Editors' Introduction

Of the seven articles included in this issue of *The Florida Philosophical Review*, five of them were presented at the 51ˢᵗ Annual Meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association, which was held on November 10-12, 2005, at the Cocoa Beach Campus of the University of Central Florida. Our thanks go to Shelley Park, who served as site coordinator, and Greg Ray and Sally Ferguson, who served as program coordinators for this event.

The first article of the issue is the Presidential Address delivered by Jim Perry, Professor of Philosophy at Hillsborough Community College. Perry's address, "'Religion', 'Science', and 'Philosophy': Three Dangerous Auto-antonyms," explains how the ambiguity inherent in the words "religion," "science," and "philosophy," leads to great confusion, and he calls on philosophers to clarify this for the betterment of not only the student population, but the world population. Take philosophy, for example. Perry argues that we can distinguish between routine and reflective meanings of the term, and that it is the latter that will foster the growth and empowerment of humanity. Along the way, Perry discusses UNESCO's Strategy on Philosophy, the Florida Public School System's lack of appreciation for philosophy, and Richard Rorty's philosophy of education. While highly critical of Rorty and others, Perry ends his paper on a salutary Buddhist note.

The second article of this issue, "Courage, Evidence, and Epistemic Virtue" by Osvil Acosta-Morales of the University of Miami, won this year's award for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper. In his work, Acosta-Morales argues against the narrow evidentialist position, which holds that beliefs should be formed or suspended based on available evidence. Contrary to the modern "evidentialists" John Locke and David Hume and contemporary ones such as Richard Feldman and Earl Conee, Acosta-Morales maintains that within the ethics of belief one may be epistemically justified in believing something where the evidence is lacking. In further undermining the evidentialist position, Acosta-Morales proposes "a form of courage to be an intellectual or epistemic virtue." He then explains what it means to be a courageous believer, while distinguishing his position from that of William James.

The winner of the 2005 Edith and Gerrit Schipper Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Paper is Gustavo Oliviera from the New College of Florida for his essay, "On Recent Scientific Advances and Incompatibilist Freedom." This work, which is the third article of this issue, contains a two-part argument. In the first part, Oliveira shows how an understanding of quantum physics and chaos theory have lead away from a determinist worldview to one that allows for incompatibilist freedom. Nevertheless, he claims that philosophers have not yet successfully established incompatibilist freedom. Part one begins with a look at views on quantum theory and its relevance to the free will/determinism debate. Werner Heisenburg, Arthur Eddington, and Wesley Salmon all

weigh in on the subject to suggest that quantum indeterminacy does not alone provide any significant evidence that there are free choices, and these views are contrasted with Robert Kane's theory. After showing that we still lack a positive account of indeterminist free will, Oliveira turns his attention to the notion of theological determinism. Here he argues by analogy that chaos theory is indeed relevant in explaining how God's omniscience need not be viewed as undermining human free will.

"Thrasymachus' Perverse Disavowal" by Erich Freiberger, a previous contributor to *FPR* and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Jacksonville University, is the fourth article of this issue. In exploring the parallels between Plato's political philosophy and psychoanalysis, Freiberger argues that Thrasymachus, the sophist of Book I of Plato's *Republic*, represents the psychoanalytic structure of perversion or perverse disavowal (*Verleugnung*). Further, Freiberger suggests that pursuing these parallels will present a less metaphysical Plato concerned with "understanding and working through the implications of what psychoanalysis calls the lack in the law," and thus Plato's work can be clearly read as an exploration into the problem of justice.

The fifth article in this issue, "On Asymmetry in Kant's Doctrine of Moral Worth," is by Jill Hernandez, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas. Hernandez addresses the recent scholarship on Kantian ethics that discusses "acts that are done from the motive of duty but not in accordance with duty," a class of actions omitted from Kant's considerations. Hernandez takes on Samuel Kerstin's view, which holds that the asymmetry in Kant's ethics can be remedied, thus making possible a "class of actions that are impermissible and yet have moral worth." According to Hernandez, however, a Kantian response to Kerstin is needed to show that there is an epistemic constraint against such actions. Hernandez explains how the asymmetry thesis is due to a misinterpretation of Kant's work and consequently is inconsistent with the respect for "the intrinsic worth of humanity" found in Kantian ethics.

Following the articles selected from the FPA program, we are pleased to publish additionally two articles and a book review. Martin Bertman, Professor Emeritus of Helsinki University, presents another look at Kant's philosophy in his paper, "Kant contra Herder: Almost against Nature." Based on a close reading of original historical sources, Bertman shows the vast distance between Kant's systematic program, which is indebted to the Enlightenment and a mechanistic view of nature, and the "organic historical vitalism" of his former student Herder. In explaining how this opposition develops, Bertman charts Kant's reading of Rousseau leading to "the profound reorientation in Kant" and the separation of nature and morality into two lawful orders. Kant "asserts the transcendental unity of reason" and the view that man's true essence is to be found in the ethical, rather than the natural, order. Herder's romantic inclinations, which influenced both Goethe and Hamann, naturally lead him to oppose Kant's transcendental philosophy. Bertman discusses Kant's

development of the principle of teleology as a response to Herder and shows how the rational ethics of the theist Kant "must stand against Humean skepticism and Herderean historicism."

The seventh article is by John Valentine of the Savannah College of Art and Design and a previous contributor to *FPR*. Valentine's article, "Prototypes of Existence and Essence in Camus's *The Stranger*," presents a careful reading of *The Stranger* that "brings the novel back to the heart of the existentialist movement." After explaining how Camus's position differs from Sartre's, Valentine shows how in part one of *The Stranger* Meursault exemplifies prototypical human existence, whereas part two portrays a Meursault transformed into stereotypical essences through society. As a "synthesis of contingency and stereotype"—existence and essence—Camus's Meursault represents Everyman.

The final contribution to this issue is a book review by Darren Hibbs, Assistant Professor at Nova Southeastern University. Hibbs reviews Keith Parsons's *Copernican Questions: A Concise Invitation to the Philosophy of Science* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), which focuses on "the question of objectivity and the realism-antirealism debate."

Our thanks go to the authors discussed above whose articles make this, we think, a significant and stimulating issue. We would also like to extend a note of thanks to all the reviewers who have read papers for us in the past year and assisted in the editorial process. It is often a challenging task to find dedicated reviewers, and it is unfortunate that this valuable service to the philosophical community is not more highly valued. Please let us know whether you are willing to review papers for *FPR*. Our "Reviewers Needed" link is easy to use. See http://www.cas.ucf.edu/philosophy/fpr/highend/reviewersneeded.php. We continue to extend an open call for papers and will continue to publish high quality general submissions and high quality selected papers from the Florida Philosophical Association's annual meetings. Information about the upcoming 2006 FPA Meeting can be found at the new website: http://www.uwf.edu/sallyf/fpa/. Thanks to Greg Ray of the University of Florida for his fine work on this attractive site.

Finally, we invite you to see a call for papers for an upcoming inter- and multi-disciplinary international conference at UCF to be held on January 18-20, 2007, on "Heresy, Blasphemy, and Freedom of Expression." The conference is presented by the following: UCF Department of Philosophy; the UCF Ethics Center, Humanities Center, and Information Fluency Initiatives; *FPR*; and the UCF Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Selected papers from this conference will be published in a special issue of *FPR*. We appreciate wide dissemination of information about this conference, so please feel free to forward the contents of the call for papers to listservs, your students, colleagues, and others who may be interested. It is also important to note that this conference is intended to feature not only faculty and other professional academic work and research but also work by students (undergraduate and graduate) on issues, concepts, theories,

principles, and applications related to the CFP. The call for papers and information on accommodations, travel and directions, registration fees, and keynote speakers, appear at http://www.if.ucf.edu.

Nancy Stanlick and Michael Strawser, Editors
July 2006

"Religion," "Science," and "Philosophy": Three Dangerous Auto-Antonyms

Presidential Address of the 51st Annual Meeting
of the Florida Philosophical Association, 2005

Jim Perry, *Hillsborough Community College*

Antonyms are words that mean opposite or even contradictory things. "Open" and "shut" are antonyms, as are "up" and "down." What interests me this evening is auto-antonyms, words that mean the opposite of *themselves*, such as "sanction," meaning both approve and disapprove. All three terms in my title, "religion," "science," and "philosophy," are auto-antonyms, having both routine and reflective (i.e., non-routine) meanings. How are we to tell which is which?

Religion first. On the one hand, religion is ritual. Notice the number of church groups that have gathered and provided for the evacuees from the ravages of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. These are faith-based initiatives, done from stated religious principles. Whatever we say about religion, it will be useful to remember these kinds of organizations and activities. At the same time, however, who has not noticed the bombings and killings from abortion clinics to the World Trade Center to the streets of Baghdad? These, too, are faith-based initiatives. So how can we know what is meant, and what is *not* meant, when the word "religion" is used?

On the other hand, religion is a quest for the infinite, and reflective religion transcends all routines and has no leaders. We need to make a distinction between routine religion, with its dogmas and hierarchies, and reflective religion which has neither. Routine religion is a (flawed) tool to avoid diabolical[1] randomness. Reflective religion is inquiry into human responsibility – for our choice of rules and routines, among other things. Again I ask: how can we know what is meant?

These two purposes are usually in conflict, and therefore confusing. To protect from randomness, routine religion rejects inquiry; but to achieve human potential, reflective religion welcomes inquiry. The same church that published the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* also employs an *Advocatus Diaboli* to find out all it can, very scientifically, about candidates for sainthood.

Each routine religion usually describes those inside it as brethren while describing those outside as heretics, infidels, apostates, atheists, pagans, or liberals.[2] Those people inside the charmed circle count as human, and those outside don't. Of course, that's what all the other routine religions are saying, too, about different charmed circles, that 'we' are human not because we think reflectively but because we obey the right rules and leaders.

One particularly dangerous – because diabolical – aspect of religion is its typical practice of

appealing to supernatural agents for its justification. In court, when we wish to promise to tell the truth we speak the words "So help me God." This is performative, valid on its face, guaranteeing there will be no joking in the witness-box. Out of court the same divine appeal becomes a trap making negotiation impossible and the proliferation of divine beings inevitable. This is doubly diabolical, because it renders accidental contradictions impossible to correct, and also guarantees further contradictions as other tribes and factions define their own divinities. It's iatrogenic.[3] The supposition of a supernatural "real" world also has the effect of rendering *this* world fictional.

Now science. There are specific routines – forensic science, medical science, social science – and then there is the reflective method by which each of these specific sciences comes to be. Routine science is knowledge gained through routine; it is work conducted according to settled principles, standards and methods – the thing Thomas Kuhn called a shared paradigm. Routine science is dogmatic. Reflective science thinks critically about those principles, standards, and methods. How, I wonder, does an audience know whether scientists are speaking dogmatically or not?

When one learns a specific science, one does not typically learn other specific sciences nor does one learn the reflective method. It is more efficient and less costly to do it this way. But we don't explain that this is what we are doing, so students don't know what we *do* mean and what we *don't* mean by the word 'science'. The result is confusion enough for a lifetime.

Specific sciences are related by complexity (i.e., kinds of variables) and predictability. At the top is mathematics: all form and no content, it has few types of variables and high predictability. Next below math come the physical sciences, from astronomy to physics and chemistry to meteorology, each with new kinds of variables. Then come the biological sciences, adding the many complex processes of life. Toward the bottom of the ladder come the social and behavioral sciences, typically deterministic, such as history, economics, psychology, anthropology, and education.[4] Finally comes the study of the one remaining variable: choice. This is the topic and domain of the humanities, the most creative part of knowledge, most complex of all and hardest to predict.

Now philosophy. Where is philosophy in all this? Is philosophy a social science and thus routine and dogmatic, or is it one of the humanities and so reflective? For undergraduates and the general public, we promote a general vision of philosophy as a quest for humanity, for the big picture, with the stated aim "to see life steadily, and see it whole." For many and perhaps most graduate students, however, we promote a vision of philosophy as a blood sport (as Norman Swarz called it[5]), a combination of courtroom and cockfight in which the last person standing gets the degree, the tenure, and the promotion. When the word "philosophy" is used, however, the audience has no quick way to know what is meant and what is *not* meant.

I have no quarrel with routine philosophy. "Think of it as a game" would have been useful advice for me if I had gotten it earlier and chosen to follow it. I learned a lot from the routines of each of my thirty-two classroom teachers of philosophy, but more than anything else I learned from my inevitable confusion that routine wasn't everything.

The OED offers nine major definitions of the word "philosophy," starting with the one it calls "the original and widest sense": "The love, study, or pursuit of wisdom, or of knowledge of things and their causes, whether theoretical or practical." This is what I always wanted and was glad to find. This is the one that could help restore America's reputation in the world, inspire peace based on understanding, and with the help of the Gates Foundation,[6] alleviate poverty in the bargain.

The United Nations plays a part in this. After a rocky start in the *Declaration of Human Rights* in 1946, in which it declared (Article 26, paragraph 3) that "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children,"[7] UNESCO's charge for its 1972 book, *Learning To Be*, stated that "All people should receive in their childhood and youth an education that equips them to develop their own independent, critical way of thinking and judgment so that they can make up their own minds on the best courses on action in the different circumstances of their lives."[8]

UNESCO's new Strategy on Philosophy "interprets philosophy in a *wide sense* of ennobling each individual and fostering the intellectual moral solidarity of mankind." World Philosophy Day 2005 comes next week, on Thursday, November 17th. Think of it: World Philosophy Day! According to several of UNESCO's documents (currently available only in French) philosophy as a field of study has an important, even vital, part to play in the abolition of poverty and all the human ills that follow from it, because philosophy addresses the causes of poverty.[9]

World peace is an interesting idea; but how will we make it so without force? Well, we might educate everyone. We might foster their intellects as a means of achieving the goal UNESCO stated above: fostering the intellectual moral solidarity of mankind. Yes, we could do that.

To do that, however, we would have to take them beyond the routine level of thinking up to the reflective level. And to do so might cost the leaders of all those routines tidy sums of money and a significant amount of power. I don't want to seem petty about this, but when we talk about cultures, nations, and other social routines, it's important to notice that these communities are never monolithic: there are young and old, skilled and unskilled, energetic and lethargic, healthy and ill, well-connected and un-connected, wealthy and poor. And when we hear talk about what's good and bad for a culture, we would be wise to ask who's profiting most from it.

One part of the world to which we might turn our attention is our own children, who are, like Lt. Kaffee in *A Few Good Men*, considered by all our Col. Jessups to be too immature to handle the truth.

Richard Rorty, for one, claims he "cannot imagine a culture which socialized its youth in such a way as to make them continually dubious about their own process of socialization."[10] This may explain why at last report, in contrast to Europe and most of the civilized world, no public K-12 school in Florida offers a regularly-scheduled introductory course in philosophy.

The Florida Association of Science Teachers has just met in Orlando to discuss the crusade by State Legislator Dennis Baxley to promote "alternatives to evolution theory" (specifically, a program called "Intelligent Design") in Florida's public schools. The state's science standards are reported to be scheduled for review in 2006. Will it be decided then that our children are too immature to handle the uncertainty of science? That would be sad, but in a contest between definitions and facts the definitions will always be more definite.

Florida's new Chancellor for K-12, Cheri Yecke, has been described as another advocate for Intelligent Design. The Intelligent Design campaign could be asked to propose that Karl Marx created the universe in 1858, complete with all the creatures, memories, fossils and documents we know about. Why anyone would want to ask them to do this I don't know, but it would illustrate that countless claims can be made about the creation of the universe, and that none of them can be proved or disproved. I suspect people outside our profession don't know that.

Rorty is mistaken; monstrously so. Children who don't learn to doubt don't learn how to cope with error by means of inquiry. They learn nothing of the moral necessity of learning how to deal with doubt. They learn nothing of their own humanity. In a world filled with routine differences, they learn nothing of our shared reflective identity. They learn nothing of the soul as the uniquely human level of functioning, so they remain utensils, not persons, puppets on strings held by other puppets. They never learn they don't need to be right to be human.

Routines fail. Definitions prove contradictory, empirical, or just too difficult to learn. Though Woodrow Wilson proclaimed after World War I that every culture had an equal and unlimited right to autonomy, we decided otherwise at Nuremburg after another World War. We committed the world to the view that cultures may be *vindicated* by their effects in practice, but they are not *validated* automatically. Cultures serve human purposes first, and not the other way around.

What is routine in the world today is the worship of routine, traditionally called "fanaticism" and "zealotry" and also "idolatry." This worship nowadays comes with weapons of mass destruction. To stop that, I am asking that when we talk about religion, science, and philosophy, we tell our audience what we do *not* mean as well as what we *do* mean. That's all. Just say there's the other interpretation, but right here and for now we're not going to use it. That'll do it. Don't leave them guessing. They'll guess wrong, and then where will you be?

Tell them all three of these three words are auto-antonyms. After they learn that, they will no longer be confused about it, their routines will be choices rather than mandates, and neither the words nor those who use them will be so dangerous any more. This explanation will give students a way to adapt their routines to their learning without becoming random or dehumanized. It will help them, using Otto Neurath's famous analogy, to rebuild their ships even as they sail on them. It will help them realize their humanity, empower it, magnify it.

Instead of looking to Oz, Heaven, or Shangri-La for something supernatural and transcendent, we might suggest the reflective self – the philosopher-king (or queen) in each of us. Buddhists have a word for this: "*Namaste.*" It means, "The divine in me greets the divine in you." That sounds like a person, at once routine and reflective. That sounds okay to me. That sounds pretty good.

Namaste.

Notes

[1] The word "diabolic" is derived from the Greek words διά (meaning "across" or "apart") and βαλλειν (meaning "to throw or tear"). This describes the effect of randomness, panic and contradiction, and seems to me to be what the famous story of Buridan's donkey was about. The later Latin interpretation of *diabolicus* as "devil" emphasizes how serious a matter any departure from routine is perceived to be in the context of religion: whatever is unpredictable is Hell, and you don't have to die to go there. Note what this implies about creativity.

[2] I am thinking of the type of liberal who is confident we can do better. Conservatives, by contrast, are afraid we can do worse. They are both right. The fatal mistake I see conservatives (and parents) make is to suppose that simply by enforcing routine they can prevent randomness. The fatal mistake of liberals is to suppose that even randomness is better than routine.

[3] This remarkable word is generally taken to refer to any "cure" that "causes" adverse side-effects. Roy Weatherford has pointed out to me that strictly speaking this word refers to individuals and "nosocomial" to institutions." He's right, of course. I am simply deferring to popular usage.

[4] Note the dreadful implication of classifying education as deterministic. Scholars following this template will treat education as something teachers do to students without the students' having any choice in the matter. On this view students will be objects, not subjects.

[5] http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/swartz/blood_sport.htm

[6] The organization is called the Initiative for Global Development. See http://www.igdleaders.org/

[7] Note the obvious problem with schools that promote terrorism.

[8] http://www.unesco.org/delors/ltobe.htm.

[9] To the extent that philosophy seeks to understand causes as well as effects, it will have a greater and more lasting impact on those effects. I have heard this point made by medical professionals associated with the World Health Organization. I have also spoken to this point and heard it presented and analyzed repeatedly and energetically at the most recent World Congresses of Philosophy (Boston, 1998 and Istanbul 2003). The next World Congress of Philosophy will meet in Seoul in 2008. I hope to have something to say there, too.

[10] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), 87.

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Courage, Evidence, and Epistemic Virtue

Winner of the Outstanding Graduate Paper Award at the
51st Annual Meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association

Osvil Acosta-Morales, *University of Miami*

Consider the claim that insofar as our interests are epistemic, what should guide our belief formation and revision is a strict adherence to the available evidence. The idea is that we should believe something if and only if we find that the evidence is sufficiently in its favor. Although some are opposed to this evidentialist approach, there have been strong supporters of it in the past, and plenty who endorse it in one way or another today. The position can be traced back at least as far as John Locke, when he argued that "assent ought to be regulated by the grounds of probability."[1] David Hume[2] and W.K. Clifford[3] are also among the more easily recognized supporters of this view. Today it is not difficult to find defenders of a similar notion. A clear example is the defense of evidentialism by Richard Feldman and Earl Conee in their recent book.[4] I will present here a case against the evidentialist approach within the ethics of belief, arguing that there are times when there is nothing epistemically wrong with believing something on admittedly "insufficient" evidence. Different attempts have been made, perhaps most famously by William James,[5] to defend the idea that under certain circumstances believing something on insufficient evidence may be permissible. However, it is important to notice that my position differs in a significant respect from that of James and others like him. Instead of trying to justify or otherwise validate such beliefs on some sort of pragmatic or moral grounds, I argue that based on purely epistemic considerations it is a mistake to conclude that all beliefs based on insufficient evidence are in some way faulty or something that we ought rationally to avoid. Furthermore, I am inclined to make the stronger claim that some of these beliefs may be virtuous or praiseworthy, and an agent's disposition to reach beliefs in such a manner is an epistemic virtue. I propose that we consider a form of courage to be an intellectual or epistemic virtue. It is through this notion of courage that we can see a weakness in the evidentialist position and find room for epistemically justified beliefs that are based on insufficient evidence. Of course, this all requires further explanation.

Lists of virtues usually include such things as temperance, justice, and courage. Most discussions of virtue focus on moral or ethical virtues. However, I am presently concerned with a different sort of virtue. The virtues that are relevant to the epistemic evaluation of an agent's beliefs and belief revision are epistemic or intellectual virtues. Some examples of epistemic virtues might include open-mindedness or thoroughness of inquiry. There are a variety of ways that one can understand virtues, both epistemic and moral. There are many debates within the area of virtue

theory in general and virtue epistemology[6] in particular that may be of interest, but we need not involve ourselves at this time with a detailed analysis of virtues in general or even epistemic virtue. It suffices for now to recognize that an essential part of what makes something a virtue is that it contributes to the attainment of valuable ends. I also believe that virtues involve a necessary internal or motivational element, but will not explore that here. Let us simply focus on the fact that moral virtues assist the agent in achieving valuable moral ends (e.g., fair treatment of others) while epistemic virtues assist the agent in achieving valuable epistemic ends (e.g., knowledge and truth).

Virtues are frequently understood to be favorable character traits or dispositions to behavior. I take this to be correct. However, I will work here with the notion that a particular choice or action may also be considered virtuous, or at least exhibiting virtue, even though the agent falls short of being virtuous because she lacks the appropriate character trait. For our present purposes at least, a choice or act that exemplifies a virtue may be understood as virtuous, independent of whether the agent making the choice or performing the act possesses a virtuous character. This helps the presentation of my primary argument by allowing us to focus on and evaluate particular beliefs and choices instead of keeping our attention and judgments confined to agents.

Let us now look at the virtue that reveals how beliefs may be epistemically justified even when the evidence is admittedly lacking. I propose that we consider a form of courage to be an intellectual or epistemic virtue. The sort of courage that is directly relevant here is a doxastic courage, pertaining to beliefs. This differs from the sort of practical courage, pertaining to actions, that is usually discussed in the literature. However, the elements that make doxastic courage an epistemic virtue are the same sorts of things that normally make its practical counterpart a moral virtue. We need not concern ourselves with defending a special conception of courage to see this. The ordinary notion of a courageous act basically involves the agent exposing herself to significant harm in order to achieve some goal that is of significant value. The courageous person does not allow the risk of loss to keep her from taking action or making the appropriate choice. However, Aristotle[7] was right in pointing out that courage involves an appropriate sort of wisdom. Being courageous is more than just being willing to take risks. The courageous person refrains from being rash and making a decision without properly considering the level of risk involved and the value of the end she is seeking. The courageous believer I have in mind will also avoid the extremes. He will not let the fear of believing something that is false lead him to be too timid or overly cautious with what he believes. On the other hand, he will not disregard the available evidence entirely and believe anything at all.

There are different ways that a choice, belief, or action may be courageous. It seems that when most people think of courageous beliefs the sort of scenario that comes to mind is that of someone believing something that is contrary to popular opinion, exposing themselves to ridicule or perhaps even physical harm for believing as they do. I agree that in some sense a person's belief is

courageous when she believes something even though she knows it to be unpopular. However, this is not the sort of courage I am interested in exploring here. All acts of courage require a goal or end that the courage is meant to help the agent in achieving. Along with this there is always a "counter-goal" or danger the agent must face.[8] In the situation described above the goal or aim of the belief seems to be truth or true belief, and the counter-goal or consequence of failure is something like ridicule or physical harm to the individual. I am interested in cases where both the goal and counter-goal are epistemic in nature, where the potential gain and the potential loss from the believer's choice both involve epistemic value. This goes back to my interest in focusing on epistemic considerations, not pragmatic or moral ones. When an agent exhibits doxastic courage he recognizes that the evidence does not adequately support a claim, but he believes it, realizing that he is taking a significant risk. The risk to which he is exposing himself, at least immediately, is that of believing something false. A false belief has a negative epistemic value. If the agent is interested in promoting or maximizing epistemic value it may seem odd that doing something that he recognizes risks a significant loss of value could be justified. The answer is simply that the risk is a justifiable risk due to the probability of success and the positive epistemic value gained from a true belief if he is successful.

It is helpful here to consider a detailed example. But first it is important to remember that doxastic courage is not of a usual sort, and our normal manner of speaking, along with our intuitions, may not immediately recognize it as courage. There are different ways to be courageous in what one chooses to believe, and certainly a variety of things that might be gained or lost by choosing to believe or disbelieve something. However, the desired focus here is on the evaluation of beliefs when we concern ourselves with only epistemic goals and counter-goals.

Unfortunately, when we think of courageous choices we do not normally consider conditions in which what is at stake is purely epistemic in this way. It might be said that this new or different sense of courage I am suggesting is not actually courage at all if it does not adequately match-up with what we normally think of as courage, and so it should go by some other name. I am inclined to think of doxastic courage as genuine courage because of the strong structural similarities it has to practical courage, and doing so also helps us to more easily notice what allows doxastic courage to qualify as an epistemic virtue. Still, calling it by a different name should not ultimately detract from the substance of my view. Or, if it is preferable, we may understand this as a stipulative definition of courage. What is more important here is that we notice that the same things that lead us to consider an action courageous and virtuous are sometimes present in the realm of belief and this is good reason to consider such beliefs virtuous, and, I think , courageous.

When making a case for justified belief in the face of insufficient evidence, examples frequently involve belief in God or some other such thing. I think under the right conditions such a belief may demonstrate doxastic courage. However, such an example may be unnecessarily

complicated and challenging in a number of ways. A simple example may work best here to shed light on the notion of doxastic courage. But before we proceed even with this, it is best briefly to consider a scenario that involves practical courage. Imagine a couple, Jack and Jill, who are involved romantically. At this time Jack is considering whether he should propose marriage to Jill. He realizes that they have not been seeing each other for very long, but he also has strong feelings for Jill, and he thinks she feels just as strongly about him. Still, he realizes that proposing at this point is risky. He thinks, and reasonably so, that while there is a chance that this act will bring them closer and strengthen the relationship there is also the chance that Jill might feel pressured and it will ultimately distance them. He sees that there is a significant chance of each outcome, but neither one is clearly more likely than the other. It seems right to think that in this scenario Jack acts courageously if he proposes. There is a real possibility that things will not go as he would like, but he does not allow the fear of rejection to keep him from missing this opportunity to take the relationship to the next level.

Let us now examine a very similar case where the choice involves belief instead of action, and where the loss and gain considered are the loss from acquiring a false belief and the gain from acquiring a true belief. Barney has fallen deeply in love with a woman, Betty, who he has known for only a few days. Although he has known her for only a short time, Barney felt a special connection with Betty right from the beginning. Neither one has explicitly professed love for the other, but there is some reason to think that Betty does love Barney as much as he loves her. Still, sometimes Betty acts in a way that suggests that she actually does not love Barney. There might be an explanation for such things, but Barney must admit that it seems just as likely that she does not love him as it does that she loves him. A strict adherence to the evidence would undoubtedly suggest that Barney refrain from making a judgment on the matter since the evidence favors neither belief nor disbelief here. Still, it seems that Barney could exhibit genuine courage by choosing to believe that she does love him. By doing so Barney exposes himself to a potential false belief, and other loss as well, but at the same time he allows for the possibility of a true belief, and other gain as well. I propose that if in the earlier example of Jack and Jill we conclude that Jack is exhibiting courage, then in the parallel case of Barney and Betty, courage and virtue are also being exhibited.

In order to see how such a risk can be a justified one, it is helpful to examine a position that explicitly denies that any belief based on insufficient evidence can ever be epistemically justified. So, we turn here to evidentialism. I will focus on the position as it is presented by Conee and Feldman, since they are currently some of the most active defenders of the view, and they provide a clear and adequately representative analysis of evidentialism. The basic claim of this view is that epistemic justification "is determined entirely by the person's evidence."[9] Directly linked to this is the further claim that in so far as we are interested in promoting epistemic value or having epistemically rational beliefs we ought to believe something if and only if it is epistemically justified.[10] It a mistake to

disregard the evidence entirely when deciding what to believe. It is also wrong to believe only those things that we take to be indubitable. At least when our interests are epistemic, we do best to avoid these strategies. Avoiding error is important, but achieving a comprehensive system of beliefs is a valuable epistemic goal that has a place alongside our interest in possessing an accurate set of beliefs. The evidentialist recognizes that the best strategy for maximizing epistemic value lies somewhere between these extremes, but he misses the mark because he does not properly account for the virtue of courage.

Justified belief will always involve a level of risk if we allow for epistemic justification with anything less than certainty. The evidentialist rightly sees that some risk is acceptable. Feldman agrees that even though "believing on only modest amounts of evidence involves taking some epistemic risk, … you should believe when your evidence is supportive rather than neutral, even if the evidence is not at all decisive."[11] The problem is that the evidentialist position is too strict. It allows for too little epistemic risk. In at least some cases we are epistemically justified in taking more risk than evidentialism allows. We see this in the cases where the evidentialist suggests that we suspend judgment.

In a situation where there is some evidence in support of a proposition and some evidence in support of its negation so that neither seems to have more support than the other, evidentialism tells us that we are epistemically unjustified if we do not suspend judgment on the matter. The claim is that, "neither belief nor disbelief is epistemically justified when our evidence is equally balanced."[12] However, if we are interested in maximizing epistemic value or utility, taking a risk where there is a 50% chance of gain and an equal chance of equal loss does not appear to be any more unjustified or irrational than not taking any risk at all, leaving no chance for loss and no chance for gain. A straight-forward matrix where we evaluate estimated value tells us that the courageous strategy is as effective as the conservative evidentialist one at maximizing epistemic value. We can see this in Table 1 below.

Table 1

	p	$\sim p$
Believe that p	1	- 1
Believe that $\sim p$	- 1	1
Suspend Judgment	0	0

For simplicity, we can take the epistemic value of a true belief to be 1, and a false belief as –1. When one suspends judgment on a matter, no epistemic value is gained or lost. There may be reason to

think that the epistemic value of true belief and false belief is not symmetrical in this way for every proposition or hypothesis considered.[13] Perhaps believing some proposition will produce only half as much epistemic value as believing its contrary. If so, this makes things more complicated, but a case for doxastic courage can still be made in a very similar fashion. Let us take the epistemic values to be those described in Table 1, at least for now, and see how this shows the error in evidentialism. It is not difficult to notice that if there is an equal chance that the proposition *p* is true as there is that it is false, the expected epistemic value for each row of the matrix will be the same. Suspending judgment is no better at maximizing epistemic value than believing that *p* or believing that *not-p*. Yet, the evidentialist position tells us that the only epistemically justified option is to suspend judgment. According to this view we are therefore epistemically obligated to suspend judgment since they take being epistemically justified as equivalent to being epistemically obligated.[14] The evidentialist better-safe-than-sorry approach claims to be the best way to promote epistemic value, but it apparently has no advantage over the more epistemically courageous approach I am suggesting.

One way of impeding the argument for doxastic courage is simply to deny that true beliefs have any epistemic value. Feldman presents an argument along these lines. He says that although it seems right that something like true belief is a proper epistemic goal and something of epistemic value, this cannot be correct. Feldman argues that if merely true belief did have epistemic value then you might be gaining epistemic value just through luck and you might lack epistemic value even if you are being rational.[15] Neither one of these consequences sits well with Feldman. He considers the possibility that knowledge might possess epistemic value, but rejects this as well. He says this seems plausible, but there are problems with this position.[16] The problems with this view emerge in situations where you have strong evidence for a false proposition. The problem here is that if adopting an attitude that will yield knowledge is what is valuable, then believing the negation of the proposition will do equally well because it helps achieve the truth condition of knowledge. So, it seems this strategy suggests equally that we believe a proposition that is not supported by the evidence. Another difficulty Feldman mentions involves situations where there is strong evidential support for a proposition, but it is insufficient for knowledge. Evidentialism suggests we should believe the proposition, but if knowledge is the proper bearer of epistemic value, then evidentialism finds itself disconnected from the promotion of epistemic value. Feldman concludes that only rational belief has epistemic value.[17]

The fundamental weakness with Feldman's arguments is that he neglects the possibility that true belief, knowledge, and rational belief all possess epistemic value. His arguments against true belief and knowledge as bearers of epistemic value work only when we assume that each is to be the sole bearer of epistemic value. Once we realize that each can have epistemic value there does not seem to be any difficulty. I agree with Feldman that true belief and knowledge alone cannot be the bearers of epistemic value. There certainly seems to be epistemic value in rational or reasonable

belief that is neither true nor qualifies as knowledge. However, this only means that rational belief has epistemic value, not that true belief and knowledge lack it, as Feldman suggests.

Adopting a doxastically courageous approach serves best to maximize epistemic value. It acknowledges the role that evidence has in epistemic justification and its connection with promoting epistemic value, but it avoids the narrowness of an evidentialist position. The courageous believer I have described is not rash and one who disregards the evidence, but she also realizes that taking epistemic risks will not necessarily keep her from her epistemic goals. Doxastic courage is an epistemic virtue that serves the agent in achieving her epistemic ends. Believing something in the face of insufficient evidence is not always an epistemic vice to be avoided, and the agent who recognizes this is better off for it.

Notes

[1] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, *Great Books of the Western World*, Vol. 35, Robert Maynard Hutchins, ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), Book IV, Ch. 16, Sect. 1.

[2] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, *Great Books of the Western World*, Vol. 35, Robert Maynard Hutchins, ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), Section X.

[3] W.K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," in *The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1999).

[4] Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology* (New York: Oxford UP, 2004).

[5] Willaim James, "The Will to Believe," in *Essays on Faith and Morals* (New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1947).

[6] We can see some of the epistemological issues addressed from differing perspectives within Guy Axtel, *Knowledge, Belief, and Character: Readings in Virtue Epistemology* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), and Abrol Fairweather and Linda Zagzebski, *Virtue Epistemology: Essays on Epistemic Virtue and Responsibility* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001).

[7] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, David Ross, trans. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998), esp. Books II and VI.

[8] This is explored at length within D.F. Pears, "Aristotle's Analysis of Courage," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 3 (1978): 273-85.

[9] Conee and Feldman, 1.

[10] Conee and Feldman, 177, 182.

[11] Conee and Feldman, 180.

[12] Conee and Feldman, 83.

[13] See Nicholas Rescher, "Peirce and the Economy of Research," *Philosophy of Science* 43 (1976): 71-98 and Isaac Levi, *Gambling With Truth* (Cambridge: MIT P., 1980).

[14] Conee and Feldman, 88.

[15] Conee and Feldman, 185-6.

[16] Conee and Feldman, 183-4.

[17] Conee and Feldman, 184-5.

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On Recent Scientific Advances and Incompatibilist Freedom

Winner of the Edith and Gerrit Schipper Undergraduate Award
for Outstanding Undergraduate Paper at the
51st Annual Meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association

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Introduction

With the development of scientific investigation, both the structure of the universe and its laws were being discovered. With the dramatic advances of Newton, there was a surge of hope that soon all unpredictability would be banished from the universe through mathematics and natural sciences. This era was characterized by the scientific affirmation of determinism, best exemplified by Laplace's statement that:

> If we can imagine a consciousness great enough to know the exact locations and velocities of all the objects in the universe at the present instant, as well as all forces, then there could be no secrets from this consciousness. It could calculate anything about the past or future from the laws of cause and effect (Peitgen 12).

This was indeed a *Zeitgeist* that permeated not only the sciences but also philosophy and theology. Human behavior, therefore, did not escape being characterized as a process subject to universal determinism, and thus the task of philosophy was to find a notion of freedom *compatible* with determinism. It was not until recently that this *Zeitgeist* has begun to be exorcised by two scientific discoveries – Quantum physics and Chaos theory – and yet I believe we are merely at the transition from the deterministic era. Although I believe Quantum and Chaos theory have indeed made significant advances towards an indeterministic worldview, determinists justifiably raise several doubts as to whether such recent scientific advances actually contribute anything significant to the free will debate. In part I of the present essay, I wish to outline the main ways in which Quantum and Chaos theory have contributed to establishing incompatibilist freedom. I conclude that although such scientific advances have indeed taken a necessary first step away from the causally deterministic worldview, philosophers have yet to establish successfully incompatibilist freedom. In part II, I turn to a different notion of determinism which is as much a part of this *Zeitgeist* as Laplace's demon, viz. theological determinism. I suggest that in *this* field, Chaos theory can be surprisingly helpful in

dismantling the deterministic worldview by forming an alternative understanding of the relationship between God's knowledge and incompatibilist freedom. I conclude that Chaos theory is certainly the path by which we may hope to advance in the problem of theological determinism, and that such success gives us renewed hope that recent scientific discoveries can advance philosophical discussion in the free will debate.

I

The roots of Quantum physics lie in the first half of the 20th century with the theories of Werner Heisenberg and Erwin Schrödinger. They first hypothesized, and later experiments confirmed, that the mere observation of subatomic particles affects their behavior to such an extent that it is impossible to determine both their position and their velocity simultaneously. This impossibility, moreover, is not a practical impossibility that may be overcome with better tools – it holds even in pure theory. The deterministic worldview invites us to believe that, even though we may be unable to determine, and thus predict the behavior of subatomic particles, we can nevertheless assume that it follows *some* deterministic pattern or hidden variable even if these remain unknown to us. However, John von Neumann and John Bell later demonstrated that there is no such hidden variable, and that in fact there cannot be such a deterministic pattern. In other words, Quantum physics shows not merely that *we* cannot determine and predict the behavior of subatomic particles, but also that their behavior is *itself* indeterministic and unpredictable. It has been proven, therefore, that the type of Laplacean determinism presented above is simply not true, at least on the subatomic level. As Heisenberg put it:

> In the strict formulation of the causality law – when we know the present precisely,
> we can calculate the future – it is not the final clause, but rather the premise, that is
> false. We cannot know the present in all its determining details (Peitgen 12).

However, how significant is this discovery for the deterministic worldview as a whole and for the free will debate more specifically? Although it is impossible to determine the position and velocity of an electron simultaneously, it is not at all difficult to determine both the position and velocity of a car simultaneously. Certainly, there will be subatomic uncertainties in this calculation, but these do not affect either ordinary experience or scientific investigation of non-subatomic objects. What does subatomic indeterminism matter for us, who do not deal with the world on the subatomic level? Quantum physics by itself, therefore, may undermine the *theoretical* justification of the deterministic worldview, but it has little effect on our practical employment of it.

The picture of the effects of Quantum physics on the free will debate is equally bleak. Arthur Eddington, a physicist commenting on freedom and determinism, states that even if von Neumann and Bell's proofs are called into question, Quantum physics shifts the burden of proof onto the determinist's shoulders, for "it is the determinist who puts forward a positive proposal and [thus] the

onus of proof is on him" (347). However, Eddington is less confident that this shift contributes much to indeterminists about human freedom:

> It would be rash to suppose that the physical controlling cause [of volition] is contained in the configuration of a few dozen atoms. I should conjecture that the smallest unit of structure in which the physical effects of volition have their origin contains many billions of atoms. If such a unit behaved like an inorganic system of similar mass, the indeterminacy would be insufficient to allow appreciable freedom (348).

Even less optimistic is Wesley Salmon's account of the effect of Quantum physics in the free will debate. Since the only level in which Quantum physics provides for indeterminism is the subatomic level, the only effect Quantum physics would have in the present debate is if subatomic events could make some significant difference regarding the freedom of a choice or action. Salmon, assuming the Quantum indeterminacy of the disintegration of an atom, presents the following scenario:

> Suppose…that you are trying to make up your mind about experimenting with marijuana…. At the crucial point in your brain is an unstable atom. Its relation to the decision process is something like a trigger mechanism. If that atom disintegrates at the proper moment, it will start a process that will lead causally to the decision to smoke pot. If it does not disintegrate, you will decide against it. Does the decision… seem free? Hardly (365-6).

Salmon's intuition seems quite strong. The determination of a choice by means of a genuinely undetermined disintegration of an atom seems to give just as much freedom as would the determination by means of some random factor external to the agent. What is needed, Salmon indicates, is a certain degree of *control* that lacks in Quantum physics. Therefore, Quantum physics may undermine the theoretical notion of universal determinism, but Quantum indeterminacy alone provides no freedom of choice and no reason to believe it has any significant effect on choice making.

Switching over to Chaos theory, after giving a brief explanation of the theory itself I will proceed to investigate whether this new scientific theory can further debunk the deterministic worldview and establish indeterminist freedom. Chaos theory has its origins in several scientific studies of the middle of the 20th century. Most famously, in Edward Lorenz's study of weather forecasting from where we get the term "butterfly effect." In a nutshell, Lorenz discovered that minute alterations in the initial conditions of a weather forecasting program could have monstrous consequences in the actual forecasts produced by the program. This alone may not seem so mind-blowing, but when it was shown that this is how the weather *actually* behaves, then Chaos seems a little more interesting. After all, what Lorenz indicates is that something as insignificant as the

fluttering of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can actually determine whether or not a hurricane forms over Florida (See Peitgen, 41-2).[1] The interesting thing about Chaos, therefore, is that even simple systems that have been taken to be deterministic "can generate random behavior, and that randomness is fundamental; gathering more information does not make it disappear" (Peitgen 10). Chaos is this fundamental randomness, and it has been found not only in the weather, but also in the movement of tectonic plates, in the motion of turbulent fluids, in the growth of populations, and even in the Stock Market. It would seem, therefore, that just as Quantum physics debunked determinism in the subatomic level, so would Chaos theory rule out determinism in many other systems and perhaps in the universe as a whole.

However, this conclusion is much too rash. In order to see why, we only need to refer to the technical definition of Chaos: "Technically, scientists term as 'chaotic' those nonrandom complicated motions that exhibit a very rapid growth of errors that, *despite perfect determinism*, inhibits any *pragmatic* ability to render accurate long-term prediction" (Peitgen 6, emphasis added). The "fundamental randomness" to which I referred to in the previous paragraph is in fact a merely *seeming* randomness, it doesn't rule out causal determinism.

> An apparent paradox is that chaos is deterministic, generated by fixed rules which do not themselves involve any elements of change.... In principle, the future is completely determined by the past; but in practice small uncertainties, much like minute errors of measurements which enter into calculations, are amplified, with the effect that even though the behavior is predictable in the short term, it is unpredictable over the long term (Peitgen 11).

Chaos theory, therefore, is similar to Quantum physics insofar as it proclaims some fundamental unpredictability in nature. Unlike Quantum physics, however, the unpredictability of Chaos has not been shown to involve any ultimately indeterministic process. In other words, it remains possible that there exists, insofar as Chaos is concerned, hidden variables that function in a merely deterministic pattern, and although Chaos theory indicates that *we* cannot determine and predict the behavior of chaotic systems, it remains possible that their behavior is deterministic nevertheless.

It is not surprising, therefore, that most philosophers have not taken Chaos theory to provide any significant contribution to the free will debate against the deterministic worldview. This attitude is exemplified by Eleonore Stump, who reiterates my analysis of Chaos as follows:

> What chaos theory undermines is just our ability to predict or explain the causal chains of events found in nature. So we might suppose that even if deterministic causal series aren't always predictable, they nonetheless exist.... So on this view, the events at the time of the Big Bang are the start of causal chains that eventually lead in a deterministic way...to all subsequent events, including brain events, even if those subsequent events aren't knowable of predictable at the time of the Big Bang (82).

If Chaos theory contributes anything to the free will debate, therefore, it is not in support of indeterminism but rather of compatibilism, for we can now account for the unpredictability of human behavior in terms of Chaos without having to undermine the traditional commitment to the deterministic worldview.

Despite the pyrrhic victory of Quantum physics over determinism and the counterproductive effect that Chaos theory has on its own, it is in their *connection* that these theories most successfully oppose the deterministic worldview. What Quantum physics demonstrates is that the Laplacean argument (viz. "if you know the present precisely, you can predict the future") is wrong because its presuppositions are erroneous – it is impossible to know the present *precisely* because there exists genuine indeterminism at the subatomic level. What Chaos theory now demonstrates is that not only is the Laplacean premise wrong, so is the conclusion: even knowing everything we can know about the present state, it remains impossible to predict the future. "The validity of the [Laplacean] causality principle is narrowed by the [Quantum] uncertainty principle from one end as well as by the intrinsic instability properties of the underlying natural laws [described by Chaos theory] from the other end" (Peitgen 14). It seems, therefore, that the deterministic worldview can finally be put aside with the aid of these recent scientific discoveries. There exist genuine undetermined events at the subatomic level, and these undetermined events are chaotically amplified to generate truly random consequences in large scales. Thus, although determinism *seems* to hold in short periods for certain large systems, the real nature of the universe is inherently indeterministic. But how does this defeat of the deterministic worldview affect the free will debate?

Robert Kane is the only libertarian to my knowledge that has capitalized on this success of Quantum physics and Chaos theory. His argument is that, since it is possible that minute Quantum indeterminacies in the brain are chaotically amplified during decision making, it is possible that there exists genuine indeterminism in the decision making process. What Kane's theory suggests is a response to Eddington's concern raised earlier, for through Chaos theory Kane is able to indicate how Quantum indeterminacy plays a role in decision making. However, it is far less clear that Kane's theory can withstand Salmon's objection presented earlier. Salmon's objection may remain valid because the indeterminism of Quantum physics is still the only source of indeterminism in Kane's theory, and it is hard to imagine how the truly random behavior of subatomic particles is under the control of the agent in such a way that provides him with responsibility over his choices. Certainly, Kane's theory is far more complex than my outline in this paragraph, but nevertheless his results are avidly contested by compatibilists. Since a thorough discussion of Kane's theory along with compatibilist objections transcends by far the time and space provided by this essay, I intend to close this first part of my essay with the inconclusive remark that even though recent advances in science have undermined the Laplacean notion of universal determinism and moved us beyond the

deterministic worldview of which I spoke at the introduction of this essay, it remains uncertain whether these conclusions really provide for any *positive* argument for indeterminist free will. At most, the indeterminists can attempt to shift the burden of proof onto the compatibilists, but even this strategy does not settle the impasse in which the philosophy of action currently finds itself.

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II

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Despite the inability of Quantum physics and Chaos theory to decisively establish incompatibilist freedom in the face of causal determinism, I believe that there exists another form of determinism regarding which these scientific advances are far more productive, viz. *theological* determinism. It was briefly mentioned in the introduction that this other form of determinism is as much a part of the deterministic *Zeitgeist* as Laplace's demon, and in this second part of my essay I intend to show how Chaos theory aids in dispelling deterministic intuitions regarding God's omniscience and human freedom. This solution of the problem of theological determinism is that God in fact *does not know* future free actions. In this second section, I intend to define this argument, discern the main objections to it, and attempt to dispel at least some of these objections utilizing Chaos theory.

Before discussing this solution to the problem of theological determinism, however, I find it important to trace its roots to the Aristotelian solution to the closely related problem of *logical* determinism. What I here define as the Aristotelian solution to the problem of *logical* determinism is the claim that, because contingent propositions about the future lack a truth value, no sound logical argument can be given for determinism or fatalism based solely on the truth value of future contingents. For example, it is *now* neither true nor false that Brazil wins the 2006 World Cup. The proposition that describes this event *may* become true in 2006, and it *may* not. Were I to have expressed this proposition last year, and were Brazil to win the World Cup next year, I would certainly have expressed a truth. Yet this expression *becomes* true (or false) *only* in 2006 when Brazil in fact does (or doesn't) win the World Cup. The Aristotelian solution requires, therefore, the explicit denial of the principle of bivalence, the principle that every proposition has (eternally, it seems) a truth value. This is the critical point where I acknowledge that some will be philosophically dissatisfied with the Aristotelian solution. Logicians seem to want a simple system in which the principle of bivalence holds, because it has been difficult to formulate a widely accepted three-value system of logics. However, given the possibility of the radical indeterminism that libertarian freedom requires us to attribute to the world, it seems at least possible that since free events are undetermined prior to their occurrence, by the same token the truth value of the propositions which describe these events are also undetermined prior to the occurrence of these events. Whether the denial of the principle of bivalence results in an intractable problem of logics is an issue that I must

leave aside for now. My concern is merely to indicate that, at little prima facie cost, it is possible to formulate an adequate solution to the problems of logical and theological determinism with the aid of Chaos theory, and that this theory rests on the intuition that future contingent propositions lack truth value (or at least appropriate *grounding* for such truth value) until their occurrence.

Returning now to the central argument of this section, I believe that the notion of essential omniscience draws an intrinsic connection between the problem of logical and theological determinism. This connection was articulated by Ted Warfield in a beautifully clear and concise essay, where he claims that *if* the problem of logical determinism is solved, so is the problem of theological determinism. Warfield adopts the following, rather unproblematic definition of divine omniscience: "God knows all true propositions" (80). Given this definition of omniscience, and the reasonable assumptions that if God exists, he exists necessarily and is necessarily omniscient, Warfield argues straightforwardly that propositions such as

(3) It was true in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD, and

(5) God knew in 50 AD that Plantinga will climb Mount Rushmore in 2000 AD

are necessarily equivalent (82).[2] Thus, Warfield argues that if it can be shown that the truth of (3) does not preclude the freedom of Plantinga's action in 2000 (in other words, if the problem of *logical* determinism can somehow be solved), then neither will the truth of (5) preclude Plantinga's action in 2000 from being free, i.e. the problem of theological determinism is also solved. I agree completely with Warfield so far. I disagree, however, with his assumption that the problem of logical fatalism has been solved in such a way that allows for the compatibility of foreknowledge and libertarian freedom (80), as evident above. Accepting his argument, though not his assumptions, therefore, I believe it is possible to indicate how the Aristotelian solution to the problem of *logical* determinism would also apply to the problem of *theological* determinism. That is, since the truth of (3) would preclude Plantinga's action in 2000 from being free, so would the truth of (5). And if the best way to escape logical determinism is to deny that propositions like (3) can be true, then similarly the best way to escape theological determinism is to deny that propositions like (5) can be true.

Concerns regarding the denial of the principle of bivalence aside, it is clear that the Aristotelian solution to the problem of theological determinism is *philosophically* satisfactory. An argument for theological determinism can validly be refuted if the premise that God has foreknowledge of future contingents is shown to be unsound. The main concern regarding the Aristotelian solution to the problem of theological determinism, therefore, is not whether it is philosophically acceptable but rather whether it is *theologically* acceptable. In what way can divine omniscience, providence and sovereignty be sufficiently maintained if God does not know future contingents? These are the questions that I now intend to address.

There are two main theological objections to the Aristotelian solution. The first is that Aristotelianism seems unsupported by scriptures. Although I trust that most scriptural passages

regarding the issue can be reinterpreted metaphorically or in such a way that is not incompatible with Aristotelianism, this is a task I must leave for biblically oriented theologians and will not address in the present essay. The second objection is more philosophical in nature. It is the concern that Aristotelians are unable to account for divine omniscience and providence satisfactorily, and this gives rise to a new aspect of the problem of evil that is problematic specifically for Aristotelians: viz. that a God who does not know future contingents creates a world recklessly, without knowing exactly how things will turn out. It would be possible, therefore, that God could create a world that becomes so infested with evil, so absolutely repugnant, that it would not be justified to consider God *good* in face of such reckless creation. This objection to Aristotelianism is strong indeed, for it claims that it undermine not only the traditional notions of omniscience and providence, but also God's ultimate goodness as well.

In response to the objection at hand, Aristotelians can argue that the notion that God does not know future contingents need not imply that God is not omniscient, for omniscience can be satisfactorily defined as "knowledge of all truths" (as Warfield defined) or alternatively as "knowledge of everything that can be known." According to the first definition of omniscience, Aristotelians can still claim that God is omniscient (i.e. knows all truths), despite the fact that God does not yet know the truth value of propositions regarding future contingents, for such propositions are neither truths nor falsehoods prior to the occurrence of events they describe. Similarly, Aristotelians can still claim that God is omniscient according to the second definition of omniscience (i.e. knows everything that can be known) despite the fact that God has no knowledge of future free actions. As Aristotelians claim that propositions about future contingents do not yet have truth value, it is possible to argue further that future free actions are inherently not things that can be known. Just as not being able to perform an action that cannot be performed due to its inherent nature (like drawing a round square) is traditionally not taken to detract from God's omnipotence, the Aristotelian can argue that not being able to know something that cant be known due to its inherent nature (like undetermined facts about the future) does not detract from God's omniscience.

Given that omniscience can be understood this way, the weight of the objection against Aristotelianism is shifted to the issue of divine sovereignty and the problem of evil. Therefore, the heart of the current objection is that if God does not know future contingents, he cannot know how creation will unfold and thus *knowingly* intend or permit that creation unfold as it does through free human agency. However, it is only *if* he cannot know how creation will unfold that God's providence is undermined and his behavior deemed reckless. In response to this objection, I will provide an Aristotelian way of conceiving of God's knowledge that counters this objection, i.e. it denies that God cannot know how creation will unfold *even though* he does not know future free actions. The way I intend to demonstrate this conception of God's knowledge is through an analogy

with an aspect of Chaos theory called "the Chaos game." I will first explain this analogy and then attempt to show how it counters the objection at hand.

Although Chaos theory is normally associated with knowledge of near events and inability to know distant consequences, there exists also an aspect of Chaos theory that has something like the reverse effect, viz. despite lack of knowledge of near events, we can yet have certain knowledge of distant consequences. The Chaos game is the classical example of this aspect of Chaos theory. In order to "play" the Chaos game, we must randomly generate the numbers 1, 2, and 3. A die would suffice for practical purposes, although a Quantum-based random number generator could also be used.

The random numbers which appear as we play the game, for example, 2, 3, 2, 2, 1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 1, …, will drive a process. The process is characterized by three simple rules. To describe the rules we have to prepare the game board. [The figure attached at the end of the essay] shows the setup: three markers, labeled 1, 2, and 3, which form a triangle.

Now we are ready to play. Let us introduce the rules as we play. Initially we pick an arbitrary point on the board and mark it by a tiny dot. This is our current *game point*. For future reference we denote it by Z_0. Now we throw the die. Assume the result is 2. Now we generate the new game point Z_1, which is located at the midpoint between the current game point Z_0 and the marker with label 2. This is the first step of the game. Now you can probably guess what the other two rules are. Assume we have played the game for K steps. We have thus generated Z_1, …, Z_k. Roll the die. When the result is N generate a new game point Z_{k+1}, which is placed exactly at the midpoint between Z_k and the marker labeled N…. A pattern seems to emerge which is just as boring and arbitrary as the structure of a random walk. But that observation is a far cry from the reality. In (a) we have run the game up to K = 100, in (b) up to k = 500, in (c) up to k = 1000, and in (d) up to K = 10,000 steps.[3]

The impression which [these images] leave behind is such that we are included, at first, not to believe our eyes. We have just seen the generation of the Sierpinski gasket by a random process, which is amazing because the Sierpinski gasket has become a paragon of structure and order for us. In other words, we have seen how randomness can create a perfectly deterministic shape. To put it still another way, if we follow the time process step by step, we cannot predict where the next game point will land because it is determined by throwing a die. But nevertheless, the pattern which all the game points together leave behind is absolutely predictable. This demonstrated an interesting interplay between randomness and deterministic fractals (Peitgen 278-9).

As one may already predict, the analogy is that just as we have certain knowledge that Sierpinski's gasket will unfold despite the fact that it is impossible to predict where any point will fall, so can God know with certainty how creation will unfold despite the fact that he cannot

foreknow or predict any free human actions. In order to clarify the analogy, I shall point to each aspect of the Chaos game and indicate how it corresponds analogically to God's knowledge and its relation to free agency.

In the Chaos game, there are three original points arranged in the shape of an equilateral triangle and one arbitrary point within the triangle. In the analogy, these correspond to the initial conditions which God sets up in the world (perhaps something like space and all physical objects within it). In the Chaos game, the moment of this "setting up" of the game is Z_0, in the analogy this moment is the moment of creation (perhaps the Big Bang, or the moment immediately prior to it). The first step of the game, the drawing of Z_1, is the first undetermined and unpredictable point of the game. In the analogy, this corresponds to the first free action, which is both undetermined and unpredictable (perhaps the fall of Adam). Each further point may represent another undetermined and unpredictable free action. The Sierpinski gasket which appears after enough points are drawn corresponds in the analogy to the state of the world at the end of times, the perfection of creation. Since God and his creation are good, we may assume that the figure of the Sierpinski gasket corresponds in the analogy to a sufficiently good aspect of the completion of creation (perhaps the state of creation in which all evil is morally justified, or the "best possible world"). Thus, our ability to know that Sierpinski's gasket will unfold through the truly indeterministic process of the game corresponds in the analogy to God's ability to know that ultimately creation will unfold as he knowingly intends or permits. Most importantly, our ability to know that Sierpinski's gasket will unfold despite the fact that we do cannot predict any specific point corresponds in the analogy to God's ability to predict the unfolding of creation despite the fact that he cannot predict any specific free actions or the outcome of the lives of any free human agents.

Certainly there are many possible objections to this analogy. The first objection is that in the Chaos game, the formation of Sierpinski's gasket is causally determined given the initial conditions and the rules of the game. It would seem, therefore, that all of creation is causally determined by God's creative power in a similar way, and hence the legitimacy of human freedom is still at stake. In response to this objection, it is granted that the analogy indicates that the unfolding of creation is determined by God in the initial conditions and in the process he sets up through which creation unfolds. Notice, however, that the process of the Chaos game *includes* the fact that the placement of each point is *undetermined*. In a certain way, the process determines that the placement of the points be undetermined. Similarly in the analogy, therefore, the process God sets up is such that human free actions are themselves *undetermined*. God determines that free actions be undetermined, and in doing so God waves his ability to know future free actions. The fact that God determines the unfolding of creation by determining the initial conditions of creation and the process through which it unfolds does not infringe on the indeterministic freedom of humans because it is *through* the

indeterministic process of human free agency that God determines the goodness of creation in its perfection.

Another possible objection is that, although the placement of points is completely undetermined in the Chaos game, all points must nevertheless fall within certain predetermined boundaries. In the analogy, therefore, human free actions must also, despite their indeterminacy, fall within certain boundaries. This restriction may undermine the significance of the indeterminacy of free actions. In response, however, we admit that our actions, even those taken to be free, are restricted by several boundaries such as the laws of physics, our physical abilities, the circumstances in which we find ourselves, etc. The imposition of *some* restrictions need not undermine the significance of free agency, however, so long as the options remaining are morally relevant and significantly different. The objector may insist that the alternatives cannot be morally relevant because whichever alternative is taken, it must be in the end be the "good" alternative, for it ultimately contributes to God's intended goodness and perfection of creation. However, there already is much in the literature indicating that the ultimate goodness of creation need not imply that *every* aspect of creation is itself good, so long as the inclusion of evil aspects are morally justified in the perfection of creation. The ultimate goodness of creation implied in the analogy, therefore, may truly include evil aspects so long as it provides, as indicated above, for ultimate moral justification.

An objection that does discern a shortcoming of the analogy is that in the Chaos game the indeterministic process is genuine *randomness*, while in the analogy it is human free agency, and not randomness. However, this is an issue where the analogy *must* fall short, since if in illustrating this Chaos game we were to appeal to free agency as the mechanism that drives the process, we would merely include in the explanation that which must be explained. The only way to illustrate this notion of God's knowledge in such a way that does not beg the question is to draw an analogy between the indeterministic freedom of agents to something *other* than that. The closest thing in nature to indeterministic free agency is Quantum randomness, for it is the only thing known to be undetermined. The reason why this shortcoming of the analogy becomes problematic is because we must make the analogy between free *agents* and something other than agents (i.e. the points in the Chaos game). However, anything other than free agents (e.g. subatomic particles), since they are not *agents* that can be in control of their own behavior, may be *indeterministic* like free agents and yet never more than merely random, and in this *latter* aspect they will be unlike free agents.

These observations point to the fact that, even if this notion of God's knowledge and its relation to human freedom is accepted, it presupposes something like agent causation. Indeed, it assumes *libertarian freedom* insofar as it claims that there must be some way in which an agent's free choice (undetermined by definition) can *still* be under his control. Indeterminism alone is not sufficient for *control* is also required. Providing a satisfactory account of control is the most difficult task for libertarians. It is also a task that transcends the scope of this paper. My intention in this
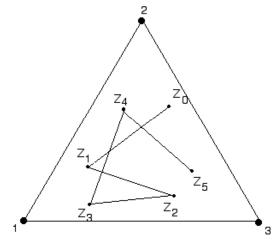
essay is merely to demonstrate, by means of this analogy with Chaos theory, how God may have certain knowledge of the unfolding of creation while simultaneously lacking certain knowledge of future free actions. Thus, it is most important to emphasize that, just as in the Chaos game it is not despite the indeterminacy of the process that Sierpinski's gasket is formed but rather through the undetermined placement of the points that the figure is generated, likewise in the present analogy it is not *despite* the indeterminacy of free actions that God's providence is maintained, but rather *through* human free agency itself that creation unfolds to its perfection as God knowingly intends and permits.

It is not difficult to imagine how Aristotelianism accounts for divine providence despite not only indeterminism but also genuine unpredictability of human free actions. If genuine love requires that an agent freely choose to love the beloved, then God could not have *caused* human beings to love him or one another. The only way in which God could create creatures capable of loving him and one another is if he created them genuinely free to choose to love or not. This genuine freedom, however, necessarily includes the possibility that one might choose *not* to love God and humanity. This would be moral evil. If it is the case that the world was created so that a good and loving God could bring about goodness and love through his creation, then it is necessary that God's creatures be *free* to love him and each other in return. If in creating creatures with this degree of radical freedom God must renounce his ability to foreknow their free choices, this seems to be a small price to pay when compared to genuine love. In other words, if the incompatibilism between human freedom and God's knowledge of future contingents is true as I argue,[4] then we are forced to choose between God's goodness and love and God's knowledge of future contingents. When faced with this choice, it does not seem unreasonable to give up God's foreknowledge as Aristotelians do in order to emphasize God's goodness and love.

In the second part of this essay, I have attempted to show that Chaos theory productively aids in addressing theological determinism. In conceiving of God's omniscience as not involving foreknowledge of free choices, it is only through the analogy with the Chaos game that God's providence and goodness are rescued from the charge of recklessness. Certainly, the present analogy is only sufficient to explain how God's omniscience need not conflict with free actions. Although the present essay provides nothing but a rough outline of this notion of God's knowledge and its relation to free actions, I believe this is the most original and promising path in attempting to solve the problem of theological determinism. Moreover, the great value of Chaos theory in discussing theological determinism increases the hope that recent scientific advances may still aid in discussing the remaining deterministic challenges to incompatibilist freedom that were left unresolved in the first part of this essay. After all, scientific advances such as Chaos theory are only in their infancy, and original thinking in such areas can still yield surprisingly good and thought provoking results.[5]

Notes

[1] See also Edward Lorenz, "Predictability: does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?", talk given at the December 1972 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, D.C.

[2] Warfield actually argues that (3) and (5) are "logically equivalent" (82), yet discerns in a footnote that "strictly speaking, all that is needed here is that (3) logically implies (5)" (85). I wish to point out that it is only this logical *implication* that is required, and I insist on no claim of logical *equivalence*. I owe this point to Kirk Ludwig.

[3] The first figure illustrates the first 5 steps of the Chaos game:

The next figures illustrate the game at (a) 100, (b) 500, (c) 1,000, and (d) 10,000 points.

[4] Other philosophers who have also argued this position include William Hasker, Nelson Pike, Richard Swinburne, and Peter Geach.

[5] I am thankful to Fernanda Oliveira for introducing me to Chaos theory and giving me much support and important comments in the earliest stages of my thinking about the issues presented here. I am also indebted to several friends from both New College of Florida and the 2005 University of Colorado Summer Seminar for their comments, objections, and encouragement.

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Thrasymachus' Perverse Disavowal

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> Disposition to perversions of every kind is a fundamental human characteristic.
> *Three Essays on Sexuality* (Freud, 1905: 191)

Introduction

Perversion. What could it possibly have to do with philosophy and the pursuit of truth? But what if we were to call it by one of its ancient names—tyranny? Or even sophistry? What might we say about it then? As Jonathan Lear has pointed out, what is at issue in both Platonic philosophy and psychoanalysis is an account of psychic structure, a logic of the soul.[1] Where psychoanalysis distinguishes the Hysteric, the Obsessional, the Pervert and the Psychotic (and possibly also phobic) structures of desire, Plato's political philosophy similarly distinguishes four or five character types which correspond to political constitutions, which are also defined by their desire: Kingship or Aristocracy, Timocracy, the Oligarchy, Democracy[2] and finally, Tyranny[3]—to which no constitution corresponds in as much as it is principally marked by lawlessness.[4] Indeed, Lear even remarks that Plato "can be credited with the invention of psyche-analysis, at least in the sense of being the first to give a systematic account of a structured psyche."[5] My goal here, however, is not to draw out Plato's account of psychic structure in general, but to point out a parallel between the psychoanalytic conception of perverse structure and Plato's portrait of the sophist in the *Republic*, and to explore some of its implications. What I propose is that tyranny (or rather the desire to be tyrant and rule over others without limit) which is promoted and even made into a fetish by the sophist Thrasymachus in Book I of the *Republic*, is the ancient name of what psychoanalysis calls perversion. Just as the pervert acts to "bring the law into being,"[6] because he desires a more durable, natural law that is not lacking in any way, the sophist also tries to bring a sham version of the law into being in order to demonstrate the inferiority of the conventional conception of justice because he perceives its lack of foundation. His need to make a speech[7] that persuades others is, in effect, a kind of demonstration—and like the demonstration of the pervert it requires the others and their beliefs if it is to achieve its effect.

Reading sophistry through perversion sheds new light on Plato that should work as a healthy corrective to both the psychoanalytic tendency to dismiss philosophy as a university discourse in

service of mastery as well as the philosophic tendency to reject in advance any claim that psychoanalysis might have anything to do with philosophy. As Lear has remarked, too often philosophy and psychoanalysis have dismissed one another through "symbolic murders" in which a single statement or position is used to dismiss any possible similarity in advance. "Each profession [has] thus worked actively to assure itself it was alright" to remain ignorant of the other, "indeed, one *ought* to remain ignorant. All in the name of maintaining high standards.[8] Such prejudices on both sides have effectively prevented an appropriate understanding of what is at stake in Plato, beyond the traditional interpretation embraced by Nietzsche and the bulk of contemporary continental philosophy, which effectively reduces Plato to Platonist metaphysics.

In what follows I propose there is a tension between Plato's ostensibly metaphysical doctrines and his strikingly dramatic representation of the Philosophical life, and it is my hope that this paper will suggest the possibility of approaching that tension from a new direction by showing that Plato is more engaged in understanding and working through the implications of what psychoanalysis calls the lack in the law (or the lack in signifier—a Lacanian notion which names the law's lack of foundation) than with the elaboration of the metaphysical doctrines of which he is said to be the author. After establishing that Plato's portrait of the sophist exhibits the same structure as perverse disavowal (*Verleugnung*), I briefly consider what this similar structure implies for Plato's assessment of philosophy and politics.

The Psychoanalytic Conception of Perversion

To grasp how perversion is similar to sophistry, we must first consider how psychoanalysis defines perversion. Let us begin by recalling that for Freud all human sexuality is tinged with perversion in as much as human sexuality begins with the infant's "polymorphously perverse disposition,"[9] which is normatively shaped and molded by passing through the Oedipus complex. For Freud, the pervert is someone who has only partially passed through the castration complex, and has not made it through the sexually normalizing passage through the Oedipus complex. Consider Freud's account of infantile sexuality.[10] Confronted by the enigma of sexual difference, the little boy interprets the anatomical difference between the sexes as evidence that the girl's penis has been cut off. For the little boy, it is a sign that the father has made good on his castration threat to punish the son's nascent sexual activities. For the girl it is a wrong she has suffered for which she must compensate. So, for the boy there is castration anxiety; for the girl the infamous penis envy. According to this account, which is written from the perspective of the child's attempt to explain the enigma of sexual difference,[11] there is only maleness because absence cannot be represented in the

unconscious. The child, in other words, cannot represent lack. It can only interpret femininity as the absence of a phallus, or penis, which the child speculates must have been cut off, or otherwise lost as a result of the paternal threat.

Freud postulates that the pervert both sees and subsequently disavows this absence of the maternal phallus.[12] Indeed, the fact that he denies this absence is evidence that he sees it, for wanting to see something again is only possible on the basis of having seen.[13] In other words, having first glimpsed that mother lacks a penis, the little boy wants to look again to prove that she does have one and to disavow her lack. This disavowal of what he has actually seen is a way of dealing with castration anxiety before the fact, by completely avoiding it, and represents a regression from the genital phase. Rather than restricting his nascent pursuit of sexual pleasure, the pervert will do almost anything to continue it, to the point of disavowing what he has clearly seen in a splitting of consciousness that is similar to that which occurs in repression. Thus, the pervert is someone whose sexual activity is not normalized by the Oedipus complex.

In "Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence" Freud says the usual result of castration threat, the normal one, is that boy gives way to this threat and surrenders his pleasure. The less common result is to create a substitute penis, and thus disavow reality—in a state in which he preserves his pleasure and his penis from the threat that is ascribed to the father. His calm is thus bought at the price of his disavowal:

> So long as he was not obliged to acknowledge that females have lost their penis, there was no need for him to believe the threat had been made against him: he need have no fear for his own penis, so he could proceed with his masturbation undisturbed.[14]

Fetishism, which is in many ways emblematic of perversion,[15] seizes upon some proximate association to provide a substitute for this missing maternal penis, which comes to have all the power of the missing organ. The pervert's fetish and his disavowal function together to guarantee that the world is already full, replete with pleasure. Their function is to ensure the fetishist that his enjoyment can continue unabated and unhindered by any paternal threat of castration. His fetish is endowed with a magical power of ensuring the fetishist that there is no lack in the world and the paternal threat is ineffectual and untrue so that pleasure can continue without end. This accounts for the monstrous excess in the works of Sade—the whole point is to show that enjoyment never needs to stop, but constitutes its own law,[16] which is more stable and enduring, and thus, more truly law, than the conventional, normative law it subverts.

The difficulty with Freud's account is that he tends to equivocate between penis and phallus.[17] A Lacanian approach dispels this confusion by clearly distinguishing between the domain of desire and that of physiology. Whereas Freud tends to use penis and phallus almost interchangeably, "for Lacan, the phallus represents for the child the signifier of the Mother's desire

with which the child attempts to identify."[18]   Thus, Freud's account of disavowing the sight of the maternal penis can be reinterpreted on the order of desire as a disavowal of the mother's lack—e.g., as an inability to represent the Mother's desire for anything other than or beyond the child itself, who attempts to incarnate her desired object. Thus, disavowal is a failure on the part of the child to symbolize adequately anything beyond the desire of the Mother. But for the child to see itself as the privileged object that fills the Mother's lack necessarily implies that the child knows something about the order of law, which mediates the lack it proposes to fill. In other words, inasmuch as the child seeks to fill the maternal lack, it necessarily encounters the paternal law, which would require it to give up position of being the exclusive object of maternal *jouissance*. Thus the child is confronted by an obstacle and comes up with an ingenious solution, which permits it to continue its masturbatory pleasure. Rather than accepting the inevitable castrating force of law, the child disavows the notion that the Other is lacking, disputes the validity of the law of the father and denigrates it by promoting the idea that there is no genuine law apart form the law of enjoyment.[19]

The crucial point is that this law of *jouissance*, which the pervert promotes, is itself based on a prior acknowledgement and subsequent disavowal of the lack in the paternal law, which demands that the child give up this enjoyment. Having partially acceded to the paternal law, but without traversing the Oedipus complex, the pervert is torn between a desire for there to be law on the one hand, and the *jouissance* of the all powerful other from whom the pervert seeks protection on the other. The solution to this dilemma is a demonstration in which this *jouissance* of the other (that the pervert equates with the lack in the Other that is disavowed) is shown as filled, because nothing can be lacking according to nature. Thus, the pervert's goal is to shift the threatening *jouissance* of which the other enjoys in him onto a natural foundation, which would bring a law into being that would not deceive and upon which he could depend and rely. He does this by staging a demonstration, which usurps the father's law and the lack it imposes, showing both to be a sham in order to realize the triumph of the more natural law of enjoyment.

Thrasymachus' arguments in praise of the life of the tyrant, and his subsequent reversal of the conventional law in book I of *The Republic* show the sophist to be caught up in just such a strategy perverse of demonstration. If the sophist praises the life of the tyrant as supremely just, it is because the tyrant is the one who is exempt and excepted from the rule of law, and the demonstration of the imagined superiority of this exemption is the sophist's principal aim. He achieves this by persuading others that the unjust law of tyranny is naturally better, and hence, more truly law than conventional law (*nomos*). But this reversal can only work by appealing to the conventional standards of justice from which the unjust life of the tyrant is the exception.[20]

The Dutch analyst Paul Verhaeghe makes a similar point about how the pervert relates to conventional authority in his recent book *On Being Normal and Other Disorders*:

> Disavowal is not restricted to the sexual relationship. It determines the pervert's entire relation to the Others of sexual difference and of authority. In the pervert's own world there is no lack and its own laws are imposed on the Other. In the conventional world, the law will apparently be followed, that is to say, the pervert acts on the assumption that *others will follow the conventional rules*, and he or she will make full use of this knowledge.[21]

Like the pervert, the sophist wants to claim that nature is superior to conventional law (that *physis* is superior to *nomos*) but this can only be demonstrated through a backhanded admission of the superiority of the conventional view of justice (e.g., of *nomos*), which everyone publicly professes. Thus, Thrasymachus says "What if I show you a different answer about Justice than all of these—and a better one? What would you deserve then?"[22] After presenting this answer—"Listen, then, I say that justice is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger. Well, why don't you praise me?" (338c)—he perversely tries to persuade the others of its truth by appealing to their desire to exempt themselves from the law and by showing the law to be without any external incentive which would justify it: "you must look at it as follows, my most simple Socrates: a just man gets less than an unjust one."[23] Thus, as Aristotle says in the *Rhetoric*, the sophist depends on the fact that "men appeal to one thing openly, and another in their secret thoughts."[24] And he exploits this fact to demonstrate that the law to which the others submit is a sham.

But if every law has an exception, this does not mean that every exception necessarily constitutes a law. For the sophist's exception to be able to replace the law would require the validity of justice to be initially perceived by the sophist, but its force to be subsequently denied or disavowed. In other words, it would require that justice be something initially desired, but subsequently rejected as ineffectual, and therefore worthy of disdain.

In the *Republic*, this theme of initial interest followed by disaffection is echoed and intensified in the challenge Glaucon poses to Socrates at the beginning of Book II where he is asked to show that the life of the just man is superior to the life of the unjust man, even if it has no external rewards.[25] The discussion is of interest to those present precisely because they are potentially in this same position of becoming similarly disaffected, and persuaded that the life of injustice is better than justice. Plato begins his dialogue on justice with the portrayal of this discussion (and the psychic structure or attitude it reveals), because the souls of those listening to this conversation, like the souls of those who read the dialogue, are potentially at risk of being persuaded that the advantages of the life of the unjust man show it to be preferable to the life of the just man. Thrasymachus' character and his argument say something fundamental about our political and ethical situation, and our relation to law, that frames the subsequent discussion and exhibits the ethical choices made by the participants. In as much as justice is without visible reward and has no external incentives Thrasymachus expresses the fundamental challenge that must be overturned if law is to be justified,

and the reason for obeying the law is to be explained. As such, his attitude, which celebrates the life of the tyrant, marks the limits of the political because it marks the point where persuasion ceases and coercion begins.

But let us look more closely at what Thrasymachus' position or attitude involves. It is not a question of simply asserting the natural superiority of Tyranny; the sophist goes a step further, and tries to demonstrate that this superiority is just as well (i.e., he tries to show that *physis*, or nature, should become *nomos*, or conventional law); and in a way that actually avows and depends upon the force of the very conventional conception of justice that his disavowal denies. What the sophist wants is for his "better answer" about justice to be agreed upon by all as a natural standard that would (perversely) also be accepted by everyone and have the force of conventional justice. His demonstration requires the collusion of the crowd. If he could persuade the crowd that the conventional definition of justice should be "the advantage of the stronger" by appealing to their secret wish to exempt themselves from the law (a wish which can be equated with the neurotic's fascination with the pervert, and his fantasy that the pervert has access to an unlimited *jouissance*), then his demonstration of the ineptitude of conventional law would, for a time, succeed.

The irony in this position is that the sophist demonstrates the very thing he finds most intolerable: the lack in the law, *viz.*, its lack of any defensible foundation inasmuch as it shows that the just life lacks external incentives. It is this insight into the lack in the law that forms the "basis" or introduction for Glaucon's call for Socrates to defend the life of the just man in Book II.

What I am proposing is that Plato's portrait of sophistic disavowal is tantamount to the analytic insight into the lack in the signifier—or the structural absence of foundation of the law that the Lacanian analyst Willy Appollon has called the *Infonde*, or the unfounded aspect of the symbolic law's representation of authority.[26]   Indeed, Appollon also makes the point that the social representation of authority is "grounded" on and conceals this groundlessness: "It is on the ground of such a lack that any society has to build the representation of its authority, as a solution to the void and the emptiness men and women face when they confront the absence in the signifier."[27] Plato uses the sophist's disavowal of the law's lack of foundation in a similar way to show that the just life is without any external foundation. Whatever its force, our motive for adhering to the law can never be a question of incentives, and this is what the philosopher learns from the sophist's disavowal.

In an essay entitled "La femininite: D'une complicte a la perversion a une ethique de l'impossible," Lucie Cantin, an analyst who works with Appollon at GIFRIC[28] says something similar about the pervert's grasp of the law's lack of foundation that applies equally well to the sophist:

> Le pervers s'en tient donc à l'absence de fondement de l'ordre symbolique, à la dimension rompeuse et arbitraire de l'ordre du signifiant pour fair apparaitre que la perte de jouissance

impose au nom de cet ordre, est non seulement injustifiable, mai qu'elle *a pour fonction de recouvrir et de refouler le* defaut même du significant (the pervert thus limits himself to the lack of foundation of the symbolic order, to the deceptive and arbitrary order of the signifier, to make manifest that the loss of *jouissance* imposed in the name of that order is not only unjustifiable, but that it has the function of covering over and repressing that very lack in the signifier.[29]

In other words, for the sophist and pervert alike, anyone who surrenders *jouissance* to the conventional law is simply a dupe, for that very surrender is simply designed to cover over the law's lack of foundation. Plato beings his dialogue on justice with this challenge for by revealing the lack in the law it dramatically portrays the motive for the inquiry that *Republic* undertakes.

Socrates' response to this challenge, in the sequel of the dialogue, is to show a different stragegy of dealing with this lack, a strategy that resotres the lack to its proper place by making loss and lack into the very principle of his response by proposing what is lacking as the objecdt of a perpetual inquiry. If the sophist perceives the law's lack of foundation and tries to fill it with something more stable, the philosopher grasps this lack of foundation, too, but he tries to keep it open and maintain an awareness of its effects. He seeks to reverse the effects of the sophist's occlusion of the lack in the law, by inviting his interlocutors to a task of a continual inquiry that keeps what is lacking constantly in view. The philosopher thus inaugurates a search into the possibility of a different kind of "natural" standard for political life beyond both the conventional law of the city (in which cultural norms are in a state of crisis, and badly in need of shoring up), and the sham "law of nature" that is promoted by the sophist and the so-called "political realist" alike.[30] But to articulate this standard, the philosopher, like the analyst, must grasp what the sophist knows, and oppose the confusion he promotes. As Cantin says, "the pervert confuses the loss of enjoyment required by the law, and the structural lack introduced by language" to propose there need be no loss of enjoyment.[31] The same can be said of the sophist. What this similarity suggest is that Socrates treats the confusion between these two lacks—the limitation of enjoyment (or castration) demanded by the law and the structural lack mediated by language—by mercilessly submitting Thrasymachus to the logical order of language through an *elenchus* (e.g., a refutation) that reverses his sophistic reversal of the conventional law.[32]

While speaking to Glaucon of the difference between Thrasymachus' style of public speaking and his own, Socrates characterizes this lack in language as the difference between seeking agreement and persuading a jury:

"Did you hear all the good things Thrasymachus listed a moment ago for the unjust life?" Glaucon: I heard but I wasn't persuaded." Socrates: "Do you want us to persuade him, if we're able to find a way, that what he says isn't true? Glaucon: "Of course I do." Socrates: If we oppose him with a parallel speech about the blessings of the just life, and then he

> replies, and then we do, we'd have to count and measure the good things mentioned on each side, and we'd need a jury to decide the case. But if, on the other hand, we investigate the question, as we've been doing, by seeking agreement with each other, we ourselves can be both jury and advocates at once."[33]

If it is a question of speeches, then one can only add up incentives, or "the good things on each side" but if it is a matter of an investigation in which both parties are willing to test their statements according to the rule of logic, then a path is opened towards a standard beyond any external incentive. Incentives may hold sway in the realm of speeches, but the realm of persuasion is ruled by a higher standard which makes it possible for one to advocate for justice while simultaneously deciding on the validity of one's argument "by seeking agreement." In other words, Socrates uses "the structural lack in language" to reverse Thrasymachus' reversal of the conventional law in order to uncover the lack of foundation that Thrasymachus' disavowal tries to conceal. What he reveals again through this reversal is that persuasion and mutual investigation into this lack of round are the only possible standards of political life, short of the tyrannical force Thrasymachus advocates.

For the reader of the dialogue this Socratic treatment of Thrasymachus opens up a path to an un-imageable third, beyond the dyadic, imaginary opposition: rule or be ruled that determines both positions. By evoking the law's lack of foundation at the same instant it tries to fill it, the argument of the sophist becomes emblematic of the political problem—the problem of ruling and being ruled—as such, and this is what makes it a fitting introduction to a book about Justice.

Notes

[1] Jonathan Lear, *Open Minded: Working out the Logic of the Soul* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998), 9, 58.

[2] Plato, *Republic,* tr. G.M.A. Grube (New York: Hackett, 1992), 544d-545d.

[3] Ibid, 571a.

[4] Ibid, 571a, 572e and following.

[5] Lear, 58.

[6] Bruce Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997), 165.

[7] *Republic*, 343b-344e, and 350e.

[8] Lear, 4-5.

[9] Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905). *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 7:125-244 (London: Hogarth, 1961), 171.

[10] S.E. 7, 195.

[11] Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* 1938 [1940]a, *Standard Edition* 23:141-207 (London: Hogarth Pr, 1961), 188.

[12] Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism" (1927), *Standard Edition* 21:149-157 (London, Hogarth Pr, 1961), 154.

[13] Alain Jurainville, *Lacan et la Philosophie* (Paris: Quadrige, Presse Universitaires de France, 1984), 264.

[14] Sigmund Freud, *Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defense* (1940 [1938])b. *Standard Edition* 23:273-278 (London: Hogarth, 1961), 277.

[15] In *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis,* Freud tells us fetishism is not an exceptional case of the splitting of the ego, just a favorable case for studying it (Freud, 1938 [1940]a: 203).

[16] Jurainville, 259.

[17] In "Fetishism," for instance, first he says the fetish is a substitute for the penis (Freud, 1927: 153). Then he says it is a perception of the lack of a penis, and then he says that disavowal is a preservation of the belief in the maternal phallus in spite of the child's observation of its absence (Freud, 1927: 152). Although Freud appears to be trying to reserve the word "phallus" for the imaginary substitute for the missing penis, his tendency to slip from one term to the other promotes possible confusion between the domain of physiology and the domain of desire.

[18] Judith Feher-Gurewich, "Perversion," *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan,* ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté, (Cambrige: Cambridge UP, 2003), 195.

[19] Jurainville, 259.

[20] Aristotle's *Rhetoric* treats this relation to convention as one of the *topoi* (e.g., places, regions or lines of argument) for which the skilled rhetorician can employ stock arguments: "Another *topos* comes

from the fact that men appeal to one thing openly, and another in their secret thoughts. In public they make a great show of praising what is just or noble; but inwardly they prefer what is to their own advantage. From the premise of your opponent you must try to draw the inference he does not. (If he assumes a moral tone you appeal to the inward self-interest of the audience. If he assumes that men act from self-interest of the audience; if he assumes that men act from self-interest alone, you appeal to the motives of justice and nobility that they openly profess.) No other *topos* of paradox is as effective as this." (Aristotle, 1960: 167).

[21] Paul Verhaeghe, *On Being Normal and Other Disorders: A Manual for Clinical Diagnostics*, (New York: Other P, 2004), 412.

[22] *Republic,* 337d.

[23] *Republic,* 343d.

[24] Aristotle, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1960), 167.

[25] *Republic*, 357a-362d.

[26] Willy Apollon, "A Lasting Heresy, The Failure of Political Desire," *Lacan, Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. Apollon and Feldman (New York: SUNY P, 1966), 35.

[27] Ibid, 35.

[28] Groupes interdisciplinaire freudien de recherche et d'interventions cliniques et culturelles in Quebec. GIFRIC is an analytic organization that is best known for its success in working out a detailed program for the psychoanalytic treatment of psychotics.

[29] Lucie Cantin, "La féminité: D'une complicité a la perversion à une éthique de l'impossible," *Savoir: Psychanalyse et analyse culturelle* (Vol. 2, nos 1 et 2, mai 1995), 54, my translation.

[30] Because the sophist and the philosopher both propose to fill the law's lack of foundation (the sophist with a "better law" that fetishizes tyranny, and the philosopher with the forms), from a psychoanalytic perspective both responses suggest that philosophy exhibits a perverse structure. The difference between the two of course is goal of the philosophic discourse, which is the reverse of sophistry. In spite of this difference of strategy, however, the structural problem they solve is the same. Where sophistry and perversion conceal the lack in a way that exploits the gullibility of others, philosophy makes it into a puzzle that engages the interlocutor and the nascent philosophical reader in a seemingly endless task of inquiry and the improvement of oneself and one's fellow citizens. If we get over our conventional offense at the notion that such a noble enterprise as philosophy could be implicated in something as apparently base as a "perverse structure" and take seriously the Lacanian notion that to say one possesses a structure of desire says nothing about the nature of one's ethical choice (indeed, for Lacanians it is perfectly intelligible to speak of a perverse desire which is wholly ethical), then one finds that philosophy, as Plato proposes it, is indeed a perverse

discourse to the extent traps the reader in this perpetual task (in a way that constrains him to adopt Plato's own "better answer" about justice). This trap, however, is a sublime one that reverses the ill effects of the sophist's discourse on the souls of those who hear it by countering it with the therapeutic discourse of philosophy. If the discourse of the sophist conceals the lack in a way that makes those who hear it worse, the philosopher's discourse reveals itself to be a sublimated sophistry, which reverses this effect. Like the sophist, Socrates also relies upon and exploits his interlocutors' beliefs, but he does so in a way that educates them and prepares them (or prepares the reader at least) to deal with the insight that the law is without any genuine foundation. By using an indirect strategy to provoke this engagement, Socratic conversation in the *Republic* (and Plato's writing in general) uses the sophist's tricks to reverse the effect of the sophist's discourse on the soul of his listeners. On this interpretation, the Philosopher" would essentially be the "sophist of noble lineage" described in the *Sophist* (231b), in as much as he practices a sublimated form of sophistry that purifies.

[31] Cantin, 59, my translation.

[32] Cf. Thrasymachus' long speech at 344a-344d. He claims complete injustice is more advantageous than justice. The claim is repeated again at 348c, and then at 348e he says that injustice is to be classed with virtue and wisdom and justice with their opposites.

[33] *Republic,* 348a-b.

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On Asymmetry in Kant's Doctrine of Moral Worth

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Introduction

Kantian ethicists typically classify actions in three ways: morally permissible acts (whose maxim and its contrary do not contradict the moral law), morally obligatory acts (whose contrary maxim conflicts with the moral law), and morally forbidden acts (whose maxim contradicts the moral law). Acts that have moral worth, on this picture, are right acts done from the best possible motive, that of duty or the moral law. Recent scholarship, however, suggests that Kant ignores another logically possible class of actions that could have moral worth; namely, acts that are done from the motive of duty but are not in accordance with duty. The omission can be explained either by saying that these sorts of acts are irrelevant to Kant's moral theory, or that Kant could not consistently maintain both his overall theory of moral worth and the view that there are impermissible, morally worthy acts.

Samuel Kerstein, in his recent project supporting the latter view,[1] argues that an asymmetry in Kant's work between motives and maxims for acting prevents Kant from recognizing forbidden acts done from duty. Kerstein believes that the asymmetry can be remedied, however, in a way that Kantians could consistently recognize the logically possible category of impermissible, morally worthy acts. The philosophical benefit from Kerstein's argument is that actions performed conscientiously from the motive of duty would have moral worth (even if they are morally impermissible), since "moral worth" characterizes acts that are normatively motivated by an agent's judgment that the act is required by the moral law.

Surprisingly, Kerstein's thesis has been largely ignored, even though Kerstein was not the first to point out that Kant does not talk about the possibility of acts that are against duty, done from the motive of duty.[2] Certainly, Kantians have given us much about why the category of morally worthy acts is narrow,[3] about how moral worth is related to a pattern of good willing by rational agents,[4] and about the esteem of morally worthy actions are tied to an agent's moral responsibility to respect persons.[5] But, a Kantian response to Kerstein's project is needed—if for any reason, because an asymmetry in Kant's ethical theory would allow agents to be wrong about what is required by the moral law and yet be motivated by it. This prospect would mean that actions that undermine morality (as impermissible acts do) would be predicated with moral worth.

In this project, I contend that there is no true benefit to Kerstein's argument, because it assumes that an agent can act from the basis of an epistemological error about the requirement of the moral law, yet still be motivated from the moral law. I take on Kerstein's contention that there is an asymmetry in Kant's works between right actions and morally worthy actions, with the result that if an agent performs a morally impermissible act from a false belief about what is required of her, the agent cannot be said to be acting from the moral law at all. Even sincere agents make mistakes about duty, but when they do, they get something wrong about the nature of the moral law, and so they are not acting from it. Agents who act on a false belief about the moral law do not act from the best possible motive and so their action cannot have moral worth. If my critique of Kerstein is successful, I will show that Kant's work need not be "remedied" to provide for a class of morally impermissible, worthy acts and indeed that Kant cannot consistently maintain that impermissible acts have moral worth. The result is that there must be a constraint on actions, such that, for an action to have moral worth, the agent must have a true belief about what is morally required. Since my epistemic constraint will ensure that there cannot be a class of actions done from duty but not in accordance with duty, I will conclude that the motive of duty is not arbitrarily morally significant.

Kerstein's View

In chapter six of his book, Kerstein observes that there seem to be actions that are done from duty, but not in accordance with duty. Further, since Kantians consider moral worth to qualify actions that are done from the motive of duty, Kerstein contends that some impermissible acts can have moral worth, if they are performed solely from the motive of duty. Such a view would be inconsistent with a traditional Kantian reading, however, in which morally worthy acts are rights acts done from the best possible motive. Kerstein believes that the traditional view is flawed because it is based on an asymmetry in Kant's work. If it is possible to fix the asymmetry, Kerstein continues, Kantians will then be able to accept the logically possible class of actions that are impermissible and yet have moral worth.

The Asymmetry Problem

Kant cannot consistently maintain both that morally worthy actions are right acts done from the highest possible motive and that some impermissible acts could have moral worth. The Kantian commitment to the rightness of morally worthy actions seems problematic, however, in view of the

role circumstances play in permissibility and moral worth. On one hand, Kant argues that the moral worth of an act is directly linked to an agent's motivation for acting. So, if an agent acts on a correct maxim and does so only from the motive that the moral law requires her to act, then her action has moral worth—even if circumstances intervene unluckily so that she doesn't achieve the end of her action. On the other hand, the moral permissibility of an action is directly linked to an agent's maxim for acting. So, if an agent attempts to formulate a correct (permissible) maxim for action, but circumstances unluckily intervene so that she mistakenly judges an incorrect (impermissible) action for a correct one, the action cannot have moral worth. In the first case, circumstances did not effect the moral worth of an action (even if the action failed), but in the second case, circumstances directly mitigate against the action having moral worth.

Kerstein suggests that by considering the two instances together, we discover a difficulty with the traditional Kantian model of moral worth. In the first case, since moral worth is directly linked to moral motivation (and not moral permissibility), whether or not the agent acts from a correct maxim has no import on the moral worth of her action. Similarly, in the second case, since moral permissibility is directly linked to a correct maxim for acting (and not moral motivation), whether the agent acts from a correct maxim also has no import on the moral worth of her action. To prove a relationship between moral rightness and moral worth successfully, Kant must smuggle a "correct maxim" into the equation of acts that are done from the best possible motive. It is only by engaging in philosophical Olympics, then, that Kant is able to avoid the possibility of morally impermissible, yet worthy, acts.

Kerstein thinks the two cases together show an asymmetry in Kant's works.[6] The asymmetry goes something like this: For Kant, the moral worth of an action has nothing to do with the agent's success in accomplishing the end of the action. Moral worth results only from the principle of volition that serves as the basis for determination of the agent's maxim. So, on Kant's view, an act can have moral worth "even if it does not bring about its intended results."[7] But that an action could have moral worth independent of the action realizing its object is asymmetrical, says Kerstein, with Kant's notion that failing to correctly judge whether one's action is morally permissible disqualifies it from having moral worth. To be symmetrical, we might say that when an agent makes a mistake in evaluating the moral permissibility of her act, the act cannot have moral worth, and so too, that when acts fail to achieve the end of their action, they should be exempt from having moral worth.

Of course, if "moral worth" for Kant relates to the motive for acting, rather than to the achievement of an action's goal, then Kant cannot say that acts that fail to achieve their end are exempt from having moral worth. Rather, since "moral worth" indicates the special quality of acts

that are done from the best possible motive, whether an agent fails to accomplish what the action intended is not relevant to moral worth. A desirable symmetry for Kant, then, cannot come by negating there are morally worthy acts. Instead, since actions can have moral worth even if, for some reason, they do not achieve their end, so too, actions that turn out to be impermissible should be candidates for having moral worth if the act is done solely because the agent believes it is required.

Assessing the Asymmetry Problem

The success of Kerstein's claim that a Kantian can consistently maintain a class of action that is impermissible, yet morally worthy, hinges on whether there is a Kantian asymmetry between correct maxims for action and moral worth. Yet, upon further evaluating the relationship between formulating correct maxims, moral worth, and circumstances for Kant, the possibility of an asymmetry problem seems to fade.

Judgment about the permissibility of an action falls within the control of an agent's practical reason. Making mistakes, then, about whether an action is right or wrong is often a problem of moral judgment. Consequently, when an agent acts on an immoral maxim, we consider her mistake in judgment to be one that she could control, and so one for which she is responsible. Since impermissible actions are the result of poor moral judgment, they cannot qualify as indicating the special type of action that elicits moral esteem.[8]

Conversely, if an action does not achieve its object, it is often because there were factors outside of the agent's control that adversely affected the end of action. In these cases, circumstances intercept the intended goal of the maxim, and although there are instances in which agents might be held morally blamable for not having proper foresight in evaluating circumstances that affected the outcome of her action, even then it is recognized that the agent suffered from bad luck, and (if the action intended was morally permissible) not poor moral judgment. When agents perform a morally permissible action, and yet circumstances intervene so that the intended end for action cannot be realized, if the normative motive for acting was the best possible motive, we would still say the action qualifies for moral worth.

Of course, a word must be said concerning the possibility that maxims that are never acted upon could have moral worth. It could be argued that since what is important to moral worth is the best motivation of a correct motive, then perhaps merely good deliberation should have moral worth. The notion of setting ends is empty, however, if there never is an attempt to achieve the ends. There cannot be "action" without *acting*. Good willing, even more, is about setting ends that

best reflect the moral law, and so best reflect the humanity of our selves and of others. At *G*400, Kant recognizes that as rational agents all of our willing is towards an end, and further more, as agents we tend towards the object of our maxim. Kant underscores that rational agents are distinctive as end-setters, and so, willing is always in view of striving to meet those ends, especially if the ends are moral ends.[9]

The difference, then, in the relationship between correct maxim-making, moral worth, and circumstances is that circumstances do not (on the Kantian perspective) function to interfere with moral judgment in a way that mitigates against the agent's control in choosing the permissible action, but since moral worth is not related to the successful achievement of an action's end, circumstances can interfere with an action's goal, and yet still have moral worth. Kerstein contends, however, that Kant mistakes the relationship between circumstances and the formulation of maxims. There are times, Kerstein argues, when factors beyond the agent's control weigh into the ability of the agent to judge the moral permissibility of an action. He writes, "Instead of a question of succumbing to inclination, however, might not whether one succeeds in adopting a principle of action that is in accordance with Kant's standard of morality be a matter of one's circumstances, upbringing, or cognitive abilities?"[10] Just as the agent is not morally culpable for when the object of action is thwarted for reasons outside of the agent's determination, so too if an agent acts against inclination, and from what he takes to be the moral law, his action should not be disqualified from having moral worth when his powers of judgment are thrown off, independent of his control.

There are at least two responses that can be made to Kerstein's claim. The first, and perhaps least satisfying, is to suggest that even if there is an asymmetry in Kant's notions of moral worth and the impact of circumstances on achieving the end of action, a Kantian still cannot consistently recognize the logically possible class of impermissible actions that have moral worth. We value actions for lots of reasons, but moral worth is a unique predicate of right actions that are done from the best possible motive. It is not through Herculean philosophical efforts that Kant proves morally worthy actions to be in accordance with the moral law. Rather, since moral worth indicates the rare quality of actions esteemed by common rational cognition, morally worthy actions stand apart from most actions, even actions that are morally obligatory. Impermissible actions simply do not elicit moral esteem, and even if circumstances affect the agent's practical reason so that the agent acts (against inclination) on an impermissible maxim, such actions cannot have the same type of worth that qualifies permissible actions that are done (against inclination) from the motive of the moral law.

The second way to respond is to counter directly Kerstein's contention that there is an asymmetry in Kant's work by appealing to a proper understanding of Kant's view that circumstances

do not factor in judging the moral permissibility of an action in the same way as circumstances can affect the outcome of actions. Indeed, circumstances external to the agent are related to moral deliberation in an altogether different way than whether the agent fulfills the object of an act. There is a common rational cognition (*G*4:392), a common moral sense (*G*4:393) that is shared by all rational agents, independent of (what might considered) different vital life experiences. All individuals have varying degrees of cognitive abilities and wildly diverse upbringings, but since for Kant, morality is rooted in the authorship of the moral law by rational agents, all rational agents have epistemic access to the requirements of morality, and so all rational agents can rightly determine how one ought to act. Rational agents have practical reason, then, and so act on maxims that are decided upon through a process of moral deliberation that is not left to chance.

Problems Kerstein's Argument Creates

Considering the possibility that impermissible actions could have moral worth is troubling, not just for Kantian ethics, but for any ethical theory that privileges morally worthy actions as those right actions that are uniquely motivated. At the most basic level, conferring moral worth on actions that are morally forbidden trivializes in a certain sense a moral theory's conception of right. Agents need not be especially concerned with following the moral law, but with making sure that they believe that they ought to do a particular action. In a similar fashion, allowing motives other than the moral law to have moral worth minimizes the special, absolute quality of moral worth that many moral theories typically reserve for actions that are done on the sole basis of the moral law requiring it.

Further, in narrowing the scope of Kerstein's claims to Kantian ethics, his arguments prove even more disconcerting, especially when juxtaposed against Kant's dual notions that only actions done from the requirement of the categorical imperative have moral worth (*G*400-401) and that only acts that are done in accordance with the moral law have this special, absolute moral worth (*G*397). Instead, the reason moral worth is only conferred on actions that are consistent with the moral law, and that are done because the moral law requires it, is because only these types of actions necessarily reflect a respect for the moral law that absolutely guarantees that an agent will have an interest in doing what is right for every instance of acting on the morally worthy maxim. Only the motive of duty necessitates that *in every instantiation of the action's being performed from this motive,* the action will always have moral worth. The moral law, then, differs from an individual's feeling of obligation to perform a particular act, because it will guarantee the moral worth of the actions that it requires,

whereas the feeling of obligation cannot necessarily guarantee an agent's interest in the moral law, nor the moral worth of her action.

Not only does Kerstein's thesis undermine a moral theory's concept of right, and specifically run counter to Kant's view that moral worth will guarantee the agent's interest in doing right, but it also seems to result in an inconsistency for morality. Right actions, for Kant, are those that respect the dignity of humanity. Good actions, or those that have moral worth, are actions that appropriately value the intrinsic worth of humanity and are done solely from the motive of acting so to appropriately value the intrinsic value of the human person. If an impermissible act is morally worthy, then, it would have to be performed because it is required. But, actions that are required are those that respect the dignity of humanity, and impermissible acts are those (on a Kantian view) that do not respect the dignity of humanity. Kerstein's claim is inconsistent, since it makes impermissible acts (those that do not respect humanity) morally worthy on the basis that the impermissible acts are done from the best possible reason (namely, that the moral law requires it—and only acts that respect humanity are morally required).

I cannot, of course, dismiss Kerstein's interpretive attempt on the mere basis that it flies in the face of traditional understanding of Kant's conception of moral worth. Rather, I think his main conclusions (namely, that there are actions that have moral worth but are impermissible, and that motives other than duty can ground moral worth of an action) are both founded in a fundamental error Kerstein makes about the relationship between moral worth and the moral law. Kerstein equates moral worth with being motivated by a sincere belief that one is doing what is morally required, and so Kerstein must accept a class of actions that are impermissible, yet have moral worth. The problem with Kerstein's linking moral worth to a deliberative process which includes sincere beliefs, however, is that the agents can be sincerely (and fatally, from a moral perspective) wrong about the nature of duty, and so about the nature of the moral law. In attributing moral worth to their action, we morally praise the false belief about the moral law that serves as their normative reason for acting.

There is, then, an inherent problem in Kerstein's argument that there could be actions which are impermissible and yet have moral worth. The foundation for Kerstein's claim is that there is an asymmetry in Kant's discussion of moral worth, exemplified in Kant's dual notions that an action can have moral worth even if the object of the action is not obtained but that an action is devoid of moral worth if the circumstances peripherally involved with the agent's willing lead the agent to an error in judgment about duty. I have shown that Kerstein's asymmetrical problem is based on a flawed interpretation. Kerstein reads Kant to say that the reason an act can have moral worth regardless of whether the end of the action is obtained is because the agent willed according to the

moral law. Kerstein is right that moral worth is related indeed to the principle of volition alone which motivates the agent to act. Kerstein makes a mistake, however, in not recognizing the proper connection between willing and acting. Kant is not saying that willing apart from acting has moral worth. Instead, willing to act on the basis of the moral law has moral worth. If bad luck would have it, and the agent's action ends up not resulting in the positive obtainment of the end hoped for, the agent still could have moral worth because she actually acted upon a maxim from the moral law. There is, then, no difficulty in Kant's denial of moral worth to actions that, for circumstantial reasons, cause the agent to make an error in willing. Impermissible acts, further, cannot be said to have moral worth for two fundamental reasons: there is an epistemic constraint on moral worth, and morally impermissible acts necessarily disvalue the intrinsic worth of humanity.

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[1] Samuel J. Kerstein, *Kant's Search for the Supreme Principle of Morality* (Cambridge, 1996 and revised edition, May 2006).

[2] See, for example, John Hardwig, "Acts from Duty but Not in Accord with Duty," *Ethics* 93, no. 2 (January 1983): 283-290. Although Hardwig does not discuss the ramifications of predicating moral worth to these actions, he believes that there are actions that are done from duty but not in accord with duty, but that every action of this type commits one of the three epistemological errors I am about to explain.

[3] Barbara Herman, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty," *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 90, no. 3 (July 1981): 362 and 366, contends that morally worthy actions guarantee that other acts done from the same motive will have the same worth.

[4] Thomas E. Hill, Jr., *Human Welfare and Moral Worth,* New York: Oxford UP, 2002.

[5] Allen Wood, "Kantianism, Moral Worth and Human Welfare," *Philosophical Quarterly* 53, no. 213 (October 2003): 587-595.

[6] Kerstein, section 6.5.

[7] Kerstein, 120.

[8] Allen Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: 1999), 27ff, is helpful in his discussion of moral esteem (*Hochschätzung*).

[9] Let's suppose, however, that an agent decides, for whatever reason, to not act upon the maxim that she previously willed. She changes her mind to act on a formerly permissible maxim. Since her willing did not result in an action, there is no moral worth of the maxim. The point, then, is not that an agent's action actually achieves the object of its goal, but that her rational willing results in action. Notice that if agents fail to act, they fail to produce anything worthy of moral praise. Of course on the other hand, upon acting, agents may achieve the ends they were hoping for. If so, there is no moral worth in merely attaining the object of one's action. Instead, Kant emphasizes that an agent has moral worth because she exercises her agency from the motive of the moral law. Moral worth resides in the fact that I will an end that is moral, and so I act in such a way that I reflect the moral law, regardless of the outcome of my action.

[10] Kerstein, 121.

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Kant contra Herder: Almost against Nature

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In Rousseau, Immanuel Kant found a congenial emphasis on (1) morality as the most important aspect of human dignity: its quality being freedom, (2) the perfectibility of humankind, and (3) the need to provide concrete, circumstantial proposals for moral progress in politics, particularly, in terms of the betterment of relations between states, especially the ending of war. Of Rousseau's impact, Kant writes, "By inclination I am an inquirer, I feel a consuming thirst for knowledge, the unrest which goes with the desire to progress in it, and the satisfaction with every advance in it. There was a time when I believed that this constituted the honor of humanity, and I despised the people, who know nothing. Rousseau corrected me in this. This blinding prejudice disappeared, I learned to honor man."[1]

Unlike Rousseau, however, who championed the "reasons of the heart"[2] against Cartesian rationalism, Kant responded to the above themes as a philosopher committed to presenting a plausibly systematic and detailed theory of the capacity and limits of knowing: "an inventory of all our (mental) possessions through pure reason, systematically arranged."[3] Yet, he opposed the dogmatic rationalist metaphysics of the Leibniz-Wolffian School, which tried to provide knowledge of reality by logical cum ontological principles.[4] Kant's critical turn avoids this sort of metaphysics whose lineage is locatable to Parmenides and Pythagoras via Plato.

However, as a waterway between two banks, Kant opposed the intuitionist attitude much inspired by Rousseau, which either takes nature as its norm or degrades nature because of a commitment to the supernatural. Rousseau's heart in harmony with nature was understood more romantically than his influence on Kant. It merged with traditional religious dogma in Jacobi and Hamann or flowed into a romantic modification of the Enlightenment in Herder, Goethe, and Schiller.

For instance, Jacobi provokes an important cultural controversy defending theism; he held that "God as Nature" (*Deus sive Natura*) in the rationalism of the exemplary Spinoza leads to nihilism and to a pantheistic "atheism." Impressed by Hume's skepticism, but an intuitive believer, Jacobi allies himself with the radically subjective theism of Hamann (1730-87), who says, "The light is in my heart but as soon as I seek to carry it to my head it goes out."[5] Further, Hamann, a Christian mystic, writing to Jacobi suggests his distance from Kant, his fellow Koenigsburger: "I am close to suspecting that the whole of philosophy consists more of language than of reason, and the misunderstanding of countless words, the personification of arbitrary abstractions."[6] The *Aufklaerer* Kant argues against such a defamation of philosophy based on a dogmatic intuition.

Not only theists, in the tradition of St. Augustine[7], who rely on God's grace to find truth by

a dogmatic theology, are enemies of the Enlightenment. Rousseau, whose views are open to selective emphasis because of their unsystematic quality and reliance on intuition, is dangerous for Enlightenment. Herder (1744-1803) is conspicuous in taking Rousseau's nature centered intuitions and marrying them to an organic historical vitalism that challenges a doctrine of humanity molded by the rational qua skeptical knife-edge of such as Voltaire. Kant's enlightenment direction is beyond skepticism and a commonsense reasonability, which often was larded by a reliance on utility and sentiment, e.g., Hutcheson and Hume. Instead, Kant offers a universal ethical doctrine that propels his speculative systematic doctrine of reality. His approach was challenged by the romantic doctrine of Herder, his former student (1780-2), who had left him for Hamann.

Kant's program seeks to overcome the limitations of the normative pure heart, with its flirtation with primitivism in Rousseau and, particularly, in Herder's national personality, which is Rousseauean but without the balance and moderation of Rousseau's universal morality based on natural harmony. Against intuitional doctrines, Kant offers a philosophical defense of the ethical or "pure will" as the standard for political action. Rousseau's "general will" inspires Kant; however, he sought to extend its political conception by its universal representation of the ethical realm. For Rousseau, *volonte generale* combines nature and cultural development of a nation's personality. Herder interprets this as a cultural organic view of cultural personality in the sweep of history. In contrast, Kant makes the rational universal ethical ground aside from nature the norm for politics. Thereby, he de-emphasizes the national personality, a fact of historical praxis, by subjecting it to the moral progress of humankind. Since the foundation of Kant's ethics is aside from the natural realm (*Reich*) he disputes a naturalistic orientation in both Rousseau and Herder, as well as the sentimental theorists.

In *"Mussmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte"* ("Conjectural Beginnings of Human History," 1785), Kant presents his own reading of Rousseau: "the assertions of the celebrated J.J. Rousseau are often misinterpreted and do, indeed, have an appearance of inconsistency. In *On the Influence of the Sciences* and *On the Inequality of Man,* he shows quite correctly that there is an inevitable conflict between culture and the human species, considered as a natural species of which every member ought wholly to attain his natural end. But in his *Emile*, in his *Social Contract*, and other writings he tries to solve this much harder problem: how culture was to move forward, in order to bring about such a development of mankind, considered as a moral species, as to end the conflict between the natural and species. Now here it must be seen that all evils which express human life, and all vices which dishonor it, spring from this unresolved conflict."[8]

The profound reorientation in Kant is the resolution of this conflict by separating nature and morality into two orders and showing, through nature's purpose, that there is a progressive asymptotic convergence between the two spheres which will result in a mirrored objective

("cosmopolitan") culture of the subjective unconditional and universal morality. This vision asserts the transcendental unity of reason. It projects a demand for an objective natural and subjective moral determination: in the end, rather Platonically, circumstance is steadied by the unmoved reality that steers it and Kant substitutes the Creator God who set it to teleological motion for Plato's Idea of the Good and the pagan inclination to hold a doctrine of an eternal nature.

The Critique of Judgment, Part 2, speculates about a teleological principle built into nature for progress culminating in a republican form of government, which is the political representation of the noumenal, ethical realm. The epistemology of the two realms, the natural and the noumenal, are separate; the later, nature, is a creation of a good God. This intention for a systematic doctrine, though admittedly one depending on "rational faith" rather than knowledge, assumes "freedom, God and immortality."

This is evidence that ethics, the realm of freedom and autonomous identity of rational beings, shares with physics, the realm of determined circumstance, Kant's *Aufklaerung* loyalty to reason: both are lawful. Committed to Newtonian physics, Kant agrees with the mechanistic view of nature and defines nature as simply "the conformity of appearance to law in space and time."[9]

Herder challenges just this aspect of Kant's mechanism. Herder's anti-mechanistic view of nature captivated the Goethe circle in Weimar. At issue is whether nature is an organic continuance from lower to higher, reminiscent of the graded ontology in Platonism, especially the biological functionalism of Aristotle.[10] Unlike Herder, Kant held that life in respect to matter, and man in respect to other living beings, is radically different and has a mysterious origin. Consequently, Kant invites a theistic position and yet one in opposition to Spinoza's rational naturalism. Even Newton's idea of space as "God's sensorium" lacks Kant's sharp differentiation between nature and "super-nature" and could be a deist danger to Kant's theism.

However, Herder's vitalist modification of *Sturm und Drang* proposes a monist consideration of mind as merely the organizational process of body by a romantic concept of nature, going beyond a machine model for physics. For Herder, there is no separation of human faculties; this opposes Kant's striving for a foundational rational unity of reason, understanding and judgment (*Verstand, Verstehen*, and *Urteilskraft*). For Kant's transcendental or critical philosophy these mental faculties not only decisively separate man from other natural creatures, but they also provide an understanding of his true essence in the non-natural, noumenal realm: they allow man to discover that his essence is ethical rather than natural.

The "mystic" or *Schwaermer* bent in Herder, which seeks to find in oneself the spiritual force in nature, is romantic. Particularly, Herder and the Weimar Kreis (Circle) stress intuitive sensibility is in harmony with nature. Further, the Genius is a creative force in culture and politics because of this creative intuition. The mystical religion of Hamann, Herder's mentor after he left Kant's tutelage,

has the characteristic romantic view of the systematic thinker as a "rational spider" (*Spinne* is a pun on Spinoza[11]). Hamann's advice to Herder – "Think less and live more"[12] – and his caution to seek the language of the divine in everything, encouraged Herder's romantic inclinations. The Genius, even as thinker, is in touch with his feelings, in a fullness of feeling which, simultaneously, is rooted in the "deep down under things" of nature. This added to the affect of Herder's exaggerating Rousseau's aspect of personality, as the mirror of feeling and the locus of freedom which, in Rousseau, was restrained by a sense of the natural equality of mankind and, further, the education of a nation through its civil law based on that humanity.

For Herder, language is at the basis of the cultural genius of a nation, and formed by the literary Genius, say Goethe. When the Genius intuitively grasps culture, he creates further a national language. The process is a creative, organic development of the natural feelings of the historical development of a nation. The genius/personality of a nation is thereby to be found in its literature and art; it precludes a foreigner and this doctrine of national romanticism, tied to nature cum native soil (*Heimat*), alienates the humanity of the outsider: historically for Germany, it is particularly anti-urban, anti-Jewish, and, in a sense, anti-intellectual.

It is important to understand this attitudinal complex in terms of the challenge Kant faced to his universalistic ethical and cosmopolitan political views. Kant's essential rational being – man or woman, Jew or Gentile, Creature or God Himself – is essentially a person: each human creature also has a personality by the "accident" of natural determination.

Herder and the "feeling-first" German romantics follow rather close to Hamann's path. Isaiah Berlin takes Hamann to be the first German anti- Enlightenment figure that struggles against a cultural invasion from France. Herder's conflict with the French Enlightenment's doctrine of classical restraint through universal laws ordering creativity in art and philosophy is Hamann's direction. Herder's historico-cultural view, despite the wide sweep of his nature based ideas, also fosters the politically inward and provincial. Herder's occasional visionary tone with its lack of restraint is characteristic of Hamann.

In Kant's review (1795) of the second volume of Herder's *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, he makes more explicit his defense of the Enlightenment against Herder than in his review of the first volume (1794). Kant is against Herder's discursively undisciplined erudite showmanship and conjectured analogies. Kant's commitment to rational argument is also applicable to opposing Hamann and, before him, Bruno, Campanella, and others of a Gnostic and hermetic mystical stamp: "We want to question whether the poetic spirit that enlivens the expression does not sometimes also intrude into the author's philosophy; whether synonyms are not valued as definitions and allegories as truth … Whether the tissue of daring metaphors, poetic images, and mythological allusions does not conceal the corpus of thought."[13]

This also is against Goethe, Herder's friend from the time of their youthful meeting in Strasbourg and his neighbor in Weimar. In Strasbourg, Goethe had grown passionate over the gothic cathedral and he derided as dead reason the French impulse expressed in Holbach's *System of Nature*. In *Faust*, he famously writes: "*Grau, theurer Freund, is alle Theorie, Und gruen des Lebens goldner Baum, Gefuehl ist alles, Nahme ist Schal und Rauch.*" ("Gray, dear friend, is all theory. Yet green is life's golden tree; feeling is all, all else is sound and smoke.") Against Goethe's attitude, Kant in "*Ueber den Gemeinspruch: Das Mag in der Theorie richtig sein aber nicht fuer die Praxis*" (1794, "On the Maxim: It is all right in theory but it does not work in practice.") defends theory even beyond science; particularly, when theory is applied to moral and political matters. Herder's biologically inspired viewpoint cannot fit the mechanistic model of science; his emphasis is that nature as creation is a mystery. Of course, Kant's God's actuality is a mystery. Kant's advantage, nevertheless the mysterious character of a "rational faith," is that he provides an explanation, within limits, for a rational system in concert with human faculties. The intuitive approach of the like of Herder and Hamann not only do not disclose the scope of the human, they obscure it. This struggle against Herder and Goethe's influence is a context for the technical and polemical work of the last two decades of Kant's life.

With Herder in mind, when Kant discusses the principle of teleology in *Analytic of the Teleological Judgment (Kritik der Urteilschaft* [61-68 and 70-71]), Kant concedes that the purposive supposition of judgment is heuristic in science, though the laws of nature once discovered are based on a mechanistic or non-purposive principle. Kant's concession to Herder is that a heuristic guidance of imagination may lead to discovery. However, in a speculation about nature as an individual whole the teleological principle leads to a rational theology. Kant continues to hold that reason, through the understanding, yields universal and absolute criteria for phenomena or nature. Though both provoked and influenced by Herder, Kant enlarged his transcendental system to include the a priori basis of art[14] (and Genius), using teleology to understand nature as God's artifact. In this regard, Hutcheson's aesthetic ontology of God's design was certainly an influence.

Furthermore, Kant's third *Kritik* argues that speculative or suppositional ideas and not discursive concepts ordered by the categories of the understanding must relate to the moral purpose of nature. As far as possible, Kant explores the necessity of a transcendental union of the cognitive faculties, where the teleological principle of judgment is the "bridge" between moral freedom in the noumenal and natural determination in the phenomenal. Kant moves from the supposition of the idea of freedom or spontaneity of ethical action to the postulates of God and immortality: the ideas of a rational faith. This is his systematic reach of reason and its limits. He writes, "To have recourse to God, as the Author of things, in explaining the arrangements of nature, and their changes is at any rate not a physical explanation but a complete confession that one has come to the end of his philosophy, since he is compelled to assume something of which in itself he otherwise has no

concept."[15]

Kant's critical philosophy when presenting the work of the understanding in terms of nature need not have recourse to God. Here he is against the deists and the pantheists. Within a natural science, Kant recognizes the distinction between the parts of nature organized into living individuals, which, can be dealt with by a heuristic or regulative concept of final purpose; nevertheless, he offers the crucial consideration that heuristic final purposes lead to mechanical laws solely on the basis of efficient causality.

The method of biology – the *vis-viva* of Herder's articulation of reality – assumes final causality in treating individual living systems, distinguishing between what is internal and what external to them, e.g., between a tree organized by its internal principle and the "mere" relation of a river to the herbage that grows at its banks. Yet, for Kant, biology is superficial in its explanations in relation to physics; the ultimate reduction in science of natural processes is to mechanical laws. These, as exemplified by Galileo and Newton's treatment of the uniformity of space and time, do not consider some internal "force" of individual objects like the discredited Ptolemaic astronomy and Aristotelian physics, where the *quality* of ontologically diverse sorts of things cause different motions. When nature is considered as an epistemological individual, Kant qualifies it and speculates about a supernatural mover: God.

This is not strange to the mechanical form of thinking: its very principle asserts an external agent causes motion. Without God, the final cause, the pagan supposition of an eternal nature is reasonable. Kant's disagreement with Herder can be put in terms of opposing Herder's evolutionary view of nature as a continuous creation, rather, in their varied ways, like Aristotle and Spinoza. For Herder, however unlike them, this is evolutionary. Nature creates higher forms. Against Herder, Kant's divine teleology stresses nature needs a supposition of the supernatural to ground ethics, which is not natural; and further, to bring a nexus between the two realms by historical progress though the instrument of conflict (*Streit*).

In addition, Kant struggles against the romantic notion of creative unity with nature is intuitive knowing; the romantic turn does not understand that the immediate and strong feelings of beauty or of the sublime do not certify knowledge. They are cognitively empty. Kant oppose a nature oriented aesthetic that overwhelms ethics, the perception of beauty rather represents morality; the sublime represents God or the dignity of morality in awesome power. These feelings are not cognitive determination for knowing; the aesthetic merely symbolizes or stands-in for some aspect of the noumenal; beauty for the ethical, the sublime for God's action. In themselves, they are part of a man's natural constitution.

Kant's system of reality is presented as a combination of reason and reasonable implication. The difference between knowledge, limited to the natural and reasonable speculation is emphasized.

Kant writes, "The autonomy of the moral law is the fundamental law of supersensuous nature and a pure world of the understanding, whose counterpart must exist in the world of sense without interfering with the laws of the latter. The former could be called the archetypal world (*natura archetypa*) which we know only by reason; the latter, could be called the ectypal world (*natura ectypa*) because it contains the possible effect of the idea of the former as the determining ground of the will."[16]

The bridging of the realms in a system is how Kant intends to overcome the skeptical turn in Hume. Hume's divides fact and values. Kant divides the factual as natural, about phenomena, and value, that is, the ethical realm. However, Kant found that Hume's division of "is and ought,"[17] which makes his politics conventional, loses the unconditioned and universal ethical law. For Kant, Hume's sentimental humanity, like Herder's historicism, finds nature cum culture necessary for human thriving. Kant takes this to be the mere provincial distortions of a cultural glass.

Kant's ethics needs no such temporal glass but it does need the speculation of the reflective judgment. However, the reflective judgment's systematic speculations are very metaphysical indeed. It not only made Hume's skepticism about causality submit to a necessary condition of the understanding, it asserted an essential rational condition to the identity of human beings. Metaphysics in Kant's post-critical view does not make logic into ontology; instead, it becomes epistemology by a theory based on the transcendental relations of human faculties. For Kant, without speculative postulates, especially God purposively creating nature, the result is a doctrine of either skepticism or agnosticism, especially about ethics and human progress.

Kant therefore allows two different notions of causality, made stranger because ethical action intrudes, in principle though perhaps not in fact, because of human desires, into the natural or mechanical order. The conative and the cognitive are inseparable at the prius of ethical action. He writes, "Now even if an immeasurable gulf is fixed between the sensible and the supersensible realm of the concept of freedom, so that no transition is possible from the first to the second, just as if they were two different worlds of which the first could have no influence on the second, yet the second use is meant to have an influence upon the first."[18]

Kant's understanding of ontology is based on the dubious principle that because nature does nothing in vain, unconditioned ethical freedom must be an agent of historical qua natural progress because the human essence is expressed teleologically in nature. At best, this is a tortured formulation; since the very essence of man is not natural. Consequently, the ethical will cannot be treated as a natural characteristic on the principle of natural development, e.g., "nature does nothing in vain."

In any case, because of reason's conflict with natural passions, moral duty results from recognizing an obligation to oneself as an autonomous ethical lawgiver. Since identity qua ethical law

giver to oneself is an essential characteristic, it is universal for all rational beings. This has the corollary of treating other persons, rational beings, as oneself, that is, as an end in itself or "noumenon" rather than as a means to some natural, conditional purpose, e.g., welfare and happiness. Indeed, because happiness is the result of a multiplicity of conditions, Kant calls it indeterminate; its search is open to council (*consilia*) not to commands (*praecepta*) of the moral law: He writes, "A man has no principle to decide with certainty what will make him truly happy, since this would require omniscience."[19]

Because his theory concludes that ethical purpose guides mechanistic nature in the multiplicity of its conditions, "speculative history" – supposing a transcendental relationship between the principles of ethics and nature – implies an eventual temporal coordination of the two realms. This suggests the determination of natural circumstance for the eventual happiness of humankind based on moral dignity. Such a speculation on humankind's progress increases the complexity of Kant's thought; and, it is noteworthy, the unconditioned/conditioned is an aspect of the part/whole problem that had traditionally burdened metaphysics. Many ambiguities reoccur in Kant's effort to bridge, if not to unify, nature and morality.

Kant's supposition of immortality adds ontological difficulties. It is a strangely ambiguous and mysterious idea. Kant admits it is less necessary than the postulates of freedom or God. Immortality can mean either each human person has always existed or each will always exist after the creation of nature. Both are possible since the noumenal realm is not the natural and one recalls the ethical equality of man and God. On the other hand, if immortality occurs after the individual's mysterious creation as a noumenal being, the exile in nature can more closely follow "man made in the Image (Hebrew: *zal*) of God," where "image" means, in principle, an ethical equality of humankind and God. Thus, the Biblical Fall might be considered to have occurred by a rather more rational, less childish Adam and Eve. Nature in either case, taken as exile, punishes or tests humankind in the world of appearance or nature: perhaps, it rehabilitates.

But why? The justification of man's two-world position may lead to Leibniz's optimism of "the best of all possible worlds" or a pessimistic, tragic view of God's intentions: similar gods to humans in Plato's *Laws* where the Athenian Stranger sometimes feels the gods play humankind "like marionettes by golden strings." Kant prefers the optimism of Leibniz, who is the major intellectual figure for the respected German philosophers, Wolff and Baumgarten: viz. Kant writes, "Everything really stands in the most perfect harmony."[20] Nevertheless, like Plato (if not Calvin and Luther), occasionally he can be pessimistic, writing the phrase found in Plato's *Protagoras*: "human nature is like warped-wood."[21]

Often the frame of the religio-cultural structure is apparent in his work. In *"Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte"*), Kant challenges the reader to find anything in his exposition in

opposition to *Genesis*. Rather like Herder, he makes explicit that the Fall of Adam and Eve projects a view of the road from instinctive behavior to reason, which in the end brings mankind to moral maturity. Of course, this is in opposition or at least in tension with his theoretical emphasis on a rational person's moral essence as something always available. Otherwise, from the pessimism of man as "warped wood" there is no need for the ethical human being to receive any reward of happiness: such a matter would depend not on justice but God's charity. Kant does not make a "leap of faith." Nevertheless, Christian structures are present in his important speculations; yet, they are ambiguously and perhaps inconsistently attached, especially the matters of divine creation and immortality.

Kant espouses the transcendental unity of reason; yet how this is understood is the important question. Mere speculation seems inevitably to move toward an assertion about reality despite Kant speaking against this as an unwarranted tendency. Again and again, the third *Kritik* reminds the reader – and perhaps a mantra for himself – of the critical viewpoint: none of the faculties of man is sufficient to present knowledge of reality in a systematic or fundamental sense. The concepts of the understanding and the speculative ideas from judgment cannot inform of things-in-themselves or noumenal reality, "the really real." This metaphysical speculation without metaphysical certainty replaces traditional ontological metaphysics. Kant's rational ethics must stand against Humean skepticism and Herderean historicism since such offer conventional or cultural based positions. The intuition and sensibility that present an ethics of feeling is like a leap to some dogmatic religious picture. Kant is a theist because of a rational ethics; consequently, his theism, as Hegel noted, is abstract. Nevertheless, because of the universalism of this rational ethics, Kant's sense of obligation to other persons is firm and deep.

Notes

[1] Kant's *Gesammelte Werke,* xx, 44.

[2] Cf. my "Rousseau: Il Cuore Puro," *Giornale di Metafisica* 25:3 (2004): 295-314.

[3] *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781): *KRV*, A, xx.

[4] For Kant's general background see my "Kant's Orientation," *Journal of the History of European Ideas* 28 (2002): 263-280, and in the same journal, volume 30, *Kant Anniversary Issue*: 1804-2004, "Kant's Stand to Hobbes and Hume" (2004): 295-316.

[5] *Werke* I, 367.

[6] *Briefwechsel* v, 272.

[7] The dualism of a natural and a noumenal realm (*Reich*) in Kant has a technical need like Augustine's Platonically inspired distinction between heaven and earth. Cf. my "Augustine on Time, with Reference to Kant," *Journal of Value Inquiry* (1986): 223-34.

[8] "*Conjectural Beginning of Human History*" in Beck, p. 116.

[9] *KRV,* B165.

[10] Cf. my "Rational Principle in Aristotle," *The Thomist* (1973): 769-80.

[11] *Briefwechsel*, ii, 203.

[12] *Breifwechsel,* ii, 330.

[13] "*Review of Herder*," in Beck, p.61.

[14] Cf. my "Kant on Beauty," *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* 28:4 (2001): 463-72.

[15] *KPV*, 139.

[16] *KPR*, 43.

[17] Cf. my "Language and the Is-Ought," *Philosophical Studies XXVI* (1986), reprinted in *Hobbes Papers*, vol. II, ed. Preston King (London: 1993): 334-56.

[18] *KU*, 2.

[19] *Grundlegung,* 47: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.*

[20] *KPV,* 110.

[21] "*The Idea of History from a Cosmological Intent*," in Riess.

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Prototypes of Existence and Essence in Camus's *The Stranger*

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I

One of the most enigmatic characters in modern literature is Meursault of Camus's *The Stranger*. Is he an absurd hero or a dangerous psychological type? There are clearly two personifications in the novel: the Meursault of Part One, an embodiment of sensualism and carpe diem, a hedonist possessing minimal self-reflection; and the Meursault of Part Two, a condemned criminal, a heinous killer—in the eyes of society at any rate—whose existence has been converted into a series of stereotypical categories. Which is the real Meursault?

A useful guide in this search is the existentialists' own distinction between existence and essence. The distinction is that between the freedom of human beings and the thinglike nature of objects, stereotypes, and essences.[1] Humans have and make a history for themselves. Their existence is open to the possibility of choice and change, a project in the making. Objects, stereotypes, and essences, however, are exact opposites of the human type of being to the extent that they are frozen in a fixed and inert state.

The theme of prototypical existence and essence is a useful guide to *The Stranger* inasmuch as the novel clearly reflects Camus's concern at the time with various atheistic existential motifs, such as the absurd nature of human existence, alienation from self and others via stereotyping, and the basic unavailability of essentialist answers (such as Christianity) to the question of meaningful life. The theme must be carefully explicated, though, precisely because of the potential for distortion in seeing *The Stranger* too closely through the eyes of Jean-Paul Sartre. The philosophical and political differences between Sartre and Camus are well known, and the existence/essence dichotomy is often associated only with Sartre's thought. Accordingly, the theme as a hermeneutical guide is best used in its general philosophical form rather than in its specific form as found in works such as *Being and Nothingness*, where it is related to a particular ontology with which Camus was not in agreement. The generic form of the theme permeates the entire existentialist tradition, where it can be found in Jaspers and others.[2]

Certainly, a cautionary note here is that Camus was notoriously uncomfortable with the attribution of "existentialist" and with Sartre's concept of human nature as a nothingness. In *The Rebel*, Camus argued (a) that there *is* a common human nature in terms of which all persons have the capacity for rebellion and for the solidarity resulting from such rebellion; and (b) that human nature has the value of being an end unto itself, so that any political system which treats individual persons as means rather than ends would be fundamentally flawed.[3] In stressing these points, Camus was

asserting that when the rebel says no to nihilism, violence, and totalitarian oppression, he or she is affirming the human characteristics of free will, potential solidarity in action, and intrinsic value as an end unto itself. But does this mean that Camus believed humans to have a fixed and immutable essence analogous to that of a physical object? Is it not possible, therefore, to apply the distinction between existence and essence to an analysis of *The Stranger*?

Notwithstanding the bitter Camus/Jeanson/Sartre disputes in the pages of *Les Temps Modernes* in the 1940s and 50s, Camus understood free will, potential solidarity in action, and intrinsic value as an end unto itself as structural aspects of human nature. When the historical rebel says no to totalitarianism, he or she reveals the ownmost human structures of metaphysical freedom, genuine dialogue or speech, identification with the entire community of humans (the structure: "I rebel, therefore, we are"), and the final value that each human has as an end unto himself or herself in the face of political tyranny. It is possible in this regard to think of Heidegger's Existentialia, although Camus did not undertake Dasein-analysis in terms of the question of Being; his own project was still in the tradition of the Cartesian cogito. But just as Heidegger finds common structures of existence for any and all instances of Dasein—for example, situatedness, falling, discourse, and care—so does Camus recognize the earlier-mentioned structures as common to all human beings. Camus framed this notion of a common human nature in terms of his famous philosophy of limits: in saying no to violence and political terror, the rebel asserts a limit at which he or she refuses to arrive. The limit is precisely the nihilistic justification of murder and oppression in the name of a future secular utopia that reduces all mankind to the status of a cog in the machinery of historical necessity. Camus was unwilling, therefore, to conceptualize human nature as an infinitely malleable nothingness á la Sartre. He believed that such a view was at the heart of totalitarian ideologies of oppression. Similarly, Camus was clearly opposed to any philosophy that viewed human nature in terms of biological or political determinism. He did not see humans as mere products of genes or historical materialism. We are metaphysically free to establish our own destinies. But we are not blank slates either, which perhaps explains his flirtation with the classical Greek conception of human nature. The structures of free will, potential solidarity in action, genuine dialogue, and intrinsic value as an end unto oneself function somewhat like Existentialia in terms of what all humans have in common as humans, but not as an essence in the sense of the reification of human nature as just another object in the field of physically or politically determined objects.

Of course, it must also be stressed that at the time Camus was writing *The Stranger* (the late 1930s) he was hardly a full-blown critic of Sartre's existential ontology, which itself had not yet appeared. On the contrary, these were the early days of French existentialism and many of the themes explored in *The Stranger* were subsequently transformed in works such as *The Fall* and *The Rebel*. This does not mean, though, that the theme of existence and essence had not occurred to

Camus. It appears that it had, at least in prototypical form. It is, therefore, appropriate to explore *The Stranger* from the perspective of this theme, keeping in mind that the exploration has limited parameters and is not meant to settle any later philosophical disputes between Camus and Sartre. As Hazel Barnes says:

> Sartre and de Beauvoir explicitly deny the existence of any human nature. Camus, to be sure, suggests in a passage to which critics have attached undue importance, that perhaps, after all, the Greeks may have been right in ascribing reality to some sort of underlying idea of man. But aside from the tentative and incomplete quality of this remark, Camus makes no use of the concept of human nature in any way that would constitute of it a determining force. For him it is an idea of what "humanity" is which serves to explain why men will revolt, placing a higher value on an ideal to be attained than on life itself. It is the basis also for the sense of human solidarity. To my mind, this is only another way of saying that man transcends himself in his projects…Be that as it may, neither Camus nor any other existentialist philosopher holds that man's moral traits are predetermined or determining….[4]

II

The dialectic of existence and essence is highly evident in *The Stranger*. Part One of the novel is a depiction of prototypical human existence. It presents the tale of a solitary man who is inexorably drawn into a tightening web of events which culminates in a scene at the beach where he shoots a man five times, with each successive shot representing "another loud, fateful rap" on the door of his undoing.[5] In developing the character of Meursault, Camus introduces numerous themes of human existence.

Meursault's indifference to events shows the amoral aspect of existence, distantly echoing Nietzsche's claim that there are no moral phenomena, only moral interpretations of phenomena.[6] Meursault does not make moral evaluations, nor is he inwardly affected by them: "Of course, I had to own that he was right; I didn't feel much regret for what I'd done…I have never been able really to regret anything in all my life. I've always been far too much absorbed in the present moment, or the immediate future, to think back."[7] Also:

> He [the prison chaplain] said he felt convinced my appeal would succeed, but I was saddled with a load of guilt, of which I must get rid. In his view man's justice was a   vain thing; only God's justice mattered. I pointed out that the former had condemned me. Yes, he agreed, but it hadn't absolved me from my sin. I told him I wasn't conscious of any "sin"; all I knew was that I'd been guilty of a criminal offense. Well, I was paying the penalty of that offense, and no one had the right to expect anything more of me.[8]

These depictions are the literary equivalent of a basic point for the existentialists; namely, that morality is a derivative human activity, it is not an a priori structure. Moral judgments are essentialist in nature. They subsume particular acts and situations under universal laws. The character of Meursault, however, suggests that existence cannot be easily caught, if at all, by such means. He is a unique existent and hardly reducible in his actions to categorical imperatives or theistic commandments.

Meursault's sensitivity to light and heat, as well as to other sensory stimuli,[9] indicates Camus's interest in the issue of the lived body. This is the body as we directly and non-inferentially experience it independently of the reconstructions of science.[10] The post-Cartesian philosophical tradition and the modern programs of the physiological sciences de-emphasize and de-value the lived body. As Michel Haar says (in explicating Nietzsche's theory of the body):

> To philosophize by taking the body as the "abiding clue" amounts to revealing the "self" as an instrument, an expression, an interpreter of the body. It also amounts to revealing the body (in opposition to our petty faculty of reasoning, where only surface "causes" make their appearance) as the "grand reason"—i.e., as the totality of deeply buried causes in their mobile and contradictory diversity. Philosophy has never ceased to show disdain for the body; it has not wished to recognize that it is the body that whispers thoughts to the "soul," and that consciousness is only a superficial and terminal phenomenon. Psychology has always idolized superficial unities for fear of facing the unsettling multiplicity at the depths of being.[11]

Husserl had already explored the idea of the lived body in his distinction between the Newtonian/Cartesian body (Körper) and the pre-reflective, instinctual, sensing, and oriented body (Leib).[12] According to Husserl, the latter operates in the life-world and forms the basis in the first place for our understanding of the body as an objective, measurable thing. In like manner, Merleau-Ponty analyzed the structures of behavior in terms of the lived body's gestural intentionality, which operates in a gestaltist manner under the aspect of a motor "I can" rather than a Kantian "I think."[13] Meursault's attention to the details of his body-states suggests the importance of the lived body in Camus's sketch of existence. For instance, at one point Meursault comments to his lawyer that "…my physical condition at any given moment often influenced my feelings."[14] Meursault also has remarkably attuned powers of sense perception. He frequently notices stimuli on the horizons of his consciousness: two hornets buzzing against the skylight during his mother's vigil, a passing steamer far out on the ocean during his fateful encounter with the Arab, the tin trumpet of an ice-cream vendor in the street during his counsel's courtroom summation, and so on. Additionally, he is able to train himself in prison to remember the exact details of every article in his bedroom, and concludes: "So I learned that even after a single day's experience of the outside world a man could

easily live a hundred years in prison. He'd have laid up enough memories never to be bored."[15] Similarly, it is clear that Meursault is a sensual hedonist in the extreme. He enjoys the "surest, humblest pleasures: warm smells of summer, my favorite streets, the sky at evening, Marie's dresses and her laugh."[16] He tells the chaplain that none of his (the chaplain's) certainties "was worth one strand of a woman's hair."[17] And when asked how he pictured the life after the grave, Meursault bawls out: "A life in which I can remember this life on earth. That's all I want of it."[18] Moreover, at the end of the novel, Meursault has no interest in spending his final moments on speculations concerning God, an afterlife, or the soul. He has lived through and for his conscious body and knows that this commitment has been right for him. He was and is happy. In the character of Meursault, we are not yet at the narcissistic contemporary cult of the body, but certainly far removed from Platonism's and Christianity's perennial cult of the anti-physical.

Meursault's consciousness, to the extent that it is plausible to isolate it, is wholly non-Cartesian. He is not a deliberate or rational man, not a res cogitans. Rather, he lives in the pre-reflective, childlike buzz of the moment:

> What is it that makes the Stranger so strange? Camus himself admitted that his character was built deliberately…He does not reveal the gimmick, but there is a gimmick. The reader soon discovers that Meursault's strangeness is the result of a lack. What Husserl calls the "meaning endowing faculty" was skillfully removed from him. He registers facts, but not their meanings; his consciousness is purely instantaneous; he lacks the principle of unity and continuity…Accordingly, Meursault has desires and affects but no sentiments. He has neither memory nor projects, and his synthetic faculties do not operate above the immediate physical level.[19]

Meursault does what he feels like doing, nothing more nor less. He does not have elaborate cognitions; there is no philosophical or psychoanalytic depth to him. Serge Doubrovsky has referred to his fundamental "animality,"[20] but this suggests that there is such a dimension to us all—a daily, pre-cognitive, lived and bodily consciousness, the prototype of which is revealed in Meursault.

Meursault is not an essence in Part One of *The Stranger*. He breathes, gets bored, makes love, swims, goes to work, enjoys the beach, buries his mother, and so on. He cannot be subsumed under forms or categories lacking contingency and freedom. It is interesting to note in this regard that the authorities in Part Two of the novel are constantly seeking to establish Meursault's identity. They want to know who (or what) this creature is. One is thereby reminded of the Socratic dictum "Know Thyself" and of the high value placed on reflective self-knowledge in the subsequent intellectual traditions of the Western world. The authorities try to define Meursault in essentialist terms, however, which do not coordinate at all with his actual states of mind or existence. Meursault finds all of this very odd, as he is unused to "identifying" himself. Thus, the attempt definitionally to fix

Meursault fails before it begins because definitions distort the very phenomenon under investigation, a kind of existentialist indeterminacy principle.

III

The theme of existence versus essence continues in Part Two of the novel, but with the important added dimension that, in the eyes of society, Meursault is completely transformed into a series of essences. After all, he has murdered a man. It is inevitable, Camus seems to be suggesting, that Meursault will be seen as a stereotype. The transformation occurs in the following stages.

The examining magistrate tries to impress upon Meursault the fact of his criminality. He interrogates him repeatedly about the number of shots fired at the Arab, and tries to shame Meursault with a crucifix and talk of religion. Meursault dimly senses the change in his status, but he cannot accept that he is a criminal and nothing else:

> "Never in all my experience have I known a soul so case-hardened as yours," he said in   a
> low tone. "All the criminals who have come before me until now wept when they saw this
> symbol of our Lord's sufferings." I was on the point of replying that was precisely because
> they *were* criminals. But then I realized that I, too, came under that description. Somehow it
> was an idea to which I never could get reconciled.[21]

A thing or a stereotype is nothing more or less than what it is; a human being, however, is a contingency, a non-objectifiable project.

The long months in prison cause Meursault to accept his assigned role as a prisoner with the corresponding loss of freedom and privileges. He does not, however, accept his guilt in any absolute sense. Rather, he admits only to a sort of vexation over his deed.[22] Guilt is a moral concept which presupposes complex metaphysical judgments; vexation, though, is a feeling of confusion and frustration. Meursault knows that "because of the sun" he has killed a man.[23] The deed has disrupted the simple harmony of his world, and he concedes that he must answer for it. But he refuses further to acquiesce in society's attempt to judge him in essentialist terms.

The prosecuting attorney at his trial depicts Meursault as a hardened, heartless criminal who is responsible not only for the death of the Arab, but also for the death of Meursault's mother and for the parricide which ensues on the court docket:

> …I tried to follow what came next, as the Prosecutor was now considering what he called
> my "soul." He said he'd studied it closely—and had found a blank, "literally nothing,
> gentlemen of the jury." Really, he said, I had no soul, there was nothing human about
> me…He proceeded to discuss my conduct toward my mother, repeating what he had said in
> the course of the hearing. But he spoke at much greater length of my crime…A moment

> came when the Prosecutor paused and, after   short silence, said in a low, vibrant voice:
> "This same court, gentlemen, will be called on to try tomorrow that most odious of crimes,
> the murder of a father by his son."…"This man, who is morally guilty of his mother's death,
> is no less unfit to have a place in the community than that other man who did to death the
> father that begat him…indeed, the one crime led on to the other…Yes, gentlemen, I am
> convinced that you will not find I am exaggerating the case against the prisoner when I say
> that he is guilty of the murder to be tried tomorrow in this court…."[24]

Meursault is, after all, a man who smoked cigarettes at his mother's funeral and took a lover after
returning to Algiers, facts of an ad hominem nature which become considerably more important at
the trial than the killing of the Arab itself.

The defense attorney, on the other hand, depicts Meursault as a decent fellow, a
conscientious worker and a dutiful son:

> "I, too," he said, "have closely studied this man's soul; but, unlike my learned friend for the
> prosecution, I have found something there. Indeed, I may say that I have read the prisoner's
> mind like an open book." What he had read there was that I was an excellent young fellow, a
> steady, conscientious worker who did his best by his   employer; that I was popular with
> everyone and sympathetic in others' troubles. According to him, I was a dutiful son who had
> supported his mother as long as he was able.[25]

Meursault drifts in and out of the ceremonies, feeling vaguely troubled and threatened by these
essentialist stereotypes. He even has the distinct impression of being excluded from the trial—of
being de trop—as he tires of "the endless days and hours they had been discussing my 'soul,' and
the rest of it."[26]

Finally, in the climactic confrontation with the chaplain, Meursault faces the ultimate
stereotype of being portrayed as a sinner. He is no longer an existent being; he is seen as an eternal
essence. That is, he is told that he has a soul, and that for the good of this soul he must repent. The
confrontation causes anger and a final rebellion in terms of which Meursault achieves a kind of
reflective authenticity. He accepts his fate and the dialectic of existence and essence in his life.[27] He
accepts, that is, his life in terms of what he has done and what he is now: a condemned man facing
his execution just as all humans are "condemned" to face death. Meursault thus becomes a hero of
the absurd.[28]

Other incidents in the novel reinforce Meursault's external transformation into a mere
category or essence. For instance, at the trial a young journalist and the little "robot" woman are
obsessed with Meursault and transfix him with judgmental stares, a phenomenon which is
foreshadowed at his mother's vigil when one of the mourners gazes continually at him. Also, when
he first faces the jury members, Meursault has the distinct impression of being reified in the manner

of one who has just boarded a streetcar as the others "stare at you in the hope of finding something in your appearance to amuse them."[29] It is clear from these and related passages that Camus was well aware of the problems involved in any attempt to convert human existence into social essence. Categories such as "dutiful son" or "inhuman monster wholly without a moral sense" are virtually essences in the classical Platonic sense. That is, they are idealizations lacking historicality and contingency of being. We can never fully become such idealizations because they are conceptually and existentially incompatible with our free being as humans.

The abrupt transition from Part One to Part Two of the novel is made clearer by the theme of existence and essence. For instance, many commentators have noted the lack of a plausible reason for Meursault's firing four additional shots after the initial one. The action has been variously attributed to his mental disintegration because of the heat and sunlight or to a surd factor in his existence. Such theories are, of course, underdetermined by the textual evidence.[30] The theme of existence versus essence, however, suggests that the additional shots are a literary technique to ensure that Meursault will be converted into a series of essences in Part Two.[31] One shot could be excused as self-defense; after all, the Arab had produced a knife and had already attacked Meursault's friend Raymond in an earlier scene. The additional shots, however, preclude such a defense. Meursault will now be analyzed and condemned in psychological and societal terms which seriously conflict with the realities of his existence as described in Part One of the novel.

Finally, we might well ask what Camus himself thought of Meursault. He responded in the preface to the American University edition of *The Stranger*:

> I summarized *The Stranger* a long time ago, with a remark that I admit was highly paradoxical: "In our society any man who does not weep at his mother's funeral runs the risk of being sentenced to death." I only meant that the hero of my book is condemned because he does not play the game. In this respect, he is foreign to the society in which he lives; he wanders, on the fringe, in the suburbs of private, solitary, sensual life. And this is why some readers have been tempted to look upon him as a piece of social wreckage. A much more accurate idea of the character, or, at least, one much closer to the author's intentions, will emerge if one asks just *how* Meursault doesn't play the game. The reply is a simple one: he refuses to lie…He says what he is, he refuses to hide his feelings, and immediately society feels threatened…One would therefore not be much mistaken to read *The Stranger* as the story of a man who, without any heroics, agrees to die for the truth….[32]

Meursault is the quintessentially authentic outsider who refuses to lie about his actions and feelings, and remains steadfastly indifferent to society's multifaceted and essentialist games. Thus, the real Meursault does not exist as a fixed state or thing. His persona at the end of the novel involves a synthesis of contingency and stereotype, but his innermost being is clearly that of a singular, free

existent. To that extent, Camus seems to be suggesting, he is Everyman. The theme of existence versus essence provides an important key in unlocking one of the most significant works of the existentialist movement.

Notes

[1] See John Macquarrie, *Existentialism* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 41-55.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), pp. 250-252.

[4] Hazel E. Barnes, *An Existentialist Ethics* (New York: Knopf, 1967), p. 116.

[5] Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage Books, 1946), p. 76. Hereafter abbreviated *TS*.

[6] See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), Section 108.

[7] Albert Camus, *TS*, pp. 126-127.

[8] Ibid., p. 148.

[9] See Thomas Hanna, *The Thought and Art of Albert Camus* (Chicago: Gateway, 1958), p. 57. Hanna refers to Meursault's extreme sensitivity to light, which "is indicated to us no less than fourteen times previous to the murder."

[10] See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), Part One.

[11] Michel Haar, "Nietzsche and Metaphysical Language," trans. Cyril and Liliane Welch in *The New Nietzsche*, ed. David B. Allison (New York: Dell Publishing, 1977), p. 18.

12 Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), Part II and III.

[13] See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Part One.

[14] Albert Camus, *TS*, p. 80.

[15] Ibid., p. 98.

[16] Ibid., p. 132. See also Albert Camus, "Summer in Algiers," trans. Ellen Conroy Kennedy in *Lyrical and Critical Essays by Albert Camus*, ed. Philip Thody (New York: Vintage Books, 1970). This essay captures much of the ambience of the world of Meursault.

[17] Albert Camus, *TS*, p. 151.

[18] Ibid., p. 150.

[19] Micheline Tisson-Braun, "Silence and the Desert: The Flickering Vision," in *Critical Essays on Albert Camus*. ed. Bettina L. Knapp (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988), p. 49. Hereafter abbreviated *CE*.

[20] Serge Doubrovsky, "The Ethics of Albert Camus," in *CE*, p. 155.

[21] Albert Camus, *TS*, p. 87.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., p. 130.

[24] Ibid., pp. 127-128.

[25] Ibid., p. 131.

[26] Ibid., p. 132.

[27] Ibid., pp. 151-152.

[28] See Thomas Hanna, *The Thought and Art of Albert Camus*, pp. 46-64.

[29] Albert Camus, *TS*, p. 103.

[30] For various interpretations of Meursault's character and his actions on the beach, see Germaine Bree, *Camus: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962). See also Jean-

Paul Sartre, "Explication de L'Etranger," in *Situations I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), pp. 99-121.

[31] For a different reading of the shooting of the Arab, see John Erickson, "Albert Camus and North Africa: A Discourse of Exteriority," in *CE*, pp. 73-86. Erickson's thesis is political and plays on Camus's ambivalence about the Algerian question.

[32] Albert Camus, "Preface to *The Stranger*," trans. Ellen Conroy Kennedy in *Lyrical and Critical Essays by Albert Camus*, ed. Philip Thody (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), pp. 335-337.

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Review of Keith Parsons'
Copernican Questions: A Concise Invitation to the Philosophy of Science.
New York: McGraw-Hill. Pp. 192. ISBN 0-07-285020-5. $27.00.

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Introductory texts in the philosophy of science usually provide a general account of the traditional problems that constitute the core of the discipline: the distinction between science and pseudoscience, the degree of objective reasoning in science, the problems of induction and underdetermination, the concept of explanation, and the realism-antirealism debate. Parsons' book is not a typical introduction to the philosophy of science. Parsons describes his book as an 'invitation' to the philosophy of science. As Parsons explains in the preface for instructors, his goal is to introduce students to only two of the core issues in the philosophy of science: the question of objectivity and the realism-antirealism debate. According to Parsons, the choice of these topics was guided, unabashedly, by the desire to stimulate interest in the philosophy of science through controversy. Given the recent history of these debates in academic and non-academic arenas, the topics are well chosen. Students who find these two issues interesting might be inclined to explore other traditional problems in the philosophy of science – thus, the use of 'invitation' rather than 'introduction'. Parsons acknowledges that he intends to defend both the rationality of science and a qualified realist position. His advocacy for these views is designed to dovetail with the strategy of sparking interest through controversy.

The book is divided into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the issues of objectivity and realism in connection to the Copernican Revolution. The profound impact produced by such a fundamental change in the way we view the cosmos leaves philosophers with significant questions about the nature of deep conceptual differences. The objectivity and realism issues amount to the following, respectively:

(1) Are paradigm changes brought about by impartial reasoning based on objective evidence?

(2) Is it reasonable to believe that some scientific theories describe reality more accurately than others?

Chapters two and three address the objectivity issue. In chapter two, Parsons analyzes Kuhn's arguments against naïve objectivity in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn argues that different paradigms are 'incommensurable' in the following respects: (1) they have different

evidential standards, (2) their value systems differ, and (3) theoretical terms are not translatable across paradigms. If these claims are true, then it would not be possible to account for deep theoretical shifts by appealing to standards of reasoning and evidence that transcend all paradigms – any given standards of reasoning and evidence are necessarily embedded in a paradigm. Parsons counters Kuhn by arguing that there are cases where deep theoretical disagreements (e.g., the debate over continental drift) were resolved using shared standards of language, values, and evidence. According to Parsons, if Kuhn's argument is limited to deeper disagreements, then Kuhn is guilty of characterizing science in general on the basis of very rare kinds of disagreement.

In chapter three, Parsons describes and criticizes representative forms of constructivist, feminist, and postmodern critiques of scientific objectivity. Each of these interpretive approaches describes the theoretical products of science as the outcome of power struggles between different social groups delineated on the basis of politics, gender, or social class. Collectively, these methods of criticism reach the conclusion that the scientific consensus at a given time is simply a reflection of the relevant power dynamic that exists within the culture at that time. Parsons responds by arguing that each of these theoretical approaches is self-referentially incoherent. That is, if we take these theorists at their word, then their own theories result from *their* position within the cultural hierarchy, which destroys any privileged claim to have gotten things right about how science works.

Chapters four and five outline the debate over whether science is engaged in a progressive march toward the 'Truth'. According to Parsons, critics of scientific progress argue that debates over scientific theories are typically resolved through political maneuvering rather than an objective analysis of the evidence for and against the candidate theories. Thus, the arguments employed by critics of science in chapter three are redeployed in an effort to undercut the view that science has achieved an increasingly accurate picture of how the world is. Although the arguments are similar, Parsons responds with a different sort of criticism than he issued in chapter three. According to Parsons, there are many examples of politically weak scientists who won over their politically powerful critics. Parsons then discusses conceptual versions of 'antirealist' arguments. Larry Laudan and Bas Van Frassen have argued that there are no good reasons to hold that scientific theories accurately depict reality. According to Parsons, in order to defend the view that science progresses in the relevant sense, one only need show how an 'approximate' truth is possible. This is easily done by using models to explain how an event occurred. When we construct a model of an event or entity, we do not have to get every detail correct, only that portion of the event/entity that we are trying to understand. Any model we create will fail to capture accurately the complete set of facts about an event or entity, but the minimal requirement can be met if we achieve accuracy in the limited manner required by a given problem. Thus, scientific understanding can be both 'realist' in

the sense that some part of the world is accurately described, and limited in the sense that not all of reality is grasped via the scientific method.

The strength of Parsons' book is the clarity and force of the arguments he uses against the critics of scientific objectivity and progress. The arguments themselves are not new – much of the material in the text can be found in any number of introductory texts. However, Parsons displays an admirable ability to frame the traditional arguments in language that strikes a nice balance between theoretical rigor and accessibility. The least effective aspect of the book is Parsons' choice of material for chapter three. Parsons self-consciously selected radical representatives from the constructivist and feminist literature in order to pique the interest of students. However, students would probably receive a greater benefit from an analysis of arguments that are less vulnerable to obvious objections. Readers who are engaged by the first two chapters (and curious students should be) might gain more from an assessment of more sober attempts to show how non-rational features of belief formation can play a role in the development of scientific consensus.

Notes on Contributors

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