Philosophy in Practice

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES
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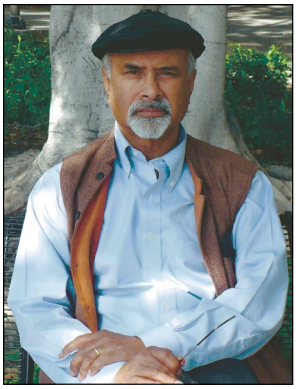
Professor Spotlight: Joseph Prabhu



Spirit of inquiry, dedication to scholarship, and remarkable achievement are just a few ways to describe the life and career of our own Professor Joseph Prabhu. Since arriving at California State University, Los Angeles in 1978, Dr. Prabhu has had a tenure marked by a myriad of accomplishments, which are substantial by any measure; however, for our much esteemed professor these laurels only minimally account for the extraordinary life he has led thus far.

Growing up in Calcutta, India, Dr. Prabhu's "single deepest influence" was the middle school and high school education he received from Belgian Jesuits. The Belgian Jesuits "had the benefit of European classical learning in Greek and Latin, which, of course, they knew as Jesuits." However, they possessed a unique thoughtfulness, sensitivity, and respect for the local culture. As Dr. Prabhu recalls, the Jesuits "went native" by dedicating themselves to understanding the local languages and cultures by writing Sanskrit grammars and even going into villages and recording folk songs. Growing up a Christian, Dr. Prabhu remembers how extraordinary it was to see the "liturgical experiments" of the Jesuits as they celebrated Catholic mass in an "Indian style." This would be his first lesson in what he would later know as hermeneutics (i.e., the science of interpretation), which would also ultimately become a particular area of specialization for the scholar. During this time, Dr. Prabhu also "lived down the street" from Mother Teresa, who was living in Calcutta at the time, and even served as "her very first altar boy." While Mother Teresa's religious devotion, charisma, and unconditional benevolence inspired awe in Dr. Prabhu, he ultimately found that her more orthodox approach to Catholicism differed substantially from that of the more liberal Belgian Jesuits, who had played such a vital role in

his intellectual development.

Despite the intrigue of the Jesuits' unfolding hermeneutical experiment, Dr. Prabhu pursued a much different academic avenue initially at Delhi University. His father was a mathematician, and he took up his suggestion to study applied math. He majored in economics—and studied under the supervision of future Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen. Occasionally, Sen would give lectures on philosophy of science, and at one point, Dr. Prabhu attended a lecture given by John Rawls, which consisted of what is now his famous work, "A Theory of Justice." The integration of abstract philosophical theory with applied economics that Rawls had displayed in his lecture stimulated Dr. Prabhu's desire to study "something abstract and investigative." Although Dr. Prabhu earned both a B.A. and an M.A. in economics from Delhi University, his undeniably deep interest in theology, as well as his newly affirmed interest in the "abstract and investigative" led him to switch gears and accept a scholarship to study theology in Germany, despite beginning work on his doctoral thesis. He recalls, "My mother was furious! I told her, rather abruptly, in a letter first, and then I had to go in personally to try to persuade her that I was going to Germany and chucking, essentially, from her point of view, six years of hard-earned university education." Fortunately for us, Dr. Prabhu convinced his mother of his new pursuits and went on to study theology, which would subsequently lead him to pursue a career in philosophy.

Within only a few months, Dr. Prabhu embarked on a journey that began at Heidelberg University in Germany under the guidance of Jürgen Habermas and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Unfortunately, he felt culturally disconnected from his lack of fluency in German, so he transferred to Cambridge University in England. Dr. Prabhu would earn a B.A. and an M.A. in philosophy at Cambridge studying with Bernard Williams, before leaving for Boston University to pursue a Ph.D. At BU, Dr. Prabhu found himself very fortunate to be able to reunite with two of his "greatest teachers," Habermas and Gadamer, who were at that time living and lecturing in Boston. In this new setting, Dr. Prabhu was able

to reunite with his old teachers and study with them in a much more deeply insightful way than when he had initially encountered them in Germany.

After graduating from Boston University with his Ph.D in Philosophy, Dr. Prabhu accepted a faculty position in a "very young" philosophy department at CSULA. Since then, Dr. Prabhu has grown extremely fond of the culture and atmosphere of CSULA and Los Angeles in general. The diversity and social backgrounds of the student body, the wide spectrum of areas of specialties of the faculty, and the liberal climate of the campus all coincide nicely with both his own liberal temperament and his desire to "provide tools" to students which enable them use philosophical arguments practically and socially.

Since his inauguration as a professor at CSULA, Dr. Prabhu has traveled and lectured on almost every continent on the globe and has accumulated quite an impressive catalog of accolades along the way. In addition to his appointment at CSULA, Dr. Prabhu has lectured and taught at more than fifty universities as either a visiting professor or as a guest. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Chicago, UC Santa Barbara, Harvard, and his own alma mater, Boston University. He has also served in many prestigious positions, including President of the International Society of Asian & Comparative Philosophy ('08–'10), Program Chair for the Melbourne Parliament of the World's Religions (2009), and co-editor of the journal *ReVision* ('95–'03). He also currently serves on an advisory panel for the UN High Commission for Human Rights and the International Security Forum. His local achievements resonate well with these as he was awarded the Outstanding Professor Award at CSULA for the '04-'05 school year, the Lifetime Achievement Award from Soka Gakkai, USA, and a Commendation from the Southern California Committee of the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Although Dr. Prabhu's career has already been filled with much achievement, there is still a great deal more that he wishes to accomplish. Currently, Dr. Prabhu is in the process of simultaneously writing three books, *Liberating Gandhi: Community,*

Empire and a Culture of Peace, which he anticipates will be out sometime this year, *Hegel, India and the Dark Face of Modernity*, and *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. He is also interested in further studying and examining multiculturalism, human rights, and Hegel, as well as finding the meaning of life. As a dedicated teacher, he also encourages his students to engage with philosophy on a personal level that goes beyond the academic environs. Dr. Prabhu says: "Philosophy is not just a head trip, you know, philosophy is something that should make a difference in your life, should mean something to you."

— Sasha Gallardo-Fleenor & Andres Garza.

Intrinsic Value and Normative Ethics

Sarah Marie Babbitt

Normative ethical theory has two central concerns. It's concerned with (1) discerning which actions are morally required of us and (2) working out some justification for these moral requirements. One way moral philosophers have tried to answer these concerns is by employing the concept of intrinsic value. The general idea is that if there is some objective value, then this value holds promise as a justification for objective moral requirements. It could not only be the basis for our choices regarding right actions, but it could also justify many of the claims certain things seem to have on us. Things as diverse as literary fiction, endangered species, and the love one has for a friend have all been considered bearers of intrinsic value. If these things were objectively valuable, then they would have an objective claim on us to treat them in particular ways (most obviously in ways that respect their objective value or goodness). But philosophers tend to characterize the nature of the concept of intrinsic value in various ways, and as a result we currently have multiple concepts working under the same name and conversely multiple ways of characterizing the same concept. Since much of the current work on intrinsic value is an attempt to clear up this muddle, we never seem to find out if any one of these concepts can actually do the work intrinsic value was first employed to do. In this paper, I want to examine the four main ways intrinsic value is characterized, not to argue that any one conception of intrinsic value is the rightful titleholder, rather to show that each conception currently in use actually fails to accomplish either of the main goals of normative ethics. Despite this setback, I think that employing intrinsic value in normative ethics might yet prove helpful, and what I hope to show is that a Kantian conception of intrinsic value, though often neglected in the litera-

ture, can accomplish these goals and so holds the most promise for work in normative ethics.

In this paper I will be focusing on intrinsic value in general. The variations of intrinsic value I put forward are general in the sense that they are not specific to one kind of intrinsic value (e.g. aesthetic intrinsic value or ethical intrinsic value). And whenever I use "intrinsic value" it can be taken as synonymous with intrinsic goodness (unless I indicate otherwise). I make this distinction because a comprehensive discussion of intrinsic value would distinguish the different modes of intrinsic value, that is, it would consistently account for intrinsic goodness, intrinsic badness, intrinsic neutrality, and intrinsic preference. However, I think it will be sufficient to focus on intrinsic goodness given the specific application of intrinsic value that interests us here. Also, there is a related debate lurking over what kinds of things can be bearers of intrinsic value, and though I do not want to argue for any particular account here, it is impossible to ignore the debate entirely. The stance one takes on this issue is often decisive in forming and evaluating a definition of intrinsic value, and at various points this issue will be addressed. But throughout the paper, I assume that actions, states, and objects (living and otherwise) are all possible bearers of intrinsic value.

I. An end in itself

Traditionally intrinsic value is defined in contradistinction to instrumental value. Aristotle is likely responsible for the persistence of this pairing. The common phrases applied to the various modern conceptions of intrinsic value can all be found in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle characterizes a particular kind of good as "good as an end in itself," "good in itself," and "good for its own sake." Many since have taken this way of characterizing intrinsic goodness to be a conflation of concepts or just plain sloppiness (Korsgaard 1983; Moore 2005; Zimmerman 2001; et.al.). Whether Aristotle distinguishes each of these phrases as conceptually distinct is not clear, but it is clear that he thought he

could characterize life's supreme value and end (i.e. the end of a good life) in each of these ways. He introduces the supreme value this way:

> Suppose, then, that the things achievable by action have some end that we wish for because of itself, and because of which we wish for the other things, and that we do not choose everything because of something else—for if we do, it will go on without limit, so that desire will prove to be empty and futile. Clearly, this end will be the good, that is to say, the best good (Aristotle 1999, 1094a).

This supreme good is introduced as a hypothetical good, a good that—if it exists—could help us discern which actions are required of us and could also be the ground of value for all other conditional goods.

From the start of the *Nichomachean Ethics* Aristotle is concerned with the relationship of value to ends. He sketches a familiar outline of the teleological nature of rational action, claiming that every rational action has some end (or purpose or target) and that end is its good. He says, "Every craft and every line of inquiry, and likewise every action and decision, seems to seek some good" (Aristotle 1999, 1094a). The end and the good are one and the same. But there are many different kinds of rational actions and "the ends [that are sought] appear to differ; some are activities, and others are products apart from the activities. Wherever there are ends apart from the actions, the products are by nature better than the activities" (Aristotle 1999, 1094a). These actions, some say, *have* ends in themselves but, more precisely, they *are* ends in themselves. These actions are pursued (or desired or chosen) for their own sake. Other actions, instrumental actions, are pursued for the sake of what they produce, so their ends are apart from themselves. In this way, the value of an action is determined by the proximity of its end. Actions with ends in themselves can be said to have intrinsic value.

This "end in itself" notion of intrinsic goodness is easily extended beyond actions to make the broader claim that *anything*

that is valued as an end in itself is more valuable than a thing that is valued because of what it produces. The tool used to produce a thing is less valuable than the thing produced because the tool's goodness is derived from the goodness of the thing. The tool ceases to be good if it ceases to produce the effects it is intended to produce. A tool is not valuable as an end in itself. An end in itself has its own value, independent of any relationship it bears like that of a tool to its effects. A thing pursued as an end just has value as it is. This is the first kind of intrinsic value that concerns us:

(1) a thing has intrinsic goodness if it is an end in itself

For reasons that will soon become clear, I deliberately use "end in itself" and would like to try to keep it distinct from "good in itself." As I noted above, Aristotle does not keep these distinct, but he does not take (1) as a definition of intrinsic value either. In the *NE*, Aristotle is trying to characterize the supreme value, i.e. the end of a good life, and (1) is meant to be a necessary criterion for a thing's having this supreme value. The thing that turns out to be most valuable will necessarily be an end in itself. This is, I think, a more appropriate use of (1); nevertheless, nowadays philosophers have seized (1) as a full definition of intrinsic goodness and have identified it with a supreme value. They take it that a thing's having its end in itself gives it a higher value than a thing that does not.

But if (1) is a definition of intrinsic value, then it seems ill-equipped to handle the concerns of normative ethics. First, this way of ranking value seems flawed. We can imagine a number of cases to show this. Imagine a billionaire is deciding between two actions that present themselves at exactly the same time. Our billionaire gets a phone call from an organization she supports pleading for an immediate donation to help relief efforts for some recent natural disaster, just as her friend has asked her to join in a game of chess. The donation is an instrumental good, since the giving of money is not an end in itself; its end, the relief efforts, gives it value. The chess game, however, is an end in itself; she regularly plays the game for itself. In this case, and any relevantly

similar ones, we would hardly want to rank the values of these activities based on the location of their ends. We want to be able to say that she should prefer the instrumental good of donating money to playing a game of chess. This characterization of intrinsic value does not help us to make the right decision. Though ends are always identical to goods insofar as they are the ends for that particular thing, ranking the goodness of distinct ends in competition will need some other criteria to determine the victor. Intrinsic value as defined in (1) fails us here. The first formulation fails to do either of the things we want intrinsic value to do. It fails to tell us what we are required to do, and it cannot tell us why we are justified in choosing to donate to relief efforts over playing a game of chess.

II. Good in itself

Many problems have come out of this identification of the end and the good, and as many philosophers have tried to refine the distinction between them (Bernstein 2000; Bradley 2006; Kagan 1998; Korsgaard 1983; Moore 1903; Ross 1963). Most notably Christine Korsgaard who, in her paper "Two Distinctions in Goodness," demonstrates how a notion of intrinsic value like (1) fails to account for the difference between a thing's value as an end and a thing's value it has in itself (Korsgaard 1983). She argues that (1) is actually a way of defining *final* value, and its proper counterpart is instrumental value. This is her definition:

> (FV) a thing has final value if it is desirable for its own sake as an end in itself (Korsgaard 1983, p. 170)

Contrast instrumental value, which is had if a subject values a thing for the sake of some end apart from the thing itself. Instrumental and final values make a more appropriate pair because, for each, claims to value are grounded in the location of the thing's end. Korsgaard takes the Aristotelian distinction and separates the location of ends from the location of the good. She sets it up nicely so the instrumental-final distinction mirrors the means-end

distinction.

The distinction between an intrinsic good and a final good can be subtle. An intrinsic good, according to Korsgaard, is a thing that has its goodness in itself (Korsgaard 1983, p. 170). If a thing has its end in itself and its end is the source of its goodness, then it has final value and intrinsic value. If the location of the end is the source of value, and the end is in itself, then those things with final value turn out to also have intrinsic value. But some things that have goodness in themselves are not ends in themselves, so we make a distinction. Intrinsic value is meant to pick out that value a thing has in virtue of what it is, independently of anything external to it. This is the second conception of intrinsic value that concerns us:

(2) a thing has intrinsic goodness if it has its goodness in itself, i.e., its goodness is inherent

The appropriate counterpart for (2) then is extrinsic value. Extrinsic value, like instrumental value, is a derivative value but a thing that is extrinsically valuable is not necessarily a means to some other end (Korsgaard 1983, p. 172). Extrinsic value is the value a thing has when it derives its value from something external to it, such as the circumstances it is in or some relation it holds with an intrinsically good thing (Korsgaard 1983 p. 171–2). The importance of making these distinctions becomes apparent once we see that instrumental goods are not synonymous with extrinsic goods and intrinsic goods are not synonymous with goods as ends in themselves. Not all final goods are intrinsic goods. For example, a person might really desire a moon rock just to have one (i.e. the moon rock is a final good). Yet the source of the rock's value is extrinsic. Her desire for a moon rock is what gives it value.

As a definition of intrinsic value (2) cannot answer the central concerns of normative ethical theory for the same reason (1) cannot. Neither, taken alone, can help us rank values in a way that would be useful in our deliberative processes. If we use the billionaire example above, but exchange talk of ends for talk of goods, we end up with the same problem. And though we may be

able to attribute some special value to a thing like, say, a human life based on its goodness in itself, the next step of using this value to justify some moral requirement is hard to apply consistently if we allow that a game of chess is also a good in itself. Nothing in (2) can help us justify our intuition that human life is more valuable.

III. Unconditional

G.E. Moore, in his account of intrinsic value, wants to be able to capture these kinds of intuitions. His account focuses on the way we make choices based on the values of our alternatives. He takes intrinsic value as some attribute or something discoverable in a thing that makes it worthy of choosing. His view combines versions of (1) and (2), and then makes the stronger claim that something with intrinsic value is not only inherently valuable and an end in itself, but it is also unconditionally valuable. This should be a welcome move for our purposes, since we are trying to find a concept of intrinsic value that can ground an objective requirement. Moore thought that deliberations about the right thing to do would be settled by "comparing the relative values of various goods" (Moore 1968, ch. I, s. 22). Intrinsic value is the supreme value; so in any case of deliberation, the right thing to choose would be the thing with the greatest intrinsic value. This is one way he puts it:

> To say of anything, A, that it is 'intrinsically good', is equivalent to saying that, if we had to choose between an action of which A would be the sole or total effect, and an action which would have absolutely no effects at all, it would always be our duty to choose the former, and wrong to choose the latter (Moore 2005, p. 32).

For Moore, no other kind of value has this definite relation with right and wrong (2005, p.35). It is right to produce the most intrinsic good that we can. In various places Moore restates the work he intends intrinsic value to do in our deliberative processes,

all similar claims to the above-mentioned, but in so doing he does not make any substantive metaphysical claims about intrinsic goodness that would help us know what kind of thing it is or how we might identify it in actions.

Still, Moore does try to articulate how we might find intrinsic goodness: "By saying that a thing is intrinsically good it means that it would be a good thing that the thing in question should exist, even if it existed quite alone, without any further accompaniments or effects whatever" (2005, p. 32). In this definition Moore wants to distinguish the goodness of a thing from the goodness of its effects or any external relations it might have. Part of his reason for this is that he wants to secure a value that is not merely objective but is also "intrinsic" (Moore 1922, pp. 255–257). Moore's use of "intrinsic" here is synonymous with universal or unconditional. It is not enough that the value of a thing be in itself and objective, it must also be unconditional. Moore's worry is that our usual understanding of objectivity may not provide the stability we need to secure the value of a thing under any circumstances. Moore illustrates the problem with an example about two groups of people, people *A* and people *B*. *A* are better suited to survive than *B*, and this is taken as a judgment that makes *A* objectively better than *B*. The problem he finds here is that most people would not want to concede this, objective as it may be (Moore 1922, pp. 255–257). Moore thinks this illustrates the need for intrinsic value. Mere objective value does not capture the kind of value we believe human life, and other things like it, to have.

Some philosophers are quick to object to Moore's talk of *existing quite alone* because he seems to be arguing that the thing in question must have value even if it existed in total isolation from anything else in the world. They allege that in his effort to get at the goodness a thing has independent of circumstances or effects, this isolation test strips the thing of any frame of reference at all. Even if it does look like Moore is saying this, this objection cannot sink Moore's view so easily. It is hard to see how we could make sense of individual objects if we employed a strict method of abstracting things out of their immediate circumstances and

trying to discern the goodness of them in the absence of anything at all. However, Moore (at least partially) avoids this problem by claiming that the sorts of things we abstract out would be organic wholes or composed of component parts (Moore 1968, ch. VI, s. 112). The intrinsic value of a whole is dependent upon the relations within it; it is not as if the elements of the whole are evaluated outside of *any* context. Moore does not completely avoid this problem, however, because he does still seem to allow that individual objects can be evaluated in this way. He can appeal to the claim that an individual that may have no intrinsic value alone can acquire it by being part of an organic whole. So, in general, we might not abstract out an individual object like Van Gogh's "Starry Night" and find it still has value in a vacuum. Instead we would abstract out the organic whole, in this case the appreciation of beauty, which consists of an aesthetic emotion and a beautiful painting (Moore 1968, ch. XI). This seems more plausible (though not uncontroversial).

Moore wants to remove any external conditions that might have some bearing on the thing to see if the thing is good independent of its particular circumstances. We might feel more comfortable with this idea, and be more true to Moore, if we couch it in terms of unconditionality (i.e. independent of conditions) rather than in terms of isolation. Thus, the Moorean conception can be formulated as follows:

(3) a thing has intrinsic goodness if it has its goodness unconditionally, and if it has intrinsic goodness, then it will be an end in itself and valuable for its own sake

Problems with Moore's view become more difficult to explain away when we try to reconcile (3) with the fact that he came to this definition wanting things like human beings to have intrinsic value. The first problem we just touched on. It is hard to see how a human being in isolation has much value. But let's set this aside since maybe there is an organic whole I have not conceived of that can eliminate this difficulty. Still, it is hard to maintain that human beings have the value defined in (3). I am sympathetic to Moore's

move to try to secure unconditional value for things like human beings. If human beings were unconditionally valuable, then there would be no circumstances that could justify their mistreatment. No condition has to be met to make a human being objectively valuable. If we could secure this kind of value for human life, many of our decisions about right and wrong actions could be easily navigated by measuring the effects of those actions on human life. And, though it seems like this might be just what we need to answer at least one of the main concerns of normative ethics, I am skeptical about (3)'s viability for a few reasons.

First, as with (2), the good of the thing is just in itself, not in its effects or in its relationship to anything outside of itself. So when we consider a game of chess that is just valued for the playing, we can see how its goodness is in itself. But this aspect of (3) is subject to a problem analogous to the problem found with (1) and (2), namely that the location of the good, being within or outside of the thing, does not seem to guarantee any kind of supreme goodness that would beat out all others in a contest. We only feel the force of these kinds of intrinsic goods when they are positioned next to relevantly similar instrumental goods. When we compare chess to donating to people in distress there is nothing in these definitions that demands one to be brought about over the other. However (3) might trump all instrumental and all extrinsic goods, because though they may be objective goods, they are conditionally so, while (3) is unconditional. In that case, we would have to admit that a thing that retains its value in this way is supremely valuable. But Moore thinks if we discovered this kind of goodness in a thing, then we would be required to produce more of it through our decision-making processes. This, in a way, seems to be just what we want, but problems arise again when we consider the actual things that would have this value.

Recall the earlier quote where Moore says that in a deliberative process the presence of intrinsic goodness requires a subject to choose the action that brings about the most intrinsic goodness (Moore 2005, p. 32). If we grant this and accept the claim that human beings have this value, then we are also committed to the

claim that we should produce as much human life as possible, making this view hard to swallow (Dean 2006, p. 115). The problem here is not that we will not be able to get moral requirements out of Moore's version or even that his version cannot help us secure value for things we believe have objective value but that it demands too much. It requires us to maximize intrinsic value which, when we consider the different bearers of intrinsic value, seems misguided. A normative theory that results in a requirement to produce the most human life possible, even if this is the way to produce the most intrinsic value, seems alarmingly counterintuitive. And Moore does have some recourse here. He doesn't think intrinsic value is additive. The principle of organic unities states that the goodness of a whole is not equal to the sum of the goodness of its parts. The production of the greatest number of human beings, taken as a whole, might not be itself intrinsically valuable (and so there is no requirement to bring this end about).

This view also places an implausibly high value on things like aesthetic appreciation, which though perhaps an end in itself and having its goodness in itself, and even objectively so, it seems misleading to add that it is also unconditionally good. Moore uses his notion of organic unities again here to avoid the problem. When a condition affects the thing in question he just expands the organic unity to encompass it, and the new whole is evaluated alone. But then in what sense are the new values not conditional? In the case of producing the maximum amount of humans and in this case of the unconditional goodness of aesthetic appreciation, the wholes evaluated do need some adjusting before they can be *properly* evaluated. This implies that there is some conditional aspect to the value Moore is ascribing.

The slipperiness of the notion of organic unities is indicative of a larger problem with Moore's view, namely, that he seems to be devising a method for justifying his own (or anyone's) subjective judgments. Moore's method for evaluating things allows him to make *ad hoc* adjustments to claims of value. As each problem arises, the whole is adjusted just so whatever Moore thinks has value will turn out to meet his definition of intrinsic value.

In addition, the moral non-naturalism implicit in Moore's view carries the traditional problems with it, and this only compounds the worry that Moore has devised a view to merely preserve his own subjective judgments. The main problem I'm referring to is that the view seems to require a sensing or discovering of the mysterious property of intrinsic value (Korsgaard 1983, p. 194). So even if we grant that something like Moore's isolation method could work, what is it that we are looking for? No real details are provided to help us identify what elements or relations of elements within the whole will produce the most intrinsic value; presumably it's just obvious. Yet this is not satisfying. Without any details about the nature of the value we are looking for, it seems like our appraisal of unconditional goods would be vulnerable to the criticism that they are mere subjective judgments. Imagine a case where person *A* finds the appreciation of beauty valuable independent of any conditions, while person *B* does not. How do we settle the dispute? Moore's view fails to give us enough detail to make it work in the way he wants it to.

IV. Favored for its own sake (fitting attitude)

The final kind of intrinsic value that I want to consider is sometimes called an *ethical-fittingness* or *pro-attitudes* account of intrinsic value. This account is similar to Korsgaard's definition of final value (FV) in that it also finds the source of value in the subject. In this case it is the subject's desire, preference, or other pro-attitude that determines intrinsic value rather than the subject's object of desire. Roderick Chisholm explains the view:

> […] intrinsic value concepts may be defined in terms of the appropriateness of certain intentional attitudes. For certain attitudes may be said to be *appropriate to*—and indeed *required by*—their objects… Thus a pro-attitude is appropriate to a state of affairs that is intrinsically good (Chisholm 1981, p. 100).

This may seem like he is only stating some criterion necessary for intrinsic value, but it is meant to be a definition. Other philosophers make the definition more explicit. Franz Brentano argues that intrinsic goodness only belongs to those things of which it is correct to love as an end (Chisholm 1986, p. 3). He claims our evaluations of things can be either correct or incorrect. If an evaluation is correct, then it properly fits the thing under consideration; it is an objective doxastic attitude, like belief. Noah Lemos, who incorporates the views of Chisholm and Brentano, defines intrinsic value this way: "*p* is intrinsically good if and only if *p* obtains and *p* is intrinsically worthy of love" (1994, p. 15). And *p*'s "being intrinsically worthy of love" means that "the contemplation of just *p* by *x* requires that *x* love and not hate *p*" (Lemos 1994, p. 12). Lemos claims this attitude of love toward an object is just that attitude that we have toward things that we believe deserve ethical treatment (1994, p. 13). The thing itself demands this particular attitude and its deserving this attitude means it has intrinsic worth. A common criticism of this view, and other views like it, e.g. (FV), is that it makes value subject-relative by grounding it in the whims of each individual.

Michael Zimmerman has an account that he thinks has the benefits of these other fittingness accounts, yet it successfully avoids the charge of being subject-relative. Zimmerman describes intrinsic value as that which is "ethically valuable for its own sake" (2001, p. 24). This value is a kind of ethical value, but it is not only attributable within the ethical sphere. He only classifies it as an ethical value because of its connection to the ethical requirement the intrinsically valuable thing places on the subject. The intrinsic value of things like beauty, knowledge, and pleasure, which themselves need not be taken as moral kinds of things, entails an ethical requirement (Zimmerman 2001, p. 24). He offers several detailed analyses of the concept (successively elaborated upon to refine the terms), but the general definition states that "something that is intrinsically good is nonderivatively ethically good, in that there is an ethical (or, equivalently, moral) requirement to favor it for its own sake" (Zimmerman 2001, p. 12,

cf. p. 86). I use Zimmerman's basic formulation as the example of a fittingness version of intrinsic value because it is has the best chance of answering the concerns of normative ethics. The fourth main view of intrinsic value is:

(4) a thing has intrinsic goodness if, once contemplated, it is morally required to favor it for its own sake

(4) is similar to Korsgaard's final value and both are different from (1)–(3) in an important respect, namely, the theory of value they presuppose makes the subject the origin of value. Korsgaard's (FV) alters the claim of (1) so that the value of "desiring for its own sake as an end" is different from the value of "an end in itself." This alteration shifts the origin of value. This reformulation of (1) is meant to highlight the fact that the thing's value originates in the subject. This move buffers the problems that (1)–(3) run into. (1) presupposes that a thing's having its end in itself is both objective and easily discernible. The problem is more salient if we consider the "mixed cases" where an instrumental good is also a final good (Korsgaard 1983, p. 184). (1) also implies that things have this better kind of value in virtue of being ends in themselves. Korsgaard's (FV) avoids the ranking problem by making distinctions between ends and goods. She is also trying to avoid the problem we found looming over Moore's view, namely that ascribing a dubious ontological status to intrinsic goodness as if it were some observable attribute that, once perceived in a thing, would make that thing more desirable or worthy of being chosen (Korsgaard 1983, p.171). Korsgaard takes a Kantian approach to value and argues that the desires of rational subjects determine the value of ends. If a rational person is interested in a thing, then that thing has value. The choice, or desire, of the subject determines its value. Zimmerman, in borrowing this move from Kant and Korsgaard, is also able to avoid some of the problems associated with (1)-(3).

(4) is similar to (3) in that it also aims to define a value that is unconditional, i.e. not dependent upon certain conditions being met, but (4) is meant to be an improvement on (3). If the value of

an object originates in the subject's having a particular attitude toward that object, then it is bestowed upon a thing not discovered within it. The non-naturalist problem seems to be eliminated, and the view seems to have separated itself from this problematic aspect of Moore's view. Zimmerman's way of accounting for the unconditionality of intrinsic goodness and its relationship to rational choice, however, reveals that his view (and similar fittingness accounts) is much closer to Moore's view than we should be comfortable with.

Now, states of affairs are the only rightful bearers of intrinsic value on Zimmerman's view. If the contemplation of a state of affairs makes the subject contemplating aware of a moral requirement to favor the state of affairs for its own sake, then that state of affairs has intrinsic value. Contemplation, in this case, is analogous to the epistemic requirement that arises when I contemplate an *a priori* proposition like (T) *all triangles are three-sided.* I am epistemically required to assent to it given the content of the proposition. If I fail to assent to it, then I am epistemically "insensitive" (Zimmerman 2001, p. 90). Lemos employs a similar strategy, and he describes it as a modest *a priori* knowledge (Lemos 1994, pp. 144–160). In an analogous case, I would contemplate state of affairs (J) *John being pleased*. In the same way I would contemplate and then assent to the truth of (T), I contemplate the elements within (J) and realize I must favor (J) for its own sake (Zimmerman 2001, p. 91). My recognizing the requirement of favoring is what indicates its intrinsic value.

Zimmerman's view tries to provide a way for the favoring of a state of affairs to be objective and true independent of external conditions. A subject who knows each of the elements of a state of affairs would be able to contemplate them independent of external conditions and grasp their moral weight. But here the intuitionist aspects of his view become more apparent. Zimmerman wants the contemplation of (J) to have the force of an *a priori* truth, but it is not one. How is an *a priori* test for truth really able to generate a moral requirement? Grant the assumption that we can find a definition of "John" and a definition of "being pleased" which,

contemplated together, present themselves in a definite way and demonstrate the objective moral force of this state of affairs. It still requires that we can recognize the goodness of this thing (i.e. John's being pleased) and to say that all this amounts to is feeling the force of this goodness and recognizing it as such, makes Zimmerman's view come out looking very much like a standard intuitionist view. And it makes it subject to the criticisms that (1) it fails to show us how we can discover intrinsic goodness and (2) it fails to secure the objectivity of intrinsic goodness. Some additional testing process seems to be required to determine the objectivity of the goodness of these things, but (as with Moore's view) the details are vague.

V. Kantian intrinsic value

Recall our overall goals. We are looking for a conception of intrinsic value that can (a) help us discern our objective moral requirements, i.e. tell us which actions are objectively right or wrong, and/or that can (b) ground objective moral requirements, i.e. provide some justification for them. The conception in (1) was much too weak to answer to either (a) or (b). It functions more like a necessary but not sufficient condition for intrinsic value. (2) suffers a similar fate, since goodness in itself is still not substantive enough to help us in deliberative processes. Moore's definition in (3) seems to be a move in the right direction with its emphasis on intrinsic goodness' independence from external conditions. This independence seems to be what's needed to secure both the objectivity and the universal applicability of our moral requirements. (3) also attempts to give us a clear picture of how intrinsic value can help us discern right from wrong. Unfortunately, this conception fails to show us how to know intrinsic goodness once we think we have found it. And it does not seem to be able to lift us out of disputes regarding subject-relative claims of value. It also has some unwelcome consequences that are the result of requiring us to produce more of it whenever possible.

Zimmerman's view attempts to remove some of the mystery

in discovering intrinsic value by claiming that contemplation, a rational process, can determine what things are worthy of being favored for their own sakes, i.e. what things are intrinsically good. This rational process is also his means of securing the objectivity of moral requirements. Unfortunately, Zimmerman's way of construing this process fails to adequately show us how we can discern intrinsic value. So we are left, once again, wondering whether or not we will be able to recognize intrinsic value when we see it. One view of non-intrinsic goodness discussed briefly above, Korsgaard's (FV), successfully makes the shift and maintains objectivity (though not unconditionally), and it does so by employing a Kantian theory of value. In the last part of this paper I want to show how a Kantian conception of intrinsic value, modeled on Korsgaard's interpretation, is able to solve the problems associated with intrinsic value's use in normative ethics.

Kant's theory of value and his distinctive notion of intrinsic value are not always taken into consideration in discussions of intrinsic value. So I will briefly touch on some features of Kant's value theory that, although fundamentally different from others considered here, are obviously relevant to (at least) our discussion of intrinsic value. First, it should be noted that Kant's definition of an end in itself is remarkably different from the others above. It is not conceived of as an end that we are required to pursue, choose, or bring about; instead, it is an end that requires it always be treated as an end and never as a means (Dean 2006, pp. 114–116). An end in itself, for Kant, is "an independent end" which can be defined as "that which must not be acted against, and which must consequently never be valued as merely a means but in every volition also as an end" (1949, *F* 437). Now this can help us avoid the misguided moral requirements to maximize intrinsic value whenever possible. These independent ends must be treated always as an end in itself but this does not mean we must always be working to bring more of it about.

A good will is an end in itself, and it is the only thing that fits Kant's notion of intrinsic value. Kant famously says, "Nothing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly

be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a *good will*" (1949, *F* 393). A good will is had by a subject if that subject is committed to the disposition to act morally despite any other inclinations or dispositions she might also have (Dean 2006, p. 20). The subject who is committed in this way, if she is fully rational, always chooses to act in accord with morality, and so she can be said to have a good will (i.e. intrinsic goodness). The good will shares many of the features of (1)–(4). It is good in itself, both in virtue of what it is in itself (Kant 1949, *F* 394) and "without regard to anything else" (Kant 1949, *F* 396). It is good without qualification, i.e. independent of external conditions. It even beats out all other goods in a contest: "In the estimation of the entire worth of our actions it always takes first place and is the condition of everything else" (Kant 1949, *F* 396). Kantian intrinsic goodness can be defined as follows:

(K) a thing is intrinsically good if it is good without qualification, and if it is intrinsically good then it is an end in itself and good for its own sake

And, as it turns out, the only thing good in this way is a good will.

When Kant says that the good will is the "condition of everything else" he is assuming the unconditional goodness of a good will and indicating the way that everything else that has value depends upon a good will (Korsgaard 1983, p. 183–184). An end in itself, for Kant, demands special treatment because it is the condition of every other good. So this condition must be satisfied to preserve the objectivity of all other goods. An end in itself can never be sacrificed to achieve some lesser end. This prohibition secures the objectivity of value even when that value originates in the subject. The subject with a good will has unconditional value, and as this subject sets ends for herself, these ends are good because she has a good will, thus their condition has been met. In other words, these ends have their value in virtue of being the rational choice of some human's good will.

An example may help. Happiness and pleasure are often considered the supreme values in normative ethical theories but,

as Kant points out, the happiness or pleasure of an evil person is surely not good. So, happiness and pleasure should not be considered unconditionally good. Of all the views considered in this paper, this view is obviously the most limiting of intrinsic value. One worry might be that many of the objective moral requirements we hoped to secure, if denied intrinsic worth, can no longer benefit from having an unconditional objective status. How on this account can intrinsic value secure the objective value of things like literary fiction or the love one has for a friend? Moore would not be satisfied with this move because he wants a value that goes beyond what the objective features of a thing or situation can dictate. The example above showed how there might be certain conditions that would make some human lives more valuable than others. His solution was to make the kind of value human lives have unconditional, but it seems like, as I show above, even on his view we cannot escape the conditionality of this value and likewise many of our other values. It should actually be regarded as a strength of Kant's view that it forces us to acknowledge that most of the things we value may be objectively good but conditionally so.

If, as rational beings, we have the power to set ends, then the ends that we set are good (Korsgaard 1983, p. 195). They are *not* unconditionally good, but neither are almost all of the goods in the world. The rational choices of humans can bring good into the world because these choices are grounded in the unconditional value of the good will. And this seems right. If the good will is present then the act chosen is good. Even Moore considered the love one has for a friend to be much more valuable, and so intrinsically good, if the friend was a good person. The good will is a condition on the value of that love. The Moorean worry that objectivity is not somehow intrinsic enough is related to the fear of relativism in our values. Our concern with shifting the origin of value is a concern with the subject-relativity that then seems to get built into our value judgments. Yet these fears in regard to Kantian value theory are overblown. They are related to the worry that immoral behavior will somehow find justification if it is not

guarded against. On Kant's view, however, it is guarded against, because the good will is the source of all value.

Kantian intrinsic value is not going to solve the problems of normative ethical theory outright, but it holds more promise than any of the more popular views held today. It can show us how things are objectively valuable in a way consistent with our intuitions. It can tell us which actions are morally required in the sense that it tells us we can never act so as to treat a thing that is intrinsically good as if it were a mere means to an end. Kant's value theory can also help us discern the right act when choosing between things like donating to relief efforts and playing a game of chess and not in virtue of their ends or anything else in them. They are valuable because of the deliverances of practical reasoning and the decision of some good will.

Kant's value theory and its conception of intrinsic value, as I have outlined it here, is only able to give us a partial glimpse into which actions are morally required because I have not gone into any detail about the role of practical reasoning (which is beyond the scope of this paper). Kant's ethical theory enables him to give a primary place to practical reasoning in our moral decision-making processes (though I am not advocating a full-blown Kantian normative ethical theory here). The will of a person committed to acting morally is what has intrinsic value and is the source of all value. The details about how the good will discerns moral requirements or how human beings acquire a good will still need to be considered before Kant's value theory can be consistently applied to our normative ethical concerns. But I have fulfilled the purpose of this paper, which was to show that the commonly held conceptions of intrinsic value fail to be significantly useful in addressing normative ethical concerns and that a Kantian theory of intrinsic value holds the most promise for doing work in normative ethics.

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A Phenomenological Understanding of Epistemic Injustice

Andres Garza

I.

In *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, Miranda Fricker takes on the ethical dimension of socially situated epistemological questions with great vigor and care. By synthesizing the subfields of social epistemology and ethics, Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice* proves to be an important contribution in regards to understanding the ethics of our knowledge practices.

In her book, Fricker introduces a new concept, *epistemic injustice*, which occurs when an individual is harmed particularly in her capacity as a knower. She delineates two basic modalities of epistemic injustice, namely *testimonial injustice* and *hermeneutical injustice*. Roughly, a testimonial injustice occurs when an individual is discredited (either implicitly or explicitly) as a source of knowledge just in virtue of certain aspect(s) of her social identity (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality). While a hermeneutical injustice, on the other hand, occurs when an individual is at an unfair disadvantage because lacunae in the "collective interpretive resources" preclude her from making adequate sense of her own social experiences (Fricker 2007, p. 1). Because, ultimately, these two modalities of epistemic injustice result in harm done to both individuals and the collective body of knowledge it is dually important that we understand how these concepts operate not only conceptually, as Fricker has done, but experientially, as I intend to do here.

In this paper, I argue that Fricker's analytic approach poses a limitation to her account of epistemic injustice.[1] Fricker chooses to focus her attention, primarily, on creating and maintaining a system of concepts, and as a result, because her project is so grand

and tells such a seemingly coherent story on paper, she fails to "see the forest for the trees." In Fricker's case, the "trees" are her concepts, which she creates and sustains by way of looking at them one-sidedly (i.e., analytically); while the actual operation of her concepts in our lived social experiences represents the "forest," which I believe she misses. Here, I intend to show another dimension to Fricker's concepts by taking a phenomenological view of them that seeks to elucidate the actual operation of epistemic injustice in our lived social experiences. It is through a phenomenological approach, rather than the fundamentally analytic approach that Fricker takes, that I am ultimately able to obtain a more complete and complex picture of how epistemic injustices operate, not only on paper, but also more importantly, in our lived social experience.

Particularly, I examine what I find to be a troubling distinction Fricker draws between testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Because Fricker spends a considerable amount of time explicating testimonial injustice, while neglecting a proper treatment of hermeneutical injustice, my first priority is to provide a phenomenological account of hermeneutical injustice, which goes beyond Fricker's minimal analytic account. My second priority is to provide a more substantial account of the relationship between the two modalities of epistemic injustice. Since Fricker neglects to fully articulate the relationship between testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, I want to provide a more adequate description of their relationship to one another by utilizing a phenomenological methodology.

As I aimed to flesh out Fricker's analytic concepts using a phenomenological method two problems emerged in her position. The first problem was that contrary to the hard and fast distinction between testimonial and hermeneutical injustice that Fricker makes, my account reveals a much more rich and complex relationship between the two modalities. In fact, I will demonstrate how testimonial and hermeneutical injustice are not so clearly distinguished when looked at phenomenologically. The second problem was that in Fricker's minimal discussion of the relation-

ship between testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, she suggests that hermeneutical injustice "occurs at a prior stage" to testimonial injustice. My account will show that once the two modalities of epistemic injustice are explored phenomenologically Fricker's order of priority is not entirely accurate.

My argument runs as follows. In part II, I provide a foundation for my discussion by explicating five of Fricker's most essential concepts. In part III, I present a particular case of epistemic injustice, involving testimonial exchanges between a black teenager and random pedestrians (of various ages and ethnicities), which will serve as the primary example on which my argument rests. In part IV, I interpret the case as one, which exhibits *prima facie* an instance of testimonial injustice; in part V, I demonstrate that the epistemic injustice experienced in the case of the black teenager is, contrary to the *prima facie* interpretation, actually a hermeneutical injustice. In part VI, I provide what I believe is a Hegelian inspired synthesis of the two interpretations, showing that neither testimonial injustice nor hermeneutical injustice can singularly describe the injustice exhibited in the black teenager case. Finally, I conclude by offering a few words on the potential harm done by epistemic injustices both to individuals and communities. It is here that I make clear how implicit, ubiquitous and destructive epistemic injustices can be to our ethical and epistemic practices.

II.
Testimonial Injustice and Hermeneutical Injustice

The most overarching concepts in Fricker's account are the two modalities of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice.

Fricker maintains that a testimonial injustice occurs when a prejudice on the part of the hearer causes the hearer to "give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word" (Fricker 2007, p. 1). In cases of testimonial injustice a speaker is wronged because

her testimony is not being fairly received due to a prejudice on the part of the hearer. The primary harm done by a testimonial injustice is twofold. First, an individual is *prejudicially* dismissed as a knower and thus denied her rightful place as a contributor to the collective body of knowledge. Second, because an individual is *prejudicially* dismissed as a knower, the knowledge, which could have been exchanged if not for the prejudice, essentially gets disregarded. As a result, the collective body of knowledge is less than it could have otherwise been if not for the prejudicial dismissal of a knower's potential contribution.[2]

Moreover, Fricker conceptualizes testimonial injustice in the following manner: "The basic idea is that a speaker suffers a testimonial injustice just if prejudice on the hearer's part causes him to give the speaker less credibility than he would otherwise have given" (Fricker 2007, p. 4). Fricker claims that the cause of a testimonial injustice is a "prejudice on the hearer's part." However, this account raises an important question. Who or what is the causal agent in a testimonial injustice? In Fricker's formulation, there seems to be an observable degree of indeterminacy in pinpointing the causal agent of a testimonial injustice. Fricker suggests that it is the *prejudice itself* that is the causal agent in a testimonial injustice. This is apparent when she claims, "*prejudice* causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word" (Fricker 2007, p. 1). However, this formulation seems to deflect the ultimate cause of the testimonial injustice onto a mere concept—prejudice. As a result, it serves to exculpate the agent that acts prejudicially. Thus, since prejudice is necessarily dependent upon an individual for its instantiation, I want to reformulate and improve upon Fricker's account of testimonial injustice by clarifying how the causal agent of a testimonial injustice is *the individual* who acts prejudicially and not prejudice in and of itself.

A hermeneutical injustice, on the other hand, can be understood as that which occurs when a lack of relevant concepts, caused by a gap in the collective interpretive resources allows for injustices to occur without their proper identification *as injustices*. An example of a hermeneutical injustice would be if you suffered

sexual harassment in a culture that lacked the knowledge or critical concept of such an injustice (Fricker 2007, p. 1). Fricker claims that when these hermeneutical injustices occur, they put "someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences" (Fricker 2007, p. 1). Thus, the primary harm in a hermeneutical injustice lies in the fact that an individual is not able to make adequate sense of an experience that it is strongly in her interests to render intelligible (Fricker 2007, p. 7). When an individual experiences a hermeneutical injustice she does not possess the necessary concepts required to make complete sense of the injustice she has suffered or to even recognize her experience as an injustice. Therefore, the hermeneutical injustice renders the sufferer unable to adequately communicate her particular injustice to others or to find redress for the injustice. Conversely, an individual could commit a hermeneutical injustice without knowing that his actions constitute an injustice, thus leaving one to wonder whether the violator would have acted otherwise had he known that his actions would be unjust. In either case, a hermeneutical injustice stems from a lack of critical concepts, which serves to allow particular injustices to occur without the proper resources to identify them as such.

Fricker's account of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice brings up two important issues. First, according to Fricker's account, testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice are neither synonymous nor intertwined with one another. That is, she makes a hard and fast distinction between the two modalities of epistemic injustice. While this distinction provides a neat and clean way to conceptualize and discuss these particularly epistemic forms of injustice, it fails to adequately capture the complexity and interrelatedness of the concepts. For example, Fricker claims that a testimonial injustice is caused by a "prejudice in the economy of credibility," while a hermeneutical injustice is caused by a "structural prejudice in the economy of collective hermeneutical resources" (Fricker 2007, p. 1). Although this part of Fricker's account may seem true on the face of it, the very notion of an "economy of credibility" implies that some kind of

common structure exists. Thus, it seems that under the surface of a given testimonial injustice rests a dynamic structure, which determines credibility. In this way, the "structural prejudice in the economy of collective hermeneutical resources," which is constitutive of hermeneutical injustice, cannot be very distinct from the underlying structural "prejudice in the economy of credibility" that is constitutive of testimonial injustice. In part V, I will demonstrate the richness and complexity of the relationship between testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice.

The second issue that Fricker's account brings up surrounds Fricker's claim that the two modalities of epistemic injustice have a distinct ordering. Fricker claims that hermeneutical injustice "occurs at a prior stage" to testimonial injustice (Fricker 2007, p. 1). A straightforward interpretation of what Fricker means by this may be something like the following. In a hermeneutical injustice, an individual is wronged because she does not have available to her the concepts to help describe her particular situation as an injustice. The concept(s) that would help to define the particular injustice experienced by the subject do not yet exist in the collective understanding and as a result the injustice never gets defined or recognized as an injustice. Now, a testimonial injustice, on the other hand, requires that the injustice have its concepts firmly in place. So if an individual suffers a testimonial injustice because a hearer has prejudicially discredited her testimony, it then implies that we possess the necessary concepts in order to make sense of her particular injustice. Intuitively, it makes sense to think that there would be conceptual gaps (i.e., the cause of hermeneutical injustice) prior to the concepts that fill these gaps (i.e., the necessary components for testimonial injustice). This is why in Fricker's view a hermeneutical injustice would have to occur prior to any testimonial injustice because if a testimonial injustice occurs, then it implies the relevant concepts exist, meaning that the relevant hermeneutical gap has been filled. While Fricker's ordering of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice seems to make sense on the face of it, in part VIII, I will demonstrate how this particular ordering is problematic.

Credibility Excess and Credibility Deficit

Within testimonial injustice there are, roughly, two ways in which prejudice can get it wrong: *credibility deficit* and *credibility excess*. Fricker explains the two concepts in the following manner: "Either prejudice results in the speaker's receiving more credibility than she otherwise would have—a credibility excess—or it results in her receiving less credibility than she otherwise would have—a credibility deficit" (Fricker 2007, p. 17). In either of these two cases, the hearer assigns the speaker either more credibility than she otherwise warrants or too little credibility when she warrants more.[3] On the whole, whenever there is a face-to-face exchange between a speaker and a hearer there is always some sort of assessment of credibility taking place on the part of the hearer. As hearers, we judge our interlocutors, whether explicitly or implicitly, and so the importance of how we come to assign credibility during our testimonial exchanges cannot be understated.

Another important thing to note about credibility excess and deficit is that, for Fricker, while a credibility deficit generally constitutes a testimonial injustice, credibility excess generally does not. The reason for this is because Fricker wants to demarcate testimonial injustice in such a way that it is able to capture what is distinctly epistemic and unjust in a token testimonial exchange. When a speaker receives a credibility deficit she is being prejudicially discredited as a knower. Therefore, a credibility deficit constitutes a testimonial injustice because when a hearer prejudicially affords a speaker a deficit in credibility, the speaker is, essentially, undermined as a provider of knowledge. That is, the speaker is wronged because she is not being given proper respect as a knower. In the case of credibility excess, one is prejudicially over-credited as a speaker. Thus, credibility excess in no way undermines, insults, or otherwise withholds a "proper respect for the speaker qua subject of knowledge," as is the case with credibility deficit (Fricker 2007, p. 20).[4] Fricker believes that credibility excess merely gives the speaker too much respect than she otherwise warrants and, generally speaking, this is a good thing for

the speaker.[5] Fricker points out that in "localized contexts excess could bring disadvantage in its wake, and deficit could conceivably bring advantage" (Fricker 2007, p. 18). However, she goes on to claim, "On the whole, excess will tend to be advantageous, and deficit disadvantageous" (Fricker 2007, p. 18).

Objectivization

The last concept I want to discuss, *objectivization*, requires that we first look at the notions of *a knower* and *knowledge*. When dealing with almost any epistemological question, one has to recognize an important distinction between a knower and knowledge. An individual knower can be said to possess knowledge, but the knower is not knowledge itself. Incidentally, the aforementioned distinction between a knower and knowledge represents a 'divide' or 'gap,' which, according to Fricker, is bridged by a process of objectivization. She explains:

> The thesis is that there is a quite general tendency among concepts such that, however subjective their original core content, they become 'objectivized', in that they take on layers of content that conceal and override their original dependence on subjective powers of recognition (Fricker 2007, p. 143).

In other words, however subjective the original core content is, there is a propensity for this content to become independent of the original subject's needs and, in some sense, become objective. As such, there is a pressure for the knower to become objective.

Fricker points out three practical pressures, which force objectivity upon the knower. The first is that you may not need an informant at this exact moment, but may instead need to store up awareness of whom to go to for information. The second is that you may often be in a position of needing others to recommend informants to you. And lastly, you may not want to get a hold of information itself, but only care that someone else in the community has it. For all these reasons, there is a profound pressure for knowers to become objectivized. The notion of objectivization

is important because when a knower is prejudicially dismissed through epistemic injustice she is, in effect, denied participation in the practice of knowledge. As Fricker points out: "When someone is excluded from the relations of epistemic trust that are at work in a co-operative practice of pooling information, they are wrongfully excluded from participation in the practice that defines the core of the very concept of knowledge" (Fricker 2007, p. 145). When someone is dismissed as knower, she is essentially denied access to the community of knowledge, which defines what knowledge is itself. Moreover, it seems that if an individual is wrongfully excluded from participation in the practice of knowledge, then not only does the individual suffer an epistemic injustice, but the body of knowledge is also less than it might have otherwise been. Therefore, with the exclusion of some members from participation in the practice of knowledge, the body of knowledge is not only less than it could be, but it may eventually wind up lacking the critical concepts necessary to define and potentially prevent more structural injustices. With this in mind, I would like to turn to an actual case of epistemic injustice.

III.

While testimonial injustices are capable of being observed and pointed to in the present, hermeneutical injustices are more visible in hindsight. In the present, we can look at a case where the police prejudicially dismiss a black man's word who says that he did not commit a crime and discuss this case in terms of how it may constitute a testimonial injustice. We might say, for instance, that the black man suffered a testimonial injustice owing to the credibility deficit he received from the racist officer. However, when it comes to hermeneutical injustice, we have a hard time pointing to something in the present because we don't know what to point to. In fact, it is the very nature of hermeneutical injustices to arise out of lacunae in our collective understanding (i.e., to arise out of the absence of concepts or what is ultimately unknown) at the time that they occur; thus, if there is no lacuna in our understanding, there

is, essentially, no hermeneutical injustice. Now, without an understanding of the relevant concepts in place, it would seem hard to discuss how exactly a particular act or exchange could constitute a hermeneutical injustice; this is why hermeneutical injustices are so difficult to pinpoint at the time they occur. Moreover, if we did have the relevant concepts in place and we were able to point to them in order to describe a particular experience, then experience would no longer constitute a hermeneutical injustice by Fricker's definition. One of the reasons I believe Fricker chooses past events in order to help explicate hermeneutical injustice (i.e., a 1974 case involving sexual harassment prior to the advent of the concept) is because present day hermeneutical injustices are, basically, unrecognizable. However, what if the relevant concepts were in place, yet not available or accessible to those who require them? What good are collectively understood concepts to affected parties, if they are, essentially, unavailable or inaccessible to them? In order to address the aforementioned questions I want to look at a particular example taken from a recent television program produced by ABC News entitled "Primetime: What Would You Do?" On this program, the producers set up hidden cameras in order to capture people's natural reactions to supposed 'everyday' situations, which typically require some sort of ethical consideration on the part of the unknowing subjects. The point of the hidden camera experiment was to test for racialized perception.

The particular episode that is relevant to our discussion here features two different scenarios. In the first scenario, a white teenager (played by a male actor) is placed in the middle of a park in broad daylight; he is there attempting to steal a bicycle that is chained to a post. With the cameras rolling, the white teenager attempts to cut off the chain, which is locking the bicycle to the post. As this is happening, pedestrians continually pass by the teenager, allowing him to continue, without much disturbance. Occasionally, he is asked questions about what he is doing, but no one stops him from stealing the bicycle. On the few occasions when people stopped and confronted him, asking him questions such as "What are you doing?" he was told by the producers to

respond with vague answers such as “I’m trying to cut this bike out” or with questions of his own like, “Do you know whose bike this is?” Most of the people who saw him stealing the bicycle as they passed by him did not stop and the few who did stop to inquire what he was up to did not feel he was doing anything that warranted any action on their part. In fact, in over an hour’s time more than one hundred people passed by the White teenager, and only one person actually tried to stop him from stealing the bicycle by interrogating him.

In the second scenario, they replaced the white teenager with a black teenager (also played by a male actor). The producers sought to keep all things the same in the two scenarios except for the race of the teenagers. That is, the age, size and dress of both teenagers was the same, as was the location and time of day. The producers wanted to determine whether the pedestrians would react differently given that now the teenager, who appeared to be stealing the bicycle, was black. Almost immediately upon arriving on the scene and beginning to work on getting the bicycle free, the black teenager was approached by a pedestrian who began questioning him. After a few minutes passed, more pedestrians came and stopped him from going any further. In fact, the cameras showed that nearly all of the pedestrians who caught sight of the black teenager stealing the bicycle were compelled to either question him themselves or call the police from their cell phones. Eventually, an angry mob of people formed around the black teenager, preventing him from taking the bicycle; even more, many of the pedestrians were yelling at the black teenager vehemently, attempting to scold and reprimand him for his apparent actions. Needless to say, the pedestrian’s reactions to the black teenager were quite different from their reactions to the white teenager.

Although the black teenager provided the pedestrians with exactly the same responses as the white teenager, the way in which these similar responses were received was quite different. Even more, many of the pedestrians forewent any interrogation altogether, and instead opted to phone 911 upon merely seeing the black teenager in action. This indicates that when the white

teenager spoke, his words merely reified for the pedestrians a belief in his innocence, whereas when the black teenager spoke, his words affirmed their belief in his guilt. While neither teenager denied that he was stealing a bicycle, the pedestrians, in general, perceived the teenagers very differently, making their own assumptions about each of them. Thus, this scenario depicts a situation in which a white and a black teenager were given very different levels of credibility.

It should be noted that those pedestrians who were most aggravated and disturbed by the Black teenager, when interviewed afterwards, told the producers of the program that they believed what they were doing was the right thing by stopping a potential thief. More importantly, the pedestrians all claimed that racial bias had absolutely nothing to do with their reactions. That is, they attributed their reaction to the black teenager stealing the bicycle to their own ethical strength. The pedestrians in the park that day all seemed to feel as if they were merely doing their moral duty and that they would have stopped any thief. However, the numbers don't quite tell the same story; hundreds of pedestrians passed right by the White teenager, while not one pedestrian allowed the black teenager to go unquestioned.

IV.

Now, I'd like to consider this case in terms of Fricker's account, particularly, exploring how, *prima facie*, this case seems to fall under the category of a testimonial injustice. It is reasonable to conclude that the black teenager is at a disadvantage in terms of how his words and actions are heard and perceived. The white teenager, on the other hand, does not have the same disadvantage. In fact, the white teenager actually enjoys an advantage. Now because both teenagers were engaged in the same activity, at the same location, wearing the same clothing and even provided their interlocutors with, generally, the same vague responses, it seems clear that the pedestrians perceived one thing about the white teenager and another thing about the black teenager. Simply put,

the black teenager was perceived as guilty, while the white teenager was perceived as innocent. Since we seem to have in place concepts like 'prejudice,' 'racism,' and 'implicit bias,' it would seem that the particular injustice for which the black teenager suffers as a moral and epistemic agent should be easily definable and categorized by these existing concepts. Because the black teenager was given a deficit of credibility owing to a prejudice on the part of the pedestrians, Fricker would, in all likelihood, categorize this case as a testimonial injustice.

One may argue that the teenagers were committing crimes (or at least acting as though they were) and that the pedestrians were right to have given the black teenager a deficit of credibility. One may believe that it was the excess of credibility that the pedestrians afforded the white teenager that was wrong and not the deficit that they gave the black teenager. This claim rests on the notion that there is an appropriate amount of credibility to be afforded to the teenagers and that the black teenager happened to receive the appropriate amount. However, if the black teenager received the appropriate amount of credibility, then the white teenager also deserved to receive the same amount of credibility, but this was not the case. Whatever the appropriate amount of credibility should have been in this scenario, it is clear that the pedestrians did not distribute it equally among the teenagers. Thus, if the problem was giving the white teenager too much credibility, then it was on the back of the black teenager who was not given the same privilege. Whatever one believes is the appropriate amount of credibility in this case, it is the disparity of credibility, which is most troubling and what ultimately makes the case an example of a testimonial injustice.

Furthermore, one may contend that this case has little to do with epistemology because the teenagers and pedestrians were not, exactly, involved in an exchange of knowledge. That is, the teenagers never made any claims to knowledge for which their interlocutors could properly judge them. However, I disagree for two reasons. First, Fricker herself notes that testimonial injustice can be "pre-emptive." Thus when potential interlocutors are

ignored or dismissed in situations where their testimony is not even solicited they too experience testimonial injustice. Fricker claims: "Testimonial injustice, then, can silence you by prejudicially pre-empting your word" (Fricker 2007, p. 131). Even if there is no knowledge being exchanged between the teenagers and the pedestrians, the credibility bias that occurs between the two parties still occurs, but at an earlier stage, a *pre-epistemic* stage. Thus, any subsequent exchange, whether it is properly epistemic or not, will in all likelihood be treated with the same biases as we have seen in the pre-epistemic stage. Whether one views the exchange between the teenagers and pedestrians as purely epistemic or not, it is epistemic in the sense that it preempts future epistemic exchanges.

The categorization of the case as a testimonial injustice seems accurate because the case is ill-suited to be categorized as a hermeneutical injustice since the relevant concepts are in place to help define the particular injustice that the Black teenager suffers. Simply put, there is no hermeneutical lacuna. Since a hermeneutical injustice requires that the relevant concepts do not yet exist (i.e., there is an interpretive lacuna), this case does not seem to qualify as a hermeneutical injustice. Thus, *prima facie*, it seems that what the black teenager experienced in the example was, in fact, a testimonial injustice. In fact, it hardly seems controversial. Nevertheless, what I want to address next is the notion that, contrary to this *prima facie* categorization of the case as a testimonial injustice, the case may be more appropriately categorized as a hermeneutical injustice.

V.

It is clear that the varying levels of credibility that each teenager received resulted from bias or prejudice (however implicit) on the part of the pedestrians. Since, at this time, we possess concepts like 'prejudice,' 'racism,' 'bias,' and the like, it would seem that we could simply describe the actions of pedestrians with one of those concepts and be done with it. That is, we could simply say, as I did

above in the *prima facie* interpretation of the case, that the black teenager suffered a testimonial injustice as a result of an implicit bias on the part of the hearer (or observer). However, it is clear from the pedestrians' reactions to accusations of racism and prejudice that many people would be averse to describing the circumstances with these concepts. As we recall, none of those pedestrians who were most disturbed by the black teenager's actions, when interviewed afterwards, believed that they were being racist, prejudiced or biased in any way. While the pedestrians were not exercising their prejudices in blatant or shameless ways, they were clearly exercising their prejudices, albeit passively. Thus, the pedestrians, in this case, did not need to commit more obvious or demonstrative acts of prejudice (e.g., shouting racial epithets) in order to exercise their prejudices. Likewise, testimonial injustices, which are carried out through credibility deficit can, and often are, very implicit; in fact, it is the implicit nature of these types of testimonial injustices, as we will see, which allow them to be continually practiced without our having proper knowledge of them.

Concepts such as 'racism,' 'prejudice,' and 'bias' carry such strong connotations these days that it makes it very difficult for their more passive forms to be characterized in such a strong way. That is, these concepts, for many people, tend to suggest more explicit acts, and so the more non-explicit and structural forms of these concepts wind up, essentially, indefinable by the existent concepts. For the most part, we all tend to recognize blatant and explicit acts of racism. At this moment in time, no clear-minded person would deny that the enslavement of African-Americans was a gross injustice. However, many acts of racism, prejudice and bias are not carried out so aggressively and overtly as the enslavement of African-Americans. In fact, a great deal of racism, prejudice and bias operates structurally and is thus implicit and understated. The inability to use these heavier sounding and more loaded concepts to describe the cases of implicit and structural bias is problematic because we are, essentially, left with no concepts for which to describe many situations.

Because the relevant concepts that would help to define the

black teenager's particular suffering are, essentially, unavailable to the pedestrians, and ultimately the black teenager appears to suffer a hermeneutical injustice.[6] Since the Black teenager has no way to define his particular suffering that is acceptable to the pedestrians, essentially, he has no recourse.[7] One might argue that since notions like implicit bias, microinequities or institutional racism exist, it cannot be said that this case shows an act of hermeneutical injustice because the concepts are firmly in place. But, then we must ask ourselves, 'Does the Black teenager have access to these concepts?' If these concepts merely exist on paper and are not available for use by those who require them, it seems that the concepts are not entirely fulfilling their role. Although these concepts may be discussed in academic circles, it remains unclear whether or not these concepts are readily accessible to the large majority of people who could potentially use them. The concepts which the Black teenager needs in order for him to make sense of his situation must not only exist, but they must also be accessible to him, as well as to the pedestrians who must recognize their actions as an injustice. It seems that, had this been an actual happening and not merely a television program, the black teenager would have been without the ability to use the relevant concepts in order to describe his experience and thus without any recourse.

VI.

What I want to now suggest is that the case of the black teenager and the pedestrians is neither strictly a testimonial injustice nor a hermeneutical injustice; rather, the injustice suffered is really a combination of the two. It is certain that, on paper, the relevant concepts that help to define or explain the particular injustice experienced exist; however, for those that require the concepts for their own use, they are, essentially, inaccessible. Because the black teenager cannot use the concepts that help define his situation, it appears he suffers an epistemic injustice owing to a gap in the collective hermeneutical resources. In this case, I want to

say that the black teenager has suffered a hermeneutical injustice. However, because, strictly speaking, the black teenager was afforded a credibility deficit owing to a prejudice on the part of the pedestrians, he can also be said to have experienced a testimonial injustice. To be clear, the testimonial injustice is that the black teenager is given a credibility deficit due to a prejudice in the form of implicit bias on the part of the pedestrians (i.e., the hearers). The hermeneutical injustice comes from the fact that the pedestrians all excuse themselves by claiming that they were merely doing their civil duties and there was no racism involved (i.e., there is *no explicit racism*, therefore there is *no racism*); if the black teenager does not have access to the very concepts of implicit racism, he cannot use them to help identify his particular suffering. In short, from an analytic standpoint, the example shows a case of testimonial injustice, while from a phenomenological perspective, the example illustrates a hermeneutical injustice. Thus, by examining epistemic injustice phenomenologically, we have been able to gain some added insight into how its two modalities operate together in our lived experience.

VII.

Now I want to take this phenomenological approach and broaden our view by looking at how individuals and communities are affected by epistemic injustices in the form of systematic or implicit bias. I will do this as a way of illustrating the greater extent of the harm in testimonial and hermeneutical injustice.

It is clear that the credibility deficit and excess, which the black and white teenagers received, respectively, can be seen as a lived experience for each of them (i.e., it is part of their day-to-day lives). That is, we can probably imagine many other situations where both teenagers would receive the same disparate levels of credibility from others based merely on their race. It is, therefore, unlikely that the disparity of credibility afforded in the case would be unique to this one particular day in which the experiment took place. Thus, we should not consider this case to be merely a

one-off phenomenon. Instead we should look at it as a snapshot into the lives of each teenager. It is clear from the fact that from over two hundred pedestrians who passed by the teenagers on that day, most of the pedestrians tended to believe that the white teenager was innocent and that the black teenager was guilty. Thus, the lack of credibility that the black teenager has to deal with, on a day-to-day basis, is certain to shape his development; just as the excess of credibility that the white teenager is afforded is sure to shape his.

So what does it mean to have a development shaped and informed by the lack of credibility one receives as a moral and epistemic agent? Those who develop in the context of an ongoing credibility deficit develop in a world that constantly undermines them as knowers. The individual who develops in this context is not only developing as someone who is undermined, but she is developing as a person who is, ultimately, dismissed and rendered unnecessary with regard to her potential contributions to the collective body of knowledge; thus, we might say she is epistemically marginalized.

What, then, are the characteristics of someone who develops as epistemically marginalized? If our lived experience is based on our knowledge and rational understanding of the world in which we continually inhabit and function, then one who is constantly undermined as a giver of knowledge may have a lived experience that is marked by prolonged self-doubt and a deeply embedded lack of intellectual confidence. This is because it is nearly impossible for one to develop the capacity to either contribute positively to the collective body of knowledge, or to obtain the confidence in one's ability to contribute, if one is regularly undermined in her capacity to contribute. Fricker admits, "Persistent testimonial injustice can indeed inhibit the very formation of self" (Fricker 2007, p. 55). Thus, when prejudice in the form of credibility deficit operates against the speaker in this way it can have a self-fulfilling power. Whereas an individual raised in the context of ongoing credibility excess may develop an "epistemic certainty" or "epistemic arrogance," an individual raised in the context of

an ongoing credibility deficit would, by contrast, develop something like an epistemic insecurity, uncertainty, doubt, confusion or frustration.

VIII.

Thus far, I have explored how living in the context of ongoing credibility deficit can shape who one becomes, particularly as a knower. Now, I would like to move beyond our talk of one black teenager and broaden our view to consider how living in the context of ongoing credibility deficit can shape particular communities rendering them epistemically marginalized.

The credibility disparity exhibited in the teenager and pedestrian case was not unique. If the experiment were done again using different actors of the same races (i.e., one black and one white teenager) the experiment would likely yield the same results. Thus, the experiment provides us with an empirical account of a general tendency people have in assigning different levels of credibility to individuals based on race. Further, the experiment represents an even larger problem, namely the inconsistent assignment of credibility based on arbitrary factors (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality). That is to say, it does not seem unreasonable to imagine how other marginalized communities face similar prejudices in regards to their epistemic credibility (e.g., minorities, women, gays, the poor).[8]

Even more, when communities of individuals have to live and develop in the face of ongoing credibility deficit, these communities begin to take on the same characteristics that we saw the individual take on (i.e., lack of intellectual confidence, insecurity, doubt, confusion, frustration). This is the most troubling aspect of it all. When we begin to see testimonial injustice as not merely something that occurs on an individual case-by-case basis, as Fricker suggests, but as something that occurs systemically, we are then able to see the full extent of the harm done by these single acts of testimonial injustice.

By examining the structural ways in which testimonial injus-

tices operate, we can see how harmful they truly are. In order to see the structural nature of testimonial injustice we need to take a macroscopic view of these injustices by taking note of their interrelatedness, as opposed to merely viewing them as disconnected one-off cases.[9] When groups are harmed in this particularly structural way in which I have characterized testimonial injustice, it seems in many regards to resemble the harm brought about by hermeneutical injustice. As we recall, one of the ways Fricker defines hermeneutical injustice is as "[…] having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to a structural identity prejudice in the collective hermeneutical resource" (Fricker 2007, p. 155). Now, if we view testimonial injustices, such as those stemming from structural credibility deficit (i.e., the kind exhibited in our case) as something that is "obscured from collective understanding, " then it is easy to see how both hermeneutical injustice and testimonial injustice can be quite similar to one another in that both modalities can operate structurally and in obscurity.

Furthermore, if a structural testimonial injustice denies an individual participation in the practice of knowledge through the credibility deficit she receives, then not only does the individual suffer, but also the body of knowledge is less than it might have otherwise been. As I noted earlier, when potential knowers are wrongfully excluded from the very practice of knowledge, the body of knowledge suffers and as a result, it may wind up lacking the critical concepts necessary to fill hermeneutical gaps. Thus, testimonial injustices, particularly the structural kinds I have described, are capable of making it so that hermeneutical gaps go unfilled because the knowledge, which could have potentially filled these hermeneutical gaps, essentially, gets disregarded in the acts of testimonial injustice. In this case, testimonial injustices are not only preceding hermeneutical injustices, but are contributing to their very existence.

IX.

I began by offering my interpretation of Fricker's key concepts in order to provide the relevant background for understanding my argument. Next, I presented a case of epistemic injustice in which a black teenager was given a deficit of credibility in comparison to a white teenager. After presenting the case, I began by discussing how Fricker might characterize the epistemic injustice that the black teenager suffered, as a testimonial injustice; this I called the a priori testimonial injustice categorization of the incident. After this, I argued that upon looking at the case phenomenologically, the epistemic injustice suffered might be more appropriately categorized as a hermeneutical injustice; this I called the *phenomenological* hermeneutical injustice categorization of the incident. After considering both the *a priori* and the *phenomenological* interpretations of the incident, I suggested that a combination of the two interpretations is the most comprehensive way to understand the incident. Finally, I discussed how credibility deficit shapes the lives of both individuals and communities who are prone to epistemic prejudice in the form of systemic credibility deficit. A byproduct of looking at systemic credibility deficit was that Fricker's distinction between the two modalities of epistemic injustice was flattened, and further, her view that hermeneutical injustice necessarily precedes testimonial injustice was shown to be doubtful, thus reaffirming my belief that a proper analysis of testimonial injustice must not only be done analytically, but phenomenologically. In this way, I have sought to add a phenomenological dimension to Fricker's concepts for the purpose of articulating a more accurate and comprehensive account of epistemic injustice. It has been my objective to provide a new way to look at the harm in epistemic injustice, particularly in regards to the inaccessibility of concepts and systemic credibility prejudice, both of which are key to ending epistemic injustices of both the explicit and implicit sort. Thus, I am hopeful that my work here can inspire more discussion in the area of epistemic injustice so that we may together progress towards a more just knowledge practice.

Notes

1. The "analytic approach" I am referring to here, which Fricker employs, operates under the assumption that the most complete way to make sense of our experiences is to abstract them conceptually. While her account does not entirely neglect experiences and the social situatedness of knowledge, it does tend to isolate and abstract concepts from these experiences in order to tell a more coherent story.
2. These two harms are merely two dimensions of the harm done by a testimonial injustice and are hardly inseparable. However, for the sake of clarity and understanding, we can generally regard the first harm as more ethical and the second harm as more epistemological.
3. Credibility excess and credibility deficit cannot be solely located in either the hearer or the speaker. In fact, it should be understood as a relation between the speaker and hearer, which in many important ways has more to do with the hearer than with the speaker.
4. Although, Fricker wants to describe credibility excess as, generally, being harmless, I disagree. If we think about knowledge in the social sense that I am presenting here, it seems that if one person receives credibility excess for epistemically arbitrary reasons, then another person receives credibility deficit for equally epistemically arbitrary reasons. Thus, looking at credibility excess and credibility deficit in such an isolated fashion hinders one's ability to see how credibility excess is capable of harming those on whose backs the credibility excess was afforded.
5. One may argue that an individual who receives an excess of credibility actually suffers an epistemic injustice because they are being falsely "pumped up" in regards to their epistemic abilities. Fricker herself admits that they may develop into fools who are "close-minded, dogmatic, blithely impervious to criticism, and so on" (Fricker 2007, p. 20). However, Fricker maintains that while this epistemically pumped up individual may be epistemically wronged in some ways, the damage is more cumulative and not the result of an isolated token case, which she wants to focus her concept of testimonial injustice on. Thus, Fricker believes that in the case of the epistemically pumped up individual it "does not show that any token cases of credibility excess constitute a testimonial injustice" (Fricker 2007, p. 20). In my own view, attempting to explicate credibility excess by isolating token instances from their situatedness in our overall knowledge practices, ultimately, neglects the reality of our lived experiences and the reality of the way knowledge is actually practiced. It is this general tendency in Fricker's account to abstract concepts from our lived experiences that I am ultimately at odds with.
6. One may argue that the concepts are available to the pedestrians, but that they are just unwilling to use them. If we consider the vehement responses of the pedestrians after the incident, it is clear that they do not have access to the concepts, in the sense that their dogmatic denial of their own prejudices

and their insistence on their own ethical strength both stand as a barrier to understanding their own implicit and possibly deep seated biases. Even if it is conceded that the pedestrians have access to the relevant concepts, it does not mean that the Black teenager has any access to these concepts. And it is the Black teenager whose interests, ultimately, are most at stake in this case. Because the pedestrians have a power over the Black teenager (i.e., they can call the cops and turn him in), it is most important that the Black teenager have access to the relevant concepts not only directly through his own knowledge of them, but perhaps more importantly, indirectly, through the pedestrians knowledge and acceptance of them.

7. The reporter who interviewed the pedestrians after the hidden cameras were exposed attempted to help the pedestrians make sense of the inequality by suggesting that they may have unknowingly perceived the teenagers a particular way because of their race. However, all of the pedestrians outright refused this interpretation and were in many cases bothered by the mere suggestion of racial bias. Thus, what I am suggesting is that even the reporter, who would be considered a third party, is unable to use the concepts, which seem to accurately describe the case.

8. We must also acknowledge the diversity of individuals within communities or groups. That is, by doing an intersectional analysis of epistemic credibility, we would begin with the understanding that all members of a given group are not necessarily identical and that an individual can belong to several distinct groups. Thus, by taking into account how individuals have overlapping memberships (e.g., Black, woman, heterosexual, poor, etc.), we can more thoroughly understand the various discriminations and privileges an individual can receive in regards to her epistemic credibility.

9. The notion of taking a "macroscopic view" is derived from Marilyn Frye's "Oppression," where she argues that in order to understand oppression one needs to take a step back and view the elements of oppression "macroscopically" because otherwise "one can study the elements of an oppressive structure with great care and some good will without seeing the structure as a whole" (Frye 1983, pp. 1–16). Thus, in the case of testimonial injustice, the same approach should be employed. In order to see how testimonial injustice operates in its entirety one must not merely isolate or abstract one-off cases, but instead look at how testimonial injustices operate in relation to one another.

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Coercion and Oppression in the Social Institution of Motherhood[1]

Sasha Gallardo-Fleenor

I. Introduction to the Exposure

"I want to have children." This declaration resonates with the desires of most women in Western society. Giving birth to and caring for a child is arguably considered to be the apex of all distinctly female possibilities. Indeed, women are fundamentally differentiated from the opposite sex in their biological capability and are often considered to be naturally predisposed to fulfilling a nurturing role. Moreover, mothers often feel an overwhelming sense of femaleness and personal satisfaction in the childbearing and child raising process. Motherhood comes to be an element of definition; women find an identity and a sense of purpose through being mothers. The amount of both personal and social value attributed to motherhood, therefore, should come as no surprise.

Contrary to what many people hold, the social institution of motherhood has nothing to do with a higher level of personal enrichment, but is rather another tool to keep women inferior to and oppressed by men by restricting female autonomy. Women find it *imperative* to fill the role of mothers to be truly female, complete, and useful. This initially implies that a non-mother status is lacking in some area and that these women are not whole or fulfilled without children. The idea that women are not whole people to begin with is not only an instance of patriarchal beliefs, but that they are incapable of fulfillment without motherhood means that women are confined to a specific set of opportunities. Moreover, that women believe motherhood is the ultimate aspiration means they consent to and embrace this restrictive being, i.e., the goals of women are decided for them before they have had a chance to objectively contemplate them themselves.

In the work that follows, I will venture to explain that motherhood is not a choice for many women but an example that demonstrates Sandra Bartky's notion of psychological oppression. Drawing from personal examples and broader social examples, I hope to show that women are inculcated with the public definition of their roles; they assimilate these beliefs as their own, as norms, and as ideals; and they, with men, perpetuate this system through others and their children. Moreover, the notion of alienated labor as applied to motherhood by Simone de Beauvoir and Adrienne Rich will supplement these ideas by explaining the discrepancy between fulfillment and motherhood, particularly where motherhood is taught to be the crown of female life. Certainly gendered expectations are changing and the tacit belief in motherhood as an innate female quality—indeed, a destiny—is coming under increased scrutiny, but the masses of women are still afflicted with a picture of an ideal life as necessitating a role as mother. The nature and quality of life for females should be independent from procreation, motherhood, and the corresponding oppressive ideology we have adopted and exercised– and my concluding hope is that the provided arguments will expose the exigency for such a project.

II. Psychological Oppression and the Expectation of Motherhood

"Motherhood is oppressive?" This was the most recurring response I encountered, accompanied with a confused and sometimes scornful look, after informing those individuals of my intentions for this project. I would not doubt that others, my readers included, will come to the same question. We are too often unable to first acknowledge and then understand that something like motherhood can be analyzed *as an institution* that perpetuates as much qualitative oppression as more familiar forms of injustices like racism and sexism. The amount of positive reinforcement given to it-- from baby dolls to baby showers-- functions to obscure and destabilize opposition in seeing it as something other than

celebratory or mystical. My first task here, then, utilizes Sandra Bartky's notion of psychological oppression to elucidate the depth that the supposed glory of motherhood has actually infected the consciousness of both women and men.

While psychological oppression differs from other more prominent types of material oppression, its perceived legitimacy and impervious detection make it much more threatening and elusive than the rest. Although it shares the same structure, i.e., an oppressed group and an oppressor, the line separating the two blurs greatly because of the manner and form in which oppression is distinctly reinforced and perpetuated. Psychological oppression develops when the oppressed internalize the limitations placed on them as being inherently natural and even self-instigated; oppressive standards are not simply "out there" in the world, but become unconsciously adopted as one's *own* beliefs about her potential and the potential of others in the same group[2], subtly choking the possibility of free and authentic being. Bartky alludes to this when she states: "More often than not, we live out this struggle [of psychic burdens], which is really a struggle against oppression, in a mystified way: What we are enduring we believe to be entirely intrapsychic in character, the result of immaturity, maladjustment, or even neurosis" (Bartky 1990, p. 25). Rather than understanding such limitations as social fabrications, these members come to accept and hence consent to their predetermined character and abilities. The collective acceptance and enforcement of such restrictions by those in this group further catalyzes and fortifies the assumed truth of these rules. This is not limited to only those in an oppressed group, though; those belonging to the group of oppressors blindly hold similar beliefs, serving to strengthen their universality and the group's grasp of power. As necessary consequences, then, the social norm comes to include (1) the general acceptance of oppressive restrictions as natural and uncontroversial; (2) the inferiority and deficiency of members of the oppressed group; (3) the further maintenance of unquestioned privilege and dominance of the oppressor; and, above all, (4) the transparency resulting from mass public subscription.

Stereotyping and Public Offense of Childfree Women

Among the forms of psychological oppression Bartky identifies, stereotypes have substantial domination over cultural definitions and expectations of gender, race, and class, to name a few. The prevalence of stereotypes needs no introduction, but the use of stereotypes to reduce female autonomy requires perhaps more exposition apropos the argued topic. More often than is realized, female stereotypes shape the ways in which we function, and it is precisely this negligence that allows women to internalize certain stereotypes. Let us consider the idea that women are naturally fit to be mothers, not simply because their bodies are built for procreation, but also because of their exclusive propensity to be caretakers.[3] This is motivated by the idea that women are emotionally charged beings, and having that access suggests they have a sensitivity to nurture and can provide more affection for children. Being emotional, though, does not come without consequence; it is almost universally equated with being contentious or irrational—and thus being female. Let men enter the picture; in comparison to women, men are recognized as more objective and neutral-- or, to use their alternate synonyms, level-headed and sensible.[4] Such is the reason why men are complimented as "born leaders," and this unearned title grants them privileged access to authoritative positions and as apt mediators. In contrast, women qua women are not only incapacitated, but are nullified completely from the possibility of unquestioned independence. That women with power are viewed with a certain contempt[5] is not a coincidence: "We cannot be autonomous, as men are thought to be autonomous, without in some sense ceasing to be women" (Bartky 1990, p. 24).

The antithetical nature of female independence can be observed in opposition to the pervasive inevitability of motherhood for women. The arguments presented here against motherhood as a social institution are ones I feel very passionate about, and I have hence made no attempt to hide my decision about opting out of raising a family. Many others, however, have felt this to be a grave and scandalous mistake, bombarding me with questions, concerns, and even vehement objections to coerce me to

the "sensible" side. Let us examine some of the responses I have received to demonstrate the depth of this and my implied treason.

"*Why not?*" It is interesting at the least to consider that women who do become mothers are not asked, "Why?", but are rather showered with praise and gifts of blue or pink. On the other side, we may notice a peculiar absence of questioning: *why do* women want to be mothers? Indeed, it feels like an odd question to ask, and this effect likely stems from the institutional regularity of this rite of passage. But if we press this question further, we find another absence where a solid reason should be. In asking a woman why she wants to pursue having a family, a likely answer will appeal to fate or the emotions in some way, e.g., "I've always known I was meant to be a mom" or "It would make me happy." I am not suggesting that those who feel positively about motherhood see it as a holiday—it is arguably very arduous, stressful, and challenging, with every facet of life being affected. Nor am I asserting that an emotional response is an illegitimate response. The focus on a proclaimed maternal intuition and the amount of giggly fanaticism attached to it impedes any explanation with a rational basis. This does not seem the least bit of a problem to many, though, because we have come to believe that the stereotype of said intuition and its surrounding infatuation *is* the rationality behind motherhood. Rather, these supplied reasons for choosing motherhood do not involve any depth or system of reasoning but just a superficial justification. Moreover, this reinforces the stereotype that women are more emotional than rational, which enervates women in general regardless of the choice regarding motherhood.

The instituted patriarchal ideology that enforces gendered stereotypes—motherhood being only an example—is not intended to be questioned or even recognizable; this is precisely how its power is maintained and why psychological oppression is so rampant. When encountered with an empty rationale, people become confrontational in having to defend something that hitherto needed no justification. In instances where I have pushed my question of "why?" further, an unexpected and unprovoked

amount of insult and retaliation thwarted any of my hopes to explain the assimilation of this shallow support. Although I have argued that fulfillment can indeed be found beyond any inclusion of children, my respondents continually maintain and insinuate that the happiness I would experience is somehow not genuine or mature in comparison.[6] And although more people are arriving at an acceptance of life decisions that oppose their ideal set, the amount of their interrogation of and distress over such reveal the transparent clutch of our oppressive ideology that still undeniably and frustratingly exists.

"You'll probably change your mind." A response like this makes it difficult to control feelings of insult. Clearly, one who chooses to remain childfree has arrived not at certainty, but at an unsophisticated state of mind that disallows "baby fever" to take over and elucidate "what she really wants." The doubt attributed to such a decision reiterates the stereotype expounded above, that women must not only find joy in aspiring to be mothers but that they ultimately *must* find this conclusion. Indeed, motherhood is seen as the pinnacle of femininity, so those who stray from this path must have exercised some unsolicited trains of thought.

This kind of thinking serves not merely to undermine the individual rights and ambitions of these women but to further divide women into antagonists among each other. The result is an irreconcilable disparity between the childfree and the child raising:

> The woman without children may envy or criticize a colleague who has them, imagining that the other woman is either supremely competent or neglectful of her job and family. Both the stay-at-home mom and the childless careerist pity the exhausted employed mother of young children, but they are also threatened by her… Meanwhile, many mothers tend to deprecate nonmothers for being selfish, emotionless, or unwomanly while secretly envying their privacy and freedom (Lisle 1991, p. 50).

Rather than seeing our different pursuits as qualitatively expressing

diversity and a feminine spirit, we see the gaps in our paths as warranting an "us and them" mentality, each of whom believes they possess more fruitful knowledge than the other. The polarity within the group of women is not instigated solely by the issue of motherhood, though; this cyclically is borne out of and permeates opinions of and interactions between classes, races, and especially genders. The relevant significance of this explanation is the consequential lack of community among mothers and the childfree, deterring any opportunity to collectively counter patriarchal obstacles to free and accessible identity. "You'll probably change your mind" further indicates a daunting and deeper social manipulation; in believing that motherhood is *the* ultimate fulfillment, these women fail to recognize their self-imposed restrictions from equally fulfilling roles as real alternate possibilities. Moreover, they confine other women to the same fate by rejecting claims against motherhood, insisting that I and other childfree women simply must be mistaken. This sort of view is ultimately self-oppressive and oppressive of other women through an implicit consent to a destined identity and divided being.

"I think you're just scared." This disturbing response, which came from a male obstetrician, distinguishes the presence of opposition to motherhood as a weakness; because my desires for my life fail to succumb to my maternal desire, my character has a diminished and precocious quality. His statement was made during an appointment with him—my first and last—to discuss the possibility of obtaining an in-office tubal ligation (more commonly known as "getting one's tubes tied"). I may not need to mention, though, that he denied that of me because I was 25 at the time and had no children, which he rationalized by the above response.

At this point, it is interesting to notice the dynamics involved here: gender, stereotypes, power. Perhaps it was not coincidental that a male was in a position to arbitrarily and shamelessly stamp a condescending label and control the destiny that I should rightly choose for myself. Perhaps it was not coincidental that he occupied an authoritative position that I could not subdue. Perhaps it

was not coincidental that he clearly prescribed "what was best for me" based on the requests of other women (i.e., where nearly all of his patients wished to be mothers). At the very least, one should perceive the eeriness of having met and spoken with someone for roughly five minutes before he declares the best solution for your life. More importantly, the deeply internalized structure of women's lives cannot be more evident: men *in addition to* women subscribe to the stereotyped expectation of women to be mothers.

This should not come as a surprise, though; their motivations for doing so differ dramatically from those in females who acquiesce. In keeping women preoccupied with aspirations of motherhood and, once realized, the duties and responsibilities of child care, men are free to pursue larger endeavors—in particular, advancements towards positions or occupations with power or authority. Motherhood acts as a filter to ensure that this remains the same.[7] This indeed explains views that women who prioritize family over work, e.g., decreasing their work schedule to accommodate responsibilities towards family, are "uncommitted" to their job or do not take it seriously. In combination with their lack of emotional stability (as previously exemplified), dedicated mothers are considered simply unfit to supervise or handle a larger pool of job responsibilities. By default, access to more demanding and rewarding careers is given to men (though it is important to note that these are normally reserved for men anyway). I must also point out, though, that this example is only one of many different but equally oppressing reasons for men to believe in the stereotype of motherhood; the amount of benefits they accumulate outweighs any need to decompress the confining structure of motherhood on women.

Women who choose another path than motherhood indubitably experience more controversy and stigma than "normal" women; the stereotypes and accompanying labels amply demonstrate this. Even a seemingly neutral label like "childless" smacks of bias; to say "childless" is interpreted as child*less*, less with its negative connotation that a person or couple with no children is missing something. Hence, I have utilized the alternate

version of "childfree" that more accurately captures the essence of being without children. Still, my use and explanation of this term is confined to only the opportunities presented within my interactions with others. The following section will illustrate that such terms likely have, unfortunately, limited public application because of the vastness of the naturalization and inevitability of motherhood within our culture.

Cultural Domination and the Insistence of Motherhood

In order to establish and preserve a cultural hierarchy, a common ideology must be massively exercised on a consistent basis. The ideology, then, becomes so prevalent that every interaction—as well as its interpretation and involved principles—in the social sphere contains, either directly or indirectly, some glint of it. The repetitious uses of sexist stereotypes to both define the nature of women and maintain male supremacy on a widespread scale intersect to form another type of psychological oppression that Bartky explains: cultural domination. Let us shift from looking at the source of a maternal desire to examining how the idea of it is perpetuated.

The predominantly male character of our culture reinforces notions that women are inferior to men and, as previously mentioned, dependent on them to determine who we are and who we can be. Masculinity is the gauge used as an objective standard, and femininity is the meter that can only move between the lowest point and midpoint; moving above halfway renders those women too "masculine" to be thought of as real women. This complicates how women are to understand ourselves when our current and historical introspections are saturated with male definition. Moreover, the omnipresence of cultural male dominance makes detection all that more challenging: if what we do and the manner in which it is accomplished are within acceptable norms, then there seems no need to fight it. The norm "will (if uncontested) appear to be natural—and because it is natural, unalterable" (Bartky 1990, p. 25). Even though women are lumped into a group of nonentities, we are given consolation in being reassured that, albeit impo-

tent, we are indeed people (Bartky 1990, p. 30). Oddly enough, the same system that strips females of an uncomplicated chance for a complete identity provides a set of options to attain some identity—that is, an identity within predetermined parameters. Only strict movement can occur, but women are led to believe the available choices (1) are indeed voluntary choices (but "choices" only in the most liberal sense) and (2) will more than suffice to exhaust potential. This, of course, relates back to the transparency of a male-dominated culture threaded into the social fabric by that culture. Hence, any definition women create for themselves originates from male standards because of their continual control over everything cultural: "However degraded or distorted an image of ourselves we see reflected in the patriarchal culture, the culture of men is still our culture" (Bartky 1990, p. 25).

Now, surely the cultural pressure on female bodies to produce and raise children does not have the sort of weight it had in previous centuries, and perhaps the persecution I suffer for my choice to be childfree is not representative of others' experiences. However, I contend that there is a pervasive view, which suggests that motherhood is natural and not socially induced. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, published in 1976, was intended to disentangle the mystification of motherhood by integrating personal experiences with historical examples, theories, and assumptions. Author Adrienne Rich believed that the relationship of motherhood to womanliness is not immune from some patriarchal agenda but actually instigated by it. The overwhelming backlash and condemnation, though, obscured Rich's goal: the metaphorical pitchfork-and-torch-wielding mass of beraters denounced the book as mother-and family-hating and Rich as simply confused. *Of Woman Born* was regarded as a "demon text": "Any book that radically questioned motherhood was demonized, regardless of whether the text actually spoke against motherhood… any questioning of the role of motherhood in women's lives was misread as an attack on mothers" (Hallstein 2010, p. 27–28). Such an unapologetic exposition of motherhood as a doctrine that serves the interests of men offended not merely

men, but women and even other feminists during that time, who still believed in their fated role. Motherhood had, prior to this, never been publicly announced as a question. Rich's book arguably introduced a discourse on the study of motherhood as a social institution, but the abundance of cultural dominance on the lives of women hindered any awakening until the next decade.

Even the development and widespread use of reproductive technology suggests a need to raise a family in one way or another. For example, the presence of technologies that thwart pregnancy and future motherhood, e.g., birth control and sterilization, remain cast in a negative—albeit less so than in previous decades. Indeed, I sometimes feel an unanticipated sense of guilt when the time arrives to take another contraceptive pill in public. Although I know I certainly have a right to exercise that decision, the desire to avoid discerning looks or, more accurately, the feeling that I am being judged by passersby, compels me to move stealthily. People often see contraception and fertility control as an excuse for promiscuity, discrediting the presence of other more relevant reasons. This is because use of conception means sex without the lingering possibility of pregnancy, and hence the impossibility of motherhood. Another response I have received to my own life choice is relevant here and clearly demonstrates this offense: in informing a friend about my solicitation for a tubal ligation, he exclaimed, "Why, so you could take home random guys and fuck?!" The unprovoked anger struck me as both hurtful and educational; considering that this came from a *friend* and not a stranger means that our familiarity with each other and his familiarity with my personality had no factor in his implying my immorality. In solidifying my refusal of motherhood, my being would be reduced to only my sexual practices. My recognition as a healthy woman depends on the functioning of my reproductive organs, even if I choose not to use them.

Some assert that technology such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF) liberates women by actualizing a desire that their body was simply incapable of realizing; on the other hand, it can be viewed as a bridge connecting the patriarchal desire for women to be mothers

with the means to do so. It is comparable to *insisting* that women be mothers, even when their bodies do not allow it (Raymond 1993, pp. 29–30). Rather than empowering women, reproductive technologies actually increase men's power by insisting that male rights are essential and of utmost concern in comparison to that of females. The media frenzy known as the baby M case[8] in the late 1980s demonstrates just this: despite being the genetic child of both the surrogate and the intended social father, custody of baby M was awarded to the father. This clearly denies any claim the biological mother has over the product of her effort, risks, and pains in pregnancy and birth. The father's rights were not enforced merely by the terms designated in the surrogacy contract, but by *his* enabling the baby's existence, as suggested by a responding IVF professor: "But for him there would be no child" (as cited in Raymond 1993, p. 34). In other cases, the primacy of male over female rights is much more blatant: "The rights of the father in his unborn children are of constitutional dimensions under the 14th and 9th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution… Those constitutional rights of the father outweigh the constitutional rights of the mother" (as cited in Raymond 1993, p. 63). Reproductive technologies, then, collaborate with stereotypes to confirm (1) the cultural insistence on the maternal desire; (2) the insistence that women fulfill role this despite whatever circumstances; and (3) standardized patriarchy through legal and social validations of the priority of male rights.

At this point, I anticipate a lurking question: even if women are led to *believe* that they can find purpose in motherhood, can't they *actually* find it there anyway? Unfortunately not: the historical duties and expectations of mothers have heavily shaped the character that today's mother has. Women ultimately participate in securing the longevity of the legacy of patriarchy in two ways: women find themselves further alienated from themselves by the demands of motherhood and, ultimately, their children are raised to believe in oppressive social standards simply by being raised within our system.

III. Alienation and the Preservation of Patriarchal Ideology

Despite good intentions and the sometimes overwhelming feelings of joy and achievement, mothers actually become more dissociated from themselves in the patriarchal structure of the family. Rather than finding the salvation they had been promised, mothers find themselves in a gendered division of labor whereby they give up power over their own bodies and procreated children to men so that they not only doom themselves but the next generation of females as well.

Both Simone de Beauvoir and Rich discuss an application of alienation to female plight in both reproduction and motherhood that works beneath psychological oppression. Beauvoir's discussion derives gendered differences, especially the reduction of female being, from a phenomenological analysis of everyday life. She argues that women's inferiority stems from the difference in biology or "flesh." Men have maintained their superiority by extrapolating from this basic difference, and hence the supposed naturalness of patriarchy defines and shapes every experience simply by living life. This is also evident in myths, biblical stories, and their interpretations, to which Beauvoir dedicates half of her heavily referenced book, *The Second Sex*, to examining. Women, being secondary to men, are characterized in ways that equate submission with femininity and power with virility:

> … the privileged position of man comes from the integration of his biologically aggressive role with his social function as leader or master; it is on account of this social function that the physiological differences take on all their significance… on the other hand, woman being only an object, she will be described as *warm* or *frigid*, which is to say that she will never manifest other than passive qualities (Beauvoir 1983, p. 375; emphases hers).

Because the passivity of women is identified with their biological differences from men, they are doomed to live out this fate.

Although I disagree with this assertion of biological determinism, the correlation of female biology with subordination gives rise to the inferiority of pregnancy, and in particular, motherhood and the social alienation associated with it. Because pregnancy and motherhood are distinctly female, both are characterized with the same imperfection women in general are granted, even more so because of their high concentration of femaleness. In order to maintain this system, though, it is necessary to assure women that motherhood is joyous, destined, and even magical, and this results in the institution of psychological oppression, which is implied in Beauvoir's writings: "[Mothers] seek eagerly to sacrifice their liberty of action to the functioning of their flesh: it seems to them that *their existence is tranquilly justified* in the passive fecundity of their bodies" (Beauvoir 1983, p. 495; emphasis mine).

The feeling of justification found in motherhood stems from the implied control or power that no man can claim or intimate.[9] In raising a child, a mother occupies a position of authority that the child relies on: "With her ego surrendered, alienated in her body and in her social dignity, the mother enjoys the comforting illusion of feeling that she is a human being *in herself*, a *value*" (Beauvoir 1983, p. 496; emphases hers). Alas, this is also a false hope. She continues: "[…] she does not really make the baby, it makes itself within her; her flesh engenders flesh only, and she is quite incapable of establishing an existence that will have to establish itself" (Beauvoir 1983, p. 496). Rather than raising "a little version" of herself or a "little man," a mother is separated from the product of her body necessarily, and this deepens with time and socialization. What had once given her a sense of fulfillment leaves her with the emptiness once all too familiar. Women are led to believe the "advertising slogan" (Beauvoir 1982, p. 523) that motherhood gives them fulfillment; instead, the self-alienation and oppression as a woman becomes further manipulated and profound, but this is covered up with positive reinforcement (as previously described).

Alienation as a consequence of motherhood is an idea that also resonates with Rich's work and Marx's concept of alienated labor. Historically, child raising has at its core been a division of

labor, where the mother carries a bulk of the responsibility and the father merely supervises. Although the notion of alienated labor was developed in an economic setting, there are very clear similarities between the relationship of the laborer to the capitalist in Marx's writings and that of mother to the father and children. Briefly, Marx's description of political economy focuses on the class struggle between the laborer (i.e., proletariat) and the capitalist (i.e., bourgeoisie). The laborer's incessant involvement with production and glorification of the product and the resulting detachment from the self creates an objectified, machine-like existence called alienated labor. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, reaps the benefits of the labor by (1) keeping the laborer alienated through continual production, (2) maintaining low wages so the laborer must continue to work, and (3) increasing his own profit and possession of private property, thereby keeping his power intact and unaltered.

Likewise, the family unit is comparable to this structure: "Through control of the mother, the man assures himself of possession of his children; through control of his children he insures the disposition of his patrimony and the safe passage of his soul after death" (Rich 1976, p. 64). In pregnancy and/or childrearing, a large amount of the work rests on women, qualifying them as laborers, while the children, then, become the products of their labor. Men are bourgeois in character; as "owners," they become the beneficiaries of production because children are raised in patriarchy *without* their direct involvement in production. The female body, then, becomes merely a tool in reproduction *and* in reproducing a cycle of patriarchy that alienates women from the products of their labor and even further from themselves:

> Typically, under patriarchy, the mother's life is exchanged for the child; her autonomy as a separate being seems fated to conflict with the infant she will bear. The self-denying, self-annihilative role of the Good Mother (linked implicitly with suffering and with the repression of anger) will spell the 'death' of the woman or girl who once had hopes,

> expectations, fantasies *for herself*—especially when those hopes and fantasies have never been acted on (Rich 1976, p. 166; emphasis hers).

Like Beauvoir, Rich concludes that in motherhood women are estranged from themselves, the products of their labor, and others. Motherhood and mothers become exploited by being another facet of male service: personal service (e.g., caring for children so men have their hands free), sexual service (e.g., bearing children implies some level of sexual intimacy), and ego service (e.g., reassurance of being a responsible father through financial purveyance) (Frye 1983, p. 9).

As previously suggested, mothers also perpetuate the system of patriarchy simply by teaching unquestioned gendered norms and, in cases where mothers attempt to counter this system, the undeniable and overwhelming social influence of these norms. After infancy, children are treated differently depending on gender: girls are given toys resembling babies and kitchenettes, a preparation for the family they will be expected to serve one day, and boys play with action figures and toy vehicles like fire engines and cars, nourishing a mindset with sometimes fanciful dreams and aspirations. At an early age, then, we are already taught the extent of our activity as either female passivity or male activity. Beauvoir also describes the treatment of girls versus boys: "[…] she continues to be cajoled, she is allowed to cling to her mother's skirts, her father takes her on his knee and strokes her hair… The little boy, in contrast, will be denied even coquetry; his efforts at enticement, his play-acting, are irritating" (Beauvoir 1983, p. 270). Instead, boys are encouraged to be independent and girls the opposite. That girls are treated as delicate and needy leads to "the 'underdevelopment' of female consciousness" (Rich 1976, p. 43) in adolescence, which in turn ultimately gives root to psychological oppression and necessary motherhood in adulthood.

Even if children are raised with ideas that both sexes are equal and hence have equally accessible opportunities, they will still encounter patriarchal ideas practiced as commonplace outside

the home. There comes a question, then, how to raise a family with awareness in a society that has contradicting norms. Moreover, mothers may face scorn and doubt in placing children in a position where they fulfill a mother's wish for gender equality. The children become merely extensions of their mothers and not persons who must make decisions for themselves. This is not to suggest that attempts to raise social consciousness in children is valueless and selfish; rather, the process of doing so in a world that says otherwise can be a challenging and delicate endeavor and thus must be taken with caution.

The fact that most parents engage in the actions described above by Beauvoir, as well as others outside the family that demonstrate the acceptable behaviors of boys and girls, means that our oppressive system will persevere to keep males on a pedestal and females as the columns erecting them. The inevitable and overwhelming exposure to cultural norms means that even children whose parents strive for social awareness will have to assimilate such norms to function. Although these may be questioned and shed later on in life, the necessary and repeated integration of these norms in early socialization may jeopardize the recognition of norms as originating from and expressing an oppressive ideology, especially when this development molds the nature of the remaining course of life. The risk of internalizing normalized oppression, as well as repeating the cycle within our culture becomes very high—and so do risks for standards and qualifications of femininity and motherhood. As being essential to the security of patriarchy, psychological oppression, female alienation, and motherhood as alienated labor will all continue to sustain the inferiority of women.

IV. Looking Towards Intervention for a Positive Social Change

We have seen that motherhood as a historically social institution works to undermine female autonomy. The transparency and lure of psychological oppression blinds women into uncon-

sciously adopting and entertaining the stereotype that motherhood is the chosen and most enriching path for them. Moreover, its suffusion has become so constant and automatic that when approached with an alternate branch of thought that opposes its normativity, its proponents lash out with fear of mass exposure. Because being female alone is a kind of diminished existence by virtue of perceived inferiority to being male, women are told that fulfillment is found in motherhood. However, the alienation experienced from the role and duties of mothering leaves them still incomplete. This repeats a cycle of female oppression, and ultimately, the succession of patriarchy. The childfree bring the possibility of female fulfillment to the surface, but to change the system requires not simply work but dedication and consistency. However, resistance to this appears in the form of a question: if it's "worked" for so long, why does it need to be changed? Still, the eradication of psychological oppression and alienation in relation to motherhood seems to be an intimidating task, and so it is much easier to concede to the prescribed norms, and ultimately, accept oppressive standards as another immobile fact of life.

Clearly, then, we are called to redefine our conceptions of motherhood and the rationality behind the reasons we choose for participating in parenthood in general. Initially, we must deconstruct our ideas of parenting to configure what an equal system of responsibility and fulfillment would look like. Women must be freely allowed to consider and explore options outside of motherhood and family without fear of scorn or reprisal. Moreover, women need to view themselves as solely owning the capacity for an identity and sense of purpose regardless of what option they choose. And should they choose motherhood, it would be in the best interest of all women—now and in the future—to teach self-validation and unconditional worth. The process of reforming our cultural ideology into a cohesive and non-exclusionary system is undoubtedly a long and demanding project, but it can start with the next generation of infants:

A woman who has respect and affection for her own

> body, who does not view it as unclean or as a sex-object, will wordlessly transmit to her daughter [and son] that a woman's body is a good and healthy place to live. A woman who feels pride in being female will not visit her self-depreciation upon her female child (Rich 1976, p. 245).

We women certainly have the right over our bodies to procreate or not, but it should be our own unadulterated decision.

Notes

1. I must acknowledge Ann Garry for her extremely helpful comments and suggested readings. I also wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for his/her suggestions for developing some explanations further.

2. While I preferred not to include an example within this explanation, a short example in the form of this note may help further elucidate this idea for the unfamiliar. Let us consider the friendly use of derogatory terms like "bitch" or "slut" within circles of female friends. Because these terms have been used historically to abase women, their use here carries the same defacement and limitations. The playful connotations associated with this usage does not alleviate or erase this, but rather makes their applications acceptable. Embracing this label means that they accept the limitations and expectations associated with it so that it defines their self-identity (e.g., proudly stating, "I guess I'm just a bitch"). Applying this and other labels to female friends also places them within the same restricting context so that their potential has a cap as previously defined by that specific term.

3. It must be admitted that men and grandparents can also act as caretakers of children. However, the degree of acceptance and the social interpretations linked with it demonstrate the pervasive attachment to the tradition of primary female child raising: "[…] these have been regarded as deviant parentings, with nothing like the prestige or social and legal support available to patriarchal mothers, as evidenced in the description of the relevant 'families' in many cases as providing at best 'broken homes'" (Card 1996, p. 12). An environment for child raising with an absent mother, in other words, is seen as damaged and incomplete.

4. This coincides with their dominance of our culture: the views belonging to the ruling class become the objective standard by virtue of their being from the ruling class, as Marx and Engels explained within *The German Ideology*. In other words, the view that women are inferior becomes prevalent because it is a part of male supremacist ideology, where males are indeed in power. However, I must clarify that the discouragement of male displays of emotion (other than anger) does not qualify as oppression, as Marilyn Frye rightly pointed out. It is not merely that some men may feel inconvenienced or

stressed by this standard, but that this standard must act as a barrier that reduces the character of those people. The disapproval of such male displays does not inhibit them but rather reinforces their objectivity: resisting emotional behavior becomes the norm because this belongs to their ideology as a ruling group. As such, the deviant behavior here—being emotional—is characterized as a female quality, where women are also considered deviant.

5. This is clearly demonstrated in affects associated with Hilary Rodham Clinton's recent presidential campaign. She was often labeled a "ball breaker," implying that the arena of political authority was a "man's world" and that her trespassing interfered in that male dominance.
6. It is important to mention that this is an opinion held on a large public level. A Harvard-Yale study done in 1986 intended to conclude that single, childless career women regret not having children, supporting the popular idea that marriage in addition to motherhood are necessary for women's health and well-being. What were not examined or even mentioned, however, were the alternate avenues towards fulfillment, as if to suggest there are no other viable options for women (as cited in Raymond 1993, pp. 71–72).
7. This would help explain the stigma associated with paternity leave. Men are not expected to care directly for children the same way or to the same extent that women are. Rather, their care comes in an indirect form of provider, e.g., financial. Accomplishing this requires that they maintain a continuous work schedule, so they secure their position through the discouragement of leaving work for family.
8. The case involved the custody over an infant conceived through traditional surrogacy, where an egg from the surrogate is used rather than one from an intended social mother.
9. Although mothers have some level of power, it is strictly regulated within the patriarchal system so as to contain its growth and influence on their overall social upward mobility.

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Peirce and Husserl: Logic from Phenomena

Joel Chandler

The contributions of Charles Sanders Peirce and Edmund Husserl to twentieth-century thought can hardly be overestimated. Peirce, best known as the founder of pragmatism and semiotics, is arguably the greatest philosopher America has produced. His influence has been carried through the tradition most notably by the pragmatists William James and John Dewey. Moreover, Peirce's founding ideas in semiotics live on today, informing the field of computer science. Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, is a leading figure of twentieth-century Continental European philosophy. His influence thoroughly permeates Continental European thought, be it directly or indirectly by way of his student Martin Heidegger. For writing this essay I have chosen to explore how it is that the ideas of these great thinkers might be placed into dialogue with each other.

Peirce and Husserl were contemporaries, both practicing philosophy around the turn of the twentieth-century. They were only vaguely aware of each other's work, however, and so, historically speaking, a direct dialogue between their ideas does not exist. Interestingly, however, while Husserl was developing his system of phenomenology, so too was Peirce independently developing his own system of phenomenology, which he came to call phaneroscopy. Another note of interest: each knew just enough of the other's work to allow each to mischaracterize the other as favoring some brand of psychologism, the predominant philosophical view of their day, rooted in British empiricism, and stating that the laws of logic are inductive generalizations. It is true that each subscribed to some form of psychologism early in his career, but it is equally true that each in his maturity would come to vehemently defend some form of anti-psychologism. My

analysis of how the ideas of Peirce and Husserl intersect shall thus begin with phenomenology and end with an account of how each arrives at the (non-psychologistic) laws of deductive logic by way of their respective theories of cognition or meaning determination.

Charles Dougherty (1980) and Frederik Stjernfelt (2007) have each given a convincing account of how Peirce's and Husserl's theories of cognition mirror each other with regard to how each arrive at the laws of deductive logic. Dougherty and Stjernfelt both identify Peirce's method of *precision* in diagrammatical reasoning with Husserl's method of *eidetic variation* in categorial intuition, both being the methods for "the imaginative separation of non-independent parts of any given whole" (Dougherty 1980, p. 322) involved in phenomenologically determining the meanings of general concepts. In this paper I shall set up and then engage this general account given by Dougherty and Stjernfelt.

So, my topic is epistemology. The piece of knowledge in question is that of the phenomenological basis for the non-psychologistic laws of (deductive) logic for which both Peirce and Husserl make a case. To connect the phenomenological bases to the accounts of logical laws, I will need to elucidate the theories of cognition offered by Peirce and Husserl. We will find that, although the phenomenological bases from which Peirce and Husserl depart differ in structure, their theories of cognition nevertheless match with regard to how these theories give a mutual account of deductive logic. My hope is that, by placing the ideas of the two thinkers in dialogue, their ideas will serve to illuminate each other in a satisfying way.

Following these opening remarks, my paper will be divided into four parts. In part 1, I begin with an overview of Peirce and Husserl, their philosophical motivations, and how these motivations affect their methods. In part 2, I outline how Peirce and Husserl each account for the elements of experience as such—that is, the basic elements of their respective phenomenological systems. In part 3, I identify how each philosopher accounts for cognition—that is, the determination of concepts—and I identify

how it is that the relationships between the cognitions identified represent the laws of logic. In part 4, I will offer some concluding remarks by way of reflecting back upon the chain of reasoning connecting logic with phenomenology.[1]

1. Motivations and Methods

Charles Peirce was a practicing scientist, who, like the professional philosopher Edmund Husserl, had a background in logic and mathematics. Both were initially swayed by some variant of psychologism, the predominant view of their day stating that the laws of math and logic are inductive generalizations, and both later fully rejected this view. In some sense this rejection helped to form each of their respective systems of phenomenology.

Husserl developed his phenomenology along Neo-Cartesian lines, seeking for philosophy a presuppositionless foundation. His method involved "bracketing" the natural attitude that assumes one's own causal interaction with a transcendent world. In this regard Husserl's motivations for developing his phenomenological system were primarily epistemological. He recognized that psychologism resulted from the British empiricist brand of epistemology—that is, one in which knowing is a passive process, reductive, and ultimately subjective. In bracketing the natural attitude, Husserl focused on the act of knowing—that is, the intentional act of attending to, or knowing, an intentional object. This relationship of intentionality thus became the hallmark of Husserl's phenomenology; and the intentional objects known by consciousness through its intending acts, for Husserl, are ideal objects that can be evaluated as true or false. Husserl will eventually arrive at the reality of the deductive laws of logic through an analysis of the necessary relationships involved in his ideal species theory of meaning, which I will explain below.

Peirce, as a scientist whose model for knowledge acquisition was that of practical experimentation, resisted all forms of nominalism and favored scholastic realism à la the medieval philosopher Duns Scotus. That is, Peirce adopted a form of Platonic

realism distinguishing between essence (reality) and existence, with essences constituting the possibilities of which existent entities are actual instantiations. This is similar to Husserl's view, except for some fundamental differences. Peirce's realism was very much tied to his scientific perspective, which took the natural attitude that Husserl "bracketed" to be the proper point of philosophical departure. So, whereas Husserl "thematized" the world with his neo-Cartesian theory of the phenomenological reduction, as motivated by epistemological concerns, Peirce, an anti-foundationalist and anti-Cartesian, was not interested in theory so much as reality as measureable by scientific means and logically structured by mathematics. Peirce bases his brand of phenomenology on ontological rather than epistemological categories, and his anti-psychologism broadly involves the deductive relationships between the categories.

In sum, both Peirce and Husserl sought to make philosophy a scientifically rigorous discipline. Both sought to found philosophy on phenomenology. And both maintained that the laws of logic are not dependent upon psychology. I will now outline the basic systems of phenomenology according to Peirce and Husserl.

2. Elements of Phenomenology

I begin with Peirce, who identifies three modes of being upon which his phenomenology is based. These modes he names Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness[2]. The three are, respectively, "the being of positive qualitative possibility, the being of actual fact, and the being of law that will govern facts in the future" (Peirce 1955, p. 75).

Firstness is a quality of feeling, yet is not dependent upon being felt. Firstness, in fact, is that which is not dependent upon anything but itself for its being. Examples of Firstness may be redness, the sound of a whistle, the feeling of joy, the sting of a whip, and so on, yet it is necessary to understand these examples, not as existing in actuality, but as "positive qualitative possibilities"—that is, potential feelings, rather than experiences as such.

Only with the addition of a Second do these possibilities become realized in fact—that is, as actual, concrete events.

A First is not dependent upon anything for its being; a Second, however, is dependent upon a First. Peirce characterizes Secondness as a force of effort or resistance, and we might loosely understand its effect as the fact or act of "bumping up against" reality. A Second constitutes the "brute actions of one subject or substance on another" (Peirce 1934, p. 469). Remember that Peirce distinguishes between essence and existence. The effort or resistant force of a Second is what gives the essence of a quality its existence in fact. It might be thought of as the event of realizing a First. This "struggle" is what allows the essence of a First to exist (together with a Second) in actuality.

Thirdness is the mediating principle between a First and a Second that provides for the representative meaning involved. It is thus dependent upon both a First and a Second. And whereas Firsts are singularly abstract and Seconds are concrete and particular, Thirds are general (universals). That is, they take the form of concepts that can apply across particulars. As such, they possess a law-like character and a character that allows them to "consist" over time. The category of Thirdness, moreover, represents the domain of Peirce's theory of signs. I will address this theory of signs in section 3 when I address Peirce's theory of cognition.

Moving now to Husserl, as mentioned above, phenomenology for him is characterized by the relation of intentionality. That is, Husserl recognizes that whenever we are conscious, we are conscious *of* something. The elements of Husserl's phenomenology thus consist of an intentional act, the intentional object towards which the act is directed, and the content of the intentionality relation. Examples of an intentional act include, for instance, the act of perceiving or the act of believing. These acts present to consciousness an object of perception or belief. Now, with regard to the content of an intentional relation, it includes "what it's like" to posses that episode of consciousness—that is, the qualitative aspect of the conscious episode, which Husserl calls hyletic data. The content of an intentional relation also includes what Husserl

calls essences. These essences are propositional in nature and are intuited as the possibility conditions for the intentional object of that particular episode of consciousness. It is important to note that, in fact, that object may or may not exist. That is, the intentional object could be an object of perception, such as an apple, or it could be a fictional object about which we may possess true or false beliefs, such as Santa Claus. And so, to sum up, Husserl's phenomenological elements include act, content, and object.

I will be dealing with Husserl's notion of essences in greater detail in the next section, but before I continue with that, I want to comment on the relationship between Peirce's and Husserl's phenomenological systems. Although philosophers have given different accounts as to how the two systems might be analogous, there is no clear "mapping" of one onto the other. One analogy we might be tempted to make is that between Peirce's Secondness and Husserl's intentional act. We could try to mix our terms and say that an intentional act meets resistance as conscious activity falls upon its object. But, given Peirce's realism, the resistance of a Second implies that the subject is being impressed upon by an external reality. Husserl, however, in that his phenomenological method involves the "bracketing" of the transcendent ("external") world and any presumption of one's causal interaction therewith, does not require of the intentional act that it be founded upon an impression. Again, in that Husserl's project is motivated by epistemological concerns and that Peirce's phenomenology is more closely associated with ontological categories, the differing approaches to phenomenology will assure that they are not directly analogous. To be sure, there are similarities, and these will become more apparent as I give a further account of the place of cognition in each of their systems.

3. Theories of Cognition

It is in their respective theories of cognition that the ideas of Peirce and Husserl most resemble one another. By theory of cognition I mean, specifically, the way in which the meanings of general

concepts are determined. I will begin by outlining Husserl's theory and then move on to Peirce.

As the method of concept determination in Husserl's phenomenology is analogous to his method of perceptual determination—or, the isolation of an object of perception in the perceptual field—I will begin with a simple account of perception. Consider, for example, an apple hanging on a tree. As a subject visually attends to the apple and walks around it, the subject's consciousness is presented with a continuous series of concrete images of the apple from various perspectives. What determines the apple as a single object for the intending subject is that about the apple that remains the same through the various perspectives from which it is viewed—that is, that about the apple that remains numerically identical over time. Now, to move from perception to cognition, Husserl will say that the conditions which make the perception of the apple as an isolated object possible are those conditions that give to the perception conceptual content. Again, the possibility conditions count as a concept, and Husserl calls the concept an essence. The presentation of this conceptual content to an intending subject, Husserl calls eidetic intuition.

When consciously attended to, to the object (apple) is added conceptual content similar to Gottlob Frege's conception of sense; that is, for the intending consciousness, the object as intended possesses a "mode of presentation." This mode of presentation counts as cognitive content, or conceptual content. It has meaning. Again, this conceptual content, Husserl will call the "essence" of the intentional object.

Now, these essences, for Husserl, possess a certain structure. If the intentional object in question is an object of perception, like our apple for example, the essential structure of that object will consist of a complex of sensual qualities. A red apple will possess shape, color, taste, a particular shade of redness, and so on. Provided the consciousness intending the apple attends to these features, Husserl claims we come to be in possession of the requisite concepts immediately through eidetic intuition. I should mention that the intentional object need not exist for this to work.

We can imagine a unicorn, for example, and thereby possess the concepts associated with that imagined object. The only difference is that, in the case of the apple, we may enjoy a "fulfilled" intention, whereas our intending acts regarding unicorns will remain empty.

With regard to the conceptual structure of intentional objects as enjoyed through eidetic intuition, there is, furthermore, a sort of hierarchy, or logical priority, to the structure. This hierarchy refers to Husserl's species theory of concepts as known through categorial intuition. For example, the apple is both colored and red. It can be colored and not be red, but it cannot be red and not be colored. "Color" is thus a concept of a higher genus than "redness," and the relationship is non-transitive. Again, concepts are known, or "grasped," through eidetic intuition, and the different levels of the intentional object's conceptual structure (the "categoriality" of the intuitions) are determined by the method that Husserl calls eidetic variation. Eidetic variation is the imaginative process by which particular concepts involved in the intentional object's conceptual structure are compared to the whole of the structure irrespective of its other conceptual features. In the same way that, in the example above, an apple may be identified by that about it that makes it numerically identical over time (by way of varying modes of presentation), conceptual parts which are variable will be subsumed under some invariable concept. For example, the apple could be in parts red, yellow, and green. These color concepts vary under the invariant concept "color," thus the concept "color" is identified as one of a higher genus than red, yellow, or green.

Again, we could say that if the apple is red, it is necessarily colored, that if the apple is green it is necessarily colored, and so on. Color, in turn, is a quality of that apple just as is its shape, and these qualities vary under a certain higher-level essence, or concept, called a property, and so on. Thus, within an intentional object we find a system of relations—relations of concepts arranged according to degrees of generality. Another way of looking at it is that in order for an apple to be red, it must first be possible that it is colored. "Coloredness" is a necessary condition

for the possibility of "redness." Hence, there is an inherent inferential structure involved. It is this system of relations that occurs within the conceptual structures giving meaning to intentional objects that constitute, for Husserl, the laws of logic. Further, in that the essences involved are abstract, generic, and publically available, their meanings will not vary relative to different intending subjects. The inferential structure constituting their relations will thus also be abstract and generic. That is, the laws of deductive logic involved will not be dependent upon any particular intending subject, and this is how Husserl avoids psychologism. As I turn to Peirce, keep in mind that the key process in Husserl's theory of cognition is the imaginative method of eidetic variation.

And so I turn now to Peirce to show that within his phenomenological system there exists a comparable method of conceptual meaning determination constituting the laws of deductive logic. So, just as the method of eidetic variation determines conceptual meanings as these meanings are grasped by categorial intuition for Husserl, so does the method of precision (or "precission," as Peirce sometimes spells it) determine conceptual meanings for Peirce in the process of diagrammatical reasoning, where diagrammatical reasoning just is mathematical deduction. Indeed, it is by the method of precision that Peirce is able to distinguish between his ontological categories to begin with.

When we experience the world, according to Peirce, we do not experience Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness as distinct categories. Any experience as experienced will involve all three. They cannot be dissociated from one another. They can, however, be *prescinded* one from the other. That is, for example, we can imagine a First without a Second or a Second without a Third, even though we never experience them in such a dissociated way. Recall the categorial nature of Peirce's phenomenology. That is, there is a priority to his categories such that a First is logically prior and is independent of the others, while a Second necessarily involves a First, and a Third necessarily involves both a First and a Second. There is a general parallel here between the nontransitive nature of Peirce's ontological categories and Husserl's

species theory of essences as intuited categorially. The ability for us to imagine this non-transitive hierarchy provides the model for the levels of conceptual generality which will, again, as with Husserl's eidetic variation, constitute the relations which count as logical laws for Peirce.

To explore this in greater detail, note again that, for Peirce, conceptual meaning is a Third, and Thirdness is the domain of his theory of signs, which itself constitutes his logical theory. He writes, "logic, in its general sense, is, as I believe I have shown, only another name for *semiotic*, the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs" (Peirce 1955, p. 98). Peirce goes on to state:

> A sign, or *representamen,* is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign, which it creates, I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object.* It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representamen (Peirce 1955, p. 99).

As for cognition, for Peirce every experience we have is an experience of a Third, or a sign, such that when we attend to an experience, cognition results. That is, a potential quality (Firstness) is instantiated as a concrete experiential fact through an interaction with reality (Secondness) according to a general law (Thirdness). When we tend to the experience, the law mediating between the quality and the fact is presented to us in its representational aspect as a thought or "proto-thought," such as a simple perception. Indeed, a perception is a primitive sort of sign. That is, when we attend to the reality that presents itself—or, in Peirce's terms, the reality that "resists" our "efforts" and with which we are involved in a sort of "struggle"—then, for us, that reality becomes an object of perception. In that that object represents the "tension" realizing a qualitative experience for us through the world's resistance to us, that object is a signifier of that relationship, and as a

sign, it is a sort-of proto-thought. A thought is thus essentially a representation of the relationship between the feeling of an experience (its qualitative aspect) and the fact that it is felt. It is a sign pointing to this relationship.

Now, Peirce divides his theory of signs into three trichotomies that yield a total of ten sign types.[3] I shall not go into all the types, but want to focus on diagrams particularly with regard to their function in diagrammatical reasoning as described above. Diagrams are a type of icon, and an icon is a sign that shares a common feature with the object it represents. A photograph is a simple icon of the object pictured, for example. A diagram is a special sort of icon in that it reveals an internal structure to the object it represents such that the relations internal to the object are represented. Diagrams can be images, mathematical equations, or even texts. Peirce is motivated to make diagrams of ideas so that he might treat them mathematically, holding that, ultimately, mathematical abstractions reflect the most universal aspect of reality, and thus, serve best to teach us about universal essences. And with the use of diagrams, we can test how the different aspects of a concept relate to each other. This testing is the method of precision given above. Again, it is an imaginative process whereby hypotheses are formed with regard to how different parts of concepts relate, and, given the structure of the diagrammatical concept in question, this abductive (hypothetical) procedure places and replaces elements of the conceptual structure in relation to its other elements to allow us to observe the results and thereby properly ascertain the necessary conceptual structure.

4. Concluding Remarks

Again, "the common root of these parallels [between Peirce and Husserl] is the use of a method for the imaginative separation of non-independent parts of any given whole. Husserl called it [eidetic] variation. Peirce called it precision" (Dougherty 1980, p. 322). It is the relationship between the non-independent parts and the whole of a conceptual structure that accounts for the laws

of logic. Just as we can say, "if the apple is red, then the apple is colored," there is a logically necessary inferential relation between the concepts of redness and coloredness. And in that neither Peirce nor Husserl need to appeal to psychology to identify the concepts redness and coloredness; the part-whole relationships between the concepts do not constitute inductive generalizations, but facts about the world, be that world one of ideal essences, as with Husserl, or scholastic-style "reals" as with Peirce.

I have thus shown how both Peirce and Husserl identify the laws of logic as based on phenomenology. After my introductory remarks, in part 1, I set the stage with regard to how Peirce and Husserl approach phenomenology, outlining their motivations and methods, with respect to each other. From there, in part 2, I outlined the basic elements of their respective phenomenological systems. In part 3, I drew from these phenomenological systems their respective theories of cognition, showing that the way in which each system accounts for the meanings of general concepts is analogous to the other. Also in part 3, I demonstrated how conceptual structures for both Peirce and Husserl inherently possess the hierarchical/categorial properties of logical priority as determined by the structures' internal part/whole relationships. I concluded by identifying that these non-transitive relationships within conceptual structures are inferential, and thus, constitute for Peirce and Husserl the (non-psychologistic) laws of deductive logic. I hope that in the process of my having elucidated this connection between logic and phenomena in Peirce and Husserl, that the dialogue of ideas generated between the two has given the reader a better understanding of each.

Notes

1. It should be noted that, in Peirce's case, he never explicitly outlined a unified philosophical system as he no doubt would have liked to have ultimately done, but rather tackled detailed philosophical problems through essays which were often disconnected with his other work. Given this, and given that his views on topics often changed, it is sometimes difficult to see in Peirce's work a consistent system of philosophy. But given the breadth of his work, scholars have been able to piece together an implicit system to his

thought. For the purposes of this paper, I shall cite the more consistent work of the mature Peirce. Additionally, in order to be intellectually responsible, I must warn the reader that I suspect that I may be guilty of unduly reifying some of Peirce's ideas for clarity's sake. To the extent that he has a unified system of philosophy, it is highly complex, and all of its elements are interrelated such that their meanings might be considered dynamic with respect to their various interrelations, especially when it comes to his theory of signs. To fix the meanings, as I have done here for clarity's sake, may do some injustice to Peirce's philosophy.

2. To the extent that scholars have pieced together a coherent system to Peirce's philosophy, the system hangs on these three categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. Peirce believed that exactly three relata are necessary to characterize any relation—that is, to give meaning to any relation—such that trichotomies are ubiquitous in his philosophy. What results is an architectonic philosophical system based on three theoretical sciences of discovery, namely mathematics, philosophy, and the special sciences, where the former is always more general and necessarily prior to the latter. Each of these three subsequently branch into threes and so on. For example, philosophy branches off into phenomenology, the normative sciences of logic (that is, the theory of signs, or semiotics), and metaphysics. Phenomenology is thus the most general form of philosophy for Peirce, prior to logic, but not the more general theory of mathematical discovery (which includes mathematical deductive logic). At any rate, an understanding of any of the trichotomies present in Peirce's architectonic system may be understood as vaguely analogous to each other, and the phenomenological categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness establish the experiential grounds for these threefold divisions.

3. "Signs are divisible by three trichotomies; first, according as the sign in itself is a mere quality, is an actual existent, or is a general law; secondly, according as the relation of the sign to its object consists in the sign's having some character in itself, or in some existential relation to that object, or in its relation to an interpretant; thirdly, according as its Interpretant represents it as a sign of possibility or as a sign of fact or a sign of reason" (Peirce 1955, p. 101). The reader may be wondering how Peirce's famous pragmatic maxim for clearly knowing a concept plays a role in the concept determination I am addressing in this paper. That maxim applies to symbols, the third sign in the second trichotomy of signs; the first two signs in the second trichotomy are icons and indices. Icons resemble the objects they signify, indices are causally connected to the objects they signify, and symbols signify their objects by way of how they are habitually interpreted. In that I am dealing exclusively with icons in this paper, I do not address the pragmatic maxim applying to symbols.

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Depression and the Phenomenological Mind

Margot Silvera

> It may be that phenomenology has also something to say concerning hallucinations, illusions, and deceptive perceptions generally, and it has perhaps a great deal to say about them; but it is evident that here in the part they play in the natural setting, they fall away before the phenomenological suspension (Husserl 1967, pp. 239).

These are the words of Edmund Husserl on the possibilities of phenomenology, the philosophical discipline he created in the effort to truly understand our mind, to study our consciousness in its purest form. Introspection is one of the hallmarks of humanity; the practice of self-reflection is present throughout the world in different cultures and traditions. Some religions emphasize prayer while others advocate meditation and mindfulness. This turning inward is also present in philosophy and psychology. Phenomenology provides one philosophical avenue. Despite being a century old, this method is still revolutionary and continues to teach us new lessons about our awareness. One new area of exploration has been how the use of antidepressants can be seen through the lens of Husserl. The philosopher Peter Hadreas undertakes this issue in his articles, "Husserlian Self-Awareness and Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors" and "In Defense of My Reading of Husserl and a Final Note." While the Husserlian interpretation of antidepressants is intriguing, it raises questions about how Husserl and his phenomenology relate to depression. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 out of 10 adults in the United States will experience depression, but even those lucky enough to avoid it will surely know someone affected. In this article I shall examine what depression looks like

to the phenomenological mind as presented by Husserl, and how the process of phenomenology he presents can actually aid in depression's treatment.

In the first section of this article I will provide a basic overview of Husserl's phenomenology as presented in his groundbreaking work, *Ideas* I. This will cover the method of the phenomenological reduction, the character of our pure consciousness, and its composition. The second section shall look at depression through the filter of phenomenology. The third section of the article will look at the articles of Peter Hadreas and how antidepressant selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors can be understood through the philosophy of Husserl. The fourth and final section shall explore the benefits that can be gained in using the phenomenological reduction in conjunction with cognitive behavioral therapy.

Section I. Husserl's Phenomenology

Phenomenology was developed by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl as a means to study our consciousness and observe our mental phenomena—our mental acts. This innovative discipline made Husserl one of the most significant philosophers of the 20th Century, influencing such greats as Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Husserl believed that all consciousness is intentional; that is to say, that consciousness is always directed at some intentional object. As Husserl stated:

> Consciousness is just consciousness 'of' something; it is its essential nature to conceal "meaning" within itself, the quintessence of 'soul,' so to speak, of 'mind,' of 'reason'… It is 'consciousness' through and through, the source of all reason and unreason, all right and wrong, all reality and illusion, all value and disvalue, all deed and misdeed (Husserl 1967, pp. 231).

If we are conscious, we are conscious of something; if there is no intentionality, there is no consciousness. This intentional object of our consciousness holds within it the meaning that animates our

world. It tells us what is right or wrong, what is real or imagined. Our consciousness is not a part of the world, but it makes sense of the world.

Husserl was an advocate of the theory of *transcendent objectivity*. This notion states that while much of our consciousness, including mental acts such as perceiving, believing, and desiring, as well as the sensory qualities of these acts are *immanent*, or continuously changing, concrete and particular. The objects that my consciousness is directed towards are *transcendent*, or numerically identical over time. Our intentional acts are immanent, but the intentional object it is directed towards, remains constant and thus transcendent.[1]

The method Husserl developed to study consciousness and its intentional objects he labeled the *phenomenological epoché*. Through this process one can disencumber consciousness of what is not necessary to it, leaving it in its purest state and ready for examination. The first step in the epoché is the *phenomenological reduction*. Husserl believed that we, as humans, live our lives in the *natural attitude*. This attitude is the normal, natural way that we experience the world around us. It is a pre-reflective disposition whereby we take for granted the transcendent world, accepting its existence and taking its causality for granted. We simply assume that it exists in the way that we experience it. When we are in the natural attitude Husserl states that we are using the *general thesis*. If we are not using the general thesis, then we are not in the natural attitude. The general thesis is something that you live through—a tacit, lived disposition.

If we wish to study our consciousness this credulous worldview must be set aside; this is done through the *phenomenological reduction*. In the first step of the reduction we *thematize* the general thesis. By thematizing the general thesis we become aware of it, we think about it and how it lets us live naïvely through the world. Doing so suspends it, brackets the general thesis, and we are no longer in the natural attitude. Husserl refers to this as *bracketing* because we are taking all of our judgments, assumptions, and acceptance of transcendent causality and setting them

aside until later, as if in brackets. The purpose of this suspension of belief is not to actually doubt, but to "attempt to doubt." Husserl was no Cartesian with radical doubt; he didn't accept or deny, he merely wanted to suspend these beliefs, so that what is *immanent* to consciousness could be studied. What remains is *pure consciousness*—the *residuum*, the residue, of the phenomenological reduction, the object of our study. When we focus on this pure consciousness the resulting state is called the *phenomenological attitude.* As Husserl states, "instead of living in [such cogitative theses] and carrying them out, we carry out acts of reflection directed towards them, and these we apprehend as the Absolute Being which they are. We now live entirely in such acts of the second level, whose datum is the infinite field of absolute experiences—the basic field of Phenomenology" (Husserl 1967, pp. 140–141).

But what does this pure consciousness consist of? Husserl believed our consciousness is a complex structure with both immanent and transcendent parts. These parts include the *noesis*, *hyletic data*, and the *noema* as is seen it the diagram below.

Noesis is derived from the Greek word for mind, *nous*, and Husserl uses it to describe the sense-bestowing act of consciousness. Other terms for this include *noetic phase* and *thetic character*. According to Husserl, all consciousness is *noetic*:

> Every intentional experience, thanks to its noetic phase, is noetic, it is its essential nature to harbor in itself a 'meaning' of some sort, it may be many meanings, and on the ground of this gift of meaning, and in harmony therewith, to develop further phases which through it become themselves 'meaningful' (Husserl 1967, pp. 237).

This is to say, it is the meaning that animates and interprets the intentional objects of our consciousness. It is the "sense" of things, it interprets what we see. It is the perception of some object, the remembering of some event, the belief in some idea; it is the intentional action of our consciousness that makes sense of the world around us and within us.

This bestows the significance that makes an object meaningful, but there can be many layers of meaning adding nuance and richness to the experience. Directed at the same object I can have multiple actions. For example, before me sits an apple. The transcendent object in itself holds no meaning, yet my consciousness imposes layer upon layer of significance for me. I *perceive* the apple is red, I *believe* it to be a Fuji, I *remember* buying it at the farmer's market, I *think* it is organic, etc.

New layers can be added, continually adding shades of meaning to the object that is the focus of my mental act. By the same token, layers can be taken away or changed. This unfixed nature makes these layers immanent; my experience of the apple is changeable and particular to me. Perhaps I look at the apple more closely, I may now perceive hints of green in the skin of the apple; this may change my belief that it is a Fuji, maybe now I believe it to be a Gala. It is still the same apple, yet the noetic layers have shifted changing the meaning I had attached.

Hyletic data, also known as *sensile* or *sensory qualia*, is the quality of our sensory experience that tells us what it's like. This "what it is like-ness" includes properties such as perceptions, our strivings, desires and volitions, pleasure and pain, as well as our moods and emotions. This data is non-intentional and non-conceptual, yet through it "the concrete intentional experience takes form and shape" (Husserl 1967, pp. 227).

Again, consider the apple. I see that it is red and shiny. I desire to eat this apple; I can hear the crisp, crunch of my bite, taste the sweet juice, and feel the luscious pulp even before I open my mouth. I anticipate its deliciousness and the thought of it makes me happy. Someone else, who was not a fan of fruit, would not enjoy it. The apple is the object and remains unchanged despite who eats it; the quality of the experience however, my enjoyment and someone else's displeasure, the perceptions, feelings, etc.—is the hyletic data and is immanent to our consciousness.

The final component of consciousness is the multi-layered noema, which is the correlate of the the noesis. According to Husserl, "every noema has a content, its meaning, and is related

through it to its object" (Husserl 1967, pp. 333). This is to say that the full noema has three different aspects: the thetic quality, the noematic sense, and by going through these two layers we reach its unifying core—the determinable object-X. The noema is both immanent and transcendent, as can be seen in the figure below, yet it survives the phenomenological reduction because the transcendent is entirely intentionally dependent on the immanent phase of the noema.

The Full Noema

The *thetic quality* of the noema corresponds to the thetic character of the act. It is not the intentional act, nor is it the object; rather it is the object *as it is intended*. Take perception for example: the thetic quality is not the act of perceiving, it is not the object perceived, but instead it is the perceived object *as such*; it is the object that is *perceived about*. I perceive the apple is red; the thetic quality is the apple as I perceive it to be. This is not the real, unchanging apple, but an object that is immanent to my consciousness that changes with my perception of it.

The noematic sense, when present, is the conceptual content of the intentional object. These concepts are abstract and generic and can serve as symbols to convey meaning. Examples of this include such ideas as "red," "apple," or "Fuji." These concepts must remain fixed so that they can be shared, repeated, and understood; therefore this noematic sense is transcendent.

Finally we come to the center of the noema, the *determinable object-X*. This is the substratum that holds our experience together—it is the constant, steady objective core that remains the same and untouched beneath the subjective meaning we impose. It provides continuity and links one perception to another, one moment to the next. It mirrors the object of our perception, but it is not the actual object itself. The pure X cannot be separated from the predicates as it was formed from them; it would not exist without them, yet it is abstracted from them. Despite being formed from immanence, the determinable object-X is transcendent. It is transcendence within immanence.

Beneath all of the layers of meaning I have imposed on the apple, under the strata of sensory quality, within the apple as I intended it remains the core of the apple, the determinable object-X. Together, all of these separate phases, the noesis, the hyletic data, and the complete noema, combine to form the framework of our consciousness.

Section II. The Phenomenology of Depression

Anyone who has experienced depression can recognize its bitter flavor. It poisons one's consciousness, tainting all of one's thoughts. While everyone experiences sadness and the occasional dark thought, depression persists and can be debilitating. Clinical depression, or more specifically Major Depressive Disorder (Unipolar Depression), is a serious, but treatable mood disorder with symptoms such as sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, loss of energy and motivation, reduced interest in what was once enjoyed, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, problems with sleeping and eating, and sometimes suicidal thoughts. As the American Psychiatric Association tells us, depression has both biological and environmental factors. The biological causes are still a matter of study, but these can include neurotransmitters and hormone levels. Neurotransmitters are chemicals in the brain's synapses that convey messages between neurons. The main neurotransmitters that have been associated with depression are serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine. Further evidence of the biological basis is that depression has been found to occur with more frequency among first degree relatives regardless of whether they are raised together. Environmental factors that can lead to or exacerbate depression include such influences as illness, loss of a loved one, stress, financial difficulties, or a poor support system.

But from the phenomenological standpoint, how does depression impact the consciousness? When one is in the throes of depression, the experience of the world changes. It is the same world, the same objects, people, and events that one knew before

and yet it is not the same at all; they are all shadowed by the cloud of depression and our experience changes.

Consider the noesis, the act-like facet that bestows meaning. Does the meaning change with depression? Certainly many layers may remain unchanged; I still perceive the apple as red, I still believe it to be a Fuji, I still remember buying it. But many layers have changed and there are new layers as well, darker layers. Perhaps now I think that it costs too much, I believe that it must be covered in pesticide, I imagine there is a worm in the center, a rotten core. My experience of the apple has changed; these layers of meaning didn't occur to the non-depressed self and they will probably leave when the depression lifts, but the strata of sense have been undeniably altered.

Next let us take the hyletic data, the "what it's like-ness." As this data includes pain and emotions the import is obvious; it can color the intentional experience with sadness and create pain where once there was pleasure. Under the haze of depression the hyletic data can envelop the intentional state in misery. What is it like? It can become darker, scarier, and even pointless. The desire for the apple is gone. The red is no longer as bright, the shine has dulled; the anticipated taste is no longer sweet, but cloying. The apple is no longer what it was.

This leaves the noema, the correlate of the noesis. The thetic quality of the noema is immanent and reflects the thetic character of the act of the noesis. When the nature of the act changes, so too does the experience of what is acted upon. My perception of the apple as red is unchanged, so the apple as I perceive is unchanged, but now that I believe the apple to be rotten, the apple I believed about has changed; the apple *as I intended* it is rotten. The rest of the noema however is transcendent and remains unscathed. The noematic sense, the conceptual content of the object, is constant; it must remain unaffected so that it can be iterated and understood. Regardless of mood, it is still "red," still an "apple." And at the center of the noema is the determinable object-X. This is the transcendent continuum around which meaning and sense coalesce; it unites the various perceptions, beliefs, and conceptual data. It

necessarily remains unaffected by the immanent despair. It is the same constant apple despite whether I am happy or sad, hopeful or depressed.

Thus, I would argue that the immanent, subjective portions of consciousness reflect the newly gloomy world, yet the transcendent aspects of the noema, the conceptual content and the determinable object-X, remain the same—it is the same apple, but how it is experienced, the meaning, the quality, and the apple "as such" have changed.

Section III. Husserl and Antidepressants

Despite the fact that depression can feel interminable, it is treatable and everyone can improve. Treatments can include a wide range of antidepressants that can influence the brain's neurotransmitters and stabilize mood. One of the most successful antidepressant drugs in the treatment of depression is the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI). Drugs in this class include such names as fluoxetine (Prozac), citalopram (Celexa), and sertraline (Zoloft), and their use leads to undeniable changes in consciousness. By studying "before" and "after" results of both good and poor responders to SSRIs, Peter Hadreas examines these shifts and uses Husserlian philosophy to explain his findings.

The changes that take place with SSRIs can be remarkable; within two to four weeks good responders can experience a shift in consciousness from depression and despondency to hopefulness and confidence. Looking at the affects noticed in both good and poor responders, however, indicates that more than just the regulation of serotonin is taking place. Many experience a shift from an affective, emotional orientation to one more cognitive and volitional. Even studies in non-depressed patients who had suffered head injuries showed "an increase in cognitive functioning" after several months taking fluoxetine (Hadreas 2010, p. 44).

While good responders find themselves becoming more mentally adept, more decisive, more resolute, and with emotional extremes being kept in check, less good responders can experience

this change as "emotional blunting." In a test of non-depressed subjects, half the group reported feeling this as "nothing bothers me," while others said it made them feel "emotionally dead." People who are excessively conscientious may find this emotional easing to be beneficial. Although rare, a tragic side effect is that this "deficiency of affect" can in some instances cause users to become suicidal. Some "delayed good responders" may face such side effects at first, but with continued use experience favorable results.

Hadreas argues that change imparted by antidepressants cannot be adequately explained through empirical or rational models. Classical empiricists explain knowledge through experience and perception, with introspection being the basis of self-consciousness. An empiricist might expect that introspection following SSRI usage could lead to the self being reinterpreted. However, this does not fit with findings: "SSRI good responders say that the drugs do not change 'who they are,' but rather enables them to be themselves with less impediments" (Hadreas 2010, p. 44).

Traditional rationalists, on the other hand, have a priori knowledge as the source of self-consciousness. Thought, not experience, is the essence of the human mind, and concepts compose these thoughts. As Hadreas states, "the mind is transparent to itself… [And] self-consciousness amounts to the self-reflexive construction of concepts" (Hadreas 2010, p. 47). This, too, is inadequate to describe the effects of SSRIs. Rather than a new "intuited sense of self," it is more a potentiality or conviction that one is now "capable of coping."

According to Hadreas, only through the lens of Husserlian philosophy can the change be explained. With the use of SSRIs, it is not the self or the consciousness that is changed, but the pre-reflective consciousness. The pre-reflective consciousness has the intrinsic self-consciousness of all experience, but it lacks the second-order awareness that comes with reflective mindfulness. Hadreas describes the pre-reflective consciousness as being like breathing. It is a "striving" we have that occurs before our conscious

awareness. But just as with breathing, there is some measure of consciousness, as we notice when something goes wrong. Ultimately, he finds that while the pre-reflective consciousness is affected, the essential self is not changed, it is simply revealed; one becomes more oneself under their influence. Hadreas states, the SSRIs "do not change their [users'] sense of 'who they are,' but rather they have a sense of being more themselves, especially as relates to their cognitive and volitional activity. SSRIs do not lead to a sense of change of self, but a sense of self more successfully realized" (Hadreas 2010, p. 48). The use of these antidepressants shifts the pre-reflective consciousness from overly emotional to more cognitive; it becomes easier to think and function.

Section IV. Phenomenology and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Despite the success of antidepressant drugs such as SSRIs in normalizing neurotransmitters, this is only part of the picture. While some people may only be a victim of brain chemistry, it is more often the case that depression is caused by a combination of biological and environmental factors, and these other causes must be addressed. One empirically proven treatment is a form of psychotherapy known as *cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)*[2]. This therapy was developed in the 1960s by psychotherapist Aaron Beck with the aim of altering thoughts in order to change behavior. Beck recognized the vital role cognitive appraisal; he showed that it is not a stimulus itself that causes our emotions, but our thoughts and responses to this stimulus as is seen in the figure below. As Beck states, "a person who is trained to track his thought… can observe repeatedly that his interpretation of a situation precedes his emotional response to it" (Beck 1976, pp. 28).

We see this when the same event happens to multiple people and each person has a different reaction. Take for example losing one's job; one person may view this as an opportunity to try something new, a chance for growth, while another person may view this as a personal slight and withdraw into depression. As Beck

states:

> The importance of eliciting a person's cognitions becomes apparent when we attempt to understand incongruous emotional reactions. We find that apparently unrealistic or exaggerated anger, anxiety, or sadness is based on the individual's peculiar appraisal of the event. These peculiar appraisals become dominant in emotional disorders (Beck 1976, pp. 29).

This distorted thinking and poor coping skills can exacerbate and even cause depression. Cognitive behavioral therapy aims to correct these maladaptive thoughts; it affects a cognitive restructuring, recognizing and changing these harmful cognitive distortions. These thoughts include such fallacies as All-or-Nothing Thinking where one practices absolute thinking such as "always" and "never"; Disqualifying the Positive where negative experiences are emphasized and positive experiences are not; Emotional Reasoning where one acts based on emotions and not evidence; Personalization where one feels responsible for things they have no control over; and many others.[3] Patients work with their therapist to learn how to identify these fallacies and change them, requiring introspection and greater self-understanding.

From this approach we can see the common ground between CBT and phenomenology. Both focus on the nature of our consciousness, both require introspection, and in both, cognitive appraisal is crucial. We must know our thoughts before we can change them. As Beck says about CBT, "in order to tap this rich source of information, it was necessary to train patients to observe the stream of unreported thoughts" (Beck 1976, pp. 33). But Beck does not stipulate a specific method to cultivate this recognition. While there are many means of self-reflection, I propose that phenomenology could be a beneficial one. Husserl himself recognized the psychological benefits of phenomenology and even refers to "phenomenological psychology" in the preface to *Ideas* and asserts that phenomenology is "very relevant to psychology" (Husserl 1967, pp. 18). He later goes so far as to say:

> The phenomenological reduction can fulfil for the psychologist the methodically useful function of fixing the noematic meaning in sharp distinction from the object pure and simple, and of recognizing it as belonging inseparably to the psychological essence of the intentional experience, which would then be apprehended as real (Husserl 1967, pp. 241).

Let us examine how the phenomenological epoché can support cognitive behavioral therapy. In casual introspection without the aid of some technique it can be difficult to recognize the ways in which our thoughts are deceptive. For a depressed person these mental distortions may be a way of life and not easily identified. Through counseling sessions with a cognitive behavioral therapist these thoughts may be distinguished, but for lasting change one must learn to do this on one's own. One can do this through the phenomenological epoché.

When we are in the pre-reflective natural attitude, judgments, assumptions, and transcendental causality are naïvely taken for granted. By suspending this credulous assumption through the phenomenological reduction, we can examine our pure consciousness without this hindrance. As stated by Husserl:

> If the right standpoint has been won and entrenched through practice, if above all there has been acquired the courage to follow up the clear essential data with an entire absence of all prejudice, and indifferences to all current and borrowed theories, firm results follow forthwith… [What follows is the possibility of] testing the descriptions of others, sifting out intrusive phrases void of meaning they have slipped in unnoticed, and of exposing and eliminating errors which here too are possible… (Husserl 1967, pp. 236).

Let us take the example of emotional reasoning where one conflates subjective feelings with objective reality despite any evidence. One's habitual practice may be to automatically accept such beliefs, for example, "I feel bad about this apple; they said

it was organic, but I *know* it must be covered in pesticide." This thought may be instinctively accepted in the natural attitude, but in the phenomenological attitude one can view it differently; one can distinguish between the perception and perception *as such*, between the object and the object *as intended*. The lines can be drawn between what is thought and all of the assumptions and judgments we have attached to it. The noesis, the hyletic data, and the noema can be identified; in the immanence of pure consciousness the essential nature can be distinguished from the emotions and meanings one has imposed. The physical, objective apple doesn't matter, but the subjective experience of it does: "From our phenomenological standpoint we can and must put the question of essence: *What is the 'perceived as such'? What essential phases does it harbor in itself in its capacity as noema?* We win the reply to our question as we wait, in pure surrender, on what is essentially given. We can then describe 'that which appears as such' faithfully and in the light of perfect self-evidence" (Husserl 1967, pp. 240).

With the aid of phenomenology, one can see the apple as perceived and understand the phases attached; cognitive distortions can be identified and acknowledged. But there must be more than cogitation; action must follow. It does little good to recognize a fallacious thought if a change in behavior does not follow. With the help of a therapist, healthier methods for thought and behavior can be instituted and practiced. Through CBT and phenomenology we can gain a greater understanding of our consciousness, why we believe what we believe and why we act the way we act, and this can aid everyone, not just the depressed patient.

One potential problem with this philosophical introspection is that it could lead to rumination, the excessive dwelling on faults and negativity. Continued cogitation on the negative could lead to even more alienation and withdrawal in a depressed person. However, the benefit of CBT has been empirically shown and I believe that a greater understanding of our consciousness can lead to a greater ability to recognize our cognitive distortions and ultimately change behavior. But just as CBT may not be for everyone,

the phenomenological epoché may not be either.

One recommendation would be to institute this process in conjunction with antidepressant drug therapy. As Hadreas showed in his articles, SSRIs can make the pre-reflective self less emotional and improve mental functioning; this shift could aid in the cognitive contemplation necessary for phenomenology. Studies have found that CBT is not only more effective than other forms of psychotherapy, it can be just as effective as drug therapy, if not more so, but the greatest benefits can be gained when CBT is used in conjunction with drug therapy.[4] Hadreas notes, "I do not contest the barrage of studies that demonstrate that the combination of psychotherapy (of various types) along with drugs has a greater likelihood of success than administering either drugs or psychotherapy alone" (Hadreas 2010, p. 63).

Conclusion

Depression has been around since time immemorial, but phenomenology for only a century. We are still learning how this relatively new field informs us of the world and our place in it. While depression shrouds the world for many people leaving their lived experiences dimmed with despair, this does not mean that they are without hope. Husserl and phenomenology can be a light in the darkness, illuminating the way in which our consciousness changes with depression. As Peter Hadreas tells us, many people can be aided through the use of antidepressants such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, realizing a change in their pre-reflective consciousness. Their intrinsic self is not changed, only freed, allowing them to be more themselves. The change from emotional to volitional cognitions can lead to a fertile soil where cognitive behavioral therapy can take root. CBT instills the tools to understand and change our maladaptive thinking and behavior. This process can be aided through the phenomenological epoché which provides a way to better understand our minds, our consciousness, ourselves. This new awareness can lead to cognitive restructuring and a beneficial change in behavior.

Notes

1. Husserl also described the "*pure ego*" which is our numerically identical self that is unchanging over time. This unique, steady self serves as our personal identity and unites the ever-changing stream of our consciousness.
2. The effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy is shown in articles such as "A Meta-Analysis of the Efficacy of Cognitive Therapy for Depression" by Keith S. Dobson. It finds that "the average cognitive therapy client did better than 98% of the control subjects" (Dobson 1989, p. 415). Further, the meta-analysis shows that on average cognitive therapy patients do better than patients of other psychotherapies, as well as other drug therapy patients.
3. The theory of cognitive distortions was developed by psychotherapist Aaron Beck, M.D, the father of cognitive behavioral therapy. The list of distortions also includes such fallacies as Always being right, Blaming, Catastrophizing, Control fallacies, Fallacy of change, Fallacy of fairness, Filtering, Global labeling, Heaven's reward fallacy, Jumping to conclusions, Overgeneralization, Polarized thinking, and Shoulds.
4. The success of drug therapy paired with CBT is shown in the article, "The Efficacy of Cognitive Therapy in Depression: A Treatment Trial Using Cognitive Therapy and Pharmacotherapy, each Alone and in Combination" by I.M. Blackburn et al. According to the article, "the combination of drug and psychotherapy was superior to either treatment alone… There was little difference between the drug treatment alone group and the cognitive therapy alone group, although the cognitive therapy group did generally better (except on self-rated depression) giving the overall clinical outcome of Combined treatment > cognitive therapy > drug treatment" (Blackburn et al. 1981, p. 187).

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Harris's Three Reasons Why There Is No Is-Ought Gap[1]

Evan Harkins

Introduction

A long-standing debate in moral theory centers on whether it is a mistake to derive norms from facts. The supposed mistake is usually called either the *naturalistic fallacy* or the *is-ought gap* (I will use both interchangeably). This debate was revived and revitalized in the early 20th century with the publication of *Principia Ethica* by G.E. Moore, and continues to be a hotly discussed issue in philosophy. Recently, the famous (or infamous depending on one's position) atheist, author, and neuroscientist Sam Harris decided to tackle this issue in his book *The Moral Landscape*. Harris has succeeded at reigniting this debate among non-philosophers, as evinced by his reception at the Technology Entertainment and Design (TED) Talks in 2010, where he received a standing ovation.[2] This initial fanfare has since been drowned out by a wave of criticism from all corners, including the religious, who are Harris's traditional intellectual opponents, and the secular who Harris typically considers intellectual allies. In this paper, I hope to provide a window into Harris's thoughts concerning the is-ought gap to see if he does, in fact, commit the naturalistic fallacy. It is important to remember that while Harris has chosen to ignore much of the metaethical literature (Harris 2010, p. 197), he has echoed some of it (albeit in non-technical terms), as well as crafted some objections to the naturalistic fallacy, which I hope to explore with greater philosophical rigor and clarity.

In his book Harris presents three reasons why there is no is-ought gap (Harris 2010, p. 11). We will examine each of his reasons in turn to see if they erase the is-ought gap. Harris's first reason is a mere assertion of consequentialism. If he is right

about this assertion then there follow many "is statements" about morality. I find however that Harris does not justify this assertion. Harris's second reason is that some values, namely what Harris terms "scientific values" lead to facts. This is the most interesting of his reasons, and mirrors a tension, recently discussed by the philosopher Paul Bloomfield, between Kant and Hume's received moral truths (Bloomfield 2006 pp. 439). Harris's third reason is that in fact the human brain treats moral beliefs identically to non-moral beliefs; as such, moral beliefs are of the same type as non-moral beliefs. While of great import to non-cognitivism, I find this reason to be largely irrelevant the is-ought chasm. Thus, through my discussion of these three reasons I find the first and third to be weak. This leaves the second reason—supported by Bloomfield's strategy—as Harris's best chance to cross the is-ought divide.

The Problem

This notion of the is-ought gap is traced back to Hume, who in his groundbreaking work, *Treatise on Human Nature*, seems to throw a monkey wrench into any theory of morality:

> In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary ways of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when all of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason should be given; for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it (Hume 1739, 3.1.1).

Let us now examine what this quote means. Simply put, it is the notion that should one reason from any number of "is" statements one should never reach an "ought" statement. For example, take the following argument:

P1. Torture causes physical damage.
P2. Physical damage is painful.
C. Therefore, it is wrong to torture.

This argument is obviously invalid; to make it valid it requires a further premise namely:

P3. We ought not to cause pain.

Thus, we seem to require an "ought statement" to truly reach the conclusion. One might here object: "Why couldn't we instead state this supposed ought as an 'is' statement?", for example:

P4. Pain is something wrong to cause.

We would then revise our argument, to say:

P1. Torture causes physical damage.
P2. Physical damage is painful.
P4. Pain is something wrong to cause.
C. Therefore, it is wrong to torture.

A defender of Hume would likely respond that P4 is merely a disguised "ought" statement. This is because "is wrong" is inter-definable with "ought not." As such we haven't really utilized an "is" statement, rather we have only utilized an "ought" statement. So we really have an "ought" premise and this "ought" premise is supposed to be of a different type than the 1–3 "is" premises (Bloomfield 2006, pp. 441).

One might also explain the is-ought gap in terms of Sherlock Holmes. Imagine Sherlock Holmes has arrived on the scene of a little girl's murder. He then examines all the scientific facts, such as the bullet trajectory, signs of struggle, and looks for clues as to who the shooter may be. He then lists his findings to his dear friend Watson explaining how the bullet pierced the skull,

causing the girl to drop her teddy bear and finally fall still on the pavement. Watson might then gasp, and exclaim "How horrible!", but our imagined Holmes would respond, "Which fact makes it horrible?" Where in this scientific investigation has Holmes encountered a moral fact? According to the is-ought gap he has encountered a large number of "is statements," but not any "ought statements." It is now very easy for one to hold this as intuitively obvious, that because Holmes encounters no "ought" statement in his naturalistic investigation, there should be no moral "ought" statements yielded by Holmes' investigation. This then seems to create a large wall, which any moral naturalist will need to scale; thus, let us see if Harris has the appropriate scaling equipment.

The Assertion of Consequentialism

Let us examine the first of Harris's reasons for rejecting the is-ought gap. Harris's first strategy is to assert that "whatever can be known about maximizing the well-being of conscious creatures… must at some point translate into facts about brains and their interaction with the world at large" (Harris 2010, p. 11). For this strategy to bridge the is-ought gap two things must be true. First, it must be true that whatever can be known about maximizing the well-being of conscious creatures does translate into facts about brains and the world. Second, it must be the case that we ought to increase well-being. Furthermore, we should note that this is a consequentialist position, where a consequentialist is one who believes that the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by the consequences or results of that action. Of the two hurdles it seems the second would be the harder to achieve.

If we grant Harris some form of materialism, such that the mind does reduce to the brain, then it seems Harris's first claim is true. Since I do not wish to be distracted by discussions of the mind's relation to the body, I will merely grant Harris this point, as Harris says very little of philosophical interest regarding this problem; namely, those facts about maximizing the well-being of conscious beings would translate into facts about brains. Perhaps,

this is hasty, for it might be the case that non-mental facts are important in the well-being of a person. For example, might it not be the case that being paraplegic is contrary to well-being regardless of whether the paraplegic person, and everyone else around him, is quite content with it. It seems that we would properly term well-being to be psychological and separate from health, which would be the relevant notion to being a paraplegic. After all, we would not say of two persons—one fat and one of a healthy weight—who are equally happy that they differ in well-being. Yet we would say of the fat person that she is unhealthy. Furthermore, Harris's 1st reason contains a suppressed premise: that we ought to increase well being. Shifting to Harris's suppressed premise, I find it to be analytic in nature, namely that what is good is what increases the well being of conscious creatures. This claim is a meta-ethical pitfall. Due to this pitfall it does not seem that an assertion of consequentialism will bridge the is-ought gap, as one might easily wonder why we should increase well being. As such, it seems Harris is simply implying that we ought to increase the well-being of certain creatures.

This makes Harris's first reason look a lot like G.E. Moore's reason to believe that there is an external world (Moore 2010, pp. 144-8). To recall, the skeptical argument regarding the external world, which Moore addresses, runs as follows:

(1) If one knows there is an external world, then one is certain of the external world.
(2) One is not certain of the external world.
(3) Therefore, one does not know there is an external world.

Moore's response to this argument is merely that one *is* certain of the external world, and as such, one *does* know facts about the external world. As such, Moore merely asserts that the skeptic is wrong. This is a deeply unsatisfying response. Similarly, Harris responds to Humeans by just asserting that there are "ought" statements that follow from "is" statements, and thus, that some form of consequentialism is true and follows from facts about the world.

In an attempt to make this assertion feel intuitive, and thus unquestionable, Harris describes two diametrically opposed lives: the good life and the bad life. Briefly, the bad life is that of a woman in a war-torn country fleeing armed men, who has just witnessed her son rape her daughter on pain of death (Harris 2010, p. 15). The good life is quite the opposite. It is the life of an economically secure and happily married individual who spends her life increasing the well-being of persons much less fortunate than her own, especially, persons who are currently living the bad life (Harris 2010, p. 15). Having given examples of the worst and best lives, Harris hopes to elicit in the reader the intuition that, yes, the bad life is bad, and the good life is good. He then hopes to fix a referent to this difference, namely well-being. Referent fixing is the process where we take a term, for example "water," and determine what scientific terminology shares the referent with that term. As such, through scientific endeavors humankind has fixed the referent H_2O. We find a possible desiderata in Boyd for referent fixing, namely "if there is a single best candidate for filling the role, that will be the nature of the thing"[3] (2010 May, p. 509). Returning to water, it is obvious that the chemical compound H_2O is the single best candidate for filling the role of water; as such it is obvious that water is H_2O. Harris then seems to think that we all share his intuition that the good life is good, and vice versa, because of the well-being of the person living it, and the well-being of the others that person is engaged in helping. In other words, we all share Harris's intuition that well-being of conscious creatures is the single best candidate for filling the role of good.

However, for this to be the correct referent of the difference it must actually be the single best candidate, not just what Harris believes humanity thinks is the best candidate. In order to make well-being seem like the single best candidate, Harris speaks of how all of us are truly motivated by the intuition that morality is about well-being, even those who purport to believe a highly different moral theory. Harris takes, as his example, a person who purports to believe a different moral theory than a Sunni militant. Harris speaks about a Sunni militant fighting with American

forces against Al-Qaeda in Iraq because, "He witnessed a member of al-Qaeda decapitate an eight-year-old girl. It would, seem therefore, that the boundary between the crazy values of Islam and the utterly crazy can be discerned when drawn in the spilled blood of little girls" (Harris 2010, p. 203). At first, this might look like our Sunni militant had changed sides because of the girl's destroyed well-being, which would clearly support Harris's notion that well-being is the correct referent for good, but it might also be the case that the militant recognized the lack of virtue in the Al-Qaeda member's behavior or that the girl needed to be treated as an end in herself. It is thus an open possibility that the militant was intuitively a virtue ethicist or an ethicist of the Kantian variety. Here then we see the problem with the assertion of consequentialism, it may be easily replaced with any other normative theory which proposes a different referent. This is because the good life and the bad life are, uncontroversially, good and bad, and as such, our best normative theories all agree on these cases. They are, if you will, the cases a moral theorist is thinking of when crafting his theory. So as long as our moral theorist has any talent, his theory will succeed at calling the good life good and the bad life bad. Harris will then need to either show why all other possible referents do not succeed or he needs to provide another argument, which ensures well-being is the referent. Because Harris does neither, he provides no reason to make well-being the meaning of morality.

Harris does however succeed in reconciling the problem posed by moral disagreement to morality through the introduction of his titular term: moral landscape (Harris 2010, pp. 7–9). Harris introduces moral landscape by way of comparison to geographical landscape. As we look out at the geography of the world, we see peaks like Everest, and pits like Death Valley. Imagine then, if we were to map all the possible orderings of society onto a three-dimensional plane, plotting the soaring majestic peaks as the heights of happiness and the lowlands as the depths of misery. This map of all the possible orderings is the moral landscape, and any society would be in some location on this map, and could best increase it's overall well-being by slowly changing society such

that society's position on the landscape is continuously moving up some slope. As such the landscape allows for multiple possibilities of utopia and dystopia, thus allowing for cultural relativism of a sort; namely, that so long as a society is on a peak, it matters not what the actual organization of that society is, but we can still criticize those societies that wallow in the depths of despair and prescribe a path to the happy highlands. This notion of a moral landscape is a great addition to any form of consequentialism, as it provides a solution to the problem of moral relativism by making explicit the many possible unique solutions for a good society.

We should here hear another philosopher, Massimo Pigliucci, who asks in response to Harris, "But why value individual human wellbeing, or the wellbeing of self-aware organisms, to begin with? (Empirical) Facts are irrelevant to that question" (Pigliucci 2010). Harris readily admits when he says "if you don't see a distinction between these two lives that is worth valuing… there may be nothing I can say that will attract you to my view of the moral landscape" (Harris 2010, p. 16). Harris, however, compares his assertion of well-being's value to the implicit assertion of health's value in scientific medicine. This may or may not help, it depends on whether this analogy—also often used by Boyd (2003 May, p. 518)—works (Harris 2010, p. 11). As stated earlier, even if we see an intuitive difference between these lives, as most of us no doubt do, it is by no means sure that this intuition is due to a difference in well-being. After all, it could just as easily be a lack of virtue between the two cases. As such, it seems that even Harris does not find his first reason welding shut the is-ought gap. The open questions posed by philosophers like Pigliucci will still haunt him. Although, Harris may still claim that he is at least approximately right and that new scientific evidence will vindicate him[4]. Harris may then hope that new research confirms or helps specify his notion that what is good is certain brain-states of conscious creatures. It is, however, hard to imagine what scientific research might yield such a result.

Scientific Values

Harris's 2nd reason is likely his strongest reason for rejecting the is-ought gap. Briefly, Harris's 2nd reason is "that the very idea of 'objective' knowledge (i.e., knowledge acquired through honest observation and reasoning) has values built into it…" (Harris 2010, p. 11). Harris here uses the word "objective." However, given his placement of quotations around it, as well as his parenthetical explanation, it is best to interpret him as meaning knowledge arrived at through appropriate reasoning and empirical observation.

The last several hundred years have seen a profound expansion of the empirical sciences driven by the normative epistemological findings of Renaissance Thought. This expansion has explained, and elucidated much that had been murky before. Has not this large sea of knowledge been charted with certain values? The notions of observational evidence, falsifiability, and logical coherence are obvious normative values that have been integral in the generation of scientific facts. Given that an "is" statement is merely an assertion of a fact, it seems that we have utilized at least some "ought" statements to discover at least some "is" statements. If this is so, it is possible to get an "is" from an "ought." How might this work? Harris himself never takes the time to spell this out; as such, I will attempt to utilize a strategy used by Paul Bloomfield in his paper "Two Dogmas of Metaethics."

If we accept that the "ought" propositions, which guide science (such as consistency), can induce "is" propositions, then we shall find a contradiction with the notion that we cannot induce "ought" propositions from "is" propositions. I shall endeavor to see how this may challenge the is-ought gap. Fortunately, Bloomfield has already created the logical scaffolding for this argument in his discussion of the Kantian notion that "ought implies can"'s tension with the Humean is-ought gap. Bloomfield forms the problem by, first, clearly stating the Kantian notion K: "If one ought to do X then one can do X." If K is true so should K's contrapositive. So we get K′: "If one cannot do X then it is not

the case that one ought to do X." He then notes that "One cannot do X" is an "is" statement, namely, a modal "is" statement. If it happens that "One cannot do X" is true we then have a case where an "is" does imply an "ought" (Bloomfield 2006, p. 443). Namely:

P1. If one cannot do X, then it is not the case one ought to do X.
P2. One cannot do X.
C. It is not the case that one ought to do X.

This is very clearly an "ought" statement derived from two "is" statements and presents a problem for the is-ought gap on its own. We are, however, concerned with Harris's attempt. Utilizing this same strategy can we create a scientific version of this problem?

One example of a scientific "ought" statement is "we ought not believe inconsistencies." This "ought" statement gives us reason to reject the Liar's Paradox. The Liar's Paradox arises from difficulty involved in evaluating a proposition like "this sentence is not true." As such we may form the conditional:

P: If one ought not believe inconsistencies, then the liar's paradox isn't both true and false.

Assuming true and false are properties of propositions, there are now four possibilities for the liar's paradox: (1) It is true, (2) it is false, (3) it is true and false, or (4) it is neither true nor false. If we assume any one of these four possibilities we can derive the third. First, if the sentence is true (1) then it is false, so the sentence winds up being both true and false. If it is false (2) then the sentence is not true: as such, it is true, and thus, once again true and false. If it is true and false (3), then it is true and false. Finally, if the sentence is neither true nor false (4), then it is not true, as such it is true and if it is true, then it is also false, so it is both true and false. Due to this abundance of absurdity the liar's paradox has taunted philosophers for several millennia. It seems obvious that if the liar's paradox is both true and false, then it is not the case that we ought not to believe inconsistencies. This is because the reason we ought not believe inconsistencies is that inconsis-

tencies are claimed impossible; but should there be a true inconsistency, then inconsistencies are possible. Let us now utilize P in an attempt to derive an "is" from an "ought."

We have already stated an uncontroversial[5] scientific ought, logical coherence, in the form of a conditional and have called it P. Continuing with Bloomfield's strategy we must now take the contrapositive of P, we'll call it P′ (Bloomfield 2006 p. 443):

> P′: If it is the case that the liar's paradox is true and false then it's not the case that we ought not believe inconsistencies.

Now let us note that P′ shows that given the negation of an "is" statement, we derive an "ought" statement. The left side of this conditional is quite obviously an "is" statement, while the right of this conditional is quite obviously an "ought" statement. This creates an obvious opportunity to derive an ought from an "is" statement, namely through modus ponens. Thus, we have an "is" statement, which seems to imply an "ought" statement. Moreover, this is not just any "ought" statement, this is an "ought" statement that is vital in scientific research and thus has a track record of success in determining "is" statements. This invocation of scientific success presumably adds to the weight of the "ought" derived.

It is important to remember that this still requires that the "ought" of moral statements be the same type of "ought" as that of the scientific statements. Should we accept the conflation of moral oughts with scientific oughts? I feel myself pulled in both directions, as I want to believe that any ought is an ought for the purposes of the is-ought gap, but I also realize there are varying motivations between moral oughts and scientific, or epistemological, oughts. Both can be couched in pragmatic terms and as part of a conditional: "If I want to gain empirical knowledge then I should use logical consistency" (the scientific conditional), and "If I want to make friends then I should be honest" (the friendly conditional). There is a large difference in these two conditionals, namely that the scientific conditional only applies to those who want to gain empirical knowledge while morality is supposed to

apply to all persons. Furthermore, the scientific conditional has no problem forcing scientists to follow it, as all or nearly all scientists do want to gain empirical knowledge. The friendly conditional, however, cannot force every person in its supposed domain to follow it, namely, a reclusive hermit[6]. As such, perhaps there is a difference in limitations between oughts, but it does not seem that this difference means that these oughts have any important difference, such as to render one type of ought immune from the gap, and the other infected.

Despite a possible conflation of scientific oughts and moral oughts, this still seems to be the strongest of Harris's three reasons. This is because to accept a division between moral and scientific oughts, on the basis of persons captured by a conditional's antecedent, will likely lead to a complete division of all oughts. For example, we may form the soccer conditional: "If I want to win at soccer, I should listen to my coach." Given that this conditional applies only to those who want to win at soccer, it does not mean that it is a different sort of ought than the hungry conditional: "If I want to satiate my hunger, then I ought to eat something." This is because a multitude of oughts distinguished by their antecedent would threaten to split the study of ought, which I take moral philosophy to be, into likely innumerable and irreconcilable subdisciplines. As such, why should we think that just because one conditional is limited only to scientists that it is not still an ought in the same sense as other oughts?[7] There are likely more arguments to be had about the types of oughts, but I will hesitantly conclude that an ought is an ought.

Beliefs About Facts and Beliefs About Values are Neurologically Equivalent

Harris's 3rd reason is that, "Beliefs about facts and beliefs about values seem to arise from similar processes at the level of the brain: it appears that we have a common system for judging truth and falsity in both domains" (Harris 2010, p. 11). To understand this last reason we must dip our toes into Harris's neuroscientific

research and Harris's notion of a belief.

Harris spends one of his five chapters on the notion of belief. He first defines belief in terms of knowledge, claiming: "When we distinguish between belief and Knowledge in ordinary conversation, it is generally for the purpose of drawing attention to degrees of certainty…" (Harris 2010, p. 115). He then speaks of how we utilize the phrase "I know it" when we are quite certain of our conviction, and contrariwise "I believe it is probably true" when we are less sure. As a philosophy student this depiction of belief and knowledge relations induces a certain mental squirm about that portion of my mind, which remembers introductory epistemology and the necessity of a belief's truth for it to become knowledge. This, however, is easily forgiven, as Harris is not writing solely for the philosopher's eyes, but a layman audience; as such, a discussion of necessary and sufficient conditions is not required for Harris. Harris eventually consults *The Oxford English Dictionary* and accepts the second definition as an appropriate working definition:

> Mental Acceptance of a proposition, statement, or fact as true, on the ground of authority or evidence; assent of the mind to a statement, or to the truth of a fact beyond observation, on the testimony of another, or to a fact or truth on the evidence of consciousness; the mental condition involved in this assent (Harris 2010, p.117).

While a large epistemological discussion is tempting, Harris needs only a working definition, comprehensible to laymen, so that he may then study the fMRI results of believing persons.

In utilizing his fMRI Harris has found that when shown a proposition, such as "California is part of the United States," and a subject judged that proposition true, the subject's fMRI showed certain brain activity, and when that subject judged that proposition false the subject's fMRI showed that same activity with extra activity[8] (Harris 2010, p.121). When Harris used moral propositions such as "It is good to let your children know that you love them," he saw a pattern similar to that used in the geographic

belief case. As such, it seems that Harris has uncovered that the brain does not differentiate between moral and non-moral beliefs.

This is a finding of great meta-ethical import because this finding does, *prima facie*, falsify many versions of non-cognitivism. Non-cognitivism is the notion that moral claims such as "It is wrong to lie" are not truly propositions, but rather non-propositional claims with no truth conditions; furthermore, non-cognitivists declare that these claims are expressions of attitudes (van Roojen 2011). Perhaps it is better defined as the view that moral beliefs are not proper beliefs, but some non-cognitive mental artifact. If many forms of non-cognitivism were true, then we would likely see striking differences in the neurology of moral and non-moral beliefs; after all, if moral and non-moral beliefs are different types of mental artifacts they will look different to our neurologist[9]. Harris has, however, found such beliefs to be mentally equivalent; as such, he has likely falsified non-cognitivism[10] (Harris 2010, p. 225).

However, Harris is mistaken in thinking Hume's problem is addressed by this, as Hume's problem is a logical one; even if our brains are constructed such that moral beliefs are treated like non-moral beliefs there is still a logical gap between is and ought. Hume would likely say that our brains are merely confused on the matter. We would not after all say that mathematical truths are of the same type as empirical truths merely because our brains treat them similarly. Rather, we would feel that our brains treat mathematical and empirical truths in the same manner or with the same cognitive apparatus. To make an analogy, a Geiger counter may click in the same manner for both alpha particles and beta particles, but this does not mean beta and alpha particles are the same type of particle. Rather it only means that both are particles. Likewise, Harris's fMRI detects beliefs, it does not show whether those beliefs are of the same sort, or of a different sort. As such, this research, while of great metaethical import in other ways, does not close the is-ought gap.

Conclusion

If Harris crosses the is-ought border, he does so on his second attempt. The first reason, the mere assertion of consequentialism, is not a plausible crossing of the is-ought bridge as one must first show consequentialism is true. Harris does not and cannot convince everyone of this position. Harris seems to conclude that those who do not accept this assertion, that there is a difference between the good life and the bad life, are "unlikely to have anything to contribute to a discussion about human well-being" (Harris 2010, p. 19). Harris's third reason, that moral beliefs are neurologically equivalent to non-moral beliefs, seems to miss the point. This gap is not one present only in the human brain, but rather a logical gap between is and ought. As such, Harris misses the mark. This leaves Harris's second attempt the most likely. The only strong objection to the second reason is that, perhaps, scientific and moral oughts are different. However, there seems little reason to believe this. As such, if Harris has traveled from the realm of is to the realm of ought it was by riding the scientific values bus.

Notes

1. I wish to thank Professor Mark Balaguer for his assistance with much of this article. Without his input its quality would surely be diminished.
2. As of this article's writing, one may watch this at: http://www.ted.com/talks/sam_harris_science_can_show_what_s_right.html
3. It is important to note that this quote is Boyd quoting another philosopher, Adams.
4. Often Harris employs similar or less complex versions of the arguments Boyd has made in the cited sources. Yet either Harris has chosen to avoid mention of Boyd's work or Harris is ignorant of it, as there is not a single mention of Boyd in *The Moral Landscape*. The most charitable assumption is that Harris was continuing to focus on crafting a book appropriate for a layman audience.
5. At least in scientific circles. Sometimes nothing seems uncontroversial amongst philosophers.
6. This might be remedied with a highly modified conditional of the form $[(((A \vee B) \vee C) \vee D)\ldots] \supset P$. Should such a conditional capture all non-socio-

pathic persons, as sociopaths are claimed to lack moral faculties by Harris 2010 P. 95, it could be considered an ought in the moral sense, as this conditional now causes all non-sociopathic persons to act in the moral manner. As such, we may then include in the quite possibly long antecedent something the hermit, or indeed, any non-sociopathic person, would follow. This could be what Boyd (2003 July, p. 25) calls an algorithm-like disposition.

7. There are, for example, very specific medical oughts (e.g., one ought not pull an arrowhead out), which do not apply to persons not trained in medicine. These oughts seem, at least *prima facie*, to be moral.
8. As an aside, Harris (2010, p. 121) notes that this likely confirms Spinoza's idea that understanding a statement is the same as tacitly accepting that statement as true, and that judging it false, requires extra work. Further, Harris feels that we like judging statements true, and dislike judging them false (Harris 2010, pp. 121). He is careful to make clear that his feeling is not yet fully supported by the scientific literature.
9. Although this does once again demand some sort of materialism, as if there is some sort of substance dualism it would be possible that the difference between moral and non-moral beliefs may be undetectable to an fMRI machine.
10. At the least, Harris has discovered a new phenomena, which non-cognitivists must explain. Namely, that if moral statements contain no propositional content, why does the brain treat them in the same manner it treats statements containing propositional content? As Harris puts it: "Unfortunately for this view, our brains appear to be unaware of this breakthrough in metaethics (non-cognitivism): we seem to accept the truth of moral assertions in the same way as we accept any other statements of fact" (Harris 2010, p. 225). Since there may be a possible explanation non-cognitivists can give, it may be hasty to believe non-cognitivism is falsified. Still this does present a new problem for non-cognitivism.

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Objective Consequentialism Cannot Account for Moral Worth of Actions

Aaron Brown

For many the belief that ethics is based on consequences can be very attractive. When looking at ethics from a practical standpoint it is somewhat understandable why objective consequentialism may be appealing, but this type of ethics contains a great fallacy, in that, because it only requires of people to pursue a favorable state of affairs and best possible outcomes, it makes it impossible to ever know what the right thing to do is, leaving actions void of any moral value. This renders this type of ethics relative and arbitrary, ultimately nothing more than a system of evaluations of outcomes and very often subject to unfavorable results because it is not possible to foresee the greatest possible consequences, which is a requirement of objective consequentialism. The moral worth or value of an action is very important because it incorporates the motive of the person performing the action. An action with positive consequences can still have no moral value; possibly the person did it only to achieve the best possible consequences but that individual can still be very immoral even if the perception of her is that she is moral. An ethical theory that allows for people who do not have moral intentions but are perceived as being moral cannot be a valid theory of ethics. Under objective consequentialism actions only have moral value if they achieve the best possible outcomes, which I will show is not possible.

In this paper I present arguments from both sides of the debate, those who attempt to either refute objective consequentialism or those who support it. Based on these arguments I will show that objective consequentialism is a flawed moral philosophy, which always results in ascribing no moral value to a

person's actions because her actions will never produce the best possible consequences and because her motives are not integrated into the evaluation of the action. As a solution, I present a theory of ethics based on Kant's deontology that does account for moral worth of actions, but only after overcoming a common misconception to his theory concerning the examples he uses.

Consequentialism is the moral theory that states that the consequences of one's actions are what determine the moral value of a person's actions and whether they are good or not, if the outcome produces the most amount of good or utility (I'll avoid happiness because that's more controversial). Consequentialism is not concerned with the initial motives of a person, as deontological ethics is. The concept of moral worth or moral value of actions is most commonly known in the text of Immanuel Kant. It has been used by many though to generally refer to the motive(s) of an action and whether those motives are moral, if they were done out of duty to the moral law. A moral motive gives the action worth or value, whereas an action that lacks this motive does not have moral worth. Many actions can have outcomes that are perceived as moral, or a person can be perceived as being moral when she really is not. Deontology is interested in a person's motives and whether they conform to certain moral laws or duties in establishing the moral value of a person's actions. Objective consequentialism is more specific though than the broad definition of consequentialism; it is concerned primarily with the best possible consequences and if those actions produce the greatest amount of good. It does not evaluate the intentions of the agent, which is one of its greatest faults. Eric Wiland explains that "[…] objective consequentialism (OC)… [is] the view that an action is right if and only if it in fact produces better consequences than any alternative action would have produced" (Wiland 2005, p. 431).

Wiland takes a strong position against objective consequentialism, pointing out a fatal flaw concerning right and wrong actions and what actions have moral worth. Under objective consequentialism actions never have moral worth because an agent is only concerned with maximizing good consequences. We can never

account for every variable, every possible outcome, to determine what actions will maximize good consequences. Therefore, we can never choose the action that produces the best possible consequences because we cannot see the future outcomes; our actions are always not quite good enough, and our actions do not have moral worth under objective consequentialism because an agent is not concerned with doing the right thing, only that the results are the best possible. Wiland's argument differs slightly from his contemporaries in that they would say most of the time a person does not do the right thing. His claim is much stronger here: people under objective consequentialism are doomed to never do the right thing, and their actions never have moral worth. Objective consequentialism cannot help in determining the most morally valuable actions because it's not possible to know what actions will bring about the best possible consequences. Wiland's argument is one of a *reductio ad absurdum* argument, in that the conclusion which follows from the premises is found to be absurd. It's absurd to accept a theory of ethics that results in saying that all actions are wrong and have no moral worth.

Objective consequentialism asks the agent to maximize good consequences but, as Wiland points out, it does not ask her do to more than she is capable of doing. This is important because shortly we will see an argument from Eric Moore in favor of objective consequentialism that makes the mistake of thinking that those who disagree with objective consequentialism base this on arguments that violate the ought-implies-can rule, meaning they are morally responsible to do a certain action but cannot because it is not in their power to do so. Wiland makes it clear we are only talking about what a person has the immediate capability of doing. The primary issue with objective consequentialism is that it asks of people to do things they don't know how to do; they cannot follow the ought-implies-can rule because even though they have the ability to perform those actions they do not know what actions to perform to bring about the best possible consequences. Wiland states in his paper, "[…] someone has the physical and intellectual ability to act in a way that happens to have optimific conse-

quences, but lacks the know-how to bring about these optimific consequences deliberately" (Wiland 2005, p. 354). So someone has the ability to perform an act where its outcome would be the best possible consequences out of all possible actions, but the agent does not perform that action because she lacks necessary knowledge or did not have the luck of randomly choosing correctly in a course of smaller choices that should lead to the best possible consequence.

Wiland uses some examples taken from Frances Howard-Snyder's paper, "The Rejection of Objective Consequentialism" (Howard-Snyder 1997, p. 242). She uses two examples, playing chess against a chess master and losing, and opening a safe; I'll stick with the safe example. You need to open a safe; opening the safe has the best possible consequences but you don't know this. You have the capability to open the safe. You are intellectually and physically able to but odds are you will fail. You could possibly guess the right combination and by accident maximize good consequences, but because you did not know that opening the safe maximizes good consequences you did not do it intentionally. Hence, your action is wrong and has no moral value.

Eric Moore, a proponent of objective consequentialism, objects to these types of examples and says that it is unfair to blame an agent for not knowing what the best possible outcome was: "We do not blame an agent for failing to perform the best action if there was no way that any reasonable, conscientious person could have known which it was" (Moore 2007, p. 84). This seems counterintuitive to the theory though: one is morally required to choose the actions that have the best possible consequences out of all possible actions available to her, but if she does not it is still acceptable because she probably just did not know better. This does not seem again like an acceptable theory for ethics. Objective consequentialism says the consequences of a person's actions should be the best possible. It does not say that only applies when you know all possible outcomes. That's why objective consequentialism is not action-guiding. It requires of people that they know things that are beyond their present assemblage of knowledge

to predict the future, and to know consequences they may never conceive of even though it is in their mental and physical power to do so.

Moore also claims that Howard-Snyder's example of the safe, which claims that a person is required to open the safe even when she does not know she is required to do so or does not have the combination, violates the rule of ought-implies-can. To clarify, the individual who is required to open the safe has the ability to open it but does not. She is not violating ought-implies-can in the way Moore thinks she is and she is not being asked to do something that she cannot do. One of the agent's available options is to unlock the safe; she just is unable to do it because she lacks the necessary knowledge.[1] If we follow the ethical theory of objective consequentialism, this problem is true in almost every decision one makes. You can never choose the action that maximizes the best possible outcomes, and you will always fall short no matter how hard you try. Your actions do not have moral worth because the motive for the action is not to do the moral thing but to simply produce the greatest consequences but almost always fail at doing so. The example does not violate the rule ought-implies-can, the ethical theory does. The ethical theory claims you can choose the action that has the best consequences when in fact that is not possible.[2]

The point that Moore is missing in defense of objective consequentialism is that even if it were possible to know all possible actions to be taken (which it is not) in a given situation, it still will not be possible to know which one will have the best consequences, which action will have the most moral worth. This is exactly Wiland's point: "But it turns out that one can almost never foresee how one can do what will produce the best consequences. Moreover—and more to the point—one almost never does what actually produces the best consequences. And so one almost never acts rightly, if OC is true" (Wiland 2005, p. 356). Objective consequentialism makes demands that are not possible to fulfill; it demands that the agent's actions have the best potential outcomes without ever providing the agent with the necessary

knowledge to achieve those outcomes: "No matter what you and I in fact do, there is surely something else we could have done that would have produced better consequences. But this means that, if objective consequentialism is correct, you and I never act rightly" (Wiland 2005, p. 357).

Moore attempts to avoid the challenges to objective consequentialism by claiming that objective consequentialism can tell us what features right actions have; it just does not give us standards for judging if an agent is morally good or not, or, as I have said, for ascribing moral worth to actions. He admits that being able to evaluate an agent's subjective properties, such as intent, motives, and rationale for actions, is important but not the only standard for a theory of ethics. He claims, in defense of objective consequentialism, that it is simply a misunderstanding of language and conflict of words, that many times when people use a word like "ought" or "wrong" it is ambiguous and they are simply expressing remorse over a past event where they could have chosen a different action. It is easy to see here that Moore is attempting to develop a defense for objective consequentialism based on an equivocation. He is saying that "ought" is not action-guiding, it is only a way of expressing remorse. This is clearly not an appropriate defense of objective consequentialism. "Ought," "wrong," and "can" are all words that apply to making immediate decisions and are action-guiding; they all signify what a person is morally obligated to do. Just because people use them differently does not make their action-guiding properties any less significant.

Moore misses the point entirely in his attempt to defend objective consequentialism. Objective consequentialism says that for an action to have moral value and be right it has to produce the best possible consequences, better than any other available action. The problem is we can never know what the best possible consequence will be; therefore, objective consequentialism makes it necessary that all actions will be morally wrong or have no moral worth because their moral worth is determined solely by their consequences (not the motives) of the agent. The ethical theory is insufficient at guiding the actions of the agent.

As a solution to the inadequacies of objective consequentialism (in that it is not action-guiding and asks a person to do things she is not capable of doing and assigns moral value to actions), we look to an ethical theory that does appropriately apply moral value to actions and is action-guiding in all circumstances, deontological ethics. This theory focuses more on an agent's motive and not always on the consequences of an action. It is generally considered as an ethical theory that is opposed to consequentialism. It does not require of an agent that she maximize good or utility, but to do the right thing for the right reasons in every situation, even when the outcomes may not produce the most good. I believe that Immanuel Kant explains it best. Starting in the preface of *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* Kant says that because we are human we reason in a certain way, and because we reason the way we do morality is based on *a priori* (i.e. independent of experience) principles. These principles form the "categorical imperative." There appears though to be a problem when first reading chapter one between 4:397-401, where Kant seems to claim that the only acts that have moral worth are those done out of a motive of duty alone. The problem that one may have here, if Kant is read this way, is it looks as if he is saying that for any action to have moral worth it must be done from duty alone; it cannot involve any type of inclination or desire, such as one's sympathy, love, or pleasure. Moral worth for Kant comes only from someone with a good will; when you have a good will your actions will conform to the moral law, and these actions then have moral worth. An action only has moral worth if it demonstrates the presence of a good will. Although a widespread interpretation, this above interpretation of this passage is wrong. Here I will give an explanation of what Kant is trying to do through his examples. Specifically he is using examples to determine what principles an agent is acting on when she acts from the motive of duty to better establish what actions have moral worth. Many times that's the problem with using illustrations: they can be interpreted too narrowly and can make the philosophical theory seem vulnerable to uncertainty. After this is clarified we will see how Kant's deontological ethics

is the proper system of ethics, which properly assigns moral worth to actions where objective consequentialism does not.

First let's take a look at what Kant says concerning *a priori* principles so we may better understand what he means when he describes which actions have moral worth and what principles are necessary for an action to be done from duty. In the preface Kant establishes that the basis for all morality must be *a priori* principles and that all beings (humans, and possibly beings we do not have knowledge of) are rational and have to make choices based on reason. This is the world of freedom, and being a rational being you have rational principles derived from our capacity to reason, unlike animals whose behavior is more reactive, driven by inclinations like fear and hunger. Reason helps to establish the categorical imperative, but this is another topic that I will not be going into detail about, though; I want to keep focus on how deontology assigns moral value to actions where objective consequentialism cannot. For Kant there will never be a time or circumstance when it is okay to not follow the categorical imperative; this principle is universal and *a priori* and will never change. This principle establishes moral obligations as opposed to a person's desires or inclinations, or even your general interest to produce good outcomes. Your desires are what you want to do and your moral obligations are what you ought to do (which is still something you want to do but not because it brings about pleasure for you). You do not need to have experience to know your moral obligations, meaning they are *a priori* obligations. They are established because of the way we reason. To do something immoral would contradict reason, it's a type of internal mechanism. Moral obligations do not differ between people. They are universal. Everyone has certain obligations, in all circumstances, and they never change, they are always present. Kant says that the knowledge of what is good and evil, what is in conformity or not with duty "is attainable by everyone, even the most ordinary human beings" (Kant 2002, 4:404). This means we do not need philosophers to tell us what is good and bad because these principles exist *a priori* in all rational beings. In other words, all people already possess these principles. You

are born with the basic principles to recognize good and evil, right and wrong. Moral obligations exist innately within us; if you have to ask the question sincerely "why be moral?" there must be something very wrong with you because you are born already knowing the importance of performing the moral act and to do otherwise goes against reason.

But not all actions, according to Kant, have moral worth, even if those actions are associated with these *a priori* principles or duties. Kant is restrictive with what actions have moral worth, which actions deserve moral esteem. At 4:398-399 Kant gives a few examples that demonstrate some of the restrictions for what actions have moral worth. If a person does not want to live but continues to do so out of duty, not out of an inclination or fear, then that person's actions have moral worth. If a humanitarian who once was sympathetic to others develops a cold temperament and is indifferent to others' suffering, if she loses the interest to help others but continues to do so out of duty, then for the first time her actions have moral worth. According to Kant, they deserve the highest esteem, unlike those who help people and enjoy doing it from an inclination to help, because they help people not because they want to, not from an inclination, but they do it only out of duty to the moral law. This is important because it seems to be one of the fundamental tenants of objective consequentialism, to choose the action that brings about the greatest consequences or good. The means to those consequences are not so important and therefore the value of those actions is indeterminate. In the end you will not be able to choose the action with the best consequence.

The first time someone reads this it may be interpreted as saying that the only time an action has moral worth is if it is done out of duty alone, that you cannot have any other inclinations or desires, you do it strictly out of duty. This is the incorrect interpretation because it is placing too much emphasis on the examples, and not on what Kant was attempting to establish by using these examples. To better understand why Kant used these examples we need to first clarify what it means when actions are done "from duty," as opposed to those done "in conformity with duty" and

determine what principles are necessary to establish acts that have moral worth and acts that do not.

Kant begins explaining what he means by duty at 4:397: "[…] the concept of duty, which includes that of a good will," meaning to perform an action from duty you must have a good will. That's the first requirement. The good will is a necessary component of acting from duty; you cannot act from duty without having a good will. The actions that are performed from duty bring out the presence of a good will and those actions establish what has moral worth. It's important here for Kant to demonstrate how a person's will can influence what actions she performs and which have moral worth. If deontology did not do this it would end up in the same place as objective consequentialism. The second requirement is that the action be done out of duty to the moral law not just in conformity with it. He uses examples to better illustrate what he means.

Kant begins with the example of the shopkeeper to contrast those who act accidently in accord with duty and those who later act out of duty, their actions being the only actions that have moral worth. The shopkeeper accidentally acts in accord with the duty when being honest: he does not overcharge his naive customers, the ones who would not know he is charging more for an item than its proper market value. The problem is he does it for selfish reasons, to ensure he does not develop a bad reputation so he can continue to have people buy from his shop to make him wealthier. The shopkeeper's actions were not a result of a good will. Kant says his actions stem only from self-interest not from duty or inclination, and it is just by happenstance that his actions accord with a moral principle. In an alternative situation it may be more beneficial for the shopkeeper to be dishonest, which may be a possibility for objective consequentialism, as a person may need to be dishonest to attempt to achieve the best possible consequence. There is nothing under objective consequentialism that restricts a person from being dishonest just as long as she attempts to ensure that the consequences are the best possible. Just as the cliché says, "you've got to crack a few eggs to make an omelet," the omelet

being the best possible outcome.

But even when a person's actions accord with a moral principle and are not done out of self-interest alone, Kant says that does not necessarily ensure they are done out of duty and have moral worth. To preserve one's life conforms to duty (Kant 2002, 4:389) but it is sometimes an action (or lack of a suicidal action) that is done out of the inclination of self-interest, wanting to continue to live as a means to further self-interested ends.[3] Because of this, this maxim has no moral worth. But if a person is suffering and no longer wishes to live and continues to do so strictly from duty, not fear or any type of inclination, this person's actions do have moral worth. What makes this person's action morally worthy is not her wish for death but her good will, her will to act out of duty, the duty to preserve life even when suffering. The will of the action is what is most important here. In these examples it's plain to see that the individuals involved are willing from duty because Kant tells us what their will is, a good will that is committed to morality. The examples do not set the limits of morally worthy actions; they are only there to help clarify morally worthy actions as opposed to actions performed from inclinations. This is the misinterpretation I talked about earlier, that his examples restrict morally worthy actions to only those that have no inclinations whatsoever, which is not true. It's somewhat impossible for humans not to have desires, even desires that conflict with moral duties. These types of inclinations are involved in pretty much every choice we make.

The next example of Kant's is very similar and better illustrates how a person's inclinations can influence her actions. He says that it is a duty to help others and there are those who derive a sense of pleasure from helping others but these people's actions do not have moral worth; their actions are simply done in conformity with duty. Sure it is favorable for people to follow such moral principles as helping the less fortunate but it just happens that their actions conform to duty and are not done out of duty. This is very common under objective consequentialism, that a person's actions just happen to conform with what may be perceived as being moral but because they are not done out of duty they do

not have moral worth. It is her inclinations in these situations that guide her actions, not her will to follow the moral law, to do it out of duty. Thomas Hill explains it well: "Kant reserves his term 'moral worth' for acts that deserve a special esteem for the quality of the agents will in doing them"[4] (Kant 2002, pp. 200). The will of the individual is what is important; an agent with a good will that wants her actions to conform to moral duties is not motivated primarily from inclination. The individual who enjoys helping others does it from the inclination of sympathy and happiness she receives from the actions performed, not because she wills her actions to be done from duty. Once again, similar to the shopkeeper, it is by accident that her actions accord with duty. This is not to say that actions that involve sympathy or love for others always have no moral worth, only that this specific example demonstrates action done from inclination and not duty. To have moral worth actions have to be done from duty and in doing so demonstrate the presence of a good will.

Kant's next example examines the sympathetic individual who loses the interest to help others by becoming cold and indifferent to others' suffering. When this individual continues to help he does not do it out of inclination but only out of duty, out of his motive to do the moral act, because his will is committed to morality. He no longer derives any pleasure from the help he provides; he does not help others from guilt but helps them because he wills his actions be done out of duty to moral principles. This person's actions now have moral worth. Once again this is not to say that inclinations cannot be involved. This example is used to clearly demonstrate someone acting from duty and not inclination. His actions, unlike the individuals before, are not accidentally in accord with duty. No matter how the circumstance may change for him he still continues to help others because he wills that his actions be done out of duty. I'm reviewing all of Kant's examples to ensure that those that read his work understand why he used them. It's also important because each demonstrates certain actions that do not have moral worth under deontology, but which may be interpreted as having moral worth under objective conse-

quentialism, but as I discussed above no action has moral worth because no action results in the best possible consequences.

One may object to Kant's view based on a lack of knowledge of motives. The objection may be that we can never know the individual's motives, whether she is willing to do actions out duty and not inclination, if her actions accord with duty by accident and do not have moral worth. Kant gives a response to this though: "It is in fact absolutely impossible to identify by experience, with complete certainty, a single case in which the maxim of an action—an action that accords with duty—was based exclusively on moral reasoning and the thought of one's duty" (Kant 2002, 4:407). It's not possible to know others' intentions and maybe not possible to clearly know even our own intentions. The examples are used so one can better understand what Kant is saying about what actions have moral worth. Within each example he has complete control over what is understood about the subjects; but in real life this is never possible, you can never have such precise insight into the intentions of others or even of your own intentions. The best that can be done is to understand the restrictions of morally worthy acts and evaluate actions as best as possible. What one can know possibly is the presence of a good will and that her actions are done out of duty to the moral law. At best Kant is describing what is necessary for an action to have moral worth; he is not saying that we will always know for sure if they do. The necessary conditions are only a guide for our actions, so we can strive to be as moral as possible. Under objective consequentialism the best we can hope is that a person attempts to bring about the best possible consequences and fails.

It still may seem that all of the examples Kant has used restrict actions deserving moral worth to those that do not involve other inclinations, which is how many misunderstand Kant's examples. I have explained that Kant's examples do not explicitly claim that other inclinations are not permissible but only that they give clear instances in which someone is acting strictly out of duty to moral principles to better help the reader understand, from an objective point-of-view, what actions have moral worth. Is it possible to

have multiple motivations, ones which are not directly aligned with moral duties involved in an action and the action still have moral worth? This has already been answered, yes. Kant is trying to make clear that for an action to have moral worth it cannot be motivated by inclinations; inclinations cannot be what motivate us to act. It's obviously impossible for humans to act without any emotion; people would only be moral robots with programs that only allowed them to perform moral actions. Kant understands that there are numerous inclinations or motivations involved, some which are not moral, that are associated with almost all of our actions. If your actions are guided by your commitment to duty then the conflict with your inclinations should be minimal, but if your inclinations are the principal cause of your actions, your action will not have moral worth.

Another statement of Kant's that might be misinterpreted is that, not only is it important that your will be devoted to the moral principle and that your actions are done from this principle, but also for your actions to have moral worth they must not be done because of some desired end. Actions must be done "in the maxim in accord with which the action is decided upon" (Kant 2002, 4:400). This is in line with what we have already said, that the reason you act is not from some desire or inclination but because you do it out of duty to the moral principle. Your desires are concerned with the end result, where a will committed to duty to the moral principle is mainly concerned with performing the moral act: "Where then can this worth be found if not in the willing of the action's hoped for effect? It can be found nowhere but in the principle of the will, irrespective of the ends that can be brought about by such action" (Kant 2002, 4:400). Your will to act out of duty has to be the primary concern for determining moral worth; it cannot be contaminated by your desires for a desired end result. This is in direct opposition with objective consequentialism. Objective consequentialism is concerned only with desired end.

Kant's theory begins to start sounding a little depressing though: everyone who is acting out of duty looks to be very unhappy, or you are not allowed to be happy when acting out of

duty in order for your actions to have moral worth. Kant addresses this at 4:399: "to secure one's happiness is a duty (at least indirectly)." One reason is that unhappy people tend to be inclined to pursue immoral actions. He is careful to say *indirectly*, because direct pursuit of happiness and pleasure are inclinations and are not moral duties. Kant says that as long as the "inclination to happiness has failed to determine the will" (Kant 2002, pp. 200), meaning it is not the foremost motive that influenced your actions, only a commitment to the moral principles, a commitment to do your action from duty, if this is what moved one to act, gives the action moral worth. Kant does not have a problem with the pursuit of happiness; in fact he says that it is very common but happiness needs to be confined to what is morally permissible.[5]

This conception of happiness, confined to what is morally permissible, also applies the same way to such inclinations as sympathy and love. To ensure that one is not unintentionally conforming their actions to duty, it must be made clear in Kant's examples who merits moral worth—namely, those individuals who will their actions be done from moral principles. Very often we confuse actions of sympathy and love with ones that have moral worth; to help another because you love them is not enough to give those actions moral worth. Most of the time when a person reacts out of love or sympathy she is not doing it for moral reasons; she is doing it out of a compulsion from her inclinations. Kant is making clear that these actions do not have moral worth because her main motivator is inclination, desire, not duty. It is possible though that an action can have moral worth when inclinations such as sympathy or love are involved as long as the primary reason that motivates such action is the duty to moral principles.

It is possible to see how the examples Kant used could be misinterpreted as saying that the only actions that have moral worth are those that are done solely out of duty and do not involve any inclination. Kant used the examples to establish situations where people acted from inclinations instead of acting from duty, many times where their actions could have been confused as having moral worth. But as I explained these examples were not claiming

that for an action to have moral worth it must be from duty alone without any inclination. The examples were used to contrast individuals whose actions at first originated from inclination and later from duty. The person, who once was sympathetic and now no longer is, only helps others because her primary motivation is the principle of duty, her devotion to moral laws. Kant is never claiming that one cannot have other inclinations involved for an action to have moral worth.[6] Those whose actions originated from inclination in different situations could easily perform immoral acts, as is common under objective consequentialism. But those whose actions were performed from duty would, if circumstances change, still be doing the action from duty and their actions would have moral worth. Under objective consequentialism if the circumstances change, the best possible consequences change. If a person's action had moral worth before, now they may not, even though the actions were the same in both situations. Because the outcomes were different and one outcome was not the best possible, the person's action does not have moral worth.

Kant's deontological ethics does not suffer from the flaws that objective consequentialism does. Deontology determines what actions have moral worth because it focuses on the will of the agent, not the consequences of her actions, and in doing so it is action-guiding where objective consequentialism is not. Deontological ethics provides the necessary structure so an individual can better evaluate her actions and whether those actions are morally worthy. Under objective consequentialism, because there is no concern for an agent's motives and only a concern for maximizing the best possible consequences, one cannot determine what actions have moral worth. It is impossible for an agent to know what actions are required to ensure that the consequences are always the best possible; most of the time, in fact always, the agent will be acting immorally because she could have acted in a way that would have produced better consequences according to objective consequentialism. And if by chance she does produce the best possible consequences it will only be by luck. It would have been impossible for her to know the outcome of her actions

prior to performing them. With deontology the intent of a person can be evaluated, and in doing so moral worth can be assigned to actions that stem from an agent with a good will and who has done the action out of duty to the moral law, no matter what the consequences of those actions may end up being.

Notes

1. Some may confuse lack of knowledge with inability. Under a strict interpretation of objective consequentialism you have it within your ability, physically and mentally, to guess the right combination to the safe. Yes, the probability of doing so is very unlikely but it still is the best possible consequence; that's why again this theory of ethics seems absurd. I want to thank my referee for pointing out this ambiguity.
2. Maybe an example of ought-implies-can can help illustrate what I mean. You go to the grocery store and when you get home after buying some things you realize that the checker has given you too much change back. The store is now closed so you cannot just rush back to give them the money. The ought-implies-can rule would say that you ought to give the money back and if you ought to that means you can give the money back; you are morally obligated to give back something that is not yours. Even if that night while falling asleep you figure out a bunch of reasons why not to give back the money, like the product costs too much, or it's a corporation and it does not need it and is already rich, it's possible under objective consequentialism you may attempt to develop reasons like this to justify an immoral act because you believe that it will produce the greatest possible consequences, like you will donate money to starving children which is much better than helping to pay for another expensive sports car for some CEO.
3. Thanks to Professor Dean, whose comments helped me to gain some clarity on this paper.
4. Footnote 20 by Thomas Hill
5. Thanks again to Professor Dean for his comments.
6. Even though I did not directly quote, some of my ideas may have been influenced by Herman (1982).

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The Transvaluation of Nietzsche

Caleb Thies

Introduction

You and I are not created equal. Perhaps you are capable of many athletic or physical feats that I can scarcely imagine attempting without looking foolish. Perhaps my understanding of the various branches of philosophy surpasses yours. Are these merely consequences of the random allotment of talents and abilities all humans receive at birth, or is it a window into the true structure of humanity—a structure long forgotten by the masses who willingly accept the professed existence of human equality? Friedrich Nietzsche certainly believed the latter to be true. His *Genealogy of Morality* (1887) enthusiastically depicts ancient society in its original state: its structure of two opposing castes (the noble aristocracy and the lowly plebeians) and its subsequently divided aristocracy composed of the physically imposing warriors and the powerless, intelligent priests. These two distinct segments of the aristocracy produced applicable forms of valuation whose natural contradiction led to our modern moral state of affairs. The more corporeal warriors preferred a system befitting their physical abilities whereas the weaker priests advocated a morality that reinforced their mental strengths and simultaneously condemned their aristocratic rivals.

According to Nietzsche, modern Western morality is nothing more than a creative veil or subliminal sickness that has inhibited humanity from realizing the true state of nature. We are the product of *ressentiment* turned creative, a living testament to the superior intelligence of priests. The noble warrior has been reduced to the role of slave and her method of valuation (her process towards true happiness) has been condemned and eventually replaced by the themes of *selflessness*, *internalization,* and *asceticism*. But how

could this have happened? The Nietzschean paradox of the lamb's usurpation and domestication of the powerful bird of prey requires a more intuitive and plausible explanation. We are supplied with priestly motives, but there remains some plausible doubt as to the explanations given by Nietzsche in terms of his argument for the indoctrination of the warrior aristocracy concerning slave morality. His usage of the "birds of prey" example and subsequent explanation of the establishment of society enable the possibility for warrior non-compliance or non-consideration of the priestly attempts at moral subversion. In our quest to acquire a more plausible account of the establishment of society and the subsequent defeat of the "bird of prey" it will best serve us to initially examine the opposing valuation systems of the warriors and the priests, the origins of these valuation systems, and the eventual formation of the Nietzschean genealogy.

As Owen and most other Nietzsche scholars will attest**,** "given the complexity of the rhetoric and argumentative structure" of Nietzsche's *Genealogy*, one must identify what strategy they intend to employ in their analysis of the work (Owen 2008, p. 143). I do not question the necessity of such efforts in most cases and, as such, my forthcoming argument relies on a literal reading to remain viable. The explanations Nietzsche provides documenting the warrior-aristocracy's transition to the selfless morality of the priests are based upon weaker assumptions than are intuitively possible. We as readers are asked to simply assume that the consequent adoption[1] of slave morality has occurred without *convincing* motivational support for warrior action.[2] This paper will analyze those authorial explanations of warrior and priest actions presented in the *Genealogy* and evaluate them for plausibility.

The Formulation of Valuation Systems

The first essay of Nietzsche's *Genealogy* attempts to develop his explanation for the historical account of aristocratic transvaluation. Although this development fails to provide any substantial

evidence of motivation for the nobility's actions, it does provide a significant descriptive foundation for his future arguments towards such evidence. The formation of the respective valuation systems of the warrior-aristocracy and the ascetic priests, their combative definitions of "good" and "bad" (or "good" and "evil"), and Nietzsche's linkage of priestly success with the advancement of Judeo-Christian morality all serve to establish the stage upon which the nobility's "bad conscience" emerges.

The original authors of value-judgments were the members of the warrior-aristocracy. Throughout history, these noble creatures used the term "good" to describe their own attributes and desires. The opposite of these characteristics and abilities, namely those belonging to the powerless lower class, began to assume the moniker of "bad." Nietzsche provides a historical etiology of the development of these "good" and "bad" concepts by examining the roots of particular words in ancient Greek associated with the nobility and plebeians.[3] Though I do not find his historical record to be overly convincing, the attempt alone seems to be a more appropriate step to take rather than the anachronistic methods preferred by the English psychologists (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 1).

These noble definitions of "good" and "bad" eventually fell victim to the centuries-long subversion by the priests, whose contrary definition of "good" and use of the term "evil" as opposed to "bad" remain intact—according to Nietzsche—in the modern era. This cunning reversal or renaming of warrior values could only have been successful with the intelligence and vengefulness of the ascetic priest. The acts of the priests against the domination exuded by the warriors above them, as described in Nietzsche's example of the helpless lambs and "large birds of prey", represent a characteristic absurdity of what would become the priestly model of valuation:

> There is nothing strange about the fact that lambs bear a grudge towards large birds of prey: but that is no reason to blame the large birds of prey for carrying off the little

> lambs. And if the lambs say to each other, 'These birds of prey are *evil*[4]; and whoever is least like a bird of prey and most like its opposite, a lamb, —is good, isn't he?', then there is no reason to raise objections to this setting-up of an ideal beyond the fact that the birds of prey will view it somewhat derisively, and will perhaps say: 'We don't bear any grudge at all towards these good lambs, in fact we love them, nothing is tastier than a tender lamb.' It is just as absurd to ask strength not to express itself as strength, not to be a desire to overthrow, crush, become master, to thirst for new enemies, resistance and triumphs, as it is to ask weakness to express itself as strength (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 13).

The striking differences between the noble and priestly groups concerning their understanding of happiness and the role they allow *ressentiment* to play in their lives naturally lead to their vastly different, and almost opposite, definitions of 'good' and 'bad' (or 'good' and 'evil' for the priests). Noble conception of 'good' is both spontaneous and personal. It refers to those things which complement the "powerful physicality" they enjoyed. Only from these extemporaneous conceptions of 'good' does the notion of 'bad' get created. It is merely "an afterthought, an aside, a complementary colour." Contrast this with the 'evil' notions of the ressentiment-filled priest and we, according to Nietzsche, witness the "actual deed in the conception of slave morality." The 'evil enemy' contained those powerful, dominant warriors whose abilities instigated the growth of ressentiment within the priests. These 'beasts of prey', when confronted with the suffocating nature of culture (a culture manufactured and championed by the men of ressentiment), "return to the innocent conscience of the wild beast" and possibly commit any number of crimes "in a mood of bravado and spiritual equilibrium." The cold, cruel warriors were such that the powerless priests, out of their ressentiment, became the "actual instruments of culture." They meant "to breed a tame and civilized animal, a household pet, out of the [noble] beast of

prey" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 11). This taming of the wild beast through the advent of accountability—namely the idea that the strong were free to be weak and thus were responsible for their actions, eventually led to the creation of "bad conscience" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 13).

This priestly morality is a negative, rejecting response in reaction to those things outside of the self that do not comply with it. The requirement of an external world is characteristic of ressentiment. This is in contrast to the noble valuation method which does not consider those things outside of itself except to reemphasize its own exclamation of 'yes' in terms of itself. "It grows spontaneously." If and when this noble system "makes a mistake against reality," it does so because it does not possess true knowledge of that lower 'sphere.' This is not to say that it hates the opposing system or 'sphere' but that it simply does not desire any knowledge about it. Ressentiment works very differently. Those born into nobility did not need to construct anything to feel that they were happy. They simply "felt they were 'the happy'." Men of ressentiment, as they "are wont to do," mislead themselves into their feelings of happiness or, at the very least, require an artificial construction of happiness achieved by "looking at their enemies" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 10).

Ressentiment may also occur within the warrior-aristocracy; however, there is a very important difference between the form, duration, and frequency of the emotion when compared to the priests and lower class. Amongst the nobility, ressentiment, when it rarely occurs, "is consumed and exhausted in an immediate reaction and therefore does not poison." The warrior is able to forget. She, unlike her enemies, does not consider misdeeds, misfortunes, or her enemies themselves seriously for any significant length of time. It is her "superabundance of power" that enables such a reaction.

The priestly method involved the manufacturing of the *moral agent*, one who was capable of *choosing* their state of existence. Such "secretly smouldering emotions of revenge and hatred" suggest to the strong that they are free to become weak—

that "the birds of prey are free to be lambs." This process effectively holds the birds of prey *responsible* for being what they are (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 13). What an ingenious plot! By establishing weakness as an accomplishment, the priests and members of the lower class were able to, through self-deception, construe their social standing as freedom; the very same existence that had previously been a source of unhappiness.

Historically, the group Nietzsche implicates as the most successful purveyors of this moral agency are the priests behind the Judeo-Christian tradition (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 7). Their creation of a favorable God who valued their weak, ascetic state has done more to solidify the effects of priestly revenge than any other efforts before or since. "Rejecting the aristocratic value equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = blessed)" the priests "ventured, with awe-inspiring consistency, to bring about a reversal" of said aristocratic values and it was they who ultimately succeeded. Nietzsche attempts to trace this reversal over two millennia by offering an alternative view of history in which the Judeo-Christian transvaluation of morality triumphed over Rome despite military losses, lost ground to the European Renaissance only to regain a foothold through the Protestant Reformation, and ultimately, destroyed the last hope of aristocratic dominance with the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 16). Although this lineage of priestly victory is only grounded upon intuition, it is rather effective in establishing the values of Judeo-Christian tradition as the pivotal antithesis to noble values. The motivation of the priests to enact this reversal is born out of their ressentiment of the powerful nobility. This ressentiment, by taking the form of Judeo-Christian values, eventually gave way to the inception of the "bad conscience" within the warrior-aristocracy. It is this "bad conscience", according to Nietzsche, that produced the motivation necessary for the nobility to succumb to the deception of the priests (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 11).

The Origin of "Bad Conscience"

Although we have been provided with an account for how the transvaluation process occurred in a historical context, Nietzsche has yet to provide us with his explanation of the process in a more methodological sense. The latter portions of the *Genealogy* seek to do just that by redefining common understanding of the conscience and moving ever closer to his designation of Judeo-Christian ideals as evil incarnate.

The foundations of the conscience, what Nietzsche refers to as the "bad conscience", resides in humanity's development and conception of *promises*. This capacity to make and carry out promises stood in contrast to the ample forgetfulness that defined ancient man. The act of making and fulfilling promises, a responsibility extended to immediate family and, presumably, fellow members of the aristocracy, requires the consideration of the future which necessarily sets humanity above the remainder of nature. However, the ability to carry out promises also necessitates the implementation of memory within the human animal. But "How do you impress something upon this partly dull, partly idiotic, inattentive mind, the personification of forgetfulness, so that it will stick?" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 3). Nietzsche the psychologist suggests that the only way to do so is to continuously make something *hurt* for it to be memorized by the brain. This pain is what registered the first remnants of morality in the brain of the ancient warrior. The conscience, our personalized notion of "what we ought to do and what we ought not to do," is itself "a late fruit of the memory tree."[5, 6]

This early morality mainly consisted of the fulfilling of obligations within the creditor/debtor relationship "which is as old as the very conception of a 'legal subject'" and even more so than the first forms of organized society (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 4). This relationship, based upon the concept of 'debt', initiated the notions of 'guilt' and 'punishment'. Punishment became the response of retribution necessitated in scenarios of a debtor's failure to repay their creditor. It would be a mistake to assume that

punishment deserved in a given situation is based upon a debtor's opportunity to act otherwise, but rather it is out of anger "directed at the perpetrator." The key idea that this method of punishment initiated was that of *compensation*—namely that "every injury has its equivalent which can be paid in compensation" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 4). "Everything has its price; everything can be compensated for." This standardization of action and reference, once established over a substantial amount of time, never lost its course in the minds of humanity. Once a standard of retaliation was established by creditors, a comparative table of punishments for debtors can then be established. *Justice* (equitable treatment between those in power and the forcefulness towards a settlement with those who do not have power) soon followed (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 8).[7]

The power of the creditor, as acts of cooperation and mutuality, expelled the individualistic qualities of human existence up until that time and slowly became the power of the State. Individual persons began to organize themselves into communities for protection, which resulted in those communities becoming responsible for ensuring said protection. Social contracts that drew their origins from the creditor/debtor relationship became the laws that governed the members of a community. Those who defied these laws were punished by the authority invested in the State. Nietzsche sees this as a crucial movement in the development of justice, as punishment was no longer aggressive, proactive retaliation. It had degenerated *pari passu* in that it had become merely a reactive force. Man's animalistic instincts were subdued by his newly formed comparative table of punishments (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 11). The same degeneration of the notion of justice applies to the notion of punishment as well. Both, over time, developed into the very opposite of their original functions. At the inception of the creditor/debtor relationship, punishment was indistinguishable from retaliation. With the establishment of the State, however, it was conformed to the new laws or moral codes of the community. Once this transition occurs, punishment becomes justifiable as a guilt-inducing power of the State against

its "debtors." Nietzsche describes such action as the attempt to arouse "the feeling of guilt in the guilty party" as a means to initiate a "pang on conscience." This, in Nietzsche's view, violates modern reality and psychology. The result of such punishment is not an awakening of the guilty conscience, but the instigation of fear and anguish within the guilty party towards the impending wrath of the State. As Foucault would agree, punishment of this sort tends to make men "harder and colder" rather than upright, moral members of society (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 14).

Although State punishment is not to be credited with the establishment of the "bad conscience", it did play a major role in allowing its creation. Nietzsche credits the origin of the State to the "blonde beasts"[8]:

> [A] master race, which, organized on a war footing, and with the power to organize, unscrupulously lays its dreadful paws on a populace which, though it might be vastly greater in number, is still shapeless and shifting. In this way, the 'state' began on earth (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 17).

Once this society was formed and the notions of punishment and justice experienced their transformations, the bad conscience was born. Humanity's reaction to the imprisonment and peace of the state produced a "serious illness" within them. The transition that these half-wild human beings experienced, in the words of Nietzsche, was no different "than it was for the sea animals when they were forced to either become land animals or perish." The instincts of the human animal were all at once unable to be discharged outwardly. This obstruction of nature forced mankind to *internalize* their instincts—an act that led to the evolution of what would become 'the soul' (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II Section 16).

> The whole inner world, originally stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin, was expanded and extended itself and gained depth, breadth and height in proportion to the degree that the external discharge of

> man's instincts was obstructed. Those terrible bulwarks with which state organizations protected themselves against the old instincts of freedom—punishments are a primary instance of this kind of bulwark—had the result that all those instincts of the wild, free, roving man were turned backwards, against man himself. Animosity, cruelty, the pleasure of pursuing, raiding, changing and destroying—all this was pitted against the person who had such instincts: that is the origin of 'bad conscience' (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 18).

This societal based disease effectively caused the human animal to hate itself and pursue systematic self-mutilation and self-violation. But now we may finally see what conditions were necessary (and were available) for the ascetic priest to promote the "self-contradictory concepts [of] *selflessness*, *self-denial*, and *self-sacrifice*" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 18). For an untold vast expanse of history, the powerless priests had internalized their ressentiment of the warrior-aristocracy and now, with the establishment of society and the accompanying internalization of humanity's animal instincts, the stage was set for a most cunning revenge—a revenge that the priests so aptly seized and transformed into "seduction in its most sinister and irresistible form" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 8).

Judeo-Christian morality, built upon the carefully crafted strategy of the priests, presented a valuation system consistent with the new conditions of humanity. The original morality of the nobility no longer appeared applicable to the standards of communal existence. Despite the cooperative aspects of Christian values and its 'new love' personified by Jesus of Nazareth, the decisive blow that the priests achieved against the warrior-aristocracy came in the form of their arguments. Harkening to the embedded linkage of man and the creditor/debtor relationship, they presented God, the supremely powerful, all-knowing Being whose abilities far surpassed those of the nobility, as the ultimate creditor. Humanity's debt of existence could never be repaid; a

realization that thrust mankind, including the warrior-aristocracy, into inconsolable guilt. Humanity then turns against itself in its grief only to find relief in the person of Jesus Christ who, as God in man, sacrificed Himself "out of love for His debtor." How irresistible a bait indeed! (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Sections 21–22).

It would seem, then, that Nietzsche has provided two plausible explanations for the motivation of the nobility to welcome transvaluation. The initial fear of Divine retribution of an all-powerful creditor demands adherence to slave morality. If this fear were to either fade over time due to plain preoccupation of the human mind or a reflective realization of hopelessness in such a predicament, the guilt embedded within the "God on the Cross" paradox ensures the effectiveness of priestly revenge (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 8).

So has Nietzsche succeeded in presenting a logical, though unorthodox genealogy for the inception of Judeo-Christian morality within humanity? My response is an emphatic "No." My objection to his argument is not based upon his far too assuming etymologies or historical accounts of the nobility's struggle against the advancement of Christian doctrine, although these aspects of the *Genealogy* do present their own problems of believability, but rather it is based upon the implausibility of his explanation of the motivation behind the actions of the nobility in adopting priestly morality. Although the aforementioned fear of Divine retribution and the guilt-ridden paradox of God's self-sacrifice are sufficient arguments to maintain adherence to Christian doctrine, it is my assertion that, according to those abilities inherent in the warrior-aristocracy (as insisted by Nietzsche himself) and the *available alternative modes of action*, it does not logically follow that the constraints of society in its infancy would have been sufficient to deter the warrior-aristocracy from exhibiting their natural instincts and showing themselves to be impervious to priestly deception.[9]

The Inconsistencies of Nietzsche's *Genealogy*

Let me begin by reexamining the Nietzschean characteristics of the nobility. The warrior-aristocracy is personified by the Homeric heroes of ancient Greece and the militant brashness of Alexander the Great. These men sought pleasure and their concept of pleasure consisted of "a powerful physicality, a blossoming, rich, even effervescent good health that includes the things needed to maintain it, war, adventure, hunting, dancing, jousting, and everything else that contains strong, free, happy action" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 7). Their violently dominant, ruthless ability to conquer "shapeless" masses of people, even when their numbers were significantly inferior, allowed them to exist as "born organizers" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 17). Such power would have naturally vaulted them to leadership positions within these fledgling societies. Herein resides the crux of my complaint. If the inherent qualities and characteristics of society work to subdue the natural instincts of the warrior-aristocracy, keeping in mind that they occupied the leadership roles of these early societies and possessed the ability to establish them through brute strength, why would they not simply abandon their current roles in said society in favor of continuing to dominate other feeble collections of weaker people? Certainly the prospects being capable of free action or even, to be more specific, of reengaging ill-equipped opponents on the battlefield would far surpass the enjoyment marked by a peaceful society.

To better illustrate my complaint, let us revisit the famous "birds of prey" example that Nietzsche provides in his First Essay. The lambs were supposedly successful in introducing feelings of accountability and guilt amongst the evil bird population. I have previously detailed their methods of invoking such feelings and introducing the "bad conscience" yet a question still remains: Why would the birds of prey care or even acknowledge the opinions of the weaker priests, regardless of the content of those opinions? If their malicious psychological methods were sensibly at work

then wouldn't it remain plausible for the birds of prey to simply take to the air and leave in search for other, less outspoken prey? No sense of defeat could exist if the warriors were fully unaware of the priestly revenge being enacted against them and therefore flight would not run counter to their original nature. If the revenge were to have been of an entirely unrecognizable character from the perspective of the warriors then perhaps they would have unknowingly fallen victim to it, much like a frog remains in a slowly heated pan until it transpires. But these methods could not have been completely undetectable. They were distinguishably contrary to the warrior nature and this observation would make itself necessarily evident. Once this evidence had made itself known (even to the slightest degree) then action would be taken. To assume the Nietzschean suggestion that the irresistible, psychological quality of priestly revenge enabled it to go undetected and undeterred into the warrior population is to take a less intuitive stance than to assume the most inept warrior could not recognize the threat slave morality posed to their animalistic nature and could subsequently disenfranchise herself from the antagonistic society seemingly sponsoring such undesirable ideals.

The greatest distinction between my intuition and that of Nietzsche is the *self-evident* quality I assign to priestly revenge. No degree of intricacy or genius behind such a plot can extinguish the obvious diametrical nature of the ascetic valuation system. Consider the following thought experiment: Suppose you have continually enjoyed a particular action (e.g., taking money from strangers) for as long as you are able to remember. Never in your experience have you been prevented from exercising this action due to your commanding presence and the force of your will. You then find yourself in a situation in which one of your potential targets asserts that your actions are incredibly wicked and, by the undeniable, indefinable, and unavoidable nature of their argument, an overwhelming sense of guilt falls upon you. Assuming that you are incapable of understanding the complexities of what has taken place, would you, as Nietzsche suggests, agree with the intelligent stranger or would you simply remove yourself from

the situation (out of confusion or distaste, etc.) and seek another target? Admittedly, this example fails to entirely contain all of the irresistible qualities Nietzsche grants to priestly revenge, yet I find that it sufficiently encompasses the majority of my point. The warriors would not have had to realize any characteristic of priestly revenge beyond its obvious hostile nature for them to seek to avoid it. One cannot simply assert the existence of irresistibility concerning opinions that so prominently refute one's own nature.

An obvious objection to my aforementioned assertion can be found simply by looking at the habits of those very historical figures upon which Nietzsche based his concept of the warrior-aristocrat. Men like Alexander retained possession of the cities and countries that he conquered. The same can be said for the vast majority of history's military heroes. Yet we cannot take examples from more recent history and apply them to a scenario in which society is coming into existence for the first time. Alexander's actions would have had to have been based upon the practice of such societies. Although common military action suggests that the original warriors more than likely followed this pattern of domination and occupation, if society possessed such contrary aspects to the warriors' animal instincts then it would follow that these warriors would opt to refuse maintenance of society in favor of pursuing their natural desires. The spontaneous nature of the nobility would also suggest that, in the event of their natural instincts being subdued and the initiation of an internal sense of entrapment, they would prefer the abandonment or dissolution of society in exchange for the opportunity to return to the freedom of their animalistic states. These warriors were not the type to grow content with only a few victories, as is paralleled in ancient military campaigns in Greece and Rome; if the occupation of conquered groups and the resulting organization of those people became too great a weight so as to inhibit the driving forces of the warriors, the most logical result would be the termination of those societies by their very leaders. Successive domination and abandonment of these societies would have ensured an endless supply of powerless groups to plunder as once the leadership and organization of

these early societies were to leave with the nobility, it would only be a matter of time until those weaker persons dissolved back into their shapeless forms.

Another objection I have received considers the vulnerability of the warrior-aristocracy's position within the earliest forms of society—namely that the powerful organizational forces at work in these societies would have enabled the priests to influence the opinions of the nobility before any abandonment of the society could take place. If this were the case, no realization of limitation would have occurred amongst the nobility thereby ensuring that their natural ability to organize conquered groups would remain in practice. This would require the priests to have responded relatively quickly to the opportunity of revenge placed before them. I cannot dispute an assumption of the capacity or timing of priestly revenge; however, there does remain a significant problem with this objection. If early society were to only weaken the abilities of the strong and not completely inhibit them from pursuing various animalistic instincts, then I would argue that they would remain impervious to any deception of the priests in terms of transvaluation. The instincts of the warrior-aristocracy would have had to have been completely turned inward for the efforts of the priests to succeed. The practice of their original, natural value system would have to be entirely prohibited. As I argued earlier, however, if the nobility were to have been the leaders of ancient society and this given society were to completely prevent the achievement of their valuation system, the nobles would have simply walked away from their duties to pursue actions they were more inclined to seek. The lower class could not have forced their continued dominance nor would any sense of duty or obligation override their instincts to chase and conquer outwardly.

Concluding Remarks

Given the complex nature of Nietzsche's *Genealogy,* it is difficult to produce an analysis of its arguments without conceding to a number of faults. Within this paper I have attempted to present an accurate and literal depiction of his arguments in an attempt

to highlight a lingering insufficiency I believe to exist within the work. Taking into account the detailed process by which he suggests selfless morality came to be entrenched amongst the warrior-aristocracy, I find it difficult to accept the limited availability of actions he grants the warriors to possess. Despite any construction of the priestly strategy to subvert their aristocratic rivals including all possible psychological and nearly undetectable methods, I refrain from asserting that the warrior population was inescapably destined to uphold the ideals of slave morality. The "birds of prey" could have simply flown away. No amount of guilt could have prevented Alexander the Great from pursuing his military campaigns across the known world, and I argue that this same drive of violent desires could not have been curbed at the dawn of organized society. I understand that my arguments rest upon an intuitive foundation no stronger than the etymologies and historical accounts issued by Nietzsche, however, I find them to remain logically based and would welcome any further objections to the soundness of my arguments.[10]

Notes

1. I recognize that my use of the term "adoption" implies the existence of the warrior's ability to elect their course of action concerning the introduction of slave morality. Nietzsche asserts that such a luxury was impossible in that the psychological methods utilized by the priests were unavoidable. As I will later discuss in further detail, I find that the warriors, as heads of the newly formed society, naturally possessed the ability to both recognize the contradictory ideals of slave morality (despite the subversive qualities of the priestly method) and elect to abandon said society in favor of the dominant nomadic lifestyle they had previously enjoyed.
2. The majority of other Nietzsche scholars seem to discount (or at least do not consider) any notion of adoption being plausible. See Janaway, Reginster, etc.
3. Nietzsche suggests that the notions of "good" and "bad" emerged, in part, from the hygienic realities of the warrior and priestly groups, but for the sake of brevity, I will not engage in a full discussion of these realities (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 6).
4. The term "evil", as used by the priestly aristocracy, represented the arrogant and lustful characteristics of the warriors. Essentially, it embodied the entire scope of warrior action and preference.

5. Lewis 1979
6. Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 3 (Notice the edenic imagery)
7. It should also be noted that Nietzsche suggests that morality in its earliest form promoted the idea of trust which is born of the debtor's promise to repay her creditor (Nietzsche 2007, Essay II, Section 5)
8. The term "blonde beast" does not refer specifically to any Aryan or Teutonic group (or to any ethnic group). It simply refers to "the Roman, Arabic, German, and Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings…" (Nietzsche 2007, Essay I, Section 11).
9. Again, Nietzsche insists that the warriors had no choice but to accept slave morality as the warfare used against them by the priests was of a subversive, mental quality that ensured the success of their moral reversal. I disagree with this supposed inescapable nature of priestly revenge as the leadership roles of the warriors, combined with their necessary understanding of the happiness inherent to their previous lifestyle would have enabled them to press on to more free, nomadic, and dominating actions.
10. I would like to thank those who have helped me complete this brief response to the translation of Nietzsche's *Genealogy*. In no particular order, the following individuals find me in their debt: Marc Missirlian, Michael Shim, Kayley Vernallis, Andres Garza, David Thies, Savannah Wright, Ashley Gerbholz, and Nick Battjes.

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A Ripple in the Ocean of Truth: Thoughts from the Perspective of Historical Materialism

Marc Missirlian

Truth is not outside of power or itself lacking in power…. Truth is of this world; it is the product of multiple constraints…. Each society has its own regime of truth, its general politics of the truth…. There is a combat for the truth, or at least around the truth, as long as we understand by the truth not those true things which are waiting to be discovered but rather the ensemble of rules according to which we distinguish the true from the false, and attach special effects of power to "the truth."[1]

—Michel Foucault

Introduction

As seen above, Foucault's conception of truth, as ambiguous as it may seem, is intimately bound to power. It follows then that to understand the way truth operates for Foucault, it is prudent to examine in some detail his use of the word "power." First, I will demonstrate that Foucaultian truth, as derived from power, necessarily *shows* itself as a historically contingent phenomenon, and further, that in the *existence* of truth, there lies no essential character. Assuredly, this position on the nature of truth is not univocal, so it seems fruitful to map the Foucaultian model of truth against divergent ones, specifically, the Cartesian model, which arguably holds that truth does indeed enjoy an *essential* character that is ahistorical.[2] Ultimately, I will maintain that truth functions as a historical and factual phenomenon, and so, for any given claim to truth, its existence is not a manifestation of a certain ahistorical essence *absolved of a particular material order.*[3]

In examining Foucaultian "power" and "truth," I turn to *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, written by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. I will begin with chapter five, "Interpretative Analytics", which focuses on Foucault's genealogical approach. Having shown that Foucault's truth exists without essence and is historically contingent, I will then contrast Foucault's model of truth with the Cartesian model, which holds that truth enjoys an essential character that is ahistorical, and I will entertain arguments against the plausibility of Cartesian truth. Finally, I will illuminate a distinction with regards to how Descartes and Foucault approach the nature of truth. Descartes is *prescriptive* about truth, while Foucault is *descriptive*.[4] I will utilize this perspective for several reasons: (1) to suggest that this distinction is contextually relevant to how individuals approach the very notion of truth, (2) to reiterate my foremost claim, that the existence of truth is not supported by an essential and ahistorical reality detached from a particular material order, (3) to present an ethical claim about how to think about truth, and finally, 4) to formulate my position with greater precision.

Genealogy: A Method in Effective History

To come to understand what the "regime of truth" is for a given society at any particular time, Foucault turns to the genealogist. Genealogy, as a method, assesses and records what counts as truth as the "product of multiple constraints." Genealogy turns towards the historically active embodiment of individuals and collectives as they stand in the practices of the day. As such, genealogy, for Dreyfus and Rabinow, "opposes itself to traditional historical method" and further, "for the genealogist there are no fixed essences, no underlying laws, no metaphysical finalities" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 106). In this reading of Foucault, it is clear that the genealogist is not interested in what is defined as the "traditional historical method," which amounts to developing interpretations and theories that aim to explicate deep and

unifying realities of the human condition by uncovering certain ahistorical and essential truths of human life. The genealogist rejects the plausibility of finding any such essences and instead, as Foucault claims, seeks to "record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 106).[5] What this means is that the genealogist is not interested in theorizing and developing interpretations of supposed essential and ahistorical truths, but instead the genealogist simply "records the history of these interpretations" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 106)[6] and studies them as the content of the structures of power, and accordingly, of truth.

In the genealogical approach to historical analysis "the task of the genealogist is to destroy the primacy of origins, of unchanging truths…Having destroyed ideal significations and original truths, he looks to the play of wills. Subjection, domination, and combat are found everywhere he looks" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, pp. 108–109). In this light, the genealogist is foremost interested in the play of wills amongst individual and collective bodies. The genealogist, in recording the interpretations of truth in historically contingent settings, looks to the dynamic interplay of dispositions, techniques, and tactics of members in society at individual and collectives levels to assess which interpretations count as truth; basically, the various interpretations are in constant tension and are in "combat for the truth" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 109). It is also valuable to mention at this point that for Foucault, the interpretations themselves are seemingly inert, as Foucault claims "there is nothing absolutely primary to interpret because, when all is said and done, underneath it all everything is already interpretation" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 109).[7] It follows, then, that the genealogist is not interested in the specific content of any interpretation, but rather in how the interpretations themselves unfold in the dynamics of power to produce what counts as truth.

Further, as opposed to the traditional method of history writing, "the genealogist writes effective history…he is opposed to a suprahistorical perspective that seeks to totalize history" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 110). According to Foucault, the

traditional historian, in his theorizing method, finds "support outside of time and pretends to base its judgments on an apocalyptic objectivity" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 110),[8] while the effective historian recognizes his place within the discipline of history writing and seeks "to put everything in historical motion" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 110). The writer of effective history utilizes a perspective where he himself in entrenched within a historical period that affects his historical analysis in practice. Conversely, the traditional historian seeks to absolve himself of such a contingent position, and conducts his respective analysis from a supposed autonomous perspective that is assumed to possess authentic objectivity.

Finally, the genealogist, in writing effective history, "opens up a new level of intelligibility of the practices" of society to "a level that cannot be captured by a theory" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 103). The genealogist is ultimately concerned with the practices of individuals and collectives, and so, theories are subordinated to practice. However, theories themselves are not exiled from the genealogical method, since the interpretations they provide directly affect what society, in general, comes to know as truth within the dynamics of power. Therefore, the genealogist, in assessing and recording what counts as truth, elucidates "the general politics of the truth." These politics present which interpretations count as true in the practices of the day, while systematically avoiding the idea that truth is a property of the interpretations themselves.

What is Power?

Given Foucault's genealogical method in approaching power and truth, it is clear that "Foucault's account of power is not intended as a theory. That is, it is not meant as a context-free, ahistorical, objective description" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 184). Further, "power is not a commodity… it is the operation of the political technologies throughout the social body" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 185). What this means is that power is not

a fixed or tangible entity which anyone or any institution can posses, but rather, power is a functional reality embedded in the socio-political, cultural, and institutional practices of members in society. Power is a web of unequal and asymmetric relationships that are multidirectional, engaging society from top down, bottom up, and from the peripheries (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 185). As such, power actively limits and produces what individuals and collectives are able to think, say, and to act in particular normative and even marginal societal embodiments. Basically, power is a "mobile" matrix that "is not in a position of exteriority to other types of relationships" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 185), so power, effectively, emerges by the practices and relationships of individuals which constantly shape the social, civil, and political order of a given society.

Also, a very telling attribute of power for Foucault is that power is intentional and non-subjective (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 187). This is quite a puzzling remark, as it is plausible to think that intentionality requires subjectivity. It seems the way to internalize this notion, following Dreyfus and Rabinow, is to focus one's scope on how the actions of individuals reverberate when extended to society at large. In Dreyfus and Rabinow's reading "actors more or less know what they are doing when they do it and can often be quite clear in articulating it. But it does not follow that the broader consequences of these local actions are coordinated"; Foucault calls this the "local cynicism of power" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 187). What this means is that when individuals act on a local scale, when they make decisions that effectively govern their lives and dictate their practices, they can never know for sure how their actions will affect general society. Although individuals may act with purpose and direction, collective society never corresponds reflexively to the practices of simply one individual, or even all the individuals; this is why Foucault suggests that society and its power relations are devoid of subjective character even though individuals perform intentionally on a local scale. From this, it seems one may infer that the direction of society entails a character which is simply not the

sum of the practices of individuals, as the dynamic power relations produce a social order which is principally non-intentional from the delocalized perspective of society at large.

Finally, since power is intentional and non-subjective, the performance of individuals does not reflect autonomous agency from the perspective of society, and as such, the action of one individual is not in isolation from the actions of another. For Foucault, "the exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others…Power exists only when put into action" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p. 219). Therefore, the practices of individuals affect and modify the practices of another, so when an individual performs in society he is exercising power and affecting another, even though he does not literally *posses* power. For Foucault, it follows here that "power is not a function of consent" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, pp. 219–220), as any individual, in his societal role, is obliged to entertain power relations whenever he acts, as his actions modify the actions of another.

Truth and Power

At this point, I have hopefully presented a fairly robust description of Foucault's notion of power and the genealogical method, and it is certainly viable to ask now how to go about conducting a genealogy. However, for the purposes of this paper it is only relevant to know what power is and how it relates to truth, so for the sake of maintaining focus I will exclude a discussion of how one is to specifically go about conducting a genealogy.

Moving forward, the genealogical method, as opposing any notions of fixed, ahistorical essences in the nature of truth, directly anticipates the study of power as a historically contingent phenomenon. Further, given the quote presented at the start of this paper, it is clear that power and truth are intimately bound for Foucault. And so, when one studies power via the genealogical method, one is effectively getting at what counts as truth for a particular society at a given time, as one is elucidating "the ensemble of

rules according to which we distinguish the true from the false." This is not to say that power and truth are synonymous, but given the relationship between power and truth, and the genealogical method in assessing power, it is clear that in Foucault's work truth is historically contingent and does not posses a timeless and spaceless essential character existing apart from the material realities of society. In the next section, I will juxtapose this estimation on the nature of truth with the Cartesian model of truth, which in my reading is in direct opposition, since the Cartesian truth I will present here maintains that truth is ahistorical and has a fixed essential character.

Prescriptive Truth vs. Descriptive Truth

Descartes grounds the epistemological source of knowledge in the thinking subject through a supposedly ubiquitous notion of "clear and distinct perception," which he formulates in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* as an effect of what we may call a "graduated ontology." This specific formalization of the nature of the thinking subject that one finds in the *Meditations* stems from the famous and principled Cartesian claim, "I think, therefore I am," and elucidates what Descartes views as "the first principle of Philosophy" (Descartes 1637, p. 51). What this amounts to is that within the Cartesian system, the "graduated ontology" maintains that the human being is a "substance the whole essence or nature of which is to think, and that for its existence there is no need of any place, nor does it depend on any material thing" (Descartes 1637, p. 51). And so, in directing the scope of this discussion of Descartes to the project at hand, what does Descartes' first principle of philosophy do to the idea of truth? To answer this I will turn to Beatrice Han-Pile's work, "The Analytic of Finitude and the History of Subjectivity," which charts Foucault's understanding of the Cartesian theatre. For Foucault, according to Han-Pile, within the Cartesian system "access to truth now takes form of objective knowledge, regulated by the method, whose criteria are the internal coherence

of discourse and the adequation of representation to the real… philosophy becomes epistemology" (Han-Pile 2005); in effect, the Cartesian theater "guarantees for all individuals an universal and a priori access to the truth" (Han-Pile 2005). Basically, it seems Descartes' system lends itself well to the notion that an individual may in fact discover a purely objective and absolute truth—of course, that is, given an appropriate method. What's left to understand is that Descartes' first principle of philosophy effectively *liberates* the thinking subject by allowing him to affirm the veracity of his thoughts, which subsequently awards him the idea that knowing truth for certain is a matter of method, as it altogether becomes a foregone conclusion that truth exists absolutely transparently, in-itself.

In short, the Cartesian system maintains that truth exists in a certain fixed and objective way, as an extension of the autonomy of the thinking subject. It seems the reasoning Descartes provides for the nature of truth existing as such, essential and ahistorical, is grounded in the idea that the thinking subject, in himself, is in fact sufficient to know what is true by way of the first principle of philosophy. So, if you will, it is *because* the thinking subject does not doubt the veracity of his thoughts that he, in effect, becomes the foundation of knowing, and capable of discovering absolute truth.

In any case, Descartes and Foucault have divergent ideas on what the nature of truth is and how one should go about in trying to understand truth. As such, I move to highlight a specific difference in their respective philosophies that seems to illuminate why their conceptions of truth are so radically different. Descartes' model is *prescriptive* about the nature of truth as it mandates what the truth is *a priori*.[9] Foucault, however, approaches truth as a *descriptive* project as he avoids any a priori definition of truth. Of course, my *naming* of these respective models as such is just a useful tool in elaborating on the divergence between Descartes—or rather, some Cartesian-style theory of truth—and Foucault, so this naming should be taken with a grain of salt.

In Hubert Dreyfus's paper, "Being and Power: Heidegger

and Foucault," Dreyfus presents a Heideggerian idea which in my estimation seems to adequately illuminate a particular disposition that may account for why certain individuals may prefer either prescriptive or descriptive approaches to defining truth. Heidegger suggests that "from Plato on, philosophers have sensed that something beyond ordinary beings was responsible for their existence as anything" (Dreyfus 1996); Heidegger names this "something" the "highest being," and this highest being "is the ground of beings and the source of their intelligibility" (Dreyfus 1996). For example, "for Plato the highest being was the good, for Aristotle the unmoved mover, for the Christians the creator God, and after the Enlightenment it was man himself" (Dreyfus 1996). Surely, these highest beings, as the source of human intelligibility, claim objective knowledge and sufficiently ground truth.

It is valid to suggest that Descartes posits a highest being as the source of human intelligibility, and specifically, he falls into the enlightenment era which *prescribes* man as the source of knowledge. His disposition seems to gravitate towards grounding knowledge as absolutely fixed and objectively transparent by virtue of man as the highest being, and accordingly, provides an a priori definition for truth. Conversely, Foucault's disposition seems to not even entertain the idea of a highest being or to ground knowledge and truth a priori, and accordingly, Foucault does not seem to have the sense that something beyond ordinary being is responsible for human existence. Instead, Foucault's truth emerges a posteriori within the interpretative analytics of power by the genealogical method, as it attempts to *describe* what counts as truth in practice. Simply, I suggest that it seems unproblematic to say that varying individuals will be drawn towards either prescriptive or descriptive conceptions of truth given some particular disposition, and that this distinction may account for why individuals like Descartes or Foucault, for example, have radically divergent ideas on how one should approach and define the very notion of truth itself.

Now, continuing on the position that I have staked out in this paper, in no way does a highest being enjoy the luxury of existing

as an essential and ahistorical truth for the grounding of human knowledge. All one has to do, following Heidegger, is to simply look and see that any and all putative highest beings are ephemeral, and accordingly, the paradigms in which they are posited as fixed and objectively true are fleeting. As such, Descartes' model for truth, or basically any model of truth, whether prescriptive or descriptive, is never supported by the authority of an essential, ahistorical, and fixed existence, and so, the credibility of any model of truth rests simply with that it enjoys the *right to exist as true* in a paradigmatic historical instance. The nature and existence of truth is necessarily enfranchised to a particular material order within the lived experience of individuals, collectives, and societies at large. In this light, Foucault may say, "my role… is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed" (Dreyfus 1996). In other words, positing a highest being, or even any other conception of an eternal and unchanging metaphysical reality that grounds truth, for that matter, is principally the product of the building up of historically contingent themes. So, following Foucault, one is never obliged to take up these themes as absolutely objective, as one is free to reject any such claim that truth must exist by way of an essential and ahistorical metaphysical reality absolved of a particular historical material order.

Lastly, before closing, I would like to provide a nuanced view of my position with regards to the prescriptive/descriptive distinction that may be overlooked unless I take a moment to explicitly address it. My position, that truth is historically contingent and devoid of essential character, does not entail that I believe that sound models for truth may only be descriptive projects. Prescriptive models for truth do not always claim absolute objectivity in the way the Cartesian system[10] does and, accordingly, prescriptive models for truth may be pragmatically useful, granted they recognize that the definition of truth endorsed by the prescription functions as true only within the limits of its respective paradigm

and *not as a manifestation of some ahistorical and essential truth disengaged from a particular material order.*

Conclusion

To reiterate, my foremost claim in this paper is that truth is bound to a historically contingent and particular material order. That is to say, I find the position that truth exists as a manifestation of an essential and ahistorical form removed from the material exigencies of the human condition untenable. To present this thesis I juxtaposed Foucault's and Descartes' respective models for truth and suggested that they were in strict opposition, as Foucault's truth is historically contingent and devoid of essential character, while Descartes' truth is essential and ahistorical. Further, I suggested that any model of truth which attempts to appeal to an absolute, timeless, and spaceless objective realm falls short of its claim, as I argued that any formalized conception of truth is bound to a paradigmatic historical instance in which its necessity stems only from a *localized* absolute.

Finally, I addressed and elaborated on an issue which I presented in the introduction, which is the idea that the starting point of this project was geared towards a practical, socio-political, and ethical understanding of truth rather than a purely theoretical one. I felt obliged to explicate this notion because the word "truth" itself is loaded with various connoations, depending on the aims of any particular discourse, and so, my use of the prescriptive/descriptive distinction was to evoke the idea that an individual's disposition will affect how they approach truth, and what type of definition would satisfy the word truth itself. In light of this, my thesis, which stems from a historical materialist type of argument and resonates with Foucaultian truth rather than Cartesian, was intended to support my ethical claims about truth. That is, if truth exists principally within a paradigmatic historical instance, then people are free to question and deny any such conception of truth that claims to appeal to a necessary and absolutely objective order of reality.

Notes

1. This quote from Foucault is from an essay entitled "Truth and Power," as found in Dreyfus & Rabinow's *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*.
2. My treatment of Descartes' conception of "truth" is admittedly contested, and so, I am not committed to the idea that my reading of Descartes is the only viable one. However, I am appealing to the seemingly credible notion that in the Cartesian system truth exists in-itself and is capable of being "discovered" via purely rational means. This is my understanding as Descartes claims, in his "Discourse on the Method," that he intends to employ "the Method which teaches us to follow the true order and enumerate exactly every term in the matter under investigation [containing] everything which gives certainty to the rules of Arithmetic" (Descartes 1637, p.48). In this sense it seems Descartes conceives truth as existing as an object or property of a true order which can be known from rational means, arithmetic. In this paper I do not contest the fundamentals of logic and its exports to mathematics, but rather, I attempt to elucidate that Cartesian truth is semantically and syntactically developed within the parameters of pure logic and mathematics, and as such, can make no claim to a "true order" outside of such parameters. Further, I would not find this Cartesian position on truth problematic if it wasn't for Descartes' commitment to qualifying God and the Soul to this "true order" by logical, rational, and mathematical means, as found in *The Meditations on First Philosophy;* I find the idea that God and the Soul may be qualified through principally and strictly rational means untenable.
3. The idea here is that even if truth did have an essential and ahistorical character, it would be altogether impossible to know that this is in fact the case because knowledge of truth, or any knowledge for that matter, is bound to the exigencies of the human condition and cannot exist apart from such. That is to say, the existence of truth cannot be disengaged from the particular, historically active, and material realities of the human breath.
4. This descriptive/prescriptive distinction directly references my earlier statement about starting points when addressing truth, as it is clear that Descartes and Foucault have divergent ideas on what the content of the word truth should entail. Ultimately, I utilize this distinction to support my thesis as well as a subsequent ethical claim on truth as found in the coda.
5. This quote from Foucault that Dreyfus & Rabinow cite is found in Foucault's 1971 essay entitled "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.
6. Ibid.
7. This quote from Foucault that Dreyfus & Rabinow cite is found in Foucault's essay "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx"
8. This quote from Foucault that Dreyfus & Rabinow cite is found in Foucault's 1971 essay titled "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History."

9. My use of the word "prescriptive" here is referring to the idea that Cartesian truth exists in-itself, and accordingly, coming to know truth is regulated simply to a matter of employing the correct method.

10. I understand that for some my treatment of Descartes may seem too bold or too inadequate a representation of Cartesian truth. Further, I am aware that Descartes' arguments are impressively nuanced and his method is quite robust, and ultimately, treating his system as akin to a sort of platonic realism might seem suspect. I accept this objection towards my reading of Descartes, but I nevertheless maintain that his rhetoric promotes the idea that his system is capable of discovering the absolute "true order" via reason, as if reason alone, the way Descartes presents it, is the qualifier for truth (and ultimately may prove the necessary existence of God). In any case, this discussion is not intended to, as they say, close the book.

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