All of these men bore swords, yet were recognized as seekers after God and were never denied the right to continue in their respective professions. The author of the present essay grew up as the child of a U.S. Army soldier, and as the brother-in-law of an Iraqi war veteran. The

question of the compatibility between Christianity and military service is thus an intensely personal inquiry. Each of the biblical instances cited seem to suggest that no direct or immediate denial of the honor of military service were given by the Lord or His contemporary followers to new converts or God-seekers. But this fact does not soften the words of Jesus and His followers against the use of violence. Most individuals in the (ancient or modern) military are never called upon to perform services that require killing. Nevertheless, if an individual is engaged in any type of military service (other than chaplaincy or medical assistance) they must be ready to be called upon to perform the actions required by their superior officers, including killing other humans. What is such an individual to do if they become a Christian (or if they were already a Christian and are called upon to join the military)? Just war theorists would argue that if soldiers can have commendable and saving faith in Christ in scripture, than just war must be possible (or the soldiers could not fulfill their duties justly). Pacifists respond that God saves us in the situations in which we find ourselves (good or bad). It was not military service that was commended, but faith. And that faith lifted the individual soldiers in scripture to a new level with God. We can only conjecture whether or not God's sanctifying

Spirit commended these soldiers in their work or led them to different occupations. Jesus and His followers never explicitly mentioned what the soldiers were to do next. Note, though, that Jesus and His followers never explicitly mentioned in the narratives that newly converted prostitutes, tax collectors, or sorcerers should leave their respective occupations (they told the new believers to stop sinning, not to stop working at their present occupations). In these instances of ambiguity, if we argue either way, for just war theory or pacifism, we must argue from silence. However, as mentioned earlier in the historical review, many early Christians laid down their arms as a result of their new-found faith, or resisted military drafts and suffered martyrdom as a consequence. The biblical evidence in these instances supports neither pacifism nor just war theory, but the historical evidence seems to suggest pacifism.

Some of Jesus' actions and words seem to endorse the use of violence or war. Jesus came to bring a sword, not peace (Matt. 10:34). He admitted that wars will continue to take place until the end of the world (Luke 21:9–11). At the end of the Last Supper, He told His disciples to buy a sword, presumably to defend themselves with (Luke 22:36–38). Finally, and most remarkably, Jesus cleansed the Temple in a violent manner (Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–

17; Luke 19:45–46; John 2:13–17). However, it should be realized that the sword that Jesus brought was not a sword of physical war. In fact, it is the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy; it is Christ who came to bring abundant life (John 10:10). Wars may continue to take place until the end of the world, but this is not to make Christians fear. The Christian's role is not to take part in the wars, but to stand firm until the end and to defend themselves with God's words of wisdom (Luke 21:12–19).

As for Christ's command to buy a sword, if Christ had intended the sword to be used for self-defense or for the defense of their leader, why is it that when Peter used his sword against an unjust aggressor, Jesus responded "Put your sword back in its place . . . for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matt. 26:52). Tertullian argued that with those words Christ proclaimed universal pacifism (Clark 1976, 45). Augustine and Aquinas interpreted the words to mean that Jesus prohibited private individuals from violence, because they do not have God's authority behind them (Dombrowski 1991, 8). However, Jesus said *all*, not all private individuals (excluding rightful authorities) (8–9). Also, Aquinas and Augustine presuppose that legitimate authorities have a God-ordained right and duty to bring about just wars *with other nations*. The question remains: "Has God given any temporal authorities the meta-

national authority to govern over other sovereign States?” Referring to Luke 22:36, Geisler (1989) concludes that Jesus condemned the aggressive use of weapons or force on religious grounds, but commended the defensive use of weapons or force “on social grounds to protect life” (227). However, Jesus later condemned Peter’s social defensive measures (Luke 22:49–51). Granted, Jesus disallowed further violence in order to fulfill scripture by suffering, but it should also be remembered that Christ’s example is our example (even to suffer unjustly at times). Erasmus (1962) posits a query: if Christ approved war, why was it that “the uniform tenor of His whole life and doctrine teaches nothing else but forbearance” (32)?

Jesus’ actions in cleansing the Temple do not support violent resistance against evil. When Jesus cleansed the Temple in the synoptic accounts the whip is not mentioned and there is no indication that He kicked the people out violently or physically (as a side note, it should be noted that pacifism does not prescribe nonviolence toward inanimate objects) (Dombrowski 1991, 60–61). In the Johannine account Jesus’ whip was probably a herding lash made from rushes. Jesus was violent only with the money and the tables and told the moneychangers to get their products (not themselves) out of the Temple. Jesus

physically herded the livestock out of the Temple area (60–62). Some analysts (Neibuhr 1960, 8; Childress 1982, 39) question whether the New Testament endorses nonresistance or nonviolent resistance. Dombrowski concludes that “Jesus’ pacifism did not preclude His actively resisting evil” (62). Jesus’ active resistance was not violent toward humans, and had redemption and renewal as its focus.

What did Jesus explicitly teach concerning war or violence, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount? Just war theory and pacifism arguments often focus on the morality of making war. "What falls out of the debate is whether or not we should take peacemaking initiatives to prevent war. Jesus did not focus on when it is okay to make war but on peacemaking initiatives that He commanded us to take" (Stassen 2000, 225).

Jesus said “Blessed are the meek” (Matt. 5:5), “Blessed are the merciful” (v. 7), “Blessed are the peacemakers” (v. 9), “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness” (v. 10), “Turn the other cheek,” “Do not resist an evil person” (v. 39), and “Love your enemies” even in the face of injustice (v. 44; Luke 6:35). Jesus willingly suffered unjust murder and forgave His murderers. Love is proclaimed as the greatest commandment (Matt. 22:37–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–37). If the primary law of Jesus was love, we

must ask with Erasmus (1962), “What practice among mankind violates this law so grossly as war” (24)? Considering the Crusades, Cahill (1994) writes: “A particularly pernicious rewriting of the Christian mandate to love occurs when Jesus’ inclusive and generous compassion for the outcast and outsider is recast as a defensive in-group loyalty” (147). The same might be said of just war theory’s advocacy of transforming love for enemies into a justification for the death of enemies, who only happen to be fighting in the wrong army. Geisler (1989) asserts that the Sermon on the Mount “does not commend a passive attitude” (here implying that pacifism necessarily includes passivity) but “condemns militant activity” (230). It is concluded that Jesus is not pacifistic; He is anti-retaliatory (230). But if Jesus is against militant or violent retaliation, how does that support just war theory or deny Jesus’ pacifism? Isn’t the justification of militant retaliation the *point* of just war theory?

Pacifism is a declaration of the new age: the realized eschatology of the New Testament (Hauerwas 1984). The Kingdom has been established by Christ already. History is not bound to the ebb and flow of States, but to God’s destination. The wars in Revelation are fought by the Antichrist against God and His saints. Still, in that dark hour, the part of the Christians is to be actively loving and

nonviolent. Even the two witnesses bring down fire from *God*, thus enacting *God's* judgment, not their own legitimate authority (Rev. 11). In the end, Christ returns with all His saints, and kills many people with the sword of His mouth. This is followed by the judgment of all humankind before God. The final (and truly just) war and judgment is God's prerogative.

Conclusions on Abortion and War

The thesis of the present evaluation was that abortion is always arbitrary and unjustified, and that Christian participation in war is never justified. For a Christian the circumstances surrounding war and abortion present compelling arguments in favor of exceptions to the law against killing. However, Christian anti-abortionism and pacifism satisfy the criteria of internal consistency and coherence, scriptural warrant, precedent, and prescription, uniformity with the understanding of the "community of faith," and experiential validation more fully than do abortion advocacy and just war theory. Anti-abortionism and pacifism are Christocentric, eschatological, biblical, rational, consistent, and experientially verifiable/practical. The biblical doctrines of creation, divine providence, evil, and anthropology all seem to point in the direction

of rejecting the morality of abortion and war. The criterion of “analogous conformity to the paradigmatic social challenges that the first Christian communities presented historically” (Cahill 1994, 244) is satisfied only in pacifism and anti-abortionism.

The “community of faith” has been nearly universally consistent in condemning abortion (though the issue of the personhood and life of the unborn has found some debate in the church since the later part of the middle ages). Adverse circumstances do not validate abortion. The fetus has a right to life that demands moral responsibility on the part of the parents and society in which it finds itself. If fetuses are of the human species, it seems that they also bear God’s image, and should be protected from arbitrary destruction. Adverse circumstances and maternal rights are of less importance than the fetus’ right to life. Rational, theological, and biblical arguments point in the direction of the personhood of the unborn.

Pacifism was a widely accepted approach to war among early Christians. The early Christian writers nearly universally condemned warfare and Christian involvement in military actions. Just war theorists gradually developed criteria for the justification of Christian participation in war. Unfortunately, just war theory’s seven core criteria are impractical and can only be approximated. Pacifism rightly

honors the ultimate sovereignty of God and the tertiary sovereignty of temporal States. Pacifism is not a passive permission of injustice, war, violence, genocide, etc. Instead, it is an acknowledgment that the Christian duty is to bring God's redemption to the world, not world peace through violence. There are three distinct forms of pacifism as anti-violence (modified, transitional, and absolute pacifism). Absolute pacifism seems to the present author to fit best with the rational, theological, and biblical evidence for pacifism and is the simplest solution logically, though modified and transitional pacifism may be valid alternatives. The important thing is that God's love compels Christians to love their enemies, and to do them no harm. Christians must do good in the face of evil.

The present evaluation was limited to the question of the morality of killing unborn fetuses or military combatants, and did not directly deal with the question of the morality of politically or legally prohibiting or permitting these actions, or on the question of the morality of defending oneself from potentially murderous aggressors. These questions were outside the scope of the present analysis. But let it be said that if the ethical conclusions that were reached in this essay are absolute, and not merely relative, citizens and their governments have a moral duty to be

consistent, and to seek the transformation of what “is” to what “ought to be” in the society in which they find themselves. The Christian must stand on the side of life. Life and love are God’s gifts to humanity, and are not to be denigrated. Christians should let God reign in His wisdom and authority, and should love all humans with the power that raised Christ to life.

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AESTHETICS

The Aesthetic Attitude: Myth or Model?

In “The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude” (1964), George Dickie argues that conceptions of the aesthetic attitude are mistaken. “Distanced” and “disinterested” attitudes (how the aesthetic attitude has been chiefly characterized) are actually not attitudes, but ways of speaking of attention or inattention, and distanced or disinterested attention is a myth (it is mere attention). According to Dickie, adherence to the myth of the aesthetic attitude negatively affects how attitude theorists approach the problems of relevance, art criticism, and morality and art. In this paper, I will summarize arguments for and against the aesthetic attitude, and offer an alternative proposal for why this myth, though perhaps mistaken, may be necessary in some form.

What is the Aesthetic Attitude?

Proponents of the aesthetic attitude characterize it in two primary ways: as a state of being psychically “distanced” (something you do psychologically in relation to art), or as being a type of attention—specifically “disinterested”

attention. Let us first look at psychological distancing. According to Edward Bullough (1912), distance is the criterion that allows us to distinguish between what is beautiful, and what is merely agreeable. If you want to appreciate art, you must distance yourself from that art—you must turn off your practical mindset and appreciate the art as it is and for itself, without regard to its relation to you personally (Dawson, 1961), like a sailor at sea in the midst of a dense fog who distances himself from hidden dangers when he appreciates the beauty of the fog (turning off or bracketing his interest in his own safety) (Bullough, 1912). The concept of psychological distancing, set in context, was an attempt by Bullough to synthesize two disparate views of aesthetics—the first focusing on the real properties of objects and our concepts of them (from the empiricist tradition), and the second emphasizing personal interpretation and openness to the emotive aspects of an aesthetic experience (from the romantic tradition) (Cupchik, 2002). If a person distances herself from a work of art, she appreciates both the qualities of the object in itself as well as undergoing an inner change in which she is temporarily put “out of gear” with her self and her personal concerns (Dawson, 1961).

Of interest to us here are the cases put forward to illustrate this view of the aesthetic

attitude. According to Bullough, a man is underdistancing himself when he watches a performance of *Othello*, but is unable to attend to the aesthetic nature of the play because he cannot stop thinking about his own wife's possible infidelity. Here the state of consciousness of being distanced has not been entered into. The husband is too close to the art to appreciate it. Further, this is because the husband has failed to put on an aesthetic attitude: art must be appreciated deliberately. Another similar case is that of the person in the audience watching *Othello* who is an expert in stagecraft, and attends to details of scenery rather than appreciating the play itself. In Dawson's account, the stagecraft expert is overdistanced. Overdistancing occurs when a percipient neither appreciates a work of art for itself (as in distancing), nor attends to the self (as in underdistancing): the percipient focuses on objective facts not central to the art (they are too far detached from the experience of the art). These cases of over- and underdistancing help us to see both the deliberate nature of distancing, and the importance of the relation of the percipient to the art. The self must not get in the way of the experience, nor must it be detached from the experience; rather, it must be bracketed in order for the experience to be fully appreciated. This takes into account the objective nature of the artwork, the

responsibility of the percipient, and the primacy of the aesthetic experience itself.

Let us now look at the second way of characterizing the aesthetic attitude: as disinterested and sympathetic attention. By “disinterested”, Jerome Stolnitz (1960), a central proponent of this view, does not mean “not interested” (as in some common parlance today, or the original meaning of the word), but instead means to have “no ulterior purpose.” In order for a percipient to have a proper aesthetic attitude, the percipient must contemplate a work of art sympathetically (accepting the work on its own terms), uncritically (letting the experience just be, without evaluative concerns), and above all else disinterestedly (without ulterior purposes). Eliseo Vivas (1959) asserts that a poem may be approached in a non-aesthetic mode, for instance as a history, and that this kind of approach misses out on the aesthetic experience because the percipient is focusing on objectives (for instance, to learn historical facts) rather than the object itself and the experience of that object.

Every aesthetic experience has an aesthetic object, (the object of the aesthetic attitude just described) which a percipient should attend to in an intransitive manner (Vivas, 1959). Vivas uses the word “intransitive” here to describe an experience of an object unmediated by outside objectives. When Vivas watches a hockey game

in slow motion, he is drawn into the experience of the object itself rather than being interested in things like “Who is winning?” To be intransitively experiencing an aesthetic object, a person must purposefully appreciate the object just for the experience of the object itself (with no other objectives in focus)—it is reading, or looking, or watching, or experiencing an object in itself, rather than reading, or looking at, or watching or experiencing a thing for some other reason.

Is the Aesthetic Attitude a Myth?

George Dickie asserts that the aesthetic attitude is a myth. Cases of under- or overdistancing are merely cases of not attending, or attending with practical motivations. We do not require the idea of “distancing”, as it can be better understood as merely attending. Similarly, there is no such thing as interested or transitive attending: there is only not attending, or attending with practical motivations—disinterested attending turns out to be mere attending. His argument might be summed up as follows:

The aesthetic attitude is characterized as “distancing” or “disinterested” attention.

“Distancing” is merely attending.

“Disinterested” or “intransitive” attending is merely attending.

Therefore, the aesthetic attitude is mere attention.

Part of Dickie’s underlying concern here is to bring out the vacuous nature of the term “aesthetic” (1964, p. 64), and he does this by approaching characterizations of the aesthetic attitude. If we conclude that “aesthetic” in the context of the aesthetic attitude is a myth, we may be moved in the direction of concluding that “aesthetic” is always vacuous when it is used to describe. The myth busted here is that aesthetic appreciation involves anything more than attention. So:

In order for there to be “the aesthetic attitude”, aesthetic appreciation must involve more than mere attention.

Cases of aesthetic appreciation turn out to be cases of mere attention.

Therefore, the aesthetic attitude is a myth.

Dickie’s objections were powerful enough to cause a near complete “black-out” on the topic until recently. The concept of the aesthetic attitude had been demythologized: what was

there left to say? Near the beginning of the 21st century, several attempts were made to resuscitate this concept, and we will deal with a few of these in the next section. First, let us explore the content of Dickie's argument so that we will better understand why it has been so influential.

After introducing the concept of "distancing", Dickie contends that he has never been induced into a special mental state as a percipient, nor has he ever deliberately put himself in such a state (i.e., he has not been distanced psychologically from artwork, and he has not distanced himself). Dickie never felt himself so induced, nor has he ever purposefully approached a piece of art in that way. Dickie now speaks on behalf of the attitude theorist in response to his own objection: "But are you not oblivious to noises and sights other than those of the play or to the marks on the wall around the painting?" (p. 57). From here, it is a short step for Dickie to contend that for the attitude theorist, distancing is actually just attending to the artwork (not a special "aesthetic" mental state). Overdistancing and underdistancing are just being distracted (attending to something else other than the artwork). If distancing is described as being oblivious to what is around you as you appreciate a piece of art, the argument can focus on how distancing is *merely* attention.

However, would the attitude theorist respond in the way Dickie suggests (i.e. with a rebuttal concerning being oblivious to all else other than the artwork)? Is that what Bullough and Dawson are saying: that distancing is about being oblivious to things other than the artwork? In fact, they are not. Bullough and Dawson point to the jealous husband and expert in stagecraft as examples of percipients attending to things in a certain manner, not as people inattentive to the artwork. These percipients must be attending to the play in order to become jealous and to notice the stage scenery. They are just misattending. They are focusing on interests regarding the self (the jealous husband), or objective facts about the artwork (the stagecraft expert), rather than the experience of the art in and for itself. If a playgoer is distanced, it does not just mean that his attention is focused (Dickie 1964, p. 57), but that he is experiencing the object without allowing practical concerns to ruin his appreciation of the art.

Dickie's argument surrounding "disinterested" attention, however, is much more compelling, and because the notions of distance and disinterested attention are so close, this later argument may affect how we view distancing. Dickie argues that Stolnitz's notion of disinterestedness is not what it appears to be (1964, p. 58). If people can listen to music

disinterestedly (without ulterior purposes), they can also listen interestedly (with ulterior purposes, like studying for a test, or in order to critique the music). Dickie points out that this is a motivational not a perceptual difference (it is about purposes, not about what is heard). Both the interested and disinterested percipients listen to the music (or fail to listen).

Dickie now turns to other artistic modes, and gives examples from paintings, plays and poems. Jones looks at a painting that reminds him of his grandfather, which makes him think and talk about his grandfather. Dickie asserts that in this instance, Jones is not attending to the painting interestedly – Jones is not attending to the painting *at all*: “distraction is not a special kind of attention, it is a kind of inattention” (1964, p. 58). What an attitude theorists might call “interested attention to artwork” turns out to be inattention to artwork. Similarly, the impresario of a play production might sit in the audience during the play, and enjoy the play with an ulterior purpose (he is happy that there are so many people in the seats, and that he is making so much money). Dickie asserts that while attitude theorists might call this “interested attention” to the play, he would call it inattention to the play (and attention to the till) (p. 59). Daydreaming while reading a poem is a similar case in which the

percipient is inattentive to the work of art (rather than being interestedly attentive).

Here Dickie's plan is to show that "disinterested" attention is about a kind of motive, not a kind of action (attending). Many cases have been mislabeled as "disinterested attention" when they were merely inattention (like in the cases of the painting, the play, and the poem). Others (like the music listeners earlier, or the case of a critic viewing a play) are cases of differences of motivation, not differences of kinds of attention (the attention is not different as a result of the motivation).

This argument can be extended to "distancing" by arguing that the differences in distances are not differences in kinds of attention, but rather are differences of motivation, and that under- or overdistancing oneself in relation to an artwork is actually mere inattention to the artwork based on differences of underlying motivations. So the jealous husband is not attending to the play because his jealousy is motivating him to think of his wife instead of the play itself. And the stagecraft expert is not attending to the play because he is attending to other things (the set being moved around on stage), because his expertise in stagecraft is motivating him to attend to and think about practical details instead of the play itself. To summarize: 1-motivations may be different between

percipients when approaching a work of art, 2- differences in motivations may affect what is attended to, but not the kind of attention, 3- sometimes the artwork itself is attended to, sometimes it is not, and 4- sometimes underlying motivations or practical concerns may determine if a work of art is attended to at all. This is a simpler account of what is happening than that of the attitude theorists, and on the strength of this simplicity, we may conclude that we were really only talking about attention or inattention, or about differences in motivation when we said “aesthetic attitude.” The aesthetic attitude becomes a puff of smoke, blown away with the winds of time.

Reviving the “Myth”

How might attitude theorists respond? Out of relative silence, two philosophers at the turn of the 21st century argued for a return to the concept of the aesthetic attitude. Gary Kemp (1999) and Alan Goldman (2001) (following Roger Scruton, 1998) both offer interesting alternatives to the myth hypothesis, centering on the nature of attention and the inadequacy of Dickie’s account respectively. I will also provide a third argument that might be made on behalf of attitude theory, which borrows elements from Kemp and Goldman’s arguments, as well as from the older

“distancing” and “disinterested” attention approaches.

Gary Kemp (1999) argues that attending is not of a single kind: there are different ways of attending to an object (for instance, I may listen to music for rhythms, or I may listen for enjoyment). A music student that is listening for the rhythms in a song is not distracted from the artwork (she is attending closely to the music), but is distracted from the aesthetic experience that might have been provided by the artwork. The student is also attending differently when they are appreciating the music than when they are listening for rhythms. Aesthetic appreciation can occur when a person attends to an object with an aesthetically minded motivation. Dickie allows for such motivations, and Kemp asserts that the presence of motivations is all that the attitude theorist requires in order to reassert the aesthetic attitude (1999, p. 394). Borrowing from Roger Scruton’s (1998) ideas concerning the centrality of attending to an object for its own sake in the context of aesthetic appreciation, Kemp (1999) thinks that disinterested attention is not the answer we are looking for: rather, the key is interested attention to an object for its own sake (p. 398). This diverts much of the force of Dickie’s argument, as it avoids Dickie’s contention that disinterested attention is mere inattention. We are left with an aesthetic

attitude that is different from that originally conceived by Bullough, Stolnitz and others, but one that is nevertheless intact: the aesthetic attitude is interested attention to an object for its own sake (i.e., it is aesthetically motivated, and toward an aesthetic experience). The attention is interested, it is just that the interests are not practical (they are directed toward the aesthetic experience and object). This first objection to Dickie's argument is focused on responding to Dickie's contention that there are no differences in kinds of attention, and on exploring how attitude theory can be changed to avoid Dickie's attacks. If Kemp's argument succeeds, the central premises of Dickie's argument fail (those regarding mere attention).

Another argument is that of Alan Goldman (2001), who points out that it is necessary to attend to a piece of art in order to appreciate it, but attending to the work is not sufficient for appreciation (p. 191). In order to appreciate the Mona Lisa, a person must attend to it, but appreciating the Mona Lisa requires more than attending to it. Dickie would agree here, though he might say that motivations can also play a role, and that the attention is not thereby a different kind of attention (it is just a differently motivated attention). However, Goldman further asserts that attending to an object with practical motivations is usually not sufficient for aesthetic appreciation of that object (so

practical motivations are not sufficient for aesthetic appreciation). Scientists pay close attention to data, investors to money, baseball players to the ball, but these kinds of attention are usually of a different variety than in aesthetic appreciation. What is needed is not just intent or motivation, but a particular type of attention: a cognitive and perceptual activity that is tuned to aesthetics. Whether or not we call this an “attitude” is merely a verbal concern (2001, p. 192). For Goldman, “not every object invites or rewards an aesthetic appreciation” (p. 191), so that having an “aesthetic attitude” is not a sufficient condition for having an aesthetic experience, nor is it a necessary condition (we may be unprepared for an aesthetic experience, and yet still have one). So:

Attending to an object is a necessary condition for aesthetically appreciating that object.

Attending to an object is not a sufficient condition for aesthetically appreciating that object (something more is needed).

Attending to an object with practical motivations is often not sufficient for aesthetically appreciating that object.

The purpose behind a person's attending to an object is not sufficient for aesthetically appreciating that object, nor is it necessary for them to have a purpose.

Therefore, aesthetic appreciation is not mere attention and motivation (something more than mere attention and motivation is needed for aesthetic appreciation).

In simpler terms, attention is necessary for aesthetic appreciation, but mere attention is not enough. Attending with practical motivations is also not enough. Even attending with aesthetically minded motivations is not enough (and such motivations are not even necessary). Mere attention and motivation (of whatever variety) does not fully account for aesthetic appreciation. What else do we need to account for aesthetic appreciation? Goldman leaves it at that, and implies that some kind of aesthetic attitude will be necessary, stating that it does not matter if you call it that, as long as you are aware that this something more exists and is necessary. This argument points out that Dickie's account is missing something important when discussing aesthetic appreciation.

It could be further argued that the "something more" is attention directed at aesthetic concerns (aesthetic objects, aesthetic

experiences, and/or aesthetic motivations). In this argument, Dickie has not only failed to account adequately for aesthetic appreciation, he has also misrepresented the attitude theorists. They are not talking about attention, or merely motivations, but the rightful objectives of aesthetic appreciation, that is, aesthetic objects (or properties of those objects) and aesthetic experiences, on the basis of aesthetic motivations. If these are not the objectives and basis of aesthetic appreciation, it is not *aesthetic* appreciation, and/or the percipient is improperly distanced or interested. Attitude theorists of both major varieties (“distanced” and “disinterested”) are calling attention to the idea that mere attention is not enough, that mere motivations are insufficient (because they might not be aesthetically centered), and that it is specifically the aesthetic object, the aesthetic experience, and the aesthetic motives that are needed to account for aesthetic appreciation. For instance, to aesthetically appreciate a painting, we need a painting (an aesthetic object) and an experience of a painting that is not clouded with practical motives and concerns. Does this require a specific kind of attitude? Perhaps, as Goldman suggests, we do not need an “attitude” to account for this. But, contra Dickie, we seem to require some sort of aesthetic something. We may be able to account for this with aesthetic objects, experiences, and

motives, each of which point the percipient in the direction of aesthetic appreciation rather than mere attention, or mere motivated attention. This last argument is actually a positive proposition: if Dickie's argument fails to account for experiences of aesthetic appreciation as Goldman argues, we may be able to suggest an alternative that does account for aesthetic appreciation.

Myth or Model?

Is the aesthetic attitude a myth? It may be. Or we might say, rather, that it is a model (but in need of a facelift). The aesthetic attitude as the work of a percipient toward experiencing art disinterestedly may not be a clear enough concept to be helpful any longer in analyzing aesthetic appreciation. Kemp asserts that at least some cases of aesthetic appreciation include interested attention (but the ulterior motives are aesthetic appreciation). Dickie has shown that cases of over- or underdistancing and interested attention can be analyzed in a simpler fashion as mere inattention, but even in cases like these there may be differences in kinds of attention, as Kemp argues. The simpler account of Dickie also does not survive Goldman's argument concerning sufficient conditions for aesthetic appreciation—something is missing. That “something” might be attention directed at aesthetic concerns—an

aesthetic object, an aesthetic experience, and aesthetic motivations. Aesthetic appreciation is not mere attention – it is a specific kind of attention. This kind of attention is directed at a specific kind of object, is a part of a specific kind of experience, and if there is a motivation behind it, requires motivation of a specific variety.

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Depiction, Resemblance & EROS

Experienced resemblance in outline shape (EROS) has been proposed as a theory that explains depiction. In this paper, I will attempt to show some of the problems that gave rise to this approach, and how EROS theory might stand up to various objections. First, I will explain key differences between conventionalist and naturalist accounts of depiction, and analyze each account as a backdrop for EROS theory. Next, I will briefly describe how EROS theory explains depiction, and provide several objections to this account along with replies that might be made by EROS theorists.

Naturalist & Conventionalist Accounts of Depiction

Naturalist theories of depiction focus on the universally available psychological capacities of human perceivers. Humans are standard equipped with the capacity to see, and to be able to interpret and understand their physical and social surroundings. Depiction can be explained as the viewer's capacity to recognize what is depicted or to perceive resemblances between the object in the depiction (for instance, a house in the picture) and the object

that is depicted (the house in the real world, or an ideal house in a fictive world). So a house is depicted in a picture if humans have the capacity to recognize or to see resemblances in the picture that map with the object outside the picture (what is being referred to).

In contrast, conventionalism is a theory of depiction in which cultural conventions account for representations of objects. Pictures denote, represent or refer to an object (depict the object) not through resemblance, but through our culturally specific agreement that they do so. Symbols refer to objects through arbitrary rules. Pictures are merely symbols, standing in for the object, and can only be interpreted by learning the system of rules for reference (or semiotics) of the specific cultural context that gave rise to the depiction in the first place.

Conventionalists like Goodman (1976) argue that resemblance is cheap: you cannot build a theory of depiction on something so easy to come by. A picture of Donald Trump could be said to resemble a picture of Oscar the Grouch more than it does the in-the-flesh person of Donald Trump. Both pictures are flat, they may be made with the same materials, using the same tools, they both arise in similar cultural milieus, the colors used may resemble each other, they both can be framed, etc. Meanwhile, the picture of Donald Trump and the actual Donald Trump share fewer

resemblances: the real Trump has hair (albeit not his own), while the picture has colored strokes that represent hair. The real Trump has a face that is part of a human being, while the picture of Trump has a face that is just part of a picture. The real Trump was born on June 14, 1946, while the picture is not alive at all and was created long after by an artist rather than a father and mother. Further, if Trump were to have a twin, the twin would resemble Trump more than a picture of Donald Trump: does this mean Trump's twin depicts him?

Conventionalism avoids these problems with resemblance, and gives us a systemic way of viewing depiction as denotation that accounts for culturally specific pictorial systems. Unfortunately, it seems to leave us with no account of why people across cultures and times can immediately understand what a picture is depicting. For instance, I know that the early cave paintings of lions are just that: pictures of lions. I know next to nothing about the culture that produced these pictures, or the conventions for creating pictorial representations in that context. Similarly, some people who have never been exposed to pictures made in my own pictorial cultural context (whether because of cultural isolation or because of extreme young age) seem to immediately understand what pictures from this context depict (Ekman & Friesen, 1971;

DeLoache, Strauss & Maynard, 1979). It seems that pictorial systems may not require explications of or familiarity with conventions in order for them to be understood.

EROS Theory

EROS theory seeks to explain, though not define, depiction in a way that brings together resemblance and causality/intentionality without falling prey to the objections of conventionalism outlined above (Hopkins, 2005). Before we elucidate possible strengths of this approach and how it answers conventionalist objections, let's explicate what it is that EROS theory is seeking to explain. There are six cardinal truths about depiction that EROS theory attempts to explain: 1- depiction is not property-less: to depict something, you must depict it as having some property; 2- depiction is always from a point of view; 3- only visible objects can be depicted; 4- objects can only be partially misrepresented in pictures (total misrepresentation is merely non-representation); 5- understanding a picture entails knowing what the depicted object looks like; and 6- knowing how the depicted object looks is necessary and suffices for understanding a depiction of the object (2005, p. 162). In EROS theory, depiction is explained as an experience of resemblance of an object in outline shape. This experience is characterized

as “seeing-in”, but depiction requires more than just seeing-in, it also requires the right kind of causal relation between the picture and the object, or requires that the picture is made with the intent for the object to be seen in the picture (p. 163).

Strengths of EROS Theory

EROS theory provides an explanation of depiction that allows for perspective, misrepresentation, distortions, and for communication through pictorial representation. Perspectives and details in a picture do not need to be perfectly preserved for this communication to be successful. But if a thing is depicted in a picture, we can say that perceivers experience resemblance in outline shape (seeing-in) and that the experience is tied either to causality or intentionality (i.e., the right kinds of causal connections exist between the object depicted and the depiction of the object, or the intention of the artist was to depict the object). Depiction in EROS theory does not require a specific system of perspective, but does require an outline shape that is experienced as resembling the outline shape of the object.

Objections to EROS Theory: Goodman's Challenge, the Limits of EROS, and POOP

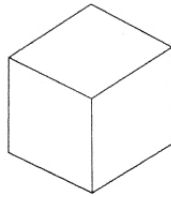
Goodman's challenge, as alluded to briefly above, is that theories of depiction cannot rely on resemblance because resemblance is cheap. Further, resemblance is reflexive: a picture resembles an object and the object resembles the picture, but we do not say that the object is depicting the picture.

What Goodman's challenge fails to take into account is that explanations of depiction are not the same as definitions of depiction. So, while definitions may require jointly sufficient and individually necessary conditions, explanations require no such things. To explain depiction by referencing resemblance (of whatever variety) is not to say that every time there is resemblance, there is depiction. Instead, it is to say that every time there is depiction, there is also resemblance. While resemblance may be reflexive (so that the picture resembles the object and the object resembles the picture), we are not forced to conclude that the object depicts the picture. Instead, we can say, "When there is depiction, we can know that resemblance is a part of it." Cheap resemblance is also not a problem: a picture that depicts Donald Trump does so partially by being experienced as resembling the outline shape of Donald Trump, and experienced resemblance of

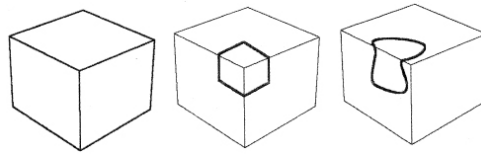
outline shape is not cheap. The picture of Donald Trump is not experienced as strongly resembling the outline shape of the picture of Oscar the Grouch. Even if the outline shapes were experienced as strongly resembling each other, this would still not necessarily be a case of depiction, since resemblance does not entail depiction (even EROS does not entail depiction). There is no intention for the picture of Donald Trump to depict the picture of Oscar the Grouch, nor are the two pictures causally related in the right way.

In “The Domain of Depiction,” Dominic Lopes (2005) offers another objection to EROS theory through an analysis of the limits of EROS when applied to specific outside cases (all images are taken from “The Domain of Depiction” and are not owned by the present author, nor are they Creative Commons licensed). This objection takes the form of four illustrations of problematic depictions:

1. A cube shown in parallel oblique perspective (EROS either says that in many cases our intuition about what is depicted is incorrect, or that EROS is so flexible that it does not have to track with objective resemblance in outline shape—either way, EROS is not necessary for seeing-in)



2. Three outline shapes of parts of a cube (recognizable outline shapes depend on the presence of significant contours or boundaries in the depiction, so EROS is not sufficient for seeing-in),



3. The outline of shading on a face, shown in positive, negative and outline (outline shape is only recognizable with the presence of an illumination boundary as is shown in the left two images, so again EROS is not sufficient for seeing-in), and



4. R.C. James's "Photograph of a Dalmatian" (the outline shape of the dog is not seen until the percipient sees the dog in the picture, so EROS depends upon seeing-in).



So EROS is not sufficient or necessary for seeing-in, and the theory seems to imply circularity (in the Dalmatian example, experiencing the resemblance of a Dalmatian in outline shape seems to depend upon first seeing-in, but EROS is used to explain what seeing-in is).

How might an EROS theorist respond? The cube example depicts an object as cubical, we see a cube in the picture, and we experience

the outline shape in the picture as resembling a cube in outline shape. How? EROS allows for multiple points of view of an object in a depiction, and this can be taken to be one such case of multiple perspectives (and EROS is still necessary for seeing-in). Or (as an alternative explanation) we could say with Hopkins (2005) that objects may be misrepresented in a picture, yet may still be experienced as resembling an object in outline shape. If this is a case of misrepresentation of perspective (or distortion), yet is still a depiction of a cube, we can forgive these shortcomings because we are still able to see-in.



In the illustration of three outline shapes of parts of a cube, only the first is depicting a cube: there is no indication that the other two (shown above as irregular shaped outlines) are intended to depict a cube. In fact, as the outlines are presented here, they are intended to not depict a cube (or they would be poor examples for Lopes' argument—after all, he is arguing from them that without clarifying significant boundaries or contours we cannot see the cube even though we see an outline shape from part of the cube). As shown above, if we are only

given the parts of the outline that Lopes highlights, we see that these do not depict a cube at all: they are not experienced as resembling the outline shape of a cube, nor are they intended to.



Similarly, for the outline shading on a face, the last image is not intended to depict a face (and it does not). Lopes is using the third image as an example of an outline that is experienced as resembling the outline shape of the first two outlines (which we experience as resembling the outline shape of a face), but we do not see the face in the third outline. It is argued that this shows that EROS is not sufficient for seeing-in. However, we actually do see-in: we experience the resemblance of outline shape between the third and the earlier two outlines (though we do not see the face in the third). So the third resembles the second and first picture. But a resemblance to a *depiction* of a face is not necessarily a depiction of a face itself. All that EROS theory claims is that if depiction and seeing-in is happening (and in the

third image, we do not see a face, and depiction is not occurring), we can explain it using EROS.

The “Photograph of a Dalmatian” case is a different animal. The picture intentionally leaves out significant portions of the features, which are provided by the percipient (via Gestalt). The viewer never sees the complete outline shape of a dog, but rather creates it in their mind (infers the presence of such a shape given the parts of the picture’s outlines, and the percipient’s previous experiences of outline shapes of dogs). The question is “how do we see a dog in the picture?” Lopes suggests that the percipient sees the dog in the picture, and then on the basis of that, sees the outline shape: seeing the surface features are all we need in order to see the dog (2005, pp. 267-268). However, it could be argued that we do not see the dog in the bare surface features. We only see the entire dog as an inferred outline shape, and that on the basis of experiencing a resemblance of the outline shape of parts of the dog that are actually visible (and depicted). The surface features are only helpful inasmuch as they provide just enough data to help our minds to begin to experience resemblance in outline shape of the visible parts. It should be noted here that most of the dog is not depicted at all (no properties are depicted for large sections of the dog). For instance, the dog’s back left leg is

not shown at all (is not visible) and so is not being depicted. So the parts that are visible are starting us out: they are experienced as resembling the outline shape of those specific parts of a dog, we see the dog, and then the outline shape of the entire dog is based on inferences: our minds fill in the rest of the invisible outline shape. But the experience of resemblance of the partial outline shape (for instance, the head) is enough for our minds to jump to conclusions (“a dog is depicted”), and then on that basis to fill in the rest of the outline through inferences. Partial EROS is sufficient for seeing-in, which helps us toward more fully fleshed-out EROS, so seeing-in is still explainable as EROS.

In sum, these cases by Lopes can be argued to be cases of multiple perspectives or misrepresentation, or are not depiction, or are partial EROS. No circularity seems to be involved, and it seems that EROS can still be said to be sufficient and necessary for seeing-in.

Another objection to EROS theory may be constructed in the following manner, which I will call the “problem of objects’ properties,” or POOP. An artist intends to depict a red apple. In the artist’s painting, entitled “Lust”, the pure bright red of the apple matches the bright red lips also depicted in the picture, poised to consume the apple. In terms of this specific picture, the redness of the apple is important to

the depiction. A green apple will not do, and similarly any other color of apple would change the meaning of the picture. More than that, any apple lacking red would be a different picture. Now, given EROS theory, we see the apple in the picture by experiencing resemblance of an apple in outline shape. But all we see in the picture then is an apple (not a red apple). EROS theory has no way to account for a red apple being depicted in a picture (as far as EROS theory is concerned, it cannot be depicted—only an apple can in this instance). It seems that according to EROS theory, a red apple can never be depicted. Similarly, a pink dolphin, a black pen, a green banana, and a painted desert. This is because redness does not have to do with outline shape, and neither do any other colors. But a red apple is not just an apple that is a specific color: in this case, this specific apple is the fruit of a specific variety of the species *Malus domestica*, and the distinctive bright redness of this variety adds to the meaning of the picture. Intuitively, the redness of the apple helps us to identify what kind of apple it is that is being depicted, and beyond that, to interpret the picture. But it seems that EROS theory cannot account for the depiction of a red apple (it can only explain the depiction of an apple).

This appears to be a problem related to properties of an object other than shape. Two

objects may have the same shape, but have wildly different properties otherwise, and yet be depictions of the same thing in EROS theory. For instance, apples are typically about the size of a small fist. But what about a picture in which there is a house, an apple the size of a house, and a normal sized apple? According to EROS theory, you do not see a large apple and a normal sized apple in the picture (because the largeness of the apple is not experienced as outline shape). Instead, you see just two apples (they both have the same outline shape). This changes the meaning of the picture: no longer is there a depiction of a house, an enormous apple, and a normal sized apple, there is just a depiction of a house and two apples. Explaining depiction, and specifically “seeing-in,” by only referencing outline shape seems to leave out other important properties of objects that give meaning to a picture (and tell us what it is that is depicted).

How might an EROS theorist respond? According to Hopkins, “the resources necessary for understanding pictures are just those necessary for experiencing resemblance in outline shape” (2005, p. 158). So to understand and interpret a picture, we do not require any resources other than what helps us to experience resemblance in outline shape. Thus, the picture “Lust” is of an apple and lips. The redness of the apple adds nothing to our

understanding of the picture, because redness is not necessary for experiencing resemblance in outline shape (nor is being a member of a specific species of red apple). And the picture of the house and two apples is just that (the size of the first apple adds nothing to our understanding of what is depicted in the picture, because it has nothing to do with outline shape). There is no way to account for properties of objects like color and size without significantly changing EROS theory.

If EROS theory were widened to include properties like color and size into the concept of “seeing-in” in response to the POOP, the theory would be a completely different theory: it would be EROOP (experienced resemblance of objects’ properties). This expansion of the theory would come with a price (above and beyond losing the catchiness of the acronym), namely in explaining how the properties and experienced resemblance of those properties relate to one another (for instance, is outline shape primary, and the other properties tertiary, or all they all equal in weight in explaining depiction, and which of the properties are necessary in depiction, and which are sufficient?). In short, like Lucille Ball, they would have a lot of ‘explaining’ to do.

How to Proceed?

While several of the strongest objections to EROS theory—such as Goodman’s challenge and Lopes’ illustrations of the limits of EROS—may be met with solid responses by EROS theorists, problems still remain with taking account of the depiction of an object’s other properties, such as color or size. EROS theory is a worthy successor to earlier naturalist accounts of depiction, and a solid counter to conventionalism. However, there is still work to be done if a holistic account is to be made of depiction of object properties. If properties like color or size are left out of the explanation of depiction, EROS theorists must explain how things like red or very large apples can be depicted. In short, they need a response to POOP.

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Response to Genuine Rational Fictional Emotions

In “Genuine Rational Fictional Emotions,” Gendler and Kovakovich (2006) seek to resolve the “paradox of fictional emotions.” The paradox goes like so: 1- we have genuine rational emotional responses to specific fictional characters and situations (the response condition); 2- we believe that those characters/situations are fictional (the belief condition); but 3- we can only have genuine rational emotional responses toward characters/situations if we believe they are not fictional (the coordination condition). Each of these claims is plausible at first blush. For instance, I can respond to Frodo’s plight in Mordor with genuine rational sadness, I can believe that Frodo is merely fictional, and I am not feeling genuine rational emotions for a three-foot high furry-footed curly-haired person (because I believe Frodo is fictional, and so I cannot feel genuine rational emotion for the poor guy). But these three conditions cannot all be true simultaneously.

The solution hinges on the question of whether emotions about actual characters/situations are similar enough to emotions about fictional characters/situations to warrant considering them “two species of the same genus” (p. 243). The differences between these two kinds of emotions (dubbed here “fictional emotions” and “actual emotions”) are related to subject matter (real or fictional) and to motivation (I do not respond to Frodo in the same way as I would if I actually met a real hobbit in such tormented circumstances). Earlier resolutions of the paradox posit that fictional emotions are not genuine, or are not rational (addressing the response condition), or that we lose track of our own belief (addressing the belief condition). Gendler and Kovakovich deny the coordination condition, and do so partially on the basis of recent empirical research which suggests that autonomic responses (response behaviors linked to the involuntary nervous system) help people in practical reasoning by the following process: we imagine consequences of our actions, which activates emotional responses, and these become reinforced to the point of automatic responses which help us behave rationally (based in part on these automatized responses). So autonomic emotional responses tied to future circumstances (“what if” scenarios) may help us behave rationally. Automatic emotional

responses to imaginary events are a part of rationality. Further, when we fear actual future events, these emotions are genuine, even though the events have not happened (and may not happen). So we can have genuine rational emotions about things that do not exist. Concerning the belief condition, with optical illusions we may perceive and respond to things we do not believe. This is because we have automatized our responses to stimuli in such a way as to act subdoxastically (without requiring belief). If this is true, we may have genuine rational emotions toward fictional characters/situations without needing to believe those characters/situations are real (the emotions occur subdoxastically). Without such emotional engagement in fiction, we would be limited in our capacity to behave rationally (we would be limited to our own narrow real circumstances for building up autonomic responses).

This proposed solution is both elegant and convincing, though there are several potential weaknesses. First, the cases given for subdoxastic responses may turn out to be doxastic (but be false beliefs that are overturned by further evidence). When I get near a window in a high-rise apartment, I believe I will fall to my death (I am afraid of heights, and of falling to my death). I also have other beliefs that outweigh this false belief, and which sometimes allow me to stand near the window and enjoy

the view without a response of fear. It is not irrational to hold two beliefs at the same time that are contradictory: it is irrational to still hold both after evaluating the merits of each (and recognizing they are incompatible). Second, the force of the argument depends upon our acceptance of the idea that the similarities between actual and fictional emotions are more striking than the differences, but what if we were able to show there are additional differences between the two? For instance, fictional emotion is a source of pleasure (even when the emotion is fear), which we derive in part from knowing that the fiction is not real. If actual and fictional emotions are indeed different, and if our emotions are not subdoxastic in the case of responses to fiction, then the argument presented here may fail to convince.

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SCIENCE

Identity of the Researcher: Situatedness on the Move

How does my identity influence me as a qualitative researcher? One might argue that this question should be broadened: how does my identity influence me as a researcher (regardless of methods used)? Does it matter what my gender, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, different abilities, religion, or political ideologies are? Will these have an effect on my research? A profound impact? Will the fact that I am poor lead me to privilege the underprivileged? Will my beliefs about Buddha, or Muhammad, or Christ or Moses skew or in some way clarify my outlook on the nature of research, knowledge, and reality? Will my identity as a man put me in a position where I am unable to critique hegemony in its myriad forms? As both a Native American and a Norwegian American will I be able to address social injustice? Do all of these things, which help to make up parts of what may be called my worldview, tint (read “distort”) my reality so that I fail to see the world as it is, and thus am caught in the circumstances in which I began, unable to climb up over the baggage I bring

with me to this occasion of research? Should this baggage be overcome? If so, how? Have you overcome your baggage? Do you see more clearly than me? Are you no longer situated? Have you transcended this mere mortal plane and achieved the eternal sainthood of the objective researcher?

I'm guessing not.

If you understand any of my words, you are situated alongside myself linguistically. You read and understand English. Which means you learned English somewhere. And you learned it well enough that my uncommon (and sometimes overly academic) speech patterns have not thrown you off the task of trying to understand what I am saying, meaning you likely have a good grasp of early 21st century American academic English usage. Your knowledge of this essay is therefore dependent upon your identity and your situatedness. You could not have read (or analyzed, or one might say "researched into") my words here were you not situated as you are linguistically and scholastically. You are also likely reading (or have printed) a digitized version of this essay, meaning you have access to a computer (and possibly a printer). This is a privileged minority social world you and I dwell in. Our situatedness is entrenched and incriminating. It shows us for what we are: mere mortals influenced by our identities. Profoundly a part of the world in

which we travel, at home even as we search. Or research.

But should this situated identity overpower us in our attempts to understand our world? Should we, as Marxists, only ever dare view our world through Marxist lenses? Should we, as Democrats, only ever see value in freedom guaranteed by representative governance? Rather, while we are situated, we should not be seen as static. Else there would be no Marxists (Marx would have thought the same as that given him by his situation, and would not have created or synthesized what is now Marxism). There would be no Christians (Christ would have found only identity with his contemporaries, and would have done and said none of what is attributed to him). If there is plurality in the world (which there is), there is also an ability to move about though still situated. What I mean is this: our situatedness is not the sole determinant of our research, our search for knowledge about our world. But our identity is always an ingredient in the way we see that world, and may allow us (or disallow us) from taking part in that world (or of seeing what else exists out there). We cannot ever hope for true detachment in order to study. We could not study if we were truly detached (read “dead”).

Research is not mere analysis of one’s identity (or through one’s identity), nor can it be pure analysis of the “given” (data) of our

world: research can rather be seen as identity searching for meaning in the data, and transformed situatedness through creative and synthesizing acts. We are changed, our identity is changed, our situatedness is changed as we seek to understand (*if* we seek to understand). While it is possible for us to be held prisoners to our identities in our research, we must not let our identities define who we are becoming—as we are changed by our research we must open ourselves to the possibility of transidentities, situatedness on the move.

What about research that entails social interaction, or that requires new or different relationships with study participants and/or organizations? Can we become Jewish to study Judaism? Is that what is meant by situatedness on the move? We believe in order to understand. We cannot fully understand what it means to be Jewish unless we are Jewish or are converts to Judaism. But we also understand in order to believe (or not believe). We must learn something about what Judaism means before we take a step of belief or unbelief. We must understand something in order to believe it. What is needed is not blind rejection of previous situatedness (as a human and as a researcher), but rather willingness to “try on” understanding and belief structures in order to understand and to come to bases for action. We will not truly understand until we are fully

situated as the participant, but we may seek to translocate our situatedness and “become” in a sense as the participant. We do this when we are caught up into the story of another, or when we are empathetically angry on behalf of a friend, when we fight for the cause of the outcast as a choice not as a necessity, and when we interview a participant and find ourselves falling in with their mode of thought. Our writing up of research should seek to capture some of this for the reader as well. To allow them to enter into the drama of the social study, or the life experiences of the participants. Instead of studying the other from outside, or becoming wholly the other from inside, our identities are transformed (if but momentarily and incompletely) to that of the other. Better yet, the other is given a voice within the research that makes him or her not the other.

In my own qualitative research and writing I am seeking to be transparent to readers and to participants, to explicate where I am, to voice what I see and how I see it, and to enter in with participants into the process of research as a participant in research. I try to be explicit with participants about what is being researched and their roles as cocreators of the research, as well as to explore identities of all involved in order to build from that (my background and theirs, and how it might affect the research). I also try to incorporate this reflectiveness in the final

writing, because readers can only enter into the identities that they are given knowledge of. If the situatedness is not explicated in some real way, the reader is left to their own devices if they are to, for a moment, live in the voice that is given. Unless the voice is clear, it will not be understood. Unless it is understood, it will not be believed. Unless it is believed, it will not transform, and that is the real goal of research (if not transformation of action, at least of knowledge).

Like Wendy Hastings (2010) in her research among site-based teacher educators, I may find myself in circumstances which force me to reevaluate my stance, my positionality with regard to the research and/or the participants. But I find it ethically wrong to disallow, once begun, the back-and-forth of discursive momentum engendered by all humans involved in the research having (and continuing to have) voices that are heard. If other humans enter with you on a journey of discovery, and the journey is to continue, it must be continuously reified by all parties (or left unfinished by some or all). Because our situatedness is on the move and not static, this dialogue among members of research must continue if the search is to continue, lest the data become not what we set out to analyze, and we become not who we set out to become.

My identity, and the identities of participants, profoundly impacts the goals, framework, theoretical underpinnings, methods, accessibility of data, and analysis of the research. But my identity, and those of participants and readers, does not bar the way for transformation. Because our identities are not static. They are not mere baggage or lenses through which we view our world. They are also what allow us to come to know the world in the first place. If I grow up in the Dominican Republic, and am never able to attend a school throughout my life, and spend my days collecting garbage scraps to exchange for pennies at a nearby dump because of my extreme poverty, I will be more limited in my abilities to research. But I will still have a voice (an important one) and an identity that allows me to become through searching. My knowledge of the world in that case may not include academia, but it may include textures of reality not possible in American academic settings. In my own research, this is the voice that matters most to me: the voice of the human (as a human, an identity becoming).

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Against a Theory of Everything

It would be interesting to prove (or at least cogently argue) that a unified theory of everything is not possible. One could proceed on these grounds (here I must confess my dependence for several of these ideas on the thoughts of Roy Bhaskar, 2011, creator of critical realism):

1. Physical reality has structure (complexity on multiple levels).
2. The structure of physical reality is at some point(s) irreducible.
3. A unified theory of everything entails that physical reality is fundamentally flat (not structured/complex on multiple levels)
4. In a unified theory of everything, physical reality is reducible (to a unified theory of everything)

Therefore, there will never be a successful unified theory of everything.

So if a person can prove that physical reality: 1. has structure, and 2. that structure is

irreducible, by deduction, a unified theory of everything would not be possible because of what it would have to be (a reduction) and entail (flat, not structured, reality). But how can one prove irreducible structure/complexity on multiple levels?

Quantum theory and the general theory of relativity are seemingly incompatible if unified, but if they are left as different layers of underlying structure of the physical universe that are irreducible (irreducibly complex in their varied layers) there may not be a problem with understanding them as distinct and complimentary, and applying to their different layers of complexity. Perhaps complexities are only reducible to certain layers of structure built into the world. Whether or not quantum theory and gravity/general relativity are in the end compatibilized, the resulting theory will still not be a theory of everything if there is even one layer of complexity above that lower level that is not reducible to it. For instance, the existence of a theory (even a projected “theory of everything”) would not be reducible to being explained fully by the theory of everything. There is a layer of complexity/structure in theorizing that is not reducible to that which is theorized about. For a theory to be a theory of everything, no other theories would be able to add anything to it that would increase our understanding of reality. It would make all

other theories and laws moot (including evolution, entropy, etc.).

Another way of stating this is that each part of a system cannot be explained outside of reference to the others/whole—the complexity of the whole is irreducible. The question is whether or not there are multiple layers of complexity, with higher levels not directly reducible to lower levels.

Another thought: might this be the same argument as that leveled against determinism?

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On Personal Polyvocalism and Polyformism in Research or Mama I'm Gonna Write Me a Paper!

Communicative acts, if they are to reach their intended ends, must match the contexts and goals for which they were created. This state of affairs is no different in research reporting than it is in politics, religion, philosophy, education or any other field that depends upon communication for its continued existence. Is the intended aim of our research to portray self-reflexivity, personal perspective, or experience? “I” may be appropriate in one’s language—use of the first person singular pronoun (and the less formal voice that often attends it) may bring with it a powerful hook into persuasion, communication of reflexivity, and self-revelation (Webb, 1992). Explicitly positioned communication may help to garner readers’ empathy and to bridge the gap between researcher and participant. It may allow for a lifting of the curtain, unveiling of the wizard, revelation of the inner workings of the mysterious black box, showing the world that research arises from a person. A particular

person. A fallible person. A person who is known and is letting themselves be known.

Is the purpose of a particular piece of research to portray objectivity and detached description? Self-referential personal pronouns may disappear (as in my first paragraph above). I tend to use much non-self-referential language in my research reporting unless it is otherwise warranted. Why? I am often seeking to address *the* truth, not my truth. I believe objects exist. I believe subjects exist. I believe subjects can exist as objects, and that objective knowing can result from subjective knowledge creation, and is one of the ultimate goals of research (and life). However, I think there is reason to believe that there are perhaps not many topics that can be addressed without any reference to how I feel about them, or how I think or act regarding them. Without “I”, “you”, or “we”, the reader is not grasped as tightly, the topic is not presented as applicably, the context is not situated as thoroughly, and the form is not humanized as fully. Research is a human occupation. Humans are persons. We should not wholly leave personhood out of the equation when we are seeking to communicate truth-seeking from a person to another person—unless that person is a reviewer for a journal that wishes for the author (me) to remain as anonymous as themselves. In that case, the present author

must remain “the present author,” rather than being “me”.

Is the aim of our reporting to bring the truths of objectivity together with the perspectives of subjectivity (as in critical realism)? It may be that an intermingling of the personal and the detached forms of language may be most effective. I have found that in my writing I often intersperse the personal with the impersonal, the first-person with the third-person, the subjective with the objective. Part of that is because I think that research ought to be transformative, and I think that transformation requires relationships. For myself, relationships require subjectification and objectification of persons, knowledge, roles and perspectives. If communication is transformation-centered, it must situate itself in the creator and the receiver. Unless “I” have a voice, “you” cannot have a voice for me. Unless “you” have a voice, I cannot have a voice for you. Similarly, unless there is a co-occurrence of objectivity in the objects of our communication and knowledge, our communication and knowledge are doomed to forever be drowned in the fluidity of self-situated perspectivity. Translation: we cannot communicate if that which is being communicated does not exist outside of a single self. We must agree on its existence, we must push toward meaning-making together, and we must ensure that the meaning-making lines up

not only with the structure of what is communicated but with the situated action of the communicators. If we communicate in order to act, in order to spur others and ourselves toward action and transformation, it may be in the interests of fulfilling our aims to bring in both “I” and the invisible arbiter (the currently unrevealing researcher in the third person).

Similarly, the argument for or against formalism in our research reporting may be best situated in the contexts and aims of the research. I must come clean that I am a silly person, an often strange and artistic misfit. I would venture to guess that many people (and even researchers) are, and thus are not at home in normatively applied formalism. This is not our mother tongue, and may well cause us to be further disempowered and alienated from the realities of our own existence. Formalism, “putting on airs,” “highfalutin” language and summary descriptions can be enjoyable at times and can store complexities otherwise difficult to attain in simple language, but can also be off-putting, uncreative, and just horribly boring (Caulley, 2008). Informalisms in common research reporting are rare outside of participant data, but at times may be found to be compelling, funny, engaging, and provocative enough to bring about attention, dissonance and reinterpretation of what is reported in light of the situated character of the informal wording

or structure. Informalisms bring out flavor (and may thus be the MSG of writing). They highlight through contrast when used in research. They are the voice of my mother calling to me with perspicacious tenacity: “Honey, don’t forget to be who you are while you’re doing what you’re doing!” “Yes, Mom.” I’ll be watching my Ps and Qs as well as the next, but you may also find me with the unordinary—that is, the playful and the common, or what is in much of the research world uncommon. The voice of my mother is in my ear and the ear of the formalist is at my back. The multiple forms, the multiple voices find me another among many: a researcher who is just a plain old human trying to communicate with other plain old humans.

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A Conversation with Complexity

The following conversation is fictional, but is based on real beliefs and ideas. I wrote it after having read a popular account of complexity research, an endeavor undertaken by many scientists, economists, psychologists, etc. who have been involved with the Santa Fe Institute in New Mexico. I am deeply interested in the theory of complexity, and its many facets, but I find myself asking questions concerning some of the fundamental principles espoused by complexity theorists. My wish here is to highlight some of these questions. I apologize in advance for any scientific errors I may have unknowingly made, or any misrepresentation of ideas or theories that might be found here. Hopefully the reader can look past any mistakes in order to see the heart of this conversation. Complexity theory deserves attention because it is a major attempt made by humans to understand the world. It is not just a science. It is a philosophical worldview. Its founders have said that it rivals religion, and in fact replaces it.

Bob: So, Mr. Complexity, what is it exactly that you believe?

Complexity: Mr. Bob, I believe that the world is full of complex systems which show signs of emergent behavior and self-organization.

Bob: Wow! You're going to have to slow down for me. I don't think I quite understand what you're talking about.

Com: Well, nobody knows exactly how it works, but we are researching many avenues of thought in order to find that out.

Bob: What do people think they know so far?

Com: When we look at a complex system, we find several key elements. First, they are composed of more than one thing (after all you can't have a complex system with only one thing in the system). Second, the things in the system seem to work together and interact in a stable way. Third, the stability of the interaction must not be too great, or nothing will happen, and we will end up with order but no complexity. Basically the system is dead. Fourth, and this element is very closely tied to the third one, the system cannot be too chaotic. If it is, nothing "interesting" will happen and everything in the system will be moving, but not in a purposeful complex way.

Bob: This makes for a very narrow margin of error for complex systems to exist. How could they even come to exist in the first place? And why do we see complex systems all around us? Shouldn't they be rare, if they have to fit such strict criteria?

Com: We believe that complex systems come about naturally. They don't have a cause outside of themselves.

Bob: I always thought that science's goal was to discover what is happening in our world, and why it happens. If you say there is no cause for something, isn't that the end of science? Science is supposed to uncover the causes of things and the causal relationships between things. Isn't it possible that there is a cause for complex systems, but it exists outside of the system itself? And isn't it possible that you have just not realized what those causes are yet? It seems to me that it is the scientist's (and everyone's) job to seek out those causes. Otherwise we must live in ignorance. Getting back to our earlier conversation, what exactly is emergent behavior and self-organization?

Com: Emergent behavior means that the sum of the parts of a complex system are less than the whole. In simpler terms, when a complex system exists, we see within it

behavior that we cannot ascribe to its parts. It is as if it is a living organism in itself. There are many causes that go into creating a complex system, but the complexity itself is unaccounted for. Stuff just happens. When we program a computer simulation of a complex system, we find that the program does interesting things that the programmer never designed into the program. It just happens.

Bob: But doesn't the action of programming cause the behavior you describe?

Com: No. When we study these programs, we find that a few simple rules are all that is necessary to bring about an environment ripe for complexity to grow in. The rules are not the cause of the behavior. Complexity just emerges. It is the same in the real world. We find complex systems just popping up everywhere. The stock market, politics, culture, board games, and even life all show signs of emergent behavior.

Bob: But isn't it true that the computer program only works because of what it is told to do? It is designed in a certain way, with a specific purpose or purposes in mind. If the programmer just sat down and started typing randomly, only gibberish would result. And the computer can't do

anything with something it can't understand. But really the analogy is imperfect. You see, what you are proposing is that there is really no programmer at all, and in fact, no computer to program. You are actually implying that there is nothing at all. No universe, matter, life, anything.

Com: What? No I am not!

Bob: But you are. You see, when you say that this emergent behavior comes from nothing, from no cause, you are really saying it just appears out of nowhere, with not even an environment being necessary to come into.

Com: But I said earlier, and I quote, "we find that a few simple rules are all that is necessary to bring about an environment ripe for complexity to grow in." Can't you see what I am saying? Don't put words into my mouth, or thoughts into my head that were never there to begin with.

Bob: They were there to begin with. I can't help it that you didn't see them. You said the environment brought about by a few simple rules was ripe for complexity to grow in. But you said nothing about where the complexity comes from in the first place. Or did you? Yes, in fact, you did. You said it just appears, without

cause, out of nothing. What you implied is that the programmer did not make it, the program itself did not make it, the computer didn't make it, and the environment created by the program didn't make it. In other words, none of these things have anything at all to do with its coming into being. So why are they necessary to a complex system's existence? The simple answer is that they are not, according to your theory. A complex system can happen anywhere, anytime, and in fact, according to you, can happen in nowhereville, outside of time, from absolutely nothing.

Com: I don't think that is what I am saying.

Bob: Then are you proposing that this emerging behavior is caused by design?

Com: No, it is not.

Bob: Then is it caused by something, maybe even something outside of the physical universe?

Com: I am a scientist, and because of this, I can state that scientifically a person cannot postulate about things outside of the physical universe. This is all that exists. If it is not, at the very least we cannot know anything about anything outside of the physical universe.

Bob: Your presupposition is that the physical world is all there is, so you hem yourself

in by that assumption, and can accept no evidence to the contrary. But if you were open to explore the opposite view, you might see that a non-physical world has been staring you right in the face all this time and you never even acknowledged its existence. You also say that if there is a non-physical world, a person can know nothing of it, but the fact that you are able to say something about it at all suggests that you know something about it. If there is a non-physical world, do you know anything about it?

Com: Only that it cannot be known.

Bob: That is something. It is enough of something to count at least as supposed knowledge about the non-physical world. And so, even according to you, it can be known at least in part.

Com: Okay. I'll go along with you just for argument's sake. I will concede that maybe it is possible that God or something exists outside of the physical world, and maybe even created the original stuff of the universe, thus setting up a proper environment for the emergence of self-organization.

Bob: What is self-organization again?

Com: Oh yeah, we haven't gone over that yet, have we? You've been changing the subject on me.

Bob: Sorry, I'll try to settle down. It's just hard for me to focus on something if I don't know its basis. So what is self-organization?

Com: It is a description of emergent behavior. It is the organizing actions of things when they reach the critical point of complexity poised on the edge of chaos.

Bob: The edge of chaos?

Com: The edge of chaos is the place between extreme stability and extreme chaos. It is the place of the emergent behavior of complexity.

Bob: Could you loosely define stability and chaos for me?

Com: Sure. Stability is analogous to water in its frozen state. Things are so stable that the movement of individual water molecules ceases. Chaos is analogous to water in its liquid state, moving incessantly and unpurposefully, chaotically bouncing water molecule off water molecule. It's a mess. But between these two states is a place we call the "edge of chaos" where we find neither pure stability nor pure chaos. Instead, we find islands of ice in liquid, and islands of liquid in ice. There is movement, but it is controlled by the stability of the system. It is not a complete mess, and it is not a complete bore, rather it is complexity in action. In

it we find certain strange things happening. Not only is the system emergent, but also within the system life may come into existence. Life is this factor that organizes itself into a system, and grows, and interacts. The complex system can be said to be alive.

Bob: But isn't heat tied to pressure?

Com: I don't follow you.

Bob: When you heat something up, what you are really doing is increasing that thing's pressure. Pressure is just particles flying around hitting each other crazily, and this motion makes them attempt to escape from containment. The tighter the fit, the wilder they get. Energy is released in the form of heat. Isn't that how it works?

Com: Yes, that's the kinetic theory of gases in a nutshell.

Bob: But some of the heat produced from this action is not useful for the system?

Com: That's correct. It gets lost to the outside world.

Bob: Let's pretend that the "system" we are talking about is the entire universe. What then? Eventually everything cools down, and every sub-atomic particle in the universe gets so far away from every other particle that it no longer moves and everything stands still. Nothing happens. What would you call that?

Com: Absolute Zero temperature. You could also call it absolute order or stability.

Bob- But aren't we talking about the result of everything tending toward disorder? If that is the case, then what we have is not order or stability at all. Rather, we have ultimate physical disorder or chaos.

Com: Chaos?

Bob: Exactly. The end of disorder is separation and death. On the other hand if we take our experiment the other way, and try to catch a single subatomic particle in a box, and somehow continue to make the box smaller and smaller, the pressure would increase until finally, in the end (if we could keep the particle in the box) what we would have is energy. Useful, explosive energy. That is order; a moving wave of energy and heat and light. Things tend to go away from this, and towards disorder.

Com: So, what are you getting at?

Bob: Systems don't naturally tend toward usefulness. They become less orderly. They continue on till they reach ultimate disorder. A cold death.

Com: Not if they are enabled by an outside force to grow in what you call order, and I call chaos.

Bob: No matter what you call it, unless acted upon by an outside source, the thing will

tend towards uselessness, and will not stop for any transition between order and chaos. Complexity must be designed into the system in order to maintain its position at the edge of chaos. And just as you pointed out, something from outside the system must put them there.

Com: And that “outside source” is the self-organizing principle within the system itself. It comes onto the scene from nowhere, and causes complexity.

Bob: But what we have found is that your “self-organizing principle” must be put into the system in the first place. Not emerging within it, not coming from nothing, but rather being designed into the system through a simple set of rules by a master programmer.
