

Florida Philosophical Review: The Journal of the Florida Philosophical Association is an anonymously refereed, electronic journal published twice a year by the University of Central Florida Department of Philosophy.

Florida Philosophical Review has its roots in the Florida Philosophical Association, one of the largest and most active regional philosophy associations in the United States. For several years, the Florida Philosophical Association envisioned a scholarly publication that would support the professional interaction of philosophers in Florida, the enhancement of philosophical education in Florida, and the development of philosophy both within and beyond Florida. *Florida Philosophical Review* realizes that vision and is committed to respecting and encouraging diverse philosophical interests and diverse philosophical approaches to issues while demonstrating the value of philosophy in the contemporary world.

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Editors' Introduction

This issue of *Florida Philosophical Review* marks our fifth year of publication. We started publishing *FPR* in the summer of 2001 with Volume I, Issue 1. In the first three years, we published 2 issues per year. Due to budget and staff constraints, however, we decided last year to scale down to one issue per year. In considering various ways to improve the timely publication of significant philosophical articles, we (the editors) have decided upon a transformation of the way in which the journal will be published. This transformation will not only help us in the publication process, but most importantly, help our authors as well.

We will begin the new process with Volume VI (July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006). As we receive papers from authors, we will send them out for review as we have done in the past. The difference, however, is that rather than to hold all the articles until a set publication date (June 30) of each year, we will continually publish articles throughout the year for each volume. An example should suffice to explain our plan. Suppose that an author sends us a paper on July 1. We send that paper out to reviewers, who respond, say, by September 30. Assume that their advice is to have the author revise and resubmit. We will then (as before) send the comments back to the author who will then revise and resubmit the article. Suppose that the author completes revisions by November 30th. We then send it out to reviewers again, who return their comments to us by January 15th. Assume that in this process, the reviewers suggest publication. We then notify the author that her or his article will be published in *FPR*. So far, nothing in the process has changed. The change takes place in the following manner: Rather than to have the author wait from January 15th until June 30th to see the article published, we will immediately begin the editorial process and publish the article as soon as it has been formatted, proofread, and approved by the author. This means, for example, that the article will be published in February rather than in June. That article becomes part of Volume VI (with publications from July 1-June 30th).

Assume, in addition, that another author sends us a paper in October. That paper, for example, might be approved by our reviewers by the end of November. In that case, we will send reviewer comments to the author, along with notification of acceptance, and immediately begin the editorial process to publish that article by early to late January. What this basically means is that every volume of *FPR* will be a year-long publication in which articles will be published as they become available throughout the year. This means that authors will not have to wait as long as they did before to see their articles published and no single article's publication depends on the publication of any others.

Article pagination will continue to be consecutive such that, for example, an article published in July will have pages 1-11, two published in August will be numbered from 12-23 and 24-39, and one published in September will be numbered from 40-57, and so on. We will continue to publish

only high-quality work, and every article and author will receive the same level of attention to detail to his or her work that we have guaranteed our authors in the past.

We will continue to publish the proceedings of the yearly FPA meeting, but these articles, too, will see a much swifter turn-around time than in the past. We think that this change in publication procedure will be of some notable value to our authors and readers.

FPR is funded by the Florida Philosophical Association and receives institutional support from the University of Central Florida, Department of Philosophy and the College of Arts and Sciences. But even with monetary support from the FPA and institutional support from UCF, there is little funding for advertising and promoting the journal. We are hopeful that some of our readers may see fit to make donations that we can add to the limited funds we receive yearly from the FPA. With additional funding, we would be able to begin to advertise locally and nationally, and additional funding will help to pay for advertisements in APA publications. If our readers are inclined to do so, they may send contributions to:

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Checks should be made out to The Florida Philosophical Association with a note in the memo area indicating that the funds are for *FPR*. Remember that *FPR* charges no subscription fees and all issues of the journal are available completely free of charge at the University of Central Florida Department of Philosophy web site.

Now that we've made our pitch for funds from our readers, we'll continue on with the business of the introduction to this issue.

The 50th Annual Meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association was held in Jacksonville, Florida on November 11-13, 2004, and hosted by Scott Kimbrough of Jacksonville University. Shelley M. Park, 2004 President of the FPA and Associate Professor of Philosophy at the Cocoa Campus of the University of Central Florida, delivered her address, "In Defense of Happiness," at the Friday evening banquet. Dr. Park's tasty talk, which coincided with dessert, begins with her observation that philosophers could perhaps benefit from some happiness, since they are typically seen as a lonely, cynical, depressed, and skeptical bunch. She goes on to describe the problematic conceptions of happiness as an object to be pursued and as a subjective state to be felt. Instead, Dr. Park moves toward a conception of happiness as a disposition, indebted to Aristotle, which allows us clearly to see "the cognitive and normative value of happiness."

The second article of this issue is by Ron Cooper of Central Florida Community College. Dr. Cooper's article is the first of the FPA presidential addresses written prior to the inaugural issue of *FPR* to be published here. (We are in the process of compiling copies of the manuscripts of past FPA presidential addresses to publish in future issues of *FPR*.) His address, "The End is Near, or Whither Philosophy? Thoughts on Francis Bacon, Dionne Warwick, and Scooby Doo," was delivered at the 1999 meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association. Dr. Cooper describes an encounter with one of his students who is interested in all the "weird stuff" from astrology to parapsychology. Their discussions led Dr. Cooper to reflect on the role and significance of philosophy today. In addition to the perennial role of asking the big questions, Dr. Cooper argues that philosophers today have a unique niche in explaining the scientific method to the general public for our overall betterment.

The third article in this issue can be read as an example of a philosophy student who is interested in understanding and explaining the scientific enterprise. Michael Roess, winner of the 2004 Edith and Gerrit Schipper Award for Outstanding Undergraduate paper, delivered his paper, "The Social Dimension of Epistemology," at the 2004 meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association. Mr. Roess begins by explaining the methods used in fixing a belief as found in Peirce. He then demonstrates how Kuhn's account of the sciences tacitly embraces what Peirce would call the authoritative method of inquiry. In order to overcome this difficulty, Mr. Roess turns to Hegel's uncovering of the process of recognition. This allows us to understand how we may return to an authentic epistemology.

Daniel Callcut's (University of North Florida) "Tough Love," is the next article that was also presented at the 50th Annual Meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association. Dr. Callcut specializes in moral skepticism, and his paper focuses on the potential conflict between love and morality. He shows how Bernard Williams' moral concerns undermine the Kantian conception of love defended by J. David Velleman.

The fifth work in this issue, and also from the 2004 FPA Meeting, is Robert Seltzer's (Nova Southeastern University) "Demonstrative Reference: It's Not What You Think." Dr. Seltzer carefully takes us through a variety of examples of demonstrative reference in order to expose the implausibility of Kent Bach's intention-theory for demonstratives. Following David Kaplan, Dr. Seltzer argues that demonstratives should be treated like proper names and that intention belong to the realm of metasemantics.

The last article, "A Note on the Visually Indistinguishable Pairs Argument." is by John Valentine, Professor of Philosophy at Savannah College of Art and Design. Dr. Valentine's article, which is from our general call for papers, deals with the concept of the aesthetic and caps off a well-rounded issue including work on philosophy of psychology, meta-philosophy, epistemology, ethics, and philosophy of language. Dr. Valentine's work discusses the aesthetic theories of both Arthur

Danto and George Dickie and uncovers potential weaknesses of their institutional approach to defining art, while also providing an analysis of Marcel Duchamp's artwork and commentary.

In closing, we would like to express our gratitude to Shelley Park for four years of service to the FPA and *FPR* as *FPR*'s co-editor. Shelley has recently "retired" from her post as co-editor to pursue teaching and research projects, but the Founding Editor (Nancy Stanlick) remains as co-editor with Michael Strawser, who has been promoted from his previous position with *FPR* as Associate Editor.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *FPR* and that you will continue to support the FPA and this journal by reading the articles, sending us your papers for review for publication, or (this is, of course, the inclusive sense of "or") by considering making a donation to *FPR*'s operating fund so that we may further enhance our production and publication process and begin to advertise locally and nationally.

Nancy Stanlick and Michael Strawser, Editors
June 2005

In Defense of Happiness

Presidential Address of the 50th Annual Meeting
of the Florida Philosophical Association

Shelley M. Park, *University of Central Florida*

Good evening. I hope you have enjoyed your time today and are looking forward to tomorrow's events as well, as am I. On behalf of all of us, let me extend my thanks to Vice President Jim Perry for putting together this year's program, to Jacksonville University for hosting us, to Scott Kimbrough for coordinating the local arrangements including the repast we are currently enjoying, for the staff at the Adam's Mark who have prepared and served this meal and taken care of us in myriad other ways, to Nancy Stanlick for producing our newsletter, and to Sally Ferguson for her ongoing coordination between all of us. As Secretary Treasurer for the past several years, Sally has been indispensable. Much more than a budget overseer or minutes taker, Sally has become the glue that holds us together and our institutional memory.

I follow in past president Bob D'Amico's footsteps tonight by promising you an appropriately brief talk. The banquet talk is not as serious as the term "Presidential Address" would signify. As a talk that comes at the end of a meal, the banquet talk is in the same genre as dessert. It should be tasty, but not too heavy. To err with regard to this genre is to risk oversaturating one's audience and making them dozy. So tonight I ask you simply to contemplate with me for a brief time the nature and value of happiness.

At the risk of beginning by insulting some of you (which is one way to keep you awake, but not perhaps an advisable one!) let me say that my topic emerges from the observation that philosophers are often a rather depressed bunch. Just as slightly crazy folk tend to be overrepresented among clinical psychologists, somewhat somber and cynical folk tend to be overrepresented among philosophers. True, given the Epicurean part of our lineage, we often liven up after a good meal and can even tend toward jovial if the meal is served with sufficient amounts of

wine. Nonetheless, we do tend as a group towards introversion, introspection, contemplation and brooding. There are also, of course, the extroverts among us. But typically, these are no ordinary extroverts. The philosophical extrovert is not your average social butterfly. She or he is more apt to be, like Socrates, a gadfly—less concerned about spreading happiness than spreading discontent. As such, the philosopher is more likely to make enemies than friends. This appears not to bother the philosophical extrovert, however.

Now stirring things up once in a while is not necessarily a bad thing. Nor (if we leave aside the brooding) are introspection and contemplation to be disdained. In and of themselves, such activities may be commended as virtuous. However, the contemplations of the contemporary western philosopher, it seems, are rarely aimed at discovering beauty or inner peace or love or happiness. Indeed, we are more apt to laugh with derision at such goals than to embrace them as the aims of a contemplative practice.

Medieval philosophers such as Saint Augustine were mired in confessions and guilt. Modern philosophers such as Hobbes painted a bleak picture of the world as rife with scarcity, competition, and short, brutish lives. Not dissimilarly, Marx wrote a human history as one filled with alienation, war and bloodshed. Descartes, an arguably self-alienated philosopher, despaired at even knowing the world. The existentialist philosophers were a notoriously angst-ridden bunch. And contemporary liberation philosophers—including Marxists, feminists, and environmentalists—fill our bookshelves with stories of oppression and injustice and human degradation of the “other.”

There are exceptions, to be sure, to these stories of philosophical solitude, skepticism, cynicism, and despair. Hume, advocating a moderate skepticism, was a congenial sort able to bracket philosophical reflections and enjoy a game of backgammon with friends. James defends tender-minded philosophies and brings a sense of optimism to thinking about social reform. Ryle adopts a cheerful tone in his works and was known as a lovely dinner companion. And some contemporary liberation philosophers—for example, bell hooks—have turned recent attention to issues of love in thinking about antidotes to oppression.

Nonetheless, the current milieu in social and political philosophy, as well as some philosophies of mind and epistemology, appears to embrace, in large part, the somewhat pop-Foucauldian notion that persons who are angry, crazy, and/or depressed (namely a good many

professional philosophers) may see the world more clearly or be more liberated from oppressive social norms than those who are not so afflicted.¹ The happy philosopher, on this view, is derided as a ‘Pollyanna’ too naïve, deluded, and/or self-absorbed to see or care about the bleakness surrounding her.

Are there things that are wrong with our world? Certainly. Yet, I wish to suggest that there is something slightly askew with a view of the world, our world, as only or primarily a source of misery. I think this view is particularly odd and, I might add, somewhat narcissistic, when issuing from contemporary western philosophers who lead relatively affluent and privileged lives—and who, thus, do not occupy a privileged vantage point on oppression, injustice, and misery. Chronic unhappiness, when one’s basic needs are met and one has ample opportunities for self-realization as the contemporary western philosopher does, betrays a fundamental lack of appreciation for what one has. And this lack of appreciation may reasonably be considered a vice, rather than a virtue. Similarly, we may view the person who does not notice natural beauty, human creativity, or human compassion—or who notices, but shows no appreciation for these things—as someone who is epistemically or ethically deficient.

In my remarks tonight, I wish thus to defend happiness as a disposition conducive to, or at least compatible with, a view of the world that is both cognitively and politically valuable, that is, both truth conducive and ethically appropriate.

In making this argument, it is necessary to say something about what happiness is. A brief look at how the term happiness is used in both the discourses of philosophy and the discourses of popular culture reveals that happiness is conceived of in a wide variety of ways. Happiness may be conceived of as a subjective state or an objective state of affairs; it may be considered temporary or relatively permanent, within our grasp or ever-elusive. Happiness may be considered a state of character that is either virtuous or suspicious. Or it may be considered a disposition or capacity that is related, positively or negatively, to epistemic responsibility. These different conceptions of happiness make a difference, I believe, to our attitudes of esteem or disdain toward happiness.

Happiness as an object of pursuit

The U.S. Declaration of Independence claims that “pursuit of happiness,” along with life and liberty, is to be viewed as an inalienable right. Presupposed by the claim that we have a right to pursue happiness is a conception of happiness as an “objective and obtainable object” (Hoffman 3). That we can and should pursue this end is a distinctively American—or at least western—idea. It is an idea, moreover, that may easily be interpreted as premised on both self-delusion and self-interest.

A category mistake with consequences for our behavior may be involved in thinking that happiness is something “out there” and thus can be found and captured. The idea that happiness is an object to be chased and caught may leave us in the proverbial position of the dog chasing its tail: some of us pursue happiness endlessly and even obsessively, but never quite find it. As Pascal claimed “we never live, but we hope to live and as we are always preparing to be happy, it is inevitable that we should never be so” (Ch. V, sec. 1). As the folk wisdom on the World-Wide Web indicates:

We convince ourselves that life will be better after we get married, have a baby, then another. Then we are frustrated that the kids aren’t old enough and we’ll be more content when they are. After that we’re frustrated that we have teenagers to deal with. We will certainly be happy when they are out of that stage. We tell ourselves that our life will be complete when our spouse gets his or her act together, when we get a nicer car, are able to go on a nice vacation, when we retire.²

Life is always about to begin, but there is “always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid” (Anon.). The anonymous author of these observations, echoing Walt Whitman’s claim that “Now” is all we have, advises us to recognize that these obstacles *are* our life and that there is “no better time than right now to be happy.”³

Closely aligned with the American notion that happiness is something to be pursued, is the rather odd notion that happiness is something towards which we work. We work incessantly at being happy and in so doing turn happiness into a fetish. We hope to obtain happiness by working

to get a good education, a good job, a promotion, a positive professional reputation; by saving to buy a new car or a new home; by working to pay off our car, our mortgage, or our credit card bill; by working at losing weight or building muscles; by earning enough money to purchase a breast augmentation or a hair transplant; by working at our relationships, working on our marriage, working at raising our children and so forth.⁴ The fetishistic pursuit of happiness, at its finest, can be seen on any trip to Disney World, where parents drag tired and cranky children from ride to ride, working towards accumulating sufficient joy and happy memories to warrant the price of admission.

It is little wonder the philosopher might view happiness thus pursued with disdain. In addition to being premised on self-deception, happiness as an object of pursuit seems heavily tied to self-absorption, to a focus on self-improvement and material accumulation. It is noteworthy that Thomas Jefferson's emphasis on "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" was a modification from Locke's emphasis on the ideals of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of property" (Locke, sec. 123)⁵ If happiness is property then it *is* something that can be pursued, captured, and accumulated. And happiness has been increasingly defined as material accumulation in western, and especially American, culture. The pursuit of the American Dream, as revealed by a 1994 Roper Poll, brings to mind the acquisition of money and a state of financial security. While most Americans polled stated that they were happy, a third indicated they would be happier if their household income doubled (Hoffman 3). As McFague notes,

the current dominant American worldview . . . is that we are individuals with the right to . . . the happiness of the consumer-style 'abundant life.' . . . Consumer culture . . . defines human satisfaction solely in terms of consumer acquisition. (11, 49)

In fairness to Jefferson, he changed the Lockean language in framing the Declaration of Independence because he did not view happiness as the mere accumulation of money, property, or personal material goods. For Jefferson, the right to pursue happiness was, in keeping with enlightenment ideals, the right to pursue a life of reason and the acquisition of knowledge. These things were to be pursued not merely as valuable in themselves, but also as the preconditions of

liberty. Happiness, for Jefferson, as for Aristotle, was an end that served the polis as well as oneself. As Hoffman notes, however,

In changing property (an achievable material goal) to happiness (an unachievable affective state) and in ordering us to pursue it, Jefferson embedded a political and psychological contradiction in the American psyche. It is this confusion between personal happiness and transcendent political good that continues to frustrate and perplex political activists (Hoffman 3).

Happiness as a subjective state

As Hoffman's remarks suggest, we frequently equate happiness with a subjective mental state. In addition to defining happiness as "good fortune or prosperity," Webster's dictionary defines happiness as:

An agreeable feeling or condition of the soul arising from good fortune or propitious happening of any kind; the possession of those circumstances or that state of being which is attended enjoyment; the state of being happy.

Here, happiness is taken to be a positive, affective state of mind. This affective state is perceived as the result of external factors that trigger it. Thus, one is made happy when one finds love, or is given a promotion, or wins the lottery, or brings home a new puppy. But this positive emotional state may only last until love sours, the money runs out, the boss criticizes you or the new puppy pees in your shoes. Happiness thus conceived is highly contingent on the actions of others and on good luck. One cannot decide to be happy any more than one can decide to win the lottery. Happiness is the result of chance, "something impersonally positive that befalls one" (Hoffman 3). Viewing happiness in this light—as an arbitrary phenomenon outside of one's personal control, Montaigne declared pessimistically that "no man should be called happy until after his death, for human affairs are uncertain and variable and the slightest shock may change them from one state to another wholly different" (Montaigne 85).⁶

On the view of happiness as a mental state, it is easy to see how the happy person may be viewed as delusional. First, cognitive errors may occur if one projects one's subjective state onto an objective state of affairs. This may happen in one of two ways: first, the "rose colored glasses effect" may cause one to infer from the fact that one is happy that the world is a happy place—thus occluding the misery that surrounds her. Secondly, what I will call the "arrogance effect," may cause one to infer from the subjective fact of one's happiness that there is some objective property of one's self that warrants this positive subjective feeling. The arrogantly happy person does not necessarily ignore the unhappiness of those around her, but she attributes differences of positive and negative affect to relatively stable personal traits. But, of course, if happiness is, as per this account, a state of mind triggered by outside events, then happiness does not properly belong to either the objective world or to the objective self. Happiness is simply a positive emotional outcome of one's—potentially temporary—good fortune. Self-deception is thus involved in thinking that this feeling will remain beyond the state of affairs that brings it about. Alternatively, one may recognize the contingency of one's positive affect on some state of affairs, but be deceived in believing that the state of affairs in question will last, i.e. that love, honor, prosperity, or other good fortune will not fade or change.

To pursue happiness—if what we mean by happiness is a subjective emotional state—is hardly a political act. Hence it is also easy to see how the person obsessed with achieving "a happiness high" may be viewed, on this account, as self absorbed, as more concerned with his or her own subjective satisfaction than with that of others. There is nothing necessary, however, about the link between valuing happiness and self-interest. The person who values happiness need not be a hedonistic egoist concerned only with maximizing his or her own pleasure. As Utilitarians advocate, happiness may be pursued as a universal goal.⁷ When we attempt to bring about states of affairs that produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number, we value personal happiness for ourselves neither more nor less than the happiness of others.

One might still object, however, (as many critics of utilitarianism have) to happiness—for oneself *or* for others—as the ethical goal. And this objection carries some weight if we think of happiness as simply a subjective emotional state.⁸ The force of this objection can be seen, perhaps, most clearly when we consider the ability to inculcate this state by chemical means such as Prozac or

various illegal, but widely used, drugs. Some psychological research suggests that the most potent means of counteracting depression are pharmaceutical, not social, economic, or political.⁹ In light of this, a utilitarian cost-benefit analysis would then suggest that the most effective means for maximizing the moral good is simply to make available to the public the means for increasing serotonin levels in the brain. But an ethical theory that advocates Prozac and chocolate for everyone—despite the potential attractiveness of such a state of affairs—appears counterintuitive as a theory for maximizing the social good. Just as the normative force of Jefferson’s claim that we should pursue happiness depended on an assumed link between rationality and happiness, utilitarianism’s normative force seems to depend on a presumed empirical connection between bringing about social justice and bringing about personal happiness. Without this link, we may wonder whether happiness—for ourselves or others—is, indeed, the noblest goal to pursue.

We criticize the happy slave and the happy housewife as persons who fail to see the conditions of their own oppression. Happiness under conditions where self-realization is not possible is insufficient. Moreover, we may suspect that it is the happiness itself that occludes the oppressed person’s ability to liberate herself. Marx bemoaned religion as “the opiate of the people.” The difficulty lies not only with religion, however, but with any creed or practice that leads to contentment and complacency incompatible with social revolution. Thus, we may be reasonably concerned that pharmaceutical alterations of our prefrontal cortex may result in false-consciousness, in an inability to see the world as it is and do what is necessary to bring about social goods such as freedom, equality, or justice. Here is the force of the claim that the unhappy person may be more cognitively and ethically virtuous than the happy person. In seeing the misery surrounding her, she becomes the agent for social change. The difficulties with this claim, however, are two-fold: first, it simply isn’t true that our world is a merely miserable place; second, the chronically unhappy person may be paralyzed by her own misery—cynics are rarely effective leaders of social revolutions. The depressed person—as well as the mere curmudgeon—is disposed to see the world through dark lenses and wallow in her own misery. She thus lacks both the optimism and the motivation to make change. Insofar as chocolate or Prozac or other chemical interventions permit her to see the world less darkly and dispose her to greater optimism, they may be viewed as enhancing, rather than diminishing, her cognitive and ethical outlook.

Happiness as a disposition

To see the cognitive and normative value of happiness, it is necessary, I think, to move away from both the conception of happiness as an objective and attainable object and the conception of happiness as a subjective emotional state. The former notion of happiness, as I have suggested, leads to placing happiness in the ever-elusive future. The latter notion, as we have seen, may be too personal and apolitical. Both, I would suggest, are the result of a category mistake.

An alternative to both of these conceptions of happiness may be found in Aristotle, who viewed happiness as an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue (24). Happiness, as thus defined by Aristotle, is the natural end of humans as social beings and best understood as a matter of developed character. This notion of happiness is certainly preferable to the other views we have considered from the point of view of understanding happiness as valuable. In particular, it acknowledges that happiness must be distinguished from states of affairs such as being honored (which are too contingent on the actions of others) and from mere pleasure (which is a temporary sensation). Nonetheless, there is something vaguely stipulative—to contemporary western ears, although not perhaps to ancient Greek ones—about this notion of happiness as the highest good. Moreover, it is not the notion of happiness as a well-functioning soul that the contemporary philosopher criticizes; hence this is not a version of happiness that is in particular need of defense against charges of cognitive and ethical error.

The person who is viewed with a certain suspicion by the contemporary western philosopher is not the well-functioning and virtuous individual; rather it is the person who is cheerful. Thus, the form of happiness I would like to defend here is best viewed as neither a state of affairs, nor as a mental state, nor even as a state of character, but instead as a disposition. Dispositions, like states of character, can be cultivated. We cannot simply decide to be cheerful, but we can practice it; as we practice being cheerful we become more disposed to smile and laugh and be friendly. Cheerfulness is not, however, to be equated with happiness; such affability is only one surface manifestation, I would suggest, of happiness. Happiness is best understood, I think, as a disposition to be appreciative and optimistic. Genuine cheerfulness is the consequence, not the cause, of a person's disposition towards gratitude and optimism. Viewed thus, cheerfulness is best cultivated by practicing gratitude and optimism, rather than simply practicing smiling.

Happiness as a disposition to be appreciative of the good in the world is perhaps best summed up by Albert Einstein's claim that "there are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle" (Brallier and Parker 3). The person disposed to live his or her life as though everything is miraculous will experience awe at nature's magnificence, feel wonder at the creativity displayed in various forms of human artifice, be grateful for life's simple—as well as more complex—pleasures, and be appreciative of the positive qualities of her or his families, friends and others. One might criticize such a disposition as parochial or apolitical. But it needn't be either. One who has cultivated the virtue of appreciation will be grateful not only for what she has. She will also be disposed to notice and appreciate the friendliness of strangers, the courage of the vulnerable, the generosity of the poor, and the resistance and creativity of the oppressed, including those from other cultures and nations.

The capacity to see the strengths and positive qualities of others is crucial to developing a tendency toward optimism. The optimist, like the cheerful person, is frequently viewed with suspicion as someone who does not or cannot see how bad things really are. To notice human misery, ecological degradation and so forth, however, doesn't require that one view the situation as hopeless. Notably, the most successful leaders of social movements have all been optimists. They have not, however, viewed the world through rose-colored glasses. Christ and Buddha did not fail to note suffering; they believed, however, that it could be transcended. Ghandi and Martin Luther King did not fail to notice social injustice; they believed, however, that it could be effectively resisted. The optimistic person, then, is mischaracterized as someone who fails to see or feel vulnerability, inequity, or oppression. The optimistic person, I would suggest, sees more than the pessimist, not less. To notice the potential for resistance among the oppressed, for example, requires noticing oppression. But it also requires noticing more than that. Unlike the pessimist, the optimist retains hope that oppressive situations can be transformed. This faith comes from noticing not only the misery, but also the resiliency and creativity of the human subject.

The difference between the pessimist and the optimist is frequently summarized as the difference between the person who notes that her glass is half empty and the person who notes that her glass is half full. This is, however, a mischaracterization of their differences. They do not merely see the same things differently. The pessimist, it is true, focuses on what is missing; her glass is

always half empty, and she does not appropriately appreciate what she has. But more than this, the pessimist is someone who projects that her glass will soon empty altogether, and she will be left with nothing. This is the attitude of despair. The optimist, however, focuses both on what is present and what is absent and, most importantly, on what is possible. Her glass is half full, and she is grateful for that fact. But she also knows as she raises the glass to her lips that it will empty further. She is no fool. What makes her an optimist is the hope that her glass will be refilled prior to reaching full emptiness. This is the attitude of happiness; it is an attitude that disposes one to see, taste, hear, and feel presence as well as absence, delight as well as sorrow, compassion as well as injustice, good as well as evil, and to have faith that the absence of those things we deem good can always be transformed into the full presence of that which is ethically desirable.

I enjoin you thus to fill your glasses and enjoy one another's company.
And having enjoined you to eat, drink and be merry,
I pass the torch, happily, to colleague Jim Perry.

Notes

¹ This was not, in fact, Foucault's view. Foucault's archeological and genealogical interests were in tracing the emergence of particular identities as socially salient categories. Nonetheless, I think there is a popularized reading of Foucault that (mis)characterizes him as a standpoint epistemologist who valorizes the perspective of those identified as crazy, criminal, or otherwise deviant.

² Anonymous. This has been widely circulated on various e-mail lists in the last several years and is recorded in various places on the World Wide Web, most notably on sites devoted to spiritual health and growth (whether Christian, Buddhist, new age, or other). See, e.g. <http://survive.org.uk/inspire3.html>, <http://members.aol.com/newme4life/dance.html>, <http://www.yogakingdom.com/wisdom/delusion.html>

³ Anonymous. This echoes Walt Whitman's claim that:

There was never any more inception than there is Now.
Nor any more youth or age than there is Now;
and will never be any more perfection than there is Now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is Now. (25)

⁴ For an analysis of the various ways in which we have transformed love into work (and the ways in which we also rebel against this), see Kipnis.

⁵ Jefferson's original draft stuck with the original Lockean language of "property." With prompting by Benjamin Franklin and others, he modified this language to emphasize happiness instead. See Klotz.

⁶ The notion that a life of contentment could be undone by events late in life comes from the ancient Greeks. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for example, we find the claim that:

No man should be called happy till his death;
Always we must await his final day,
Reserving judgment till he's finally laid away.

A similar notion is in Aristotle although it would not be accurate (see below) to characterize Aristotle's notion of happiness (or that of other ancient Greeks) as akin to a psychological state. The shift to viewing happiness as a psychological or affective state is modern. However, the notion that happiness (or well-being) is contingent on external affairs has a much longer history.

⁷ Utilitarianism contends that the morality of actions and/or principles depend on how well they advance universal human happiness (or the greatest happiness for the greatest number). It is rooted in an ancient Greek view about the unique value of pleasure and happiness; however, utilitarianism emerged in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a doctrine of social reform. Jeremy Bentham proposed the principle of utility as a standard for evaluating civil laws and

social institutions. John Stuart Mill advocated the principle of utility as compatible with advancing universal human freedom and sexual equality. Peter Singer suggests that the principle of utility mandates protecting the well-being of non-human animals. Utilitarianism is, thus, much broader in its concerns and scope than is hedonistic egoism. See e.g. Bentham; Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*; and Singer.

⁸ In defining happiness as pleasure and the absence of pain (and unhappiness as pain and the privation of pleasure), Utilitarians such as Bentham and Mill, appear to be defining happiness in terms of subjective states. See e.g. Mill, *Utilitarianism*. Responding to criticisms of hedonistic utilitarianism, ideal utilitarians proposed goods alternative to pleasure as the goods to be maximized for right conduct. G. E. Moore, for example, upheld experiences of beauty and relations of friendship as intrinsically valuable goods.

⁹ See e.g. M. Gold; P. Kramer.

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**The End is Near, or Whither Philosophy?:
Thoughts on Francis Bacon, Dionne Warwick, and Scooby Doo**

Presidential Address of the 45th Annual Meeting
of the Florida Philosophical Association

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A couple of years ago a student in my ethics class stopped by my office about half-way through the semester. Rachel was a very bright young woman—quiet and reserved, but her test scores were quite high. She told me that she had taken the course on the recommendation of a friend who was “into” philosophy, and although she enjoyed the class, she had hoped that we would discuss other subjects: the mind, the truth about life after death, the nature of time, “more metaphysical things” as she put it. “What you want is introduction to philosophy,” I told her. And she was delighted to find out that she could take my introduction to philosophy class the next semester.

Rachel made an “A” in ethics, and sure enough I saw her the next semester in introduction to philosophy. Again, about half-way through the semester she stopped by my office to express her disappointment. It turned out that when Rachel had told me that she was interested in the mind, she meant, as she put it “the 90% of the mind that we don’t use, that can be used for ESP.” By life after death, she meant near-death and out-of-body experiences, and by the nature of time, she had meant the fact that time is, as she said, “not really real, since people like Nostradamus are able to see into the future.”

In the old screwball comedy films of the forties, it was possible to slap somebody across the cheek, give ’em a good shaking, holler “Snap out of it!” and they’d come to their senses. Too bad that doesn’t work with all the Rachels of the world, who are perhaps genuine seekers who want to get things figured out, but go about it the wrong way. Perhaps the same sense of wonder that led *us* to lives of philosophical study and leads others to physics or biology or history, sometimes leads down the path to wierdo-ville. But shouldn’t education set people on the right path, one that doesn’t lead them to call Dionne Warwick’s Psychic Friends’ Hotline, at \$5 a minute?

Through further discussion I found that Rachel was a science major—she had taken biology, chemistry, geology, and was currently enrolled in physics. She made an “A” in each of them. Why hadn’t she learned something about the scientific method, about how to evaluate evidence, about how to tell a good theory from a bad one?

Perhaps Rachel is just a victim of her generation, the so-called Generation X. You may have read Peter Sacks' book *Generation X Goes to College: An Eye-Opening Account of Teaching in Postmodern America*, in which a journalist turned academic describes how his dreams of the joyous fulfillment that comes from seeing young minds inspired were soon dashed by row upon row of blank faces under backwards baseball caps. Many of his complaints are familiar: the students won't read their assignments, they won't participate in class, they refuse to believe that the material is relevant, they answer their cell phones in class, etc. What's worse than their apathy, writes Sacks, is that Generation X has given up on truth. Belief in alien abductions, astrology, or angels watching over them is as valid to Xers as anything else. A professor who uses phrases such as "really happened," "is the case," or "can know with certainty" is dismissed. But Sacks thinks that we can't really blame them. They move about in a world without absolutes, a world that, for complicated reasons, has been a long time coming.

Maybe things aren't really so bad. After all, my professors probably said the same about my generation when I was an undergraduate 20 years ago. And for those of you who were undergraduates 40 years ago, *THE SAME WAS PROBABLY SAID OF YOU*. There is a short piece of writing from ancient Sumer over 4,000 years old complaining that the youth were even dumber than the previous generation. And we all remember Plato's lament in the *Laws* that Greeks of his day were scientifically and mathematically illiterate.

But we're in a different boat. We live in the best-educated age the world has ever known. Until a couple of centuries ago, literacy world-over was the privilege of a tiny elite class. Today, there is no one in the United States who can't read because of lack of access to education. Ninety percent of Americans finish high school, forty percent go to college, and over twenty percent of all Americans complete college. You'd expect that ordinary folks would know something about science, something about history, and maybe even, dare I suggest, a thing or two about philosophy. If despite modern-day education, we can still with some legitimacy complain about how clueless the present generation is, what can we do about it? What can we as philosophers do about it?

I happen to think that there is something to Peter Sacks' evaluation of Generation X, but I think it is not restricted to young people. I think that, as *educators*, we have failed for a long time to offer guidance on how to think about the big questions. We have especially failed as *philosophers* to provide that guidance. There is a seeker somewhere within us all, but sometimes that search gets diverted, as with my student Rachel. Sometimes the payoff of the search doesn't seem worth the effort, as with members of Generation X. Some people think they've completed the search and are busy trying to direct us down their paths, as with religious zealots. But what you won't find on the search is a philosopher sitting at the desk of the welcome center handing out maps.

I'm not very sure anymore about what use we serve as philosophers. How many Americans with college degrees can even name a philosopher? They might remember Plato or Descartes from a class

they took years before, but could any of them name one from this century, much less a living one? Peter Singer may be the only living philosopher who's had any effect on the public—far more than anyone else he's convinced hundreds of thousands of people world-wide to take animal welfare seriously. Unfortunately, most people in this country probably know him better as that philosopher up at Princeton who wants to kill all the babies! **We're** all convinced that what we do as philosophers is important and that Carnap and Wittgenstein and Husserl and Derrida are important people—and we're right, on a certain level. Those “big guys” made tremendous contributions to philosophy, and when we publish another article in a journal or read a paper at a conference like this, we too make contributions to philosophy. But do we do anything more? **Could** we do anything more?

At the 20th World Philosophy Congress held in Boston just over a year ago (some of you attended), a panel of eminent thinkers was asked what we've learned from philosophy this century. W.V. Quine, may his name be blessed, passed on the question! The other panelists just hemmed and hawed too. The fact is that many of the answers to the big perennial questions have come, not from philosophy, but from science. The nature of matter is the domain of quantum physics, time and space are described by relativity theory, philosophy of mind is largely responses to neuroscience, and the origin of the universe is sorted out by astronomers.

Now if you ask a panel of eminent scientists about what science has done in this century, you get some straightforward answers. What's more, ordinary Americans know something about these things, because they have enormous influence in our daily lives. Perhaps most important is in medicine. Many diseases that were fatal only a century ago, like leukemia and diabetes, are now treatable. Many have been virtually eradicated, like small pox, cholera, black plague, and polio. A hundred years ago there was little that could be done to save the life of a prematurely born infant. And if you had a heart attack at age 35, there was no one standing nearby who took a three hour course in CPR at the local community education center who could save your life.

Scientists discovered DNA, cloned sheep, sent astronauts to the moon, created radios, TVs, and computers. Where were philosophers when the major advances of this century were made? Not needed! Enormous social progress has been made, too. But who led the battles for human rights around the world? Heidegger? Let's not kid ourselves: who'd want to invite us to the shaping-of-the-millennium party anyway when we have the reputation of never being able to agree on anything? (Which, of course, is true.) We used to be the people who asked the big questions, about the meaning of life, about death, the existence of God—questions that we used to claim **should** be asked by everyone. But when a student asks us about the meaning of life, say, we're more likely to rattle on about the meaning of the term “meaning” than to offer some real help.

So what can we expect from philosophy in the next millennium? Let me make it clear that I hope we continue to do what we do already, even though nobody else gives a damn. But other than

our discussions with each other in the philosophical journals and at conferences, is there something else we should be doing, some sort of practical contribution to society? People do want answers to the big questions, but they usually find them coming from science. Whatever's left over, they leave up to their religion or to Dionne Warwick. My concern is not so much that Americans don't know any science, although that's a serious problem, too. Two-thirds of American adults don't know that dinosaurs died before humans appeared. Three-quarters don't know that the sun is a star. One-half don't know that it takes a year for the Earth to orbit the sun. The more serious concern is that most people don't know how science works. And it's there that I think we have our niche. We're in the midst of rapid technological advance that will continue at an ever-increasing pace in the next century. Because of this, more than ever, philosophers are needed. Our job (in addition to traditional philosophical discussion) will be to explain to the public the scientific method, broadly conceived, so that the public will be better equipped to (1) distinguish science from technology so that they can make informed ethical decisions, (2) distinguish science from religion so that they can free themselves from superstition, and (3) distinguish science from pseudoscience so that they can take better control of their own lives.

Now why should this be our problem? Well, because we do it better than anyone else. Nobel laureate Peter Medawar said it best: "Ask a scientist what he conceives the scientific method to be and he will adopt an expression at once solemn and shifty-eyed: solemn, because he feels he ought to declare an opinion; shifty-eyed, because he is wondering how to conceal the fact that he has no opinion to declare." Scientists are especially good at making and reporting discoveries, at formulating hypotheses and testing theories, but they're god-awful at articulating how they do it. Ordinary folk commonly speak of "taking a scientific look at" something, or going about an inquiry "scientifically," but they really don't know what this means. It's high time for somebody to explain why the scientific method works and how it is not a separate enterprise from establishing truth and probability in all manner of daily affairs. If philosophers are concerned with protecting our society from the threat of technopoly, the false promises and intolerance of religion, and the lies of pseudoscience, that somebody is us.

Science is a two-edged sword, and we can readily see the promise and danger of the modernist, scientific world-view in the work of Francis Bacon. More than anyone else, Bacon helped create the scientific method, but his work is a call to arms to rush into nature and force from it the information that will allow us to harness the world's powers, for "Truth therefore and utility are here the very same things...." His writing is replete with the language of violence as it rouses us to take command of an unruly nature, for only when "she is forced out of her natural state, and squeezed and moulded" can we understand her. He even speaks of an "inquisition of nature" whereby it is put on the rack and tortured and forced to yield its mysteries, and the scientific method that he helped to invent is the way to unveil nature's "feminine" secrets, for "there are still laid up in the womb of

nature many secrets of excellent use.” Bacon says that he is suggesting only that “the human race recover that right over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest.” To him, science and technology are identical.

Although I am praising the scientific method and scientific progress in general, I am also pointing out that the technology produced by science has also given us thalidomide, nuclear weapons, DDT, and chlorofluorocarbons. The same technology that has doubled the world-wide human life expectancy in a century and a half now forces all of us to confront painful end-of-life decisions, since we can extend lives virtually indefinitely. No better than scientists do ordinary folk clearly distinguish science and technology, and when they become aware of ethical dilemmas created by technology, they turn to scientists for answers. This is especially true in the case of environmental ethics. Philosophers have not responded well, for environmental philosophy has so far been largely uncritical of Bacon’s central modernist contention¹ simply because it has faithfully taken the findings of science as the only way of defining our ecological problems, and indeed as our only hope for correcting those problems.

I’m suggesting that an important service of philosophy in the near future will be to inform the public that science and technology are separate, that the ethical issues created by technology are not answered by technology, and that the most pressing of these issues is to help the public make sense of environmental ethics.

A better understanding of how scientific research proceeds, how theories are weighed, how discoveries are made, and how evidence is evaluated can also help in deciding what is sensible and what should be rejected regarding the claims of religion. The diplomatic view is that science and religion do not conflict: with just a little chipping away at most believers’ tendency toward literalism, they will agree that scriptures offer no historical accounts, but are really attempts to convey spiritual wisdom clothed in the garb of myth. Creation stories, resurrections from the dead, miraculous healings, are not to be understood as actual events but as heuristic devices illustrating somehow a deeper meaning of human existence. Well, it would be nice if believers really thought this way. While some religions do not ask that you accept their myths at face value (there are very few Hindus, for example, who would claim that Vishnu in his incarnation as Rama actually fought a ten-headed monster with the help of a magic monkey), the great majority of mainstream members of western religions are quite firm in their conviction that scientists routinely make claims that conflict with the tenets of faith. After all, 70% of all Americans believe that Adam & Eve were real people and that Noah’s flood really occurred.

A century after Nietzsche’s death, God is alive and well in the United States. A 1996 Gallup poll reported that 96% of American adults believe in God, 90% believe in heaven, 80% believe in miracles, 73% believe in hell, 72% believe in angels, and 65% believe in Satan. Now education makes a difference, but not as much as you might expect. Belief in heaven, for example, breaks

down like this: 94% for those with no college; 90% for those with some college; 80% for college graduates; 75% for those with graduate degrees.

It's not so much belief in God that bothers me. Personally, I'm not a believer, although at times there are some process thinkers, especially Charles Hartshorne, whom I think might be onto something. But I'm not addressing the plausibility of the views discussed within philosophical theology. I worry about the rank and file believers for whom belief in God comes as part and parcel of a world view that allows for all manner of superstition, intolerance, and exploitation.

Take the belief in miracles. Christians world-wide seem to think that religion demands belief in miracles. A good example is the claimed appearance of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes in 1858. She appeared, witnesses said, to declare that her birth had indeed been due to immaculate conception. This was good timing, by the way, because Pope Pious IX had just proclaimed the doctrine three years earlier. Since then, over 100 million people have visited the site to be cured of various diseases. Now the Catholic Church has accepted 65 of those as true, miraculous cures. So according to the Church, your chances of miraculous cure at Lourdes are less than 1 in a million! Now the chances of spontaneous remission of cancer (when you lump together all forms of cancer) are from 1 out of 10 thousand to 1 out of 100 thousand. Now only three of those 65 people deemed cured at Lourdes had cancer. So, their chances of beating cancer would have been better had they stayed home!

This sort of irrationality presents unlimited opportunities for exploitation from charlatans like faith healers. One of my heroes is James Randi, also known as the "Amazing Randi." He is a world-class magician who has tirelessly exposed frauds for over thirty years. His James Randi Educational Foundation is just up the road in Ft. Lauderdale. One of his famous feats was when he exposed a popular faith healer named Peter Popoff in the 80s. Popoff appeared to be able to divine ailments of audience members who would then come up to the stage for a curing. Randi discovered that Popoff's wife worked the crowd by having them fill out little cards, and then she'd transmit the information by radio from backstage to her husband who listened in through his "hearing aid." (Why would a faith healer need a hearing aid?) Randi played a videotape complete with the radio transmissions on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, and Popoff was ruined. However, Randi received hundreds of letters from Popoff's ex-followers thanking him for exposing Popoff. Now, they said, they'd turned to other faith healers whom they know to be honest. Popoff, by the way, has recently recovered and is back up to his old tricks again, and he's doing fine now.

We have scientology, founded by the science-fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard who bragged to his friends in the late 50s that he'd invented a religion and was on his way to making millions. We have Hal Lindsey who continues to exploit religious people's apocalyptic fears as he did in his book *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which has sold over 20 million copies! We have perennial presidential hopeful Pat Robertson with his multi-million-dollar enterprise the Christian Broadcasting Network, who urges viewers to send in their donations to help fight the satanist-communist powers in

Washington, to make sure that we can survive Y2K catastrophes (because computers are somehow the mark of the beast), and to ensure that we can arm ourselves in the soon-to-come battle of Armageddon.

There are other religious currents that may not be based on exploitation but can be just as dangerous in other ways. Christian Scientists have recently endorsed quantum physics as proof of their belief that matter is not real and thus disease is illusory—this from a church that has consistently rejected physics for the entire century. There is the growing movement of the Promise Keepers. Openly anti-gay and anti-feminist, they urge men to reclaim their role as the head of the household and urge women to become “suitable helpers” for their husbands.

If you think that such currents are only minor disturbances that do not really count as evidence of any real threat, since we have a firm constitutional guarantee of the separation of church and state, think again. Earlier this year the state of Kansas removed evolution from its public schools’ science standards. (Toto, I’m not sure where the hell we are.) In 1996 Arizona did the same. Things have since gotten a little better there, because science teachers appealed to the very same “equal time” notion that creationists have championed so often. We all know that these situations arise not because of good evidence from alternative scientific views but from religious fundamentalists. By the way, 45% of Americans say that they “accept evolution,” but only 9% say that they accept the view that humans evolved from now extinct forms. On June 29th of this year (1999, Eds.), the United States House of representatives voted 275 to 140 in favor of establishing a national day of prayer and fasting—it failed only because House rules require a 2/3 majority for certain kinds of legislation. Here in Florida we have our school voucher program, which allows public funds to be used to send children to private, that is, religious (and usually racially segregated) schools.

So my complaint about religion is not just that it makes unreasonable claims that are nevertheless believed by so many because they don’t understand the scientific approach, but more that the stench of that irrationality draws the flies of exploitation and breeds the vermin that chew away at secular government. (Sorry—I was feeling a little Voltairesque there.) My worry about religion is not very different from my concern about other forms of irrationality. The turn of the millennium has produced plenty of religious looney toons predicting doomsday, just like other self-proclaimed prophets have done for centuries. But what we’ve really witnessed in this decade is an enormous growth in the public’s interest in pseudoscience. Over half of all Americans believe in astrology, ESP, and communication with the dead. One-third say that they’ve seen ghosts. Two-thirds say that they’ve had a psychic experience. One-third believe in Atlantis, and one-quarter believe that aliens visit our planet. Who can blame them? The newspapers publish astrological charts, psychics advertise in *Psychology Today* magazine, popular bookstores often devote a shelf to philosophy/new age, and the commercials for Dionne Warwick’s Psychic Friends’ Hotline are filled with the happy testimonials of toothy celebrities and chirpy callers. There has been a lot of talk lately

about the popularity of the TV show the *X Files*, in which in nearly every episode another paranormal incident is investigated and left unsolved, implying that the only explanation is a supernatural one. This is a far cry from *Scooby Doo*, a kids' cartoon from 30 years ago which is still a regular feature on Cartoon Network. The Scooby Doo Gang always solved the mystery by exposing the perpetrator as a very natural villain who had avoided detection by playing upon the local folk's proclivity for superstition.

Perhaps trying to correct public belief in the paranormal is to tilt at windmills. In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Gibbon wrote that "the practice of superstition is so congenial to the multitude that, if they are forcibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision.... So urgent on the vulgar is their necessity of believing, that the fall of any system of mythology will most probably be succeeded by the introduction of some other mode of superstition." How else do we explain the persistent belief in a supernatural cause for crop circles when it's been shown time and again that they are made by pranksters? Why the continued (and recently increased) interest in Nostradamus despite his hopelessly nebulous French and despite the fact that his supporters claim proof that his prophecies are accurate *only after* the supposed events have occurred? I recently remarked to a colleague that alien abductions are just today's version of the incubi and succubi of the Middle Ages. The same fears were expressed by the ancient Greeks whose gods had sex with mortal women, and the ancient Hebrews, whose book of Genesis mentions the "sons of God" who took wives from the daughters of men. My colleague's serious reply was that that was not evidence against alien abductions, but that it only proved that alien abductions have been going on for thousands of years!

Perhaps our tendency to seek patterns where there are none, to draw conclusions from the thinnest of evidence, and to wish so hard for comfort that we find it in the least welcoming places is hardwired into our brains. How else do we explain the voluntary assent to the patently ludicrous ideas and the astonishing behavior of cults like Heaven's Gate? Are these just cranks who were victims of their own stupidity, or are they evidence of our being programmed to be readily manipulated? Perhaps these traits are somehow evolutionarily connected with certain forms of creativity that are as responsible for glorious achievement as they are for dismal folly.

There is an overlap in paranormal and religious beliefs, of course. Many people draw religious implications from research on near-death and out-of-body experiences. The reports of these experiences, they say, provide evidence that we survive death. Books by Raymond Moody sell millions, but the same is not true of books by skeptics like British parapsychologist Susan Blackmore. Blackmore points out that such experiences are caused by neural disinhibition and can be induced by LSD, a bang on the head, or a lack of oxygen. Fighter pilots in training experience them regularly when subjected to high g-forces. But what's more important is that Blackmore left

her old field of study when she became fed up with the sloppiness involved in parapsychological research—it just wasn't science at all.

Other areas of pseudoscience don't appeal to religious tendencies so much as they simply resemble, on the surface, real science. Medical quackery runs the gamut from psychic surgery in the Philippines (in which the desperately ill spend thousands of dollars to have a sleight-of-hand artist produce a few chicken parts and proclaim the patient cured, who then returns home to die) to Deepak Chopra (who appears on his PBS specials, handsome and sophisticated, and tells you that in order to feel good you just have to, well, feel good). In between there's therapeutic touch, debunked by a nine-year-old girl's simple experiment published in a prestigious medical journal, yet still taught in numerous nursing programs around the country. There are homeopathic medicines, which claim to work on two principles: (1) induce the opposite of the desired effect—if you have insomnia, you need some caffeine; and (2) dilute the active ingredient until it has probably disappeared—if the active ingredient in your insomnia remedy is caffeine, the bottle is likely to tell you that there is a solution of 6x, which means one part caffeine to one million parts water. So what you get is, well, very pure water—so it can't hurt.

Another medical humbug is the very popular use of magnets, for which there has been a number of endorsements by famous sports figures. I have a friend who used to work as a horse trainer (I live in Ocala, which is horse country). He began selling blankets and leg wrappings with magnets in them to horse owners, who tend to be highly superstitious anyway. They're supposed to make the horse feel peppy and run faster or something. He then branched out into a line of products made for humans: magnetized bracelets, shoe inserts, underwear, what have you. He explained to me that the human body is really a big magnet, and the products he sold enhanced and re-aligned our bodies' electromagnetic charges. But if the body is magnet, I asked, why do we need a bracelet to hold his magnets on? Wouldn't they just stick to us? It's a lot more complicated, he replied, it has to do with physics and all that. I took one of his belts that are used for the relief of back pain, slid a magnet out from its little pocket in the belt, and stuck it to a metal filing cabinet. Then I took a few sheets of paper, about a dozen, and placed them between the cabinet and the magnet, but then the magnet wouldn't hold. It seems unlikely to me, I told him, that the magnetic force would penetrate the skin (which is quite thick on your back); so it wouldn't seem to have any effect on the muscles beneath. But it will, he answered, after the skin itself becomes charged, which might take an hour or two, and in turn magnetizes the muscles below. You can guess where that conversation went, and his magnet business is doing fine now.

The Federal Drug Administration is virtually powerless to regulate these sorts of swindles, because most of them existed before the agency was created and so have been grandfathered in. It's even tougher to protect the public from all the garbage that passes for psychological counseling. The most popular explanation in this decade for why we're all emotional wrecks is childhood sexual

abuse. The top-ten ailments that are commonly cited as evidence of childhood sexual abuse are: headaches, sleeplessness, overeating, vague anxieties, too much affection for one's parents, lack of sexual desire, too much sexual desire, having sought psychotherapy, having avoided psychotherapy, and (number one) the inability to remember childhood sexual abuse.

I have no illusions about philosophers saving the world. Nor do I pretend to know what's best for philosophy. But I do think that our society is facing challenges that will amplify in the next century. The responses to those challenges require a certain expertise, and we have that expertise. Merleau-Ponty characterized philosophy as vigilance. Perhaps we can pass along some of that.

My student Rachel graduated last year and is now in our nursing program. She drops by my office every week or so to talk philosophy. She's become really interested in philosophy of mind—she says that Daniel Dennett “rocks.” She's also come to see that all those science courses she took supplied her with much more than a body of “facts.” She now considers a terrestrial life form like an amoeba more interesting than any purported alien form. She still believes that celestial bodies exert powerful influences, but she knows that those forces are the stuff of astronomical observation and not astrological dreams. And although it wasn't apparent then, her geology class taught her something about how to tell not just shale from Shine-o-la. I like to think that Rachel's transformation is due to what she learned in philosophy class and in private conversations with me about philosophy. She's still a seeker, but I'm much more confident now that her searches will lead her to something worth finding. Now if I can just get her away from Dennett!

¹ Editors' Note: Feminist theorists have been and are addressing this problem in ways different from the stereotypical modernist approach(es).

The Social Dimension of Epistemology

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It has been well established that the pursuit of knowledge is an inescapably social activity. This is not only because we live in a world with others but also because, as Francis Bacon noticed, our inability to observe ourselves blinds us to the assumptions we use in inquiry. We become aware of these prejudices only by collaborating with others who, by making use of different assumptions, allow us to become aware of our own. For such collaboration, a community of merely like-minded inquirers will not suffice. Rather, what is needed, as has been noted by thinkers such as Feyerabend and Harding, is a genuinely diverse community comprised of differently minded thinkers who will be able to check one another and who also share a commitment to inquiry. Unfortunately, the need for such a community poses a problem. As Kuhn explains, genuine communication seems impossible between such radically dissimilar inquirers because they are discussing “different worlds” (111). If this is the case, then although we may be able to make progress within the constraints of a given set of tacit assumptions we will never overcome their limitations and will be ensnared by our own paradigm.

In what follows I will demonstrate that Kuhn’s description shows the scientific enterprise to recapitulate, in a higher form, what Peirce would call the authoritative method of inquiry, one in which there is no social forum whereby the authority of the institution is able to discover its prejudices. I will then apply aspects of Hegel’s explanation of the process of recognition, found in the “Spirit” section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, to the scientific enterprise in order to overcome this difficulty and secure a foundation for genuine inquiry (263-409).

1. Peirce: The Necessity of an Open and Diverse Community of Inquiry

Charles Sanders Peirce was one of the most original thinkers to examine the social dimension of epistemology. He challenged the conception of experimentation as merely a means of verifying the results of a given theory for one’s self, claiming that its primary purpose is to facilitate the emergence of those social practices required to overcome the problems present in individual inquiry. In “The Fixation of Belief,” he describes the natural progression of methods used to create and defend truth claims from its beginnings in individual inquiry to a more social method of inquiry. By examining this progression, we will see clearly how a social component is necessary for successful inquiry. Peirce terms the first method used “tenacity” (12). By this method, which is more a natural predisposition to form habits than methodically to fix beliefs, an individual merely clings to whatever belief is initially formed regarding a given matter and, so far as possible, refuses to acknowledge counter-evidence. While this method may enable individuals to survive in favorable

conditions, it cannot sustain itself, for people are inherently social creatures subject to what Peirce calls the “Social Impulse” (12), which compels people to interact with one another. The confrontation brought about by this impulse results in a diversity of beliefs, and thus allows a recognition of tenaciously held beliefs for what they are, leading the tenacious believer to question them and to begin the process of genuine inquiry.

The “Social Impulse” overcomes tenacity, but only to become “authority” (14). By this, Peirce’s second method, the beliefs of a community are coerced by an authority such as the church or the state. By educating the entire community in the same manner, the authority can prevent the development of contrary beliefs within the community and avoid the doubt that discredited tenacity. In effect, this method merely brings about an entire community operating as a single tenacious inquirer.

This method too, cannot sustain itself because the power of the authority to regulate belief is limited in scope. “Only [those] most important can be attended to” (14). In matters of lesser importance they will still be determined by “natural causes” (14), that is by tenacity. In addition, the beliefs mandated by the authority will slowly shift over time. Both the critical and the historical consciousness, then, will find themselves faced with contradictory authoritative beliefs which neither they nor the authoritative institute can reconcile. This irreconcilability betrays the instability of the authoritative method to its adherents and forces the development of a new method.

After the failure of both tenacity and authority, Peirce suggests the “*a priori* method” (15), a discussion based inquiry that he takes to characterize traditional philosophy. Historically, this method has proven the least effective. Indubitable truths come and go in fads just as do different styles in art. This can clearly be seen in the periodic reemergence of skepticism, as well as the recurring debate between rationalists and empiricists.

Peirce’s own pragmatic method for fixing belief makes use of experiment to provide a common ground in reality that may facilitate and direct discussions and thereby avoid the endless disagreements that beset the *a priori* method. An experiment is a transliteration of a belief into its pragmatic consequences, consequences that can be experienced by all inquirers and which therefore provide a common ground for inquiry among those holding different beliefs.

The upshot is that the individual cannot go it alone in the pursuit of knowledge. Genuine inquiry requires a community (in order to avoid the problems of tenacity) that is both diverse (in order to avoid the problems of authority) and open to both discussion and experimentation (in order to avoid the problems of the *a priori* method).

2. Kuhn and the Impossibility of the Necessary

When taken at face value, the scientific enterprise seems to have embraced the highest stage of Peirce’s development. Experiments provide a touchstone that serves as a basis for open

communication, and the co-existence of different branches of science and research programs within these branches appears to ensure a genuinely diverse community. Kuhn's account of how so called "normal science" (Kuhn, 23-24) operates, however, calls into question the extent to which the implementation of these principles is successful. Specifically, Kuhn challenges the possibility of inter-paradigmatic communication—the genuine communication Peirce demonstrated as necessary for proper inquiry—and hence raises the question whether the scientific institution merely reinstates the method of authority at a higher level.

Before examining Kuhn's analysis of the sciences, a few words are in order regarding the idea of a "paradigm" or "theoretical framework" which has lately come under attack by thinkers such as Davidson. Theoretical frameworks are mutually exclusive sets of theories and concepts that enable and inform observation itself. As different theories may be used to mentally organize and present the same event, two rational people may witness the same event and observe two very different phenomena. To the extent that two inquirers hold different interpretive frameworks they may be considered to be living in "different worlds."

An example may here be helpful (Davidson 70-72). Phlogiston theory, the dominant paradigm in chemistry prior to the 1770s, understood the process of combustion as the release of some matter (phlogiston) into the atmosphere by the burnt matter. This accounted for the material's alteration, specifically its weight loss. With the development of the air pump and realization that there must be different gases in the air, at least some of which must play active roles in chemical reactions, a plethora of variations on phlogiston theory emerged in order to preserve it in light of increasing difficulties posed by laboratory results.

Lavoisier, confronted with this multitude of theories, as well as by the anomalous weight gain some metals experienced when burnt, eventually proffered the oxidation theory of combustion, according to which burned matter actually combined with oxygen from the air rather than releasing phlogiston. Yet, even after Lavoisier's new theory was published and had gained many adherents, a number of scientists were unable to accept it, including Priestley who had separated oxygen prior to Lavoisier. The reason for this was that the paradigm that enabled phlogiston theory was not compatible with the notion that a part of the atmosphere could combine with solid matter and become a part of it. The Phlogiston's non-acceptance of the new theory, which explains much anomalous data, was not due to a conscious dogmatic refusal to accept it. Rather it was due to an inability to understand it, for it ran counter to the paradigm already held by many scientists.

It is clear, then, that conceptual schemes do play a large part in facilitating our observations. Priestley's inability to understand Lavoisier's oxidation theory also shows paradigms to be mutually exclusive, and not to allow for cross-paradigmatic communication. If different paradigms produce different experiences, and one is limited to the use of one's own paradigm when interpreting

experiments, then the common ground in reality Peirce posited as facilitating communication through experimentation does not exist.

This is the driving assumption behind Kuhn's account of how "normal science" functions. According to Kuhn, every new scientist goes through an institutionalizing period in which she is given reductionist histories of science and performs paradigmatic experiments that serve to indoctrinate her. Once she has learned the paradigm, the scientist performs experiments, collects data, and otherwise "extend[s] the knowledge of those facts that the paradigm displays as particularly revealing" (24). In so doing, she makes use of all the techniques required by Peirce's methodology for genuine inquiry, performing experiments, publishing articles, and collaborating with colleagues; yet, insofar as all scientists are operating under the same paradigm they are essentially operating under a higher version of authority, one in which it is not the authority of a single person or an institution such as the church or the state, but the authority of the scientific paradigm that they accept unquestioningly.

According to Kuhn, since this state of science is far more productive than pre-paradigmatic or crisis science in which there is more work done attempting to prove one's own paradigm rather than to increase knowledge within it, the attempts to appeal to observation to determine between them are inherently flawed, and much of the polemic is simply scientists talking past one another. "Normal" science, so long as it is producing fruitful research, is more desirable than non-normal science. That is because it allows the scientist to "concentrate . . . upon the subtlest and most esoteric aspects" of inquiry, rapidly expanding knowledge within the paradigm without having to "attempt to build his field anew, starting from first principles and justifying the use of each concept introduced" (19-20).

In what purports to be merely a descriptive account of how the growth of knowledge occurs within the sciences, we can begin to detect prescriptive elements. Kuhn asserts that, since progress can be made only when the conceptual scheme has already laid out its possibility, to the extent that science desires progress it "holds creative philosophy at arm's length . . . for good reason" (Davidson, 88). Also, since it is impossible to appeal to pure observation in order to decide between paradigms, a shift from one paradigm to another is not necessarily a progress toward truth, but rather a shift that will again allow for the productive research of a normal science. Kuhn thus tacitly endorses a recapitulation of Peirce's authority at a higher level, that of the conceptual scheme or paradigm, rather than of any given person.

3. Hegel's Spirit: The Process of Recognition

Kuhn claims that it is neither necessary nor fruitful to promote inter-paradigmatic growth. His critics, particularly Paul Feyerabend,¹ hold fast to a commitment to the proliferation of paradigms, pointing out that the growth of the sciences is not propelled merely by theoretical

concerns. They maintain that placing Kuhnian restrictions on science will fundamentally damage the enterprise. Yet, this critique is merely a negative one, asserting that Kuhn is wrong in describing how the sciences develop and does not address the theoretical concerns he brings up. The problem we now face is to discover how the scientist acting within the community can maintain a commitment to her own paradigm in order to maintain the growth of scientific knowledge while simultaneously acting in a way that undercuts this paradigm by constantly interacting with others whose paradigms are vastly incompatible with her own. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* addresses a similar problem as it occurs in the social sphere in its analysis of "the ethical substance" (Hegel 263-294). By examining the tension between the family and the community and its resolution in the development of Spirit, we can come to see how this problem might be overcome in the sciences as well.

The first major relevant insight of Hegel's "Spirit" is that the abstract or isolated individual is a myth; humans always develop in families. We saw that this myth served as the starting point of Peirce's analysis. Just as the individual always develops in a family it seems that the scientist *qua* inquirer always develops within a community of inquirers who share a paradigm. The family, like the scientific community, is diverse in that its members serve different functions (i.e. bread winner and home-maker v. botanist and physicist), have different expectations from the family (to be shown proper respect or to be fed and sheltered v. to contribute to the edifice of knowledge or to help produce technology), and even tolerate different personalities. In spite of this diversity, however, each member of the family is committed to act toward the "good of the family," as it is the structure of the family as a whole that sustains each of its members. Likewise each inquirer works for the preservation and perpetuation of her paradigm.

The single family, like the individual, never functions in complete isolation. Rather, it always finds itself within a larger community and culture. Just as the duty to the family arose out of a consideration of the function of the family (to sustain each member), so the duty toward the community arises out of a consideration of its function. The community allows for different families to co-exist not just peacefully but in a manner that is beneficial to each. For example, the state acts as an arbiter between feuding families, preventing endless cycles of vengeance. Likewise, it promotes the formation of groups that help each member contribute to the good of her family more effectively, such as business guilds. This commitment to the peaceful and mutually beneficial co-existence of different families is very similar to Feyerabend's commitment to the proliferation of theories within the scientific community.

In this more social context we can see that Kuhn's commitment to the rule of a single paradigm (duty toward family), and Feyerabend's commitment to the proliferation and coexistence of theories (duty toward the community), need not be at odds with one another (as one should hope, since both claim to be descriptive rather than prescriptive). Yet, clashes do occur in the social

context as well. *Antigone* presents an example of such a clash that Hegel uses as the basis for his discussion in which one is so blind to one's adherence to a particular duty that she is blind to all others (261, 284). Just as Antigone's fierce commitment to her familial duty led to a clash with Creon, whose adherence to the communal duty was just as strong, so too it seems that Kuhn's commitment to the growth of knowledge within a paradigm clashes with Feyerabend's commitment to inter-paradigmatic dialogue. What this example emphasizes is that it is fundamentally impossible for one to "lose" one's commitment to one's own paradigm in the commitment to diversity within a community. This is illustrated by the fact that it is clearly in Creon's best interest to maintain the order of the Kingdom. Although one may adopt the standpoint of the community, as Creon and Feyerabend do, and criticize another for acting in opposition to the community in doing this, each still maintains his own paradigm.

In the "conscience" section (383-409), Hegel examines individuals *qua* epistemic agents. In this role, there is no higher court to which the agent might appeal in resolving conflicts as there was in the analysis of the ethical substance. This situation, then, closely mirrors that of the sciences as described by Kuhn. As a scientist one is committed to the growth of knowledge, and as one embedded in a paradigm the very act of publishing one's results is taking a stand for the knowledge produced by that paradigm and asserting its primacy. However, in a truly diverse community, this will not result in mere accolades as it likely would from within a single paradigm, but rather will confront two forms of criticism: one from competing paradigms that dismiss the results as absurd and another from the standpoint of the community itself that dismisses the results as provincial and from a partial perspective. Kuhn addresses only the first of these criticisms.

Although communication may be impossible when the criticism levied is an absolute rejection of the other paradigm, this is not so when the critique is that one's information is partial. One can admit this criticism while still maintaining the limited truth of the results one has reached. Perhaps Hegel's most brilliant insight is that if one genuinely accepts this criticism, she not only perceives her own knowledge as limited, but also a path to the knowledge of the critic becomes open to her as a limited form of knowledge. The critic cannot maintain a stance of pure critique, but must herself have some other oppositional knowledge that led her to make the critique in the first place. This knowledge, which is cut off from other paradigms entirely when approached directly, may be approached from the point of view that, although it may not cohere with an opposing paradigm, it is still true from a limited perspective. This realization has put the one criticized in the same position as the critic himself.

Provided the original critic accepts the implications of her critique—namely that her own paradigm is itself partial—both parties now find themselves on the same ground. The acceptance of the situatedness of all knowledge provides a reasonably close approximation to the extra-paradigmatic realm that Kuhn claimed was unreachable. It is only after the realization is made that

all knowledge is situated by a paradigm and thus subject to the critique of being partial, that civil discourse—the sort that Peirce demonstrated as necessary for genuine inquiry—is possible. Furthermore, the struggle to make one’s point of view clear to another, the struggle to allow another to share in one’s own situated knowledge, is the same struggle as making that knowledge clear to one’s self. For, if all knowledge is situated, then to truly understand any knowledge one must know how it is situated. Yet, one can only know this by coming to know other forms of situated knowledge.

4. Conclusion: A Return to Epistemology

The key problem facing the sciences and epistemology is that notions that are considered social, yet which are essential to inquiry, are ignored. The model of knowledge commonly presupposed is one in which an individual is an absolute knower capable of acquiring a comprehensive account of all knowledge, and others are understood merely as useful checks helping her along her solitary way. We have seen that this conception of the self in relation to knowledge is itself flawed, and that the self can begin to acquire genuine knowledge about the world only when it first realizes itself as situated, with access only to partial perspectives. Furthermore, this place of situation, uncertainty, and partiality of knowledge can itself be discovered only when one is confronted by another perspective and accepts its critique. But how can contemporary society make use of this knowledge?

If we examine the sciences we find the popular conception of individual and absolute knowledge re-cast in the form of the quest for a “theory of everything” (Greene 15) and the myth of the level playing field in the form of a drive toward the “impartial observer.” Any commitment to a potential “theory of everything” is a commitment to an absolute perspective. We now know this conception of knowledge, which claims an absolute knowledge and an absolute knower, falls prey to what Donna Haraway has described as “the God trick” (Haraway 183-201). Even were such a theory attained, it would necessarily be an incomplete explanation of everything and given strictly from a situated perspective.

What is worse, that notion also spawns the ideal of the impartial observer. If there is a single explanation of everything, then a single observer should be able to attain it alone. Although one requires others to eliminate personal biases in order to understand everything, no additional content from others is required; the social is merely a negative aid to inquiry. Any attempt to attain this impartiality largely requires the elimination of the individual’s own situation and with it much of the partial ground to which she *does* have access. This can only result in the aggrandizement of a single perspective to the exclusion of all others and leaves all inquirers in a situation in which they can neither communicate nor acknowledge themselves as partial, situated observers. It is the ground of an ultimately flawed epistemology.

One may argue that this amounts to nothing more than relativism, and brings with it all the problems relativism entails; for if all perspectives are equally situated, then how is one better than the other? This is Kuhn's justification for the adherence to the dominant paradigm in scientific inquiry. The answer to this criticism is simple. Yes, all knowledge is both partial and relative to our situation in the world, yet its own partiality implies it is a part of some true greater whole. Likewise, we are now in a position to realize that this critique itself is merely the critical consciousness and falls prey to its own judgment. We are all human beings and it is impossible to go through life holding only this contentless critical perspective. To commit an action is to commit to a partial perspective and be responsible for that commitment and its impact upon others. The moment we accept this responsibility we are subject to criticism, and it is this criticism that allows us to realize both that we are, and more importantly how we are, situated within our common world. Thus, all who are dedicated to inquiry must take steps to ensure that they adopt the best stance they can, one that promotes recognition of one's own self as partial and situated and which fosters dialogue and understanding.

Note

¹ See Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, 3rd ed. (New York: Verso, 1996), but also Solomon “A More Social Epistemology,” in *Socializing Epistemology: The social dimensions of knowledge*, ed. Frederick F. Schmitt (Linham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1994); Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

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Tough Love

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Introduction

Bernard Williams has explored how various personal ideals—ideals of self-fulfillment or of romantic love—can come into conflict with and threaten to undermine morality’s authority over thought and conduct. One of his central aims was to show that the paramount normative standing traditionally accorded to morality is more precarious than moral philosophers, especially Kantian moral philosophers, have tended to admit. Here I focus on the potential conflict between love and morality. I think that a pervasive tendency of Kantian responses to Williams is to make the potential conflict between love and morality seem less troubling only by offering insufficiently robust conceptions of love. In this paper I begin to make this case. What I aim to do here is motivate and then criticize J. David Velleman’s Kantian conception of love in light of Williams’ concerns.

1. The Potential Tension between Love and Morality

In “Persons, character and morality,” Bernard Williams discusses a scenario imagined by Charles Fried, in which a man is confronted with two drowning people, at equal risk, and where one of those drowning is the man’s wife (Fried 227). Fried, it seems, tries to offer a justification for the man saving his wife over the other person that shows the man’s actions to be morally fair or, at least, not unfair: the man’s actions are not unfair to the stranger because in such situations, where one person only can be saved and there is no more impartial reason to save one person over the other, then it is permissible to act on one’s partial reasons and to save one’s loved one. More specifically, Fried suggests that, once the impartial perspective does not point one way or another, the chance fact that one of the drowning people is the man’s wife is allowed to come into play because there is a sense in which this is ultimately no more unfair than using a lottery to decide whom to save: after all, it could just have easily been the stranger’s spouse on deck, and thus the other person’s good fortune to be saved.

Williams objects to the suggestion that “moral principle can legitimate [the man’s] preference, yielding the conclusion that in situations of this kind it is at least all right (morally permissible) to save one’s wife” (Williams, 18). This suggestion, in his well-known formulation, “provides the agent with one thought too many” (18). What Williams is primarily concerned about here is a normative tension between love and morality: a tension between the ideals of morality and the ideals of romantic or other love. He is also concerned with what might be called a psychological tension between love and morality: if the man really loves his wife, is it realistic to expect him to be *capable* of giving due regard to the stranger, considering the permissibility of saving his wife, and so

on? But the main concern he is expressing is that, even if the man is capable of considering the permissibility of his action, is this not too cold and detached a thought to be compatible with what an ideal of love would suggest? Hence not only is love, seen realistically, in potential tension with morality, but the very ideals of love and morality are shown to be, at least potentially, in conflict.

2. The Counterfactual Condition

Some of the responses to Williams suggest that one can accept his claim about what the man's fully spelled out thought should be and yet reject the suggestion that this in any way raises difficulties for impartial morality. For just because it is morally permitted that the man save his wife, why must this be his motivating thought? Perhaps all that impartial morality demands of the man is that he satisfy a 'counterfactual condition': were it impermissible that he save his wife, then he would not save her.¹ In response, Williams might challenge the suggestion that what justifies the man's action in this circumstance need not appear in his thoughts while he is acting. Shouldn't the impartial outlook of morality suggest an ideal of character that is a little more conscientious? Shouldn't the man check that "it is all right" that he save his wife? What status does the stranger earn in his thoughts? Is the stranger's life, in this situation, 'nothing' (at the level of phenomenology) to him? If the stranger is nothing to him in this context, is that morally acceptable? How far can morality let motives and justifications come apart? These are important questions. But what I want to stress here is that even if Williams is wrong to think that impartialist conceptions of morality must give people "one thought too many," his larger point, about the potential tension between love and impartial morality, survives. First we must note that though the counterfactual condition may assuage some of Williams' concerns, by itself it surely cannot make these concerns go away.

To help bring this out, let us go back to Fried's scenario, but let us alter it a little. Imagine that the man is the captain of the ship (an alternative scenario that Fried brings up) and that the man can either save his wife, whom he loves deeply, or (to alter the original case further) a group of strangers who are stranded nearby. Now, one might think, it is no longer permissible for the man to save his wife; indeed, I take it to be (at least *prima facie*) morally impermissible. After all, it is the captain's duty to treat each of his passengers fairly and equally, and this means that a large group of easily rescuable people must take priority over a single individual. How could he morally justify saving his wife ahead of all the others? So now the situation is that it is impermissible for the man to save his wife and, if he is to satisfy the demands of morality, he will not save her. Williams' point is that if the man does truly and deeply love his wife it is by no means obvious that he can or should abandon her to save the others. In other words, it is not realistic, or attractive, to think that love has built into it the condition that one's devotion runs only so far as morality permits.² But insofar as one agrees that this is so, it seems one must accept the potential conflict between love and morality. To paraphrase Williams, one runs that risk if one is to love at all.

There are two main ways of trying to avoid this conclusion. One way is to offer a more ‘moralized’ account of love such that love and morality, for instance, are not even in potential conflict. The other way is not to shape love around morality, but rather to alter the content of morality so that it allows more room for partiality. For the remainder of this paper I shall examine and reject a Kantian response that takes the first route.³

3. Impartial Love?

J. David Velleman, in “Love as a Moral Emotion,” is responding to those such as Williams who find a tension between the value we place upon our loved ones and the equal moral value of everyone. Those who find such a tension disagree as to how great the consequences are for morality or our conceptions of morality; some think the tension points to a need to abandon what one may call impartialist conceptions (be they Kantian or consequentialist) of morality and the moral life; others find this an extreme and overblown response to a manageable tension. Velleman thinks that both sides of this dispute are mistaken in their common assumption that love and morality are “even potentially at odds to this extent” (341). If they were, then “love would have to be, if not an immoral emotion, then at least non-moral” (341). But love, according to Velleman, is a “moral emotion” (341). Velleman’s aim is thus to dissolve the question of “how two divergent perspectives [those of love and morality] can be accommodated” (341) by replacing the faulty conception of love which gives rise to it.

Velleman wants to defend a conception of love inspired by Kant. In truly loving someone, Velleman argues, what our love is centrally responding to is that person’s rational nature. Now, as Velleman notes, one issue that such a view must face is “how being valued on so generic a basis is compatible with being valued as special” (366). Part of the answer, he argues, can be found in the Kantian distinction between dignity and price, since the notion of dignity explains the way that we can all share the value of being special: our status as a person entitles each of us to be seen as irreplaceable. But there is a further puzzle to which his view gives rise, namely, how some people rather than others turn out to be, as we say, special *to us*. For if love is an appreciation of a person’s value *qua person*, then how is it that we do not love everyone? Moreover, if love is an appropriate response to the value of a person *qua person*, then *ought* we to love everyone? The burden that Velleman’s account must take up is that of making sense of love’s partiality, and it is a burden, I suggest, that his account cannot carry.

Velleman acknowledges that he must distinguish love from Kantian respect, even if both love and respect are responses to the value of rational nature. The essential feature of love, Velleman argues, is that it “disarms our emotional defenses” in response to an object’s “incomparable value as a self-existent end” (365). And to have one’s emotional defenses disarmed by someone is not simply to possess an intellectual awareness that this someone is a person; it is to *see* the person *as a human*

being (371). This is how love differs from respect: whereas the immediate object of respect is the intelligible aspect of a person, the immediate object of love is “the manifest person, embodied in flesh and blood” (371). It takes the manifest qualities of a person to disarm us, even if it is his or her intelligible aspect that we love. This, then, is the sense in which we “love a person for his observable [and distinctive] features – the way he wears his hat and sips his tea [and so on]” (371). But it is not the features themselves that we love; it is the features “as an expression or symbol or reminder of his value as a person” (371). Velleman’s account thus rather neatly explains, albeit not entirely plausibly in my view, why some people are more lovable than others: some people’s empirical selves signal their rational nature more clearly than others. But the notion that people embody their rational nature in different ways, and to different degrees, still does not explain why we love only some people.

One reason why it does not is that it jars with an excellent point that Velleman makes against the commonly held, but mistaken, view that loving someone entails wanting to care for him, be with him, and so on. This view, as Velleman powerfully argues, is a “sentimental fantasy” (353). The painful but familiar truth is that one can love someone whom it drives one crazy to be around. Just think of the “cranky grandfather, smothering parent” (353) and so on. How does Velleman explain our partiality here? Even if one can accept that one’s love for difficult relatives is constituted by an arresting awareness of their value as a self-existent end, one surely cannot think that why one has come to love *these* people is because they are marvelous exemplars of rational nature. That would be to replace a sentimentalist fantasy with a rationalist one. Velleman’s account of why we love some and not others, then, will need to be fleshed out to make room for cases such as this.

The shape that any such account must take, however, is clear. Some people’s empirical features explain how we have come to *see* their personhood, and thus how we have come to love them and not others. However, even though the manifest features of people play a crucial role in our *coming* to love them and not others, our love of them is not a love *for* any of these manifest features qua manifest features. The empirical person we see is loved for the value of personhood that the empirical person before us reveals. On this view, then, the key reason that we do not love everyone is that we all imperfectly convey and imperfectly perceive personhood. Think, then, of people that you know but do not love. If love for a person is identified with seeing his or her value as a person, then the reason that you do not love these people must be because you fail to see their true value. Here Velleman’s view, and at times his tone, is similar to that of certain mystical writings about the world’s existence. Most of us most of the time, caught up in daily life, fail to look and *really see* the world; but, most of us, some of the time at least, have moments when the blinders come off and we look at the world in appropriate wonder. Afterwards, when one cannot get in touch with this response (the defenses are up again), one can still feel that this is how one *should* see the world, even if (for a variety of practical and psychological reasons) one cannot. According to Velleman, it seems,

this is how we should think of our lack of universal love. Everyone deserves a response that constitutes a full apprehension of his or her value but, in practice, it is only possible to love some.

This is *an* explanation of why we love only some people, but it is awfully far-fetched. Is it not possible to really see someone and not love what one sees? On Velleman's account, the answer must be "no," for to really see someone is to love him. The fact that Velleman's account of love makes it so hard to explain the fact that we love only some suggests that something has gone wrong with the account. And the heart of the problem, it seems to me, is the marginalization of people's distinctive features in his conception of love. This marginalization is especially glaring if one thinks of romantic love. Now, Velleman is right in suggesting that focusing excessively on romantic love is liable to mislead, as the example of love for difficult relatives illustrates above. Indeed, one upshot of that example might be that there can be no single, overarching conception of love. Velleman does, however, mean to be offering an account of love that is broad enough to encompass love between spouses or life-partners (as he must if his account is to be responsive to the kind of Fried example that Williams exploits), so examining his account in regard to romantic love in this sense at least is fair game. And here the picture that his account delivers is very unsatisfying.

On Velleman's account, remember, the manifest features of one's beloved are loved for the value of personhood for which they are, as he puts it, "conduits" (371). These features are loved, then, not for their intrinsic appeal, but only insofar as they are manifestations of personhood. But this is unconvincing. I am not suggesting that we treasure a person's features in isolation from the person whose features they are. That would, indeed, make one some kind of feature-fetishist. But, by the same token, the person we treasure is not totally separable from his or her particular features. That is, I do not love my partner merely because she instantiates features of personhood (as if any features would do); I love her, at least in part, because she has *these* features. True, a time-honored lovers' game consists in asking "Would you still love me if...?", and we do feel that real love endures through fairly substantial changes in one's beloved. But the fact that you would continue to love your partner through changes in his or her distinctive features in no way shows that your love for him or her is a love that *transcends* his or her distinctive features. There *are* cases in which love naturally and admirably continues despite massive changes in the beloved (due to serious illness or accident, for instance), but it is a mistake to think that this forces one to accept Velleman's position. The right response is to incorporate the history of a person into his or her distinctive features. I take it that this is not merely an ad hoc response but is independently plausible. It can, of course, be hard to say what features of one's beloved are central to one's love or for what features we ourselves wish to be loved. A comprehensive answer, perhaps, is neither possible nor desirable. But I submit that it is nothing so thin as mere personhood.

It is a curious upshot of Velleman's rationalistic view that it threatens to make our particular loves totally rationally arbitrary. The problem seems, at least in part, generated by the wish to situate

love within the impartial outlook of morality. More specifically, it is generated by the fact that Velleman makes the reason for loving the same for all of us. Everybody has the same reason for loving everybody else (and, of course, his or her own self). And it is because we have the same reason to love everybody that loving the people that we do looks, from the standpoint of reason, totally arbitrary. But love is not *that* arbitrary. There are reasons that explain, and to some extent justify, one's particular loves.⁴ The key point, however, is that they are not reasons that everybody necessarily shares (simply, as it were, by being a person). In the case of romantic love, for instance, my love for my partner makes sense *given her distinctive features and mine*. Some of the qualities that move me simply will not be reasons, or at any rate nowhere near so salient, to others with different dispositions (or different histories). They are part of what make *me* partial to *her*. But in order to provide such straightforward and satisfying explanations of why we love only some people one must give a far greater role to people's manifest properties than Velleman allows. When we love someone we do not love only that aspect of him or her that is found in all persons.

We are now in a position to look directly at Velleman's discussion of instances of apparent conflict between love and morality such as those with which we began. I think that doing so shows definitively the unacceptable price that Velleman's account of love must pay for its attempt to transcend love's partiality.

4. Velleman on the Conflict between Love and Morality

Velleman writes of the original Fried example: "I do believe that the man's love for his wife should heighten his sensitivity to her predicament. But I cannot believe that it would leave him less sensitive to the predicament of others who are in—or perhaps alongside—the same boat" (373). Here, recall, there is a real question about what would count as being appropriately sensitive to the drowning stranger and to what extent that sensitivity can co-exist with the thoughts of a man setting out to save the person who means "everything" to him. More startlingly, however, Velleman continues:

Of course the man should save his wife in preference to strangers. *But the reasons why he should save her have nothing essentially to do with love....* The grounds for preference in this case include, to begin with, the mutual commitments and dependencies of a loving relationship.... No doubt, the man also has nonmoral, self-regarding reasons for preferring to save his wife. Primary among these reasons may be that he is deeply attached to her and stands in horror at the thought of being separated from her by death. But attachment is not the same as love. (373, emphasis added).

Here Velleman is forced to make the implausible claim that the man's reasons for saving his wife over a stranger have nothing to do with love. This is an odd claim, but we can now see why

Velleman must make it. His reason for saying this depends on his theory that love proper is akin to Kantian respect and, more specifically, because he makes the basis for love the same for each of us (rational nature). This, I take it, is the explanation of Velleman's view that the "grounds of preference" for the man saving his wife *cannot* be derived from love, for the grounds that love provides to save his wife, coming as they must from rational nature, are equally grounds to save the stranger. But the fact that Velleman's account of love entails that *love must be excluded* from the man's grounds of preference to save his wife seems to me tantamount to a *reductio* of Velleman's view.

The reasons that move and justify the man's actions to save his wife are neither plausibly nor appealingly described as consisting solely in the fact that the two have had a relationship or by his horror at the thought of separation. A central reason for the man to save his wife is because, to use the adjective that Velleman himself uses (inadvisably perhaps given his own view), the relationship is a "loving relationship" (373)—or more straightforwardly still (and why not say it?) because he loves her.⁵ To exclude love from the man's reasons for saving his wife in particular, and thus to reduce these reasons to the quasi-contractual ("mutual commitments and dependencies") or the "non-moral and self-regarding," is unappealing and implausible. A realistic and attractive conception of love, surely, would suggest the man both would be and should be partial to saving his wife.

5. Conclusion

The counterfactual condition, Velleman notes, aims to show that the conflict between love and morality is "manageable" through "segregation of the conflicting parties" (341), and he thinks this concedes too much to those who claim such a conflict by implying that love is not a moral emotion. One point that arose from our discussion in section 2 was that, even if the counterfactual condition can assuage worries over the potential conflict between love and morality, it cannot make all of Williams' concerns go away, for it does not seem realistic or attractive to think that love runs only so far as morality permits. This is why Velleman's view is of such interest, since he suggests a conception of love according to which the very idea of a conflict between the ideals of love and morality is mistaken. Thus, seen from Velleman's conception, it is a mistake to think of love proper as capable of outrunning impartial morality. Many who advocate the counterfactual condition also, of course, think this⁶—but Velleman offers a substantive conception of love that tries to make good on this claim.⁷

Velleman's attempt to dissolve the very idea of a conflict between love and morality by making love more impartial, however, must be rejected. The attempt to do so forces him to abandon some of our deepest considered judgments about love. Thus the gains achieved for impartial morality come at too high a cost. Indeed, I am inclined to think that any ideal of love that is comprehensively shaped by the demand that it mesh neatly with impartial morality is likely to be insufficiently deep or robust. Hence, I suggest, the attempt to dissolve the potential conflict between

love and morality by shaping love around impartial morality ought to be rejected.⁸ Love, as all the novelists tell us, is much deeper and much tougher than that.⁹

Notes

¹ Or, in Marcia Baron's more general formulation: "Part of what it is to act from duty is to act with a counterfactual condition always at hand (though not always in one's thoughts): one would not do this if it were morally counter-recommended" (216-217). For a related point, see Peter Railton's "Alienation, Consequentialism and the Demands of Morality" in *Consequentialism and its Critics*, ed. S. Scheffler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 105.

² Neither, of course, does love have built in the condition that one will do anything for the sake of one's beloved. And Williams clearly is not advocating such an implausibly Romantic view. As he says in relation to friendship, just because "there is some friendship with which his life is much involved [it does not follow] that a man must prefer any possible demand of that over other, impartial, moral demands. That would be absurd..." (17).

³ I discuss the latter option in chapter two of my doctoral thesis, *Bernard Williams and the End of Morality* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2003).

⁴ "Justify" unfortunately suggests the idea that there is a standing need, absent any specific challenge or criticism, to defend one's love. Perhaps then the notion of reasons *endorsing* particular relationships is better.

⁵ Furthermore, this helps explain his horror at the thought of being separated by her death. Such a thought need not be purely "self-regarding." (It is the thought of being separated by *her death* that gives the thought its particular horror.) But, of course, the man's concern for his wife is not purely other-regarding or altruistic either. His reasons, it seems to me, fit into the important category of reasons that Williams has helpfully called 'non-egoistic.'

⁶ Such as Marcia Baron. See note 8 below.

⁷ And, significantly, the conception of love that makes sense of the judgment that love proper is incapable of outrunning morality undermines the initial motivation to propose the counterfactual condition. For if love proper is incapable of outrunning morality then the nature of love must be such that, as Velleman says, there is no need to worry about the psychological harmony of love and morality in the first place.

⁸ This conclusion, then, shows me to be also in disagreement with the following in Baron: "If opponents insist that such a counterfactual condition gets in the way of friendship and love, then, I want to say, so much the worse for friendship and love – thus conceived. Unless one buys into an extremely romantic notion of love and a similar notion of unconditional friendship, the conflict is bogus," 217, note omitted. To suggest that love and friendship, attractively conceived, can conflict with the counterfactual condition does not (as Baron here seems to suggest) thereby commit one to the disastrous view that love and friendship should be conceived of as unconditional. Williams is very clear about this.

⁹ Thanks to Jacob Ossar, Jerry Schneewind and Susan Wolf for their comments on earlier versions of this paper.

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Demonstrative Reference: It's Not What You Think¹

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I. Introduction

Kent Bach has proposed a version of a so-called “intention-based” semantic theory for demonstratives, theories which became popular through the later writings of David Kaplan, specifically in his “Afterthoughts” (1989). I’ll present some examples of demonstrative reference (some familiar, some not), give an example of reference through proper names, and then discuss the views of Bach. I’ll then offer some critical comments on his theory, and conclude that it is not plausible and should be rejected.

II. Hits and Misses

What follows are some examples of mistakes in reference. The first two should be familiar:

(A) *The Carnap-Agnew Case*

This example is given by David Kaplan in “Dthat” (396):

Suppose that without turning and looking I point to the place on my wall which has long been occupied by a picture of Rudolf Carnap and I say:

(27) Dthat (I point as above) is a picture of one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century.

But unbeknownst to me, someone has replaced my picture of Carnap with one of Spiro Agnew.

(B) *The Keys Case*

This example comes from Marga Reimer (1991a, 190):

Suppose, for instance, that I suddenly realize that I have left my keys on the desk in my (shared) office. I return to my office, where I find the desk occupied by my officemate. I

then spot my keys, sitting there on the desk, alongside my officemate's keys. I then make a grab for my keys, saying *just as I mistakenly grab my officemate's keys*, "These are mine."

The next three examples are original, and expand on the concept of mistaken reference:

(C) *The Coffee Mug Case*

I am sitting by my friend's desk, where there is a coffee mug. When I go to grab the mug, he tells me, "Be careful, that's hot"—so I immediately pull my hand away from the mug, thinking of course that the mug is too hot to grab. "No," he continues, "I didn't mean that the *mug* was hot; I meant that the *coffee inside* the mug was hot. You can grab it, but just be careful when you drink it."

(D) *The (Mis)Perception Case*

While saying to someone, "Could you give me that?" I am pointing to the soda bottle on my desk, because the *image* is clear and right in front of me (so I think that *object* is what I'm looking at)—but, because of a reflection (or a trick of the light, or a dysfunction in my eyes), I misperceive the object (not the image), and I am actually pointing to a folder on my desk.

(E) *The Jones-Case*

I am sitting with my friend Smith, and both of us are talking about a person named Jones. Both of us happen to know two people named Jones: one is a police officer and the other is a firefighter. The police officer happens to be married with two children, and the firefighter is single (and doesn't have many other personal commitments). In our discussion, I say, "Jones had to work a double-shift last night." The conversation continues, and I go on about how much trouble it is for Jones to work a double-shift. Smith then turns to me, confused, and says, "Why? Jones is single, so it shouldn't be that much more trouble than usual." I reply (crudely, of course): "No, I meant Officer Jones, not Firefighter Jones."

These examples show some differences in what we would call "mistakes in demonstration" or "mistakes in reference." The last example contains no demonstratives, but can be used in the same spirit as the others to show this point about mistakes in reference. For (A) and (B), one could make a *prima facie* case that the speaker made the mistake; while in (C) and (E), there was clearly a mistake in communication between the speaker and the audience, and one could make the *prima facie*

case that the audience made the mistake in assuming one thing over another. (We will suspend discussion of (D) temporarily.)

If one is an intention-theorist for demonstratives, then the intentions of the speaker are supposed to belong to the realm of *semantics* for demonstrations. This view has been embraced from Kaplan in his familiar work, "Afterthoughts" (582):

I am now inclined to regard the directing intention, at least in the case of perceptual demonstratives, as criterial, and to regard the demonstration as a mere *externalization* of this inner intention. The externalization is an aid to communication, like speaking more slowly and loudly, but is of no semantic significance.²

According to Kaplan's view, the actual demonstration (or pointing) aids communication, but does not bear on the *semantic* question of fixing the referent (or content) for demonstratives (or demonstrative utterances). The speaker's inner intention, the directing intention that guides the behavioral manifestation of pointing, is supposed to have fixed the referent of a demonstrative *before* the pointing begins to communicate this intention to the audience. (Kaplan claims that the directing intention is "criterial" to the demonstration, and that the actual pointing "is of no semantic significance," which would lead one to assume that he is also claiming this directing intention to belong to the realm of semantics.) The classic example that Kaplan uses (583-4) to illustrate this view is taken from Donnellan's article "Reference and Definite Descriptions":

Here the directing intention is aimed at the interesting looking person seen holding a martini glass. Had the speaker pointed and said, "Who is that man?" the case would have raised no question of referential use. But suppose, having been taught that it is rude to point at people, the normal mode of externalizing the intention is unavailable. What to do? He cannot simply say, "Who is that man?" with *no* externalization. This would baffle his auditor, who would say, "Which man?"

...Now according to my new view of what determines the referent of demonstrative, the demonstration ... is there only to help *convey* an intention and plays no *semantical* role at all.

Now, given this example, is Kaplan's theory correct? For it seems that we could argue its correctness for (C) above, but not for (A) and (B), since those examples make a plausible *prima facie* claim that the speakers failed to refer to what they "intended to refer to." If the theory doesn't accept (A) and (B) as counterexamples, then there must be an explanation as to how an intention-based semantic theory of demonstratives can still be right in light of (A) and (B). Revisions and clarifications to intention-theories have thus appeared in the literature to account for this request.

Those revisions attempted to keep intentions at the helm for demonstrative reference, but to explain them differently in light of such examples—and such revisionary attempts are found in Bach.

II. Bach's Intention-Theory – Synopsis

Are the intentions of the speakers actually thwarted in cases like (A) and (B)? Kent Bach claims they are not (1992). His claim is that "... the best of intentions *are* good enough to determine the referent (at least when there is one)." Since his position is a revised version of an intention-theory, it is necessary to reiterate his position. I will then provide some criticisms.

Bach claims that for demonstrative utterances (empty reference statements aside), there is an intention always present that we can call a "referential intention":

- (12) A referential intention isn't just any intention to refer to something one has in mind but involves intending one's audience to identify something as the referent by means of thinking of it in a certain identifiable way (296).

So, for example, consider once again example (A). For this example, there might have been an intention (in some sense) to refer to a picture of Carnap which clearly failed, but according to Bach there was actually another intention (a "referential intention") hidden in Kaplan's demonstration—and this intention was successful:

- (9a) Clearly it was not Kaplan's intention to be pointing to Agnew's picture, but ... he did intend to point to and thereby refer to the picture behind him. Believing this to be Carnap's picture, he intended to point to and refer to Carnap's picture, but this was not his referential intention. He intended his audience to identify what he was talking about simply by recognizing his intention to be pointing to the picture behind him. The fact that *he* took this to be a picture of Carnap was not germane to his referential intention, even though he intended to be talking about a certain picture of Carnap. He intended his audience to identify what he was talking about not as Carnap's picture but as the picture he was pointing to behind him (297).

So, Bach claims that Kaplan's "referential intention" succeeds in picking out the picture behind him—since Kaplan communicated successfully to his audience that they should look at the picture behind him—and so the intention-based semantic view is correct: intentions belong to the realm of semantics, and determine the referents of demonstrative propositions.

To further illustrate Bach's point, consider once again Reimer's case of grabbing the wrong set of keys in (B) and Bach's revised account of how the speaker's intentions once again played the

decisive role. According to Bach, again, a “referential intention” hidden in Reimer’s demonstration succeeded:

- (9b) Although I intended to refer to my keys, I didn’t intend my officemate to recognize *that* intention. The intention I intended my officemate to recognize was my intention to refer to the keys I grabbed. My officemate was to identify what I was using the word “these” to refer to by thinking of the keys not as my keys but as the things I grabbed. The act of grabbing them was the only manifest basis, hence the only plausibly intended basis, for him to identify them. That they were my keys was not part of that basis (296).

If we follow Bach’s point here for Reimer’s example, her officemate is clearly drawn to a particular object (the object in her hand) by her grabbing it. She drew attention to those keys in her hand, and her officemate recognized what object she was talking about. The conversation then continued, and she discovered that those keys were not her keys but were his. Clearly, an object was demonstrated—and even though she said something false about that object, the demonstration *itself* was indeed successful in some sense (since she couldn’t have said something *false* about any object if it wasn’t). Again, as with Bach’s reformation of the Carnap case, we should conclude that the intentions of the speaker belong to the realm of semantics, and do indeed determine the referent of a demonstrative utterance.

III. Criticisms of Bach (I)

Bach’s revisionist “intention-theory” seems correct at first, but his view is problematic. First, his revision of the “intention-theory” of demonstrations, while intuitive at first glance, makes the intention-theory tautological at best, and question-begging at worst. Bach explicitly claims that:

- (10) The reason the act of demonstration does not *and cannot* override the speaker’s referential intention is that the latter *is* the intention to refer to the object being demonstrated. It is precisely because the speaker can be mistaken about which object this is that scenarios like Reimer’s can arise, but this does not make them genuine counterexamples to [the revised intention theory] (298 emphasis added).

Here Bach claims that it is a matter of *definition* that the referential intention of a speaker automatically succeeds referring “to the object being demonstrated.” If a demonstration *cannot* override a speaker’s referential intention, then one could never doubt the truth of this “intention theory” as defined here. Bach correctly says that Reimer’s scenarios are not “genuine counterexamples” to his “intention theory”—but not because something is wrong with her

scenarios; rather, because (save empty reference cases) nothing could *possibly* count against “referential intentions” the way that Bach has defined them.

To see how tautological this move is, consider how the nature of this revision would infect other areas of language as well, making them also “intention-based” in the same way (since, of course, we all intend *to refer to the referents* when we use words that refer in our language). Just consider, for example, analogous cases with proper names. If I said “Smith” when I had Jones clearly in mind, whatever object I happened to refer to by the name “Smith” was in the realm of what I “intended to refer to” in this global sense of “intend.” I clearly intended to refer to *someone* in some sense, and I also clearly intended to refer to that someone by using the name “Smith,” because I used that name. Since Smith turned out to be the individual I referred to (and “the referent”), then I “intended” (of course) to refer to Smith (“the referent”). But again, claiming that I “intended to refer to Smith” because I used the word “Smith” and (mistakenly) referred to him through using this word is absurd, because I, of course, had intended to refer to Jones. Further, I could, in this sense of “intend,” “intend to refer to Smith” without ever meeting Smith or knowing who he is. Such cases can be multiplied indefinitely.

That the first case involves demonstratives and the second involves proper names has no bearing on Bach’s use of “referential intentions.” If we take his original statement—

- (12) A referential intention isn’t just any intention to refer to something one has in mind but involves intending one’s audience to identify something as the referent by means of thinking of it in a certain identifiable way (296)—

then clearly my use of the word “Smith” fits all these criteria, since I understood the global social rules governing reference (since I understood the language), and I clearly intended to identify *something* as the referent “by means of thinking of it in a certain identifiable way.” In the sense of Bach’s “referential intention,” Smith was the person I “intended to refer to”—so just about *every* aspect of language (save empty reference cases) becomes tautologically intention-based on Bach’s formulation of the intention theory. For, as long as there are competent speakers of a language, rudimentary and trivial intentions will always be present in that language. (And it is not at all clear whether such intentions are philosophically interesting.)

Granted, we have methods to determine what a speaker “had in mind” while uttering a demonstrative, and they are pragmatic interpretations related to the context of utterance. But Bach has interpreted this concept of what a speaker “had in mind” so as to make it a matter of *definition* that the referent was the “intended referent”—even in cases where one has no idea who or what the referent is. On his account (save empty reference cases), an unintended referent would be impossible.

In other places, Bach seems to think that referential intentions can actually be overridden. Bach writes:

- (11) Such an intention [i.e., a referential intention] is not fulfilled if the audience fails to identify the *right* individual in the *right* way, that is, *the one intended in the way intended* (296, emphasis added).

But the problem with (11) is that it's ambiguous (contradictory?), especially when one considers (9) and (10), where Bach explicitly formulates his definition of what a "referential intention" is. At least with *those* formulations, if *something* was referred to, then there was what Bach calls a "referential intention." At best, what Bach says in (11) seems to conflict with his earlier claims of (9) and (10)—or, what is most likely the case, Bach's use of the word "intended" in (11) is either ambiguous or begs the question.

IV. Criticisms of Bach (II)

Comparing Bach's view with Kaplan's views in "Afterthoughts" brings out further problems. If one understands his formulation of the intention theory, one can ask whether Bach's reformulation is even an intention-based *semantic* theory for demonstratives. I'll argue that it isn't—and I'll use Kaplan's later view in "Afterthoughts" as a comparison to show this.

Bach is well aware that one might too broadly construe his formulation of a referential intention and tries to defend his position in light of this possible misunderstanding. I quote him in full:

- (12) IT [the "Intention-Thesis"] might seem to imply that one could utter any old thing and gesture in any old way and still manage to refer to whatever one has in mind. This would be absurd, but IT implies no such thing. To think that it does would be to misunderstand the nature of referential intentions and their relationship to the utterances used to express them. You do not say something and then, as though by an inner decree (an intention), determine what you are using it to refer to. You do not just have something "in mind" and hope that your audience is a good mind reader. Rather, you decide to refer to something and try to select an expression whose utterance will enable your audience, under the circumstances, to identify what you are referring to. These circumstances are comprised of mutually believed matters of fact, such as what is in plain view to both of you, including any gestures on your part, as well as shared background information (298-99).

There are at least two ways to understand (12), so it might be helpful to spell out both interpretations. Both rest on the relation between (a) an *intention* to refer to some specific object and (b) the *communication* of your intention through an act of demonstration. For the first interpretation (i), your intention might refer to something logically prior to (and distinct from) your act of demonstration. In this sense, you have something “in mind” first (in Bach’s words, you “decide to refer to something”) and then, after having it “in mind” you proceed to demonstrate it. For the second interpretation (ii), your intention to refer to something and your means of communicating this intention through an act of demonstration are logically “bound up” together, so that they might be viewed as different things on the same level of language—i.e., the intention to refer is bound up with its communication, i.e., the physical act of demonstrating.

Note that Kaplan’s view aligns itself with (i), as was shown with Kaplan’s comments on Donnellan’s example:

Now according to my new view of what determines the referent of demonstrative, the demonstration ... is there only to help *convey* an intention and plays no *semantical* role at all (1989, 583-4).

I am now inclined to regard the directing intention, at least in the case of perceptual demonstratives, as criterial, and to regard the demonstration as a mere *externalization* of this inner intention. The externalization is an aid to communication, like speaking more slowly and loudly, but is of no semantic significance (582).

That is, according to Kaplan, there is first an intention, and then the act of demonstration follows to simply communicate this intention to the speaker’s audience. For Kaplan, since the externalization of an intention to refer is of no semantic significance (and “plays no *semantical* role at all”), the semantics of demonstrative reference are already completed before the communicative act of demonstration occurs. In short, demonstrative reference (and the content of the demonstrative utterance) is secured before pointing to the specific object one “has in mind.” But it’s not clear if Bach’s position is (i) or (ii). Bach explicitly says that:

The crux of my defense of IT will be to explain how in each case the relevant intention is “directing” not just in Kaplan’s sense but in a specifically communicative way. A referential intention is part of a communicative intention, an intention whose distinctive feature is that “its fulfillment consists in its recognition” (1992, 296).

But in claiming this, Bach is fostering interpretation (ii), and that referential intentions are logically bound up with the communicative acts used to express them. His position, then, is *not* that referential intentions are distinct things inside of the speaker's head that belong to the realm of semantics, and determine the referent of a demonstrative proposition *before* the demonstrative act gets under way (as it is with Kaplan's view). Rather, the referential intention and the act of demonstration occur together—or at least should be understood as a single thing—for a demonstration to be completed.

If this is Bach's view, then it's clearly not Kaplan's view. More importantly, if Bach's claim is that referential intentions are such that they are logically bound with the *communicative* acts used to express them, then we have even more reason to reject it, because, on this interpretation, referential intentions are *not* part of the realm of semantics for demonstratives. They are (in Kaplan's wording) part of the *metasemantics* of demonstrative reference—that part of demonstrative reference that concerns itself with communication—and, if this is the case, Bach's position clearly is not an intention-based *semantic* theory of demonstratives, for it argues that the speaker's intentions are part of the metasemantics of demonstrative reference.

Possibly, Bach's position is (i), but it's not clear how. For problems exist with what he says in (12), and the first sentence clearly goes against (i). If reference is secured by the intentions of the speaker to refer, then all that is at stake for finding the right words/action/etc. is *communication*. (We can see this with Kaplan's view.) As far as the *semantics* of demonstratives is concerned, the work is already done by the intention to refer. So when Bach talks about not being able to determine the referent of a demonstrative utterance by an "inner decree (an intention)," he is already separating himself from (i), and an intention-based view of semantics.

In short, Bach's intentions do not belong to the semantics of demonstrative reference—which entails eliminating his theory from an intention-based semantic theory of demonstratives. In trying to interpret the role of intentions for demonstratives, Bach either interprets them to the point of being tautological, or excludes them from the realm of semantics completely.

V. What's the Problem?

So, where should the intentions of speakers be situated for a demonstrative theory? Why are there problems in trying to place them within the realm of semantics? Obviously demonstrations are very "user-friendly" things in our language. We clearly have *reasons* for pointing as we do—and there are usually things (and people) that we want people to see, get for us, avoid, and so on, in our everyday interactions. Without these reasons and the *purposeful* account of demonstrating, the entire practice of demonstration would be a very stale and mechanical movement.

And intention-theories get their motivations from these kinds of considerations. That is, though Kaplan may have pointed to the wrong thing in the Carnap-Agnew case, he did have some

“intention to refer,” as Bach suggests. There were clearly *some* (implicit) intentions that Kaplan had to get his audience to look where he wanted them to look. (Just consider the intention to speak English to his audience.) What are we to say about these? Kaplan had a *purpose* in pointing as he did, didn’t he?

We all have some important background linguistic intentions when we point that are related to how reference *works*, and how to refer in general. These intentions are *global* or general views about reference, and they do coincide with our pointing (since we are competent speakers of language, and know that when we *point* over there people will *look* over there).

But such beliefs that we may have about how reference *works* or what *constitutes* reference for some particular context containing a demonstrative do not answer the *semantic* question of how a particular referent gets *individuated* for a demonstrative proposition and its content. All these examples mentioned concerning how reference works (and my background linguistic intentions that accord with them) fall clearly in the realm of the *metasemantics* of demonstrative reference, since they involve the pragmatics of linguistic rules, and how things generally get demonstrated in our language. They do not answer the *semantic* question of what makes a demonstrative utterance be *about* a specific object for a particular demonstration— i.e., how *that* demonstrative came to be about *that* object.

Consider another example, analogous to Kaplan’s Carnap-Agnew case. Suppose I am talking to my friend who is not very fluent in the philosophy of language, Steve, and I turn to someone while pointing to Steve and I say:

- (a) Dthis guy doesn’t know much about demonstratives.

But, in this example, a contingency arises, and my friend gets replaced by David Kaplan. In this situation, if I were to turn and see who I am pointing to, I would definitely be surprised, and withdraw my statement.

Note the *individuation* of reference for my demonstration—and how much I *didn’t* (or *wouldn’t*) want to point to David Kaplan. The reason why I pointed in the first place had to do with my *friend*, and not David Kaplan. We can claim further that I didn’t even know that David Kaplan was in the *building*, let alone anywhere near my demonstration. But there he is, the referent of my demonstration. How are we to explain this in terms of intention-based semantic theories?

Before we answer this question, first note about what was going on in my head when I pointed. To claim that I had my friend “in mind” when I pointed seems intuitively and, I would argue, correct—but claiming this, of course, entails that my intention did not secure the referent (which would definitely exclude it from the realm of semantics). Second, the claim that I had Kaplan “in mind” when I pointed seems clearly wrong. Third, and this is Bach’s approach, to claim

that I had an intention to “point to the person (say) to my left,” and *that* intention fixed the referent of my utterance, utterly reduces what was going on in my head at the time I pointed to the point of it being tautological, to the claim of my wanting to demonstrate the thing demonstrated. (But this is clearly true, because that’s why I *pointed*.) That is, this third claim concerning the other kinds of intentions that I might have had concerning my pointing—i.e., those having to do with how reference *works* and how to refer in general—should not be the *semantic* criterion for the individuation of reference for demonstrative utterances. They are global metasemantic or pragmatic intentions about linguistic rules and norms, and do not answer the question of how my utterance of the word “dthis” in (a) came to be about David Kaplan, and not my friend. If intention-theorists have only these motivations to justify the semantic role of speaker intentions, one should reject such theories. For if intention-theories of demonstrative reference are to be convincing in arguing for the *semantic* role of speakers’ intentions, they cannot do this by begging the question of reference or reducing the mental contents of speakers to a trivial tautological machine.

A semantic theory of demonstratives (intention-based or not) should answer the following basic background question: in virtue of *what* is a specific demonstrative utterance about a specific object? If a demonstrative is uttered, and the utterance was about a specific object, then we can ask, “*How* (or *Why*) did *that* demonstrative utterance come to be about *that* object?”

Throughout this discussion, I have been sketching out “intention-ways” of answering this background question from Bach. In his theory, my intentions should fix the referents of my demonstrations, and belong to the semantic realm. My physical act of pointing, on the other hand, belongs to the realm of metasemantics—namely, of communicating this intention to my audience. As a general rule, intention-theories claim that the speaker’s intentions are the semantic criteria; for the intentions of speakers play a semantic role, and should be responsible for fixing the reference of a demonstrative.

For example, if we ask, “In virtue of *what* did the utterance, ‘Who is that man?’ come to be about the man in the corner, as opposed to some other man?”—the answer for intention-theories is: that the speaker had *that* person “in mind” when he uttered as he did, and that his *intention* to refer to that man allowed his utterance to be about *that* particular man. But, as I have argued, this way of providing a semantic theory of demonstratives can’t work.

To see this clearly, we come to the last example, (D). What would Bach claim I had “in mind” for this example? What “referential intention” was successful in this case? I am looking directly at the (image of a) soda bottle, but, because of a trick of light or an eye dysfunction, I am pointing to a folder. I clearly demonstrated the folder, and anyone in my office would interpret my pointing as such. One way of phrasing my “referential intention” could be: I intended “to refer to whatever was at the end of my finger when I pointed”—and, again, one shouldn’t reject this

phrasing. One should only reject the view that my intention (phrased in this way) belongs to the semantics of demonstratives.

One general reason this approach fails is connected to the logic of explanation. If we start with a *given* referent for a demonstration, and then rephrase what my intention was according to this referent (as I have argued Bach does), this clearly begs the question of how intentions are supposed to fix referents for demonstrations. We can rephrase this false explanation in terms of the background question mentioned above (i.e., *how* a demonstrative gets to be about an object): How do we figure out what the referent is?—just look to the speaker’s intentions (and conveniently rephrase them); how do we figure out what the speaker “intended to refer to” or what the speaker “had in mind” at the time of the pointing?—just see what the referent is.

Or, put another way: if intention-theorists claim that the intentions of the speaker fix the referent of a demonstrative, they cannot do this by taking a given referent and then *rephrasing* the intention according to that referent. Why? Because intention-theorists are supposed to explain *how* the intentions of a speaker *determine* the referent of a demonstrative utterance, and this approach begs this question. This approach ignores even the basic problem of how reference is fixed for demonstrative utterances at all. It simply remains silent on this problem (since it just assumes a referent, and works backwards from that referent to a convenient rephrasing of what speakers “have in mind”). Such a side-step of the main issue comes close to a remark from Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations* [#308]: “The decisive movement in the conjuring trick has been made, and it was the very one that we thought quite innocent.” We can certainly *start* with a referent and then *rephrase* what a speaker “had in mind” given this referent. But the question at the start was, “How did that object get to be that referent?”—and this question has been passed over.

Fortunately, there seems to be a plausible answer to the question of where to put the intentions of speakers for demonstratives. The answer comes from Kaplan’s semantic theory of proper names in “Afterthoughts.” In his theory, Kaplan argues that the intentions of speakers for proper names (cf. example (E) above) do not belong to the realm of semantics:

The contextual feature which consists of the causal history of a particular proper name expression in the agent’s idiolect seems more naturally to be regarded as determining what word was used than as fixing the content of a single context-sensitive word. ...The causal theory of reference tells us, in terms of contextual features (including the speaker’s intentions), which word is being used in a given utterance.

That is, the intentions of speakers for proper names belong to the metasemantic realm of reference—i.e., they are part of the context that, in Kaplan’s words, help *determine* what is said, but are not *part* of what is said. And demonstratives should be (semantically) treated like proper names

for the correct placement of the intentions of speakers. In doing this, we are delegating the intentions of speakers to the realm of metasemantics for demonstratives. They are simply part of the context that helps determine the referents of demonstratives. Multiple utterances of demonstratives are similar (semantically) to multiple utterances of a name. Only by adopting this view of demonstratives can we have both a plausible account of demonstrative reference and a plausible account of mental content that preserves important contextual information for speakers in a language.

Notes

¹ Thanks to Deirdre Fagan, Steve Alford, David McNaron, and Ben Mulvey for helpful comments and suggestions.

² One must use caution, because *anything* can be viewed as “semantically significant” or semantically insignificant, depending on one’s views of generality. To say that something “bears on the semantic question,” or “belongs to the realm of semantics,” or “belongs to semantics proper,” is to claim that it is part of the fixing of reference and truth value of a proposition, and that it is not part of other aspects of language (such as the intonation and tone of a speaker).

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A Note on the Visually-Indistinguishable-Pairs Argument

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The paper is a critique of the so-called visually-indistinguishable-pairs argument which first appeared in Arthur Danto's article, "The Artworld," in 1964 (202-212).¹ In section 1.1, I present a summary of the argument. In 1.2, I explore the concept of the aesthetic and the issue of whether artifacts can have perceivable properties which qualify them for the status of artworks under specific conditions. Finally, in 1.3, I attempt briefly to situate my own conclusions about the identification of artworks in reference to the artworld theories of both Danto and George Dickie.

1.1 The Argument

The specific background of Danto's article, "The Artworld," is unquestionably the perplexity that audiences often feel with respect to the issue of what sorts of objects can be called art. How is it, for example, that ordinary items like urinals, beds, and Brillo Boxes could be so designated? As artworks, how would they be phenomenologically different from real urinals, beds, and Brillo Boxes?

Danto argues that they *would not* be phenomenologically different. He cites in support of this claim Andy Warhol's displays of facsimiles of Brillo cartons, maintaining that it is "an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (*Readings* 209) that makes Warhol's boxes art, whereas the usual kind of Brillo Boxes at the supermarket are not. There are no perceivable properties as such, he says, which would distinguish the former as art. Rather, Warhol's boxes are experienced as art only in terms of a kind of conceptual or theoretical shift whereby a properly informed audience senses that something has happened in the artworld. That is, a new understanding has emerged. Ordinary objects can now be perceived in terms of the "is of artistic identification" (*Readings* 206), as in the case of someone walking into an art museum, seeing Warhol's boxes, and uttering sentences such as: "Look at those Brillo Boxes. They're an interesting work of art." The artistic context, the theory of the readymade, and the ideology of Pop Art make such sentences intelligible. Exactly the same sentences, uttered at the supermarket in the absence of such theoretical shifts, would be absurdly false or simply unintelligible. Conceptual shifts in the history of art, as well as specific artworld contexts, determine the identification of various objects as artworks, says Danto, not any particular properties of artifacts that are accessible through the senses.

In more recent years, Danto has not altered his position. For example, he argues that Marcel Duchamp's famous work entitled *Fountain* is not strictly identifiable with the actual urinal. Rather, the urinal is the occasion or medium through which Duchamp made a philosophically stunning statement about what sorts of things could be art. Danto cites with approval the following explanation of *Fountain* which appeared in the early journal *The Blind Man*:

Mr. Mutt...took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object (*Disenfranchisement* 34).

Danto claims that no amount of sensory perception could ever reveal to us the full import of this readymade, its status as an artwork, nor indeed how it is that *Fountain* differed philosophically and artistically from any of the hundreds of other exactly similar urinals which were not designated as art. It cannot be a question of beauty, says Danto, because Duchamp was quite explicit in the theory of the readymade that they should be indifferently ordinary objects: “No beauty, no ugliness, nothing particularly aesthetic about it...” (*Disenfranchisement* 34). Neither can it be a question of some type of pleasure response induced by perception of the work’s properties, such as “its gleaming white surface, the depth revealed when it reflects images or surrounding objects, its pleasing oval shape” (Dickie, cited in *Disenfranchisement*, 33). All of these aspects were surely perceivable in any of the other urinals, but they, in point of fact, were not works of art. And finally, Danto is very suspicious of the so-called aesthetic attitude theorists. That is, he is dubious of there being any kind of relevant state of disinterestedness—or its variants by other names—which would get us from the ordinary urinal to *Fountain* by way of an unusual or special state of consciousness. Thus, what remains in his analysis is Danto’s belief that Duchamp’s *interpretation* of *Fountain*, superimposed upon the urinal as a physical object, is what truly constituted the object as art and accounts for its lingering strangeness today.

It is important to stress three things at this point. Firstly, Danto is no friend of relativism. He does not believe that just *any* interpretation of the infamous urinal is correct. It must be Duchamp’s interpretation or a reasonable facsimile thereof (*Disenfranchisement* 44-45). Secondly, when Danto speaks of “interpretations,” he clearly seems to have in mind something like “theories.” This would mean that the quote from *The Blind Man* above constituted a theory or explanation of what *Fountain* was all about. Such theories are, of course, part of larger views or theory-shifts within the artworld. Thus, again, we come to his conclusion that there is simply no seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling as such which can help us identify objects as artworks independently of the interpenetrations of theory. Thirdly, Danto has been very clear about the Hegelian underpinnings of his philosophy of art; namely, the notion that all meaningful experience is mediated through ideas that have historical efficacy. It is clear that he sees dialectical consciousness at work in the idea of the readymade:

Hegel’s stupendous philosophical vision of history gets, or almost gets, an astounding confirmation in Duchamp’s work, which raises the question of the philosophical nature of art from *within* art, implying that art already is philosophy in a vivid form, and has now discharged its spiritual mission by revealing the philosophical essence at its heart. The task may now be handed

over to philosophy proper, which is equipped to cope with its own nature directly and definitively. So what art finally will have achieved as its fulfillment and fruition is the philosophy of art (*Disenfranchisement* 16).

Thus, when Duchamp “created a new thought” for the urinal, he called into question the very definition of art from within the artworld itself and revealed the fact that philosophical ideas, not physical properties, are constitutive of the nature of art.

Such is the basic form of Danto’s argument. It has had a significant influence on many subsequent aestheticians, including especially George Dickie and his institutional theory of art. In the next section, I want to re-examine the argument in terms of the concepts of the aesthetic and intentional making.

1.2 Aesthetic Properties and Intentional Making

In this section, I want to explore the possibility of there being sensory properties of artifacts that would *intrinsically* constitute them as artworks under certain conditions of intentional making. But what could such properties be?

We might receive help here from three sources: (A) the ancient root meaning of the word aesthetics; (B) the critical theory of formalism; and (C) Wittgenstein’s comments about the duck-rabbit image.

(A) The key etymological root for the term aesthetics is the ancient Greek word *aisthetikos*, which refers to taking pleasure in some aspect or aspects of sense perception. I want to employ this emphasis on a sensory phenomenology but with an important modification. Rather than stressing the pleasure that one takes in sense perception, I want to stress the mere taking note of particular aspects of sense perception for their own sake, while ignoring other aspects or functions of the artifact in question. Thus, for example, in the case of a new car, it seems straightforward enough that we could ignore the use-function of the vehicle and instead take an intrinsic interest in its various sensory qualities. That is, our eyes could follow certain lines, shapes, and colors just *as* lines, shapes, and colors. Similarly, in the case of music, our ears could follow certain tones just *as* tones. Such an interest, no doubt, could be achieved with no ulterior motive beyond simply dwelling on these qualities as such. Of course, when we dwell on them, we may find that we like or dislike what we experience. Therefore, to build the notion of pleasure into aesthetic experience—as in the case of the strict definition of *aisthetikos*—would be a mistake. It would render bad art or other kinds of disagreeable aesthetic experiences impossible. What I am attempting to uncover here is a kind of “phenomenologically foundational” focus that we can take on the sensory qualities of artifacts. I explore this idea more fully in the next section.

(B) From formalism I want to borrow the emphasis on the following key aspects of perceiving artifacts: line, shape, color, tone, taste, and smell, etc., as well as the various ways in which these sensory

elements interact. It seems to me that taking note of such phenomena for their own sake is tantamount to becoming aware of the aesthetic aspects of artifacts.

The concept of the aesthetic is, of course, complex. There are huge varieties of terms that have been employed with great intricacy in this area.² For instance, in his article “Categories of Art,” Kendall Walton discusses the issue of what it means to identify an artwork’s aesthetic properties. As examples of aesthetic properties, he cites “tension, mystery, energy, coherence, balance, serenity, sentimentality, and pallidness” (Walton in *Readings* 333). He argues that these properties are emergent attributes of works of art which are based on non-aesthetic properties such as colors and shapes, modulation of notes, and pitches and rhythms. In order to perceive correctly such aesthetic properties, he says, one must have a prior knowledge of and training in a variety of artistic categories. Some of these categories are commonly explored in formalism, but others are clearly contextualist and historical. Familiarity with such categories enables us to perceive some features of artworks as standard (e.g., the exposition-development-recapitulation form of classical sonatas), others as variable (e.g., the arrangement of colors in paintings), and still others as contra-standard (e.g., traditional sculptures which move on their own) (Walton 334-337). His analyses are rich and detailed. He does not, however, deal with the singular and foundational acts of perception which are necessary conditions for the basic recognition of artifacts as art.

Perhaps what is missing in Walton’s account is an attempt to describe what it means to experience lines, shapes, colors, tones, forms, etc., as themselves intrinsically aesthetic, especially again in light of the Greek root *aisthetikos*.³ When one is drawn to line, shape, color, etc., *as such*, one is perceiving aesthetically. The nature of the drawnness is often non-reflective, immediate, and holistic. Of course, the sort of experience I have in mind is frequently presupposed for us in the artworld in terms of an artifact having already been contextualized: we see it in an art museum, hear it at a symphony, and so on. But there are unusual cases—such as readymades in their early years—where the artworld is at a loss in regard to certain artifacts, and audiences must fend for themselves.

Interestingly, Walton himself gives an example of this latter type:

If we are confronted by a work about whose origins we know absolutely nothing (for example, one lifted from the dust at an as yet unexcavated archeological site on Mars), we would simply not be in a position to judge it aesthetically. We could not possibly tell by staring at it, no matter how intently or intelligently, whether it is coherent, or serene, or dynamic, for by staring we cannot tell whether it is to be seen as sculpture ... or some other exotic or mundane kind of work of art (351).

It is no doubt true that we would be at a loss as to how to apply sophisticated aesthetic terms to such an object (for example, “coherent” or “serene”) precisely because we would not know which categories of

art pertain to it. However, we could still be drawn to or intrigued by its colors, shapes, and forms as such. In that case, we would be relating to the object as generically aesthetic. It seems likely that we could do this notwithstanding our lack of specific art categories, as Walton suggests when he acknowledges that we could attribute aesthetic properties to this strange object the way we do to natural objects, “which of course does not involve consideration of historical facts about artists or their societies” (352). But this would mean that, if we can be intrinsically interested in the lines and colors of a sunset, for example, we can be equally interested in the purely formal properties of an artifact. Tones, shapes, lines, colors, forms, etc., can have their hold on us even if we have no further ideas as to how to classify them. Correspondingly, it is perhaps useful to distinguish between what might be called “higher-end” aesthetic properties (such as beauty, mystery, and serenity) and “lower-end” ones (such as line, shape, color, form, etc., experienced simply as such). The latter are clearly necessary conditions for the former, but I see no reason to assume that they cannot be perceived on their own independently of any further knowledge of artistic categories or styles. The basic holding of our attention is singular and foundational in regard to the phenomenon of aesthetic properties emerging in our consciousness.

Following additional suggestions made by Monroe Beardsley (527-530), we might also think of aesthetic experience as a domain which involves the following features: (1) A situation where “attention is firmly fixed upon heterogenous but interrelated components of a phenomenally objective field” (527). That is, attention is highly focused on the object and its complexity, and the object controls the experience. (2) The experience is one of significant intensity: “Aesthetic objects give us a concentration of experience....They summon up our energies for an unusually narrow field of concern” (527-528). He goes on to suggest that aesthetic experiences are peculiarly able to shut out distractions. (3) The experience is highly coherent: “One thing leads to another; continuity of development, without gaps or dead spaces, a sense of overall providential pattern of guidance, an orderly cumulation of energy toward a climax, are present to an unusual degree” (527-528). According to Beardsley, when such an experience is broken off, it retains its hold on us and we can resume it holistically at will. (4) The experience is particularly complete in itself: “The impulses and expectations aroused by elements within the experience are felt to be counterbalanced or resolved by other elements within the experience, so that some degree of equilibrium or finality is achieved...” (527-528). In other words, aesthetic experience stands out in one’s memory as a singular event. Although Beardsley does not specifically discuss a “phenomenologically foundational” focus on formal qualities per se, his comments are clearly compatible with it. It seems likely that an aesthetic object could only emerge in our experience if we had suspended—to some extent at any rate—our normal patterns of dealing with our environment; e.g., patterns of manipulation, buying and selling, focusing on utilitarian functions, and so on. Thus, aesthetic experience will have, no doubt, a different feel to it to the extent that it is detached from normal routines and interested in the sensory qualities of artifacts only for their own sake.

(C) If I understand Wittgenstein's comments on the duck-rabbit image correctly, he is suggesting that perception is inevitably concept-laden. He claims that in viewing this image we are bound to experience the "dawning of an aspect" (i.e., we would see either the duck or the rabbit), which he interprets to be a function of what he calls seeing-as (193-214). Seeing-as is sortal and operates by way of a foreground/background contrast. Thus, if we are acquainted with the concept of a duck (we have seen ducks before, we know how to use the word duck correctly, etc.), it is likely we will see the pattern as a duck if we are accessing at some level the concept of a duck. The same is true for the rabbit image. Of course, the accessing may be quite immediate and non-linear, and the experience is often one of "Aha! There's the rabbit (or duck)." But still, as we perceive one of the patterns, the other one stays in the background. As Wittgenstein suggests, it is extremely unlikely that someone could perceive both duck and rabbit simultaneously. One may switch back and forth in a split second, but that is a different matter.

The sort of perceptual shift involved in the duck-rabbit image may have broader applicability. Consider how we might be able to perceive artifacts solely for their aesthetic properties. Duchamp's readymades are directly relevant to this discussion.

I want to return for a moment to a somewhat more extensive version of *The Blind Man* commentary of 1917:

Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object. (2)

Undoubtedly, Duchamp's agenda in submitting *Fountain* as a work of art in 1917 was destabilizing and deconstructive. It was conceived as a colossal joke played on a stodgy and conservative artworld. But (as Danto notes) there was a serious side to it as well. Duchamp's intention seems to have been the total rejection of the European "aesthetics of taste"—especially the emphasis on beauty or ugliness—in favor of the "new thought" that anyone at anytime could simply *choose* to experience any artifact as art. Aesthetic form (as Duchamp understood it) was apparently irrelevant to this process. We can clearly see this from some of Duchamp's later comments about critical reactions to *Fountain*. Duchamp's patron, Walter Arensberg, "imagined the artist's intent in submitting the urinal was to draw attention to 'a lovely form,' and to the formal parallels between this piece of industrial plumbing and the sculpture of Constantin Brancusi!" (*TOUT-FAIT* 7). But Duchamp's reaction to this statement was, "I threw the urinal in their faces as a challenge, and now they admire it for its aesthetic beauty" (7). As Danto points out, "its beauty, if beauty there is, is neither here nor there. He was submitting it as a work of art, not something calculated to induce what he dismisses as 'retinal flutters'" (7).

Philosophically, the most startling aspect of Duchamp's readymades is the idea that any artifact can be experienced as art simply by choosing to do so. It would appear that Duchamp believed no further criterion for the identification of art was necessary: simply take an artifact, any one at all, and decide that it is art. In the process, no attention need be paid to aesthetic form at all. Indeed, as Danto correctly notes, Duchamp's gesture here seems exactly parallel to Hegel's notion that the idea of art as it dialectically metamorphoses into philosophy is vastly more important than the material or formal substrata of individual works of art.

From a formalist point of view, however, Duchamp's theory of the readymade is extremely problematical. The wording of *The Blind Man* commentary is tantamount to the theory that art is anything anyone chooses it to be and an artist is anyone who makes such a choice. Such a theory—if I am correct in attributing it to Duchamp—is philosophically uninformative and trivial. Choosing in an ad hoc way to experience artifacts as art—with no other criterion than mere arbitrary choice—is hardly a solid basis for defining art. It should also be pointed out that Duchamp did not merely *choose* to perceive a urinal as a work of art. He did more than that: he titled the urinal, he signed it, he turned it upside down, and he re-contextualized it by entering it in an art show. Additionally, there is a certain inconsistency in Duchamp's claim that there is “nothing particularly aesthetic” about readymades. In an interview given in 1915, he declared that:

The capitals of the Old World have labored for hundreds of years to find that which constitutes good taste and one may say that they have found the zenith thereof. But why do people not understand what a bore this is? ...If only America would realize that the art of Europe is finished—dead—and that America is the country of the art of the future.... Look at the skyscrapers! Has Europe anything to show more beautiful than these? New York itself is a work of art, a complete work of art... (8).

Similarly, in the same edition of *The Blind Man* in 1917, Louise Norton had this to say about *Fountain*:

...the jurors of *The Society of Independent Artists* fairly rushed to remove the bit of sculpture called the *Fountain* sent in by Richard Mutt, because the object was irrevocably associated in their atavistic minds with a certain natural function of a secretive sort. Yet to any “innocent” eye how pleasant is its chaste simplicity of line and color! Someone said, “Like a lovely Buddha;” someone said, “Like the legs of the ladies by Cezanne;” but have they not, those ladies, in their long, round nudity always recalled to your mind the calm curves of decadent plumbers' porcelains? (2-3)

According to Danto, “one aspect of the highly overdetermined gesture of submitting the urinal was to de-Europeanize American art—to get Americans to appreciate their own artistic achievement. But that meant that Americans had to be made to see an article of plumbing as a work of art, but not necessarily beautiful in the way works of art had standardly been seen” (*TOUT-FAIT* 8). On this alternative reading of readymades—and given Duchamp’s penchant for American plumbing—it is possible to argue that what he wanted to accomplish with *Fountain* is the broadening and mundanizing of beauty in a way that transcended the aristocratic and snobbish traditions of Europe. If this reading is plausible, it is possible to conclude that the issue of *Fountain*’s beauty is a relevant and important issue in terms of the question of the perception of formal elements.

Even if we take Duchamp at his literal word that aesthetic form has absolutely no role to play in the theory of the readymade, it must be stressed that the “new thought” of ordinary objects as art would have to be grounded in basic formal features such as line, shape, and color—perceived as such—once the “useful significance” of said objects had disappeared. Without formal elements, the “new thought” would be entirely abstract and unrelated to the physicality of artifacts, a sort of free-floating Hegelian idea, if you will, adrift in Absolute Spirit. The reduction to absurdity of this idea would be the complete elimination of artifacts altogether. All one would need to do is simply think the thought that everything is art, and the pure choice would make it so. But the “everything” in question here is extremely problematical because the “new thought” is *about* artifacts and what are they if not collections of formal properties that come to the fore once “useful significance” disappears? Correspondingly, it does not seem so easy to dismiss the concerns of formalism, especially again in terms of Duchamp’s own ambivalence about them.

Among a variety of readings of *Fountain*, therefore, it is certainly possible to ignore the use-function of the urinal—as Duchamp himself suggested in *The Blind Man* commentary—and focus instead on the purely formal aesthetic properties of the object (its line, shape, color, as such). Of course, as the Bauhaus School taught, form follows function. But form is *not* identical with function, just as—to return to Wittgenstein—the duck is not identical with the rabbit. A possible reading of Duchamp’s readymades is that we may choose to place utilitarian factors in the background and focus purely on the foreground of intrinsic aesthetic properties (i.e., lower-end formal properties not to be understood as beauty or ugliness in the tradition of European aesthetics since the 18th century). We can shift back and forth quite readily in the case of a urinal, just as we can freely shift in regard to the duck-rabbit image.

I want to emphasize at this point that when I speak of a perceptual shift from use-function to aesthetic form, I am not presupposing any special kind of attitude or state of mind. George Dickie has, I believe, done a credible job of showing the many errors and problems connected with the aesthetic-attitude theorists (Ch. 3). The minimal shift I am stressing simply means that consciousness is moved from focusing on function to form, nothing more or less than this. If such a shift is commonly and naturally possible, then the next question I want to address is how we can get from the perception of an

artifact's aesthetic properties to the perception of it as art. What role does intentional making play in this process?

In order to develop my argument more fully, I want to distinguish between two types of artifacts: Artifact 1 and Artifact 2. Artifact 1 is any item produced by human hands with the intention that its aesthetic properties are to be noticed for their own sake. This would surely include the overwhelming majority of cases of artistic creation where some kind of raw material is fashioned into an aesthetic object. Artifact 2, on the other hand, is the readymade (by my interpretation thereof); that is, any item produced by human hands where there was no original intention that it be perceived aesthetically, but subsequently the artifact has been intentionally re-perceived and manipulated somehow into an aesthetic object (by focusing on its lower-end aesthetic properties). Readymades are certainly not the standard fare of artistic creation, but Duchamp has demonstrated, I believe, that their possibility must be taken into consideration. The object that is the readymade as such—a urinal, comb, bottle rack, snow shovel, etc.—is clearly a type of raw material that is being used by someone other than its original maker for non-utilitarian purposes. Of course, it is not the case that readymades lack intentionality. Someone must intentionally perform the perceptual shift on the artifact and alter it somehow. When this happens, we can get an odd result; namely, a situation where the person who does the shift first is the “artist” of the artifact, notwithstanding the fact that he or she did not create the artifact. This is consistent with Duchamp being known as the artist of *Fountain*. It is a very unusual application of the term artist but one whose possibility must be allowed. Where there is clear evidence that an artifact's maker simply did not do the shift, we can do it in their stead. The intentional re-perceiving and re-making of the object can be as simple as titling and signing the object (as Duchamp did with *Fountain*), thereby intending that its previously unnoticed or unstressed aesthetic features be brought to the foreground as such.

If the preceding argument is correct, it follows that the creation of an Artifact 1 or Artifact 2 is tantamount to the creation of art. Since Artifact 1 is the standard case of artistic creation and Artifact 2 is statistically unusual, we might want to distinguish a strong sense of the word art from a weak sense. But both cases clearly involve a perceptual shift from function to form, as well as some kind of intentional making or re-making of the requisite artifact. This leads us back now to the indistinguishable-pairs argument. Are there, for example, inherent properties of Warhol's Brillo Boxes and those at the supermarket—and of *Fountain* and the various other similar urinals—that phenomenologically could constitute *all* of these as works of art in either the strong or weak sense of the term?

The answer, I believe, is yes. All these objects have lines, shapes, and colors that could be noticed simply as such (via the shift). When so noticed, and when the conditions of intentional making or re-making as outlined above are in place, what one is perceiving is basically the same in every case; namely, art. Undoubtedly, Warhol's boxes are considerably more avant-garde than those at the supermarket and have a much higher dollar value. But this is irrelevant to their basic identification as art objects. Danto is surely correct in making visible the atmosphere of art theory which interprets such things as urinals,

beds, and Brillo Boxes within modern art history, but it seems to me that they could be intentionally created (or altered) and perceived aesthetically without knowing anything about such theory or history. It is true that there is still an aspect of concept-laden perception in the shift, but it is hardly the full-blown, art historical perception that Danto has in mind.

I want to develop this last statement more fully. The physiological and psychological processes underlying our ability to identify figures such as ducks and rabbits, as well as our ability to shift from the experience of function to that of form, are certainly complex. They involve “top to bottom” neurological processing, acquisition of the ability to use and understand a natural language, and an impressive array of mastered concepts. We must learn, for example, what ducks and rabbits look like, and how correctly to use the words duck and rabbit. In like manner, we must also learn how to understand and use the concept of an object’s having a function, as well as what it would mean to suspend such an interest in favor of simply experiencing formal qualities *as* formal qualities (line *as* line, tone *as* tone, etc.). However, once the relevant concepts are understood, we seem able to exhibit a sort of smooth effortless switching from one animal shape to another, and from function to form. Perceptual shifts of the sort I have described are thus anything but neutral and simple. On the other hand, however, the sorts of artworld concepts and theories that Danto finds indispensable to the very recognition of artifacts as art seem considerably more complex than anything found in the notion of the perceptual shift from function to form. Just in the case of readymades alone, think of the extensive historical knowledge of the artworld which is presupposed in gaining insight into what Duchamp did. What Danto is talking about in this case are sophisticated philosophical ideas which have interpenetrated the perception of a urinal as art. In like manner, Danto discusses Roy Lichtenstein’s *Brushstroke* paintings of the 1960s. He argues that these paintings are heavily surrounded by complex theories which must be understood as fundamentally rejecting the style of brushstroke-making found in Abstract Expressionism (*Transfiguration* 105-111). Presumably, if Danto is right, an untutored viewer unaware of these theories could not interpret and perceive Lichtenstein’s paintings as art. No doubt, it is likely that all sensory experience is interpretational to a greater or lesser extent, but the conceptual machinery of the perceptual shift is far less complicated than Danto’s way of experiencing art through sophisticated artworld theories. If it is possible to perceive artifacts as art in a more straightforward manner than Danto has suggested, then inference to the simplest explanation might warrant taking this approach.

In concluding this section, I want to return to readymades one last time. It seems to me that what Duchamp did with *Fountain* was to broaden and mundanize the concept of art. In my reading of *The Blind Man* commentary, he appeared to be establishing a perceptual shift from function to lower-end aesthetic form. He seemed to be implying that *any* artifact could be so shifted and experienced as art if certain types of intentional re-making were also presupposed. And this would be true quite independently of the intentions of the creator of the artifact, since it seems unlikely that the original maker of the *Fountain* urinal had any aesthetic agenda in mind *per se*. Of course, he *might* have had such

an agenda, in which case the famous urinal was already perceived as art (via the shift). But Duchamp's actions lead us to infer that he (Duchamp) did not think this to be the case. Rather, his procedure was typically Dadaistic and subversive, and could be read as the incredible notion that *all* artifacts have artness as one of their potential properties if the function-to-form shift is done on them and they are intentionally altered somehow.

Finally, if a urinal is a type of raw material for the perceptual shift (Dickie 87), does this mean (as Danto has suggested) that "it is not even clear what color *Fountain* is, or if it has a color" (Danto *Disenfranchisement* 38). In other words, Danto believes—quite consistently with his theory of art—that *Fountain* is basically an idea superimposed on an artifact that must be understood via a theory-shift in the artworld. As an idea, it can have no perceivable aesthetic properties, such as color. But this seems very problematical. *Fountain* does have (or at any rate the original did have) aesthetic properties: once we shift away from its function as urinal, we can notice its white color, its shape, and its feel, all for their own sakes. In other words, we can hold it in our hands and have direct sensory access to it. This is true even notwithstanding Duchamp's comment that readymades have "no beauty, no ugliness, nothing particularly aesthetic about them." My reading of this comment is that he was referring to the absence of higher-end aesthetic properties (such as beauty or ugliness in the traditional European senses) but not to lower-end properties such as the mere presence of line, shape, and color as such. No doubt, Duchamp was more interested in the joke he was playing on the artworld and the new idea of ordinary objects as art, but such interests would hardly negate the presence of lower-end aesthetic properties and the possibility of perceiving them in terms of an intentionally re-worked Artifact 2. The ostensive theory of *The Blind Man* commentary is the idea that we can arbitrarily impose the notion "that's art!" on artifacts at will without grounding this in their formal elements, whereas my own position—perhaps a deconstructed version of *The Blind Man* commentary—is that artness is determined by a perceptual shift from function to form *as grounded in* low-end formal elements.

It is true, of course, that the 20th Century saw many conceptual experiments in the artworld. This has led a number of theorists to conclude that formal properties are not important or relevant in conceptual art. Where the idea of a work is paramount it can certainly seem as if sensory qualities are adventitious. But from a formalist perspective it is imperative to realize that sensory qualities are phenomenologically foundational—they help to establish the very artness of the work. It is the task of critical interpretation thereafter to determine *what kind* of art has emerged or what the artist is attempting to say in the conceptual piece. If the distinction is not maintained between (A) intentional making or re-making and the perceptual shift from function to form as determinative of artness per se, and (B) the critical interpretation of the work's meaning or its place in art history, then a certain confusion arises in which artworld interpretations are taken to be constitutive of the piece *as art* rather than constitutive of the piece's meaning. I believe it is precisely this problem which is evident in Danto's visually-indistinguishable-pairs argument.

1.3 The Artworld or Institutional Approach to Defining Art

It is not my intention in this paper to present and defend a full-blown theory of the nature of artworks.⁴ Rather, I see my comments as zeroing in on a potential weakness of the artworld or institutional approach to defining art. The main stumbling block for these theorists—among whom Danto and Dickie are probably the most sophisticated right now—is giving a plausible genetic account of how the artworld itself could have arisen in the first place.⁵ Danto's position is that the identification of artifacts as art can only take place in terms of various theories which are pre-existent in the historical artworld. This would mean that artworld theories are conceptually prior to and phenomenologically constitutive of individual works of art: theories of art precede the facticity of art. Thus, the artworld is a kind of regulative idea whose historical genesis is unclear. In his defense, Danto *has* articulated the thought that the artworld has emerged from historical thinking about the business of artifactuality and the point of art-making in a way that provides for the development of new works to be recognized in the context of theory and history. There is, he believes, no problem with the artworld's genesis; it is coeval with artistic practice and appreciation. My arguments, however, are intended to make clearer the role of perceptual shifts and intentional making or re-making in this historical process. I believe it is important to stress how the earlier emergence of Artifacts 1 and the later emergence of Artifacts 2 make possible a basic understanding of art and the artworld in a way that does not heavily presuppose a great deal of complicated art historical theories.

In like fashion, George Dickie defines *art*, *artist*, *artworld system*, and the *artworld* as follows:

A work of art is an artifact of a kind created to be presented to an artworld public. ... An artist is a person who participates with understanding in the making of a work of art. ... The artworld is the totality of all artworld systems. An artworld system is a framework for the presentation of a work of art by an artist to an artworld public. (92).

Although Dickie claims that the interconnectedness of all these definitions is inevitable and that they “bend in on, presuppose, and support one another” (92) the circularity is obvious. Even though Dickie does not find the circularity to be “vicious,” nowhere do we find a clear, non-recursive definition of art. Neither do we find a plausible account of how the artworld developed in the first place.

The sort of perceptual shift I have outlined would give a phenomenologically foundational account of how singular acts of perception (i.e., those that focus only on lower-end aesthetic properties of artifacts) probably existed—along with various forms of intentional making—and established early prototypes of art and the artworld. In other words, art would have been historically all and only Artifacts 1 (and then Artifacts 1 *and* 2 after the introduction of the readymade), and the artworld would have been the cultural contexts in which Artifacts 1 were produced, displayed, bought and sold, critically discussed,

and so on. This grounding of the identification of artworks in the old tradition of *aisthetikos*—i.e., the perceptual shift as applied to intentionally produced artifacts—can, I think, be defended as an alternative to artworld or institutional theories.

Notes

¹ George Dickie's naming of the argument can be found in George Dickie, *Introduction to Aesthetics: An Analytic Approach* (New York: Oxford U P, 1997), 80.

² For a detailed discussion of various aesthetic terms or concepts and how they relate to "non-aesthetic" properties of objects, see Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," in *Readings*, 312-331.

³ A similar difficulty occurs in Sibley's discussion of the connection between "non-aesthetic" properties and aesthetic concepts. If I understand him correctly, Sibley's claim is that certain kinds of factual statements about physical objects reveal to us their non-aesthetic properties such as type of line or shape *as* line or shape, saturation of color *as* color, aspects of tones *as* tones, and so on. These properties provide a foundation for aesthetic concepts, although it is impossible, he thinks, that any collection of such properties would ever be logically sufficient to justify the application of the requisite aesthetic terms. What Sibley seems to miss, however, is that we can focus on lines, shapes, colors, tones, etc., for their own sakes in a phenomenologically foundational way. Such focus would be "aesthetically primitive" and would be distinguishable from the higher-end aesthetic concepts—such as delicacy, gracefulness, vibrancy, garishness, and so on—that Sibley cites. He is surely correct in arguing that these latter concepts are complicated matters of taste, but I am attempting to uncover a kind of raw experience of formal elements in terms of the old tradition of *aisthetikos*.

⁴ For an expanded discussion of my formalist theory of art, see John Valentine, "A Formalist Theory of Art," *Southwest Philosophy Review*, Volume 14, Number 2, July, 1998: 139-150.

⁵ Although not an artworld or institutional theory of art, Jerrold Levinson's theory of art shares a similar difficulty in that it attempts to define present art-forms in terms of historical antecedents and is thus essentially recursive in nature. See Jerrold Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," in *Readings* 223-239.

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