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Kim's Dilemma and Ecological Reductionism for the Mind

Anoop Gupta

Wir Mussen Wissen, Wir Werden Wissen (We must know, we will know.) David Hilbert (1862–1943; inscribed on his gravestone)

Unlike most the metaphysical debates about truth, the central issue in the philosophy of mind has remained ontological: what *is* the mind? If it is not like tables and chairs, then what is it? In fact, according to Kim, contemporary accounts of the mind have addressed only one of two problems in trying to answer these questions.

We can get a lay of the land by considering the two solutions that have been on the market, namely, functionalism and materialism. First, functionalism is the view that “mental kinds and properties are functional kinds at a higher level of abstraction than physicochemical or biological kinds” (Kim, 1999, p. 3); it has been the favored stance of most cognitive scientists.¹ Yet on the one hand, functionalist does not solve the dilemma: As Kim (1998; 2006) pointed out, functionalism is no solution if we cannot explain mental causation: we must explain how the mind affects the brain.

Second, the materialist solution is to reduce the mind to the brain. This causes an alternative problem. On the other hand, then, as Kim anticipated, if we identify the mind and brain we stand to lose the subjective character of the mental. So, functionalists and physical reductionists will flounder on one or the

¹ In Putnam's (1967/1975) “The Nature of Mental States” he asked if temperature could be identified with mean molecular kinetic energy, thinking it could be. Mental states, like pain, however, he held was something different altogether; it “is a functional state” he claimed, “of the whole organism” (1967/1975, p. 433). Famously, however, in Putnam's (1998) lectures at McMaster University, he held, “[F]unctionalism, constructed as the thesis that propositional attitudes are just computational states of the brain cannot be correct” (p. 74). As Putnam explained when we assert “there are a lot of cats in the neighborhood” cannot be reduced to one computational state. Mental states are realizable from multiple physical ones.

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other horn of the dilemma. As Kim (1998) put it, we face a “profound dilemma” (p. 237), in the order in which I shall discuss matters, either:

1. We reject reductionism and cannot see how mental causation could be possible (functionalism).
2. We accept reductionism and explain mental causation, but lose the subjective character of the mental (materialism).

“Either way” as Kim (1998) said, “we are in danger of losing the mental. That is the dilemma” (p. 237). Many recent solutions to the mind-body problem can be viewed as reply to Kim. To indicate the direction I wish to head: I propose an *ecological reductionism*, whereby, mental states are semi-global brain states that are causally efficacious. More about this as my argument unfolds.

I proceed thus. First, I reconstruct how Kim (1999) said we arrived at the dilemma. Second, I shall scrutinize Kim's discussion of functionalism, in view of several recent views that attempt to account for mental causation. Finally, I shall argue ecological reductionism offers the best prospects of solving Kim's dilemma by updating what we mean by *mind* in the different contexts we employ the term.

Scope

Some caveats. I do not aim to present an exhaustive historical account of the origins of the contemporary debate about the ontological status of the mind. Nor shall I scrutinize Putnam's (1998) argument against functionalism. I consider Kim's historical retelling only to elucidate his claim that the dilemma must be solved. I shall only mention in passing the problems in using words like causation, physical, and so on, as they go beyond the scope of this paper. Finally, I also only touch upon debates about ontological status, since my purpose is to account for the subjective character of consciousness.

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In my account, I will accept two things. First, I accept multiple realizability. One brain state may realize various mental states, at different times in the same brain. The inverse situation, as Kim (2005) anticipated, “multiple reducibility” (p. 53) also occurs. One mental state can be reduced to various physical states at different times in the same brain.² Second, I accept, in a way to be explained in this paper, bi-directional causality. Brain states cause mind states and vice versa. Finally, the ecological reductionism I propose is only intended to be programmatic.

Kim’s Dilemma and its Historical Antecedents in the Philosophy of Science

It is useful to briefly trace how we got entrapped in the dilemma in the first place. Kim (1999) traced the contemporary problem of the relation of the mind to the body to an ad hoc question in the philosophy of science that arose in the 1950s and 1960s. He identified Feigl’s (1958) “The Mental and the Physical” as well as J. J. Smart’s (1959) “Sensations and Brain Processes” as antecedents of the current debate. As he noted, the relation of mind to body is one example of how higher levels (e.g., economic laws) relate to basic physical ones (e.g., quantum laws).³ Kim (2005) claimed that the mind-body problem arose for physicalists who aspired to take the mind seriously and accepted a layered model of domains of science like a “ladder” (p. 53). As Kim (2005) put it, we need to know how the mind can exert causal powers in a world that is

² For the purpose of making the point only, we can put matters in logical terms “ $\diamond(\forall x)(\exists y) Cxy$ ”: it is possible that all brains states can cause a single mental state. Also, “ $\diamond(\forall y)(\exists x) Cyx$ ”: it is possible that all mental states can be caused by a single brain state.

³ Putnam (1998) noted that if we ask how many objects are in a room, it depends on our definition of *object*. In Putnam’s (1990) paper “Is Water H₂O?” he noted that a table is the same if one molecule is missing. A table is not a meteorological sum (like a set) of molecules, he said. The moral is that medium sized objects merit their ontological reification and we could think the same is true for the mind, too. Yet, at the same time, in Putnam’s (2004) in *Ethics Without Ontology* he acknowledged that lower-level descriptions can help explain what happens at the higher levels.

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fundamentally physical. The philosophical debate became focused, as Kim has said, with Putnam's (1967/1975) argument for functionalism.

Kim (2005) defined irreducibility as the notion that mental properties are not identical with physical ones. Kim (1998) commented that Putnam's (1967/1975) paper brought about the demise of identity theory, the notion that "mental states *S* is identical with physical state *P*"; gave birth to functionalism; and established anti-reductionism as the received view among cognitive scientists.

Kim (2006) had noted that there are "three players" (p. 553), the mind, body, and behavior. "Having a mind", Kim (1998) said, "can be constructed as a simple property, capacity, or characteristic that humans and other higher animals possess in contrast with things like pencils and rocks" (p. 5). He said that the mental includes things like sensations (seeing red), that-clauses ("I hope that"), and personality (honesty). As he explained, we can distinguish the *reference* of our intentions (what our thoughts are about) from their *content* (e.g., remembering a thunderstorm). Behavior, he held, includes not just reflexes, bodily movement, but also beliefs, thinking, judging, and so on. How, Kim (1998) asked, does a mental state come to have "meaning" (p. 185)?

According to Kim (1999) in his Townsend Lectures delivered at the University of California in 1996, March, in the 1970s non-reductive physicalism came on the scene in the form of "the mind supervenes on brain", "x is realized by y", and "x emerges from y". Yet as Kim (1999) noted, non-reductive functionalism leaves the "harder problem untouched" (p. 19). We still have the "mystery" (Kim, 2005, p.153) of how the mind causes physical states.

Kim (1999) noted that Putnam (1967/1975) proposed that the mind is a functional state of the brain, which has often been understood in terms of supervenience. Kim (1998) contended that supervenience is the view that the mind supervenes on the physical in that any two things (objects, events,

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organisms, persons) that are exactly alike physically cannot differ in “mental properties” (p. 10).⁴ As Kim (2005) diagramed it on Page 45:

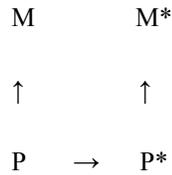


Figure 1. The mind supervenes on the physical.

According to supervenience advocates of the mind, physical states cause brain states, and mental ones, too. As Kim (2006) said, however, the idea of “downward causation will loom large” (p. 548).

However, supervenience had lived on in a new guise. Emergence (sometimes called non-reductive physicalism) Kim (2006) noted, made a comeback in the 1990s. Kim (2006) defined emergence:

[A] purely physical system composed exclusively of bits of matter, when it reaches a certain degree of complexity in its structural organization, can begin to exhibit genuinely novel properties not possessed by simple constituents. (p. 448)

Kim (2006), however, did not think emergism solves the problem of accounting for mental causation. He noted that Van Gulick (2001) distinguished various types of emergism. According to Kim’s account of Van Gulick, there is (a) a specific *value emergism* (a statue being 11lb. is not a property of its parts); (b) *modest emergism* (a piece of cloth is purple but not its parts; or a cell is alive,

⁴ Supervenience understood along the lines of Kim forces us to reject multiple reducibility. Suffice it to say, however, that we can discuss the mind-body problem, and Kim’s dilemma specifically, even if we embrace multiple realizability. The idea in *supervenies*, I think, need not stipulate the exact nature of relationship between two levels of description, only that there is warrant for distinguishing them, namely, one being contingent upon the other.

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not its constituent elements); (c) *radical emergism*, whereby the whole is different than its parts. As Kim explained, emergent properties must be considered to have distinctive causal powers, irreducible to the base ones'.

According to an epiphenomenalist's view—and this is the danger—the mind serves no causal role. Brain states produce mental states that are causally inert. Supervenience, however configured, may collapse into epiphenomenalism. Kim (2005) worried that supervenience yields the exclusion principle, the notion that “sufficient causal content at one level excludes causation at another level” (p. 52).

As an alternative to supervenience, Kim (2005) considered reductive identity on Page 53:

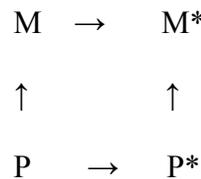


Figure 2. The mind is identical with the physical.

According to the identity theorist, mental and physical states are co-extensive. It has been often assumed that only physical objects like neurons electrical charges are causally efficacious. Kim (2005) remained optimistic that “physicalism will vindicate mental causation” (p. 148). “If we have not”, Kim (2005) remarked, “identified the actual realizer—perhaps we never will—it would not make much difference philosophically” (p. 164).⁵ Kim (2005) accepted physicalism, which he says there is “no credible alternative to” (p. 174). Kim (2005) has maintained that we must choose between two unsavory options, “reductionism” (p. 70), losing the subjective character of consciousness; or “epiphenomenalism” (p. 70), without accounting for mental

⁵ “To think”, Kim (1999) wrote, “that one can be a serious physicalist and at the same time enjoy the company of things and phenomenon that are nonphysical, I [Kim] believe, is an idle dream” (p. 120).

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causation. In what follows, I want to consider some contemporary accounts in light of Kim's dilemma; as stepping stones on which to suggest my way out of the thistle.

The First Horn: Emergent Systems

To avoid getting caught on the second horn of the dilemma we must explain mental causation. For a hint at a solution to how mental causation is possible, I aim to look back to the general problem of how levels of description relate to each other.

Bontly (2002), who considered the general problem of levels of descriptions, attempted to show that we need not account for mental causation. He claimed contra Kim that the supervenience argument generalizes such that only fundamental physical properties are causally efficacious. Bontly (2002) wrote that we are left to think "all causation is found in nature's basement, at the level of fundamental particles" (p. 90). Bontly's way out of locating all causal powers at the quantum level is to question our folk theory of causation (see discussion under Figure 5, p. 6).

Bontly's argument, as he noted, takes the form of a reduction ad absurdum. Since we do not accept that only fundamental particles are causally efficacious, we should not have to choose only one level of description as being so. For Bontly, embracing emergism does not bring with it the problem of mental causation. According to him, we must accept that causality at one level does not obviate higher-order entities being thus efficacious.⁶

The notion of causality based on the idea of the billiard balls metaphor may require revision, yet Bontly does not elaborate what the alternative is. We can concur, for the sake of argument, that various levels of description must

⁶ We may wish to note that attributing causal efficacy to only base properties holds the danger of the *drainage problem*. If we could keep on dividing matter, causality drains away. If only fundamental particles have causal efficacy, we are on a slippery slope as we divide them further at the subatomic level.

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make reference to objects that are causally efficacious. Yet without an alternative theory of causality, the problem of mental efficacy remains.

Batterman (2000), writing from a physics point of view, told us that *universality* can be understood as “similarities in the behavior of diverse systems” (p. 120). Batterman (2000) argued that the concept of *universality* as employed by physicists can be used to explain macro regularities that are realized by wildly different and heterogeneous lower level mechanisms. He rephrased the problem of the relation of levels of descriptions in terms of how we explain universality, identical behavior by distinct systems.

Batterman (2000) claimed that the mind-body problem has been set between two extremes. According to him, we have considered the mind and body as either distinct or identical. He claimed to take a moderate position. According to him, physical properties are often irrelevant when the realizers are wildly heterogeneous. For instance, he said that the structure of molecules in a fluid and their forces do not affect its critical behavior.⁷

The upshot of Batterman's argument, in this context, is that since systems' behavior at various levels of description are not identical, this gap between them may save causal efficacy as we go up the rungs, as it were. Multiple realizability writ large, we are prodded to think, saves causal efficacy of emergent systems. Yet even if we accept some co-variation between upper and lower levels, base properties still have an influence on what they realize, and not vice versa. The viscosity of a fluid will be influenced, by variables like temperature and the nature of the particles that constitute it. The problem with analogies for the mind drawn from science is that they only involve the physical realm. The temperature of a liquid is an analogy that is dissimilar to the relationship between the mind and brain in a relevant respect. The temperature of a liquid

⁷ Batterman (2000) said, “Instead, in the *asymptotic regime* where many molecules find themselves correlated—that is, where correlation diverges—it is the collective or correlated behaviour that is salient and dominates the observed phenomenological behaviour” (p. 129). “Such asymptotic methods” said Batterman (2000), “often allow for the understanding of emergent structures which dominate observably repeatable behavior in the limiting domain between the theory pairs” (p. 137).

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only requires a discussion of physical causation. At best, Batterman provided only an analogy of fluid dynamics for the mind, not an explanation of mental causation.

Newman (1996), drawing on his doctoral dissertation *Chaos and Consciousness*, buoyed up the contention that examples of chaotic systems are illustrations of emergent properties. Newman's (1996) argument depends upon his definition of emergism, so it is useful to cite it:

[A] property P of an object O is emergent if P is the result of physical properties of the physical constituents of O while at the same time it is impossible to explain P in terms of the physical constituents of O. (p. 246)

Newman relied upon Broad's (1929) criterion, which has been influential for philosophers of mind, that "the existence of an emergent property cannot be predicted on the basis of the best possible knowledge of the lower-level entities" (1996, p. 247). According to Newman (1996, p. 252), a chaotic system has several features, of which only the last concerns us, in this context: a system when having three or more dimensions has a "particular kind of aperiodic long-term behavior that is characterized by the existence of a strange attractor in the system's state space" (p. 252). "This means" Newman (2002) said, "that the state of a chaotic system evolves toward the attractor in its state space, it will never be in the same state twice, and any two nearby points in the state space will diverge exponentially under the dynamical evolution of the system" (p. 254). Yet he also pointed out that the unpredictability of non-linear dynamical systems is a kind of "epistemic impossibility rather than a metaphysical impossibility" (pp. 554-555).

Yet if we are dealing with only our epistemic limits, there is no reason to posit ontologically emergent properties. Speaking of the mind as an emergent system is to precisely claim that it is an entity called the *mind* that is above and beyond the brain in the strong sense Newman discussed emergism. Suffice it to say, Gillett (2002b), who I shall consider in more detail in this section, rejected

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Newman's (1996) attempt to use chaos theory to account for emergent properties, claiming he cannot show they are "causally efficacious" (p. 104). If chaotic systems reflect our epistemic limits, as Newman held, I shall argue, when also considering Gillett, that there is no reason to posit them having ontologically emergent properties, having not established their causal efficacy. At best, non-linear dynamical systems may be able to provide a model of the relationship between the state of the brain and the firing of any one neuron, but not between a physical and mental system. Having not explained downward causation, we impale ourselves upon the first horn of Kim's dilemma.

Another tact. Gillett (2002a, 2002b) has attempted to solve Kim's dilemma by distinguishing causal and non-causal ontological determination. Gillett (2000b) relied upon Shoemaker's (1980) causal theory of properties, according to which "a property is individuated by the causal powers it *potentially* contributes to the individuals in which it is instantiated" (as cited in 2002b, p. 98). As Gillett (2002a; 2002b) noted, the shape of a knife makes it *appropriate for cutting flesh* (a property) when made of, for instance, steel and of the right size.

Ontologically emergent properties, like being appropriate for cutting flesh, argued Gillett (2002a), are examples of non-causal determination. Gillett (2002a) called his view a "patchwork physicalism" (p. 114). On his view, a patchwork of different properties, both causal and non-causal, function in conjunction. As Gillett (2002b) explained, upward determination is not causal because it is "instantaneous" (p. 100) and involves "wholly distinct entities" (p. 100). He claimed the relationships between the two levels are like that between parts and a whole; they non-causally determine each other.

Gillett thinks that we need not account for mental causation because it does not apply in physics anyways. Gillett thought we can jettison reductionism and are not required to account for mental causation as he defended a non-causal version of it.

Consider the property of being knife-shaped that is not entailed by its micro-properties nor is its ability to cut flesh, as Gillett held. The function we

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assign the object, namely to cut, is what makes it a knife. Merely designating an object as a knife only reflects how we use language and our social practices, not that some terms cannot be reduced to their physical properties appropriately combined. Gillett has only argued for multiple causal determinations, where the non-causal ontological component is, in the case of a knife, a fact about our conventional designation. It could be argued that the difference between a knife and the mind is that between an artifact and natural kind. An example of a natural kind is a tomato, which can be defined by its deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), which is not true of artifacts.

Though Gillett has attempted to evade the necessity for accounting for mental causation, he must do so. On Gillett's view, taken to an extreme, entities non-causally proliferate without any clear limits, other than how we use language. At the least, in the case of the mind, accounting for its causal efficacy is a useful constraint for considering its ontological reification.

The ontological status of the mind is a litmus test for resolving debates about reductionism in the philosophy of science. We can take solace knowing that general problem of reductionism that spawned the mind-body problem may be solvable because there is an explanatory commerce between levels that must involve causality. Yet we must explain how there could be mental causation. Kim's dilemma cannot be evaded; it must be tackled.

The Second Horn: The Reductive Definition of *Mind*

The alternative tack, reductionism, we may wish to recall, brings with it the danger of impalement on the second horn, losing of the subjective character of consciousness. One notion remains attractive in emergent accounts: the mind is a sum greater than its parts at any one time that also acts upon them. Learning that water is H₂O does not eliminate our talk of water, but clarifies our definition of it. Much of the problem, I shall argue, requires a clarification of what we mean by *mind*.

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Putnam (1967/1975) had already said that *sense* is to be understood in terms of “what there in fact is” (Putnam, 1967/1975). What there *is*, is brains and their constituent parts.

Marras (2005; 2006), at the University of Western Ontario, in Canada, department of philosophy, had argued that the reduction of emergent properties to physical ones does not require identifying the two, only that they can be reductively explained in terms of base properties. Marras (2006) conjectured that emergent properties like pain may not be “beyond the scope of reductive explanation altogether” (p. 367). Marras (2005) claimed, in fact, that if the mental can be reduced to the physical is an “empirical question” (p. 359).

Resolution of Kim's dilemma is both a conceptual and empirical issue. It is a conceptual issue because we need to define what we mean by *mind*. It is an empirical issue because what we think a *mind* is will be influenced by what we learn about the brain. The famous examples of neurological progress relate to studying lesions in the brain, and it is helpful to rely upon them.

As Kim had already realized, we cannot, on the first score, explain mental causation without making the identification between the physical and the mental. At issue is how we are to identify the physical and mental. On the second score, empirical evidence does bear on the problem of mental causation. As is well known, if we have damage to Broca's area, in the frontal lobe, there are deficiencies in understanding the meanings of words. Damage to the neo-frontal cortex can cause deficiencies in planning and making judgments, too. If we have damage to Wernicke's area, on the left posterior section of the superior temporal gyrus encircling the auditory cortex, we can understand the meaning of words but lose a sense of syntax. Of course, some brain damage causes memory loss. As brain damage accrues, we can lose a sense of self altogether. If we had no memory, I think, we would not even be conscious, as understood in colloquial terms.

It is highly probable that there is no one brain state that is always coextensive with the exact same mental one. Yet certain mental states do depend on brain ones in certain areas, like the vision center at the back of the cranium.

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Marras needs to explain what a mental state of pain is if given a reductive explanation. I have an answer. The mind is, I contend, semi-global states of the brain, since some parts of the brain must be active to be conscious, and we can leave to neuroscientists the task of determining what modules are so.

Van de Larr (2007), of Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands, faculty of philosophy, argued that some dynamical systems “exhibit a form of global to local determination or *downward causation*” (p. 308).⁸ He claimed that the mathematical models of dynamical systems can be extended to natural phenomenon. Though noting all talk of *higher* and *lower* is metaphorical, Van de Larr (2007) also held, “The dynamical higher-order patterns—some of which are associated with (conscious) mental activity—constrain the behavior of their lower-level constituent (neurons)” (p. 320).⁹ As Van de Larr (2007) pointed out, the problem is that we lack a “clear metaphysical embedding” (p. 321). Van de Larr (2007) claimed that Gillett (e.g., 2002a; 2002b) provided the required metaphysical clarification. For Van de Larr, micro-properties are necessary, and the realized ones’ explanation requires reference to them.

Yet I have already concluded that there are reasons to have deep reservations with Gillett’s (2002a; 2002b) account. Gillett, we may wish to recall, attempted to legitimate the ontological reification of the mind based on the notion of non-causal determination between various levels of descriptions. We cannot I argue, however, clarify the metaphysical issue of what the mind is without explaining mental causation. In fact, in lieu of explaining mental causation, Van de Larr has only modeled the relationship between brain states and the firing of individual neurons, not said what the mind is. Further conceptual clarification of *semi-global brain states* is necessitated, as well as its relationship to *mind*.

⁸ Citing Clayton (1997), Van de Larr (2007) said, “[A] dynamical system is a set of functions (rules, equations) that specify how variables change over time” (p. 309).

⁹ Van de Larr (2007) wrote, “In the ideal case of an intentional action of the intentional influence would be modeled by the current order parameter being the parameter that is dominant with regard to the trajectory of the system at that time” (p. 320).

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Returning to the computer analogy helps our way through the thicket. The electrons moving in the circuits of computers allow the execution of various functions. If we are playing a video game say, *Donkey Kong*, the colors upon the screen, music, coordination with the joystick, and so on, are a function of the software. In the analogy between computers and talk of semi-global reductionism, the brain is the hardware-cum-software. The screen, to follow the analogy, is like the physical apparatus of the body (e.g., the face). There would be little use of a computer processor if not connected to the physical apparatus, like the screen, joystick, disk drive, printer, or keyboard, required for the instillation of the software, and even though some is built in, the system never gets of the ground without inputs. There is a moral.

The debate over the ontological status of consciousness has been one between proponents of mental states versus those of brain ones alone. The brain, however, is part of the nervous system. Students of brain development know that the senses—such as, hearing, seeing, tasting, touching, and smelling—are indispensable to having a mind. It is fanciful to think of brains in vats, a science fiction episode of *Star Trek*, but this is just a different way to feed information into the system. From an empirical point of view, there must be inputs in the first place. We need a mind because we have a body, as Aristotle already knew.

By a robust understanding of *semi-global brain states* I mean this: imagine a series of concentric circles, one including another: at the core, the mind is semi-global brain states. At the, allowing the possibility of mind, we have the nervous system and the body; as well as even further out, the entire socio-cultural world.

Since the idea of ecology is all the rage right now, I need to distinguish my view from more radical ones. Robbins and Aydede (2009) authored the introductory chapter for *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*. They identified three theses often held by proponents of situated cognition: the embodied, embedded, and extended theses. First, *the embodied thesis* is that cognition depends on the body. For example, we can explain how symbols

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become meaningful by understanding the role of sensory motor basis of cognition. Further, they distinguished between on-line cognition when we are engaged in the world; and off-line cognition when we are not engaged (e.g., when we are reflecting).

Second, *the embedded thesis* is that cognitive activity exploits structure in the natural and physical worlds. As Warneken and Tomasello (2009) said, writing about cognition and culture, we form “shared intentionality” (p. 469). For example, institutions like marriage, money, and government require social recognition to maintain their meaning/value. An example is cognitive off-loading, the way in which we store information in our environment, which beckons us to an ecological theory of mind, and this leads to their next and final point.

The extended thesis is the view that the boundaries of cognition extend beyond the individual. The extended thesis is radical because it entails an ontological claim about what the mind is. As they noted, the reason to take seriously the extended thesis has been interest in dynamical systems, whereby the entire system has properties that cannot be accounted for by merely understanding its parts. Rather, we have to understand the mind as part of the environment, as one entire system.

However as they also noted, Adams and Aizawa (2008) have argued that the extended thesis requires conflating the important metaphysical distinction between causation and constitution. That is, just because something causes something else, does not make it part of what it is. Suffice it say, the extended thesis may be worthwhile considering for political or methodological reasons, but we need not endorse it in philosophy of mind. If we are to take into account the role of the social context in cognition with or without ontologically distributing the mind outside our skulls I shall leave for others. The ecological view I propose is merely intended to pay heed the embodied and embedded thesis, specifically, the way the mind draws upon chunks of brain functioning developed primarily through social interactions.

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To solve Kim's dilemma, we need to take stock of the benefits and costs of any one view in light of his desiderata. The challenge is to explain mental causation while maintaining the subjective character of consciousness. As Kim anticipated, emergent views of consciousness must fail, not allowing us to account for mental causation. Kim (2005) was on the right track as indicated in the title of his book *Physicalism or Something Near Enough*. I have pursued a reductive strategy to show the dilemma can be solved. Once we accept the mind as semi-global brain states, as I have suggested, we no longer have a problem of mental causation. Contending that the mind causes a brain state just means certain collective brain states influence say, the firing probability of a bunch of neurons in a certain area of the brain. The mind, I emphasize, has not been eliminated. It is still useful to talk of a mind, as it denotes a specific type of brain functioning in the robust sense discussed.

The talk of folk terms also allows us to save the subjective nature of the mental. The use of our *folk language*, however, has carried with it the metaphysical assumption that what is denoted by them is not real. For our present purposes, we need determine if the negative connotation with the world *folk* requires emendation because that takes us into an ontological dispute and hence beyond the scope of this paper. Kim's dilemma, recall, only requires that we respect consciousness. Suffice it to say that the use of folk language related to mental life is justified because it is consistent with current scientific practices. Identifying the mind with semi-global brain states does not hinder, or in any way invalidate, relying upon introspective methods to probe a person's mental states in a folk language, like qualitative studies. A folk language, in fact, is a natural way to access qualitative truths at that level of description, which it is reasonable to think, would at least have to be taken into account in addition to any strictly reductive findings.

Kim's desiderata for a successful resolution to his dilemma include explaining how the mind could be *causally efficacious* and respecting consciousness. Kim's dilemma forces this. First, the only way to account for mental causation is to reduce the mind to the brain. Second, we obviously

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experience the world so it would be—a shame—if all our experiences are themselves chimeras. I have attempted to show that, far from conflicting, both criterion function in tandem. From reductionism flows the solution to mental causation. I argued that brain states precipitate other ones, and semi-global ones, identified with consciousness, do so, too. There is both *upward* and *downward* causation within the brain: from the parts to larger chunks and vice versa. Ecological reductionism does not entail the loss of the mental. On the contrary, I have attempted to clarify what we mean when we assert “we have minds”.

There is a philosophical moral. Wittgensteinians have often been considered a threat to cognitive scientists. Traditional philosophical problems, on Wittgenstein’s view, merely involve linguistic confusions. For a Wittgensteinian, the *mind-body* problem must be rooted in confusion about the use of those words. Further, as Brook, the previous Director of Institute of Cognitive Science at Carleton University, in Canada, pointed out, for Wittgensteinians, nothing goes on in the head (A. Brook, personal correspondence, 2002). Cognitive scientists, in an ironic twist, may concur in their own way. Meanings do not float freely in a netherworld. As I have argued, and by the lights of our best scientific accounts, meanings are brain states that arise from persistent and ongoing attempts to solve problems in an environment that includes an entire socio-cultural context. The best way to show the fly how to get out of the fly bottle is to help it to see. We can get out together.

Kim identified a dilemma that reflects the desire to account for mental causation—the mind is good for something, roughly—while maintaining the subjective nature of consciousness. As I anticipated in the “Scope” of this essay, ecological reductionism is only a picture, but it has the virtue of fulfilling Kim’s desiderata when several other views I considered flounder on one or the other horn of the dilemma. I have argued from an ontological vantage point that ecological reductionism allows us to recast our definition of *mind* in reductive terms and retain our folk semantics. After all, our meanings are nuanced, and we intend slightly different things by *mind* in different contexts.

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Further research will be fruitful, I think, by extricating ourselves from metaphysical disputes without dismissing them out-of-hand. On the contrary. We need to spell out how brain functioning allows mental states and the proliferation of ideas: that often we have taken to be abstract objects, like numbers. We cannot escape the mind; we cannot escape the brain. And we cannot exist outside of the socio-cultural context that provides some shape to our perceptions about the world and our place in it. And is not this not what Kim's dilemma was all about?

For example, considering whether to accept or reject ecological reductionism we learn something about ourselves. Namely, we desire a philosophical account of the mind that is scientifically cogent, yet tallies without our everyday goings-on. And a theory of mind's acceptability must lie in its successful application, its explanatory power, and its usefulness to ordinary linguistic practices. Because that is the level of description at which mind-talk occurs. And there must be room in our ontology for the everyday, too.

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Ecpyrosis and Cosmos in Heraclitus

Theodoros Christidis

1. Introduction

There are two ways of interpreting Heraclitus' cosmology: the first adopts the view that the Ephesian supported a theory of one, unique and eternal universe in which all kinds of change take place without the occurrence of any kind of *ecpyrosis*, which is considered as Stoic idea. According to Kirk this view has been supported by many scholars such as Schleiermacher, Lassalle, Burnet, Reinhardt; we must cite also Kirk himself as an ardent follower of this view. The second sustains the view that *ecpyrosis* is one of the main features of Heraclitus' cosmology, according to ancient testimonies such as those of Aristotle and Theophrastus; in this view there occur alternating geneses and decays of universes; thus, there is a phase of cosmogony followed by the evolution of the emerged universe and ending by *a kind* of *ecpyrosis*. This view is supported by Diels, Gomperz, Gilbert, Brieger and Gigon; we can add the names of Charles Kahn, Philip Wheelwright, and Rodolfo Mondolfo. Our interpretation supports the latter view of successive universes, with an important difference: there is no need to suppose that a total conflagration is taking place; on the contrary, we assert that the expression *ἀπτόμενον μέτρα* ('kindling in measures') in fr. 30 precludes the occurrence of *ecpyrosis* in the sense of total conflagration. Thus, we introduce the notion of *quasi-ecpyrosis*, where "a maximal amount of the universal stuff has returned to a fiery condition"¹ leading to a state, where fire is the preponderant element in a mixture of the three elements, *fire, sea, and earth*, the latter two being a transformation of the first. This interpretation has as a crucial element the new interpretation we give to fr. 124 saved by Theophrastus. Thus, in our view, this fragment plays a

¹ Wheelwright, see below.

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crucial role in supporting a new interpretation of Heraclitus' cosmology, which includes a phase of cosmogony too.

2. The Most Essential Fragments for the Establishment of a New Interpretation of Heraclitus' Cosmology

The most important fragments leading to the establishment of a new interpretation of Heraclitus' cosmology are listed below:

Fr. 30: *This world-order, the same of all², did none of gods or men make, but it always was and is and will be an everliving fire, kindling in measures and going out in measures.*

Next fr. 31a comes with an introductory comment of Clement, who saved both fr. 30 and 31:

“And that he pronounced the opinion that it [the world] is both created and destructible, the following words tell us: (fr. 31a follows)³.

Fr. 31a: *fire's changes: first sea, and of sea one half is earth and the other half is lightning flash (πρηστήρ).*

For he says that fire virtually, by the logos and god which steer all things, is turned by way of air into fluid, which acts as the seed of the world-ordering process, and which he calls sea; then, out of this (the sea), earth comes into being and heaven and everything comprised in it” (this is the closing sentence which refers to fr. 31a).

Then fr. 31b comes with Clement's comments again:

² Cf. Gregory Vlastos, *On Heraclitus*, *American Journal of Philology*, 76 (1955) 345 and n. 21.

³ Kirk's translation, with slight differences in some points.

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“That these things are taken up again and turned into fire he shows clearly with these words:

Fr. 31b: *<earth> is dispersed as sea [‘sea is dispersed’, Clement understood] and is measured so as to form the same proportion as existed before it became earth.*

Similarly too about the other elements the same things happen. Opinions kindred to those of Heraclitus are pronounced also by the most renowned of the Stoics, with their beliefs about the things turning into fire and the arrangement of the world...”

Fr. 50: *Listening not to me but to the logos it is wise to agree that all things are one.*

Fr. 51: *They do not apprehend how being at variance it agrees with itself; there is a connection working in both directions, as in the bow and the lyre⁴.*

Fr. 64: *The thunderbolt steers all things.*

Fr. 66: *Fire coming on will discern (κρινεῖ, literally: separate) and catch up with all things.*

Fr. 41: *Wisdom is one thing, to be skilled in true judgment, how all things are steered through all.*

Fr. 54: *The unapparent harmony (connexion) is better than the apparent.*

We cite also two fragments which contain the expression εἰ δὲ μή:

⁴ Kirk’s translation; note the expression ‘a connection working in both directions’.

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Fr. 94: *The Sun will not overstep his measures; if he does (εἰ δὲ μὴ), the Erinyes, the minions of Dike, will find him.*

Fr. 121: *The Ephesians deserve to be hanged to the last man, every one of them, and leave the city to the boys, since they drove out their best man, Hermodorus, saying 'Let no one be the best among us; if he is (εἰ δὲ μὴ), let him be so elsewhere and among others'.*

We now cite the crucial, to our opinion, fr. 124 quoted by Theophrastus, with his introductory comment:

“It would be unreasonable to think that, although the whole of heaven and each of its parts are all ruled by order, logos, forms, powers and periods, in the principles nothing of the sort occurs, but, as Heraclitus says,

Fr. 124: *the fairest order in the world is a heap of random sweepings.”*

We give now the doxographer's citations which favor Heraclitus' theory of cosmogony:

(a) Aristotle, *Physics* 205a and *Metaph.* 1067a:

... as Heraclitus says the whole of things become from time to time fire.

(b) Aristotle, *De caelo* 279b:

All (the natural philosophers) say that (the cosmos) comes into being; but some hold that it comes into being (as) eternal, and others that it is perishable as everything else of its components, and others (consider it) as coming to being and perishing

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alternately and this being so [that is, perennially], as Empedocles of Acragas and Heraclitus of Ephesus declare.

(c) Aristotle, *De caelo* 280 a 10:

For they say that orderly things are becoming from disorderly ones, but to be orderly and disorderly at the same time is impossible, and it is necessary that they are parted with genesis and time... then, it is clear that it is impossible that the cosmos can be eternal and generated.

(d) Theophrastus, *Metaph.* 7a (we give the comment that comes before the one which cites fr. 124):

*Perhaps one would wonder how and which principles we should assume, that is which of the two, the amorphous ones and like dynamical, as they say those who speak about fire and earth⁵, or the formed ones, as mainly ought to be defined as (Plato) says in the *Timaeus*: because for the most decent things the most proper are order and determination...*

(e) Theophrastus' comments after the quotation of fr. 124:

And these phenomena ask for a scrutiny, for it is demanded to be defined up to which degree the order (is present there) and for what reason it is impossible to have more order than to go over to the worst".

(f) The Derveni Papyrus:

⁵ With this expression we think that Theophrastus alludes to Heraclitus.

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(i) *the Sun... according to nature has the width of a human foot, not overstepping his measures; if he does, the Erinyes, the minions of Justice, will find him.*

(ii) *it will be an overstepping... of justice⁶.*

(iii) *[Thus] knowing that the fire when is mixed with other entities agitated (i.e. stirred or churned) them and prevent the entities from assembling because of the heat, (Zeus, i.e. air/Mind) removes a sufficient quantity of fire in such a distance so that it (fire) could no longer prevent the entities to clump.*

3. Our Interpretation

We now proceed to develop our interpretation of Heraclitus' theory of the cosmos. We support the view that his theory comprises two phases⁷ taking place during a time interval, probably the one known as the *Great Year*. The first phase is the cosmogonical one: the universe starts from a state of disorder (fr. 124), which develops to a state of dynamical equilibrium, which is unstable (in modern terminology) and is described by fr. 31a and 51. The second phase refers to the universe as we know it, with the immense diversity of changes taking place in it. The end of this phase comes when fire *is kindled in measures* (fr. 30) and *comes, discerns and catches up with all things* (fr. 66). The former phase corresponds to the Way Down and the latter to the Way Up. All the

⁶ See in Gabor Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus, Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

⁷ This is not quite original, as in Anaximander's cosmology too there are two phases, one that starts with ἄπειρον giving birth to the opposites (according to Plutarchus, 'φησὶ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ αἰδίου γόνιμον θερμοῦ τε καὶ ψυχροῦ κατὰ τὴν γένεσιν τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου ἀποκριθῆναι...') and the second, during which from the opposites (the elements) all the beings of the cosmos emerge. We adopt Vlastos idea that Heraclitus was influenced by Anaximander and Anaximenes (cf. G. Vlastos, *On Heraclitus*, AJP, Vol. LXXVI, 4, p. 354).

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processes taking place in either phase are governed (or steered) by fire: fire is the common stuff of everything and also the agent which governs everything and develops, at every step of the development of the universe, its plan-cosmos. From the saved fragments it comes up that fire is indeed the fundamental element and all the other entities, both the elements sea and earth or every other being in the universe consist fundamentally of fire; that is, everything is but a transformation of fire⁸.

Now, what is the state from which cosmogony starts? The state described by fr. 124 and 66 (the state of disorder) comes first; and then fr. 31a marks the beginning of cosmogony. We make the hypothesis that the two consecutive states of fr. 124 and fr. 31a concern this initial state (that is, before cosmogony starts), which we can designate *pre-universe*, during which fire is changing first to sea. According to Clement, (Heraclitus says that) “fire virtually is turned by way of air into fluid, which he calls sea, and which acts as the seed of the world-ordering process”. It seems curious that researchers did not give the due attention to this Clement’s comment, which begins with this characteristic expression “δυνάμει γὰρ λέγει [Ἡράκλειτος]...” We may take as granted that the verb λέγει means that Heraclitus alluded to some process like that described by Clement. If this is so, then we may proceed to assume that this initial state, the pre-universe, consists of the mixture of *fire* + *sea*, and assume that the element *sea* is *fire* in a different state⁹.

⁸ We should mention here the view Heisenberg, one of the greatest physicists of 20th century, had phrased in his book *Physics and Philosophy* (Harper and Brothers, N.Y., 1958, p. 63): “[But] the change in itself is not a material cause and therefore is represented in the philosophy of Heraclitus by the *fire* as the basic element, which is both *matter* and a *moving force*. We may remark at this point that modern physics is in some way extremely near to the doctrines of Heraclitus. *If we replace the word ‘fire’ by the word ‘energy’ we can almost repeat his statements word for word from our modern point of view*” (italics are ours). As Heisenberg identifies *fire* with the modern concept/entity of *energy*, it is worth noticing what he says about the latter: “Energy is in fact the substance from which all elementary particles, all atoms and therefore all things are made, and energy is that which moves”.

⁹ It has been pointed by the doxographers that Heraclitus had followed the scheme of Anaximenes, according to which his element, air, is transformed to liquid by condensation; further

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Now, according to fr. 51, this state of the mixture is a dynamical state of equilibrium like that of the bow and the lyre. We know that fr. 51 describes such an equilibrium by saying that [fire] *being at variance* (meaning, according to our interpretation, after having changed to sea) *it agrees with itself* (meaning that it continues to be fire in another form or state); and these changes are likened to the state of the (at least transient) equilibrium of the string of the bow and the lyre; for in the latter case, when the string is released, the equilibrium breaks down, and as a result, the arrow of the bow is winged or the string of the lyre produces a sound. For that reason we said earlier that this equilibrium is unstable or, at least, a transient state. And a state of equilibrium of the mixture *fire + sea* means that every time the quantity of fire that transforms to sea is equal to the quantity of sea that transforms to fire, like the following scheme

fire \rightleftharpoons sea;

this is entailed by the simile of the bow (or the lyre)¹⁰, where two forces are applied in the case of the bow, the one that the hand of a man exercises on the string; the other, as reaction to this, is the force of tension of the string acting in the opposite direction. We think that this is a complete and integral treatment of fr. 51.

Before going to the next step, that is the beginning of cosmogony, we have to go over the famous issue of *ecpyrosis*. We disregard the arguments pro and against the proper notion of *ecpyrosis*, which assumes that, at some epoch, all

the liquid (water or sea) being congealed turns to earth. Thus, we may say that, for Heraclitus, these derivative elements (sea and earth) remain all the time *fire* in another form (or state); the same is true for all entities: this is the meaning of fr. 50 that *'all things are one'*.

¹⁰ Vlastos, op. c., p. 351. After his argument in favor of the word *παλίντροπος* (instead of *παλίντονος* proposed by Kirk and others) he makes the following comment in relation to *παλίντροπος* *ἀρμονίη*: "If this is to the *framework* of the bow and the lyre, then *παλίντροπος* must refer to their shape... but that would make for a static image... To get a comparably dynamic image out of the bow and the lyre we must assume that *ἀρμονίη* refers to their *modus operandi*. This is indeed *παλίντροπος*, for bow and lyre do their work, send forth arrow or sound, at just that moment when the process of stretching the string is reversed."

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the entities and elements will turn into pure fire. We pretend that *ἀπτόμενον μέτρα* of fr. 30 precludes such a total conflagration. In our view, the conflagration is understood as partial, leading to an excess of fire vis-à-vis the other Heraclitean elements, sea and earth. And, according to fr. 31a, the initial mixture after the *ἀπτόμενον μέτρα*, will consist of fire, sea, and earth where fire is the extremely preponderant one.

It was a pleasing surprise to read in Wheelwright¹¹ a very similar view. Meeting Kirk's arguments against ecpyrosis, he makes the following comments: "If the dominance of fire in an *ἐκπύρωσις* were to entail the destruction of all strife, then admittedly a situation would arise—an interval of absolute peace and rest—such as is expressly denied by several of Heraclitus' statements. But would a cosmic conflagration ever be absolute? Could it, in Heraclitus' terms of thinking, represent an interval of unalloyed oneness and unchallenged stasis? The very notion is repugnant to Heraclitus' style of thought. But could there not be a periodic cosmic conflagration without any implication of purity? There is nothing pure about the *contrary* cosmic situation—when a maximal amount of the fiery substance has transformed itself into water and earth. Why could there not be a counteractive situation, occurring at vastly long intervals, in which the universe somehow bursts into flame (as the doxographers have described the occurrence) with nothing more implied than a maximal amount of the universal stuff, (which is also process), has returned to a fiery condition? Surely the cosmic fiery state would have to be somehow impure in order to allow the seeds of a future universe to emerge from it."

This is exactly our notion of partial ecpyrosis or *quasi-ecpyrosis*; and it corresponds to the period, which is described by fr. 124 and is referred by fr. 103 as the *common beginning and end in a circle's circumference*. We must now examine first the evidence from ancient writers' and doxographers' texts that favors this kind of partial ecpyrosis, and then the meaning of fr. 124 according to our interpretation.

¹¹ Philip Wheelwright, *Heraclitus*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1959, pp. 52-3.

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(1) Aristotle in two passages (*Physics* 205a and *Metaph.* 1067a) says that, according to Heraclitus ‘*the whole of things become from time to time fire*’¹². It seems to be certain that Aristotle with this expression means that the whole universe becomes at times fire. This expression alludes to a total ecpyrosis, but we must remember that Heraclitus himself had precluded this case by saying that *fire is kindling in measures*, thus not totally: the meaning is that everything in the universe disintegrates giving a mixture of fire and sea (initially), in which fire is the preponderant element; this is the meaning of fr. 66, where it is said that ‘*fire coming on will discern* (*κρίνει*, literally: *separate*) and catch up with all things’: all the entities in the universe will dissolve into the fundamental elements with fire in an excessive proportion.

(2) In our interpretation it is not the notion of ecpyrosis that is crucial, but the fact that, as Aristotle says it openly, there is a succession of universes in Heraclitus’ theory. As it is seen from *De caelo* 279b, Empedocles and Heraclitus consider the world *as coming to being and perishing alternately and this occurs so* [that is, perennially]. If Aristotle had seen in Heraclitus the idea of one, ungenerated and unperishing world-universe, then he would not have considered him as an opponent to his view (that there is only one and eternal world).

(3) There is additionally this passage (some lines after, in *De caelo* 280 a 10), where he makes allusion to the idea (held very probably by Heraclitus) that some orderly cosmos could be generated from some disorderly state. Aristotle’s conclusion is again that the cosmos is impossible to be eternal and generated (as Heraclitus had held). The disorderly state is described conspicuously by Theophrastus in fr. 124, as we will see in a moment.

(4) Theophrastus ranks Heraclitus in those philosophers, who pretend that the *principles are amorphous and like dynamical, as they say those who speak*

¹² ἅπαντα γίγνεσθαι ποτε πῦρ: the meaning is that, as is said one sentence earlier, even if one of the elements is not infinite, ‘ἀδύνατον τὸ πᾶν, κἂν ἢ πεπερασμένον, ἢ εἶναι ἢ γίγνεσθαι ἐν τι αὐτῶν (it is impossible, even if (the one element) is finite, that everything either be or become one of them as Heraclitus says that everything becomes from time to time fire’.

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about fire and earth—undoubtedly the last sentence refers to Heraclitus. And a little further, he makes a peculiar point by saying that ‘*it is demanded to be defined up to which degree the order (is present there) and for what reason it is impossible to have more order than to go over to the worst*’. This is, we think, a second allusion to Heraclitus, as just a little earlier Theophrastus had cited fr. 124, where the Ephesian is referred by his name, and where the cosmos is characterized as a random throwing of pieces of matter (σάρμα εἰκῆ κεχυμένον ὁ κάλλιστος κόσμος), that is as a disorderly state of materials due to the excess of fire, that is, in modern terminology, due to the high temperature of the mixture.

(5) There is also the relation of Heraclitus’ theory to the Orphic cosmogony, as it is described by a philosopher of the 5th to 4th century in the Derveni Papyrus. Heraclitus could have been inspired by some of the Orphic ideas, but it is more probable that “later writers of Orphic texts looked to Heraclitus for ideas which would lend themselves to verse compositions to be added to the Orphic canon”¹³. The writer of the Papyrus cites some phrases from Heraclitus’ work; in particular, he cites the following: “the Sun... according to nature has the width of a human foot, not over-stepping his measures; if he does, the Erinyes, the minions of Justice, will find him...” It is a pity that the papyrus was significantly destroyed; thus it is difficult to read it and be sure about the meaning of the saved words¹⁴. Of those lines that were saved, it reads: “sacrifice... of justice”; or, in another rendering: “it will be an overstepping... of justice”¹⁵. In either case we could raise the following question: what would happen, if the Sun overstepped its measures? This brings out the issue of the

¹³ See for more arguments in David Sider, *Heraclitus in the Derveni Papyrus*, in *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, edited by André Laks and Glenn W. Most, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 148.

¹⁴ See, *The Derveni Papyrus*, Edited with Introduction and Commentary by Th. Kouremenos, G. Parassoglou, and K. Tsantsanoglou, Firenze, Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2006.

¹⁵ See in Gabor Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus, Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

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meaning of the expression $\epsilon\acute{\iota} \delta\grave{\epsilon} \mu\eta\grave{\iota}$. Vlastos¹⁶ in his critic of Kirk's views makes the point that "no part of nature can 'overstep its measures', which is surely the point of B 94 and not as Kirk understands it, that 'long term excess is punished (and reduced¹⁷)", which is precisely what Anaximander had taught, not Heraclitus". In footnote Vlastos quotes Reinhardt, according to which the expression ' $\epsilon\acute{\iota} \delta\grave{\epsilon} \mu\eta\grave{\iota}$ ' in fr. 94 "expresses something impossible, a fall, which will never happen, as in fr. 121, where the same expression occurs"¹⁸. But here Reinhardt and Vlastos are not taking into consideration that ' $\epsilon\acute{\iota} \delta\grave{\epsilon} \mu\eta\grave{\iota}$ ' expresses just the opposite of what they assert: Hermodorus was indeed the best among the Ephesians, that is, he had overstepped the measures they had put on this issue and, because of this overstepping, [he] was punished (he was exiled). Thus, it seems that Heraclitus would agree with this interpretation, that whenever a person or a process or a physical body does overstep some measures imposed by nature or the society, then this entity will be punished. This means that we could assert that Heraclitus would also agree with the idea that is expressed in the same part of Theophrastus' comment, after the quotation of fr. 124, i.e. the idea that there is a reason 'for which it is impossible to have more order than to go over to the worst' (that is, to disorder); this reason would be, in this case, the overstepping of some measures in the universe.

The idea in the Orphic cosmogony, akin to Heraclitus' theory, is best described by Th. Kouremenos as follows¹⁹:

"Air/Mind never came to be: it existed before the cosmos came to be and will always exist. It dominates all derivative entities ...; in

¹⁶ G. Vlastos, *On Heraclitus*, AJP, vol. 76, 4, p. 358.

¹⁷ Kirk, Heraclitus, *The Cosmic Fragments*, Cambridge University Press, 1954; in p. 402 says actually that 'long term excess is punished (and reduced) by the servants of Dike'. We agree with this idea, but we disagree with the spirit of the argument Kirk developed there.

¹⁸ Fr. 121: "The Ephesians, every grown man of them, deserve to be hanged and leave the city to beardless youths; for they have exiled Hermodorus, the best man among them, saying: 'no one should be best among us; if there be any such, let him be so elsewhere and among others'.

¹⁹ See, *The Derveni Papyrus*, as in ref. of n. 14.

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other words, the wise air determines the behavior of the other basic entities from which the derivative entities come to be and into which they eventually dissolve... If air/Mind did not want it to, the universe would not be as it is now, for it is air/Mind that caused the other basic quantities to be configured into the cosmos²⁰. As is explained in col. IX.5-10, they were originally dominated by fire which caused them to mix together and prevented the formation of coherent structures (fire era). Air/Mind opened a new chapter in the history of the universe (Mind era) when it came to dominate all other basic entities and caused them to condense out of their primordial mixture. The first to separate out was fire. When the fire content of the mixture dropped to a sufficiently low level²¹, the other basic entities would not be prevented any more from accreting to form the large-scale structures we see in the universe. Since the existence and size of the Sun are thought of as necessary conditions for the generation and existence of all other derivative entities, the quantity of fire air/Mind caused to separate out first can be plausibly assumed to have become the Sun²².

It is worth noticing the sentence by which the writer of the Derveni Papyrus describes why the fire prevented the other elements to form coherent structures:

*Γινώσκων οὖν τὸ πῦρ ἀναμεμειγμένον τοῖς
ἄλλοις ὅτι ταρασσοὶ καὶ κωλύει τὰ ὄντα συνίστασθαι*

²⁰ Heraclitus had the same idea with the difference that in his theory it is fire that *steers* everything; also fire is inherently the medium that bears the cosmic plan and is responsible for its realization.

²¹ In Heraclitus' theory this is due to fire's nature to change to sea (πυρὸς τροπαὶ πρῶτον θάλασσα..., fr. 31a) so that its high proportion in the initial mixture drops significantly and the mixture reaches a state of dynamical equilibrium, described by fr. 31a and 51.

²² *The Derveni Papyrus*, *ibid.*, p. 30.

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διὰ τὴν θάλασσαν ἐξαλλάσσει ὅσον τε ἰκανόν ἐστιν
ἐξαλλαχθὲν μὴ κωλύειν τὰ ὄντα συμπαγῆναι

which, in Th. Kouremenos translation, reads as follows:

[Thus] knowing that the fire when is mixed with other entities agitated (i.e. stirred or churned) them and prevent the entities from assembling because of the heat, (Zeus, i.e. air/Mind) removes a sufficient quantity of fire in such a distance so that it (fire) could no longer prevent the entities to clump.

The idea that things which are heated behave in a disorderly way was very common: think of a copper filled with water and heated up to the boiling point; this was a common experience of a disorderly state. Thus, it is very probable that Heraclitus too had imagined a similar state for the case of the world, when fire was the dominating element in the mixture. During this state the elements could not interact and give birth to the entities of the universe. But, when the transformation of fire into sea had progressed enough, then started the formation of the beings, as very elliptically the comments of Clement describe after fr. 31a: “then, out of this (the sea), earth comes into being and heaven and everything comprised in it”.

4. The Meaning of Fr. 124

The last sentence signifies the end of cosmogony and the beginning of the second phase of Heraclitus’ cosmology, the emergence and development of the universe as we know it. This phase of development, the passage to which has been referred in fr. 30 as fire’s *going out in measures*, is ruled by fr. 80: *One must realize that war is common and Justice is conflict and that all things come to existence (and are ordained?) in accordance with conflict and necessity* (καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ’ ἔριν καὶ χρεῶν). It should be stressed that ἔρις and χρεῶν have not the same meaning—thus it is not a redundancy; χρεῶν must

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have the meaning of a deterministic law, whereas ἔρις must be a force acting in opposition to χρεῶν, that is like a force acting between the contrarities as the warm and the cold, etc. In accordance to the simultaneous action of these two agents, fr. 84a says: μεταβάλλον ἀναπαύεται (changing it rests), as well as fr. 84b: κάματός ἐστι τοῖς αὐτοῖς μοχθεῖν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι (it is weariness to toil for and ruled by the same). The former gives the idea of how after the change a state of equilibrium is produced; and the latter gives the emphasis to the fact, which is in accordance with Heraclitus' spirit, that it is not expected that any being could resist to the universal trend of change: it is probable that any entity stays for some period of time unchanged, but sooner or later it will change; in fact, everything changes all the time, but the faintest changes escape our ability to notice them.

The question now is this: how this organized universe will at some time return to its initial state described by fr. 124? Or, in other words, *why is fire kindling in measures again?* How could this be justified by Heraclitus' thought? We could again recur to the meaning of fr. 80, where ἔρις (*conflict*) plays the role of allowing the elements to form orderly things as well as of imposing the dissolution of compound things to their constituents. This is in accordance to another fragment of Heraclitus, namely fr. 41, which states that *'the wise is one, knowing the plan how all things are steered through all'*. The meaning of this fragment is of unexampled (for the ancient mode of thinking) importance: it acknowledges that in the cosmos everything interacts with all the other things in it! This idea, which has been vindicated only by the development of modern physics, has as consequence that all sort of changes can be entailed during the development of the universe, even its perishing. This development is described by fr. 66, which states that *'fire coming on will discern (κρινεῖ, literally: separate) and catch up with all things'*. But, the trouble is that Heraclitus did not want to express his ideas more explicitly. He spoke in an oracular style, which means ambiguously, letting all the possible interpretations open²³.

²³ It is probable that he did so deliberately. One can remind here what Plotinus says, when quoting fr. 84a,b; it seems that he does not understand clearly what Heraclitus had meant by

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As far as the interpretation of fr. 124 is concerned²⁴, we point out the fact that this fragment is either misunderstood or underestimated by many scholars. Kirk, for example, has not comprised it in his classical work ‘*Heraclitus, The Cosmic Fragments*’²⁵. We can anyway find important comments in some other writers’ texts to which we will come in a moment. In our view, fr. 124 plays a crucial role in our effort to interpret Heraclitus’ cosmology. It concerns the situation, which results after the occurrence of fire’s era: the period during which *fire is kindling in measures*, as fr. 30 says. From what has been said earlier, this expression precludes the idea of total conflagration. In our view, as well as in Wheelwright’ view, the situation that comes up during this period is that of a mixture of elements, in which fire is in a tremendous excess vis-à-vis to the presence of the other two Heraclitean elements, sea and earth. This means that the mixture is in a disorderly state, because of this fire’s excess—in modern terminology, because of the extremely high temperature of the mixture. This is the state which is described so properly (to our view) and so unintelligibly (for many writers) by fr. 124. Because of the conditions stated just earlier, the material of fire and the other two elements are behaving like *a heap of random sweepings*. The characterization of this state as *the fairest cosmos* is an idea vindicated by Heraclitus’ pattern of apprehending the very notion of cosmos; we will come to this in a moment.

Thus far it is understandable why under these conditions the elements are in a disorderly state. Let us see what comes next. As fr. 31a states: ‘fire’s changes: first sea, and of sea one half is earth and the other half is lightning flash’. As fire

these fragments, so he comments: “*though neglecting to make the argument clear for us, as though we should perhaps seek in ourselves, as he also sought and found*”.

²⁴ The fragment cited by Theophrastus, says: *And it would seem to them absurd, if the heaven in its totality and every part of it were all of them in order and according to logos and to forms and to powers and periods, but in the principles nothing such occurs, but “the fairest order in the world is a heap of random sweepings”, as Heraclitus says.*

²⁵ In p. 82 of this work he says: “Diel’s emendation, retained in DK, of $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\xi$ to $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\mu\alpha$ in Heraclitus fr. 124 is surely wrong; for a correct explanation of this fragment, retaining ms. $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\xi$, see J. McDiarmid, AJP 62 (1941) 492 ff., and P. Friedländer, AJP 63 (1942) 336.

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begins to change to sea first, its proportion in the mixture is lowered, that means that the temperature drops continually until a new state is reached, in which a state of dynamical equilibrium is achieved, the changes going forward in producing more sea and vice versa. In this state now it is possible that the emergence of the objects of the universe can start. Thus, according to Clements' comments, which follow fr. 31a, (a) "*fire virtually, by the logos and god which steer all things, is turned by way of air into fluid, which acts as the seed of the world-ordering process, and which he calls sea*" (this is the state of dynamical equilibrium); and (b) "*then, out of this (the sea), earth comes into being and heaven and everything comprised in it*": this is exactly the completion of cosmogony. After that, we have the new born universe, which is the second phase of Heraclitus' cosmology.

It remains to comment the expression the fairest cosmos in fr. 124. Why in that state Heraclitus thought that the cosmos is in its fairest form? It is evident that this state is not the one which we see around now. It is another state from which the cosmos runs at some epoch of its development (when 'fire is kindling in measures', fr. 30), and this is done according to fr. 66, as 'fire coming on will discern (*κρινεῖ*, literally: separate) and catch up with all things'. In this state there is disorder, which is the opposite to the notion of order. But, in Heraclitus' theory the opposites are identical, as it is defined in fr. 67 and 8826. From this point of view, in either phase, the one described by fr. 124 and the next which concerns the universe as we know it, there is cosmos. In the former phase cosmos is in a disorderly state; in the latter, it is in the actual state, in which "the whole of heaven and each of its parts are all ruled by order, logos, forms,

²⁶ Fr. 67: *god is day night, winter summer, war piece, satiety hunger and undergoes alteration in the way that fire, when it is mixed with spices, is named according to the scent of each of them.* We must stress the point that 'god undergoes alteration', that is he becomes the opposite, without losing his identity. As the simile declares, it seems that *god is but this one fundamental essence of all things.* Fr. 88: *It is the same the living and the dead and the waking and the sleeping and young and old: for these things having changed round are those and those things having changed round are these ones.* In this fragment the identity of the opposites is realized through changes going to one direction and also to the opposite one.

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powers and periods". Thus, during the cosmological development the cosmic plan is also developed and changed; and repeats itself remaining always the same, because the responsible agent for the plan is fire, the *everliving fire*.

The distinction of the development of the cosmos in two phases had only a methodological intention: to make easier the apprehension of Heraclitus' theory. It is obvious that the Ephesian had no particular interest in technical matters. He had defined his principles and applied them in every field of his investigation. He ranked order and disorder as the two faces of the one and unbroken unity of the reality of the cosmos²⁷; and further, according to fr. 54 that says that '*the unapparent harmony is better than the apparent one*', he qualified the unapparent cosmos of fr. 124 as the *fairest cosmos*.

Epilogue

We give below as a synopsis the scheme of Heraclitus' cosmology citing parts of the relevant fragments and some of the comments made by ancient writers; we begin by citing the views of Aristotle and Theophrastus about the general conception of Heraclitus' theory of cosmos-world:

[Arist. De Caelo: '*and others (consider it) as coming to being and perishing alternately and this being so [that is, perennially], as Empedocles of Acragas and Heraclitus of Ephesus declare*'];

²⁷ We cite here the writers who have made substantial comments on the meaning of fr. 124 with the relevant references: H. Fränkel, *A Thought Pattern in Heraclitus*, AJP 59(1938) 309-337, T.M. Robinson, *Heraclitus*, University of Toronto Press, 1987, p. 96, A. Finkelberg, *On Cosmology and Ecpyrosis in Heraclitus*, AJP 119 (1998) 195-222, Charles Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, Philip Wheelwright, *Heraclitus*, Oxford University Press, 1959, pp. 50ff., Miroslav Marcovich, *Heraclitus, Greek text with a short commentary*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin, Jean Bollack, Heinz Wismann, *Héraclite ou la Separation, Les Editions de Minuit*, Paris, 1972, pp. 338-9, Marcel Conche, *Héraclite, Fragments*, Presses Universitaires de France, pp. 276-8.

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Theophr. Metaph. 7a: *for what reason it is impossible to have more order than to go over to the worst*’].

(1) *fire is kindling in measures (fr. 30)*

(2) *fire coming on will discern (κρινεῖ, literally: separate) and catch up with all things (fr. 66)*

(3) *the fairest order in the world is a heap of random sweepings (fr. 124)*

(4) *fire’s changes: first sea, and of sea one half is earth and the other half is lightning flash (πρηστήρ) (fr. 31a).*

[We add here Clement’s comment for the state produced when fire begins to change significantly to sea: “For he says that fire virtually, by the logos and god which steer all things, is turned by way of air into fluid, which acts as the seed of the world-ordering process, and which he calls sea”].

(5) They do not apprehend how being at variance it agrees with itself; there is a connection working in both directions, as in the bow and the lyre (fr. 51).

(6) *fire is going out in measures (fr. 30)*

[“Then, out of this (the sea), earth comes into being and heaven and everything comprised in it”: the succession of Clement’s previous comment; and Ar. *De Caelo*: (they say—probably, an allusion to Heraclitus) from disorderly things orderly things are becoming].

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(7) One must know that the war is common and Dike (justice) is strife, and that all things are happening by strife and necessity (fr. 80)

(8) <earth> is dispersed as sea and is measured so as to form the same proportion as existed before it became earth (fr. 31b)

[with Clement's comment again: Similarly too about the other elements the same things happen—the Way Up].

(9) fire is kindling in measures [the world comes to the initial state].

So, with the last point a new cycle begins in Heraclitus' cosmology.

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**Paul Ricoeur:
The Intersection Between Solitude and Connection**

Kathleen O'Dwyer

While the work of Paul Ricoeur ranges over diverse subjects – the problem of evil, the meaning of identity, human will, and human fragility - his philosophical writings have increasingly centered on hermeneutics as the key instrument in the search for meaning; he sees human experience as inherently interpretive; and he asserts that language is both the foundation and the form of one's encounter with reality and one's attempt to make sense of the world:

The decisive feature of hermeneutics is the capacity of world-disclosure yielded by texts. Hermeneutics is not confined to texts nor to authors of texts; its primary concern is with the worlds which these authors and texts open up. It is by an understanding of the worlds, actual and possible, opened up by language that we may arrive at a better understanding of ourselves (Ricoeur, 1991: 490).

William Hall explores Ricoeur's work with the focus on 'what his writings tell us about what it means to be human', and he argues that 'his philosophy can be viewed as a singular project which is centrally concerned with this question of human meaning' (Hall, 2007: 4). Ricoeur's philosophy aims at greater understanding, of the world, of the subject, and of the relationship between them. A key aspect of this relationship between the subject and what is external to it is the ambiguous, challenging and volatile intersection of self – self-love, self-preservation, self-centeredness, self-care, self-esteem, etc. – and other – acceptance, concern, empathy, recognition and acknowledgement of the other; it is the mediation between 'oneself' and 'another', between one's essential solitude and the possibility of solicitude.

Ricoeur's examination of the role of language in human experience, its inevitable translation both across different language usages and within same-language contexts, and its power to reveal and to conceal the truth of who we

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are and how we live, forms the nucleus of his analysis of the human subject as ambiguous, fallible, and mysterious, but also as potentially powerful, loving, and creative. The expanse of this spectrum is noted by Richard Kearney as he addresses Ricoeur with the reflection: 'It is remarkable that you should begin your philosophical career by reflecting on the nature of *l'homme fallible* (*fallible man*) and conclude by shifting the focus to *l'homme capable*' (Kearney, 2004: 167). Human weakness, frailty and failure co-exist with human capability, power and possibility, and Ricoeur's analysis may be construed as a commitment to strive towards the possible in full cognizance of its obstacles.

Ricoeur justifies his insistence on the hermeneutical nature of human existence because, he argues, 'language is the only complete, exhaustive, and objectively intelligible expression of human interiority' (Ricoeur, 1970: 545). This view of language, as 'the only...intelligible expression of human interiority', acknowledges the limitations of language, and leads Ricoeur to work towards the possibility of a restorative hermeneutics wherein meaning is retrieved/restored/recovered through open and comprehensive attempts at interpretation. This may appear to conflict with a hermeneutics of suspicion which Ricoeur associates with Freudian psychoanalysis as the latter discerns a hidden meaning concealed or distorted in the conscious expression of language. However, as Kearney explains, for Ricoeur, the hermeneutics of suspicion is necessary for a hermeneutics of affirmation (Kearney, 2004: 7):

Suspicion takes the form of a critique of false consciousness by the three 'masters of suspicion' – Freud, Marx and Nietzsche...All three recognized that meaning, far from being transparent to itself, is an enigmatic process which conceals at the same time as it reveals. Ricoeur insists therefore on the need for a hermeneutics of suspicion which demystifies our illusions (Kearney, 2004: 7, 8).

Both hermeneutical practices endeavour, albeit through different methods and directions, to disclose truth and meaning, and to confront the ambiguities of self-knowledge and self-deception. Kearney, in his introduction to Ricoeur's

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short thesis, *On Translation*, explains that for Ricoeur, translation ‘indicates the everyday act of speaking as a way not only of translating oneself to another...but also and more explicitly of translating oneself to oneself’. The titles of some of Ricoeur’s works, for example, *The Course of Recognition*, *Fallible Man*, and *Oneself as Another*, suggest an outline of some of the obstacles to the fulfillment of human potential, the complexities inherent in encountering the alterity of the other, and hence an analysis of the barriers to the experience of human relationship.

Ricoeur’s work involves an acknowledgement of opposition and conflict as an inescapable dimension of human living. He notes the oppositional nature of diverse political ambitions, of different national aspirations, of contrasting ideological convictions, and of myriad philosophical and historical interpretations of human experience. Without cynicism, and without despair, Ricoeur acknowledges human failure to realize genuine human community as recounted throughout history and as experienced in many manifestations in contemporary times. Underlying these failures, Ricoeur recognizes the conflicting nature of many inter-personal relationships, as the human subject strives to discover, and to maintain, his or her identity in a world which is already interpreted before the individual’s entry to it: ‘In being born I enter into the world of language that precedes me and envelops me’ (Ricoeur, 2002: 27). The identity of the individual, at all the stages of life and development, is inter-linked with, and perhaps inter-dependent on reflection, recognition and expectation of the other, in personal, cultural and social realms. An inevitable tension ensues, a tension between the experience, the desire and uniqueness of the individual and the corresponding existence of the other. The correspondence between the experience of the self and the other entails similarities and commonalities in the experience of being human, but it is counter-balanced with the reality of difference and divergence. Ricoeur argues for an acceptance of difference, for a living-with diversity, and for a respect which honours the multiplicity of human thought and interpretation. According to David Kaplan, this is ‘one of Ricoeur’s many strengths as a philosopher...He tends to think in

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terms of opposites, pairs, and contrasts juxtaposed in such a way that highlights and preserves differences, while resisting the temptation to synthesize a new unity' (Kaplan, 2003: 1). Thus, Ricoeur advocates a focus on bridge-building and mediation between diverse positions and interpretations rather than an unrealistic attempt to integrate difference. This is the basis of his ethical vision.

Ricoeur defines the 'ethical intention' as '*aiming at the "good life" with and for others, in just institutions*' (Ricoeur, 1992: 172), he is firmly asserting the existential bond between the self and the other, and he is also insisting on a philosophy of action, the practical expression of his philosophical thought. Ricoeur is using the phrase, "the good life" in the Aristotelian sense of "living well" or the Proustian concept of the "true life"; he explains that 'the "good life" is, for each of us, the nebulous of ideals and dreams of achievement with regard to which a life is held to be more or less fulfilled or unfulfilled', and he stresses the practical manifestation of this aim: 'we would say that it is the unending work of interpretation applied to action and to oneself that we pursue the search for adequation between what seems to us to be best with regard to our life as a whole and the preferential choices that govern our practice' (Ricoeur, 1992: 179). Our values are expressed in the choices which determine our actions. The living of 'the good life' entails living 'with others' and resounds with Martin Buber's definition of 'community' as an extension of the 'I-Thou' relationship between authentic selves. Many, if not all of our chosen action, have an impact on others and on our relationships with others. The difficulties involved in the open embrace of the other, in interpersonal and institutional realms, are aptly chronicled in various interpretations of human history, and continue to challenge contemporary ideals of peaceful co-existence between nations, groups, and individuals. These difficulties and challenges inevitably pose challenges to the experience of relationship in human living, and are confronted and analysed creatively in the philosophy of Ricoeur.

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The Fragmented Multiplicity of the Subject

We do not mistake ourselves without also being mistaken about others and our relations with them (Ricoeur, 2005: 257).

Illusions pertaining to concepts of subjectivity, distorted assumptions regarding human nature, and mistaken perceptions of self and other, diminish the potential of human relationships. Ricoeur's analysis of the human subject examines and critiques diverse interpretations and descriptions which have been offered throughout the history of philosophy. He questions the concept of the self as a fixed unity which underlies the Cartesian cogito, and he notes 'the humiliation of the cogito reduced to sheer illusion following the Nietzschean critique' (Ricoeur, 1992: 299); he rejects the contention of thinkers such as Michel Foucault that the subject is merely a construct of particular cultures; and he dismisses the description of subjectivity as a biochemical entity endorsed by some analytic philosophers. Instead, Ricoeur proposes a narrative understanding of subjectivity that takes into account the open-ended and fluid nature of one's life description, and which, as Kearney points out, cannot be restricted to dogmatic formulations: 'The narrative model of identity suggests that the age-old virtue of self-knowledge...involves not some self-enclosed ego but a hermeneutically examined life freed from naïve archaisms and dogmatisms' (Kearney, 2004: 199). According to this narrative understanding of identity, the temporal dimension of selfhood precludes fixed definitions, unchangeable certainties, and necessitates an acceptance of fragility, vulnerability and fallibility: 'the Self is aimed at rather than experienced...the person is primarily a project which I represent to myself, which I set before me and entertain' (Ricoeur, 2002: 69). Thus, Ricoeur explains the 'mobile' nature of identity:

narrative identity is not that of an immutable substance or of a fixed structure, but rather the mobile identity issuing from the combination of the concordance of the story, taken as a structured

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totality, and the discordance imposed by the encountered events...it is possible to revise a recounted story which takes account of other events, or even which organizes the recounted events differently (Ricoeur, 1996: 6).

Concordance and discordance characterize the developmental nature of personal identity as it is constantly exposed to change and to re-interpretation. As Morny Joy explains in her introduction to this aspect of Ricoeur's work, in *Paul Ricoeur and Narrative*,

Ricoeur's approach is hermeneutical in that it accepts that we are constantly part of a process of interpretation and reinterpretation. We are involved in a constant evolution whereby the past is being integrated into the present, and the present refining its perceptions of the past and of its own definitions (Joy: 1977: xxvi).

Thus, Ricoeur asserts that the temporal unfolding of life may be understood as the unfolding of a narrative, an open-ended life-story which is constantly re-narrated in the light of reflection and experience: 'Learning to narrate oneself is also learning how to narrate oneself in other ways' (Ricoeur, 2005: 101). This Ricoeurian concept is aptly captured in the title given to one of Ricoeur's essays on the theme, "Life: A Story in Search of a Narrator", and he opens the essay with the following words: 'That life has to do with narration has always been known and said; we speak of the story of a life to characterize the interval between birth and death'. However, Ricoeur adds a warning note: 'And yet this assimilation of a life to a history should not be automatic; it is a commonplace that should first be subjected to critical doubt' (Ricoeur, 1991: 425).

Story-telling, personal as well as fictional, helps one to make sense of one's life, and the importance of narration, especially in the light of insight gained through interpretation, memory and integration, is an essential characteristic of the psychoanalytic process as outlined by Freud and Lacan. The

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contemporary psychoanalyst/philosopher, Judith Butler, refers to this experience as *Giving an Account of Oneself*, and stresses that narration always implies a listening and receiving other: 'An account of oneself is always given to another, whether conjured or existing' (Butler, 2005: 21). Our story becomes real and meaningful when it is related to another, whether this other is real or imagined, familiar or anonymous. According to Freud the unconscious also emerges as a narrative in dreams; Lacan expands on this theme, famously stating that 'the unconscious is structured like a language' (Lacan, 1999: 15); thus, through the medium of language in the psychoanalytic encounter, an integration of the past with the present is enabled in a re-narration of the subject's life-story. This process, inside or outside the psychoanalytic setting, requires a radical shift from illusions of self-knowledge, self-transparency, and self-righteous possession of the truth of oneself and of others; it requires a different interpretation of the subject, a renunciation of 'the ideal of the perfect translation' (Ricoeur, 2006: 8). Accordingly, meaning can only ever be temporary, as the openness to ongoing interpretation precludes completion and fixity.

This aspect of Ricoeur's thought raises the question of authority, or authorship, regarding the narration of a life. Does this authority rest with the individual, or can other narrators of that life also be valid? This is central to Jacques Derrida's critique of psychoanalysis, as he argues that the process of analysis inevitably involves the imposition of another's truth on the subject no matter how this imposition is masked as interpretation, facilitation, or echoing of the subject's own truth: 'To analyze anything whatsoever, anyone whatsoever, for anyone whatsoever, would mean saying to the other: choose my solution, prefer my solution, take my solution, love my solution; you will be in truth if you do not resist my solution' (Derrida, 1998: 9). Reflecting the paradox inherent in the psychoanalytic 'rule' of 'free' association, and the psychoanalytic explanation of 'resistance' to the analyst's interpretation, Derrida's argument poses questions of validity and ethics regarding the possible invasion of the private space of the individual and the forced acceptance of a

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new conformity, which may be a denied reality of psychoanalytic practice. Derrida extends his argument to question the validity of biography, whereby a person's story is restricted to the perspective of the biographer, with its inevitable prejudices and selective emphasis. The analogy between biography and history is obvious – history is essentially constructed through whole or partial biographies, and hence is susceptible to similar arguments.¹

Ricoeur explores the complicated nature of selfhood in *Oneself as Another*, and his conclusion is summarized by Kaplan, in *Ricoeur's Critical Theory*, as the assertion that 'the many different ways of posing the question of selfhood suggests that there is no single, unitary conception of the self but multiple aspects of selfhood that are illuminated by posing different questions' (Kaplan, 2003: 83). Ricoeur refers to the influence of society on the conditions of our adjustment, echoing Freud's discussion of the conflict between individual happiness and the demands of civilization: 'most often we treat ourselves as objects. Working and social life require this objectification' (Ricoeur, 2002: 101), but he suggests that the individual personality also plays a part in imposing these requirements, and thus he describes 'a level of pretension that is determined jointly by society and the subject's personality' (Ricoeur, 2002: 101).

Unquestioned acceptance of illusory theories of selfhood which profess ideals of self-knowledge, self-sufficiency, and self-unity, entails a rejection of the essential multiplicity of the self, with its diverse and often discordant pluralities and variations. This is achieved only by a masking of one's vulnerabilities and mutability. The necessary mask is that of unity, coherence and achievement, suggestive of a fixed subjectivity which is closed and secure from the permeations of encounter with experience, since this experiential encounter necessarily demands an openness to change and revision. The mask of self-unity and self-completion also, either consciously or unconsciously,

¹ Ricoeur provides a comprehensive exploration of the challenges posed by concepts relating to history, giving witness, remembering, forgiving, forgetting, etc. in his work *Memory, History, Forgetting*.

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imposes a veil of *a priori* judgments and expectations on the other, whether this other is an event, a text or a person, and it therefore precludes and prevents a recognition and reception of difference or alterity, in oneself and in the other; if the self is fixed, the other is also fixed. The inherent danger and limitation of illusory unity is suggested by Kearney; ‘Narrative concordance can mask discordance; its drive for order and unity displacing difference...it can degenerate into oppressive grand narratives’² (Kearney, 2004: 110). The desire for unity and the corresponding denial of difference and complexity necessitates the oppression of that which does not correspond to this ideal, and the repression of one’s awareness of such ambiguity and plurality diminishes the possibility of mediation within oneself and with others:

Man is not intermediate because he is between angel and animal; he is intermediate within himself, within his selves. He is intermediate because he is a mixture, and a mixture because he brings about mediations. His ontological characteristic of being-intermediate consists precisely in that his act of existing is the very act of bringing about mediations between all the modalities and all the levels of reality within him and outside him (Ricoeur, 2002: 3).

Ricoeur suggests that the self is therefore a mediation between constancy and change, between innate characteristics and the transformations which result from the ongoing character of lived experience, between what he describes as *idem*-identity and *ipse*-identity:

ipse-identity involves a dialectic complementary to that of selfhood and sameness, namely the dialectic of self and the other than self. As long as one remains within the circle of sameness-identity, the otherness of the other than self remains within the

² The critique of grand narratives as valid representations of reality and experience is a central characteristic of postmodern thought.

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circle of sameness-identity, the otherness of the other than self offers nothing original (Ricoeur, 1992: 3).

This is very close to the thought of Derrida, as he also maintains that acknowledgement of ‘the radical otherness of the other...is the condition of my relation to the other’. For Derrida, the inability to know the other ‘from the inside’ is integral to human relationships and so also to love: ‘I cannot reach the other...This is not an obstacle but the condition of love’ (Derrida, 2004: 14).³ The attraction of remaining within a closed circle of illusory self-knowledge and transparency also restricts access to the otherness of the self, and consequently limits the capacity for self-acceptance and self-love because it denies an essential part of that self. It restricts the creation of a narrative identity whereby one’s life-story, one’s understanding of oneself, is enriched by the attempted synthesis of past, present and future, and by the willingness to revise and reinterpret one’s identity in the light of new experiences and new translations of previous stories one has told about oneself and others. In this way, as argued by Kearney, ‘story-telling can also be a breeding ground of illusions, distortions and ideological falsehoods...narrative emplotment can easily serve as a cover up’ (Kearney, 2004: 199). The ‘cover up’ is an attempt to deny or to mask uncertainty, fluidity and vulnerability, and to dismiss the limitations inherent in the concept of self-knowledge. The self is never a completed possession, it is never a fixed entity, it is never a self-sufficient cogito; rather it is a living, and therefore a growing, changing, and responding ‘becoming’ which is in the process of interpreting and reinterpreting itself and its world. This understanding of the self implies an exposure to life’s unceasing questions and challenges, a plurality of interpretations and answers, and an on-going tension between what it is and what it is becoming: ‘It seems, then, that conflict is a function of man’s most primordial constitution; the object is synthesis; the self

³ The desire to know the other ‘from the inside’, rather than being an emanation of love, may perhaps be seen as a pathological desire to obliterate the otherness of the other or to bolster the illusion that one can interpret anything or anyone perfectly or completely.

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is conflict' (Ricoeur, 2002: 132). In his introduction to Ricoeur's work, *Figuring the Sacred*, Mark Wallace summarises Ricoeur's thesis of selfhood as 'a task to be performed, not a given that awaits passive reception by the subject' (Ricoeur, 1995: 3). Without acknowledgement of one's complex and often contradictory nature, the self imposes a self-captivity to narrowness, disproportion, and alienation from itself and from others. Rejection of one's multiplicity and mutability is a rejection of Nietzsche's call for a more realistic appraisal of the subject as 'human, all too human', and it is also a denial of human frailty and fallibility. The resulting self-righteousness, coupled with a pseudo-self-constancy, inevitably fosters an alienation from the full spectrum of being human, an estrangement from the diverse potentialities of self and other, and erects a barrier against the openness and mutuality inherent in any approach to the possibility of genuine relationship.

Narrowness of Vision

Habit *fixes* our tastes and aptitudes and thus shrinks our field of availability; the range of the possible narrows down; my life has taken shape (Ricoeur, 2002: 57).

The quest for certainty and security, for control and solution, and for fixity and permanence, is often sourced in a perceived need for acceptable self-image; this self-image, whether individual or collective, personal or national, entails a confining restriction of boundaries, a selective portrayal of human nature, and the imposition of constricting limitations in the possibilities of human relationship. The experience of relationship is blocked in this narrowing of perception, as the self withdraws behind illusions of self-sufficiency, self-knowledge and self-acceptance. Vulnerability, fallibility, and change are rejected in favour of insurance against risk, but this insurance is maintained only through a refusal to encounter the possibilities of life in their fullness and ambivalence.

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Ricoeur's hermeneutics of the self, his description of identity as narrative, and his emphasis on interpretation as essential to understanding, cohere in his insistence that mediation is integral to selfhood and being. Mediation is intrinsic to the individual's relationship with himself or herself and the diverse complexities within the self; it is inherent in the individual's encounter with the world; and it is prerequisite to the mutuality and reciprocity of genuine relationship between self and others. Ricoeur's thesis of mediation demands a recognition of human fallibility and error, it calls for the embrace of plurality and tension within the human condition, and it warns against the consequences of a one-sided and narrow vision of human nature which denies its ambiguities and contradictions.

Narrowness of vision can centre on one side of the polarities which Ricoeur sees as framing human existence; polarities of freedom and finitude, of responsibility and fallibility, of good and evil, and of self and other. Restriction of vision, and consequently of understanding, is 'endemic to all of human thought, the tendency to avoid the risk of openness and otherness by seeking refuge "within the circle which I form for myself"' (Ricoeur, 2002: xv). The closed 'circle' results in a diminishment of perception, a narrowing of vision, and a closing off of possibility and understanding. The romantic poet, William Blake describes it thus: 'For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' / narrow chinks of his cavern' (Blake, 2004: 142). The closed circle of a one-sided interpretation of reality and of human nature may be transcended by an openness to the validity of other perspectives and interpretations: 'by situating my perspective in relation to other possible perspectives that deny mine as the zero-origin' (Ricoeur, 2002: 26). A refusal to consider other possible perspectives leads to a diminishment of life, a stagnation of growth, and a dismissal of the possibilities of the other.

The selective disavowal of one side of the apparent polarities inherent in the human condition is tempting in its illusory power to enhance one's self-image. Martha Nussbaum, in her expansive work on philosophy and literature, refers to this understandable attraction to a distorted vision: 'When we examine

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our own lives, we have so many obstacles to correct vision, so many motives to blindness and stupidity. The “vulgar heat” of jealousy and personal interest comes between us and the loving perception of each particular’ (Nussbaum, 1992: 162). Restricted vision, with its limited focus on selected aspects of human nature, can result in a veil of ignorance and illusion, distortion and denial. Concentration on human freedom, ‘the voluntary’, to the exclusion of human finitude, ‘the involuntary’, and a similar selection along the spectrum of good/evil, power/domination, responsibility/fallibility, intellect/emotion, and patient/agent, results in a distortion of individuality, as the other cannot be perceived as being like oneself, and one cannot see oneself as another. Instead, unacceptable, uncomfortable, unfamiliar aspects of human nature are projected elsewhere to one’s own situation, and the commonality of a shared human existence is denied. Denial of weakness and fault, of ‘fallibility; the constitutional weakness that makes evil possible’ (Ricoeur, 2002: xliii), and of any aspects of humanity which are deemed unacceptable, prevents the necessary confrontation with and resolution of the difficulties and conflicts which ensue in spite of their repression and denial, and thwarts the ‘opportunity for a much more extensive study of the structures of human reality’ (Ricoeur, 2002: xliii). A one-sided vision of oneself, of others, and of reality is mistaken in taking the part for the whole.

Ricoeur argues that this denial is a denial of the essence of human nature: ‘the idea that man is by nature fragile and liable to err...designates a characteristic of man’s being’ (Ricoeur, 2002: 1). Denial of an essential aspect of human being within the self diminishes an approach to the humanity of the other. Ricoeur asserts that ‘My humanity is my essential community with all that is human outside myself; that community makes every man my like’, and he supports his argument by quoting Alain Badiou:

In every human body all passions and errors are possible...There are as many ways of being wicked as there are men in the world. But there is also a salvation peculiar to each man, of the same

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complexion, of the same turn as he (Badiou, quoted in Ricoeur, 2002: 61).

Badiou's assertion that 'All passions and errors are possible' in every human being is frequently contested and denied, particularly in relation to events and behaviours which are deemed 'inhuman', 'horrific' or 'incomprehensible'. The barbarity of holocaust, the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, the growing revelations of child abuse and torture are examples of evil which we prefer to denounce as monstrous and beyond the boundaries of our capabilities. Our predictable reaction is a mixture of shock, revulsion and a demand for punishment or revenge. Ricoeur explains that 'all values are accessible to all men, but in a way that is peculiar to each one. It is in this sense that "each" man is "man"' (Ricoeur, 2002: 61.) Denial of this essential interrelationship of self and other, refusal to see oneself, in all one's weakness and glory, in the other, and restricting one's horizon to that of illusory self-containment and self-righteousness, while superficially creating a sense of self-satisfaction and security, inevitably results in one's alienation from the reality of oneself.

Ricoeur consistently asserts the relational and dialogical nature of human existence, he rejects the fantasy of individual self-sufficiency in an acknowledgement of the realities of human interdependence; however, he does not equate interrelationship with the negation of one's existential solitude:

the feeling of the primal difference between I and all others; to find oneself in a certain mood is to feel one's individuality as inexpressible and incommunicable. Just as one's position cannot be shared with another, so also the affective situation in which I find myself and feel myself cannot be exchanged (Ricoeur, 2002: 55).

Rather, he suggests a respect for and an accommodation of both solitude and solicitude, a mediation between the incommensurable aloneness of the individual and the undeniable human striving for community and connection.

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Solitude, aloneness, is both challenging and inevitable, but the entrenchment of self-protection and projection results in alienation and loneliness. Erich Fromm asserts that in the absence of this mediation ‘our civilization offers many palliatives which help people to be consciously unaware of this loneliness’ (Fromm, 1995: 67). The palliatives range from ‘beneficial’ categories of work, group membership, material compensation, to ‘destructive’ obsessions of drug and alcohol addiction, crime and psychosis. The obsessive character of these palliatives suggests their failure in satiating the desire which propels them. The denial of one’s essential aloneness ironically diminishes the level of connection with others which could make one’s aloneness bearable and fruitful. This point is supported strongly by Ilham Dilman in his analysis of love, *Love: Its Forms, Dimensions and Paradoxes*. He states, ‘I argue that it is in accepting this separateness that we find our individuality and that it is only as such that we can establish a genuine reciprocity in our personal relationships’ (Dilman, 1998: 1). However, the difficulties involved in finding our individuality are often sourced in the quest for relationships, especially when relationships are seen as potentially providing esteem and recognition.

The Fragility of Identity

Nothing is more fragile, nothing is easier to wound than an existence that is at the mercy of a belief (Ricoeur, 2002: 125).

The human need for recognition, reflection, affirmation and acknowledgement is a phenomenon explored and debated in philosophy and psychoanalysis. Many theorists look to the earliest experiences of infantile life to analyze and describe the development of this need in the human subject.⁴ Ricoeur examines the quest for recognition in its diverse manifestations, and outlines the fragility of a

⁴ Freud firmly asserted the lasting influence of childhood experience on adult life, and this has been further explored by psychoanalysts like Donald Winnicott, Wilfred Bion, and Karen Horney and Melanie Klein.

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personal identity which is solely dependent on its provision by an other. He sees the quest for recognition and esteem as a basic human need; however, he suggests that if/when it resides solely in the convictions and opinions of others, it is constantly threatened. This understandable fragility can confine the subject to a fear-driven concentration on protection and performance, thereby precluding the possibility of open encounter with self and other which is prerequisite to the experience of mutuality and relationship.

The concept of identity is the subject of much philosophical debate, particularly in postmodern literature where cognizance of the dissolution of hitherto established sources of identity and meaning is central. Ricoeur situates identity in close proximity to recognition, and therefore as influenced by the perception of the other: 'the demand for recognition expresses an expectation that can be satisfied only by mutual recognition' (Ricoeur, 2005: 19). Self-recognition and self-identity require reflection, acceptance and support of others; hence, the 'dialectic of identity confronted by otherness' (Ricoeur, 2005: 103). According to Kearney, Ricoeur's dictum is that 'the shortest route from self to self is through the other...the self is never enough, is never sufficient unto itself, but constantly seeks out signs and signals of meaning in the other' (Kearney, 1998: 1). Identifying the self through the other is a common thread in the philosophy of Hegel, Levinas and Lacan, although these three philosophers diverge in their analysis of the dialectic of self and other. Hegel's analysis centers on the master-slave dialectic which is only resolved when both master and slave recognize the need for recognition by an other which is the same as itself; otherwise the proffered recognition is valueless. Levinas posits the other – its existence, its demands, its needs and its enhancement, as the basis of selfhood; accordingly, the self can only exist in a meaningful way when it 'answers' to the call of the other. Lacan points to the mirror-stage as the moment when the subject begins to identify itself with the reflection emanating from the other, but he insists that this 'subject supposed to know' is merely the symbolization of a 'fundamental fantasy' (Lacan, 1999: 67). Nietzsche expresses his understanding of this human need whereby 'the individual wants

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to confirm the opinion he has of himself through the opinion of others and strengthen it in his own eyes', but he warns of the danger of 'habituation to authority which...leads many to base their own belief in themselves upon authority, to accept it only from the hand of others' (Nietzsche, 1984: 63). Ricoeur explores the interplay between identity and recognition stating that 'I actively recognize things, persons, myself; I ask, even demand, to be recognized by others' (Ricoeur, 2005: x), and suggests that this is the demand for recognition of 'my genuine identity' (Ricoeur, 2005: xi). However, the need for recognition by another as essential to our sense of identity coexists with a perception of the other, because different, as a possible threat to our fragile identity:

It is a fact that the other...comes to be perceived as a danger for one's identity...is our identity so fragile that we are unable to bear, unable to endure the fact that others have different ways of leading their lives, of understanding themselves, of inscribing their own identity in the web of living together? (Ricoeur, 2004: 81).

This is part of the tension between selfhood and alterity, the dialectic of the self and the other than self, whereby the fragility of personal as well as national, racial, cultural and institutional identity is commonly perceived to be threatened by difference, unfamiliarity and discordance.

Ricoeur's analysis of narrative identity entails an accommodation of all aspects of one's self, of one's life-story, with the integration of past, present and future as essential to a genuine narrative. This resounds with Nietzsche's thought experiment of the eternal recurrence, whereby one must be willing to accept all of one's life, even to the point of accepting the possibility of its recurrence over and over again, in order to take responsibility and autonomy for one's self. However, there are difficulties inherent in this attempted integration. Memory is the door to the past, but it is susceptible to selective remembering and forgetting; action in the present is the action of the agent/subject, but it is correlative to its impact on the patient/other; the future is the focus of

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intentionality based on a trust in self-constancy and self-fulfillment, but it is vulnerable to the vicissitudes of personal feeling and commitment, as well as to the unpredictable nature of the external world. William Wordsworth acknowledges the difficulties encountered in the attempted creation of a life-story: “I cannot say what portion is in truth / The naked recollection of that time / And what may rather have been called to life / By after-meditation” (Wordsworth, 2000: 420, 421). Hence narrative is fragile, uncertain, and unfinished, and this fragility is coupled with the always present potential to self-deception.⁵ The apparent paradox inherent in the concept of self-deception – how is it possible to deceive ourselves? – is given at least partial resolution in the inevitable gap between the unconscious dimension of the psyche and its manifest translation in conscious speech. Nietzsche sees it as the victory of pride over memory: ‘I have done that’, says my memory. ‘I cannot have done that’ – says my pride, and remains adamant. At last – memory yields’ (Nietzsche, 2003: 91). Freud agrees, stating that ‘there’s no guarantee whatever for what our memory tells us’ (Freud, 2006: 553), and explains the phenomenon from an individual and social perspective: ‘it is inherent in human nature to have an inclination to consider a thing untrue if one does not like it...society makes what is disagreeable into what is untrue’ (Freud, 1991: 48). The stories we tell ourselves about ourselves are not always truthful or comprehensive; the stories we tell to others about ourselves are sometimes coloured by our quest for recognition and approval. In the light of the analyses and insights developed through Freud and Nietzsche, the possibility of complete self-knowledge remains an unattainable ideal; self-deception is a phenomenon which must be acknowledged. According to Lacan, personal truth is often evaded, because ‘Truth does in effect seem to be foreign to us, I mean our own truth. It is no doubt with us, but without concerning us to the point that one really wants to speak it’ (Lacan, 2007: 58). In varying degrees, self-deception entails a disavowal of certain aspects of the self, and in the ensuing diminishment of the

⁵ For an exploration of the phenomenon of self-deception see Herbert Fingarette’s classic study, *Self-Deception*.

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self, the possibility of love is weakened; it is thwarted in that parts of the self are withheld from awareness and recognition, and the experience of communication, mutuality and intimacy is distorted and restricted.

In an essay on Ricoeur's philosophy of the self, Joseph Dunne outlines this possibility of self-deception: 'This is the province of self-deception, which might be defined as a significant discrepancy between the story one lives and the story one tells', and this reflects 'a deeper conflict *within who one is*, when one part is lived out only at the cost of disowning another part which, though disowned, continues to find disguised expression in one's life' (Dunne, 1996: 153). As a result, 'there is thus the whole margin hidden by censorship, prohibition, the margin of what is unspoken, criss-crossed by all the figures of the hidden' (Ricoeur, 2006: 26). The 'unspoken', 'the hidden', the unconscious fantasies and motivations of human thought and action, are often beyond the power of speech to elucidate. Echoing Lacan's 'empty speech', Ricoeur refers to 'the uses of speech where one aims at something other than the true, other than the real...namely, the lie', and goes on to argue that this is not the greatest misrepresentation which speech is capable of, but rather that 'it is language's propensity for the enigma, for artifice, for abstruseness, for the secret, in fact for non-communication' that curtails and diminishes the narrative identity of the subject. Kearney explains that 'for narrative identity to be ethically responsible it must ensure that self-constancy is always informed by self-questioning' (Kearney, 2004: 112). The opposition between self-knowledge and self-deception is deconstructed in this acceptance of the spectrum between them, a spectrum which may be diminished in an openness to self-questioning, and to the integration of the often uncomfortable answers which may ensue.

Another difficulty encountered in the construction of a narrative of the self is the reality of entanglement between one's life history and that of others; Dunne attests to this aspect of narrative identity in Ricoeur's philosophy: 'The self...is historical through and through, and is enfolded *ab initio* within a web of relationships' (Dunne, 1996: 144). From birth, one's history is linked to the histories of others, and as these histories unfold and reveal themselves one's

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own narrative has to be continually revised. It has to be revised and refigured in an attempt to mediate one's own identity with the radically different and changing worlds of others, and in the attempt to produce new meaning which integrates this difference. Failure to do this results in deception regarding identity of the self, and confinement of the other to the status of the foreigner, the alien. The difficulties inherent in the construction of narratives extend to collective narrative relating the stories of groups and institutions. Kaplan outlines Ricoeur's analysis of ideology in this respect:

The danger of the stories groups tell about themselves is that they often become frozen oversimplifications, expressed in slogans and caricature, serving only the interests of power and authority. Ideology functions through this kind of collective memory, as well as through ritualization, stereotype, and rhetoric, all of which prevent us from interpreting and recalling things differently (Kaplan, 2003: 96).

However, while Ricoeur insists on the necessity of exposing the dangers of ideological interpretations of reality, he also warns of the propensity of the critique to become another ideology.⁶

Ricoeur suggests a 'triple quest' in the constitution of the self (Ricoeur, 2002: 126); this order 'is built on the themes of having, power, and worth', and these quests are intricately linked (Ricoeur, 2002: 113). The quest for having, for possession, is fuelled by a desire for control through appropriation of

⁶The relevance of Ricoeur's warning may be discerned in the historical examples of the phenomenon whereby personalities and groups inspired by opposition and rebellion against established orders are transformed into protectors of newly-established orders. The Irish poet, Brendan Kennelly, refers to this phenomenon in Irish history where the achievement of freedom and independence from a colonial power coincided with the establishment, explicit or implicit, of another set of restrictions and ideologies. The contemporary theorist, Slavoj Žižek, offers an ironical discourse on such reversals in his discussion of the paradoxical injunction 'to enjoy' which he discerns in the 'liberal', 'rule-free' experience of contemporary society.

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objects, and a dependence on this possession and ownership as a protection against loss. The loss which is feared is that of self-affirmation, and the mode of having as a bulwark against this threat can range from ‘a just possession which would distinguish among men without mutually excluding them’, to ‘unjust having’ which sees appropriation by the other as loss for oneself. In this sense ‘the category of having designates a vast domain in which the wrong done to others wears innumerable guises’ (Ricoeur, 1992: 221). A second root of self-affirmation follows from the relation of the quest for having, because having implies the power of man over man. The world of work, especially, posits the individual as a force dominating other forces. Ricoeur argues that almost all human actions entail the exertion of one will over another. This coheres with the philosophy of Nietzsche, where he argues that the exertion of one’s will, over everything that confronts it, is the ‘will-to-power’ which underlines all human drive and life. Ricoeur differentiates between *power-in-common* whereby a community shares the exercise of power in order to live together, and *power-over* which can easily become violence towards the other:

The descending slope is easy to mark off, from influence, the gentle form of holding power-over, all the way to torture, the extreme form of abuse...from the simple use of threats, passing through all the degrees of constraint, and ending in murder. In all these diverse forms, violence is equivalent to the diminishment or the destruction of the power-to-do of others. But there is something even worse...humiliation – a horrible caricature of humility (Ricoeur, 1992: 220).

What Ricoeur terms ‘something even worse’ is the utmost assault upon the integrity of the other because it attempts to obliterate that which is deemed indispensable to human survival, one’s sense of worth or self-esteem. The desire for esteem as reflected in the eyes of another ‘is a desire to exist, not through a vital affirmation of oneself, but through the favour of another’s recognition’ (Ricoeur, 2002: 120). The ambiguity of this desire is noted by Nietzsche: ‘One

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man runs to his neighbour because he is looking for himself, and another because he wants to lose himself" (Nietzsche, 2003: 87). It is in the realm of interpersonal relations that one desires acceptance, approval and recognition. As Kaplan asserts, 'recognition is something we owe to others not merely as a courtesy but because it is a necessary human need' (Kaplan, 2003: 156). The fragility of this esteem, dependent as it is on the opinion of the other, is open to deception, neglect, scorn and humiliation: 'Here there is a threat of existing in a quasi-phantasmal manner, of being a reflection...the possibility of being no more than the word of another, the dependence on fragile opinion' (Ricoeur, 2002: 121). Thus the quest for recognition by another cannot permanently answer the need for self-worth and self-esteem; unless this can also be discovered within the self there is a constant hunger for affirmation and recognition, and this takes precedence over any attempt at genuine connection and relationship with the other.

Ricoeur's observation that the problem of power and the problem evil are intertwined is solidified by his experience of the atrocities of the concentration camps, the terror of totalitarian regimes, and the peril of nuclear power, (Ricoeur, 2002: xiv), and also by his personal response to cruelty and betrayal between man and man, man and woman, adult and child, and the myriad forms of suffering which are inflicted physically and verbally by one human being upon another. He concludes that 'the possibility of moral evil is inherent in man's constitution' (Ricoeur, 2002: 133). Evil is a reality of human life, 'it is manifest only in the way it *affects* human existence...In all hypotheses, evil manifests itself in man's humanity' (Ricoeur, 2002: xlvi). In his analysis of the ethical dimension in Ricoeur's thought, John Wall reminds us that 'violence remains ultimately our own free choice, [and that if] we refuse to acknowledge our responsibility for violence...we deny our own freedom to re-create our own moral world' (Wall, 2005: 109). This reference to our individual responsibility for and involvement in the reality of conflict is asserted by Ricoeur:

Even if it is true that the real conflicts that stake out affective history are accidents, in the literal sense of the word, random

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encounters between our effort, our power of affirmation, and the forces of nature, or the familial, social, and cultural environment, the fact remains that all these external conflicts could not be interiorized if a latent conflict within ourselves did not precede them (Ricoeur, 2002: 132).

The ‘conflicts that stake out affective history’ reflect the conflicts, conscious or unconscious, ‘within ourselves’; we recognize these conflicts through our own personal experience.

Solicitude

Talking about love may be too easy, or rather too difficult. How can we avoid simply praising it or falling into sentimental platitudes? (Ricoeur, 1996: 23).

Ricoeur’s exploration of love, relationship and solicitude ranges over concepts of friendship, agape, self-love and sexual love, and he discerns the desire for possession, power and worth as potentially motivating various manifestations of these experiences. Human fallibility, frailty and need can diminish the possibility of genuine relationship in human living; the quest for recognition and affirmation can impose conformity to the demands and expectations of others; and the fear of one’s existential aloneness can propel a flight from the self towards the potential safeguard of belonging and acceptance. Ricoeur accepts these constraints on human capability, ‘self-recognition requires, at each step, the help of others’ (Ricoeur, 2005: 69), but he suggests a dialectic of self and other which acknowledges human solitude, understands the need for self-esteem, and strives for co-existence of personal solitude and intersubjective solicitude: ‘my thesis is that solicitude is not something added on to self-esteem from outside but that it unfolds the dialogic dimension of self-esteem’ (Ricoeur, 1992: 180). Within this comprehensive and ambivalent framework, the possibility of self-love and love for the other is enabled:

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My own self-esteem that I search for by means of the esteem of others is of the same nature as the esteem I experience for others. If humanity is what I esteem in another and in myself, I esteem myself as a thou for another. I esteem myself in the second person...I love myself as if what I loved were another (Ricoeur, 2002: 124).

Freud says something similar when he refutes the precept of universal love: 'I love another...if...he so much resembles me that in him I can love myself' (Freud, 2002: 46). The dialectic between self-esteem and solicitude for others suggests that they are intrinsically linked. This is also the argument of Fromm in his discussion of love:

The love for my own self is inseparably connected with the love for any other being...love of others and love of ourselves are not alternatives. On the contrary, an attitude of love towards themselves will be found in all those who are capable of loving others. *Love, in principle, is indivisible as far as the connection between 'objects' and one's own self is concerned* (Fromm, 1995: 46).

Esteem for oneself implies the esteem for the other, because the self is an other and the other is a self. One-sided esteem is not genuine; it is distorted in some way, as it infers a splintered and selective understanding of humanity. Respect, understanding, compassion and tolerance cannot be genuinely felt and expressed for another while simultaneously being withheld from the self. The converse is equally true.

The lure of escape from one's essential aloneness is often focused on a desired fusion with the other, but Ricoeur insists that this fusion is illusory and deceptive: 'The one is not the other. We exchange gifts, but not places...the benefit of this admission is that it protects mutuality against the pitfalls of a fusional union...a just distance is maintained at the heart of mutuality, a just

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distance that integrates respect into intimacy' (Ricoeur, 2005: 263). Kearney explains the attraction and impossibility of this desired union as 'the lure of fusion, that is, for the illusion that some ecstasy or addiction might make us 'one with the other'. But it cannot. The other will never 'be' me, nor even 'like' me' (Kearney, 2001: 13), and he urges 'an awareness that no amount of intimacy can ever grasp the other' (Kearney, 2001: 14). In Ricoeur's words 'the lived experience of the other always remains inaccessible to me' (Ricoeur, 2005: 157). Acknowledgement of human solitude and a respect for the alterity of the other enables the emergence of a dialectical esteem wherein self and other are recognized in their unique humanity. In this dialectic, 'the voice of solicitude' is heard, 'the voice which asked that the plurality of persons and their otherness not be obliterated by the globalizing idea of humanity' (Ricoeur, 1992: 227).

Freedom from the constraints of identity and recognition sought exclusively in the affirmation of the other enables the attainment of personal autonomy and responsibility: 'it is not a fate that governs my life from the outside but the inimitable way in which I exercise my freedom as a man' (Ricoeur, 2002: 61). However, Ricoeur distinguishes between an illusory self-sufficiency and an autonomy which recognizes, and indeed celebrates, the need for otherness: 'the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought without the other' (Ricoeur, 1992: 3). This need is not reducible to quests for assimilation, absorption, or control, but is intrinsically linked to esteem for the self and for the other than self: 'The autonomy of the self will appear then to be tightly bound up with solicitude for one's neighbour and with justice for each individual' (Ricoeur, 1992: 18). As the Irish poet, Brendan Kennelly notes, 'the self knows that self is not enough' (Kennelly, 2004: 425), and the possibility of solicitude exists within a welcoming acknowledgement of this insufficiency. Solicitude embraces the need for others, without obliterating autonomy, responsibility, or self-esteem: 'To self-esteem, understood as a reflexive moment of the wish for the "good life", solicitude adds essentially the dimension of *lack*, the fact that we *need*

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friends; as a reaction to the effect of solicitude on self-esteem, the self perceives itself as another among others' (Ricoeur, 1992: 192).

Ricoeur differentiates between solicitude and 'obedience to duty', and he argues that 'its status is that of benevolent spontaneity, intimately related to self-esteem within the framework of the aim of the "good" life' (Ricoeur, 1992: 190). Esteem, recognition, and the experience of solicitude imply a mutuality which embraces self and other in their autonomy, frailty, capability and vulnerability. Ricoeur explains this mutuality with reference to Aristotle's thesis on *Philia*: 'the good man's own being is desirable to him; given this, the being of his friend is then equally desirable to him' (Ricoeur, 1992: 186). Faith in human goodness, in oneself and in others, co-existing with an acknowledgement of human frailty, fallibility and evil, enables the possibility of solicitude. This is Ricoeur's thesis, according to Wall: 'for Ricoeur, love is given to the other from the self, originating in a prior faith in the self's own human created goodness that is then applied to the other as another such self' (Wall, 2005: 121). Self-esteem and self-appreciation simultaneously opens to appreciation and respect for others, and this mutuality is enhanced rather than hindered by the embrace of solitude and distance: 'must one not, in order to make oneself open, available, belong to oneself in a certain sense?' (Ricoeur, 1992: 138). As Kearney explains, 'By deepening solitude, the self discovers that it receives from others all that it appreciates in its own being, and consequently it is not alone' (Kearney, 1996: 44).

Ricoeur's acknowledgement of human frailty, fallibility and evil does not belie a belief in the potential goodness of the human subject and the possibility of love and happiness within his appraisal. He situates this possibility in the concrete experiences of action and relation, with the focus on the people who are in one's life and care, rather than in theoretical abstractions which are often devoid of responsibility: 'It is for the other who is in my charge that I am responsible' (Ricoeur, 2005: 108). In the immediate, individual and unique encounters with reality, of self and other, choices are made, judgments are considered, and the possibility of solicitude presents itself. Such encounters are

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'events' in which the experience of happiness is enabled: 'The events that bespeak happiness are those which remove obstacles and uncover a vast landscape of existence' (Ricoeur, 2002: 68). Ricoeur accepts the human desire for happiness, but sees its attainment as experienced in the encounters and 'events' through which life is directed: 'happiness is not given in any experience; it is only adumbrated in a consciousness of direction. No act gives happiness, but the encounters of our life that are most worthy of being called "events" indicate the direction of happiness' (Ricoeur, 2002: 68). Deception, denial, projection and blindness pose obstacles to the experience of these events, but these may be overcome in an on-going openness to 'the vast landscape of existence'. Ricoeur sees this as the 'function' of the human subject:

This essential openness or accessibility to...the "function" or the "project" of man as such, grounds the person in giving him a horizon of humanity that is neither I nor you but the task of treating the person, in me and in you, as an end and not as a means (Ricoeur, 2002: 136).

Within this 'horizon of humanity', love is enabled, both as an attainable possibility and as the way of being which fulfils itself: 'It is Eros, it is Love that shows that this aim, which is immanent to the function of man, is happiness anticipated in a consciousness of direction and of belonging' (Ricoeur, 2002: 137). While Ricoeur acknowledges the fallibility and frailty of human nature, and while he insists on an acceptance of the reality of evil as a creation of humanity, he nevertheless maintains a belief in the primordial goodness of the human being, he confirms the possibility of hope even amid impossible constraints, and he expresses a love of life in spite of its brokenness: 'Man is the Joy of Yes in the sadness of the finite' (Ricoeur, 2002: 140).

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Regularity Theory and Inductive Scepticism The Fight Against Armstrong

Benjamin Smart

Introduction

David Armstrong argues that given the Humean sees “the true form of an inductive inference (to be) simply an inference from the observed cases to the unobserved cases. And, given that the law is just the observed plus the unobserved cases, *that* inference,... is an irrational inference” (1983: 53)¹. The Humean, according to Armstrong, is committed to inductive scepticism².

I show in this paper that in fact the opposite is true. The regularity theorist is entirely committed to non-scepticism about induction, and furthermore that contra Armstrong, the regularity theorist is fully entitled to this position regardless of whether he’s justified in inferring the universally quantified conditionals he posits as laws. To achieve this aim I postulate a ‘regularity-relation between universals’; a relation that plays the same role as Armstrong’s Natural Necessitation Relation, but entails a high probability of our conclusions about the unobserved being correct (less than 1 but certainly sufficient to justify inductive inferences) purely through observed regularities and a priori mathematics, without needing to bring any extra, ‘spooky’ entities into our ontology.

¹ *Ibid.*

² Armstrong actually attributes this position to Hume himself, but whether or not Hume genuinely believed induction to be irrational is debated. Regardless of the outcome of this debate, this paper is concerned with what the ‘Humean’, or perhaps rather less ambiguously the ‘regularity theorist’ should believe, as opposed to what Hume himself believed.

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1. Hume and Induction

Although this paper is primarily concerned with *laws of nature* and not specifically *causal laws*³, the best indication of the regularity theorist's commitment to inductive non-scepticism is found in Hume's discussion of causation.

When Hume discusses the formation of ideas from impressions, or our identification of causes and effects, he certainly recognises the inductive inferences involved. If Hume were to be (as traditional interpretations imply) a strict inductive sceptic, it seems he should conclude that any attempts to identify causes and effects are futile; this would be a strange opinion to attribute to Hume. After all, Hume spends considerable time outlining the conditions under which causes and effects *should* be identified. As Helen Beebe suggests, "Hume's rules appear to tell us that we *should* seek out hidden causes; but if he is an inductive, and hence causal, sceptic the rules lack any normative force: no purpose is served by acquiring more, or more refined, causal beliefs" (2006:43). It seems to me that if no inductive inferences were in any way justified, no such set of rules would be better than any other.

Hume does go on to say that we can conceive of "a change in the course of nature; which sufficiently proves, that such a change is not absolutely impossible", but this is more an indication of Hume's recognition of the problem of induction, and the lack of *certainty* that ensues from inductive inferences, than it is evidence of his supposed inductive scepticism. It would be perfectly consistent for Hume to make this assertion, and still hold that inductive reasoning is often justified. He could still believe that we can have good reason

³ It is possible to dismiss the regularity theory of causation, whilst accepting the regularity theory of laws of nature, by denying that one can reduce cause to law; that is, by claiming that there is more to causation than nomic connection³. A regularity theorist of laws of nature could accept $\forall x(Fx \rightarrow Gx)$ to adequately represent laws concerning ravens and blackness and so forth, but deny that the same can be done for causation. The regularity theory of causation thus entails the regularity theory of laws of nature, but the regularity theory of laws of nature does not entail the regularity theory of causation.

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to identify a cause-effect relation purely from experience, even if these reasons are non-deductive and fallible.

Whether or not Hume himself was a non-sceptic about induction is inconsequential for the purposes of this paper. What *is* important is that he, as a regularity theorist, *should* have been. I will first show that if a regularity theorist wishes to identify any laws of nature (even with an admission of fallibility), he *must* be a non-sceptic about induction.

2. Why a Regularity Theorist Must Reason Inductively to Identify Laws of Nature

A regularity theorist believes that when we identify a law of nature, we do so by observing a constant conjunction between certain properties (the property of being a raven, and the property of being black, for example). The observed instances are, of course, constrained to our present and past experiences. According to the regularity theorist, the constant conjunctions that make up a law of nature must hold omnitemporally and omnispatially; “there must be a constant union betwixt the cause and effect. ’Tis chiefly this quality that constitutes the relation” (1985: 223). It follows that if the regularity theorist is to justify his identification of laws, he must justify his belief that the constant conjunctions identified will hold across all spatio-temporal regions. He is making conclusions about the entirely unobserved future, from the partially observed past, in so doing committing himself to the rationality of inductive reasoning.

It may be argued, of course, that the regularity theorist need not *identify* laws of nature in order to maintain his primary beliefs about what a law is constituted by. For a universal regularity to hold; that is, for a law to exist, nobody needs to actually know, or even believe that it’s a law at all. Even when a law *is* identified, the regularity theorist must accept he may be wrong. The regularity he thought was a law can always turn out not to be, as the regularity can always break down at some point in the future (or may even have already

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broken down at some unobserved point in the past). So whether or not a regularity theorist identifies a regularity as a law has no bearing on whether it actually *is* a law. Nevertheless, it's clear that the regularity theorist attempts to identify laws, so the problem remains.

3. Armstrong's Argument

Armstrong argues⁴ that the rationality of induction is a necessary truth, not just analytically, but for some 'deeper reason'⁵. He proposes that the necessitarian can rationally predict the continuing uniformity of nature by inferring a 'natural necessitation relation between universals', $N(F,G)$, as the best explanation for our observations. According to Armstrong though, there is no way for the regularity theorist to justify inductively derived predictions about the future. He claims their predictions about unobserved events are not grounded by inference to the best explanation, but based solely on the 'pattern of inference: observed instances to unobserved instances'; where e (the observed instances) is inductive evidence for h (claims about unobserved instances), Armstrong suggests the regularity theorist reasons as follows: $e \rightarrow e+h$, $e+h \rightarrow h$, which of course is reducible to $e \rightarrow h$. This is to be regarded as an irrational inference.

In the pattern of inference which I favour (the explanatory law) we have first a passage from observations to the entity which best explains the observations. It seems reasonable to regard this as a rational, although non-deductive, inference. Second, we have a deductive passage from the entity to the unobserved cases. But what makes the Regularity theorist's preferred pattern of inference rational? On his view the law does not explain the observations⁶.

⁴ See Armstrong; 1983: 54.

⁵ The details of which I won't go into, but for further discussion see Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature* chapter 4.

⁶ I will argue that the law does in fact explain the observations.

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As Hume pointed out, the observed cases do not entail that the unobserved cases will resemble them. There seems to be no other way to explicate the rationality of the inference. (1983: 56)

According to Armstrong then, a necessitarian can rationally infer laws (that are in some way distinct from the observations) that support counterfactuals and “entail conditional predictions about the future”⁷, but the regularity theorist cannot. The regularity theorist must, therefore, be an inductive sceptic.

Armstrong concludes in favour of N(F,G) via inference to the best explanation, but what is this an explanation of? Consider the relation between the universals ‘ravenhood - F’ and ‘blackness - G’. Armstrong’s can’t be an explanation of why *all* ravens are black (omnitemporally), as this ‘fact’ is not available to him prior to N(F,G) coming into the picture. That *all* ravens are black is not what Armstrong is explaining, but an implication of his explanation. What Armstrong is actually trying to explain is why all the *observed* ravens have been black.

It seems then, that Armstrong feels that for the regularity theorist to justify inferring his laws, the laws must “explain the observations” (1983: 56). According to him though, universal regularities, being just the sum of observed and unobserved instances, provide no substantial explanation for the observations themselves. However, by “explain the observations”, Armstrong must have in mind an explanation for *why* the objects have the properties they do. This seems to be asking too much of the regularity theorist, who by the very nature of his theory rejects that any such explanation exists. It seems to me that all the regularity theorist has to provide is an explanation for why the ravens *have been observed* to be black, and this is a very different prospect. If asked, “why have all the ravens I’ve observed been black?”, “because all ravens are black” looks like a reasonable explanation. I will argue that if he can reasonably take the step from “this raven has been observed to be black” to “this raven is

⁷ *Ibid.*

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black”, the regularity theorist can justifiably infer that the next raven he observes will be black.

I demonstrated why the regularity theorist must be an inductive non-sceptic in order to derive laws (in the form of universally quantified conditionals), but I will further argue that the regularity theorist need not make *universal* generalizations in order to make inductive inferences, but may use temporally or spatially restricted ‘laws’ in order to make his inferences. As a matter of fact, all the regularity theorist needs to justify his conclusion that the next F will be a G, is that within his population of Fs, all or *most* Fs are Gs.

4. The Law of Large Numbers: Support for the Regularity Theorist’s Right to Reason Inductively

The Law of Large Numbers shows that for any finite population, proportions in large samples are highly likely to resemble proportions in the total population from which the sample is taken, and *ipso facto*, a population is likely to resemble a large sample of that population. If, for example, we choose 3000 random ravens from a population of a million ravens, half of which are black, half white⁸, the probability of the proportions of that sample being within 3% of the proportions of the total population (between 47% black and 53% black) is greater than 0.9, so when we don’t know the proportions in the total population, it is rational to assign equal proportions to the total population as those we get in our sample. As D.C. Stove puts it:

Whatever the proportion of black ravens may be in a population of a million, at least nine out of ten 3000-fold samples of that population do not diverge from that proportion by more than 3% in the proportion of black ravens they contain (1986: 70).

⁸ Note that a 50/50 proportion will give the lowest probability of a representative sample. A population of 100% ravens will of course give a 100% chance of a representative sample.

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The calculation of these probabilities is very simple *a priori* matter. One merely calculates the number of possible 3000-fold samples in the population, and then the number of these possible samples whose proportions of black-to-white ravens fall within 3% of the proportions of the total population (I'll call these samples 'representative samples'). We then divide the latter by the former to get our probability. It is simply a mathematical truth that more large samples are representative samples than non-representative samples⁹, and so for any random large sample of a finite population, one is more likely to get proportions closely resembling the proportions of the total population than not.

It is important to note that once we have a sample greater than 3000, the size of the total population does not have a significant affect on the proportion of 3000-fold samples representative of the population; that is, if we have a total population of a hundred trillion instead of a million, the majority of samples will still be representative. This may sound counter-intuitive, but it is easily shown to be true mathematically. If the law of large numbers argument is sound, it seems that the regularity theorist can justifiably make inferences from the observed to the unobserved, despite Armstrong's claim to the contrary.

Objections have been raised to this attempt at justifying induction on the grounds that we may never be able to observe a truly random sample, and even if we did, it is unlikely that we could know it to be random. Following Campbell and Franklin I don't see this as problematic, but I will address this objection in detail in the next section.

Another objection regularly raised is that many of our inductive inferences are made with respect to infinite populations, as the mathematics used in Stove's argument could not be put into practice (there would be an infinite number of representative and non-representative samples). It seems to me, though, that when making inferences about particular events or instances, we rarely have to consider infinite populations. Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that there are an infinite number of black ravens. To make an inference to the colour of the *next* raven, I only need to consider the population to be all the past ravens plus

⁹ Assuming, for the time being, an equal probability of choosing any possible sample.

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the next raven to be observed. The population is no longer infinite, and so the law of large numbers can be implemented. Granted, this does not allow us to make inferences about the colour of *all* ravens, but this is not needed to predict the colour of the next raven. So long as the next raven forms part of the population designated, I am justified in making my prediction. So the regularity theorist does not need to postulate *universal* laws, he can pick out temporally or spatially restricted populations, of which the unobserved raven is a member, and where there is a large enough population and we have large enough sample to apply the law of large numbers.

5. The Randomness Objection

The Law of Large Numbers provides excellent ammunition for the Regularity Theorist against Armstrong, but the mathematics looks only to be applicable under the assumption that each observable has an equal probability of being observed. It seems that this is not the case with the observation of ravens, however. Surely I have a higher chance of observing the raven in my garden, than I have of observing a raven a thousand miles away. What we apparently need is a ‘fair sampling procedure’, and it’s not clear this is available.

Scott Campbell and James Franklin, however, have argued that there is really no need for randomness whatsoever. “In fact, the demand for randomness... leads to nothing but absurdity.” (2004: 83) In short, Campbell and Franklin argue that even if you have good reason to think your sample is not random, you are often still justified in believing your sample is representative of the total population.

Should we, in knowing that all particles observed over the last few hundred years with negative charge have repelled one another, conclude the electrons prior to the first observations attracted one another? Obviously not. Campbell and Franklin conclude that unless we have a genuine reason for believing our sample is not representative “then it is rational to think that it probably is, *because most samples are*. [To believe otherwise] is equivalent to

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holding that we cannot suppose that we are likely to draw a red ball out of barrel of a hundred balls, 99 of which are red, unless we know the method of drawing out the ball is random or unbiased”(2004: 84). Essentially, in our case, all we need to know to justify applying the Law of Large Numbers is that we have no reason for thinking our sample of ravens is not representative¹⁰.

Campbell and Franklin recognise Indurkha’s objection that a sample of ravens in England may not be representative of a sample in some mountainous region (ravens in a mountainous region may be white, for example, for camouflage purposes). However, they respond by showing there is no *a priori* justification for making these conclusions, and so the objection cannot affect the sampling thesis in general. Admittedly, given empirical evidence, we may well have good reason to be cautious in making generalisations about animals outside of our restricted spatial region, but for many of the inductive inferences we make there is no evidence of this kind, and all the regularity theorist needs to show is that he is justified in reasoning inductively *in some instances*. Indurkha’s objection, therefore, makes little head-way in supporting Armstrong’s conclusions.

6. Armstrong’s response to the law of large numbers approach

Armstrong does discuss the regularity theorists’ appeal to probability and the law of large numbers, but dismisses the validity of this approach by introducing the problems posed by ‘unnatural’ predicates. It seems at least possible that our observation of ravens may lead us to believe these ravens are black, when in fact they are ‘bleen’ (black before the year 3000 and green thereafter). In fact, if this objection held, the Law of Large Numbers should force us to make an infinite number of inconsistent conclusions!

The grue problem is one that applies to the rationality of induction in general, but it has been addressed. Goodman¹¹ has provided arguments to

¹⁰ The fact that we may have these reasons is irrelevant here.

¹¹ See Goodman; 1979 ch.III.

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suggest we should only accept natural predicates like green and black, purely because these are the best ‘entrenched’ predicates; that is, predicates like green and black are routinely used by the general populous, and ‘unnatural’ predicates like bleen are not. Restricting the regularity theorist’s inferences to these kinds of predicates would solve the problem. However, Armstrong argues that it is “impossible to see how the new principle [of restricting inferences to natural predicates] is to be justified” (1983:58). Although he says nothing more as to why it couldn’t be justified, I assume the reasoning goes something like this: Whereas Armstrong may rule out grue-like predicates, as only natural predicates are, in Goodman’s words, “well-behaved predicates admissible in lawlike hypotheses” (1979:79), the regularity theorist does not hold a lawlike hypothesis, so this kind of response is unavailable to him. However, I believe the regularity theorist too can make the claim “*nothing is grue*¹²!”

It seems to me that the regularity theorist does, in fact, have an adequate response to Armstrong. He can simply appeal to the very principle this objection is supposed to rule out; that is, he can appeal to inductive evidence. There have, as yet, been no *confirmations* of any objects instantiating unnatural colour predicates like grue. As the date of colour change is completely arbitrary, it should be equally probable that the important dates in the unnatural colour predicates’ calendar are in the past, but no such predicates have ever been seen to hold. Armstrong, when articulating his concerns about the grue problem, claims that emeralds may well be grue instead of green, where the change occurs in the year 2000AD. We are now in 2008, and no colour changes were observed in the year 2000AD, so we have confirmation that emeralds are not grue (of course that doesn’t rule out other unnatural predicates where the changes would occur at some future date). The claim is that whenever we have postulated specific unnatural colour predicates in the past, and the dates on which the colours were meant to change has now passed, we have confirmation that these objects were not, in fact, the postulated unnatural colour predicate.

¹² Or any other unnatural predicate for that matter.

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This looks to be good inductive evidence to suppose our future postulations of certain objects instantiating unnatural predicates will also turn out to be false.

An objection is bound to be raised here. I'm using the very principle that the grue problem is supposed to undermine, to answer the grue problem. It is still the case that unnatural predicates may become apparent in years to come. This may seem problematic, but I see the burden of proof to be very much in the hands of those who think the regularity theorist must be an inductive sceptic. I have shown that the regularity theorist may have good justification to reason inductively independently of the grue problem, and given that induction is necessarily rational, if reasoning inductively in conjunction with my justification of induction can help avoid the grue problem, it's not obvious why it shouldn't be allowed.

7. Can a Universally Quantified Conditional be a Good Explanations for why "All Fs Have Been Observed to be Gs"?

Ultimately, my claim is that *the best explanation* for the observed instances being in the proportions they are, is simply that the same (or at least very similar) proportions would be found in the entire population.

Consider an opaque pot filled with a billion marbles. We randomly pick out five million marbles, and they all happen to be black. If asked why all the marbles have been observed to be black, when there are millions of potential colours, the explanation "because *all* the marbles in the pot are black" seems perfectly reasonable. We have observed a large sample of balls from the pot, and as a result can justifiably apply The Law of Large Numbers to make conclusions about the total population¹³, which in turn explains our observations. Even if you deny that we can justifiably assert a universally quantified conditional on the basis that all we have shown is that it's probable that most ravens are black, as opposed to all ravens are black, this conclusion still enables us to make justified predictions about the colour of future ravens.

¹³ This requires an additional step: see below for details.

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Nevertheless, in the same vein as Campbell and Franklin, I maintain that we have no positive reason to think that our sample includes non-black ravens on the basis of our observations, so it seems reasonable to suppose, given the evidence, that it doesn't. This conclusion is of course fallible, but such is the nature of inductive inference. Regardless of this issue (the resolution of which has no bearing on whether the regularity theorist can make inductive inferences), there may still be worries about circularity here, and it is this circularity that brings into question whether these conditionals can be good explanations in this context.

When I explain my observing a ball's blackness by appeal to all (or most of) the balls in the pot being black, it looks as though I'm simply stating "this ball has been observed to be black because this ball is black". Although this in itself is not a circular explanation, to get to the proposition "all (or at least most of) the balls are black" from the observation of black balls, the regularity theorist does have to take the step from "this ball looks black", to "this ball *is* black". As already demonstrated, if this move is allowed, we can then infer the blackness of all the balls in the pot (by applying the same principle to every ball we observe, and then using the Law of Large Numbers to make inferences about the total population), and explain our observations in virtue of these inferences.

This is in itself potentially troubling, as it rests on the assumption that we are justified in our move from "this ball looks black" to "this ball *is* black", but one would expect a G.E. Moore-style response should suffice: I observe a ball that looks black; I am more sure that balls that look black are black, than I am of any other possibility; therefore I'm justified in asserting that this ball is black!¹⁴

Nevertheless, "because all the marbles in the pot are black" is still a "self-evidencing explanation" (Hempel 1965: 370-4). As Lipton suggests, however, the circularity of an explanation does not mean it shouldn't be considered an explanation. Indeed, many of the scientific explanations we accept are of

¹⁴ As a matter of fact, Armstrong himself writes that G.E. Moore is justified in vindicating commonsense (1983: 53). It certainly seems commonsense to allow the step from "this ball appears black" to "this ball is black".

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precisely this kind. I might explain my thinking a certain star is moving away from me by the observable ‘red shift’, but my explanation for my observation of red shift would be that a star is moving away from me¹⁵, “...what is significant is that the circularity is benign” (2004: 24). It does not affect the justification of my explanation of why I observed red shift, nor the explanation of why I think the star is moving away from me. I claim that universally quantified conditionals can be benignly circular explanations. The observation of a large sample of black balls allows us to infer that all (or at least most of) the balls in the pot are black, which in turn explains why all the balls have been observed to be black, and allows us to make claims about the colour of balls taken out of the pot in the future. This example is almost identical to the ‘red-shift’ example above, and yet nobody questions the explanatory value there. The circularity does not affect the justification of why I think all the balls in the pot are black, neither my justification of why I think the next ball I observe will be black, so why shouldn’t “because all the balls in the pot are black” be a good explanation?

8. Natural Necessitation Relations and the New Regularity Relation

Armstrong claims that the natural necessitation relation between universals can be found via inference to the best explanation, and that given this ‘law’ is in some way distinct from unobserved instances, inferences about the nature of these unobserved instances can justifiably be made; that is, $N(F,G)$ somehow entails that all future Fs will be Gs. However, I claim that the regularity theorist can use the same methodology to arrive at a relation between universals: $R(F,G)$, where R is the ‘regularity relation’, which holds between universals in our set population (whether this be a universal, or spatio-temporally restricted population).

The regularity relation is easy to comprehend. It is a contingent relation inferred through the regular observation of Fs being Gs, where the Law of Large

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

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Numbers can be applied as justification for making conclusions about the total population of Fs. It is nothing over and above the instances themselves, and *a priori* mathematics. $R(F,G)$ holds when these conclusions can *justifiably* be inferred by the law of large numbers. Once $R(F,G)$ has been inferred, in exactly the same way as $N(F,G)$ can stand between observation and conclusions about the unobserved for Armstrong, $R(F,G)$ can stand between observation and conclusions about the unobserved in the pattern of inference for the regularity theorist. We are left with the pattern of inference $e \rightarrow R(F,G) \rightarrow h$, a rational inferences that completely defuses Armstrong's objection.

One may object that the regularity relation need not identify universal regularities, as it can feasibly be applied to spatio-temporally restricted populations. I can allow this, though. The only concession that has to be made is that if we only admit omni-temporal and omni-spatial regularities to be laws, these spatio-temporally restricted regularities would not be laws. That's not to say we're unjustified in making inductive inferences about unobserved instances within that population.

Secondly, one may object that the number of instances needed to justifiably infer a conclusion via the law of large numbers is vague. We do not know the size of our population in most instances, so we can never precisely calculate the probability of our sample being a near population matcher. Furthermore, what probability actually justifies our inferences? Is 80% enough? Do we need 90%? Does a sample of 3000 completely justify our inferences, but a sample of 2999 provides no justification at all? This seems more problematic, but I the objection can be avoided by accepting the notion of degrees of justification. I would be more justified in my belief that 50% of a particular (fair) coin's tosses will land heads after a sample of 10,000 coin tosses (50% of which landed heads) than after a sample of 5,000 coin tosses (50% of which landed heads). I have already shown, however, that with samples over 3000 we have over a 90% chance of our sample being representative (a near population matcher). Given that the regularities we are generally concerned about in nature generally involve a sample of far more than 3000, and that a 90% chance of our

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sample being representative seems more than sufficient, I don't think this vagueness objection should overly concern us. If the objector is still unsatisfied, he should bear in mind that if this is problematic for the philosopher who wishes to infer a regularity relation between universals, it is equally problematic for he who wishes to infer a natural necessitation relation.¹⁶

The natural necessitation relation is a spooky, mysterious relation; a relation that cannot be explained without begging the question (it is that which necessitates all Fs being Gs in a world where $N(F,G)$ holds?). If there is a natural necessitation relation, it is a primitive, incomprehensible entity. $R(F,G)$ on the other hand, is easy to grasp in terms of 'impressions' that even Hume would admit, and yet it still allows us to assign a high probability to our inductive inferences being correct. So what is it about $N(F,G)$ that makes it a better explanation for all ravens having been observed to be black than $R(F,G)$? It seems to me that $R(F,G)$, if by nothing other than parsimony, comes out as the better explanation.

Conclusion

Armstrong argues that the regularity theorist's pattern of inference to the properties of future observables is nothing more than $e \rightarrow h$ (observed to unobserved). He argues that we need an *explanation* of why there is a constant conjunction between certain universals, and that natural necessitation is the only option.

However, I have shown that what is required is not an explanation of why (say) ravens are black, but an explanation of why we observe them to be black, and of course "all ravens are black" serves as a perfectly good explanation for why every time we observe one, it appears black. Furthermore, I have argued that the pattern of reasoning to the universally quantified conditionals that make

¹⁶ Armstrong would claim he has 'inference to the best explanation' to justify inferring $N(F,G)$, but given that I deny natural necessitation relations to be the best explanation for regularities, this response holds little weight.

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up the law is perfectly rational. One doesn't simply move from straight from the observed to the unobserved, but via $R(F,G)$ ¹⁷. The pattern of inference is therefore as follows:

$$e \rightarrow R(F,G) \rightarrow h$$
¹⁸

This pattern of inference *is* rational, and demonstrates how the regularity theorist is in no way committed to inductive scepticism.

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¹⁷ Where $R(F,G)$ is the contingent relation between universals derivable when a universally quantified conditional is justifiably inferred via the law of large numbers.

¹⁸ Again, I feel that a Campbell/Franklin-style response gives us more reason to suppose the universally quantified conditional holds than any other distribution of colours (that is, something like "most of the ravens are black, but three are white"), but even if we merely accept that "most ravens are black", we still have good reason to make inductive inferences about the colour of the next raven we observe.

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Inter Fidem et Rationem
**Discerning the Proper Intersection of Philosophical and
Theological Methodologies in the Works of Nicholas Rescher
and Joseph Ratzinger**

Andrew M. Haines

Initially, the distinction between philosophy and theology seems clear enough: philosophy is concerned with modes of knowledge arising naturally in the human person while theology is concerned with the knowledge presented supernaturally by faith, and the God who reveals himself as such. In light of this, the age-old maxim that philosophy is the *ancilla theologiae* is still maintained by many. Philosophical study is still required, in most cases (and to varying degrees), for those pursuing theological studies. In short, there is, at least in most circles, no justifiably tenable case for philosophy and theology being anything other than distinctly different yet complimentary and coexistent sciences.

Such a simple compartmentalization is however—like all classifications seeking to over-simplify vastly complex ideas—bound to fail. The incredibly broad implications of both philosophical and theological methodologies are, in the end, bound to enter into areas of overlap insofar as their content is concerned. In some cases, there is simply no ‘easy answer’ to the question: ‘Is this a principle of theology or a truth of philosophy?’ Adding to the enigma of such questions is, in no small part, the ubiquitous “diffusion of complexity,” which seems to characterize the situation of intellectual pursuits in the twenty-first century.¹ While continuing to put forward the unique identity of each discipline, academia has produced an entirely new science, commonly referred to as ‘philosophical theology.’ The aim of this specialization (which for many years lurked seminally in the pages of countless ancient and medieval writers) is to articulate by way of philosophical method the claims and

¹ Cf. Rescher (2001, 262-3).

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principles proper to theology.² Quite naturally, this attempt to combine philosophical methodology with theological objectives introduces a host of difficulties, and in this paper I will seek to investigate the limits of their coalescence: I will attempt to demonstrate the proper expressions of both philosophy and theology at their point of confluence, and will do so with particular regard to the insight of Nicholas Rescher and Joseph Ratzinger, both of whom have written much on this very subject. Finally, I will put forward my own suggestion, namely that there is a fundamental difference between philosophical and theological science insofar as methodology and aim (*telos*) are concerned, and that a correct understanding of these two facets enables one to distinguish between what is properly philosophical and what, although ostensibly similar, belongs strictly to theology.

I. God in Philosophy: Rescher's Contributions

In his essay, "God's Place in Philosophy (*Non in Philosophia Recurrere est ad Deum*)", Nicholas Rescher presents a strong case for the suitable limits of philosophical methodology with regard to the divine.³ The challenge, as he correctly identifies, is to understand the universal import of philosophy without relying too much on the utilization of God as a source of knowledge.

[P]hilosophy is supposed to deal with "the big questions" and...[there] are no bigger questions than those that relate to the nature and role of God—his existence, his relation to ourselves and to the world, and in general his place in the grand scheme of

² Concerning the early Christian philosopher, Ratzinger writes: "[H]e carries in his hand the Gospel, from which he learns, not words, but facts. He is the true philosopher, because he has knowledge of the mystery of death." Moreover, citing Gerke, he goes so far as to say that the early Christian philosopher is "interpreted as the prototype of the *homo christianus* who has received the revelation of the true paradise through the Gospel." (Ratzinger 1995, 14).

³ Cf. Rescher (2001, 246-56).

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things... In this way, a prominent place for God in philosophy seems securely assured.

However, he continues:

The rival intuition runs in the opposite direction. Insisting that God should not be viewed as a mere philosophical instrumentality, it takes the line that God has far more important work to do than to help philosophers out of their difficulties. Apart, perhaps, from noting this fact itself, our philosophizing should proceed on a secular basis and keep God out of it. (Rescher 2001, 246-7)

The situation exposed by Rescher is fundamental: Seen from the philosophical vantage point, what is the place of God, whose import is quite obviously derived from philosophical investigation, but whose alleged power could presumably circumvent any philosophic quandary?

Rescher probes this difficulty from various angles and asserts a number of claims in response. Initially, his focus is dominated by a consideration of God in philosophy *per se*, and the implications of theistic versus naturalistic modes of enquiry. In other words, he seeks to show a distinction in species between questions concerning divine reality (supernatural) and those concerned with the world (natural). (2001, 247-8) His thesis on this point, I think, is only moderately satisfying. Speaking of the optimal method of approaching such a distinction he writes: "The operative principle would thus become that of question/answer coordination: If God is not involved (explicitly or obliquely) in the question, then he should not be referred to in the answer." (2001, 248) From the outset, Rescher's position appears rational, yet perhaps not altogether tenable; it offers—at least on a superficial level—some basic guidelines for the proper inclusion of God in the realm of philosophical examination.⁴ Still, Rescher's understanding here requires a great deal of further qualification

⁴ Rescher formulates this same argument elsewhere in more comic terms: "Give unto nature what is nature's and unto God what is God's." (2001, 249).

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before it is at all satisfying. He seems to recognize this shortcoming later, raising the pith of his analysis in a section of the essay titled “Philosophy & Theology.” In this portion of his work, Rescher digs even more deeply into the incommensurable relationship between the two sciences. “Of course,” he admits, “there are going to be various issues that spill over from seemingly secular questions into theological ones.” (2001, 251) He gives the example of philosophical anthropology, and man’s presumed relationship to the divine. How can we avoid asking the question, he suggests, not only of our conceptualization of God, but also of his actual relation to us, given our philosophical understanding of his existence? These queries, and others like them, are the very substance of theological philosophy.

At this point, Rescher’s analysis becomes quite fascinating and—one should think—quite original. He makes a distinction between “philosophical theology” and “theological philosophy,” proceeding to speak of their respective characteristics:

[T]heological philosophy occupies but a very small sector of the terrain of philosophy as a whole... Only a very small proportion of philosophical issues have theological involvements... By contrast, a substantially greater body of theology’s theoretical issues have philosophical involvements (although these are, for the most part, not the most crucial issues of the theological domain). Put differently, philosophical theology occupies a far larger sector of theology than it does of philosophy. (2001, 252)

It seems justified to agree with Rescher on this point. The fact of the matter is that philosophy quite evidently maintains a much broader horizontal scope than does theology; all the questions of metaphysics, ethics, natural science, politics and art are ultimately philosophic in character. With that in mind, however, Rescher’s claims nonetheless give rise to a series of further, more penetrating questions about the relationship between philosophy and theology. ‘What is it about philosophy that makes it so suited for interdisciplinary work (e.g.

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philosophical psychology, political philosophy, theology, etc.), yet so able to stand independently?’ ‘What is it about theology that requires it to assume philosophical methodology so often in its course of inquiry?’ ‘Does theology actually *require* philosophy at all?’ ‘If not, then why is it so often invoked?’ To investigate them will require another and further point of departure, namely an inquiry from the standpoint of theology.

II. Philosophy in Theology: Ratzinger’s Contributions

Addressing this issue of relationality from the opposing angle is no simpler. According to Joseph Ratzinger, the notions of “how the two disciplines [of philosophy and theology] are related in the concrete and how their distinct claims to rationality can be safeguarded within their relationship are questions which...require a methodical effort in their own right.” (1995, 16) In light of this significant proposition, Ratzinger briefly traces the long history of the two sciences, their initial cohesion, later division and final divorce, and ultimately raises his own fundamental question on the matter—a question whose answer will, for the most part, occupy the remainder of this essay: “Can philosophy and theology still enter into any kind of mutual relationship at the level of methodology?” (17) Certainly, we must admit that the jury is still out on this. Ratzinger, as we will show, believes that there is a meaningful relationship between the two disciplines. Thinkers, on the other hand, like Heidegger, Jaspers and many others, are of the opinion that “he who supposes himself in possession of the answer has failed as a philosopher.”⁵ (17) Regardless of the plausible answers given on both sides of the fence, and perhaps because of them, the rift between philosophical theologians and philosophical purists is still as deep as ever. Following Ratzinger’s question, however, it seems that a ray of

⁵ Cf. Heidegger (2000, 8): “A ‘Christian philosophy’ is a round square and a misunderstanding. To be sure, one can thoughtfully question and work through the world of Christian experience—that is, the world of faith. That is then theology... Philosophy, for originally Christian faith, is foolishness.”

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understanding surfaces in the otherwise stalemated debate. Instead of simply addressing the coherence of philosophy and theology in certain, handpicked tasks of intellectual interest, he seeks rather to understand the particular differences and similarities of their unique methodological constitutions. In other words, he asks the question: ‘What makes theology “theology,” and philosophy “philosophy”?’ This is a question with a definite and achievable answer.

In an attempt to reply, Ratzinger concedes the lingering perplexity of the situation:

It must be granted, in fact, that if a reason entirely neutral vis-à-vis the Christian faith is part and parcel of the philosophical act, and if philosophical knowledge necessarily excludes any prior given which streams into thinking from faith, then the philosophical activity of a believing Christian must indeed appear to be something of a fiction. (17)

This is a consideration that cannot simply be overlooked, and in many ways the existentialist argument is difficult to refute. “But,” responds Ratzinger, “are the answers of the Christian faith really such as to cut off the path of thought?” (17) In other words—from his point of view—it seems that there must be a common ground between philosophical and theological work from the viewpoint of methodology. Both make use of discursive, rational and organized modes of thought. As he writes elsewhere, the earliest trends in a Christian understanding of God “meant opting for the *logos* as against any kind of myth; it meant the definitive demythologization of the world and of religion.” (2004, 138) If it had not, then the views of theologians like Karl Barth and others would hold true; that is, it would “[become] logical...to interpret faith as pure paradox.”⁶ (1995,

⁶ Cf. (1995, 19): “Against this continuity between philosophy’s search for the ultimate causes and theology’s appropriation of biblical faith, Barth sets a radical discontinuity. Faith, according to Barth, unmasks all of reason’s image of God as idols. It does not draw its life from the synthesis but from paradox.”

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21) Surely then, if this position is to be refuted, one which would render all philosophical processes in the realm of theology meaningless, there must be some tenable basis for assuming a strong correlation between what is properly philosophical and what is actually theological.

Ratzinger's analysis here continues mostly along the lines of how philosophy and theology reside mutually in the life of the faithful Christian, who continually desires to understand more about who God is and how he can relate to such a divine being. While he gives this particular theme ample attention, Ratzinger also leaves quite unanswered the original question: "Can philosophy and theology still enter into any kind of mutual relationship at the level of methodology?" The answer is still obscure, indeed; but having been armed with some tools necessary in illuminating it, we might now proceed even farther along the path toward a fitting response.

III. Method and *Telos*: Understanding the Synthesis

Having explored two very different prefatory approaches in some detail, we are now prepared to offer an answer—or at least the beginnings of one—to our central question. At this point, it seems that a primary reflection might be offered, namely that theology and philosophy differ in two ways: 1) with respect to methodology and 2) in terms of *telos*. Each discipline, moreover, has a particular and exclusive internal relationality between these two elements, upon which is constructed the whole of its operative value. Here, it will be helpful to examine the relational aspects of each science, philosophy and theology, in greater detail.

a. Method and *Telos* in Philosophy

The distinctive methodology of philosophy, as we have already somewhat exposed, can be briefly identified as the quest of pure human reason toward the attainment of truth. In other words, it is "the search of unaided reason for answers to the ultimate questions about reality" (Ratzinger 1995, 16),

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or alternatively, the “mission of providing satisfactory answers to the ‘big questions’ that we have regarding the world’s scheme of things and our place within it.” (Rescher 2001, 3) Entailed in this methodology—from the perspective of both Rescher and Ratzinger—is an understanding of the *telos*, viz. the decisive nature of truth, and its significance as a result of independent human inquiry.

The proximity of relationality between method and aim is no coincidence. In fact, it is exactly this propinquity that enables philosophy to operate as it does. If truth were not achievable by the efforts of human reason, philosophical pursuits would offer no real value for the human experience. This much is certain. But there is indeed a further distinction that must be made. The nature of this second and further delineation does not concern the logical proximity of method and *telos*, but rather the character of the *telos* itself in relation to its actual achievement. It seems that one cannot hold the relationality of method and *telos* to be so intimate that the goal of philosophy is, in fact, presupposed by the philosophical method itself. In other words, one cannot do philosophy without an idea that the proper aim of such work is an understanding of the truth, in whatever light it may come to be seen. But truth—by what we intend it to mean in the philosophic sense—is only understood by means of rational investigation. In order for philosophical investigation to occur, the method employed must be such that it does not take for granted the end of truth as attained by reasonable argument and discursive understanding. After all, since truth is the goal of philosophical investigation, it cannot be the prerequisite of its very exercise, as we have shown. Thus, it appears that there is no means by which to conduct an authentically philosophical survey other than by a method aiming to arrive at some degree of naturally achieved knowledge. And subsequently, it would seem, that although the abstract conception of a *telos* is inherently present in the very idea of philosophical methodology, the *telos* itself—the actual end of philosophical inquiry—is not and cannot be presumed by the philosopher, but is only demonstrable as the product of a properly conducted investigation.

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b. Method and *Telos* in Theology

Discerning a clear methodological and teleological relationship in theology, on the other hand, seems at first to be a rather more straightforward enterprise. For theology, unlike philosophy, it is more feasible to depart from the standpoint of teleology, moving only subsequently toward a grasp of methodology. As is evident enough from the word itself, the *telos* of theology is ‘*theos*.’ On this ground, (and given that theology is, of course, a properly human enterprise) one possible formulation of the definition of theology would be, as Ratzinger suggests, a “rational reflection upon God’s revelation.” (1995, 16) This construction hearkens to the primary idea of theology as aimed inexorably toward God and the revelation by which one knows him through faith. Departing from this perspective, the notion of a ‘science of God from the standpoint of faith’—the *fides quaerens intellectum* of Anselm—is yet another possible definition of theology. However, we must note that the employment of ‘faith’ (or the ‘faithful one’) as the agent and source of theological investigation introduces an entirely new facet to the idea of theological teleology. Since it is by faith alone that one admits the very existence of God as knowable *in se*, and the veracity of revelation by which he makes himself known, the rational character of a theological method—as suggested in the first definition by Ratzinger—seems only secondary to the work of theology. What remains primary is the *telos*: God. Put otherwise, while the philosophical project is intrinsically concerned with a rational, discursive methodology, theology is caught up first-and-foremost with a *telos* provided by faith, and only secondarily with “rational reflection.”⁷

⁷ This is certainly a point of great debate. Indeed, some will argue, there may be cases where, in some sense, the secondary “reflection” precedes the primary recognition of *telos* presented above. Although I do admit that, especially on the level of ‘natural theology,’ reflection seems primary and faithful assent to God’s being appears secondary, if Anselm’s axiom is to be maintained, then we must always be willing to recognize an element of *fides* in any aspect of rational reflection. In other words, while theological reflection may arise outside of a conscious individual assent to

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This is not, however, to deny the intimate necessity for reason in theology. On the contrary, theology is theology only because it seeks to ‘understand’ its divine *telos*. For the human person, understanding—at least on the systematic level⁸—is impossible without reason. Consequently, any hope for a systematic theological methodology is incoherent without the inclusion of “rational reflection,” as Ratzinger says. Still, though, we must continue to admit that a notable disjuncture appears to persist as a result of the non-integral relationality of the theological *telos* with any particular method or system of understanding. In other words, since the proper end of theology is presumed to exist as a viable truth even before theological investigation occurs (at least in my and many other prominent understandings of this idea), there is no way of positing one absolute method over the rest in coming to realize and appreciate this veracity in its fullest sense. This does not mean that some methods of investigation are not superior to others in extracting certain details—to be sure they are: various methods of scriptural analysis, systematics, etc. are all useful in their own right. But for theology as a whole—and here I mean all genuine faithful assent seeking to understand its divine *telos*—there is no supreme method of investigation. The mystics are, at least in the eyes of the Church, just as much ‘theologians’ as are the great writers of the patristic period. In sum, there cannot be said to be one exclusive theological methodology. Theology is, by its very constitution, inevitably predisposed to a great number of methodological formulations. As for its systematic execution, however, it retains an ever abiding dependence upon philosophical modes of method and inquiry.

c. Rescher and Ratzinger on the Methodological-Teleological Distinction

God’s life and revelation, whatever is properly theological is by its nature arisen from faith, and thereby upholds the distinction that all theology is the expression of *fides quaerens intellectum*.

⁸ As opposed, for example, to some form of direct, mystical knowledge of God, with which theology, strictly speaking, is also concerned.

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From our brief foray into the works of Nicholas Rescher and Joseph Ratzinger on the distinctive characteristics of philosophical and theological methodologies, a few points come to light that we should now mention.

First, it seems that Ratzinger would agree with the points I have made regarding the relation of method and *telos* in theology. As a result of the characteristic openness to methods and processes, theologians are, for good reason, very appreciative of philosophical methods. As I stated in the beginning of this essay, the idea of philosophy as *ancilla theologiae* has not been discarded. In fact, more and more it seems that theologians are turning to philosophy for further perspectives on truth. Ratzinger, as we have seen, readily admits that “the answers of the Christian faith [do not] cut off the path of thought.” (1995, 17) From his own writings, it is evident that he values the diverse application of philosophical understanding for use in a variety of disciplines, and that he is not opposed to employing philosophical method in what is properly theological work.

Furthermore, regarding Ratzinger, it appears that our analysis has adequately responded to the question of whether “philosophy and theology [can] enter into any kind of mutual relationship at the level of methodology.” It seems that they can—and not only can but must! Because it is naturally so open to methodological possibilities, theology requires philosophical contributions in order to achieve an understanding of its *telos*, even though the objective truth of the matter in question is already supposed. This, I would argue, is the ‘mutual relationship’ par excellence, and precisely the sort of thing Ratzinger aims to achieve in his own contributions to the philosophical-theological debate.

Turning to Rescher, then, we can fill in what is still lacking in our discussion of relationality between theology and philosophy: namely, the extent to which philosophical methodology may rightly be employed in theological investigations. Rescher, like Ratzinger, agrees that philosophy does not assume the reality of its *telos* (truth) until it has been rationally demonstrated. “Explanation,” he writes, “in philosophy as elsewhere, has to proceed from what is in the sphere of cognition the more clear and accessible—from what is prior

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in the order of knowledge (even if not in the order of being).” (2001, 248) Such is indeed the limitation on implementing theological explanations in philosophical circumstances. For this reason, as we have seen, he writes that “a very small proportion of philosophical issues have theological involvements.” (252) But as for philosophical contributions in the theological sphere, “a substantially greater body of theology’s theoretical issues have philosophical involvements.” (252)

Conclusion

In light of the investigation at the beginning of this section—and with respect to Ratzinger’s question of methodological relationship—Rescher’s claims appear to have grown in clarity. Although each thinker contributes to the question in a very different way, the two positions together provide for a more cohesive and well-articulated understanding of a “mutual relationship [between philosophy and theology] on the level of methodology.” Ultimately, what we are left with are two sciences that differ immensely in focus, but whose exercises, by virtue of their distinctly human deployment, are nonetheless strictly bound up with rational insight and discursive expression. Moreover, while both Rescher and Ratzinger seem to point to a model of philosophy necessarily separable from theological involvement, both thinkers continue to hold that, in large part, philosophical methodology is precisely what provides for the majority of theological investigations. This disposition of openness on the part of theology to the philosophical method is, I argue, a product of theology’s *telos*-centered constitution, and the very characteristic of theology that makes it a science both thoroughly human and incontestably divine. Philosophy, for both Rescher and Ratzinger, is certainly considered to be the *ancilla theologiae*, without which and without whose methodological contributions theology—on the systematic and communicable level—would undoubtedly fail.

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Pacifism and Virtue Ethics

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The most common formulations of the pacifist position are built from a perspective of act-based ethics. Yet when confined to these moral systems, the doctrine of pacifism faces substantial difficulties. However, the alternative moral theory of virtue ethics provides a groundwork upon which a stronger version of pacifism may be developed. In this paper I will consider various forms of pacifism that rely on an act-based perspective, with a focus on absolute pacifism as the most consistent of these forms, and present major arguments against pacifism within this traditional structure. I will then explore the nature and advantages of a pacifism based on virtue ethics, along with specific relevant virtues and vices, possible objections, and social implications of a theory of virtue pacifism.

Act-based Versions of Pacifism

Pacifism can be generally defined as an ethical theory that holds the use of force to be morally impermissible. A “use of force” can be further described as an act that inflicts a particular outcome upon another being against his or her will (Narveson, 1965, p. 266). The concept of force is often used in close connection with that of violence, which I understand as a type of force that causes direct harm to another human being. These terms are frequently used vaguely, relying on common sense understanding, and I will not try to define them more clearly here.

It is important to specify that pacifism is not simply the belief that violence is evil or that killing should be avoided, which are views that most moral people hold. Pacifism is distinguished by the belief that it is morally wrong to use force even in response to violence. At the heart of traditional pacifism is a high valuation of human life, which pacifists uphold so absolutely that they deny that any end could sufficiently justify treating another human with violence (Kelley, 2006). The theory that most consistently applies this concept—absolute

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pacifism—rules all uses of force morally wrong. Yet the doctrine of pacifism has been expressed in a variety of versions that offer different answers to key questions. Many rule-based views that have been understood to carry the pacifist spirit must be put in a separate class from absolute pacifism.

One issue that pacifist positions must address is the question of to whom their doctrine applies. A specific stream of pacifism states that only people who hold to the pacifist doctrine have a duty not to respond to violence with force. One major problem with this view is that it does not present the rejection of force as a universal moral principle but leaves it as a matter of personal choice. Jan Narveson points out that this preference for nonviolence could be held just as well by non-pacifists (1965).

In response to these arguments Craig Ihara defends a version of pacifism based on the belief that while it is not morally wrong to not live as a pacifist, “a life of nonviolence is a morally preferable way of life” (1978, p. 369). Thus pacifists fulfill a supererogatory role, doing good that goes beyond the requirements of universal duty. It is significant that, as Ihara recognizes and as will be addressed below, this view highlights the inadequacy of traditional ethical theories which find it difficult to account for acts of supererogation.

The main consideration in classifying versions of pacifism is the degree to which they prohibit the use of force. Different views on this issue can be roughly located along a continuum that places absolute pacifism at one extreme and just war theory at the other. According to Duane Cady in *From Warism to Pacifism*, these two extremes also differ fundamentally in how they relate means and end when considering the value of human life (Kelley, 2006). Just war theory holds that the use of force as a means may be necessary when there is a goal that is more important than individual life or well-being. Absolute pacifism denies that any goal can justify the use of force that threatens human life.

The first step away from absolute pacifism on Cady’s continuum is the theory that force is permissible if it is not lethal (Kelley, 2006). While this view recognizes both the value of human life and practical challenges to absolute pacifism, it opens up a slippery slope that may justify a variety of violent actions

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(Kelley, 2006). In a rule-based ethics this theory would likely require a detailed system of guidelines for application.

Andrew Kelley argues that every other view along the continuum falls under the same teleological principle as just war theory. All versions apart from absolute pacifism and the “non-lethal” view allow that “there are certain conditions under which respect for the value of a single human life may be overridden by other concerns,” and every view except absolute pacifism justifies force in some situations (Kelley, 2006, p. 220).

One theory that has been identified with pacifism permits the use violence only when necessary to defend other people, thus prohibiting force in self-defense. This view requires an explanation as to what differentiates oneself from all other people and how a threat to others is enough to justify the evil of using force while a threat to self is not (Narveson, 1965). A modification of this view, the assertion that force may be used only in defense of people who cannot defend themselves, is still inconsistent because it simultaneously declares that “everyone ought to put himself in the position of people who are defenseless by refusing to defend himself” (Narveson, 1965, p. 265). If this rule was universally applied, its outcome would be equivalent to the previously-mentioned view: everyone should by duty be unable to defend himself, yet obligated to defend everyone else. Narveson argues that if the denouncement of force leads to the denial of an individual right to self-defense in principle, then the general use of force for defense must also be denied. The difficulties of each of these less-than-absolute theories leads to the conclusion, shared by both Narveson and Kelley, that absolute pacifism is the most coherent and philosophically relevant expression of the pacifist ideal.

A final theory to consider before critiquing absolute pacifism is one that replaces the deontological approach of the views already considered with a consequentialist ethic. This theory considers pacifism to be “desirable as a tactic” and promotes nonviolence as a means to bring about the best possible results (Narveson, 1965, p. 263). This view faces the clear difficulty that the refusal to use force does not always create better results than the opposite

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option, and it shares the classic utilitarian difficulty of the unpredictability of consequences. The claim that a pacifist approach is significantly effective also does not necessarily establish an absolute principle or basis for judging right and wrong (Narveson, 1965). People who espouse a just war principle may also recognize that nonviolent methods are desirable in many cases.

Among all the act-based theories that have been identified with pacifism, absolute pacifism is the most consistent because it holds simply and without qualification to the view that the use of force is morally wrong. According to Kelley, this view “represents the true spirit of pacifism” (2006, p. 221). Absolute pacifism also offers a unique understanding of the world, challenging the assumption that violence and force are a necessary part of human interactions. It sets an ideal for individual and communal morality, making nonviolence a goal that must be pursued (Kelley, 2006).

Despite its attractiveness, the traditional version of absolute pacifism faces several fundamental difficulties. A simple argument against traditional absolute pacifism has been laid out by Narveson, who criticizes the doctrine as fundamentally inconsistent. The basic point is that pacifism depends on an objection to violence, but there may be some cases in which the use of force is the only means possible of preventing an act of violence. Central to Narveson’s argument is the issue of personal rights: “In saying that violence is wrong, one is at the same time saying that people have a right to its prevention, by force if necessary” (1965, p. 269). The concept of having a right entails the ability to prevent that right from being infringed upon, regardless of a person’s willingness to use that ability. Narveson’s objective is to show that even if a person believes violence is wrong, the use of force is not unjustifiable for that person. A person may still choose to reject her own right to self-defense, but if she is truly opposed to violence she cannot consistently refuse to defend the rights of others (Narveson, 1965).

A major weakness in Narveson’s argument is his idea that a refusal to use force to prevent violence effectively justifies the initial violence. Yet an absolute pacifist could claim that by refusing to respond with force they are

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condemning the initial violence on principle: All uses of force are wrong, and it is never justifiable to respond in kind to a wrong action. This view follows the spirit of the biblical command not to repay evil for evil (Romans 12:17).

However, the absolute claim that it is always wrong to use force is problematic in itself. A different criticism of pacifism argues that the use of force cannot be recognized as inherently morally right or wrong. Kelley offers an example of someone who uses force to prevent a friend from killing herself. Most people would recognize that while it would be preferable not to have to use force in a given situation, it would also not necessarily be morally wrong (Kelley, 2006). If we alter the argument by prohibiting only the use of force that causes harm or threatens the life of another, we face complex questions of how intentions relate to actual consequences.

The argument that absolute pacifism is inconsistent can be restructured based not on individual rights or rules about the use of force but on the inherent value of human beings. Kelley states that there are cases when the use of force “may be more in tune with the spirit of pacifism,” meaning that in practice the application of absolute pacifism may not always be the best way to express a respect for human life (2006, p. 223). Simone Weil makes a similar argument with her claim that nonviolence should not be used unless it would more effectively counter violence than the use of force. Weil qualifies this view, however, with the idea that humans must work towards a world where nonviolence is in fact predominately effective (1952, p. 137).

According to Kelley, the main problem with absolute pacifism is that upholds the “duty not to use force” as absolute, even when it conflicts with other duties such as the well-being of a friend. This difficulty for pacifism, however, “stems from the failure of the moral theory on which it rests to be able to address adequately the problem of how to resolve conflicts between duties.” Thus the weakness is found in act-based theories in general, not in the ideal of pacifism (Kelley, 2006, p. 222).

In the context of act-based ethics, pacifism can be understood as one extreme that goes too far in the opposite direction from just war theory. Cady

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points out that a balanced ethical theory must not focus on duty without any respect for consequences, as absolute pacifism has been accused of, nor elevate an end so as to justify any means (Kelley, 2006).

An Alternative Approach to Pacifism

The contemporary field of ethics is characterized by a diversity of moral theories and systems. Alasdair MacIntyre declares that “each premise employs some quite different normative or evaluative concept from the others, so that the claims made upon us are of quite different kinds” (1993, p. 279). John H. Yoder concludes that when people critique a variety of pacifist views, they tend to stray from the true issue by “simply talking past one another out of logically incompatible prior assumptions” (1971, p. 129). Yoder advises the evaluation of each version of pacifism in its own system. As this paper has attempted to demonstrate, when judged on their own terms, pacifist theories founded on act-based systems display major weaknesses.

Virtue ethics offers an ancient alternative approach that has been revived within the past century. Instead of focusing on individual actions, virtue ethics addresses individual character; it emphasizes “being” instead of “doing.” A moral system based on virtue holds the potential to be more holistic than act-based systems. The purpose of virtues relates to the good of specific practices, individual lives, societies, and the traditions that provide context for individual lives (MacIntyre, 1993). By avoiding becoming bogged-down in detailed considerations of rules and consequences, an ethics centered on personal character also sheds a different light on what it means to be pacifistic and may allow us to come closer to the heart of the pacifist doctrine.

The major advantages of virtue ethics can now be applied to formulate a stronger version of pacifism. The most significant consideration is that since individual character shapes every facet of a person’s life, a virtue pacifism must do likewise. Such a pacifism would also rely on positive standards instead of on entirely negative prohibitions. Kelley distinguishes between “negative peace,” a

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lack of external conflict, and “positive peace,” a state of harmony that includes a “conscious attempt” to preserve such harmony for the future (2006, p. 219). Kelley’s version of pacifism makes positive peace or harmony the “goal of life” at both the individual and societal levels (p. 225). This goal may also be expressed in terms of the biblical concept of *shalom*, which Nicholas Wolterstorff identifies with a society entirely characterized by peaceful relationships and the enjoyment of life (1980, p. 79). André Comte-Sponville similarly differentiates between traditional “*pacifists*” who oppose all war, and what he calls the “*peaceable*, who are prepared to defend peace even with the use of force” (1996, p. 191).

In Aristotelian terms, positive peace could be understood as a component of *eudemonia* or living well, or as an element that contributes to the fulfillment of the natural human *telos* or proper end. Thus the virtues that a person must live in accordance with in order to achieve a good life necessarily include those that promote a state of harmony or peace.

Kelley points out that while act-based theories tend to relate only to cases that directly involve some use of force, a positive pacifism would address both the motives and effects of each decision with consideration of how an individual lifestyle contributes to a larger goal of peacefulness in society (2006). In other words, “peace is something that we must work at continually and in all aspects of our lives” (Kelley, 2006, p. 224).

Virtue ethics has also been applauded for recognizing the complexity of many moral decisions and offering flexibility in evaluating particular cases. Just as the less-than-absolute varieties of pacifism previously discussed attempt to take specific circumstances into account, in each case virtue pacifism would weigh all the relevant factors of behavior in relation to personal character. When peace is made the goal of every action, the individual could be justified in using force when necessary to pursue ultimate peace, yet she would be extremely cautious in doing so (Kelley, 2006, p. 225).

Another strength of virtue ethics is that it emphasizes the development of personal character through the teaching and practice of virtues. A key

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component of this process is the imitation of individuals who are recognized as examples of virtuous character. A pacifist would thus emphasize studying the lives of figures recognized for their peace-promoting standards in order to develop the same positive traits as those people. Different individuals may be upheld as examples of different virtues, and the same may be true for vices. According to William Frankena, the recognition of a moral ideal is critical in motivating one to be a certain kind of person (1993). One interesting implication of these concepts is a high valuation of history, art, and other disciplines that offer insight into human character. Considerations of particular people and whole societies may lead to an understanding of how actions are shaped by character and values, knowledge that is valuable in making practical decisions.

Related to the issue of individual examples is that of supererogatory acts. As previously mentioned, virtue ethics more readily accounts for such acts than duty-based or consequentialist ethics does. This allows for the argument that there may be some cases in which the use of force is not morally wrong, yet it is morally better not to use force, regardless of rights or consequences. In the version of pacifism defended by Ihara, a pacifist is one more radically committed to a standard of nonviolence than average people. Because a pacifist has made a specific decision to set the principle of not doing harm to another person as her highest ideal, she may not be morally obligated to violate that ideal even in cases where the use of force would be the right choice for most people (Ihara, 1978).

Particular Virtues and Vices

A pacifistic theory grounded in virtue ethics should include the consideration of specific virtues and vices. Such an exploration offers additional insight into how positive pacifism can be pursued; it also raises issues about the strengths and weaknesses of both pacifism and virtue ethics in general.

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First we will address one of the major vices that stands in opposition to the spirit of pacifism: cruelty. This term is generally used to describe behaviors that show little consideration for the rights, well-being, or inherent value of other living beings. It is closely tied to the vice of malice, which is more directly “the *pointless* but deliberate infliction of suffering” (Taylor, 1993, p. 336). Like all virtues and vices, the nature of cruelty goes deeper than specific acts or expressions. Richard Taylor argues that when confronted with cruelty, humans have a natural moral revulsion that does not derive from considerations of either the rationality or the consequences of malicious actions. Instead, we look at the motives and character of the people who perform cruel actions and denounce them as vicious individuals (Taylor, 1993). Taylor goes so far as to say that the principle which makes acts of violence morally evil is not based on the fact that the loss of human life is itself an evil, because such loss is a necessary part of reality; death often results from human actions that are not considered morally wrong, such as in auto accidents. Instead, malice is repugnant because of what is in the hearts of those who act heartlessly (Taylor, 1993).

The virtue commonly recognized as the opposite of cruelty is compassion, which shares in the sufferings of others instead of gaining pleasure from suffering (Comte-Sponville, 1996). Taylor argues that both cruelty and compassion transcend rationality: cruelty because it is unjustifiable, and compassion because it is driven by a deep impulse that goes beyond logical reasoning (1993). The only satisfactory motivation for people to act morally for the benefit of the common good, Taylor concludes, is an innate capacity for compassion (1993, p. 339).

Other prominent thinkers such as Rousseau have upheld the belief that compassion or pity is a natural part of what makes us human (Comte-Sponville, 1996). In *The Ethics*, Spinoza identifies compassion (*miser cordia*) with the capacity of love to value another human enough to take joy in his successes and to be saddened by his sufferings. This virtue leaves no room for the hatred of people, only of unhappiness itself (Comte-Sponville, 1996, p. 109). Spinoza’s view distinguishes compassion from mere pity (*commiseration*), which can only

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apply in cases of suffering. Another possible distinction is that unlike pity, compassion also requires respect and excludes contempt for the other person. Hannah Arendt further proposes that compassion recognizes only individuals and particulars, while pity can be abstract and generalized (Comte-Sponville, 1996, p. 114).

Even if compassion and pity are understood as natural human capacities primarily experienced as emotion, the role of reason and principles need not be excluded. A major weakness of pure virtue theory, such as that advocated by Taylor, is that it does not provide adequate explanation for why virtues are good and it allows too much subjectivity in judgments about right or wrong actions. As illustrated in Kelley's theory of positive peace, virtue ethics requires an ultimate goal or good with which virtues may align and from which principles for action may be derived (MacIntyre, 1993).

In response to multiple weaknesses of virtue ethics, a variety of ethicists have attempted to combine a focus on virtue with the strengths of act-based or principle ethics. Comte-Sponville proposes that both virtue and duty are essential and complementary, though duty is a "constraint" while virtue is a "freedom" (1996, p. 222). Frankena likewise states that every virtue or disposition to act in a certain way corresponds with a principle that defines how that virtue should be expressed (1993).

In defining the specific virtue of compassion, Comte-Sponville offers a principle based on the inherent value of living creatures: Sharing in another person's pain "means that one refuses to regard any suffering as a matter of indifference or any living being as a thing" (1996, p. 106). Compassion thus entails a deliberate commitment, not simply a natural reaction in an immediate situation. In *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, Kant, the greatest proponent of deontological ethics, also recognizes the relation between virtue and duty. Kant states, "But though it is not in itself a duty to feel pity and so likewise to rejoice with others, active sympathizing with their lot is a duty. To this end it accordingly is an indirect duty to cultivate our natural (sensitive) feelings for others" (Kant, 1797/1964, p. 122).

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Closely related to compassion is the virtue of gentleness. Comte-Sponville makes the distinction that “compassion suffers at the suffering of others; gentleness refuses to produce or increase suffering” (1996, p. 186). Directly opposed to aggressiveness and violence, gentleness combines both love and strength expressed in a peaceful manner. It entails the controlled use of power shaped by a commitment to avoid harming others (Comte-Sponville, 1996). Aristotle describes gentleness in relation to the appropriate use of anger, as the mean between being hot-tempered and spineless (Comte-Sponville, 1996, p. 190).

Comte-Sponville argues that absolute pacifism is problematic because it upholds the principle of gentleness as an absolute, while in fact no specific virtue can be absolute or adequate in itself. In its proper role, gentleness does not reject all possibility of using violence, since this would prevent people from doing whatever is necessary to defend the goal of peace that gentleness aims for (Comte-Sponville, 1996). A key problem for Comte-Sponville, I believe, is his denial of any absolute values and his rejection of the concept of good as *telos*. Yet he does make a valuable argument that the various virtues must complement each other. He states that even the preservation of human life cannot be unconditionally upheld, since choices must be made in relation to particular circumstances. Still, gentleness requires the avoidance of violence as much as possible (Comte-Sponville, 1996).

In *Gravity and Grace* Simone Weil offers a principle for the application of gentleness that determines when the use of violence may be justified. She states, “to keep the love of life within us; we never have to inflict death without accepting it for ourselves” (Weil, 1952, p. 138). Thus a person can only take the life of another when she would still be willing to do so even if the action required the loss of her own life. Weil is specifically addressing the motivations for war, but her principle can be applied in individual cases. Strictly followed, this rule would not justify force used in self-defense and sets the standard of gentleness very high.

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Ultimately, virtues such as compassion and gentleness may be brought together under the more comprehensive virtue of love. According to Weil, love is the affirmation of the existence of another human being (1952, p. 113). Drawing upon Weil, Comte-Sponville describes *agape*, the form of love traditionally understood to be shown by God, as the opposite of violence. Such love does not seek its own good or use force to gain control, but expresses itself through generous respect for others (Comte-Sponville, 1996). Kant recognizes that in its pure sense, love, like compassion, is a disposition that cannot be made obligatory. Yet Kant proposes that all duties are based on an obligation of “practical love,” which acts according to the ideal of love; as Comte-Sponville states, “Act as though you loved” (1996, p. 224).

In Andrew Kelley’s version of pacifism, love is established as the foundational virtue. The ideal character trait of *agape* is the means for pursuing the goal of peace or harmony and offers a guiding standard in difficult decisions (Kelley, 2006). When making a judgment about whether violence is justified to promote peace in a particular situation, a person should consider whether the action reflects what a “truly loving person” would do. In this view, emphasis on the virtue of love could complement a commitment to avoid using force. One of history’s most prominent pacifists, Gandhi, expressed this concept when he stated, “Non-violence is a dormant state. In the waking state it is love” (Kelley, 2006, p. 226).

Other virtues especially pertinent to a doctrine of pacifism may include tolerance, temperance or self-control, and patience. Selflessness and generosity must be recognized, since the strongest expressions of pacifism have been historically tied to a willingness to sacrifice for a higher good. Also critical is the virtue of forgiveness, which Comte-Sponville identifies with mercy as the opposite of resentment (1996). This virtue deserves particular attention in light of the fact that much of the violence committed throughout history, from the individual to the national level, is tied to long-standing grudges and bitterness. Forgiveness or mercy is generally more difficult than compassion; it requires a deliberate choice to overcome hatred and accept the wrong-doer as a fellow

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human being (Comte-Sponville, 1996). Another essential complement to love and gentleness is justice, which includes respect for all human beings and which is necessary to create a harmonious society where a commitment to nonviolence can be effective.

Further Considerations

Most people would likely recognize these and related virtues as desirable. What would distinguish the role of such virtues in a virtue-based pacifism is that each person would cultivate them with the clear goals of becoming someone who lives according to the spirit of pacifism, and of promoting harmony in society. The individual and social *telos* to which virtues align—the good life, human flourishing, or however it is described—must include the ideal of positive peace as a primary component. As Wolterstorff suggests, the ideal of shalom is comprehensive enough to provide a goal towards which all responsible human action properly aims (1980). One issue that deserves further attention may be specific virtues that focus entirely on this goal. For example, Jesus proclaimed a blessing for “those who make peace” (*eirenopoioi*; Matthew 5:9), and the New Testament uses a different Greek term to recognize the virtue of being peaceable or peace-loving (*eirenikos*; James 3:17). However, since virtue ethics addresses overall character, none of the human virtues is irrelevant to this discussion. Ideally, a holistically virtuous person and a positive pacifist should be one and the same.

The connection between personal virtue and a well-ordered society is a crucial element of virtue ethics. MacIntyre points out how individual identity and well-being is shaped by social context, so that moral development must be pursued as part of membership in a community (1993). From a distinctly Christian perspective, Yoder speaks of the “messianic community” which together lives out pacifism as “a foretaste of God’s kingdom. The pacifistic experience is communal in that it is not a life alone for heroic personalities but for a society” (1971, p. 124). Drawing on biblical visions of shalom expressed

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in harmonious and joyous communities, Wolterstorff also stresses that at the heart of Christianity lies a “promise of peace in all dimensions,” both personal and social (1980, p. 79-80).

Kelley argues that the value of peace or harmony for democracy should make pacifism a realistic and desirable approach even in the political arena. A commitment to peacefulness should be cultivated at all levels of society, resulting in greater harmony both internally and in relation to the outside world (Kelley, 2006). The implications of any form of pacifism would have to be worked out differently in regard to issues of international relations and warfare versus individual and social concerns; yet the same principles are relevant in every sphere.

Some of the strongest objections to this version of pacifism, as already mentioned, involve the inadequacies of virtue ethics as a foundational moral theory. While I believe that virtue ethics has many advantages over alternative theories and offers great potential for moral philosophy, I agree with critics such as Frankena that this approach should be complemented with insights from act-based ethics. Within this more comprehensive perspective, the strongest version of pacifism would be a “positive pacifism” that focuses not on prohibitions but on individual and social character defined by both actions and traits in line with a goal of stable, comprehensive peace.

This description invites a final weighty question: Is this version of the theory truly pacifism? By recognizing that the use of force may sometimes be permissible or even necessary as part of the pursuit of peace, the positive pacifism described above departs from the consistent ideal of absolute pacifism and may be identified with a cautious version of the just war theory. It might be argued that the ideal of harmony is one upheld by most sensible people, and that the positive pacifist perspective may be claimed by those who occasionally resort to violence at either the individual or international level.

In response to this question, we may return to the idea of a continuum that includes varying degrees of pacifism. A foundation of virtue ethics could be used to support different views along this spectrum, and each person who

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subscribes to virtue pacifism must decide what degrees of force she believes to be permissible. However, by focusing on character and motivation, virtue ethics relies less on hypothetical cases or precise rules for behavior that pinpoint one position out of many. The positive pacifism I have described may be identified as several degrees removed from the extreme of absolute pacifism. Yet it is still distinct from the opposite end of the spectrum because it is based on the spirit of pacifism, with a strong presumption in favor of peace.

Perhaps the strongest message of any theory that identifies itself as pacifistic is that the majority of individuals and societies have not done and are not doing enough to promote the goals of peace and harmony. Ultimately, positive pacifism seeks to affirm both the high idealism of absolute pacifism and a more realistically consistent understanding of the world. A pacifism that stresses virtue ethics offers comprehensible, attractive goals that relate to each person as a complete moral being. Such a view argues that those who desire peace cannot rely on mere humane inclination but must actively seek the cultivation of virtuous motivation, behavior, and character in each individual and in society as a whole. This is a pursuit that also requires a willingness to make personal sacrifices and even to risk erring on the side of the gentler virtues. Any generally successful effort may require a significant change in perspective for an entire culture. Yet one of the strengths of virtue ethics is the understanding that moral formation begins with the individual, in the formation of one virtuous human life.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that traditional versions of pacifism that rely on principle-based ethics are unsatisfactory. Absolute pacifism, the view that most consistently upholds the ideal of nonviolence, is in itself inconsistent and takes the pacifist principle to an unbalanced extreme. In response to these problems, I have attempted to elaborate a stronger version of pacifism based on the perspective of virtue ethics. Such a positive pacifism would focus on

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comprehensive peace as the goal of human action and would promote the cultivation of personal virtues such as gentleness and compassion. This endeavor opens up further questions, particularly regarding technical categorization, practical application, and the need to supplement virtue ethics with principles of action. Yet overall, I believe that the combination of virtue ethics and pacifism offers rich potential for the field of ethics and for the future of human society.

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The Burden Faced by External Norms: A Response to Bartol

Colin Wysman

In his follow-up to my recent article “Internal Injuries,” Jordan Bartol has touched upon what he takes to be some significant concerns with my criticism of Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition. I am glad to be given the chance to clarify and defend some of my previous claims in this short response.

First, I ask that the reader once again consider a key difference between internal and external critique as described by Antti Kauppinen. In his paper (2002), he describes the burden that external critique faces in terms of justifying norms as universal (pp. 481); a difficulty, he continues, that internal critique escapes because it draws its criticism from the internal values of a particular system. What I am concerned with here is that Honneth, in maintaining that recognition theory is a purely internal method of critique, uses the idea of a surplus of value as a premise without adequately justifying its universality. My main point, which I hope to clarify here, is not that recognition theory, based on the surplus of value idea, is an unacceptable form of critique; rather, I have simply argued that it is unable to stand alone as a form of internal critique.

I thus believe that Bartol has wrongly characterized my position as being a complete rejection of external critique. Indeed, external principles can be extremely valuable (and perhaps a necessity) for transhistorical critique. What I hope to have argued in my recent article is not that Honneth’s recognition theory ought to be rejected outright due to its reliance on the surplus of value idea. Rather, that by wrongly characterizing it as pure internal critique, the double burden explained by Kauppinen (2002) that demands that an external norm be both justified as universally valued and unambiguous enough to be practically applicable, is ignored. It appears as if Honneth himself is at least somewhat aware of the significance of this challenge, suggesting that without a plausible concept of moral progress, recognition theory is merely speculative (2002, pp. 518).

What I propose is that we seek a more fully developed moral theory that acknowledges any reliance on external norms and attempts to justify those

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norms as universally held. I believe that Bartol has made an important advance in our debate with his sketch of a universally grounded critique involving both internal and external principles. Though it is not something that I can fully address in such short space, I caution against presupposing the universality of an external premise without a rigorous justification as I feel Honneth has done with regards to the surplus of value aspect of recognition theory. While Bartol has certainly put forth a convincing theoretical model for a universally valid external critique, it is important not to ignore the burden that external norms face by wrongly characterizing them as internal.

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