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Please address all business and editorial correspondence to fpr@mail.ucf.edu or to Shelley Park and Nancy Stanlick, Editors, *Florida Philosophical Review,* Department of Philosophy, Colbourn Hall 411, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32816-1352.

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

This issue of the *Florida Philosophical Review* is devoted primarily to works on terrorism. After the events of September 11, 2001, much has happened in the United States, in Afghanistan, in Bali, Indonesia, and in many other parts of the world that remind us regularly that terrorism is a continuing threat. Much has also made it clear that responses to terrorism, whether by the news media, by government officials, or by our neighbors, are often also threatening. If some of the authors represented in this issue of *FPR* are right, there are connections between individualism, democracy, terrorism, and totalitarianism; there are questions about the reasonableness or rationality of our responses to terrorism; and there is the possibility that exaggerations of the dangers of terrorist attacks are slowly but surely eroding our freedoms. There are significant questions we need to ask our political leaders, and most importantly ourselves, regarding how far we are willing to go to be protected against the dangers of terrorism. We may wish to ask ourselves whether, as we consider the events of the past fifteen months, we are willing to risk our liberties for security, and if we are, whether we are equally willing and able to bear the cost. We may do well to heed the words of Benjamin Franklin when he said that "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety" (Franklin's "Historical Review," 1759) and to pay close attention to the eloquent words of warning in John Philpot Curran's speech that, "It is the common fate of the indolent to see their rights become a prey to the active. The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance; which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime and the punishment of his guilt" ("Speech upon the Right of Election," 1790). We must be vigilant because safety cannot be guaranteed, and we must be vigilant because liberty, once lost, is hard to win back. We need to be vigilant in protecting ourselves against the dangers of terrorism and terrorist threats, but we must be even more vigilant in protecting ourselves against the dangers that fear and irrationality can cause us to perpetrate on ourselves.

In the first article of this issue, Farhang Erfani explores the relationships between totalitarianism, terrorism, and democracy. Using the work of the French philosopher Claude Lefort, Erfani develops a connection between totalitarianism and democracy. Erfani argues that Lefort's arguments apply also to terrorism, and that terrorism, like totalitarianism, is dependent upon democratic forms of government. Democracy's openness makes it possible for totalitarians (and terrorists) to gain power and influence, but it is also possible for democracy's openness to create conditions in which disenfranchised persons may be assimilated and in which their autonomy is effective in a war against terrorism.

James Roper, in the second article of this issue, investigates the nature of our responses to terrorist attacks by means of an analysis of the reluctant gambler problem and a distinction between

act and rule probabilism, suggesting that the personal risk of terrorist attacks is no more likely now than it was prior to September 11, 2001. Unfortunately, however, many people, barraged as we are by the media's almost constant news reports about terrorist threats and by regular government alerts, believe that the risks are much higher than they actually are. Even more unfortunately, and although it is probably possible to reduce the risks of future terrorist strikes, the U.S. government's response to the terrorist threat has been, arguably, to weaken the United States Constitution and thereby threaten our liberties. It is necessary, Roper contends, to ask ourselves how willing we are to allow our rights and liberties to be diminished in the face of a risk that is not significantly more serious after the attacks of September 11, 2001, than it was prior to those attacks.

In the third article, "Our National Tragedy: Some Philosophical Reflections," Ron Hall examines the concept of tragedy in a biblical world view that, on George Steiner's interpretation, provides us with a combination comedic-dramatic view of history in which, as in the case of Job, "all is well that ends well." Hall takes exception to this claim, arguing that even if it were the case that those who are victims of a tragedy like that perpetrated on innocent persons on September 11, 2001, ultimately receive a reward of eternal life, it is *still* tragic that they suffered harm in this life. To illuminate this view, Hall considers an Aristotelian distinction between irreparable undeserved suffering and reparable undeserved suffering, noting that it seems clear that the first is more serious (more tragic) than the second. But even in cases in which undeserved suffering is reparable, it does not automatically and unproblematically follow that the suffering was not tragic simply because it was in some way repaired. There is, Hall argues, a way in which even those who adhere to such a biblical world view must recognize that the suffering of those who are victims of terrorist attacks, whose lives are cut short, is tragic *even* when one believes that a bad ending becomes good by compensation and justice (i.e., by the promise of eternal life). For Steiner, Hall notes, Christianity has "dealt the *coup de grace* to tragedy" because all that is lost in suffering is returned to more than its original condition. Hall's position, in contrast, is that even if irreparable undeserved suffering in this life is compensated for by benefits in another life far exceeding any loss or suffering in this one, that it is *still* the case that the lives of victims in this world were irreparably ruined, that their suffering or loss is serious and undeserved, and *that* is a tragedy. Hall's position, then, is that a biblical worldview must find a place for tragedy if it is to deal adequately with "the hard facts of life."

Hoyt Edge and Luh Ketut Suryani, in the fourth article of this issue, "A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Volition," present a philosophical and statistical analysis of the concept of volition utilizing the distinction between individualist and collectivist cultures. They find in their study that it is indeed the case that "the concepts of self, volition, and autonomy form a family of concepts, which are systematically different in an individualist and in a collectivist culture." Responses to their survey questions reveal a cultural distinction regarding the "ability to take initiative and to persist in action" between Balinese and American respondents. Americans show more "primary control," i.e.,

Americans tend to "attempt to conform the world to (their) own wishes," while the Balinese responses exhibit greater affinity to "secondary control," i.e., they try "to conform to the world." For Euro-Americans in particular, "the self identifies with itself and the faculty of will," but in collectivist cultures (such as that of the Balinese), "the self identifies with others, so what needs to be emphasized and valued in such a culture is not control over one's individual will, but the relationship with others."

Edge and Suryani do not discuss the implications of their findings with respect to tensions that arise between individualist and collectivist cultures, but their research is suggestive when considered in light of terrorism and responses to it. Perhaps the Euro-American propensity to wish to exert control over surroundings can begin to explain why so many "rugged individualist" Americans seem to be willing to sacrifice their individual rights and liberties for safety (see Roper's article); they may see doing so as a way to gain control over the problem and threat of terrorism. Further, the danger of the rise of totalitarianism engendered by democratic forms of government (explained in Erfani's article) might be exemplified by such willingness to *exert control* over a problem and thereby manifest itself in exerting control *over others*. Finally, Ron Hall's analysis of the concept of tragedy in the face of terrorism and of tragedy's relationship to Christianity's tendency toward theodicy might be viewed in light of Edge and Suryani's research on the individualist/collectivist distinction with respect to the will.

A Christian-biblical tendency to deny the tragedy in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, might be explained with respect to a modern Christian's view that it is *individual* salvation that is most important, and what is thus promised to each person for eternity in return for faith. It may provide some measure of comfort to the individual to believe that the reward for sacrifice, for suffering, is an eternal life of eternal bliss, but it does not (consistent with Hall's view) detract from the *tragedy in this life* that the loss of life as a result of terrorism has caused. Nor will *individual* salvation compensate for tragedy that befalls and is felt by a *group*—in this case, a nation. Moreover, if we are to try to begin to understand what leads terrorists to resort to measures as extreme as hijacking loaded planes and using them as bombs to destroy buildings and human lives, we may need to understand how these individuals exercise their will against the backdrop of a *community* identity. We should also begin to try to understand a related tendency in ourselves to risk and perhaps to lose our individual rights and liberties to defend ourselves, not only as individuals, but also as patriotic members of *nations,* concerned with *national* security and identity. Paradoxically, while the U.S. prides itself on its preservation of democracy and individual liberty, the price citizens may pay for national security is diminution or loss of their rights, freedoms, and very way of life. And *that* would certainly be tragic.

The final article in this issue, S. Brian Hood's "Answering Some Objections to Scientific Realism," examines metaphysical and epistemological issues unrelated to the political concerns

surrounding terrorism. In his article, Hood defends Hilary Putnam's explanationist argument for scientific realism, arguing that one need not be committed to either the thesis of metaphysical realism or the thesis of internal realism in order to be a scientific realist. Thus, objections to these theses are not telling objections, claims Hood, to Putnam's defense of scientific realism. Finally, Hood defends Putnam's argument for scientific realism against Arthur Fine's charge of circularity. Hood concludes that some form of scientific realism is likely true, although an acceptable theory of reference has yet to be developed. A hopeful position, he contends would be "a minimal epistemic realism claiming no more than that there are empirical conditions such that were they to obtain, we would be in a position to assert, with justification, of some scientific theory positing unobservable empirical structures that it is true, or approximately so."

Completing this issue of *Florida Philosophical Review* is a review by Steve Wall of Michael Weston's *Philosophy, Literature, and the Human Good.*

This issue of the journal marks the end of our second year of publication of *Florida Philosophical Review*. Our next issue, Volume III, Issue 1 (June 2003), will contain selected papers from the 48th Annual Meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association. Please note, too, that we have a special call for papers for a graduate student issue of *FPR* to be published one year from now, in December 2003 (Volume III, Issue 2). The deadline for submissions for the graduate student issue is August 2003 (see the call for papers on the main journal website). In addition, we invite readers to submit papers and book reviews at all times of the year for consideration in any upcoming issue. Contributors need not be faculty, residents of, or students in the state of Florida to have their work published in *FPR*. *FPR* is a fully on-line, free access, anonymously reviewed publication of the Department of Philosophy, University of Central Florida and is sponsored by the Florida Philosophical Association.

Once again, we would like to thank our contributors, reviewers, and readers for their support of this journal. Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new Associate Editor, Dr. Michael Strawser, to *Florida Philosophical Review*. Dr. Strawser, a Visiting Instructor of Philosophy at the University of Central Florida and author of *Both/And: Reading Kierkegaard from Irony to Edification*, received his Ph.D. from the Florida State University in 1993. After several years living and working in Sweden, Dr. Strawser has returned to Florida. We are delighted he has joined our editorial team, as he brings significant editorial experience (having served as an assistant to the editors of *Synthese, Social Theory and Practice,* and *Law and Philosophy*), a keen eye, and a generous spirit to our philosophical endeavor.

Shelley Park and Nancy Stanlick, Editors
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The Uncanny Proximity: From Democracy to Terror

Farhang Erfani, *Villanova University*

> It seems strange to me that most of our contemporaries have no sense of how much philosophy owes to the democratic experience, that they do not explore its matrix or take it as a theme for their reflections, that they fail to recognize it as the matrix of their investigations (Claude Lefort, "Question" 20).[1]

Introduction

The events of September 11, 2001 have reinforced in most people's minds, including many intellectuals, the belief that there is a gap—an essential one[2]—separating democracy from its enemies, in this case from terror and totalitarianism. Totalitarianism as a political regime is well-known and its opposition to democracy is easily understood, since much of the twentieth century was characterized by the opposition between western liberal democracies and totalitarian regimes of all sorts—fascist, communist, religious, etc. But terror is a new beast, a new foe for democracy, and one that it barely understands. It is not that terrorism is new in itself but it was always associated with totalitarianism, with a state. As an evil act, it belonged to evil countries. My goal here is not to contest the legitimacy of democracy or to dispute the evilness of terror; I am interested in the relationship between the two.

There has been a rather minor debate in the aftermath of 9/11 about the role of America in the world and especially about its presence in the Middle Eastern politics. Those very few in the United States who have asked such questions have faced harsh criticism and "warnings" from their neighbors, peers, and the government. It is unsettling that the government has not recognized the need for and the validity of such questions as essential to the welfare of democracy itself, but people's anger is somehow understandable. First, it seems that by examining America's role in these events we would be blaming the victims, which would indeed be wrong. Second, many are outraged that we could associate those capable of committing such horrendous crimes with the duly elected

officials of a democratic society. This is not the place to explore the actual issues and the ramifications of 9/11. In this paper, without dwelling on or denying the gravity of this specific case, I hope to pursue the connection between democracy and terror at a philosophical level. In my view, there is a very fine line separating democracy from terror.

Through the analysis of the French political philosopher Claude Lefort, I hope to show that there is an uncanny proximity between terror and democracy. In his work, Lefort went back to the origins of modern democracy, which for him is the condition of the possibility of modern politics in general. In Lefort's view, political power of any kind rests on the contingency and the groundlessness that politics has experienced since the French Revolution. The Revolution divorced power from the divine and made it a human affair. No longer was politics a site with privileged access—to use his expression, power became an "empty place" that no one could permanently claim. I will try to carefully retrace his analysis of power in this paper, but it is important to notice that for Lefort all forms of power struggle must be understood within this paradigm of political contingency. Lefort dedicated his life to studying totalitarianism and to showing that totalitarianism could come only after the democratic turn. I will extend his analysis and try to account for terrorism, the kind that we experienced on 9/11, as another struggle that must be understood and fought through democracy.

Lefort and the Failure of Marxism

Among contemporary French philosophers, Claude Lefort is very little known outside of France. To the English-speaking audience, his name is mostly associated with Merleau-Ponty who, after his death, left his writings to Lefort to be edited. To others, he was Sartre's strongest critic regarding support of the Soviet regime. In a way, we could say that he remains unknown for his own work because he does not belong to any school of thought, and because he has not tried to leave a "doctrine" behind. He has always been a thorough analyst of our contemporary conditions and a careful reader of the political traditions that precede us. But if we were to force him into the intellectual map of twentieth-century France, we would have to place him between phenomenology and Marxism. Although Merleau-Ponty was his high school philosophy teacher and their friendship led Lefort to appreciate phenomenology, he cannot be considered the typical, mainstream phenomenologist. Nor was he ever an orthodox Marxist, unlike most of his fellow colleagues and intellectuals. Lefort's intellectual career has been an honest interrogation of his century; without blindly sticking to an agenda or protecting a party, Lefort began as a revolutionary Trotskyite and became a staunch defender of the democratic revolution, keeping at heart his commitment to the leftist project of emancipation and liberty.[3] Although the task of this essay is to focus on Lefort's

analysis of democracy and terror, given how little he is known in the English-speaking world, some background knowledge of his work is needed to place him in historical, social, and political context.

Lefort, born in 1924, was only sixteen years old when the Germans occupied Paris during World War II. Too young to be part of the *Résistance*, he nevertheless grew up in the strange environment of Paris amid the pessimisms of the time as well as the messianic tone of the intellectuals promising the possibility of a better future. Despite the war, a number of newspapers and journals were created calling for radical changes, for a Revolution following *la Résistance*.[4] The general consensus was that if *la Résistance* were to be fruitful in the long run, more had to be done than just to defeat the Nazis. The old ways of the French Republic, the ways that allowed the rise of fascism, had to be changed; a return to the bourgeois hegemony seemed futile and Marxism appeared to many as the logical path to follow.[5] Certainly, the kind of camaraderie that the Résistance had created resonated well with Marxist ambitions. In a nutshell, "the theme of revolution was in the air of the time and the adhesion of a young man to a revolutionary project and organization was in the order of things."[6] Even though Lefort would be no exception, he was never a diehard Marxist despite his youth.[7] With the same admiration and suspicion with which Merleau-Ponty had approached Husserl, we could say that Lefort worked "[w]ith Marx, against Marx."[8] To fully appreciate his democratic commitment requires us to grasp this *aporia* in his work.

Lefort was barely eighteen years old when Merleau-Ponty, then his high school philosophy teacher, asked him about his political inclinations and whether he followed the French Communist Party (P.C.F.). Surprised by the young man's "repugnance" vis-à-vis "the Party," Merleau-Ponty directed him toward Trotskyism.[9] Although it is difficult to summarize a life-long struggle in a few words, we could say that Lefort's reluctance, or even "repugnance", was twofold–-political and philosophical. In the first place, before being able to articulate his misgivings in philosophical terms, Lefort objected to the Soviet regime's political practices. Whereas intellectuals of the time, including Sartre, preferred to look away and disregard Stalin's gulags and the oppression of dissidence, Lefort always insisted that "prisons and [concentration] camps should not blind us. There, oppression is condensed, but it reigns over the entire society."[10] This very basic condemnation prevented him from ever fitting in with the Left. Increasingly isolated, his criticisms of the Soviet Union almost pushed him out of the Trotskyite party, but it was perhaps meeting the young Cornelius Castoriadis that launched his career. Together, they created a new journal, the famous *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, which Lefort co-edited for ten years.[11] During that time, he regularly contributed to a number of journals, including *Les Temps Modernes*, founded by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. As it turned out, history proved him right; the Soviet Union's regime was an irretrievable project and regardless of the fervor of its admirers and reformers, very little was there to salvage. But this realization was no relief

in itself. In the late fifties, Lefort realized that his career as an activist had not solved the difficulties facing Marxism and that there was a philosophical knot that had to be untangled.

From the beginning, Lefort was under the impression that Marxism and Communism were suffering from a philosophical blunder that their own categories could not understand; it was finally through phenomenology that Lefort learned to see it.[12] To put it in a nutshell, when a theory "intends" the world, when it reduces the world to a formula, phenomenology reminds us of "the impossibility of a complete reduction."[13] The world is too thick and any theory is only a perspective from and within the world and it can never overcome this finitude. Traditional metaphysics had disregarded this perspectivist insight and had allowed itself to search for an Archimedean point from which all could be seen and explained. Marx too was a "metaphysical" theoretician in this sense; he had hoped to reduce all processes of the world, all events and all possibilities to one axiom, to dialectical materialism leading to the proletarian revolution—in Lefort's own words, Marxism "reduced the creativity of history to that of the proletariat."[14] So it is no surprise that Lefort regarded Stalinism as dangerous, not because it was a mistake but because it was the most obvious symptom of ailing Communism: in his view, Stalinism was not a "direct deviation from Marxism, but a deviation from a path, which . . . was moving away from . . . revolutionary politics."[15] Given his rejection of "totalizing" theories, Lefort never sought a god-like perspective on history and he never tried to simplify all human events to one thought.[16] The basic lesson of phenomenology is that what emerges from such metaphysical attitudes is too mechanistic, too inhuman, too deterministic.[17] As we will see, such perspective is necessarily "totalitarian."

In all fairness, it must be said that Marxism is not the only theory plagued by this obsession with finding a first principle; this is modernity *par excellence*, from Descartes to Leibniz, from Hegel to Marx and Freud. Merleau-Ponty had already dealt with these issues and proven the inadequacy of such theoretical attitudes,[18] barring Lefort from taking political theory's traditional path. For Lefort to think about politics meant more than finding another political first principle—it meant exploring the phenomenon of politics in itself, which led him to study primitive societies and their political structures. Whereas Merleau-Ponty, exploring the questions of the self and of human agency, relied on contemporary research in psychology, Lefort based his observations on 1950s research in anthropology, especially the work of Marcel Mauss and Claude Levi-Strauss. What he sought in his anthropological work was not the fundamental difference between primitive societies and "us." On the contrary, by refuting causal explanations,[19] he had hoped to find what made such societies cohesive and political. Primitive societies, as well the modern ones, share at least one common trait: they cannot be reduced to one aspect. They are, as Lefort uses the term, "articulated totalities;"[20] we cannot define and delimit what is political in them, for as long as they are societies they are political entities. [21] Primitive societies were more than the forces of production; Marxists had oversimplified

history to make it fit their philosophy. So by the end of the 1950s, Claude Lefort's theoretical and militant paths had led him to the same conclusion: traditional Marxism was mistaken in analyzing politics and history only in terms of materialism. Such analysis left no room for human agency; there was no need for us to call for the revolution. Following this thought to its logical conclusion, we would have nothing to do but wait—a sort of Heideggerian waiting for the last god. Though certain Marxists were resigned to waiting, we must admit that quietism cannot account for the totalitarian phenomenon of our time, nor could it explain the forms of domination experienced in both communist and capitalist countries. What was needed was a new way of understanding our historical conditions, an account that would explain struggles and conflicts instead of denying their existence or waiting for them to be solved by historical inevitability. What was needed, in short, was to bring politics back into the debate.

Let us be clear that (a) by distancing himself from Marxism, Lefort was not abandoning its questions, nor was he becoming a capitalist or a liberal.[22] Since Marxism could not explain the role of political agency in history, it is our task to rediscover what it means to live in a political society, what it means to live through conflicts and to figure out what kind of society is best suited for conflictual politics. And (b) his basic misgiving about Marxism was true about liberal-capitalism too. In those societies, other forms of totalities are in play and a suffocating alienation is easily discerned. The question goes therefore beyond the Marxist-Liberalism debate: why is it that modern societies experience domination? In his own words, "why is totalitarianism a major event of our time, why does it require us to probe into the nature of modern society?"[23] The issue, for Lefort, had to be shifted from historical dialectical materialism to the question of political struggle in general, to an analysis of power and domination in politics. It was through Machiavelli that he found his entry.

Lefort and the Rediscovery of Power in Politics

Merleau-Ponty had written an important essay on Machiavelli,[24] which no doubt encouraged Lefort in the direction of considering the analysis of power and domination in politics, but the result was not easy to come by. It took fifteen years of research and careful readings of Machiavelli and his commentators for Lefort to come to terms with the nature of the political,[25] resulting in his yet un-translated book *Le travail de l'oeuvre Machiavel.* Machiavelli's influence on Lefort's work cannot be neglected, for in many ways it was his reading of Machiavelli that turned him to democracy. What Lefort needed from Machiavelli was another way of understanding a polity, a way that was not couched in material conditions alone. Lefort tells us that the "discourse of Machiavelli proceeds to a slow and methodical destruction of the teachings of traditional politics."[26] What Machiavelli destroyed is the pretense of a rational and peaceful politics—the kind that Marxism promised *after* the revolution. In Lefort's view, this kind of vision goes hand in hand with the modern

philosophical approach, but politics was not always conceived in this way. "Whereas ancient political philosophy is primarily an analysis of the experience of the Greek city, modern political philosophy is primarily, in theoretical terms, a *hypothesis*."[27] It is "hypothetical" thought–or what we called "metaphysical thought" earlier–-that Machiavelli rejected. In imagining a peaceful and reconciled society, modern political theorists take politics—the art of facing contentions and ruling over differences—out of political thought. Machiavelli's merit lies in his attempt to keep this unruly, yet indispensable, side of political life alive. While running the risk of doing injustice to his fifteen years of research, we could say that this is the fundamental lesson that Lefort retained from reading the Florentine: politics' goal is not to go back to a "natural" peace because social divisions and conflicts are unavoidable. In a key passage of *The Prince*, Machiavelli tells us that

> I would point out that there are two ways to . . . power: the support of the populace or the favor of the elite. For in every city one finds these two opposed classes. They are *at odds* because the populace do not want to be ordered about or oppressed by the elite; and the elite want to order about and oppress the populace. The *conflict between these two [ambitions is] irreconcilable.*[28]

To which Lefort adds that "reflections on *The Prince* are inseparable from the discovery of an originary division of the social body. But in order to appreciate fully what this means, it must be said that this division resists all attempts at nullifying it."[29] Modern political philosophy, after Machiavelli, sought to resolve or even ignore this inherent conflict by imagining a rational order in which all conflicts can and ought to be resolved. Whether it was through force with Hobbes or Hegel, through material distribution with Marx or Locke, or even through the authority of reason with Rousseau or Rawls, modern political philosophy aims at reconciling what Machiavelli calls irreconcilable. With such a model, "legitimate dissent would have [to be] eradicated from the public sphere."[30] Chantal Mouffe has pushed this issue much further than Lefort, though she acknowledges her debt to him. In her view, modern society is inescapably and structurally plural and "democratic theory should renounce . . . escapism and face the challenge that the recognition of the pluralism of values entails."[31] She, like Lefort, certainly understands the need for a peaceful society in which there is an absence of continual violent strife and a "certain amount of consensus," but she believes that if all differences are "eradicated," another form of violence is in place. We need a democratic society in which there is no "antagonism," which she sees as a struggle between enemies, but an "agonistic model" which is a struggle between adversaries.[32]

What Lefort retains from this analysis is the origin and the nature of power, which without conflicts would not exist.[33] It is not the case that a dominant class, through power, has come to cherish different interests from others with whom it is fundamentally at odds–-power is only the "third party" that emerges because of the irreconcilability of interests.[34] Power, for Lefort, is the

articulation of conflicts and not their source; it has "no truth in itself"[35]—it only exists as a mediation between political differences. If there is no conflict, then there is no power and therefore no politics, which would not be undesirable if it were possible and if conflicts could be reconciled once for all.

Lefort and Democracy as an "Empty Place"

But are we saying that because power is an inherent political factor that there is no difference between kinds of power? Are we equating the power of a king, the elite and the populace? Is there a preference? If so, what is the criterion? Better yet, how can we explain power in other terms than economics? Living in a liberal democracy (France) and being a Marxist at heart, Lefort had to face such questions—are we to choose between the power of the party and the power of corporations? Why is Stalin's exercise of power so "repugnant?" If there is no society without an exercise of power, then why should we reject totalitarian regimes? The underlying issue here is totalitarianism and its difference with democracy, which seems rather obvious in the beginning. Democracy represents political freedom and "in the history of domination, [totalitarianism] manifests a radically new form in that it aims at nothing less than effacing the political condition of men."[36] It is true that a comparative study will yield some interesting results but it still would not explain totalitarianism and its "unheard of" power. This is why Lefort insists that the "rise of totalitarianism, both in its fascist variant . . . and its communist variant . . . obliges us to reexamine democracy" itself.[37] From that point on, his research moves from Machiavelli to the origins of democracy and totalitarianism.

There is what I would call an "uncanny" proximity between totalitarianism and democracy that Lefort detects from the start[38]—democracy and totalitarianism have the *same political foundation* in the French Revolution. What demarcates them is the way they take up the legacy of the Revolution. Lefort shows that the Revolution made room for modern democracy, which, once corrupted and abused, allowed for the first instance of totalitarian life under Robespierre. There are, of course, great differences between these two political systems: when speaking of a totalitarian regime, we have in mind a political entity that goes unchecked and has no real limit; democracies, however, are kept in check by regular elections as well as institutional balances of power. A totalitarian regime follows its own instincts and its purpose is self-pleasing; a democratic government has a limited purpose, a definite mandate, serving the people. But according to Lefort, this very "indeterminacy" and openness of democracy is what allows for a totalitarian regime to take power and to terrorize people.[39] Both kinds of regime are rooted in the demise of the *Ancien Régime*. In "The Question of Democracy," which is perhaps his most important contribution to this issue, Lefort tells us

> Under the monarchy, power was embodied in the person of the prince. This does not mean that he held unlimited power. The regime was not despotic. The prince was a mediator between mortals and gods or, as political activity became secularized and laicized, between the mortals and the transcontinental agencies represented by a sovereign Justice and a sovereign Reason. Being at once subject to the law and placed above laws, he condensed in his body, which is at once mortal and immortal, the principle that generated the order of the kingdom. His power pointed towards an unconditional, otherworldly pole, while at the same time he was, in his own person, the guarantor and representative of the unity of the kingdom. The kingdom itself was represented as a body, as a substantial unity, in such a way that the hierarchy of its members, the distinction between ranks and orders appeared to rest upon this unconditional basis.[40]

It is rather odd, some could object, to say that the *Ancien Régime* was not despotic. What Lefort is trying to separate here is life under the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century and life under the King. Without expressing a preference, Lefort is pointing to the fact that power, under the King's reign, was limited and could not be as invasive and dominating as, say, under Stalin's regime. The difference in domination does not lie in the difference of technology, for instance. The reason that totalitarianism is so radically powerful is because it came *after* modern democracy. Only after the democratic revolution could we have had Stalin or Hitler. This revolution that Lefort, following Tocqueville, equates with the French Revolution opened up the site of power in a new way—if power "was embodied in the prince" it was the decapitation of the King that loosened the seat of power.

> This model reveals the revolutionary and the unprecedented feature of democracy. The locus of power becomes *an empty place*. There is no need to dwell on the details of the institutional apparatus. The important point is that this apparatus prevents governments from appropriating power for their own ends, from incorporating it into themselves. The exercise of power is subject to procedures of periodical redistributions. It represents the outcome of a controlled contest with permanent rules. This phenomenon implies an institutionalization of conflict. The locus of power is an empty place, it cannot be occupied—it is such that no individual and no group can be consubstantial with it—and it cannot be represented.[41]

"At the same time that the transcendental foundation of certitude disappears, so does the belief in the existence of a determined order;"[42] power becomes mutable, changeable and therefore uncontainable. As Lefort puts it, "democracy is instituted and sustained by the *dissolution of the markers of certainty,*"[43] meaning that democracy is left to itself. Does this mean that democracy has no ground for certainty and that this "indeterminacy" that we spoke of dooms it to failure? "I am not suggesting," Lefort says, "that [democracy] has no unity or no definite identity; on the contrary, the

disappearance of natural determination, which was once linked to the person of the prince . . . leads to the emergence of a *purely social society* in which the people . . . take on the status of universal entities [but not] substantial identities."[44] In other words, the "emptiness" to which Lefort refers is only the lack of "substance" in the philosophical sense of the term, meaning that whoever occupies the place of power—and so long as there is a government there is at least a partial occupation—cannot claim to have the essential or substantial privilege of being in charge. Modern democracy became possible only when the transcendental source of power, the King, was removed and that no one was allowed to have an otherworldly power. Once political legitimacy is put in human terms alone, it becomes automatically limited and can be held accountable. Speaking concretely, when a democratic regime functions properly, it occupies this seat of power only momentarily and with a specific mandate approved by the people. "The originality of democracy is therefore the institution of this 'empty place' of power where society projects its antagonisms, test its divisions and understands itself as a divided society. At the origin of modern democracy, there is the instauration of a right with limited power."[45] Since no one in this model has a divine authority, disagreements and conflicts become not only acceptable but in fact necessary. "Political conflict is now legitimate on its own grounds. Free of the determinate identity of the prince or aristocracy, a new set of political actors enter the political stage without requiring substantive identities."[46] This claim of "democratic indeterminacy" is not new in itself—Rousseau, Tocqueville, and others had noticed it before. The originality of Lefort's contribution lies in his couching of this event in history, as well as his observed links between democracy and totalitarianism, for the latter "does not come out of nowhere."[47]

What does this analysis entail for totalitarianism? In a nutshell, if democracy's "virtue," as Lefort calls it, is that power "belongs to no one,"[48] we could say that totalitarianism is nothing but a perversion of this virtue—it is possession of full power.

> Let us now consider [the] two moments of the totalitarian project, two moments which are, in fact, inseparable: the abolition of the signs of division between state and society and the signs of internal social division. They imply a de-differentiation of the agencies that govern the constitution of a political society. There are no longer ultimate criteria of law or of knowledge which are beyond the reach of power. This observation best enables us to identify the uniqueness of totalitarianism. For, without even speaking of European absolute monarchy, which quite clearly always involved a limit on the power of the prince—a limit bound up with the recognition of rights acquired by the nobility and by the cities, but even more fundamentally governed by the image of a Justice of divine origin—despotism . . . never appeared as a power that drew from itself the principle of law and the principle of knowledge. For such as event to take place, all reference to supernatural powers or to an

> order of the world would have to be abolished and power would have to be distinguished as purely social power.[49]

This last sentence encapsulates Lefort's position very well—it is only after the democratic revolution and after democracy opens the field of power to contention that it can be appropriated without limit, in its *totality*. The pre-democracy monarch's power was held in check, according to Lefort, by his duties and social role as well as its pretense to divinity. But because democracy has "naturalized" the field, power can be seized without limit. This is why Lefort believes that "totalitarianism is a major fact of our time"—we live in the age of democracy and only a very small "change in the economy of power is required [for a] totalitarian form of society to arise."[50]

We must remember that the social field is always constituted by conflictual antagonisms and that it is indeterminate because it is "purely social" (or human instead of divine). Given this, no totalitarian regime could in fact succeed in occupying the field and in determining its limits. To use Merleau-Ponty's favorite image, Lefort says that a "democratic society is instituted as a society without a body, as a society which undermines the representation of an organic totality."[51] Totalitarianism needs to recreate, in "image" only, the body of the decapitated prince—as did Stalin[52]–in order to keep a tight rein on democracy, but because it is only an image, it needs force to be legitimized. Thus, at least to pretend that the political field is owned, in its totality, by a single governing body, totalitarian governments have recourse to terror.[53] "Terror" in Lefort's analysis—and I will come back to the more current use of the term, especially since 9/11—is the forced "de-differentiation" of the people into the People-as-One, which is nothing but a "fantasy."[54] "Any edifice of totalitarian politics," adds Poltier, "relies on the phantasm of a society that would have overcome its internal divisions."[55]

> It is this image which is at the source of the totalitarian ambition to overcome the divisions which keep the real unity of the community open to question—to realize the democratic fantasy of the people-as-one in a symbolic series of identifications of the people with the proletariat and the proletariat with the party.[56]

The road from modern democracy to totalitarianism and terror is short; a mere "shift" of power could change a democratically governed country into a totalitarian one. Sadly enough, such shifts are often made in the name of the people, in the name of the people-as-one. The sort of patriotism that has emerged since September 11 certainly calls for a unity, a One-ness of the people that suffocates dissent and borders on a sort of terror. I would certainly not say that 9/11 has made America into a totalitarian regime, but it has shown the fragility of democracy. Lefort rightly asks, "may not totalitarianism be conceived as a response to the questions raised by democracy, as an attempt to resolve its paradoxes?"[57] In other words, to paraphrase Milan Kundera, it is the

"unbearable lightness" of democracy and the anxiety that comes with such groundlessness that lets democracy slip and become totalitarian.

From Democracy to Terror (and Back)

Lefort's analysis has much merit, especially in the light of today's political and international arena. He is right, in my view, in insisting that democracy precedes, if not always chronologically, then at least structurally, totalitarianism. Where his analysis fails, at least for our concerns after the terrorist attacks of 2001, is in understanding the reality of terror in itself. Could his theory be somehow adapted to this new form of terror? Given that he couched his entire intellectual path in historical developments, it would be no betrayal on our part to see how we could answer these pressing questions through his work. In fact, the rest of my analysis will follow his advice: I will here take democracy as the "matrix" of my analysis and see how terrorism can be understood through democracy.

So what is terrorism? Since George W. Bush's promise to wage war against terror, properly defining terrorism has become a crucial issue. Many contend that the definition is relative—the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist depends on one's political inclination. Lefort's definition of terror is tangential to his work on totalitarianism—it does not explain Timothy McVeigh or al Quaeda. The violence committed in these cases is not state-sponsored and is directed against a state (in both cases, the American state) whereas Lefort's definition of terror was centered on totalitarian forms of domination. I propose to define terrorism in terms of democracy—terrorism should be understood as violence perpetrated against a state which is accused of depriving the perpetrators and their fellows of their autonomy and their right to self-determination.[58] My definition of terrorism therefore encompasses al Quaeda and McVeigh, despite their considerable differences. It is noteworthy that (a) both claim that the American government has made it impossible for them to lead their lives as they choose and (b) they carry out their violent acts on *behalf* of their people. Even Bin Laden, whose terrorism is grounded in religion, needs *and* seeks popular support. Bin Laden pretends that he represents the majority of Muslims around the world who are threatened by western, especially American, presence in Muslim lives and politics. It is striking in my view that he needs to justify his actions in the name of the people, and not just religion or god—Bin Laden too is shaped by the democratic revolution. He too lives after the decapitation of the French king—he cannot say that *"l'Etat c'est moi"*—or to be more accurate, he cannot pretend to be all Muslims or to embody Islam. He claims to be their *representative*.

Seeing terrorism against the democratic backdrop has many advantages. It allows us to differentiate terrorism from other forms of violence and to assess the validity of that violence—some

groups are freedom fighters when they truly represent the people. But it simply is not the case that Bin Laden is fighting in the name of all Muslims, or even their majority—if that were the case, we would be on the brink of a world war. It is not even the case that most Muslims are violent or seek the annihilation of westerners, despite the shameless diabolization of the West by the middle-eastern state-controlled media, scapegoating internal political failures. But there is an even greater advantage in understanding terrorism through the democratic revolution: it allows us to combat it democratically.

To fight terrorism with democracy does not mean that elections will disarm terrorists. Terrorist acts can be fought through democratically supported courts and treaties. More importantly, however, the spread of democracy can prevent future terrorism. We must make sure that the "silent majority" does not support it. Without that basic support, terrorism becomes simply a criminal activity and its success will be as unsuccessful as that—it will have no real political impact. It will lack the network and will be unable to recruit at a large scale. I certainly would not want to romanticize democracy and believe that it will do no wrong once in power. But I believe that it reduces the likelihood of such disasters. As Amartya Sen has remarked, no democracy has ever known a famine—democracy often exercises a certain check on extremes. The current war on terror will not prevent future terrorist acts as much as the development of local democracies would. The majority of the 9/11 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia, perhaps the least democratically inclined regime in the region, yet to this day supported and approved by the West, especially by the United States. Saudis have no control over their government, which is an outdated form of hereditary aristocracy. This absolute lack of democratic political control has made the frustrated Saudis into the ideal recruiting ground for terrorism and it will continually be the case until they become more democratic. In fact, we must remember that the Middle East has rarely had a chance to develop true democracies—because of both internal and external factors. The very few countries that have experienced it, even sporadically, such as Turkey, have become more peaceful and have managed to keep religious fanaticism more and more in check.[59]

Tocqueville used to say that the greatest advantage in a democracy is not that the people make the right choice; they rarely do. But because they make their own laws, because they feel that the political power in place belongs to them, they obey and follow the rules better than in any other form of government known to us so far. This should then be our goal: involving more people and allowing them to exercise democratic control. Claude Lefort is the first to admit that autonomy "is a resounding word and it requires some elucidation." He adds, "autonomy, it has to be said at once, can only be relative. But we must recognize that it is also pointless to wish to fix or to efface its limits" once for all.[60] After all, defining what autonomy means—and it is no accident that Claude Lefort has dedicated so much of his research to human rights which would be nothing without

autonomy—is itself a political question that needs to be posed in the indeterminate terrain of democracy. We need to expand what Tocqueville called the "democratic revolution." Terror in its current form finds popular support among those who feel that the "empty place" is no longer empty, that it is occupied by those who work against them, and, even worse, that they could never occupy it. We can resist this form of terror the same way Lefort envisaged resisting totalitarianism, i.e., "incorporating individuals into the legitimate groups," by giving them hope.[61]

We can certainly work at keeping democracy more "empty" or more open—here and abroad—so that fewer citizens and non-citizens feel alienated. Even many sectors of liberal democratic societies that fortunately are not violent feel nevertheless disillusioned and un-represented.[62] By giving more voice to the excluded and the oppressed, democracy may be able to assimilate them; for if the claim of such people is a lack of autonomy, democracy is *the* system that should be able to allow them to exercise power. And with this exercise of autonomy comes a certain respect for others as well as for the very institution that makes room for it:

> In affirming the absence of any divine or otherwise incontestable grounds of power in society and insisting on the right of all to critically contest the legitimacy of every exercise of power, an inherent *respect* for the right of all to critically contest the legitimacy of every aspect of the institution of society is recognized. A right to question and dissent from one another is acknowledged which gives rise to a sense of *mutual respect* which can be sacrificed only at the cost of losing the project of democratic autonomy itself.[63]

In the same way that the democratic process leads to respect, exclusion from it leads to contempt. As Mouffe says, "the result can be the crystallization of collective passions around issues which cannot be managed by the democratic process and an explosion of antagonisms that can tear up the very basis of civility."[64] Those alienated from the process lose faith in it and seek to affirm their autonomy in other ways that "democracy cannot manage." The current war on terror keeps in place the very conditions that created terror from the start. It supports dictators; it angers local populations by proposing or making "regime changes" favorable to the West and not the people. A true war on terror would empower people through democracy and not disenfranchise them further.

Notes

[1] Claude Lefort's books, with the exception of *Le Travail de l'Oeuvre Machiavel*, are only collections of articles and I will refer to the article instead of the book title. Wherever possible, I cite the English translation and all subsequent translations from French are my own.

[2] The difference between totalitarianism/terror and democracy is seen as "essential" in so far that democracies consider their enemies to be fundamentally and radically different in kind—as if the two sides were made of two incompatible essences. I will here follow Claude Lefort's lead and contend that not only there is no essential difference but there is a surprising and an uncanny proximity between democracy and its enemies. See Lefort's seminal essay on this issue "Totalitarianism without Stalin" where he asks, "How can [the bourgeoisie] go on dreaming of an *essential difference* between the western capitalisms and the USSR?" (54, my emphasis).

[3] Poltier, "La pensée."

[4] For instance, Camus, 1528. He is only one case here. See Poltier, *Passion* 21-30.

[5] See Mark Poster's *Existential Marxism in Postwar France* for a more detailed account of this environment.

[6] Poltier, *Passion* 28.

[7] Lefort, "Image of the Body" 295-297.

[8] Howard 186.

[9] Poltier, *Passion* 22.

[10] Lefort, "Dissidents" 180.

[11] Poltier, *Passion* 33-37.

[12] McKinlay, 489.

[13] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* xiv.

[14] Lefort, "Image of the Body" 294.

[15] Lefort, "Staline et le Stalinisme" 113.

[16] Howard 203-208.

[17] Lefort, "Totalitarianism without Stalin" 58.

[18] For instance, Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 154-173.

[19] Lefort, *Travail* 187.

[20] Lefort, *Formes* 16.

[21] Much more needs to be said about Lefort's work in this area and it should be the subject of another essay. Here, my aim in laying out Lefort's earlier research is to draw attention to Lefort's questioning of all forms of societies in order to understand the theoretical and political failure of Marxism. Others, especially Poltier in *Passion* and Howard, have worked on Lefort's anthropological work.

[22] Lefort, "Politics and Human Rights" 271.

[23] Lefort, "Image of the Body" 297.

[24] Lefort, *Signs* 211-213.

[25] Lefort distinguishes between the political (*le politique*) and politics (*la politique*). Politics is the science of government but the political is about power and conflictual relationships, beyond (but including) the sphere of government. For more on this, see Poltier, *La découverte* 49-59 and Jean-Pierre Marcos's excellent article.

[26] Lefort, *Travail* 399.

[27] Manent 175.

[28] Machiavelli, 31 (my emphasis).

[29] Lefort, *Travail* 721.

[30] Mouffe 30.

[31] Mouffe 93.

[32] Mouffe 101-103.

[33] See also Miguel Abensour *La démocratie contre l'Etat* for a similar treatment of Machiavelli, coming from the Marxist perspective.

[34] Lefort, *Travail* 366-398.

[35] Lefort, *Travail* 426.

[36]Abensour "Les deux interpretations" 80. Abensour's essay is perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of Lefort's account of totalitarianism. Though it is only available in French, it merits attention.

[37] Lefort, "Question" 12.

[38] Lefort, "Question" 16.

[39] McKinlay 492.

[40] Lefort, "Question" 17.

[41] Lefort, "Question" 17.

[42] Poltier, *La découverte* 78.

[43] Lefort, "Question" 19.

[44] Lefort, "Question" 18, my emphasis.

[45] Klepec, "Le totalitarisme aujourd'hui" 20.

[46] McKinlay 493.

[47] Lefort, "Image of the Body" 301.

[48] Lefort, "Human Rights and the Welfare State" 41.

[49] Lefort, "The Logic of Totalitarianism" 286. See also Tocqueville's "Introduction" in *Democracy in America*, especially 7-13.

[50] Lefort, "Question" 20.

[51] Lefort, "Question" 18.

[52] Lefort, "Totalitarianism without Stalin" 55. Poltier in *La découverte* (95) rightly reminds us that no totalitarian government has ever managed to embody the totality of a society. The task in itself is impossible and is nothing but a chimera. Lefort also admits that we must speak about totalitarianism "not because dictatorship has attained its greatest strength" for it never really can and we must go deeper than just "empirical description" to appreciate its terror ("The Logic of Totalitarianism" 284).

[53] Lefort, "Totalitarianism without Stalin" 71.

[54] Lefort, "Image of the Body" 297 and 304. For more on the people-as-one, see Jean-Pierre Marco's article "Les catégories du politique" (esp. 96-102).

[55] Poltier, *La découverte* 91-92.

[56] Hendley 177.

[57] Lefort, "Image of the Body" 305.

[58] I would therefore exclude acts of violence, against the state or individuals, that do not claim to represent a greater majority than the gang of perpetrators. Such acts could be seen as simply criminal or delinquent. It is the underlying claim to self-determination and the validity of such claim that should guide our definition of terrorism.

[59] The relationship between democracy and religion will always be thorny; modern democracy, as Lefort shows, rests on a groundless and contingent foundation but religion has a claim to an otherworldly truth. Their coexistence, however difficult, is possible.

[60] Lefort, "Politics and Human Rights" 267.

[61] Lefort, "The Logic of Totalitarianism" 289-290.

[62] Mouffe 7.

[63] Hendley 174, my emphasis.

[64] Mouffe 104.

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Probability and Risk Assessment: Taking a Chance on "Terrorism"[1]

***James Roper**, Michigan State University*

Introduction

I begin by sketching a situation I call "the reluctant gambler problem." I maintain that my intuitions, and those of many apparently rational individuals with whom I have discussed this matter, appear to conflict with well known normative principles of rational choice. My analysis of this puzzling situation suggests that those who take such an apparently irrational position are not necessarily forsaking their reason. By making a distinction between what I term "act probabilism" and "rule probabilism," and adopting the latter, I argue that someone whose initial response to the reluctant gambler conundrum appears irrational can potentially justify his or her position. Standard normative theories of rational choice do not seem to accommodate such "rule probabilism." I argue that such theories are, *prima facie*, not adequate to codify our intuitions about rationality.[2]

Applying the lesson I draw from the reluctant gambler problem to an analysis of the most reasonable way for citizens of the United States to confront terrorism in a post-September 11 world, I refer to a recent poll by Professor Richard T. Curtin, Director of Surveys of Consumers at the University of Michigan, which concludes, on the basis of consumer preferences and statistical analysis, that U.S. citizens exaggerate their personal risks from terrorist attacks.[3] I maintain that the distinction between act and rule probabilism can shed light on the exaggeration of our personal risks from terrorism. Let me be clear, I am not suggesting any sort of full analogy between the reluctant gambler issue and the threats of terrorism; rather, I believe we can use a distinction I make in my analysis of the former to help shed light on the latter.

Finally, I examine some of the political ramifications of adopting a stance regarding terrorism suggested by the distinction between act and rule probabilism. I maintain that making the distinction that Alan Dershowitz and others make between "retail" and "wholesale"—or even "apocalyptic"—versions of terrorism does not measurably change my conclusion that Americans are exaggerating their personal risks from terrorism.[4] In this connection, I explore other, more palpable, risks we face—especially political risks associated with the loss of basic freedoms. I also suggest several circumstances that might help to explain our exaggeration of terrorist risks. The terrorism crisis is a serious issue. So too, however, is the endangerment of U.S. citizens' fundamental civil

liberties by administrative policies designed to combat terrorism. The political choices we make will determine the future of freedom in the U.S. I conclude with several recommendations, and explain why my analysis may warrant these responses.

The Reluctant Gambler Problem

Some philosophers have said a necessary condition for a person to be called rational is that he or she should "take probability as a guide to life," and this seems intuitively plausible.[5] In trying to clarify what it means to guide one's life by probability, however, we encounter the following puzzle.

Imagine Ms. Jones sitting in her living room on a hot summer Sunday reading the paper. Slowly the image of a cold glass of ginger ale forms in her mind. Checking the refrigerator reveals she is out of ginger ale. Fortunately, there is a store about four miles away, and Ms. Jones decides to drive there to buy some ginger ale.

As she walks to her car, she encounters a man she recognizes as Mr. Chance. Ms. Jones knows Mr. Chance to be completely honest, but rather peculiar in other respects, as will soon be obvious. This individual reminds Ms. Jones that her computer contains a program for playing roulette. The roulette wheel that appears on her monitor can be set to have, literally, any finite number of "slots," and the probability of the "ball" landing in any particular slot is always 1/the number of slots this computer version of a roulette wheel has been set to register.[6] For example, if there are 10,000 slots, then the probability of the ball landing in some designated slot is 1/10,000.

Mr. Chance shows Ms. Jones very reliable evidence regarding the statistical probability that a person belonging to a narrowly specified class of drivers—which, Ms. Jones recognizes, includes her—will be killed while driving on any of a narrowly specified class of trips which, she recognizes, includes her projected trip to the store. On the basis of the evidence Mr. Chance presents to Ms. Jones and her knowledge of his intellectual integrity and the reliability of his data and analytical methods, she has absolute confidence in the reliability of his statistical probability statement—which takes into account both the fact that she has no aversion to gambling and that she attaches no positive or negative value, or utility, to the act of driving to the store.[7] Mr. Chance's statement also takes into account any special circumstances relevant to his statistical estimate—for example, the general condition of Ms. Jones's car, whether she has had a good night's sleep, is intoxicated, etc. Thus Ms. Jones finds herself presented with a statistical probability estimate that a person like her in all relevant respects, embarking on a trip such as her planned trip to the store has, for example, one chance in a million of being killed if she drives to the store for ginger ale. *I assume, further, that Ms. Jones understands that Mr. Chance's statistical analysis is accurate and that she cannot measurably alter her probability of dying should she choose to drive to the store herself.* Mr. Chance does not need to specify these

odds exactly; he need only be able to present Ms. Jones with a clear estimate. We also ignore the risk of injury, though this would not be possible in the real world.

Now Mr. Chance suggests the following wager. He and Ms. Jones, and suitable observers, are to go back into Ms. Jones's home and set her computer roulette program for the statistical probability Mr. Chance has calculated—in our example, one in a million—she has of dying on her projected trip. If Mr. Chance has presented Ms. Jones with an estimated range, the odds would be adjusted to accommodate that fact. Next, Ms. Jones is to select a number between, in our example, one and one million and communicate it to the observers. Finally, her computer's roulette wheel is "spun." If her number comes up, Ms. Jones will be painlessly killed.[8] If it does not, Mr. Chance will bring the cold ginger ale into her house, sell it to Ms. Jones at the store's price, plus payment for the wear and tear that will not be put on her car by driving it to the store and back, and leave. Mr. Chance has assured Ms. Jones, and she knows she can believe him, that he will never return. *In short, this bet is to be a one-time thing—not the first of a series of visits Ms. Jones will experience over her lifetime.*

I have presented this wager to hundreds of colleagues, friends, and students over a period of many years. While a few would accept the gamble, the overwhelming majority would not. Indeed, whenever I imagine myself in Ms. Jones's position, I find *myself* refusing Mr. Chance's bet.[9] The whole point of this wager, of course, is to pose a problem about our very concept of rational choice—"taking probability as a guide . . .." The example is so structured that, according to Mr. Chance's story, a rational person should be indifferent between taking the bet and driving to the store. But here is the problem: Typically, those who refuse the wager are not indifferent. Their rejection is not a matter of a coin flip; it is a serious rejection. They do not want to accept the bet. Period. But even if my "anecdotal" accounts of presenting this wager to students, colleagues, and others are not taken as credible, the key point is that I find myself wanting to reject the wager—and I *am* familiar with normative theories of rational choice and probability theory, and I do not think I can change my risk of dying by driving myself.

Are all who would refuse such an offer just acting irrationally—refusing to take probability as a guide to life? This certainly seems *possible*. After all, it appears that both the *probability and the payoff*—hence, the *expected value*—would be the same either way we choose.[10] The cost of the ginger ale and the expense of driving the car are the same for both choices, and, by assumption, there appears to be nothing else that would allow us to value taking the bet over rejecting it, or *vice versa*. If we are rational, it appears we should be indifferent between Mr. Chance's options. Unfortunately, however, this approach would exclude from the class of rational persons many who most people believe should be included. Indeed, I would count myself among those so excluded.

We might reject the idea that taking probability as a guide to life is, on any plausible interpretation, a necessary condition for rationality, but on this view we would be hard put to say

what 'rationality' means.[11] The following analysis neither labels those who reject Mr. Chance's bet irrational nor rejects the idea that guiding one's life by probability is necessary for rationality.

Analysis of the Reluctant Gambler Problem

When those who reject the wager are first presented with it, they usually say such things as: "If I stopped doing things like driving to the store for ginger ale, life would become so dull that it would not be worth living, whereas I can have a very full and satisfying life without doing such things as accepting Mr. Chance's wager." These remarks are suggestive, but they need clarification and analysis. Remember, we granted Mr. Chance's claim about the statistical probability of being killed while driving to the store. In addition, the wager assumes that those approached have no aversion to gambling and participate in a variety of activities known to have statistically specifiable risks of dying associated with them. Therefore, someone who says there is *something different* about accepting Mr. Chance's offer must, first, distinguish acts such as accepting his wager from other acts and, second, explain how we are justified in firmly refusing Mr. Chance's bet and yet getting into the car and going after the ginger ale.

To begin answering these questions, I suggest the reluctant gambler problem reflects a pre-analytic intuition about rational action—relating especially to the way in which we use probability to guide our lives. To be more specific, I believe we can make a distinction between applying probability assessments to individual actions and applying them to rules. In effect, I am making a distinction between what I will call "act probabilism" and "rule probabilism." This intuition is not typically reflected in standard theories of rational choice. In effect, I am using Mr. Chance's thought experiment to challenge such standard normative theories of choice.

To help clarify the distinction between act and rule probabilism, I note a suggestive parallel.[12] Most philosophers are familiar with the way in which the ethical theory of traditional, or "act," utilitarianism has been distinguished from modified versions of that theory that are typically labeled "rule" utilitarianism, but a brief recounting of this distinction will elucidate our analysis of the reluctant gambler problem. *Traditional, or act, utilitarianism* is the theory that says one ought to do that action, among the possible alternatives, that maximizes the happiness, or "utility," of the greatest number of people. There are variations and refinements, but this is the main idea. Actions are justified *directly* by being subsumed under the principle of utility. *Rule utilitarianism*, on the other hand, involves a two-step process for justifying actions. First, one defends a set of rules by showing that following these rules—or, rather, this *set of rules*—will lead to maximizing the happiness or utility of society.[13] Just as an individual can be an act utilitarian, an individual can be a rule utilitarian. This is controversial because some philosophers believe that the appeal to rules entails that a rule utilitarian must be part of a group or community.[14] The point here, however, is not to argue for rule

utilitarianism as an *ethical* theory; it is rather to draw a loose parallel between rule utilitarianism and certain aspects of the theory of rational choice *regarded as a theory of individual action*. In this venue, the issue is less problematic.[15]

One further point. Though the matter is often ignored, as I have ignored it here for simplicity, it is clear that even rule utilitarians would not want to preclude *ever* dealing with special situations as if they were functioning as act utilitarians. Very important decisions, whether they primarily affect the decision makers as individuals or have profound implications for the larger society, might be approached, even by a rule utilitarian, as individual choices—which warrant careful and detailed calculations. Similarly, rule probabilists may, and likely will, want to consider some decisions in detail, rather than simply subsuming them under a set of rules. But, in making this point, I am not abandoning the distinction between "act" and "rule" probabilism. On the contrary, these exceptions actually strengthen my position. As soon as we contemplate what it means to do a sustained calculation of the probabilities associated with a particular action, it is clear that no human could consistently deal with *every action* in the manner of an act probabilist.[16] Moreover, as I explain below, the proper response to terrorism may be to revise some of our rules. This is much different from treating cases individually, in the manner of an act probabilist. Though it may *appear* to some that such a program of rule revision involves treating cases individually, this is simply not true. There are still rules; they are just altered to deal with a new reality. The act probabilist I envision would not utilize rules. Every action would be individually considered.

The distinction developed above sheds light on our analysis. Is wagering with Mr. Chance something one needs to do as part of a normal life? To clarify how it might make sense for someone who takes probability as a guide to life to reject such a bet, I propose that such an individual be regarded as typically applying probability estimates to rules, rather than directly to actions. In short, such an individual would be a sort of "rule probabilist," as opposed to an "act probabilist." In effect, I suggest that a parallel between the application of the principle of taking probability as a guide to one's life and rule utilitarianism, regarded as a theory of individual action, may function as a sort of "philosophical explanation" of how a rational individual can be justified in rejecting Mr. Chance's offer.[17]

With this view in mind, we can make sense of the typical reply that one simply does not have to deal with things like Mr. Chance's proffered bet in order to live one's life. Individuals who reply in this way might be regarded as *rule probabilists* whose rules for living rationally do not include becoming involved in wagers like that proposed by Mr. Chance. This is what they mean when they say driving to get ginger ale is part of their normal life whereas gambling with Mr. Chance is not. Such individuals "frame" the issue differently in virtue of being rule probabilists. The reluctant gambler problem is a puzzle precisely because it frames the issue in question in a way that ignores the possibility that people are rule probabilists. Instead of thinking of Mr. Chance's proposal as

more or less equivalent to driving to the store themselves, they think of Mr. Chance as proposing that they abandon the principles of rationality by which they order their lives and consider doing something that seems, *prima facie*, bizarre.[18]

In the case of Mr. Chance's proffered wager, for example, I find myself considering *the general rule that I will drive in all of the "normal" ways required to function in the society in which I live—including doing my job, raising my children, nurturing my family, and so forth.* This is a very general formulation, and it will no doubt include and exclude different things depending on whose rule it is and how it fits into the set of rules by which that person's decisions are governed. Such a rule clearly incorporates probabilities because, in adopting it, I must accept the very real, though hopefully small, probability that I will be killed or injured in the course of following this rule. Moreover, at least in my case, this rule does not incorporate the belief that I can arbitrarily alter these probabilities when I am frightened—for example, by Mr. Chance's wager. As I have argued, the distinction between act and rule probabilism is intended as a *philosophical explanation* of how it is possible for a human being to reject Mr. Chance's bet without jettisoning his or her claim to rationality.[19] This particular rule is only an example, based on my own sensibilities, but I believe many would identify with it.[20]

This rule probabilism construal of "taking probability as a guide," however, appears to oblige us to explain why we should accept this interpretation rather than one modeled on act utilitarianism. Mr. Chance might reply to the above argument: "What you say makes sense if people are rule probabilists, but you still have the burden of explaining why most people are not more like act probabilists. After all, act probabilism seems to be a better fit with traditional theories of rational choice."

I present two related answers to this challenge. First, the main point of the (Mr. Chance) thought experiment is to *challenge* traditional ways of thinking about rational choice. To argue that the burden of showing why alternative approaches should be considered is wholly mine is, essentially, to beg the question I raise. Someone who objects to the move to rule probabilism has *at least* as great a burden to justify his or her position as I do—even if it can be shown that act probabilism better accords with traditional normative theories of choice.

But, second, and more importantly, I maintain that even the most rational of us are rule probabilists *by default*. Perhaps Mr. Data, the android in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* would have the computational speed necessary to apply probability estimates to every action, whatever that might mean in light of the vagaries of the theory of action.[21] But humans, I urge, do not come even close to having the ability to apply probability directly to every decision. Even the best calculators among us simply lack the capacity to be act probabilists.[22] Since "ought implies can," even where the "ought" is part of a normative theory of rationality, we are rule probabilists by default—unless, of course, one jettisons the earlier assumption that we do, in some sense, take probability as a guide to our lives.[23] This consideration helps explain why, as we said above, those who reject Mr.

Chance's wager, frame the matter in terms of their (sets of) rules rather than as a straight choice among individual actions—as an act probabilist would.

The resolution of the reluctant gambler puzzle turns on rejecting the assumption that people are act probabilists. Recall that the whole point of the reluctant gambler problem is to put those who advocate taking probability as a guide to life in a situation where it seems that they should be indifferent between accepting Mr. Chance's wager and going for the ginger ale themselves. The problem arises because many supposedly rational individuals would firmly refuse the wager—as would the rational thought experimenter—in this case, myself. Hence these individuals are anything but indifferent between the wager and driving to the store themselves. We circumvent the problem by showing that rejection of the wager can be philosophically explained in terms of the fact that *humans are rule probabilists by default.*[24]

To conclude this analysis of the reluctant gambler problem, I have outlined a strategy to enable an individual to justify rejecting Mr. Chance's proffered wager while continuing to "take probability as a guide to life." In the next section, I show how this strategy is useful in dealing with the new reality of terrorism directed against the United States. While there are important similarities between the case of Mr. Chance and that of Mr. Terrorist, the applicability of our strategy to terrorism in no way depends on any sort of perfect match, or analogy, between these two cases. The point of this paper is to show that dealing with the "reluctant gambler" problem suggests a theoretical approach for dealing with recent terrorist threats.

"Terrorism" and the Reluctant Gambler

I begin this section with a reference to an opinion poll conducted by one of the leading polling experts in the United States. Professor Richard Curtin, Director of Surveys of Consumers at The University of Michigan, states that his most recent polling of U.S. consumers shows that they "exaggerate their personal risks from terrorism."[25] The importance of this finding for this paper cannot be exaggerated. *Empirical data by one of the most respected polling experts in the country supports the position that American consumers believe they are at greater risk from terrorism, in this post September 11 world, than serious statistical analysis indicates is warranted.* This result provides a framework of fact for the more speculative analysis of this paper. It also clearly signals a difference between terrorism and the reluctant gambler, where we posited that Mr. Chance's probability estimate was true.

It is as if Mr. Terrorist came to us on September 11 and following and offered us a sort of wager. He confronted us with our own mortality by placing us in a situation where the maxims of our lives—the sorts of rules we live by as rational rule probabilists—seem to be cast into question by the new reality spawned that fateful day. In this respect, the parallel with the reluctant gambler problem is clear. Mr. Chance forces us to examine our probabilistic rules pertaining to certain sorts

of driving. Rational individuals know about the risks associated with driving but have come to terms with them—perhaps driving a safer car, driving more carefully, or being more selective about where and when to drive, and incorporating these decisions into their rule, or rules, about driving. Mr. Chance forces us to think about these driving risks, and perhaps that is why most people prefer to follow their old (set of) rules and drive to the store. We simply do not have to deal with Mr. Chance's wager as part of our normal life, so we reject it. Similarly, Mr. Terrorist calls attention to the probabilistic rules by which we order our lives. Ordinarily, we would not engage in a critical reevaluation of these rules. Over time, we have arranged our lives to reduce serious risks while engaging in activities we find fulfilling and necessary for our usual functioning. It is as if Mr. Terrorist came to our door on September 11, 2001, and said, "Look, you simply cannot rely on your old ways of doing things, including your old ways of incorporating probability judgments into your decisions. The rules you have been using to organize your lives are now useless. What we have done, and threaten to do, changes everything! Pay attention to the warnings! Dramatically alter your lives! Be afraid! You cannot hide behind the fact that you are not soldiers. We want to kill you! (Remember, 'terrorism' is the more or less random killing of civilians for the purpose of making a political statement.)"[26]

Mr. Chance offered us a rather strange bet that threatened to disrupt one very specific aspect of our lives simply by making us aware of the ordinary (and real) risks associated with driving to the store. Mr. Terrorist, on the other hand, challenges the basic strategies by which rational rule probabilists would order most aspects of their lives. He is not saying that we can go on with our lives knowing that the risks associated with living are essentially the same as they were; *in effect, he is claiming that we face much more serious risks now that he is targeting us for terrorist attacks.* In this respect, Mr. Terrorist's offering appears to differ from that of Mr. Chance, who makes clear that our probability of dying is the same whether we take his bet or not. We can reject Mr. Chance's bet. At worst, we may come to believe we are less rational than we thought we were—though I have challenged that perception. However, many believe we cannot reject Mr. Terrorist's bet without placing ourselves and others in harm's way.

There does appear to be a parallel between the *payoffs* that Messrs. Chance and Terror offer us. Just as Mr. Chance offers only the same ginger ale we wanted in the first place, Mr. Terrorist is offering us, in a sense, exactly what we have but—*and here the similarity breaks down*—with a ghastly difference: If we take *his "bet,"* we will experience fear, arguably paralyzing fear.

Shouldn't we be afraid? The World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked, anthrax laced the mail, and who knows what is next? Our own national government issues alert after alert, urging us to be vigilant, but offering no specific directions about how to do that. Mr. Terrorist wants us to be worried and afraid. *Yet, contrary to what Mr. Terrorist wants us to believe, our probability of dying in a terrorist attack is so small that it is essentially the same as it was before the attacks.*[27] Some may face

greater threats from terrorists, depending on where they live, the requirements of their jobs, and so on. *Yet even these individuals' risks of being killed by terrorists are negligible if viewed in the context of the risks they faced* before *September 11*. Since September 11, 2001, fewer than thousand people have died in the worst terrorist attacks in this nation's history. No one in their right mind fails to think this an atrocity—especially given that these people were murdered to make a political point. On the other hand, this year, twenty thousand people *will die* of the flu, forty-five thousand *will die* and hundreds of thousands will be injured in auto accidents, countless numbers *will die* of various "natural" diseases, and so on.[28] An important difference between the reluctant gambler problem and Mr. Terrorist's imposed wager is that the first is structured to be *a one-time thing*, and it is so specific and isolated that we can ignore it without having to dislocate our lives, as I explained above. Mr. Terrorist, on the other hand, presents us with the prospect of continuing "wagers" and that makes it difficult to ignore him and continue to live our lives. However difficult it may be to ignore Mr. Terrorist, he does not appreciably increase our risks. What Mr. Terrorist fears is that we will note our risks are largely unchanged, refuse to be terrified, and only change those maxims of living that will create greater difficulty for *him*.

In his book, *Fear Less*, Gavin De Becker argues that the generalized "alerts" from the government are probably a bad idea. De Becker is a risk expert with special interest in terrorism and he offers a number of specific suggestions of steps people in different occupations and walks of life can take in the present situation.[29] In effect, De Becker is suggesting how we might remain rule probabilists but revise our rules with the terrorists' "new reality" in mind—though he does not approach the problem in terms of rule versus act probabilism. It is not part of this paper to rehearse suggestions like those of DeBecker, but merely to call attention to this literature and stress its significance. Although I argue that the risks associated with a post September 11 world are negligible when placed in the context of the variety of risks we face, I do not deny that we can, and probably should, make changes in the rules by which we bring probability to bear on our decisions—changes which will decrease somewhat the risks terrorists pose for us. (Remember, I have argued these risks are already incredibly small.) But then there are ways to reduce most risks we face, for example, the risks associated with driving, disease, and smoking—some of which are *not* small. What I maintain we should *not* do is attempt the impossible task of becoming an act probabilist in the face of terrorist risks that are not appreciably greater than we faced prior to September 11—or, for that matter, in the face of other risks we face—though we might revise our rules to reduce these risks.

If I am right about the real risks we face from terrorist attacks, why should there be any issue at all?[30] Why would rational individuals allow themselves to be drawn into the terrorists' web of fear? Because of the random nature of their attacks, terrorists place us on the front line by the appalling proposition with which they confront us: That we are all "enemy soldiers" they want to

kill—men, women, children, everyone is a target. These are the sorts of arbitrary attacks that Israelis have had to live with for over fifty years and that are currently intensifying. On September 11, all Americans were given notice that we too were potential targets, even in our own country, and we are not comfortable with this message.

This is precisely the importance of the lesson we learn from the reluctant gambler: Though we should probably revise many of our rules to make ourselves more difficult targets for terrorists, we must not permit ourselves to be turned toward act probabilism. I explained earlier that such a position is impossible for human beings to adopt. The lesson we learn from the reluctant gambler is that humans, to the extent that they take probability as a guide to their lives, *must be rule probabilists*. Unlike Mr. Data, we simply haven't the capacity to calculate the risks of each individual action—whatever that might mean. To the extent that Mr. Terrorist can provoke us into such an *attempt*, he has terrorized us into a sort of *decision paralysis*. Should this happen, we will have been drawn away from our usual set of maxims, which incorporate the (albeit rough) guidance of probability; and we will find ourselves attempting to calculate the risks attending all of our actions—or so many of them that our lives are disrupted. If this happens to a sizable portion of the United States populace, the terrorists will have succeeded in terrorizing this nation.

Explanation and Justification

Early in this paper I alluded to an empirical study by Professor Richard Curtin, whose most recent empirical study of U.S. consumer behavior shows that American consumers "exaggerate their personal risks from terrorism." These results suggest there is *no justification* for the outright panic many experience when they consider the terrorist attacks that have been made on the United States and future terrorist attacks that may occur.[31] These reactions of panic and fear might be *explained*, however.[32] Like a good deal of recent work in the social sciences, my speculations presuppose something like the account of rationality that is commonplace to economists, political scientists, psychologists, technically trained philosophers, and others, though I make no formal reference to it here.[33] Indeed, this effort is best regarded as a philosophical explanation of the sort discussed by Robert Nozick.[34] I describe circumstances that could, in the context of a standard theory of rational choice, lead to the reactions in question.

After the horrors of September 11, George W. Bush urged Americans to be vigilant but to "live their lives." Many people seem not to be reassured by Bush's rhetoric. They are still frightened.[35] Indeed, the major TV news networks spent—and continue to spend—a great deal of time reminding us how vulnerable we are to terrorist attack and how terrible such attacks are apt to be. Often they are echoing remarks made by the President, the Vice President, or other high-ranking officials. Ana Marie Cox, in her nationally syndicated newspaper column, maintained that

"worse-case scenario claims have become [a] cottage industry in [the] media since Sept. 11 attacks, overwhelming calmer voices."[36]

Terrorism has literally become the bread and butter of television's twenty-four hour news channels—the main source of information for most Americans. Ana Marie Cox's article, cited above, points out that many of the so-called experts on terrorism who regularly appear on these news channels have questionable credentials. What they do share, though, is a penchant for hysteria. One commentator said, for example, that the probability that al Quaeda would "decimate" this country was "50-50."[37] It is not difficult to understand why television networks and commentators would want to frighten us. Scared viewers are more likely to stay glued to their televisions, fearful they will miss key information needed to help survive the next onslaught of the terrorists. These television stations use their coverage of terrorism and its future possibilities in much the same way as terrorists use their attacks: To gain national attention. The 1970 era film *Network* tells the story of an industry in which the news divisions were in the process of being turned into "shows" to gain market share.[38] Although *Network* is a work of fiction, its references to shows about terrorist groups seem almost quaint compared to what is actually showing on the 24-hour news channels. Today, it is almost as if a sort of "Clippy"—the little paperclip "helper" from Microsoft who graces the screens of my computers—appears on all of our media and *constantly reminds us* of the new reality of terrorism.[39]

In addition, the Bush administration has been under fire because of its ties to corporate scandals associated with Enron, World Com, and others and because of allegations that more was known about the terrorist attacks of September 11 than has been divulged. As soon as the government was challenged on its intelligence failures, Vice President Cheney went on television and said that we would almost certainly be attacked and probably with weapons of mass destruction.[40] One does not have to believe the Bush administration is using terrorist threats to deflect criticism to understand that these officials are clearly in "potential conflict of interest" in this matter.[41] That is, it is in their interest to deflect criticism from areas that are potentially embarrassing, like failures of the economy and intelligence failures. Both the Whitehouse and the twenty-four hour news channels have reasons to make sure Americans are focused on the threat of terrorism—and the television stations are in a position to orient their programming to make sure that is their focus. There are other voices, but these are seldom heard.[42] It is not surprising, then, that Americans are deeply worried about terrorist threats—worried beyond anything that is rational. Though not a formal scientific explanation of why Mr. Terrorist has been so successful in frightening us toward adopting an untenable "act probabilism," the discussion in this section does suggest how such a result is possible.

Political Fallout

This paper focuses on the individual actor, but ultimately the citizens of a nation, presented with a serious threat, demand that their leaders protect them. Democracies have always managed to make such adjustments in time of war.[43] Today, we are told, we are fighting a "war on terror," which may last many years. In light of the preceding section, it should not be surprising that many Americans are so obsessed with terrorist threats that they have acquiesced to their leaders making major changes in the country's political infrastructure ostensibly to reduce the likelihood of terrorist attacks. At both the federal and state levels, legislation has been passed giving law enforcement agencies broad powers that clearly supersede anything envisioned in the U.S. Constitution. No price seems too high if people come to believe that paying it provides even slightly greater protection from terrorists, and they are regularly encouraged in such beliefs.[44]

Decision theorists call the problem of moving from the individual preferences of the members of a group to a collective—or group—preference 'an amalgamation problem.'[45] To solve such a problem rationally, it is essential that we know the real "costs" of various options. The preceding sections show why most people are not in a good position to assess rationally the risks associated with terrorism. The steady diet of fear that pours from their television screens, and from many other media, whether by accident or design, seem to foster a frantic, act probabilist response—a response I have argued is literally incoherent.

In principle, though, we are in a much better position to appraise the risks of abandoning our basic legal protections as embodied in the Constitution. We know, for example, that the Constitution is a collection of legal rules. In short, it is a *rule based*—not an act based—document. We also know that the Constitution embodies the fundamental rights and duties that are the bases of our freedom. Furthermore, we know the rights embodied in the principles of the Constitution are difficult to achieve but very easy to lose and, thus, that we should not part with them except in the *most extreme* circumstances. Even then, we should make provisions that allow us to return to our Constitutional base after the crisis is over. Finally, we know that, even in the face of nuclear destruction, during the Cold War, we managed to preserve basic Constitutional guarantees. The Constitution warrants such protection because it embodies the rights that make the United States, imperfect though it may be, a free and democratic society.[46]

I have argued that the individual risks associated with the terrorism we confronted on September 11 are not significantly greater than the risks Americans faced prior to that date.[47] I have suggested that we may believe they are greater because our media and our leaders are telling us they are, but a rational assessment of the probabilities shows otherwise.

On the other hand, the risks of losing our basic rights and freedoms because we trade them away for what our leaders say is greater security are very real. Indeed, many rights and liberties have

already been lost or severely diminished.[48] It is consistent with this paper that Americans should not continue to give up basic rights for the sake of supposed increases in security against terrorism. The price is just too high—especially in light of both Professor Curtin's empirical results that consumers exaggerate their risks from terrorist attack and my more theoretical argument that the risks associated with terrorism are essentially the same as we faced prior to September 11, 2001. If we want to consider reducing the risks associated with the new reality of terrorism, that may be worth doing. But we should approach this project against the backdrop of a realistic appraisal of the risks from terrorist attack—and we should be very careful to understand the costs of such risk reduction. Alan Dershowitz makes a number of proposals for diminishing terrorist risks in his excellent new book *Why Terrorism Works*.[49] What is particularly valuable about this book is that Dershowitz spells out both how a non-democratic government would seek to eliminate terrorism and how a democracy should proceed, balancing the preservation of Constitutional protections against security needs. Finally, any such risk reduction must take place within the framework of rule probabilism. This is consistent with Dershowitz's insistence that a democracy should not jettison constitutional protections even if these may need to be reviewed in light of terrorist threats.

Summary

This paper began with an analysis of the reluctant gambler problem—a problem in which the notion of guiding one's life by probability seemed to conflict with the preferences of apparently rational people (or rational thought experimenters). To resolve that problem, I made a distinction between rule and act probabilism, on the analogy of rule and act utilitarianism. Arguing that humans are rule probabilists by default, I suggested that, if those who refuse Mr. Chance's wager—our reluctant gamblers—are considered to be rule probabilists, their decision to reject Mr. Chance's bet is consistent with the idea that they rationally guide their lives by probability.

Next, I stressed that the parallel between the reluctant gambler and our response to terrorist attacks was only partial. But the distinction between act and rule probabilism used to analyze the reluctant gambler problem suggested a way of confronting the new terrorist risks we faced after September 11—especially in light of the fact that the risks associated with such attacks today are essentially the same as they were before September 11.

The perception that the risks of terrorism have somehow mushroomed in light of the events of September 11 may be at least partially explained by the television coverage of the 24-hour news networks and the potential interest of the current administration in diverting public attention away from their own questionable practices and issues. While the risks of terrorism are not appreciably higher than they were prior to September 11, it might be possible to reduce these risks. Unfortunately, our national government seems to have determined that the best way to diminish

such risks is to dismantle our Constitution—a document which is a testament to the value of having clear rules to protect citizens' rights and freedoms. The important question Americans now face is how much they want to pay—especially in terms of diminished rights and liberties—to reduce a risk that is essentially the same as it was several years ago. If we continue down this path, our chances of remaining a uniquely free and open society do not look promising.

Finally, in an appendix, I differentiate 'terrorism' from what I call 'terror war.' I contest the claim that the possibility of the U.S. facing terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction offers a serious challenge to my analysis in this paper.

Appendix: "Terror War"

A strike on the U.S. with one or more weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) would not be in the realm of what I term 'terrorism.' The order of magnitude of such a strike would be *qualitatively different* from terrorism as we have known it. In the wake of September 11, 2001, the U.S. declared a "war on terror;" many, however, including myself, believe that terrorism as we know it, *including the events of September 11*, is really more analogous to a *criminal assault* than a war. But the use of WMDs by a country or a group of individuals clearly is *an act of war*. Because of the destructive power of such weapons, I suggest we label such an attack "terror war," and this is not the topic of this paper.[50]

Some will argue that, in restricting my topic in this way, I am really admitting that we should be terrified. "After all," such an individual might intone, "What you are now calling 'terror war' is what is really scaring us." I disagree. While I only sketch some features of my answer to this challenge, these suggestions reflect my general strategy. The destructive power of many WMDs is so great that *the end result* of such an attack on the United States simply overwhelms even major increases in the probability of such a result.

For example, if a nuclear attack on New York city would kill ten million and the probability of such an attack were, say, one in ten billion prior to September 11, what decision theorists call "the expected (negative) value" of such an attack will be 0.001.[51] In short, the expected (negative) value of a one in ten billion chance of a nuclear bomb exploding in New York city and killing ten million people could be interpreted as the (actual) loss of one one-thousandth of a human life. If al Quaeda were able to increase the odds massively to one in one billion, the expected (negative) value becomes 0.01 or the (actual) loss of one one-hundredth of a human life. The difference is clearly insignificant. This happens because the (negative) *end result* of such a WMD's use is so much more important (10 million dead) than the probability of such an end result (one in ten billion or one in one billion) when evaluating expected (negative) value—unless the probability increases *astronomically* or we assume we are starting with *zero* probability. While some may feel that al Quaeda is capable of such astronomical increase in the probability of a WMD being deployed against the United States or

that New York city has been at zero risk of a nuclear strike since the Cold War ended, the arguments I outline below mitigate strongly against such prospects.

During the Cold War, the former Soviet Union and the United States were said to have a "balance of terror" because each could destroy the other. The strategy behind this "balance" was referred to as MAD, or *mutually assured destruction*. The message inherent in the MAD strategy was, and is, that an attack with WMDs rises to a level commensurate with using whatever weapons are required to defend your country—even if these weapons may kill civilians. Hence, the term "terror war." Note, incidentally, that the MAD strategy, and the variations of it I sketch out below, is a *policy*—a *rule* that does not admit of obvious exceptions. That is what makes such a policy effective: the fact that your opponents know what to expect if they attack you, and you know that they know, and so on.

It can be argued that it is irrelevant who deploys a WMD against the U.S.; the risk associated with such a deployment is the same *whoever* does it. For forty years, Americans faced the prospect of *nuclear annihilation* in an exchange of many, many nuclear warheads with the former Soviet Union. After the Cold War ended, just over ten years ago with the breakup of the Soviet Union, most Americans seem to have forgotten that the majority of the (former Soviet) weapons were *still there*. While these weapons are not targeted as they were during the Cold War, they can be *retargeted* very quickly. During the last ten years, those weapons have continued to exist, and to pose a threat for us—albeit a significantly reduced threat. On the other hand, with the end of the Cold War, other nations began to develop WMDs, and there are now a number of other countries with such weapons. Many of them are potentially hostile to the United States. In a sense, the nuclear Damocles Sword that hung over our heads never went away completely. It was just shrunk a bit and shoved into a closet.

The conclusion is this: We have continued to face the prospect of being struck with WMDs since the late 1950s, and the probability of such a strike has always been very obscure. Al Quaeda terrorists, or other terrorists, who are intent on striking us with a WMD are just one more such threat; we have known that such threats from extremist groups existed for at least a decade. It can be argued, and this is particularly significant, that succeeding with a plan to strike the United States with a WMD will likely be significantly more difficult in light of September 11, since other states are now potentially less likely to allow a terrorist access to nuclear materials or technology. This is the thrust of our "rule" that countries are "either with us or against us" and that we will pursue something like a MAD strategy against anyone who aids terrorists in obtaining or deploying WMDs. But make no mistake, we have been continuously at risk for such a WMD attack since the late 1950s and it is very difficult to assign a probability to the risk of the U.S. being struck by a WMD.

Most experts do not think such an attack on the United States is imminent; but a WMD attack is possible.[52] To assess this likelihood we need to consider what the U.S. response to such an

unprovoked attack would likely be. If we were so attacked by a *country,* it is pretty clear what would happen, and no sane leader is likely to risk the nuclear annihilation of his or her nation by supporting such an assault.[53] If a WMD is deployed against us and it is *unclear* who did it, how many Americans really believe our leaders would not be forced to respond, perhaps with our own WMDs, against *someone*? The citizens of the United States would demand it, and the world knows it.[54] Perhaps this is why Yasser Arafat has so publicly and vehemently denounced al Quaeda. Arafat declared that (bin Laden) "never helped us, he was working in another completely different area and against our interests."[55] This means that any terrorist would have to think long and hard before launching that kind of attack because once the U.S. targeted a particular nation, or nations, for retaliation, it is very likely that information about who was behind the attack would be forthcoming. Let me be clear: I am not morally sanctioning such action; rather, I am saying that this is what I believe *would happen* were, say, ten million New Yorkers to die in a nuclear explosion. In any event, the considerations of this paper pertain to *terrorism*, not to terror war. Though it may be difficult to draw a precise line between the two, there are clear cases on both sides of the line. I plan a future project in which I will deal specifically with terror war and the strategies and morality pertinent to it.

Notes

[1] I limit the meaning of 'terrorism' in this paper. See the Appendix for details. I want to thank my friend David Zin for his extensive comments on this paper.

[2] Tversky and Kahneman's distinction between normative and descriptive decision theory is suggestive. Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Rational Choice and the Framing of Decisions," *Decision Making*, ed. David E. Bell, Howard Raiffa, and Amos Tversky (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988).

[3] See endnote 25 below.

[4] See Alan M. Dershowitz, *Why Terrorism Works* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002).

[5] The idea that one should "guide one's life by probability" is intended as a sort of common sense, or pre-analytic, stand-in for a detailed theory of rational choice, incorporating both probability and utility. It might be urged that I simply state such a theory at the outset—perhaps incorporating into such a theory a solution to, or dissolution of, the "reluctant gambler problem"—more or less by fiat. I present the issue of "taking probability as a guide" in this more common sense way, however, *precisely because* I intend to raise questions I consider *analytically prior to* any precisely stated theory of rational choice. I could raise the same issues as a challenge to some standard theory of choice. Unfortunately, this approach would make the paper essentially unreadable by those not familiar with such work, and that seems inappropriate given the very general and intuitive issues the paper seeks to raise.

[6] While the "classical" interpretation of probability is associated with certain problems—especially in regard to the principle of indifference—it is appropriate in this context. See Merrilee H. Salmon, et al., *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992) 74-77.

[7] There are several technical points we should note in setting up this problem. First, it is only necessary that Ms. Jones find Mr. Chance's statistical probability estimate acceptable. The precise statistical methodology he uses is irrelevant, as long as Mr. Chance is using generally accepted statistical methods. Second, because statistical probability technically does not apply to the "single case," Ms. Jones must transform Mr. Chance's statistical probability estimate into something like rational subjective probability. (See Salmon 77-84). Third, as I said in endnote 5 above, this problem can be set up using various standard theories of rational choice. The problem is constructed so that the "utility," as determined by standard theories of rational choice, appears to be the same whichever decision Ms. Jones makes, but there are other issues that emerge below in our analysis.

[8] It may strike us as strange that anyone would give someone the right to (even painlessly) kill them when they are not, for example, desperately ill—or even that such killing should be legal. All we need here, however, is that the reluctant gambler problem is a viable philosophical thought experiment, not that it fit our specific laws and customs.

[9] I set the problem up very carefully for those whose opinions I canvass. They include people who understand at least the elements of the theory of rational choice and the basic interpretations of probability. In short, I am assuming well-informed, and presumably rational, observers, though most of them are *not specialists* in probability and choice theory. That is intentional since the problem is designed to challenge a standard interpretation of rational decision theory.

[10] For an elementary introduction to the theory of rational choice, see Duncan Luce and Howard Raifa, *Games and Decisions* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1957).

[11] See Luce and Raifa, *op. cit.*

[12] Note: I am not drawing any sort of *exact analogy* between the act/rule utilitarianism distinction and that between act and rule probabilism. I merely offer the former as a suggestive motivation of the latter.

[13] Manuel Velasquez, *Business Ethics: Concepts and Cases,* 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prenctice Hall, 1992) 60-70. Note: I presuppose a number of refinements in utilitarian theory not included in most accounts, including Velasquez. The most important is the idea that it is *not individual rules that the rule utilitarian justifies but, rather, a set of rules.* I assume that a set of rules cannot be altered piecemeal without loss of utility, since the rules that make up such a group will *interact with one another* in various ways.

[14] In personal correspondence, some years ago, John Rawls made this point in connection with a challenge I made to his paper, "Two Concepts of Rules," reprinted in John Rawls, *Collected Papers,* ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999) 20-46.

[15] Such theories are typically constructed, at least initially, as theories of individual action. The "amalgamation" of the decisions of individual actors into a sort of group action is treated as a separate problem. Again, Luce and Raifa, *op. cit.* is a good introduction.

[16] Since utilitarianism is an *ethical* theory, I leave open the question whether a human can be an act utilitarian—though I doubt that this is possible.

[17] Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981) 8-11. Here I utilize Robert Nozick's notion of a "philosophical explanation" regarded as an account of how something is possible. The importance of this notion where I refer to "explanation" is to highlight that I am not making straightforward empirical claims; rather, I am indicating how certain things are possible in light of various assumptions.

[18] See endnote 5 above.

[19] See endnote 17 above.

[20] I remind the reader that my analysis of rule probabalism (or, indeed, rule utilitarianism) assumes we are dealing with sets of rules that are interconnected with each other. A full explanation of this for either theory is beyond the bounds of this paper.

[21] See, for example, *Star Trek: Insurrection,* dir. Jonathon Frakes, Paramount Pictures, 1998.

[22] As noted above, I do not deny that ordinary people make individual calculations in some especially important cases. But I contend that rational people would be forced to adopt, even if implicitly, rules to cover most of their dealings because they cannot, in principle, calculate every individual action. That is what it means to say they are "rule probabilists by default."

[23] Refer to the preceding note and to endnote 2 above. A detailed treatment of both choice theory and utilitarianism would reveal more complexities, but exploring them would take us well beyond the limited, more or less "broad stroke," goals of this paper.

[24] See endnote 17 above.

[25] Personal conversation. The results of these polls will be published in Richard T. Curtin, "What Recession? What Recovery? The Arrival of the 21st Century Consumer," Department of Economics, *The Economic Outlook for 2003* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, forthcoming January 2003.) Note that Professor Curtin is in no way responsible for any logical or interpretative errors in my use of his empirical results.

[26] For a more detailed account of what I take terrorism to be, refer to the Appendix.

[27] See endnote 25 above. The Appendix is also relevant here.

[28] The reference for U.S. automobile deaths is Ruth Gastel, ed., *Auto Safety and Crash Worthiness* (N.p.: 2002 Insurance Institute III Insurance Issues Update, August, 2002). For information on flu deaths, see "Seniors at Greater Risk as Flu Season Approaches" (Business Wire, 21 Oct. 2002).

[29] Gavin De Becker, *Fear Less* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 2002). Note: The fact that we can reduce the risk is compatible with my claim that the risks from terrorism are negligible. We all face many risks every day. The great majority of them can be reduced. The question is usually whether we want to take the trouble—and pay the cost—of such risk reduction.

[30] Again, I refer the reader to Professor Curtin's empirical results regarding Americans' perception of terrorist risks. See endnote 25 above.

[31] See the Appendix on "terrorism" versus "terror war."

[32] See endnote 17 regarding "how possible" explanations.

[33] Again, endnote 17 is especially relevant. Ultimately, empirical investigation will be necessary to confirm our suggestions, but such empirical research, if it is to be useful, must reflect the theoretical bases of our rationality. This section outlines how the theory of rational behavior may—when inappropriately utilized—help us understand the irrational reactions of many Americans to terrorist threats.

[34] See endnote 17 above.

[35] This point reflects a common stance taken both by many ordinary citizens and journalists. For support, see endnote 36 below.

[36] Ana Marie Cox, "Stuck on Terror," *Lansing State Journal* 28 July 2002: 11A.

[37] Cox 11A.

[38] *Network,* dir. Sidney Lumet, Turner Entertainment, 1976.

[39] See Microsoft Windows 98, Second Edition (Computer Operating System).

[40] Tom Stuckey, "Cheney Says There is No Doubt Terrorists Wish to Strike Again," Associated Press 24 May 2002: BC cycle.

[41] Valasquez 377-379. The news networks have an even greater potential conflict of interest than the administration, as I indicate.

[42] Cox 11A.

[43] Crane Brinton, *The Shaping of Modern Thought* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1950).

[44] Robin Toner and Janet Elder, "A Nation Challenged," *New York Times* 12 December 2001, Late Ed.: 1.

[45] John C. Harsanyi, *Rational Behavior and Bargaining Equilibrium in Games and Social Situations* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977). Harsanyi is perhaps the most comprehensive reference on this subject.

[46] Stephen Holmes and Cass R. Sunstein, *The Cost of Rights* (New York: W.W. Norton: 1999).

[47] It is not that these risks cannot, like most risks, be reduced; it is, rather, that they are not appreciably greater, as they stand, than they were prior to September 11.

[48] The references for this are vast. See endnote 4: Dershowitz speaks to this issue *seriatum.* See also Lynda Guydon Taylor, "Groups Worry Liberties are Compromised in Name of Anti Terrorism," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 27 Oct. 2002, One Star ed.: W-3.

[49] See endnote 4.

[50] See endnote 4.

[51] According to the 2000 United States Census, the population of New York City is just over 8 million; and the population of the greater New York city metropolitan area is 21.2 million. My choice of "ten million" in my example is somewhat arbitrary, but it would not alter my point if I worked with another number—say, five, eight, fifteen, or twenty million.

[52] Cox 11A.

[53] My remark here is intended to refer to countries likely to be directly supporting terrorist strikes against the U.S. Neither Russia nor China is very likely to provide such direct support, so I exclude them from consideration. If they were included, it would certainly complicate the U.S. response.

[54] Many I have spoken with believe some of the nations that rushed to our side after September 11 feared we would loose a nuclear fusillade against someone in retaliation. But, then, we were not struck with a WMD.

[55] Greg Myer, "Arafat Decries al Quaeda Tactics," Lansing State Journal 16 Dec 2002: 1A.

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Our National Tragedy: Some Philosophical Reflections

Ronald L. Hall, *Stetson University*

Introduction

By all, or by almost all, of the (American) accounts, the events of September 11th were tragic. This is evidenced by the fact that immediately following these events virtually everyone in America began to refer to the terrorist hijackings and subsequent attacks on The World Trade Center and the Pentagon as "*our national tragedy*."

I was as shocked and horrified by these events as anyone else, and quite ready to go along with this characterization of these attacks as tragic. My guiding assumption here was that an event qualifies as tragic if it is tied up with *bad endings* of some very serious sort. And what worse endings can we imagine than the deaths of so many innocent people?

But was I being entirely too parochial? Perhaps I was taking an altogether too narrowly American slant on these events. My question was made all the more urgent by the sobering TV shots of Muslims celebrating in the streets. For many radical Muslims, these events were anything but tragic. From their perspective, none of the deaths on September 11th could conceivably count as a serious "bad ending," indeed, quite the opposite. From the radical Muslim perspective, all of these deaths were good endings. All of the people who died either deserved to die (insofar as they were complicit, directly or indirectly, in America's policies toward Muslims in general, and toward Palestinian Muslims in particular, and, directly or indirectly, complicit in supporting a morally corrupt American culture), or they were martyrs on a fast track to paradise.

Most Americans would probably agree with the claim that what happened on that "fateful" day was not tragic from the hijackers' perspective, or from the perspective of the radical Muslim organizations, like al Quaeda, that were behind the attacks. Again, even though the "fate" of the hijackers was exactly the same as that of their victims, that is, violent death, they (the hijackers themselves) no doubt thought of their own (impending) deaths as good endings, perhaps the very best of endings, and those in the organizations who orchestrated the attacks no doubt saw justice being done in a morally corrupt American society. This much, I think, is fairly uncontroversial.

The question that I want to raise, however, is whether or not it makes sense, even from the American perspective, dominated as it is by Judeo-Christian tradition, to call these events "our national tragedy." This is a particularly difficult question for Americans since, as a people, we are deeply informed by a religious worldview that is similar to the one that informs Islam. Historically, theologically, philosophically, ethically, and so forth, I can think of no better way to

characterize this common worldview than to call it "biblical." The fact is that Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are all religions of "the book."

How then can we characterize the general American perspective on these events? One thing is clear: most Americans would agree with the radical Muslims that the deaths of the hijackers were not tragic. Indeed, most Americans might agree that the hijackers "got what they deserved." But what did they deserve? Well, from their perspective they got a well-deserved paradise for heroic sacrifice; and from the perspective of most Americans, they got a well-deserved—albeit self-imposed—death sentence for murder. In either case, the hijackers' deaths—being thought of as justified by both sides, but for different reasons—would most likely not count as tragic for Muslims, Jews, or Christians.

So, we come to the deaths of the people who happened to be in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in the hijacked planes. Most Americans, I venture to say, would agree that they (and their loved ones) were the real victims of the tragedy. And most would agree, I aver, that their deaths were unjust, and moreover that they were serious bad endings, not only *for them* (if that makes sense), but especially for their loved ones, and somehow for the nation. It seems then that it is these deaths—these serious bad endings—that provoke us to call them tragic.

My question, however, is simply this: "Were we, and indeed, are we, *justified* in thinking of these deaths as constituting a tragedy?" Answering *this* question is especially difficult for those Americans—including me—who embrace the biblical worldview.[1] The difficulty here is found in the fact that it is arguable that tragedy has little, if any, place within the biblical worldview. Rather, the worldview where tragedy seems most at home is within what we might call the worldview of classical Greek antiquity. My assumption is that the modern worldview—where we find ourselves today—is the result of the triumph, or at least the dominance, of the biblical worldview over the Greek, though I would certainly not contend that this triumph or dominance was or is thorough or complete. Indeed, the present issue, the place of tragedy in a worldview dominated by biblical models and metaphors, shows to what extent we resist letting important concepts go, even if they seem to go against the grain of our generally accepted worldview. So again my question: "Insofar as Americans embrace the biblical worldview, are we justified in thinking that some events, like the events of September 11th were really tragic?" More specifically, I will ask whether Americans who embrace a biblical worldview are justified in viewing the events of September 11th as tragic. First, however, I turn to examine the Greek notion of tragedy as forwarded by Aristotle.

The Aristotelian View of Tragedy

Aristotle, perhaps more than any other single figure, has given us our most commonly accepted definition of tragedy. He taught us that a story or a play is tragic only if it has what I have been calling "a serious bad ending." His way of defining it involves reversals of fortune that result in serious human suffering that in turn evoke in others the dual emotions of *pity* and *fear*.

His classic definition is as follows: "A Tragedy then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also having magnitude…with incidents arousing pity and fear, whereas to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions."[2] By extrapolation, we can say that a minimal condition for a person's life-story counting as tragic is that it involves incidents that arouse *pity and fear*. If we adopt this minimal criterion for tragedy, as I think we must, then are we justified in claiming that the events of September 11th were tragic?

We can't adequately answer this question, however, until we are clear as to how to apply this Aristotelian criterion. Moreover, we can get clear about this, only if we have an adequate understanding of how Aristotle conceived of these emotions of pity and fear.

Consider first the emotion of pity. On Aristotle's view, it is rational to pity someone who is suffering an unfortunate turn of events only if this suffering is serious (or has magnitude) and only if it is not deserved. For Aristotle, it makes sense (it is rational) to feel pity only if it would be irrational to think that the person who is enduring the (serious) suffering can be morally censured or blamed for bringing it about. "Pity," Aristotle says, in the *Poetics*, "is occasioned by undeserved misfortune."[3] And in the *Rhetoric*, he says: "Pity may be defined as a feeling of pain caused by the sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which *befalls* one who does not deserve it." And what are such painful and destructive evils? His answer is: "death in its various forms, bodily injuries . . . "[4] and so forth.

Secondly, consider the emotion of fear. The undeserved sufferings of others naturally provoke fear in us since whether or not we suffer is not merely a function of our moral actions or character. Even the best of us, on Aristotle's view, are subject to bad luck, to the blind forces of chance or necessity, to what the Greeks called *tuche*. Tragic events provoke fear in us because we realize that such events could happen to us and that it is not within our power to be safe from them. Tragic events remind us of our human vulnerability, our human fragility. And this is scary. As Martha Nussbaum puts it:

> Aristotle stresses repeatedly that what we pity when it happens to another we fear in case it might happen to ourselves . . .. And since pity already, in his view, requires the perception of one's own vulnerability, one's similarity to the sufferer, then pity and fear will almost always occur together . . .. Aristotle adds that fear implies that these bad things are big or serious, and that it is not within our power to prevent them.[5]

Much of our ordinary use of the term "tragedy" comports with Aristotle's insights. Clearly our national tragedy provoked in most Americans both pity and fear. But it did not provoke this in everyone, nor was it provoked for all of the parties in the events. Americans generally had no pity for the terrorists, and terrorist supporters had no pity for the victims. And without pity (and its companion emotion of fear) there is no tragedy. That is, when people get what they deserve, pity and fear are not appropriate responses and hence the life-stories of such people are not tragic. Certainly, from the perspective of most Americans, all of the hijackers deserved to die and hence not one of them deserves our pity. On the other hand, and again from

the American perspective, the non-terrorist passengers aboard these planes did not deserve their fate and would accordingly be pitiable and their death fearful. According to Aristotle's criteria then, from the perspective of most Americans the deaths of the perpetrators of the attacks (the villains) would not be tragic while the deaths of the victims would be.

Keeping our focus on the connection between tragedy and the companion emotions of pity and fear, let's consider whether Aristotle has given us enough resources for determining when pity and fear are and are not appropriate responses to the events we encounter. The key here for him is seriousness, or magnitude of the suffering. I don't take exception to his claim that pity is an appropriate response to a case of suffering only if that suffering is underserved or to his claim that such cases of suffering are exactly the sorts of events that provoke in us the deep fear that we are similarly vulnerable. I am less sure, however, as to how we might judge when a case is serious enough for pity and fear to count as appropriate responses. That is, I cannot find in Aristotle an adequate criterion for making this judgment of what magnitude of seriousness is enough to make a case of suffering qualify as tragic. Is there any mark that guides us in determining when a case of suffering crosses the line of seriousness to become tragic? I do not object here to the idea that there may be a sliding scale of tragedy, since it does seem that some things are more tragic than others. I would hope, however, that such a sliding scale would not become a slippery slope that lets every case of suffering—the pain of my amputated little toe, for example—count as tragic. In other words, granting that we might very well have to settle for a sliding scale of seriousness, or a sliding scale of the tragic, this need not imply that it would not make sense to say that at some point on the scale we would pass beyond the point at which the term "tragic" would no longer apply.

Is there any clear mark of this point on our scale on the other side of which we would cease to call an event tragic? Perhaps there is no such hard and fast mark, but there are some guidelines. I would like to suggest one here. What I have in mind for marking the difference between sufferings that are serious enough to qualify as tragic and those that are not is found in the distinction between what I would call repaired (and hence reparable) undeserved sufferings vs. *irreparable* undeserved suffering. Clearly it is intelligible to make such a distinction. Moreover, it also seems intuitively clear that irreparable underserved suffering is more serious than reparable undeserved suffering, even if that suffering is not in fact repaired. To my mind, this difference is so great as to make it reasonable to think of such cases of underserved irreparable suffering as the ground zero of seriousness, and hence as the ground zero of the tragic. Other cases of undeserved suffering that are reparable but not in fact repaired are less tragic, and indeed cases of repaired undeserved suffering may not be tragic at all. In this latter case, we may well refuse to call such events tragic if the suffering it produces is merely a temporary setback, and with time is reversed.

For the sake of argument, then, I will adopt this amendment of Aristotle's definition of tragedy since it is highly unlikely that anyone would deny that any case of irreparable underserved suffering is more serious than a case of repaired underserved suffering. The amended criterion

comes to this: every case of undeserved and irreparable suffering is tragic, and cases of undeserved but repaired suffering are not serious enough to qualify as tragic. In saying this, I am trying to capture the difference between events that *end badly* and events that *end well*—that is, the difference between *tragedy and comedy*. This amended definition of tragedy may help us with our original question as to whether from a biblical perspective the events of September 11th were or were not tragic.

A Biblical View of Tragedy

In trying to formulate how someone who is committed to a biblical worldview would answer the question whether the events of September 11th were tragic, I turn to George Steiner's book entitled *The Death of Tragedy.*[6] Steiner addresses precisely the issue with which I am wrestling. In addition to proposing a definition of tragedy along the lines I have developed here, Steiner also makes the claim that tragedy has no legitimate place within a biblical framework. (If Steiner is correct about this, then those Americans who claim a biblical heritage could not properly understand the terrorist attacks as tragic.) Of course Steiner's claim that tragedy has no legitimate place within the biblical framework is based on his definition of tragedy and on his understanding of the biblical worldview.

Steiner's conception of the tragic and his claim that it has no place within the biblical worldview is hinged on a distinction I have already introduced and which he makes much of, namely, the distinction between the Greek and the biblical worldviews. Steiner says that tragedy was as central to the Greek vision of reality as it was alien to the biblical perspective. What is Steiner's definition of tragedy that leads him to make this assertion? An element of Steiner's definition is captured in his claim that, " . . . where there is compensation there is justice not tragedy."[7]

To see this contrast between justice and tragedy, consider the differences between the biblical story of Job and the Greek story of Oedipus. As Steiner sees it, the story of Job doesn't really count as tragic since in the end there is compensation and hence justice. (It does not alter the weight of this claim to point out that the compensation story was a later addition to the original story that ended with Job repenting in dust and ashes. In fact it supports Steiner's point, for it shows that this tradition could not let that bad ending stand.) To put this in different language, Job's undeserved suffering that resulted from his losses was not irreparable because his losses were not permanent. Because his losses were only temporary setbacks and not irretrievable, they could be restored, and in fact they were restored. The story of Job ends well. In contrast, in the case of Oedipus, we find a story of underserved suffering for which there is no compensation, no reparation, and no final redemption. The story of Oedipus ends badly.

For Steiner, the Greeks commonly assumed that such irreparable damage is most often caused by blind forces of necessity and chance (forces of *tuche*) all around us shaping our lives for good or ill, and that these forces

> lie outside the governance of reason or justice. [And] worse than that…[these forces can] . . . prey upon the soul and turn it to madness or . . . poison our will so that we inflict *irreparable* outrage upon ourselves and those we love. . . .Tragedies end badly. . . . *Tragedy is irreparable.*[8]

According to Steiner, it was Christianity that inherited the Judaic vision and its implicit repudiation of tragedy-as-undeserved-irreparable-human suffering. But, as Steiner sees it, Christianity did more than inherit this vision: its doctrines of the resurrection and its promise of heaven, and the final redemption of all believers, dealt the *coup de grace* to tragedy. He claims:

> At Gethsemane the arrow changes its course, and the morality play of history alters from tragedy to *commedia.* Finally, and in precise counterpart to the prologue of disobedience, there is the promise of a celestial epilogue where man will be restored to more than his first glory.[9]

Suppose then that we accept, as I do, Steiner's definition of tragedy as undeserved and irreparable human suffering. Does it follow that a biblical worldview excludes the possibility of acknowledging the reality of tragedy so defined? More precisely, is Steiner correct to think that a biblical perspective cannot grant a legitimate place to the reality of tragedy, so defined, because adherents to this worldview believe that there are no ultimately bad endings, at least for the faithful? And is he correct that whatever ultimate bad endings a biblical worldview can acknowledge, namely the bad endings for the damned, are not really tragic either, because these bad endings are just? More pointedly, given Christianity's beliefs about the ultimate redemption of the faithful in heaven, is Steiner correct to say that the Christian perspective can find no legitimate place for tragedy because this perspective excludes the possibility that human beings are subject to undeserved irreparable suffering?

Let us try to answer this last question by first accepting Steiner's definition of tragedy, and then going back to apply it to our original question: "From the biblical perspective, was our national 'tragedy' really tragic?" Granting that, from the perspective of most Americans, it is not problematic that the damage caused that day was undeserved by all but the terrorists themselves, this question now turns out to be the question of whether the events of that day inflicted any *irreparable suffering.* If we insist that they did, something I want to insist on, then we are faced with the following dilemma: If the events of September 11th were indeed tragic in Steiner's sense, and if he is correct that tragedy in this sense has no legitimate place within the biblical framework, then either this framework is deeply flawed, perhaps irreparably (tragically?) so, or he is mistaken that this worldview cannot acknowledge a legitimate place for real tragedy.

My view is that tragedy in Steiner's sense is a real possibility for human lives and that indeed our national tragedy was actually tragic insofar as it caused undeserved and irreparable human suffering. That is, I simply cannot abandon the belief that tragedy is a real human possibility, and often a real human actuality. This is difficult for me, since I am also an adherent (of sorts) to a biblical worldview. My problem then, and I think the problem for many, is finding a way of making sense of how such tragic events can be accommodated within this biblical

perspective. In fact I am so committed to finding a place for the tragic, that I am willing to, indeed, I will be forced to, abandon my embrace of the biblical perspective if I find that it cannot accommodate the tragic.

Let's come back then to the question of the victims of the tragedy. "For whom, if any, were these events tragic?" I think that we might include the victims themselves, but that we must certainly include all of those who valued the victims' lives, ranging from loved ones to fellow Americans to fellow human beings.

In one sense, it might appear hard to make the case that what happened to the victims was (or is) tragic *for them*, since they are dead. Lucretius is famous for making the claim that death cannot be a bad thing for the dead, since something can be a bad thing for someone, or as we might say, a tragic thing for someone, only if he or she experiences it as such, which, for those who are dead, is impossible.[10] To answer Lucretius on this point would take us far afield. My inclination, however, is to think that the untimely and undeserved death of the hijacked passengers, and the death of the people in the buildings the hijacked planes hit, count as irreparable damage to them. What seems obvious to me is that the lives of those killed were permanently ruined, and because this ruination was undeserved and serious, these deaths do count as tragic, even for them.

More obviously, I think, these events were tragic for the people who did not lose their own lives but lost the lives of loved ones. Think of all of the children, wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, friends and fellow human beings, who were devastated by these events. It is hard to think that the ones who lost loved ones escaped having their own lives permanently scarred, if not ruined, by these losses. If the people that suffered these losses of their loved ones did not deserve this suffering and if these losses were permanently damaging, it is hard to see how we can avoid calling them tragic.

Of course, one does not have to die, or to have one's loved one die, to have one's life permanently and undeservedly ruined. Consider the following example. Suppose that a relatively young man at the peak of his career falls off a horse and through no fault of his own his collision with the ground breaks his neck and renders him a quadriplegic for the rest of his life. Wouldn't we say that this person's life was permanently ruined? And wouldn't we also say that the lives of this person's loved ones were also irreparably and undeservedly ruined?

Well, what if this "victim" made the best of his irreparable condition? Indeed, suppose that the quadriplegic does make the best of the life he has left; suppose in fact that he even makes great contributions to the world, which he would not have made had it not been for the accident. Would this mean that what happened to him was not tragic? Clearly not, for even granted that good can be brought out this bad situation, it does not follow that the situation that causes the suffering in this case is repaired, or in some way becomes good. The fact that good can come out of suffering does not imply that the sufferings of the quadriplegic and his loved ones are not irreparable.

But what about heaven? Doesn't the Christian hope that someday, in the next life, the quadriplegic will be fully restored to health imply that his present suffering is reparable? If we come to think so, we might begin to think it is shortsighted to grouse about present suffering simply because it cannot be fixed in this life, for surely it can, and will be fixed in the next. So we might be tempted to conclude that while there may well be many undeserved human sufferings, none of these are ultimately irreparable for indeed all of this damage will someday actually be repaired. This might lead us further to conclude that if there is an afterlife that restores us fully and completely, then there can be no ultimately bad endings, that is, there can be no real tragedies.

The same logic would apply to the people who sustained such devastating losses in the hijacking attacks. I do not think that we would be justified in thinking, because lots of good can be brought out of this very bad situation, that these events were really not tragic after all. We may, however, come to believe that we are justified in thinking that the damage these events caused is not irreparable, since it will be repaired in heaven. This might then lead us to reconsider our judgment that these events were tragic, that is, that they caused irreparable harm.

This is a seductive logic. If we suppose that those who lost loved ones in this national tragedy will have their loved ones restored to them in the next life, we might come to believe that our thoughts of these events as tragic simply reflects our impatience. What the hope of heaven suggests is that these sufferings were just temporary setbacks, not irreparable. Even if we do not get everything back the way that Job did in this life, we will get it all back in the next life. So, to echo Steiner again, if there is compensation, there is justice, not tragedy.

Let me close by questioning Steiner on exactly this point. Steiner's pivotal claim is that where there is compensation and eventual restoration there is no tragedy. Or to put this differently, if compensation and restoration are forthcoming to all who suffer (and are believers), then no damage to them is irreparable, and indeed all damage will in fact be repaired. And if this is so, there is no tragedy, no ultimately bad endings.

Consider the following two cases. Suppose that my dearest loved one, my wife, suffers a temporary lapse into amnesia. She cannot remember where or who she is and as a consequence is lost for days or weeks. Now suppose that by the same stroke of chance her memory is restored. She returns home, and my loss and hers is repaired. It is hard to see how this happy ending could count as tragic.

Can we amend the story to make it tragic? Suppose the amnesia remained and she never returned. Now would the situation be tragic? Suppose after many years of separation that we both die apart from one another. Now suppose that we both go to heaven, her memory is restored and we are reunited. Have things been repaired? I think the answer to this question must be an emphatic "no." That is, I think that we must say that nothing, not even our heavenly restoration, could compensate our earthly loss. The fact that we are now together does not make it acceptable that we were deprived of a life together on earth. Even from such a heavenly perspective, I would still have to think that the fact that we were so deprived did irreparable

damage to us; it was tragic then and is tragic now, and even heaven can't repair our loss of a life together.

I think of the events of our national tragedy in a similar way. Many were deprived of much and heaven cannot change this, or make it acceptable that they were so deprived. The losses here were irreparable, they were tragic. To reiterate: even granted that loved ones may be reunited in the heavenly hereafter, I cannot imagine that any would say that what happened that fateful day in September was something good. Nor do I think it is plausible to think that the hope for a future restoration nullifies the claim that these events were tragic. That is, I cannot resist thinking that even from a post-mortem heavenly perspective we would still see that these terrorist attacks were and will always be tragic.

If a biblical worldview can allow this to be so, then Steiner is wrong. More importantly, if biblical faith can allow itself to acknowledge a place for tragedy within it, then its perspective would accord more readily to our ordinary experience than it seems to on Steiner's account. If we grant that events can cause undeserved and irreparable damage then we can continue to think that our national "tragedy" was really tragic, as we all thought at first and most likely still do, without having to abandon faith, including the hope for a hereafter of redemption and restoration.

Of course this does not solve all of the problems for the faithful. Now the problem of evil begins in earnest. And the main agenda of this problem is to answer this question: How can there be tragedy in a world governed by a loving and all-powerful God? Atheism is argued on the basis of taking tragedy seriously. Theism is defended either on the basis of denying tragedy its full reality, or on the basis of arguments—free will defenses and virtue defenses, for example—that show us how to reconcile biblical faith with the hard facts

It is beyond the scope of this paper to rehearse these arguments here. As far as I am concerned, however, such attempts at reconciliation must go in one direction only. Trying to make the hard facts of life, its tragedies included, fit with our faith, as we have just seen, may cause many to think that they have to deny that events like our national "tragedy" were really tragic. I much prefer going in the opposite direction. As I see it, I can continue to embrace my faith only if I can find a way to reconcile it with the exigencies of human life. And this includes reconciling it with life's hardest fact, our intractable human vulnerability to undeserved and irreparable suffering.

Notes

[1] Common to this worldview is the belief in a personal God who—being just—has created a world in which justice will ultimately prevail.

[2] Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle,* ed. Richard McKeon (New York, 1941) 1460.

[3] Aristotle 1467.

[4] Aristotle 1468 (emphasis added). These passages do not settle the issue of whether or not on Aristotle's criteria, Shakespeare's tragedies count as "tragic," since in these cases it seems that the "tragic figures" (Hamlet, for example) bring their suffering upon themselves and so the suffering does not simply "befall" them.

[5] Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986) 385.

[6] George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (New York, 1961).

[7] Steiner 4.

[8] Steiner 7-8 (italics added).

[9] Steiner 13.

[10] See Martha Nussbaum, "Mortal Immortals: Lucretius on Death and the Voice of Nature" in her *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1994) 192-228.

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A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Volition[1]

Hoyt Edge, *Philosophy Department, Rollins College*
Luh Ketut Suryani, *Department of Psychiatry, Udayana University*

Introduction

The concept of volition, or will,[2] has been central in Western philosophy, particularly in the Modern era. However, most non-Western (non-Euro-American) cultures have been described as collectivist,[3] in which the individual is subsumed within the group, as opposed to Western individualism. In such cultures, one may wonder if a legitimate concept of volition applies, and, if so, whether it is conceived differently from the Euro-American concept. Our research in Bali suggests that a robust notion of volition exists there, and that a cross-cultural comparison of Bali and the U.S. demonstrates that a cross-cultural component of volition exists, but there is also a significant difference between the two cultures in their views of volition, which mirrors a similar difference in their views of self. Indeed, a major function of this paper is to argue that although there is a consistent cross-cultural component to volition, we find a family of concepts—volition, self, and autonomy—that systematically relate to each other in the U.S. and in Bali, and that this family of ideas is different in the two cultures we examine. In turn, this finding suggests that the concept of volition varies from culture to culture.

Connecting the Concepts of Volition and Self

Descartes made the concept of will central in his philosophy and to subsequent Modern philosophy by defining the self (mind) in terms of will. He said: "What is a thinking being? It is a being which doubts, which understands, which conceives, which affirms, which denies, which wills, which rejects, which imagines also, and which perceives."[4] For him, there was a distinction between "My arm is moving" and "I am moving my arm" based on the fact that I exert my will to raise my arm. Given Cartesian dualism, will was conceived as an exertion of mind upon body to causally carry out the intentions of the mind.

Even if one rejects the particulars of Cartesian dualism, as most philosophers after Descartes have, nevertheless the idea of the will, designating the active ingredient of the mind through which we act in the world (including our bodies), remains central in Western philosophy. The idea of will continues to be important for questions in philosophy; for instance, it is conceived as necessary for moral responsibility. If I am not able to act volitionally, then my behavior will be described as my

arm moving, rather than my moving my arm; in such a case, we would be hard pressed to call a person morally responsible for the action. Hence, even if we reject traditional descriptions of volition that seem to imply a dualism of mind and body, nevertheless it is incumbent upon us to make sense of the concept of volition, as it seems to incorporate the fundamental idea of an agent acting in the world.

If we turn to the history of psychology, we find the same traditional interest in the concept of will, following its centrality in philosophy. As experimental psychology blossomed in the 1880s mainly in Germany, one of the important research topics was the will.[5] On the whole, these early experimental approaches depended upon introspection, but all introspective analyses were brought into question by the subsequent behaviorist paradigm, so research on the will virtually ceased in psychology for almost a century.

However, William James offered another approach in *The Principles of Psychology*. James's ideomotor theory derived from his idea that "wherever movement follows *unhesitatingly* and *immediately* the notion of it in the mind, we have an ideo-motor action."[6] For James, "We may then lay it down for certain that every representation of a movement awakens in some degree the actual movement which is its object; and awakens it in a maximum degree whenever it is not kept from so doing by an antagonistic representation present simultaneously to the mind."[7] The theory that every representation in the mind is correlated with some bodily movement has been criticized on logical grounds; a particular bodily movement does not follow *logically* from a particular mental representation, as Hume correctly argued (based on his atomistic, associationalist paradigm).

Nevertheless, a good deal of recent *empirical* research lends support to James's conception. For instance, it has been found that more people who imagined themselves subscribing to cable television, rather than merely listening to a persuasive message about how good it would be, actually subscribed to cable television.[8] Imagery has often been associated with improved performance on a task.[9] Further, research indicates that when a person imagines performing an action, there may be a slight change in the corresponding muscles.[10], Nevertheless, we do not wish to defend the ideomotor theory in general, but it is a particular aspect of James's theory, related to the idea of volition, that is relevant here, and it is this aspect that contemporary psychology has shown an increasing interest in investigating.[11]

For James, the self was the source of the will, and one could not understand volition unless one understood the centrality of the self. James wrote, "Volition is primarily a relation . . . between our Self and our own states of mind."[12] In other words, James thought that in most cases of willing, there has to be a connection between the action and one's concept of self. In order to exert will, one has to desire the object or action and identify with it in such a way that the object or action is connected with one's own concept of oneself. It is when this implication occurs that the "electric connection" between will and action occurs, so that the will is effective. Nevertheless, we do not

want to defend James' attempt to explain how action results from an act of will. Rather, we want to focus on his idea that the concepts of volition and self are interconnected, even more intimately than Descartes proposed.

So far we have made two points in this paper. The first is that the concept of volition is a fundamental one in Western philosophy, and even if we reject the Cartesian understanding of this notion, it remains central to our understanding of the self and to our understanding of moral responsibility. Secondly, we have investigated the connection between the concepts of self and volition in two ways: a) we have pointed to empirical research describing the intimate connection between concepts of self and volition, and b) we have referred to William James, who suggested that the idea of volition is best understood in terms of the concept of self.

For the remainder of the paper, we want to bring that connection between of volition and self to bear on a cross-cultural investigation of the concept of volition, and in so doing, we argue that this connection is displayed cross-culturally. A number of people have argued that the concept of self is different in different cultures.[13] If this is true, and if it is the case that the concept of volition depends on one's own self-concept, then it would imply that the concept of volition is going to be interestingly different as it becomes culturally contextualized along with the idea of self. Indeed, we will find these two ideas vary systematically in two different cultures.

A Cross-Cultural Investigation of Volition

In both psychological anthropology and in cross-cultural psychology, a major distinction in a classification of cultures, as well as in concepts of self within the cultures, is made between individualism and collectivism. Triandis asserts that the individual self is viewed as primary in individualist cultures, while the self is viewed as subsumed within the collective, or at least as yielding to the desires of the group, in collectivist cultures. The distinction between the individualist and collectivist concepts of self is discussed in slightly different ways by a number of other authors. For instance, Edge has made the distinction between an atomic self and a relational self.[14] Others have portrayed the distinction in the following ways:

Authors	Individualism	Collectivism
Dumont[15]	The individual is absolute; there is nothing over and above his legitimate demands.	Holism: "Stress is placed on society as a whole, as collective Man."
Schweder and Bourne[16]	Egocentric self: "Society is imagined to have been created to serve the interests of some idealized, autonomous, abstract individual existing free of society, yet living in society."	Sociocentric self: Individual interests to take a second place "to some good of the collectivity."
Marsella[17]	An individuated self: "Independence, autonomy and differentiation." The individual is "separate, detached, and self sufficient."	Unindividuated self: The non-Euro-American self is to include a wide variety of significant others."
Kirkpatrick and White[18]	Western self: "All psychological matters pertain to a single person."	Non-Western collective self: It is "the family, the community, and even the land" that is "a cultural unit with experiential capacities."
Markus and Kitayama[19]	Independent self: "An individual whose behavior is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to one's own internal repertoire."	Interdependent self: "An individual whose behavior is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to the thoughts, feelings and actions of others."

All of these authors purport to show that there is a fundamental distinction in the nature of selves between these two types of cultures.

We have argued that the concept of volition is intimately tied to concepts of self. Since these concepts of self differ in significant ways between collectivist and individualist cultures, we would expect there to be cultural differences in their concepts of volition. The focus of some of our research in Bali, Indonesia, has been an attempt to investigate empirically the question of the

universal, versus the culturally laden, aspects of volition, and this research will form the basis of our analysis in this paper.

Our research took place over a two-year period (1999-2000) as was sponsored by the Bial Foundation (Porto, Portugal). Colleagues at the University of Edinburgh had been developing a volitional competency questionnaire (VCQ), and our project attempted analogously to develop a Balinese volitional competency questionnaire (BVCQ). In this paper, it is not necessary to describe the procedures for developing it beyond noting that the questions come from two sources: (1) an examination of the literature on volition (especially Kuhl's action vs. state orientation theory), psychology of action, motivation, self-control, self-regulation, conation, and competence, among others, and (2) our knowledge of Balinese culture. Through a process of offering earlier versions of the questionnaire with a large number of questions and receiving feedback on the adequacy of the questions, we reduced the questionnaire to 82 questions, 66 from the Edinburgh VCQ, and 16 additional ones.

To determine how the Balinese conceived of volition, we performed a factor analysis on the questionnaire data base, and it yielded eight factors that were intuitively consistent with an understanding of volition, but the statistical result was not stable enough for us to be fully confident in these findings independently. However, we found that if we analyzed only the 66 questions that overlapped both the Edinburgh VCQ, we found a remarkable consistency. The Edinburgh analysis yielded five factors, and we found that a five-factor analysis of the Balinese data was statistically plausible. Four of the five factors were virtually identical in the Balinese and Edinburgh data. These results can be seen in Table 1. The findings suggest that there are cross-cultural (if not universal) elements that we have located in volition revolving around these four factors.

Table 1: Cross-Cultural Factors in the Balinese and Edinburgh Data: Persistence/Initiative

BVCQ08	8. I find it difficult to stick to my decisions
BVCQ22	22. I rarely take the initiative.
BVCQ23	23. I often have a hard time having my views taken seriously by others.
BVCQ30	30. My opinions often change
BVCQ34	34. I have little persistence
BVCQ44	44. I find it hard to make decisions, even if they are minor ones.
BVCQ55	55. I have little influence on others' values and beliefs
BVCQ61	61. I rarely win games with competitive partners.
BVCQ27	27. I have little self-discipline
BVCQ52	52. I readily become absorbed in my own thoughts

	Helping/Influencing Others
BVCQ37	37. I am not very good at helping others solve their problems.
BVCQ15	15. Others rarely ask my advice when they are in a difficult situation.
BVCQ20	20. I am good at influencing others' course of action.
BVCQ26	26. I am good at helping others avoid stress.
BVCQ28	28. I can influence my close friends when appropriate.
BVCQ31	31. I am good at making other people happy.
BVCQ45	45.I am good at helping others recognize stress.
BVCQ63	63. I am good at helping others develop mentally.

	Positive Self-image/Self-confidence
BVCQ02	2. I have strong determination
BVCQ14	14. I am generally full of energy and vitality.
BVCQ17	17. I generally choose the right time to take action.
BVCQ21	21. I am in control of my habits.
BVCQ24	24. I am generally self-confident.
BVCQ25	25. I keep myself in good physical shape.
BVCQ29	29. I act with a firm sense of duty to society.
BVCQ32	32. I am generally free of unwanted habits.
BVCQ36	36. I consider myself a lucky person.
BVCQ39	39. I find it easy to improve myself.
BVCQ40	40. I can focus all my attention on one thing.
BVCQ60	60. I have a good memory.
BVCQ64	64. I am able to change my mind when appropriate.
BVCQ58	58. I am good at controlling my emotions.

	Handling Outside Influence
BVCQ19	19. I do not cope well with stress.
BVCQ38	38. I often let things in my life get out of control.
VCQ42	42. I find it hard to relax mentally.
VCQ49	49. I do not deal effectively when fearful for my physical well-being.
VCQ59	59. I have difficulty eliminating bad habits.
VCQ62	62. I do not deal effectively with psychological fear.
VCQ65	65. I am impatient.

Both cultures emphasize the ability to initiate and persist in action. This is the core concept of agency, without which we would question whether we were dealing with volition. Further, respondents from both cultures identified two other factors as important that relate more to qualities that would enhance or undercut one's ability to initiate action. The first is seeing oneself as a capable person. Psychologically, one needs to have the confidence in one's own ability to initiate and carry out the action in order to do so. This is the general condition of being able to identify the action with the self. If I do not have the self-image of myself being successful in the action, I cannot connect my self-identity with it. This is an important aspect of James's connection between self-concept and action.

Secondly, I must see myself as being able to handle negative outside influences successfully, those that would keep me from carrying out the action.[20]

Comparisons of American and Balinese Data

However, the focus of this paper concerns differences in the cultures as much as similarity, and not simply that there seems to be a cross-cultural element to volition. To approach this question, we gave the Balinese Volitional Competency Questionnaire (in English) to a group of 162 Americans. Samples were comparable in age and sex to the Balinese sample; they differed in education, but this difference reflects differences in the educational level of the general populations. See Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Data

	American	**Balinese**
Numbers	162	282
Sex:		
Male	35%	37%
Female	45%	43%
Age: Range	18-85 years old	16-73 years old
Average	36.5 years	32.5 years
Education:		
None	0	1
Primary	1	5
Junior High	25	25
High School	1	104
Vocational		
Nursing, etc.	12	60
University	118	87

When we compare the differences between the results of the two samples (see Table 3), two points emerge. First, two of the five questions that show the greatest difference between Balinese and American responses seem to question the idea that the Balinese have a strong sense of volitional competence.

Table 3: Comparison of American and Balinese Responses to Volition Questions

Means American	Means Balinese	Question
4.10	2.58	51. I am good at willing my mind to perform at a high level when needed.
3.92	2.50	66. To accomplish a future goal, I can will myself to do things that I would rather not do.
3.74	3.72	6. I can resist being influenced by other people.
3.85	4.16	48. I am in control of my own destiny.
2.05	2.18	46. I find taking responsibility difficult when in a group.
2.17	2.11	47. I find it difficult to keep striving as long as necessary.
1.99	2.09	18. I find it hard to resist negative influences on me.
1.76	1.98	77. I feel that others are running my life for me.
3.60	3.88	21. I am in control of my habits.
3.53	3.60	58. I am good at controlling my emotions.
4.25	3.90	82. I follow my conscience in doing many things.
2.52	2.83	81. I do anything I am convinced of without considering others' opinions, whether they agree with me or not.
3.45	4.38	79. I worry a lot about offending or hurting someone close to me.
2.96	3.98	80. I worry about shaming myself.
4.08	4.47	7. I act with a firm sense of duty toward my family.
3.60	4.14	29. I act with a firm sense of duty to society.
4.12	3.82	2. I have strong determination.
2.79	2.74	11. I often yield to temptations in pursuit of a future goal.
1.91	2.13	22. I rarely take the initiative.
1.91	2.52	27. I have little self-discipline.
1.69	2.31	34. I have little persistence.
4.14	4.56	35. I develop and maintain strong beliefs.

2.10	2.29	38. I often let things in my life get out of control.
3.32	4.57	70. Do you believe that events in your life are directed by a superior power/being?
4.31	3.95	71. Do you feel you have much influence over the direction of your life (events, successes, etc.)?
3.35	2.99	76. Do you think that you can control the events and things around you?
1.80	3.24	78. I feel that whether or not I am successful it is just a matter of luck and chance, rather than of my own doing.

Americans overwhelmingly answer more positively to the two questions: (1) I am good at willing my mind to perform at a high level when needed (#51), and (2) to accomplish a future goal I can will myself to do things that I would rather not do (#66). The low Balinese responses to these two questions seem to indicate that the Balinese cannot control their wills or persist to accomplish goals, two of the things that are at the heart of volition, and this fact seems to contradict the results we just discussed concerning the cross-cultural factors that were consistent between the Balinese and the Scots.

Our view is that these responses are due primarily to the way the two questions are phrased: these are the only two questions that specifically ask about one's ability *to will* something, to exert one's will. If you look at other questions, Balinese respond with a high level of volitional competence. For instance, they can resist being influenced by other people equally as well as Americans (# 6), and they respond that they have strong determination (# 2). They also believe that they have control over their lives (#s 48, 77, 21, 58, 38, 76). Furthermore, if you look at how they assess their own behavior, one notices that they have great determination and self-control (#s 2, 6, 18, 21, 58, 11, 38). As an illustration, they may save for years, denying themselves all sorts of possessions, in order to be able to have the money to cremate a parent. Further evidence that they can be persistent in achieving their goals comes from the fact that they also respond that they can keep striving as long as it necessary and that they can resist negative influences on them.

Thus, the responses to these two questions seem to be anomalous. We believe the difference between the Balinese and the American responses results from the questions specifically asking about willing, the only two such questions in the entire questionnaire. Americans have placed the notion of willing so central in its tradition, and put so much value on it (making it central to the idea of autonomy) that it becomes a high value for Americans to focus on exerting the will. The individualist (Euro-American) culture, with its isolated mind, defined traditionally as having a faculty of will, and which views action as resulting from a direct exertion of the will, focuses on this quality,

and in so responding reifies the individualist mind. At the heart of our folk psychological theory is the idea of the mind acting through the will. Among collectivist cultures, however, such a conception is not valued. To be sure, one is able to act and persist in action in these cultures, but the focus is not on exerting the individual, private will. (We will describe below an alternative concept of volition that does not place so much weight on an individualist self.) As we have indicated before, in individualist cultures, the self identifies with itself and the faculty of will, but in collectivist cultures, the self identifies with others, so what needs to be emphasized and valued in such a culture is not control over one's individual will, but the relationship with others. Thus, one difference between individualist and collectivist cultures (or at least the Balinese culture) is that individualist cultures find it natural to talk about exerting the will towards one's end, while collectivist cultures do not.

The Kantian tradition, especially, has emphasized the individual will, with its autonomy, as defining our most human quality. An example in political philosophy of taking this robust view of the individual self and its autonomy is found in Robert Paul Wolff's small book, *In Defense of Anarchism,* in which he argues that if we take such a notion of autonomy purely, we cannot have any legitimate state. He says: "If the individual retains his autonomy by reserving to himself in each instance the final decision whether to cooperate [with the state], he thereby denies the authority of the state."[21] In other words, the self is defined so narrowly, so bound up in its atomistic self, which has no connection with others that mediates its isolation, that there is only one choice for the moral individual—she must either exert her narrow, atomistic will or lose her autonomy. Wolff's conclusion follows only when one does not have a defining relationship with others; if one does, the obligations found within the relationship are fundamentally part of the self and are not viewed as forced on her from the Other, from outside the self. Such an expansion of the concept of self and autonomy takes us to our next point.

The second finding that arises from our investigation involves a cultural difference in volitional focus dealing with the ends toward which one should exert the will. When the individual self is primary, as it is in individualist cultures, the focus of volitional control is on changing the world to conform to its desires, since the atomistic self is primary, while in collectivist cultures, where the self is identified with others—or, more specifically, when others are part of one's self-concept—the self will attempt to a greater degree to exert control to integrate with others and the world. In our interpretation, we depend on the idea that there are two kinds of volitional control, primary control and secondary control, a distinction made by Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder.[22] In primary control, individuals attempt to change the world so that it conforms to their needs and desires, while in secondary control, the person tries to fit in with the world and "flow" with it. Our view is that the notion of primary control mainly fits in individualist cultures, with a focus on

individual selves, while people in collectivist cultures exercise secondary control to a greater degree, which emphasizes connection and relationship with others.

Relying on this distinction, we believe that there is a different complex of ideas in which the concepts of self, volition, and autonomy logically complement each other in individualist cultures, and a different set of these three concepts in collectivist cultures. In other words, the individualist/collectivist distinction marks differences not only in conceptions of self, but in different concepts of volition and autonomy.

Our conclusions agree with the findings of Oerter, et al. In a significant study investigating American, Indonesian, Korean, and Japanese cultures, Oerter, et al. interviewed individuals in these cultures, asking two things: (1) what an adult should be like, and (2) how they would solve two dilemmas, one representing an interpersonal conflict, and the other an intrapersonal conflict. Based on a content analysis of the responses, they offer two conclusions. In terms of their first conclusion, Oerter, et. al. found that even collectivist cultures possess and value a notion of autonomy, "verbally expressed as being independent, having one's own opinion, deciding independently and having economic independence."[23] Further, they said, "Every subject tested used the term 'responsibility' to characterize the autonomous personality."[24] Thus, interdependent (relational, collectivist) selves retained the notions both of autonomy and moral responsibility, so that one can expand (although we will not pursue this point) the family connection of concepts to a four-term cognitive complex of self/volition/autonomy/responsibility that was present in both independent/individualist and interdependent/collectivist cultures, but it was a different complex in the two kinds of cultures.

The second conclusion of Oerter, et al., is that individuals in both kinds of cultures talked about having control in their lives as important, and we found this in our data. The Balinese reject, for instance, the idea that others are running their lives for them (# 77), and to an even greater degree than Americans, they answer that they are in control of their habits (# 21). Likewise, they answer as strongly as Americans that they are good at controlling their emotions (# 58).

Further, the Balinese have no trouble talking about striving for their personal goals. For instance, they affirm, in almost the same proportion as Americans, that they do what they want in most situations (# 31), and they affirm to a high degree that they follow their conscience in doing many things (# 82). Furthermore, they respond even more than Americans in saying that they do anything they are convinced of without considering others' opinions, whether or not they agree (# 81).

The difference between primary control and secondary control in volition revolves around whether or not people want to change the world, or whether or not they feel it more important to adapt to the world. Several of our questions relate to this distinction, with the Balinese clearly coming down on the side of secondary control. In two of the questions that produced the greatest

difference between American and Balinese responses, to an overwhelming degree the Balinese responded that they believed that events in their lives were directed by a Superior Power/Being (# 70), and thought that whether or not they were successful was a matter of luck and chance rather than their own doing (# 78). At first glance, these responses may seem at odds with the notion that they have high volition and that they are in control of their lives. But it points to secondary control, as opposed to primary control, as the kind of control that is emphasized in Bali. Although they feel that they are in control of their own emotions (# 58), and they do not feel that others control their lives (# 77); nevertheless, they have a strong belief that they live in a spiritual world infused with divine forces. In such a world, it is more important that one adapts, that one accepts the influence of Karma or the influence of the Ancestors, or the influence of Divine forces. The notion of harmony with others and with the world is fundamental to Balinese thought.

There are other aspects of the culture that point to Bali being a collectivist, or interdependent, culture where secondary control is valued. For instance, the Balinese (Anak Agung Gde Kaleran, private communication) describe *lek* as one of the prime motivating factors for them, which can be translated as "shame," but Geertz[25] has described it as stage fright, the fear of not playing their part well enough so that the merely particular aspect of themselves will show. In effect, it is a relatively low-grade but constant worry that they will not act properly toward someone else in the community or toward a group of people. Our data supports this view: one of the five questions that showed the greatest difference between American responses and Balinese responses was that the Balinese admit that they worry a lot about offending or hurting someone close to them (# 79). There is also a great disparity in the responses to a question asking whether or not they worry about shaming themselves, with the Balinese scoring much higher than the Americans (# 80). Furthermore, one of the highest scores given by the Balinese was to the question, "I act with a firm sense of duty toward my family" (#7). To a lesser degree, but still very strong in the response, the Balinese also affirmed that they act with a firm sense of duty to society (# 29). Thus, a sense of control (of self and of the world) is part of their sense of volition, as in the U.S., but their concept of volition differs in that it aims at secondary control, at fitting into the world and adapting to others (out of a sense of duty).

Conclusion

We believe that our data supports the view that the concept of self is fundamentally connected to the concepts of volition and autonomy. As we can talk about two fundamentally different kinds of cultures, an independent (individualist) one and an interdependent (collectivist/relational) one, with different notions of self, we can talk about two different views of volition and autonomy (we plan to publish a much more thorough analysis of the different concepts

of autonomy later). The traditional Western concept assumes that there is an independent, atomistic self, and it places emphasis on the ability of the individual to make decisions independently of others and it exerts primary volitional control, attempting to change the external world to conform to one's own needs and desires. Likewise, autonomy is expressed when nothing outside of the atomistic self has any legitimate obligatory power.

This kind of volition is not sought as strongly in Bali. The Balinese certainly pursue their own interests within a circumscribed area—so long as it does not conflict with group harmony, or with *adat* (local custom)—and they show a great deal of self-control and persistence. The ideas of initiating action and pursuing them with strong determination seem to apply to both cultures. However, identifying with others in their self-concept means that they do not primarily seek to change others or the world to conform to their individual needs and desires, but when there is a conflict between self and the others, they will use their self-control to harmonize themselves with the group.[26] Thus, the good of the group becomes a value, since self-identity is tied to the group. Thus, secondary control fits with their notion of a relational self, where they identify themselves with others. In such a culture, autonomy is not viewed as acting in isolation, since there is no self that is in isolation. The relationship with others always mediates one's actions and one's obligations.

While there are some aspects of volition that seem to hold cross-culturally, we need to understand volition as also culturally contextualized. The cross-cultural elements of volition seem to consist of those elements that relate to an ability to initiate and persist in action, so long as one has personal qualities (e.g., self-confidence) that psychologically shore up one's decisions. But other aspects of volition seem to be culturally contextualized, at least in our data sample. These aspects relate to whether it is important to focus on the will as a function of mind, and on whether one primarily seeks to control the world, or to fit into the world. Finally, we have attempted to show that these differences in volition related to different concepts of self, which, themselves, are culturally contextualized. Thus, it is not possible to discuss volitional (or autonomy) in a context that ignores concepts of self. Indeed, these three ideas are interdependent. A collectivist idea of volition and of autonomy is related to a collectivist notion of self. Conversely, the traditionally Euro-American emphasis on and understanding of volition makes sense only in a context of an individualist notion of self.

Notes

[1] We would like to thank the Bial Foundation of Porto, Portugal, for their support in this project.

[2] We do not distinguish in this paper between volition and will. Indeed, we employ the terms broadly, meaning simply the agency responsible for initiating and continuing actions.

[3] Harry Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995).

[4] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1951) 27.

[5] N. Ach, Ű*ber die Willenstatigkeit und das Denken* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1905). See also A. Michotte, *Etude Experimental sur le Choix Volontaire* (Louvain: 1910).

[6] William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (New York: Dover Publications, 1918/1890) Vol. II 526.

[7] James, Vol. II 522.

[8] W.L. Gregory, R.B. Ciandini, and K.M. Carpenter, "Self-relevant Scenarios as Mediators of Likelihood Estimates and Compliance: Does Imagining Make It So?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 43 (1982): 89-99.

[9] A. Richardson, "Mental Practice: A Review and Discussion, Part I," *Research Quarterly* 38 (1967): 95-107.

[10] E.R. Korn and K. Johnson, *Visualizaton: The Uses of Imagery in the Health Professions* (Homewood, IL: DowJones-Irwin, 1983). See also D.G. Mackay, "The problem of Rehearsal or Mental Practice," *Journal of Motor Behavior* 13 (1981): 274-285.

[11] Susan E. and Hazel Rose Markus Cross, "The Willful Self," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 14.4 (1990): 726-742.

[12] James, Vol. II 567-8.

[13] Hoyt Edge, "Individuality In a Relational Culture: A Comparative Study," *Tribal Epistemologies: Essays in the Philosophy of Anthropology*, ed. Helmut Wautischer (England: Ashgate Publishing, 1998) 31-9.

[14] Hoyt Edge, *A Constructive Postmodern Perspective on Self and Community: From Atomism to Holism* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1994).

[15] Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970) 4, 8.

[16] Richard A. Shweder and Edmund J. Bourne, "Does the Concept of the Person Vary Cross-Culturally?" *Culture Theory Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, eds. Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine (New York: Cambridge UP, 1984) 190.

[17] Anthony Marsella, "Culture, Self, and Mental disorder," *Culture and Self: Asian and American Perspectives*, eds. Anthony Marsella, George DeVos, and Francis Hsu (New York: Travistock Publications, 1985) 209.

[18] John Kirkpatrick and Geoffrey M. White, "Exploring Ethnopsychologies," *Exploring Pacific Ethnopsychologies*, eds. Geoffrey White, M. and John Kirkpatrick (Berkeley: U of California P, 1985) 11.

[19] H. Markus and S. Kitayana, "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation," *Psychological Review* 98 (1991) 226.

[20] The fact that the questions asked in this factor are stated in a negative way should not be a problem. For methodological reasons, many of the questions on the questionnaire had to be asked negatively. Presumably, volitionally competent people would rate these negatively stated questions low, thus asserting that they are competent in these abilities. The final category, Helping/Influencing Others, is not central in our discussion now and seems to be simply one consistent avenue of expressing volition.

[21] Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970) 40.

[22] F. Rothbaum, J.R. Weisz, and S.S. Snyder, "Changing the World and Changing the Self: A Two-process Model of Perceived Control," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 42.1 (1982) 27.

[23] Rolf Oerter and Rosemarie Oerter, Hendriati Agostiani, Hye-On Kim, and Sutji Wibowo, "The Concept of Human Nature in East Asia: Etic and Emic characteristics," *Culture and Psychology* 2 (1996) 27.

[24] Oerter 28.

[25] Clifford Geertz, "Person, Place and Conduct in Bali," *The Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[26] Interview data, too extensive to discuss here, confirm this position.

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Answering Some Objections to Scientific Realism[1]

***Brian Hood**, University of Florida*

Preliminaries

This paper is a defense of Putnam's explanationist argument for scientific realism. Some have claimed that the explanationist defense has dubious hidden premises, e.g., science has always been "aiming for the truth". After pointing out problems for metaphysical realism, I consider internal realism since some suggested that to be a scientific realist one must be either a metaphysical realist or an internal realist. Metaphysical realism's causal theory of reference vitiates metaphysical realism. Internal realism's metaphysical and epistemological commitments render it unacceptable; hence, it is no alternative to metaphysical realism. Lastly, Arthur Fine argues that the explanationist defense of realism is circular—I argue that his worries need not concern the scientific realist.

The Explanationist Defense of Scientific Realism

Putnam's metaphysical realism (MR) is composed of the conjunction of three theses:

1. There is a world existing independently of our minds.
2. The truth-values of our statements, when their meanings are fixed, are determined entirely by how the world is.
3. The extensions of natural kind terms in our language are not determined by the intensions of those words, but primarily by a direct connection between the words and their references via some sort of causal contact of the word users with the objects in the extensions.[2]

Internal Realism (IR) is a thesis stating, roughly, that science may converge to some ultimately true theory, but that truth amounts to warrantable assertability.

For present purposes, scientific realism (SR) is the thesis that our hypotheses or theories that are well confirmed are at least approximately true and that science is an epistemically progressive enterprise. Whether or not SR entails MR or IR under the formulations given is controversial. Some have argued that proponents of SR must endorse one or the other.[3] Both MR and IR are problematic, the former in virtue of (3) and the latter in virtue of its epistemic notion of truth, and that neither, as stated, are acceptable realisms.

Hilary Putnam has claimed that SR is the only philosophy of science that does not make the success of science a miracle; there would be no way to explain success if the explanatory mechanisms posited by a theory were unrepresentative of the way the world actually operates.[4] Boyd has argued along similar lines.[5] If using a certain experimental method, including the operation of experimental apparatus, depends on a theory that posits unobservables, the best explanation for the success of this method is that those unobservables exist.

Hidden Premises and Problems for Scientific Realism

Some have suggested that for the Explanationist Defense of Realism (EDR) to work, one has to assume that (i) science in general, and at any time of history, is aiming at obtaining truth alone, and (ii) science is not prevented in any way from achieving that aim.[6] Otherwise, the measure of success may be different from truth attaining or what success measures, though understood as truth attaining, may be something else.

According to (i), if at any time science has *not* been aiming for truth, then success fails to be probative for the truth of scientific theories, since the success of non-truth-seeking science would be measured in terms of utility, psychological satisfaction, or whatever the aim of ideal science during that period of non-truth-seeking scientific activity. In order for the explanationist defense of realism to work, one needs to argue that science has *always* aimed for truth.

The challenge suggested by (ii) is this: given the vastness of the universe and our access to a relatively miniscule portion of it, how do we know that science is approaching truth rather than diverging from it?[7] In order for the explanationist response to be a cogent defense of realism, one must assume that science has a sense of our position with respect to the rest of the universe so that one could gain a sense of whether the track that science is on is truth-conducive. So, we can imagine ancient Egyptian flat-earthers running the explanationist defense of realism and inferring that their belief system is true or is approaching truth. After all, flat-earth science was probably the most predictively successful theory available to ancient Egyptians.

Others have claimed that there is no stable middle ground between IR and MR.[8] Proponents of IR are skeptical of metaphysical claims regarding the correspondence between true theories and the world. Internal realists are dubious of non-epistemic notions of truth. The worry of the internal realist is that no matter how much our beliefs are justified, there is always a possibility that our best theories are radically unrepresentative of the world. That is to say, according to the internal realist, the mere possibility that our theories fail to represent the structure and mechanics of the universe should make us wary of metaphysical notions of truth. The concern is that it is possible that all claims about theoretical entities may fail to refer, though our theories are empirically adequate and predictively successful, so we should abandon the correspondence (or metaphysical)

theory of truth. The locus of this worry is belief in a mind-world lacuna, which cannot be conclusively closed by any inductive procedure, for any such procedure would beg the question against Hume.[9] Either we embrace MR and defend the claim that there is a metaphysical connection between the world and our scientific theories about it, or we take the metaphysically frugal route and radically divorce truth as correspondence from our assertions about the world, although we still may be justified in believing our best theories.

Fine objects that the explanationist defense of scientific realism is circular and, therefore, unavailing to the realist. This is the last objection to realism addressed.

In Defense of Scientific Realism

In evaluating (i) and its bearing on the explanationist defense of realism (EDR), first it must be ascertained whether (i) is actually necessary for EDR. This is far from clear as EDR is silent on the aims of scientific enterprise by both Putnam's and Boyd's lights. The claim that if science *ever* did not aim for truth, then success could *never* be probative for a theory is a dramatic overstatement. Moreover, it begs the question against EDR.

A better formulation of the above worry is "if science did not aim for truth, the success would not be probative for the theory." Related to this worry is a concern voiced in (ii): the measure of success may be different from truth attaining or what success measures, though understood as truth attaining, may be something else.

Antirealism assumes that SR is a thesis about aims.[10] Why is this? Realists reject such formulations of their position. The answer to this question not only provides a response to the objection under consideration, but it will reveal an overlooked feature of the realist/antirealist dialectic that is responsible for much of the debate.

Granted, SR must suppose that scientific objectives are epistemic if success is to be evidence for SR. But this is different than what the antirealist is claiming. The antirealist presumes that philosophers must defer to science for success assessments and it is this unwarranted presumption that sustains the antirealist's mistaken characterization of SR in terms of the "aims of science." Our hypothetical, purely pragmatic science may be remarkably successful, but this (pragmatic) success is not evidence for SR if scientific methods are not truth tracking. Deferring to science for an assessment of success would lead the realist astray, for the type of success at issue is indifferent to the truth of SR. And presuming that this is what the realist does when evaluating success of science as evidence for SR unfairly portrays SR as naïve and makes SR seem more vulnerable than it actually is.

Realism is inferred from the success of science, not as assessed by science or thereto deferring for such an assessment, but by philosophers with theories about what kind of success is

probative for a theory, such as scientific realists (as SR, too, is an empirical hypothesis). One such proposal is novel predictive success as a kind of success warranting the imputation of some measure of truth to a theory.[11] It is incumbent upon such theories to give an account of success so that it can count as evidence for a theory; once such an account is given, the success of that theory can then be considered evidence for SR. Many of the issues in the realism debate are instances of philosophers talking past one another on issues of success and aims. By exposing the antirealists' presupposition, I hope to make clear why antirealists repeatedly formulate SR in a way that the scientific realist finds objectionable. Then, the realist may diffuse many antirealist arguments by addressing the dubious presuppositions upon which the antirealists' aberrant formulation of realism depends.

What if science is not aimed at pursuing truth alone? Is this a challenge to SR? Pragmatic success does not preclude epistemic success. One should expect pragmatic success to be a consequence of epistemic success, i.e., having theories that increase our knowledge of the phenomena under investigation. Again, science could be aiming for X (pick your favorite non-truth-related virtue), but if it saves the phenomena and if it has predictive power and success (in the epistemic sense mentioned above), then it seems that, without recourse to SR, success is a mystery. Furthermore, Putnam's and Boyd's arguments do not infer the truth of SR from the claims that our current theories are predictively successful and that science *aims* for truth; rather, the truth of SR is inferred from its purportedly unique ability to explain the success of science.

An appropriate challenge to EDR must fault abduction (as Fine does) or suggest an alternative explanation of the success of science, thereby demonstrating that SR does not have a monopoly on explaining the success of science.

Hence, it seems that EDR does not presuppose (i). Besides attributing to SR a rather naïve view of science, (i) invites difficulties insofar as it suggests a possible difference between the property in terms of which science is assessed for success and the property actually being measured in a success assessment, a spurious worry.

Moreover, whether science has pursued truth in all its history has no bearing on EDR. One could defend EDR against the present complaint by insisting that any practice that does not aim to discover truths is not scientific, thus making the pursuit of truth a necessary condition for qualifying as a science. Such a response would be unsuccessful. However, another criticism to be made of the idea that EDR presupposes (i) is that science does not aim for truth *alone* and SR does not purport that it *does* aim *solely* for truth. Pragmatic virtues do seem to play some role in science; however, they are likely to be subservient to, and to have their provenance in, epistemic concerns.

Turning to (ii), does EDR presuppose that science is not prevented in any way from attaining the goal of truth? My critique of (i) somewhat absolves me from the responsibility of defending my negative answer to this question. The aims of science are irrelevant to the success of EDR and it is a mistake to couch SR in terms of aims at all. This said, I do think that the possibility

that science is departing from truth as science "progresses" warrants response. This is a concern related to (ii), but which makes no appeal to the aims of science.

The possibility that science is diverging from truth is a remarkably skeptical concern, the impetus of which is most likely the finite nature of man and our limited access to the world. Imagine our Egyptian flat-earth theorists confronted with EDR. For the flat-earth theorist, EDR would obtain the result that the flat-earth theory is true, or at least partially so.

However, if this possibility gives grounds on which to doubt SR, then, too, we must take as a serious threat to our justification for believing that there exists an external world the possibility that we are all Berkelean souls with external-world-like experiences. It seems immoderately skeptical to take as a serious threat to SR the possibility that our best extant theory is actually less representative of the world than its distant ancestors merely in virtue of the ability of a false theory to accurately predict.[12]

Must one accept either MR or IR to be a scientific realist? MR as formulated in this paper is objectionable; IR, too, is problematic and unacceptable. That one must endorse either MR or IR to be considered a scientific realist seems questionable. The conclusion contains a modest suggestion that cannot appropriately be said to fall under MR or IR, though it does presuppose that truth is metaphysical. It does seem that one can be a scientific realist without endorsing (3), namely the claim that the extensions of natural kind terms in our language are not determined by the intensions of those words, but primarily by a direct connection between the words and their references via some sort of causal contact of the word users with the objects in the extensions. However, traditionally scientific realists have tended to fall into one of these two camps. Certainly, with respect to their metaphysical and epistemic commitments, MR and IR represent the extremes of the positions that philosophers have held in the realist literature. The essential difference between the two positions is the notions of truth to which they subscribe. MR is committed to a metaphysical correspondence theory of truth whereas IR, motivated by skepticism, eschews metaphysics, opting for an epistemic notion of truth.

The most dubious tenet of MR seems to be (3), that is, the Causal Theory of Reference (CTR).[13] CTR states that terms refer in virtue of a causal interaction between the language users and the objects purportedly in the extension of the terms used. If this causal connection cannot be spelled out, then it seems that we must divorce confirmation from truth, for our natural kind terms may fail to pick out natural kinds.

Examples of meaningful, scientific terms, the referents of which are fixed abductively, i.e., non-causally, would be counterexamples to CTR. Interestingly, we are realists about many entities to which we have no ostensible access. Examples abound; consider Pangea (or any of the other historical geological periods of the earth), the Earth's molten core, dinosaurs (and other extinct species), and galaxies. Moreover, scientific realist Jarrett Leplin writes,

> the most confident postulations at the frontiers of science are explicitly abductive: neutron stars, offered as the only possible source of certain radio signals; the missing mass required for a cyclical universe, offered as the only possible source of forces holding together hydrogen clouds in rapid rotation or of violations of Kepler's law by fast stars at the periphery of the galaxy; black holes required by a sufficient concentration of cold matter, offered as the necessary companions to such stars as the supergiant of Cygnus, whose motions are otherwise unaccountable.[14]

One, and perhaps the only, line of defense against the objections to CTR proffered in this paper would be to construe the causal connection between terms and their referents such that a causal link *does* exist between the terms in my counterexamples and the posits purportedly in their extensions. However, I am not optimistic about such an approach. Gerrymandering the causal connection cannot work either, for then CTR stands guilty of being *ad hoc*.

There are other worries associated with CTR. For one, CTR requires us to know the details of how the initial causal link is formed between the entities and terms. The answer to this question is likely to be that the initial referential use of a term, 'p,' fixes the reference of 'p.' This is not a satisfactory response. It may be impossible to know the conditions of 'p"s initial referential use and, hence, we cannot know if our utterance of 'p' is referentially successful.

MR has been shown to be problematic, if not false, in virtue of a flawed theory of reference. According to the challenge being entertained presently, there is no recourse but to IR. But how secure is IR?

IR rejects the correspondence theory of truth, contending that there is no non-question begging way to close the mind-world gap, dissociating confirmation and truth (in any metaphysical sense). IR seems like the natural place for a scientific realist impressed by (ii) to retreat, since granting (ii) is tantamount to rejecting MR. Confirmation warrants only the assertion of scientific claims. We call a theory "true" just in case its assertion is sufficiently warranted, that is, justified. According to IR, our best theories are "true" (in a non-correspondence sense of true). Bas van Fraassen's constructive empiricism and IR are similar in that they both excise metaphysical truth from our evaluations of our scientific explanations and theories. Internal realists would claim that our best scientific theories are "true" (i.e., they enjoy warrantable assertability) because they are empirically adequate, i.e., they save the phenomena, but this seems to get things backwards. Putnam rejects the notion of metaphysical truth altogether, claiming that it is unintelligible.[15] So, while van Fraassen, out of epistemic caution, invokes empirical adequacy where he believes there to be no grounds for imputations of metaphysical truth to theories, Putnam denies that the notion of truth as correspondence even makes sense. He eliminates truth as correspondence, supplanting it with truth as "warrantable assertability," thus undercutting the motivation for invoking empirical adequacy in the first place. However, without empirical adequacy, there are no grounds for attributions of the

internal realist's "truth." The internal realist needs some explanation of the justification for making truth attributions to theories, but without empirical adequacy or metaphysical truth, it is not clear which way to turn.

This criticism also demonstrates that a non-epistemic notion of truth is unavailable to van Fraassen (who endorses a metaphysical notion of truth anyway). However, the scientific realist wants to say that her theory is empirically adequate *because* it is true in a non-epistemic sense. As for the constructive empiricist who abstains from making attributions of truth to theories, satisfied with the notion of empirical adequacy, suffice it to say empirical adequacy is no surrogate for truth.[16]

It is an undesirable consequence of IR that it makes tables, chairs, and cats (as well as electrons and gluons) mental constructs. For even non-scientific claims are relativized to conceptual schemes under IR. IR's metaphysically anemic notion of truth implies ontological relativism and idealism. If we relativize truth to conceptual schemes, then claims such as "there are electrons" will be judged true only within the context of a theory. This relativism precludes any rational theory adjudication, since, under IR, there are no theory-independent grounds on which to assess the truth of two competing theories. Hence, we have incommensurability. In sum, truth is not epistemic justification.

Arthur Fine's Objection

Fine's argues that EDR should be rejected, as it is question begging.[17] If abduction is a legitimate form of ampliative reasoning, then the debate is thus adjudicated in favor of the realist, for it is the justification of abductively inferred claims concerning theoretical entities that is the crux of the debate.[18]

Fine's argument against EDR points out a potentially vicious circularity in the realist's reasoning; however, it does not follow that realism is false and it does not follow that an abductive argument for realism like EDR is corrupt. Fine's argument simply points out that the legitimacy of abduction is not to be presupposed.

It is perplexing that an advocate of enumerative induction, such as Fine, would find fault with abduction. Induction is subject to well-known paradoxes such as Goodman's grue paradox, the resolutions of which depend on explanatory reasoning.[19] Mere concomitances of properties do not justify the projection of such co-occurrences. That my tires have not failed since I bought my car does not license the inference that they will continue to operate properly and that I have lived everyday of my life up to now does not justify the belief that I will live to see tomorrow or that I will live forever. Enumerative induction and explanatory reasoning go hand in hand and mutually support one another. Our everyday inferential practices seem to vindicate this claim, as we rarely induce without seeking some explanation for the regularity from which we are inducing. It is hardly

clear that enumerative inductive reasoning is more basic or methodologically sound than abductive reasoning. We reject abduction only to be faced again with vexing paradoxes of induction. We should be prepared to induce only so long as we are prepared to abduce, and given Fine's endorsement of Laudan's historical argument against realism, it is clear that he is more than willing to induce, hence one may argue that *his complaint* against EDR is unavailing.[20]

Conclusion

I have attempted to defend SR against various objections while not making any arguments for SR directly. The formulation of SR under consideration may not be a sustainable position. However, I do think that some form of SR is correct. Certainly, absent from the formulation of SR discussed in this paper is an acceptable theory of reference; I take it that recourse to IR is patently otiose; therefore realists should focus their efforts on developing and refining MR. More reasonable would be a minimal epistemic realism claiming no more than that there are empirical conditions such that were they to obtain, we would be in a position to assert with justification of some scientific theory positing unobservable empirical structures that it is true, or approximately so.

Notes

[1] I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their helpful critical comments.

[2] This is not my formulation of MR, but rather that of the opponent to scientific realism whom I am addressing in section II, Dr. Chuang Liu.

[3] In particular, Chuang Liu has argued this point.

[4] Hilary Putnam, "What is Realism?" *Scientific Realism,* ed. J. Leplin (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984): 140-153.

[5] Richard Boyd, "Confirmation, Semantics, and the Interpretation of Scientific Theories," *The Philosophy of Science,* eds. R. Boyd, P. Gasper and J.D. Trout (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991): 3-35.

[6] This criticism is Dr. Chuang Liu's.

[7] I mean by "approaching the truth" an overall increase in our best theories' representational accuracy. Simply put, our best theories now are more verisimilar that their predecessors. The thesis according to which science is getting ever better at accurately representing the world has been called "convergent realism"; that is, over time, our best theories can be described as converging on the truth.

[8] I attribute this claim to Chuang Liu.

[9] See Hume, David, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Penguin Books, 1984). This worry's impetus is likely Hume's concerns about induction. To attempt to close the mind-world gap *via* some inductive procedure would be to presuppose the legitimacy of induction, i.e., the very thing in question. It is an inductive skepticism that gives this objection its force.

[10] Van Fraassen, in particular, is guilty of making this assumption when he gives the following formulation of SR: "Science aims to give us, in its theories, a literally true story of what the world is like; and acceptance of a scientific theory involves the belief that it is true." See Bas van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980): 8.

[11] Jarrett Leplin is probably the foremost proponent of this approach. See J. Leplin, *A Novel Defense of Scientific Realism* (New York: Oxford, 1997).

[12] The inspiration for employing this "Moorean" strategy comes from a response that Jarrett Leplin makes to the objection to EDR that the world is ultimately unintelligible. See J. Leplin, "Truth and Scientific Progress," *Scientific Realism,* ed. J. Leplin (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984): 212.

[13] See Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).

[14] J. Leplin, "Methodological Realism and Scientific Rationality," *Philosophy of Science* 53 (1986): 49.

[15] It should be noted, that this is Putnam's position in his *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981).

[16] I have argued this elsewhere. See my "Van Fraassen, Explanation, and Truth" (unpublished manuscript). It should be added that it is no victory for realism that internal realists have redefined truth so as to evade the problem of attaining metaphysical truth. Such a move is *ad hoc*.

[17] A. Fine, "The Natural Ontological Attitude," *Scientific Realism,* ed. J. Leplin, (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984): 83-107.

[18] Abduction, or inference to the best explanation, is an ampliative method of reasoning whereby we infer a hypothesis H from a set of data O on the grounds that H best explains O. For example, I observe that dropped objects fall down, toward the center of the Earth, instead of up, so I infer that there is a gravitational force responsible for the trajectory of falling bodies. Reasoning of this type takes the form "If P, then Q, Q, therefore P"—if there is gravitational force, then falling bodies behave in a certain manner, i.e., they fall toward the center of the Earth. No other hypothesis better explains this phenomenon, so we infer that there is a gravitational force.

[19] See Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).

[20] Larry Laudan argues that success is not evidence for truth. To support this claim, he offers a list of successful scientific theories that current science rejects, or whose central theoretical terms fail to refer in contemporary science. See Larry Laudan, "A Confutation of Convergent Realism," *Philosophy of Science* 48 (1981): 19-49.

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Review of Michael Weston, *Philosophy, Literature and the Human Good* (London*:* Routledge, 2001). Pp. 198. ISBN 0-415-24337-8. $75.00. ($24.95).

***Steve Wall**, University of South Florida*

Since its inception, philosophy has been characterized by the quest for and the critique of a measure or standard that transcends, informs, and judges human experience. Another perennial problem that has occupied philosophers from the Greeks to the present is the attempt to define literature's role in conveying transcendental standards and the values of the culture. However, Kant's critiques made metaphysical standards like Platonic Forms, formulations of God, essences, and truth less viable for more recent philosophers. So the task is how to assert a standard for the human good without also relying on transcendental entities that cannot be verified by human experience. Michael Weston addresses the development of these concerns since the period of Kant. The arguments of Kant, Friedrich Schlegel, and Friedrich Nietzsche occupy the first chapter, while Weston devotes a chapter each to the positions held by George Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, Jacques Derrida, Iris Murdoch, Martha Nussbaum, Richard Rorty, Stanley Cavell, Soren Kierkegaard, and D.Z. Phillips. He concludes by advancing his own solution and by presenting an incisive examination of the ethical dilemmas posed by Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*.

As Weston presents the criticisms of traditional metaphysical claims, a paradox emerges: each thinker who seeks to undermine a conventional standard or measure ends up making their own claim to universality. Kant held that we must posit a transcendental realm and act as though it oversees our world. Schlegel and Nietzsche reject Kant's metaphysical standard, but they construe life as an unending process of self-creation, a move that reifies "becoming," "art," and "creation" to a level of global truth. As Weston observes, one needs access to metaphysical concepts such as "truth," "essence," and "finality" in order to realize Schlegel and Nietzsche's prescriptions for self-creation, and indeed Nietzsche's *Ubermensch* paradoxically represents a metaphysical ideal even as he seeks to undermine all universally valid truths.

Other thinkers also find themselves mired in this paradoxicality that Weston has identified: Bataille's notion of the "impossibility" of transcendental truth, Blanchot's "madness of the day," Derrida's deconstruction, Rorty's ironism, and Cavell's skepticism all recognize the futility of acquiring a final truth or standard for life, but they all nonetheless remain firmly ensconced in the realm of metaphysical thought or language. That is, they all are connected in some way to the very metaphysics they attempt to vanquish.

Nussbaum and Murdoch are also unsuccessful in their efforts to introduce a standard of the human good through the use of literature. Both philosophers value literature as playing a central role in showing what is involved in living according to different conceptions of the value of life. The problem for Weston is that there are different orientations for each which serve to undermine the hope of universal standard: Nussbaum is an Aristotelian and Murdoch is a Platonist, and while both hold out the possibility of a truth that is valid for all, their empirical searches arrive at contradictory conclusions.

Having considered the ideas of these writers, Weston advances his own theory of how to escape the abstraction and paradox that trapped these thinkers and that will allow him to make use of literature as a model for ethical life. First, he recalls Kierkegaard's solution to the problem of abstract and impersonal theorizing: raise the individual against Hegelian and transcendental standards. Only individuals raise the question of the purpose of life; to say that a vision of life is true is to adopt it. Second, Weston turns to D.Z. Phillips's readings of Edith Wharton's novels and those by other authors to illustrate ethical decisions made by literary characters. These works show that what is "true" or valuable in life is not subject to an abstract and universal standard: "We see that 'truth' in its moral context is the truth of personal appropriation: to see certain values as 'true' is to take them as the measure of one's life" (143). Third, Weston suggests that if we are willing to forego the views of Nussbaum and Murdoch regarding literature as part of a quest for truth and the human good, and instead interpret literature as a "historically situated exploration" into the possibilities of human nature and the good life, then much of what they claim for literature has merit. He agrees that literature can convey life's possibilities as they are perceived from some perspective—the author, a character, the work itself. The reader is able to entertain life's possibilities and significance not by following reasoned and abstract arguments, but by following the actions and experiences of individual characters. Their perspectives, not universally valid rules, influence the reasons for their actions.

Lord Jim, with its innumerable ethical possibilities and twists, is an excellent vehicle through which Weston illustrates his thesis. This work confronts the reader with a vast array of the possibilities of making sense of life by its use of multiple and inconsistent frames of reference. The reader is thus left to determine for himself whether a particular ethical issue was decided correctly. Conrad's skillful use of both an omniscient narrator and Marlow as narrator layers the action and forces the reader to participate actively in the novel's development. However, the reader also maintains enough distance from the story so that "[w]e are, in our capacities for moral assessment, shown to ourselves" (159).

Through Jim's self-justifications for his act of cowardice and his subsequent obsession to redeem himself, the reader views a person attempting to live his life according to pre-conceived ethical notions which offer little assistance. The other characters' codes are just as unsatisfactory:

The French Lieutenant, Gentle Brown, and Stein, for example, lead equally illusory lives. Our reading of a character like Jim who is undertaking a "historically situated exploration" leads us to empathize with his ordeal, and to recognize "what it is to be human, 'one of us'" (176).

Some critics might question the novelty of Weston's thesis. His use of Kierkegaard is bound to recall the heyday of the atheistic Existentialism that Kierkegaard influenced and which held that humans are individually responsible for their actions without any hope for transcendental assistance. Weston's thesis also has some similarities to Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics with its disapproval of preconceived regulatory principles (although Weston might respond that Fletcher makes the same paradoxical error earlier identified when he elevates love or *agape* to the level of a transcendent good). And readers who remain unconvinced about the ability of literature to replace philosophical argument as an ethical vehicle might point out that *Lord Jim's* multiple narrators and perspectives are not always present in literary works, and so might wonder if his thesis holds up as well when applied to these less complex works. Further, in some literary works, authors rely on ethical standards that are as metaphysical as those of any philosopher; I think Edith Wharton, to whom Weston approvingly alludes, can be read as advocating certain universal ethical standards. In *The House of Mirth*, for example, she advocates traditional values as a bulwark against materialism, and she suggests some form of moral sustenance—art, literature, philosophy, religion, or "the house not made by hand." One might consider these appeals "metaphysical."

My view is that even if one decides that Weston's thesis revisits previous ethical theories, and even if one finds that not every work of literature will offer up the sort of complexity found in *Lord Jim*, his conclusion is nonetheless secure: new and creative ways of envisioning life are "not dependent on philosophical views of language or history, nor does opposition to them rest on arguments binding on any disinterested party. We are none of us that. If it is difficult to remember this philosophically, literature continually reminds us" (xix).

Notes on Contributors

Hoyt Edge is the Hugh F. and Jeannette G. McKean Professor of Philosophy, and the Associate Dean of the Faculty, at Rollins College. He has published an edited book and a co-authored book, as well as written *A Constructive Postmodern Perspective on Self and Community: From Atomism to Holism*. His background is in philosophical psychology, and his research interests focus primarily on Australian Aboriginal culture and the Balinese culture.

Farhang Erfani is an instructor at Villanova University. His research interests include contemporary French philosophy and political philosophy. He is currently finishing his dissertation on democracy and utopia.

Ronald L. Hall is Professor of Philosophy at Stetson University in DeLand Florida. He holds a B.A. from Stetson, a Masters of Divinity from Duke, and a Ph.D. from Chapel Hill. He is the author of: *Word and Spirit: A Kierkegaardian Critique of the Modern Age* (Indiana University Press, 1993), *The Human Embrace: The Love of Philosophy and the Philosophy of Love* (Penn State Press, 1999), *LogicWorks: The Next Generation*, with Rob R. Brady (Philosophical Information Center, forthcoming 2003), and numerous articles in journals and books.

S. Brian Hood received his BA in Philosophy from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where, under the directions of Jarrett Leplin, he completed his Honors thesis, "The Limitations of Kitcher's Theory of Explanation as Propositional Systematization." Following two years of graduate work at the University of Florida with Chuang Liu serving as his principle advisor, Brian moved to Bloomington, Indiana, where he is currently pursuing graduate studies at Indiana University in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science.

James Roper joined the Philosophy Department at Michigan State University after graduate work at Princeton University. Dr. Roper teaches business ethics, a course he designed and placed in the curriculum, as well as courses in philosophy of science and logic. He founded and, until July 1999, directed Michigan State University's National Champion Debate Team and the annual Spartan (summer high school) Debate Institutes. He has published in such journals as *Philosophy of Science*, *Synthese*, *The APA Teaching Philosophy Newsletter,* and *Florida Philosophical Review*. Publications are forthcoming in *Teaching Business Ethics* and volume 5 of Moses L. Pava, ed., *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations*. Professor Roper has developed—and published accounts regarding—an approach to teaching business ethics based on student classroom debates.

Luh Ketut Suryani is Professor of Psychiatry and head of the Department of Psychiatry at Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. She has published a number of books, including *The Balinese People* and *Trance in Possession in Bali*, both coauthored with Gordon Jensen (published by Oxford University Press); *Cultural Factors, Religious Beliefs and Mental Illness in Bali*; and *Meditation*. She also serves as Chairperson for such organizations as The Bali Aging Foundation, The Indonesian Cultural Psychiatric Association, and The Youth Foundation.

Steve Wall has an MLA in Humanities, is ABD in Philosophy, and is pursuing a Ph.D. in English at the University of South Florida. He serves as a teaching assistant and adjunct in all three areas. His areas of interest include aesthetics and the philosophy of culture, American, Southern, and nineteenth-century British literature. He recently presented a conference paper on the poet Sidney Lanier and has reviewed two books on the Southern Agrarians and on the Indian influence on British Romanticism, respectively. In Spring 2003, he will present a conference paper on American literature and the 9/11 tragedy.