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Stance is published annually in April. The deadline for submissions is mid-December. All papers are anonymously considered by multiple reviewers. Notification of initial decision is in February. All authors receive constructive feedback concerning submissions.

Having an international standard serial number [ISSN 1943-1880-print; ISSN 1943-1899-electronic], *Stance* is registered with the U.S. Library of Congress. *Stance* is listed in *The Philosopher's Index*.

Further information regarding *Stance* is available at *stancephilosophy.com*.

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Stance 12's cover features female representations of the six inhabited continents. Left to right, the statues are Africa, Europe, North America, Asia, South America, and Oceania. The statues were commissioned for the Paris Exposition of 1878 as a gesture of goodwill and unity to those visiting Paris for the World's Fair.

Building on the idea of last edition's cover, featuring a dissolving version of Michelangelo's *David*, we hope to embrace a non-male dominated and non-Eurocentric view of philosophy. Each statue's thoughts combine with those of the others, signifying diplomacy; philosophy is for all, and it is better when constituted by people with a diversity of experiences.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Cody Clark
Gabriel Shetterley

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stance gratefully acknowledges Ball State University's extremely generous support of the publication of *Stance* since 2007.

Since 2014, *Stance* has partnered with the Steven Humphrey Student Philosophy Colloquium at the University of Louisville. *Stance* staff members attend the conference and select one or two papers to consider for publication. We are grateful to the University of Louisville Philosophy Department for their support of our partnership and especially to Steven Humphrey for his gracious hospitality. We look forward to the enduring exchange of ideas fostered by this partnership between *Stance* and the Humphrey Colloquium.

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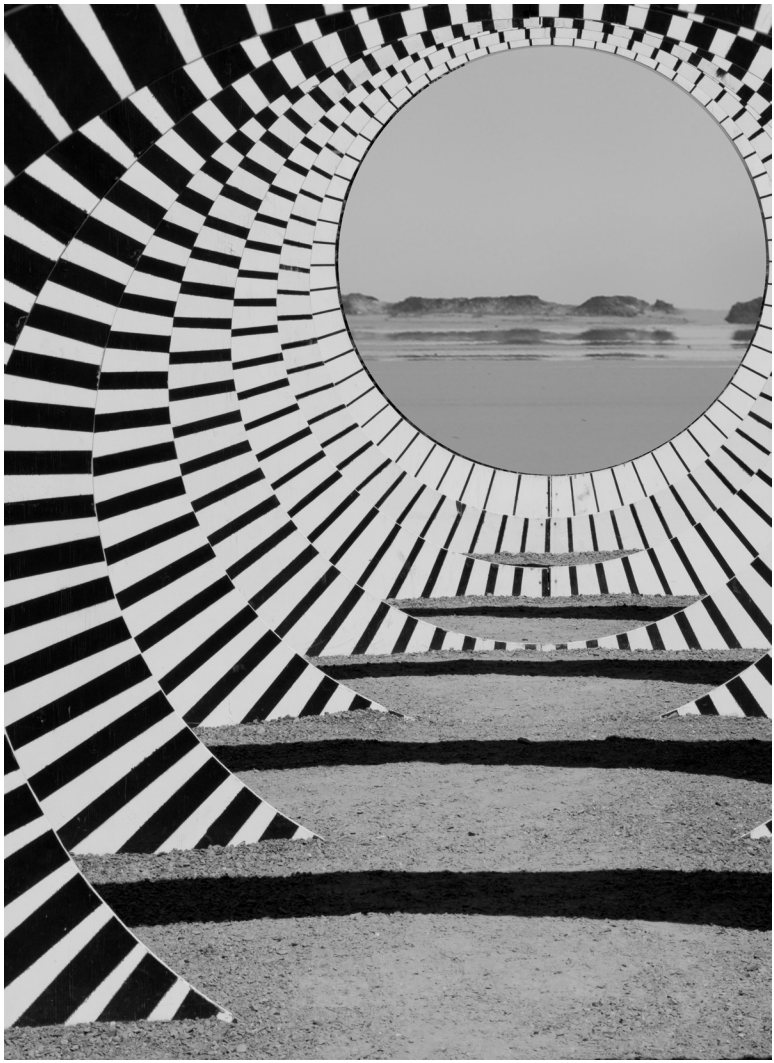
COLOUR AND THE ARGUMENT FROM ILLUSION



CAMERON YETMAN

ABSTRACT

For A. J. Ayer, the occurrence of delusions confutes the notion that we perceive the world directly. He argues instead that perceptions are caused by immaterial "sense data" which somehow represent the properties of material things to us in our experiences. J. L. Austin systematically rejects Ayer's claims, arguing that the occurrence of delusions does not preclude the possibility of direct perception, and that, indeed, our normal perception is direct. I challenge both philosophers' ideas by examining how they deal with the phenomenon of colour.

INTRODUCTION

In "The Argument from Illusion," A. J. Ayer contends that humans have no direct perceptive access to the material world because the appearances of things in that world can be delusive and are, to some extent, causally dependent on the state of the observer.[1] Instead, perceptions are caused by immaterial "sense-data," which somehow represent the properties of material things to us in our experiences. J. L. Austin systematically rejects Ayer's arguments, concluding that our normal perception of the world is direct.[2] I propose to challenge both philosophers' ideas by looking at how they deal with the phenomenon of colour. Ultimately, although neither Ayer nor Austin can provide a satisfactory explanation of colour, Austin's theory proves particularly unsatisfactory.

I. AYER AND ILLUSION

Ayer introduces the theory of sense-data in terms of the argument from illusion. The argument goes as follows. Sometimes, people have experiences of things which do not exist in the external world. For example, a mirage is an experience with a definite content (it is *of* something), but it is not caused by a real physical object; there is no oasis. Furthermore, the experience of a mirage is the exact same—Ayer says "qualitatively indistinguishable"—as the experience of an *actual* oasis off in the distance.[3] There is simply no way to tell the difference between the two: "[t]he fact is that from the character of a perception considered by itself . . . it is not possible tell whether it is veridical or

1 A. J. Ayer, "The Argument from Illusion," in *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 2nd ed., ed. John Perry and Michael Bratman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 215-18. Ayer does not *explicitly* agree with this argument in the text, but for ease of wording I will act like he does.

2 J. L. Austin, "A Refutation of the Argument from Illusion," in *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 2nd ed., ed. John Perry and Michael Bratman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 219-27.

3 Ayer, "Argument from Illusion," 217. Ayer provides other examples of this sort, including a straight stick which appears bent underwater and the effect whereby seeing yourself in a mirror looks the same as seeing your twin somewhere behind it.

delusive."[4] By "veridical," Ayer is referring to our everyday perceptions of things in the world, which do not seem to deceive or delude us in any way. Few would doubt, for example, that their perception of their morning cup of coffee is somehow misleading; we do believe such perceptions are susceptible to serious skeptical doubt, as we do with mirages. Ayer goes on to argue that because veridical and delusive experiences are often indistinguishable they cannot be caused by completely different things, as one would expect different sorts of causes to have qualitatively different effects. For this reason, it seems absurd to suppose that veridical perceptions are caused by one's direct sensory access to the physical world, while delusive perceptions are caused by incorporeal sense-data. Therefore, because Ayer has already shown that delusions do not depend on the physical facts of the world (there is no mirage, etc.), the material world must only be perceivable through the same means as are delusions (i.e. sense-data).

Perceptions of colour seem to fit well within the framework of sense-data. For Ayer, sense-data serve to give us indirect knowledge of the properties of material things through some "presentative function" which the sense-data hold in relation to those things.[5] Exactly what this function is or how it works, he admits, is not certain. Colour, as a property of material things, is thus perceived through a mysterious function of sense-data. Additionally, the fact that colour perception relies on the internal state of the observer (shown by the fact that ingesting brain-altering drugs like *mescal* makes "things appear to change their colours") demonstrates that we do not perceive colour directly (i.e. without mediation).[6] If we directly perceived colour, it is unclear how a drug could disrupt those perceptions. So, for Ayer, colour is nothing more than the reception of certain information-bearing sense-data into the eyes, which the brain then somehow translates into coloured perceptual experiences. Changing the brain, such as through ingesting certain drugs, thus changes perception.

II. AUSTIN'S CRITIQUE OF AYER

Austin criticizes the basic premises of sense-data theory. To begin, he argues that it is *not* the case, in most of Ayer's examples, that one is having an experience of something which is not really there. For example, Ayer maintains that, in the case of a straight stick half-submerged in water, what we see of the submerged section "is not the real quality of a material thing," because the stick is *straight* and thus cannot also be bent.[7] In response, Austin retorts, "[w]hat is wrong,

4 Ayer, "Argument from Illusion," 217.
5 Ayer, "Argument from Illusion," 215.
6 Ayer, "Argument from Illusion," 216.
7 Ayer, "Argument from Illusion," 216.

what is even faintly surprising, in the idea of a stick's *being* straight but *looking* bent sometimes?"[8] The fact that a submerged stick *looks* bent when we know it is straight does not necessitate that the bent part is not *real* but simply that a stick half-submerged in water looks bent. For Austin, one cannot abstract from the conditions in which the delusion is taking place: the stick looks bent due to the refractive properties of water. But what of mirages? These seem to have no explanation in terms of simple external phenomena. Austin agrees but does not believe this necessitates the introduction of a theory of sense-data, as we already have a name for delusions of this sort: *mirages*. Furthermore, the person perceiving a mirage is clearly not in a typical state of mind, and so their delusions occur under special circumstances. Indeed, Austin argues that there is no reason to suggest that the existence of occasional delusions—*even* when they appear identical to normal, non-deluded perceptions—demand there be one common cause for all perceptive experiences,

> [f]or even if we make the prior admission (which we have so far found no reason to make) that in the 'abnormal' cases we perceive sense-data, we should not be obliged to extend this admission to the 'normal' cases too. For why on earth should it *not* be the case that, in some few instances, perceiving one sort of thing is exactly like perceiving another?[9]

It is simply not evident, for Austin, that two things which appear the same must have the same sort of cause. An analogy could be the trajectory of a baseball: the cause may be a human pitcher, or a pitching machine, but the result is the same either way. We do not generally find this fact even remotely surprising. Likewise, it could well be that we directly perceive the material world and that delusions, if not also directly perceived, have some alternate cause.

It is unclear how Austin will deal with the phenomenon of colour. His only treatment of colour in the text comes on page 225, where he argues that seeing a white wall through blue glasses is not the exact same as seeing a blue wall. His justification for this claim is that, while we may say in either case that the wall "looks blue," the two experiences are very different.[10] In one, we walk up to a wall in normal conditions, and it looks blue. In the other, we put on strange coloured glasses, and then the wall looks blue. One cannot simply *ignore* the act of putting on the glasses. What of Ayer's *mescal* example? Austin would presumably reply that the person under the influence of the drug is in an altered mental state, and so it is no wonder they are having delusive experiences. But what, for Austin, even are delusions? This is really the crux of the problem. For Austin, delusions have two types—those of

8 Austin, "Refutation of Argument from Illusion," 222. Italics mine.
9 Austin, "Refutation of Argument from Illusion," 226.
10 Austin, "Refutation of Argument from Illusion," 225.

belief and of perception.[11] Delusions of perception are different from *illusions* in that they are creations of the mind: "the term 'delusion' *does* suggest something totally unreal, not really there at all . . . delusions are a much more serious matter [than illusions]—something is really wrong, and what's more, wrong *with* the person who has them."[12] In a delusion, the mind *conjures up* something which does not really exist.

III. CHALLENGING AUSTIN

Here is my challenge to Austin: if I can show that some part of our everyday perceptive experience is a delusion, it must be the case that direct perception is false. Why is this? Recall that, for Austin, delusions are strange perceptions and sensations conjured up by the mind which have no grounding in everyday experience. Every example he cites of actual delusion—a medical patient seeing pink rats, a person on drugs hallucinating, someone seeing mirages—are examples that only occur in rare and specific circumstances, which we can predict and usually avoid. But what of colour? Experiences of colour are just about as ubiquitous as experiences can get. Surely, if Austin claims that our everyday perception of the world is *direct* and unmediated by anything like sense-data, perception of *colour* must be direct and not delusive—right?

Not quite. According to Austin's definition of delusion—something that is conjured up by the mind—colour perceptions are delusions, and their ubiquity does nothing to mask this fact. The most obvious point to raise in support of the notion that colour is a delusion is the existence of colour-blindness. I may look at an apple and see it as red, while my friend sees the exact same apple as brown. This difference in colour must be manifest either *in* the apple itself, in our optical instruments, or in our mind's processing of the visual information it receives. In the case of colour-blindness, the colour-blind person has certain defective cells in their retina which fail to respond appropriately to certain wavelengths of light. Does this fact nullify the example, because the defect is not in the mind but in the eyes? Well, one could potentially argue that the only reason atypical optical instruments cause atypical perceptions is because they deliver incomplete information to the brain. While this response gives priority back to the brain, assuming its truth without further evidence would be begging the question. As such, one cannot take (as I did for a long time) colour-blindness as the trump card it seems to be.

There are further examples to consider. In 2015, a photograph of a dress was uploaded to the internet which caused widespread debate.[13]

11 Austin does not make this distinction explicit, but it is quite obvious from his discussion on page 220.

12 Austin, "Refutation of Argument from Illusion," 220.

13 Adam Rogers, "The Science of Why No One Agrees on The Colour of This

The issue was that everyone seemed to see its colour differently: some saw blue-and-black, and some white-and-gold. There is a relatively complex neurological explanation for this discrepancy in perception, but the basic explanation is that different people were correcting for chromatic bias in different ways. Chromatic bias is the effect whereby one's brain subtracts the hue of ambient light from one's perceptions to allow for better distinguishing of colours. For instance, when carrying a sheet of printer paper from the bright white light of the outdoors into a room lit with an incandescent bulb, we are not typically shocked that the paper suddenly turns yellow because our brains are correcting for the change in ambient light in such a way that the paper's colour seems consistent; we still think it is white. In an interview with WIRED, neuroscientist Jay Neitz from the University of Washington describes chromatic bias as the way in which "[our] visual system is supposed to throw away information about the illuminant and extract information about the actual reflectance"—the illuminant being the background light, the reflectance being the light reflecting off the object.[14] In the instance of the dress, the optical apparatus of observers are normal and well functioning. The discrepancy in perception is caused by differences in neural activity. If the brain can affect which colours we see in certain illuminating situations, it seems a small jump to the conclusion that the brain *in general* can affect which colours we see.

I will use one more example to help illustrate my point. People with chromesthesia, a subset of synesthesia, experience sensations of colour as a result of hearing certain sounds. As Jean-Pierre Ternaux explains in "Synesthesia: A Multimodal Combination of Senses," synesthesia in general occurs where "the excitation of one sense triggers stimulation in a completely different sensory modality."[15] This excitation occurs in the brain and can be considered "a fusion of sensory modalities, involving the specific cortical areas responsible for the sensations corresponding to the five 'classical senses.'"[16] In layman's terms, the area of the brain responsible for one sense-experience gets mixed up with and stimulates another, though only the first has been directly stimulated by something in the outside world. Furthermore, Ternaux notes that "[recent] investigations using functional magnetic resonance imaging clearly indicated activation of the primary visual cortex in the absence of visual stimulation in a subject with colour-word synesthesia."[17] For this subject, hearing certain words elicits

Dress," *Wired*, last modified February 26, 2015, accessed November 25, 2018, www.wired.com/2015/02/science-one-agrees-colour-dress/.

14 Rogers, "The Science."

15 Jean-Pierre Ternaux, "Synesthesia: A Multimodal Combination of Senses," *Leonardo* 36, no. 4 (2003): 321.

16 Ternaux, "Synesthesia," 322.

17 Ternaux, "Synesthesia," 322.

experiences of colour, all without retinal stimulation. Thus, if experiences of colour can be conjured up in the brain—albeit via other sensory modalities—it seems reasonable to suggest that colour *always* arises in this way, though of course with the much-improved definition and vividness accompanying direct retinal stimulation.

IV. A POTENTIAL REBUTTAL

Austin might respond to my challenge by arguing that I have not understood his view. In the case of a patient seeing pink rats, for example, Austin could maintain that the person is not so much perceiving some sort of conjured-up *image* of pink rats but rather that their mental state is simply such that they cannot tell the difference between seeing the floor and seeing pink rats. This *seeing* ("the patient . . . sees pink rats") is not like normal seeing.[18] Instead, the person *believes* they are seeing pink rats, without perceiving some image of them. This potential rebuttal plays off the other sort of delusion Austin describes—those of beliefs. I distinguished these from delusions of perception earlier because they seemed completely unrelated. But perhaps, just as delusions of grandeur or persecution are "primarily a matter of grossly disordered beliefs," so are delusions of perception.[19] If this is the case, the person's mind does not conjure up an image of pink rats, as there is no image to speak of. Instead, they simply believe they are having this experience.

This explanation solves nothing because there is no reason to *believe* one is seeing pink rats if one is not having an *experience* of them. Firstly, since pink rats do not exist, this experience cannot come from the external world. Secondly, someone who is not having an experience of pink rats would not say they are, and, if they did, they would simply be lying. Lies cannot account for all reported cases of delusion. Furthermore, while it is true that one can experience delusions of grandeur or of persecution without these convictions having any foundation in reality, delusions of perception are entirely different because they are *perceived* (in terms of sense-experience, whether real or conjured up by the mind). One does not have a delusion of grandeur in the same way one has a delusion of colour. Delusions of perception are not delusions of belief except in the sense that they may make one believe one sees something in the real world, when in fact it is conjured up in the mind.

CONCLUSION

Returning to colour, I conclude that because there is solid evidence to suggest our perception of colour heavily relies upon neural activity,

18 Austin, "Refutation of Argument from Illusion," 220.

19 Austin, "Refutation of Argument from Illusion," 220.

such perception is conjured up in the mind and is thus a delusion. This leaves us with an uncomfortable decision to make: either colour perception is an outlier and all *other* aspects of normal perception (audition, olfaction, etc.) are direct, or else all perception is in some sense conjured up in the mind. The latter option seems the only acceptable one, on the assumption my premises are correct. If this is the case, direct perception is false. While this does not mean Ayer is correct (I have many qualms with sense-data theory as well), it does mean that Austin has no good way of distinguishing veridical from delusive perceptions or at least of distinguishing their causes. Of course, neither does Ayer, as all he can say is that they are both caused by sense-data, and this fails to be a very illuminating explanation at all. Thus, Ayer must fall back on the premises of sense-data theory, and Austin must reconsider his grounds for distinguishing perceptions of what is real from what is not.

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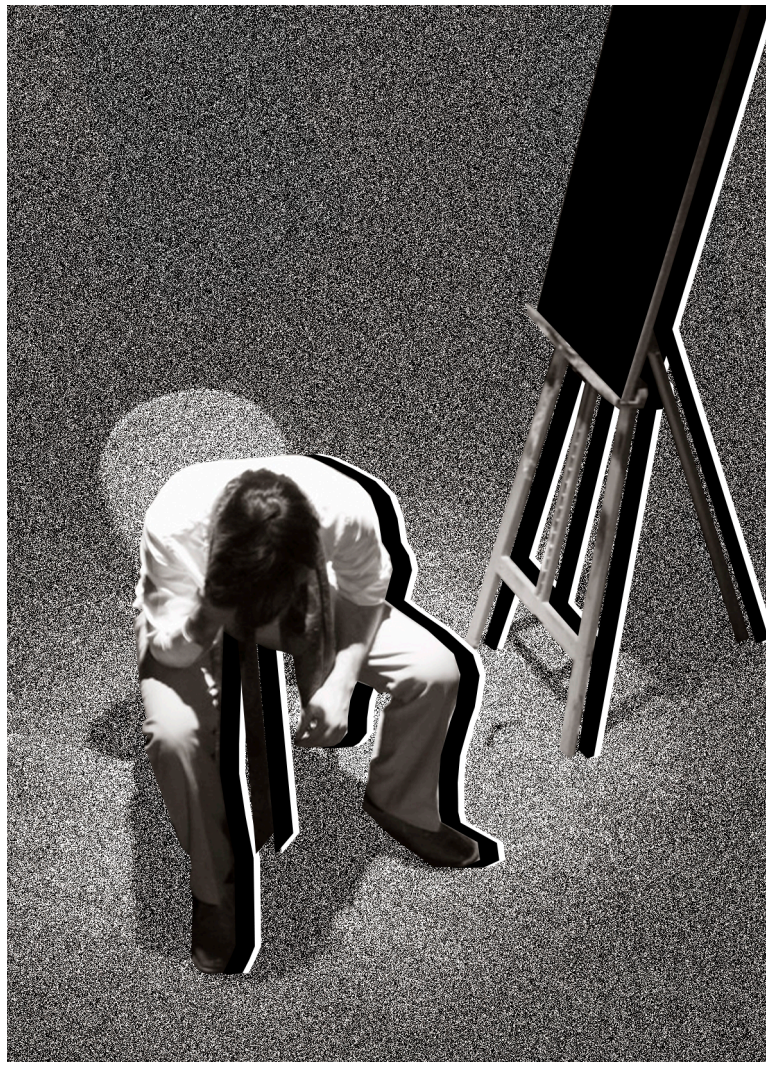
Cameron Yetman is a third-year student at the University of King's College in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he is pursuing a combined honours degree in philosophy and the history of science and technology with a certificate in art history. His academic interests include epistemology, philosophy of language, and ancient physics.

THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTENTIONAL FALLACY:

HOW WE OUGHT TO ADDRESS THE ART OF IMMORAL ARTISTS



ROSANNA SPARACINO

ABSTRACT

I argue that biographical information is akin to other non-aesthetic, social, historical, or political information. As such, artist's biographies are always relevant and important when interpreting art. While the meaning and value of a piece of art is not determined by any single piece of contextual information, neither is its meaning and value ever entirely separated from context. In some cases, however, a piece of art that is technically magnificent may be experienced as repugnant when the artist has committed egregious acts.

I. THE INTENTIONAL FALLACY

In "The Intentional Fallacy," literary theorist William Wimsatt and philosophy Monroe Beardsley discuss the problem of trying to interpret art while relying on authorial intent.1 One commits the intentional fallacy when one attempts to discern the meaning of a piece of art in part or in full by assuming the intent or purpose of the person who created it.[1] Their primary argument is that, when assessing the success of an artistic work, "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for" determining this success.[2] Their anti-intentionalist argument is based on the notion that the artwork "is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it."[3]

They examine three types of evidence used when interpreting artworks: external, internal, and intermediate. Ultimately, Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that one commits the intentional fallacy when they "look to features *external* to the work for help in coming to an understanding of the work."[4] External evidence includes anything private—journals, letters, or reported conversations—that reveals how or why the artist created the work.[5] However, using evidence that is *internal* to the artwork and available to the public—such as formal aesthetic elements—avoids committing the fallacy. Finally, Wimsatt and Beardsley describe *intermediate* evidence as that which concerns "the character of the author, or about private and semi-private meanings attached to words."[6] Wimsatt and Beardsley note that the problem with this third type of evidence is that it is more slippery; use of it only *sometimes* leads one to commit the intentional fallacy. Further, they suggest that it is difficult to distinguish intermediate evidence from

1 William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," *The Sewanee Review* 54, no. 3 (Summer 1946): 468-488.
2 Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," 468.
3 Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," 470.
4 Garry Hagberg, "Artistic Intention and Mental Image," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 22, no. 3 (October 1988): 66, doi:10.2307/3333051. Italics Added.
5 Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," 478.
6 Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," 478.

external evidence. They admit, "the three types of evidence, especially [external] and [intermediate], shade into one another so subtly that it is not always easy to draw a line between examples, and hence arises the difficulty for criticism."[7]

Besides Wimsatt and Beardsley, other philosophers have engaged with the intentional fallacy and the role of the artist's biographical information. Noel Carroll interprets hard anti-intentionalism as a position where "reference to artistic intention and the biography of the artist are never relevant to interpretation of the meaning of artworks."[8] However, in response to Carroll's interpretation of anti-intentionalism, philosopher Kent Wilson clarifies that anti-intentionalists do not necessarily deny the relevance of biographical information to interpretation but instead deny the strict constraint that this information ought to have on interpretation.[9]

I agree with both Wilson and Wimsatt and Beardsley that an artist cannot control the ultimate reading of his art after he has created it. In fact, Wilson demonstrates how untenable intentionalism is with an example where a sexist remark, intended to be a humorous quip, is still interpreted as degrading regardless of what the speaker's intentions are.[10] My own argument embraces the notion that we can interpret art irrespective of what the artist says about his work. I argue that we *ought* to interpret or understand art not as the artist intends or suggests but instead by taking biographical information into account alongside other aesthetic elements to inform our critical understanding of the works. However, unlike what Wimsatt and Beardsley assume about the detachment of the author, I do not agree that one can ever abstract the artist away from the work or, as William H. Gass suggests, forget that someone did it.[11] While the artist may not be a sufficient condition for the work of art—as many other factors contribute to the creation of an artwork—the artist is certainly a necessary condition for its creation. Acknowledging that someone was responsible for creating the work, regardless of what they may have intended, is central to my position.

I argue that biographical information regarding the immorality of an artist's character is important and should color our general understanding, interpretations, or reinterpretations of art. In cases where the immoral character of the artist is known, this information

7 Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," 478.

8 Noel Carroll, "The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Myself," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55, no. 3 (1997): 305, doi:10.2037/431800.

9 Kent Wilson, "Confession of a Weak Anti-Intentionalist: Exposing Myself," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55, no. 3 (July 1997): 310, doi:10.2307/431801.

10 Wilson, "Confession of a Weak Anti-Intentionalist," 310-311.

11 William H. Gass, "The Death of the Author," *Salmagundi*, no. 65 (October 1984): 11, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40547668.

ought to be taken into legitimate critical consideration. Theories of interpretation should not restrict criticism so that it neglects general biographical information. This view provides a morally defensible way to address the art of problematic artists.

II. IMAGINATIVE RESISTANCE

Philosopher Kathleen Stock relies on intentionalism to develop a solution to the problem of enjoying the work of morally problematic artists, such as Woody Allen. Her solution is connected to what philosophers of fiction term "the puzzle of imaginative resistance."[12] This puzzle, she explains, is where readers resist imagining what certain fictional passages ask them to imagine. Stock suggests that we experience imaginative resistance when "we are led to think…that those passages are asking us to engage in…counterfactual imagining."[13] This kind of imagining is "in service of what would or could or might be the case" given that some other imagined scenario were also the case.[14] Some pieces of fiction, as intended by the author, direct us to make and believe certain counterfactual conclusions. However, in Stock's view, had belief in these counterfactual conclusions not been ascribable to *authorial intention*, readers would not experience resistance. As it relates to the problem of Woody Allen and his filmography, Stock concludes that we are not morally compromised in enjoying his work because Allen's problematic values are not endorsed in any of his work, save for *Manhattan*. As she phrases it "there is no serious implication in any of his films, intended to be believed by the viewer, that pedophilia is acceptable or in any way permissible."[15] Therefore, one cannot interpret the films as inviting, through imagining, the endorsement of a counterfactual about the permissibility of pedophilia.

There are two problems with Stock's argument that keep it from being entirely compelling. First, she relies on the notion of artistic intention to suggest that Allen does not endorse pedophilia—a notion that I have already discussed as irrelevant. If Allen had suggested that *Manhattan* was *not* intended to endorse pedophilia, that would not change or undermine arguments, stemming from evidence provided by the film, that *Manhattan* does indeed endorse pedophilia. Second, the problem with her claim that we are "uncompromised" in enjoying Allen's films is that she does not consider that our attention matters and is taken into account when deciding what kind of art gets made,

12 Kathleen Stock, "Imaginative Resistance and the Woody Allen Problem," *Thinking About Fiction* (blog), November 13, 2017, https://www.thinkingaboutfiction.me/blog/2017/11/12/imaginative-resistance-and-the-woody-allen-problem.

13 Stock, "Imaginative Resistance."

14 Stock, "Imaginative Resistance."

15 Stock, "Imaginative Resistance."

curated, or financially supported. If people with the financial power to fund art recognize that we are willing to look at and appreciate art that is made by problematic artists, these artists will continue to enjoy support, financial benefits, and even persist in their moral transgressions without trouble. Therefore, it seems we may be compromised in enjoying the works of Allen, even when his films do not endorse pedophilia. However, Stock's argument that the problem of imaginative resistance (regarding immorality in art) signals an aesthetic flaw in the work suggests that these works may be rejected for moral and aesthetic reasons. Numerous philosophers have engaged with this particular position, and it is worth examining further.

III. DEALING WITH INFECTED ART: OTHER APPROACHES

There are reasons for condemning the art of immoral artists, especially when we believe the work demonstrates, expresses, or is connected to what is known or believed about an artist's immorality or problematic character. Stephanie Patridge argues that the immoral character of the artist "not only legitimately affects our appreciative response...but we might think that they should."[16] Specifically, she suggests that "[i]t seems that sometimes facts about an artist's moral life will affect our interpretation of, attribution of appreciative relevant properties to, and overall evaluation of an artist's work."[17] However, Patridge argues that there is no similar plausible claim to be made when the art is not obviously infected. In other words, if the artwork is uninfected, our appreciative response is unaffected by any revelations about the artist's moral life.

Similar to Patridge, Eva Dadlez posits that there may be ethical grounds for condemning art when the work appears to "endorse a problematic attitude."[18] Moreover, she notes that other philosophers believe that this kind of endorsement undermines the *aesthetic* value of the piece. Specifically, she draws on David Hume's argument in "Of the Standard of Taste" where he claims that we cannot "relish" works where "vicious manners are described without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation."[19] She then notes Carroll's

16 Stephanie Patridge, "Some Thoughts on Art, Appreciation, and Masturbation," *Daily Nous*, last modified November 21, 2017, http://dailynous.com/2017/11/21/philosophers-art-morally-troubling-artists/#Patridge.

17 Patridge, "Some Thoughts on Art."

18 Eva Dadlez, "Flaws, Aesthetic and Moral," *Daily Nous*, last modified November 21, 2017, http://dailynous.com/2017/11/21/philosophers-art-morally-troubling-artists/#Dadlez.

19 Dadlez, "Flaws, Aesthetic and Moral."

assessment of Hume's argument that suggests this incapacity to enjoy morally flawed works indicates an aesthetic flaw.[20] Dadlez and Patridge are right to suggest that when the immorality of an artist manifests in the artwork, those works are potentially aesthetically flawed or at least *less* good. One may find it harder to become immersed in the artwork and can experience, as Stock discusses, imaginative resistance. In fact, one study suggests that there is a strong correlation between one's moral evaluation and aesthetic evaluation.[21] Participants in the study who judged the actions of the artistic subject to be wrong also viewed it as less aesthetically appealing. Further, once one becomes aware of the fact that an artist is immoral, and the artwork directly reminds you of that odious fact, it seems highly unlikely that one could leave that knowledge behind so that our appreciative responses are unaffected.

However, Dadlez and Patridge are unclear about what they mean when they suggest that we have grounds for "condemning" or "rejecting" these works of art. I do not agree with one possible interpretation—that these works should be removed from our institutions—so long as the art demonstrates impressive technical skill or maintains historical importance. As philosophers Matthew Strohl and Mary Beth Willard point out, if one views and appreciates art strictly through a moral lens, this may ruin one's ability to appreciate art, especially since the revealed immorality of our favorite artists seems so common.[22] The person who views art through a moralistic lens is doing so "at the expense of severely impoverishing their aesthetic life."[23] However, it appears correct that our aesthetic evaluations are inevitably altered in light of these immoral revelations. These works are less good in one morally-rooted way, but their overall quality is not entirely diminished. As Beyrs Gaut suggests,

> there are a plurality of aesthetic values, of which the ethical values of artworks are but a single kind. So...a work of art may be judged to be aesthetically good *insofar* as it is beautiful, is formally unified and strongly expressive, but aesthetically bad *insofar* as...it manifests ethically reprehensible attitudes.[24]

Nevertheless, since I am more concerned with how to address the art of problematic artists—regardless if the artwork is infected or not—I

20 Dadlez, "Flaws, Aesthetic and Moral."
21 Shen-yi Liao, "Genre Moderates Morality's Influence on Aesthetics" (unpublished manuscript, University of Puget Sound, 2010), 5.
22 Matthew Strohl and Mary Beth Willard, "Aesthetics, Morality, and a Well-Lived Life," *Daily Nous*, last modified November 21, 2017, http://dailynous.com/2017/11/21/philosophers-art-morally-troubling-artists/#StrohlWillard.
23 Strohl and Willard, "Aesthetics, Morality."
24 Berys Gaut, "The Ethical Criticism of Art," in *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 183.

believe Patridge and Dadlez ultimately do not go far enough with their interpretive theories.

Interestingly, Patridge also considers cases where certain moral violations are so egregious that they could plausibly merit the rejection of the artist's work as a whole. She suggests that this may be the case when it comes to the artworks of Adolf Hitler, but she is not so sure how well this line of argument would apply to the films of Roman Polanski. Her reasoning is that Hitler's racism is more of a settled moral violation than Polanski's rape of a female child.[25] Patridge's attention to Hitler's art is not completely satisfying, since his work does not exhibit high technical ability, nor does it have historic aesthetic importance. The art world's lack of an original Hitler painting is not much of a loss, at least as it compares to the potential loss of a Polanski film. The tension that we feel when we find out that the person who created our favorite work of art is a morally flawed individual is not a tension felt in the case of Hitler's art.

IV. APPLYING MY APPROACH TO ALL ART: OBJECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Again, my view is that our interpretations of art should take knowledge of the artist's immorality into account. If the artwork is infected, our direct aesthetic evaluations of the work are and should be colored, as Patridge and Dadlez suggest. This is true even if the artwork is uninfected, even if the moral failing is not touched on in the art. Audiences and critics have a duty, when the immorality of an artist is revealed, to bring this knowledge with them into the galleries, theaters, or other venues where one may engage with the art of problematic artists.

As I have noted, some anti-intentionalists hold that artworks should be interpreted, appreciated, or engaged with on "pure" aesthetic grounds, separate from any contextual information such as biography. The problem with this is that obtaining a pure reading or interpretation of anything is nearly impossible. We often bring something—an assumption or ideological framework—with us when we engage with cultural artifacts like artworks. Those who think or argue that they are doing a neutral, pure, or objective analysis are choosing to ignore the fact that we enter modes of aesthetic evaluation and artistic interpretation already inculcated with certain *beliefs*, which are often informed by the status quo or dominant cultural ideology. Therefore, ostensibly "pure" aesthetic evaluation and interpretation actually stems from an ideology already embedded in one's belief system, and—embedded so deeply and imperceptibly—it feels like an objective

25 Patridge, "Some Thoughts on Art."

insight or a truth more than just another interpretive belief.

Further, the social, historical, and political context of an artwork is frequently mentioned by art critics and historians. This type of contextual information is seen as valuable, legitimate, valid, and important for developing a fuller, richer interpretive understanding of the art. If these non-aesthetic features are considered legitimate grounds for criticism and interpretive theory, biographical information, especially regarding the immorality of an artist, should be considered legitimate grounds for interpretation as well. Biographical information is just another piece of non-aesthetic, contextual information just like the social, historical, and political context. Perhaps part of the reason why biographical information about artists—especially when it concerns the immorality of male artists whose moral transgression are so often forms of misogynistic behavior—is not considered as critically legitimate as other non-aesthetic features has to do with the male dominance in the field of art criticism and art in general. For one, recognition of this male dominance in the art world reveals that *the* viewpoint of what counts as legitimate criticism is ultimately a male viewpoint. Further, given this dominant male viewpoint in conjunction with the male-saturated art world, there are structural incentives to put forth non-provocational criticism that does not endanger the status of prominent male artists. Ultimately, the primarily male critics and aesthetic theorists wish—implicitly or explicitly, intentionally or unintentionally—to protect the group of largely male artists. If we acknowledge biographical information concerning the immorality of male artists, and consider this information right alongside any other aesthetic interpretation of art, the status and reputation of those male artists is seriously threatened. As a result, my approach to the problem of dealing with the art of immoral artist's is likewise a threat to the dominance and privilege of male artists.

In fact, one major and potentially threatening implication to my approach is that it helps to reshape the culture around artists and what is considered legitimate criticism. On my approach, we need not tolerate or accept that problematic artists are the norm. Nor need we believe that good art comes as the expense of being a bad person. My approach has higher demands for artists and their character by signaling that their moral transgressions are relevant and unacceptable. Further my approach urges the development and embracing of critical theories that acknowledge biographical information as not just *sometimes* relevant but rather as always relevant and always important. Ultimately, my approach punishes the artist, not the patron. The interpretations that result from my approach avoid the "pure" aesthetic analysis which allows for the artist's skills or "genius" to override and erase his moral abuses. In other words, artists are no longer glorified persons who can have their reputations protected or elevated by their artistry. However,

the audience or patrons get to "keep" or engage with the art while acknowledging the problematic nature of the person who created the work. My approach further punishes the problematic artist by encouraging them to recognize that our knowledge of their immoral abuses denies them the privilege of a "pure" reading of their work. This is precisely what photographer Nicholas Nixon regretfully recognized when he was accused of sexual misconduct by several of his students. He asked to have his photography exhibition taken down, claiming "I believe it is impossible for these photographs to be viewed on their own merits any longer."[26] Under my approach, this is what artists must contend with when making moral decisions in their private and public lives.

26 Katharine Q. Seelye, "Boston Museum Closes Nicholas Nixon Photography Show Early," *New York Times*, last modified April 12, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/arts/design/ica-boston-closes-nicholas-nixon-photography-show.html.

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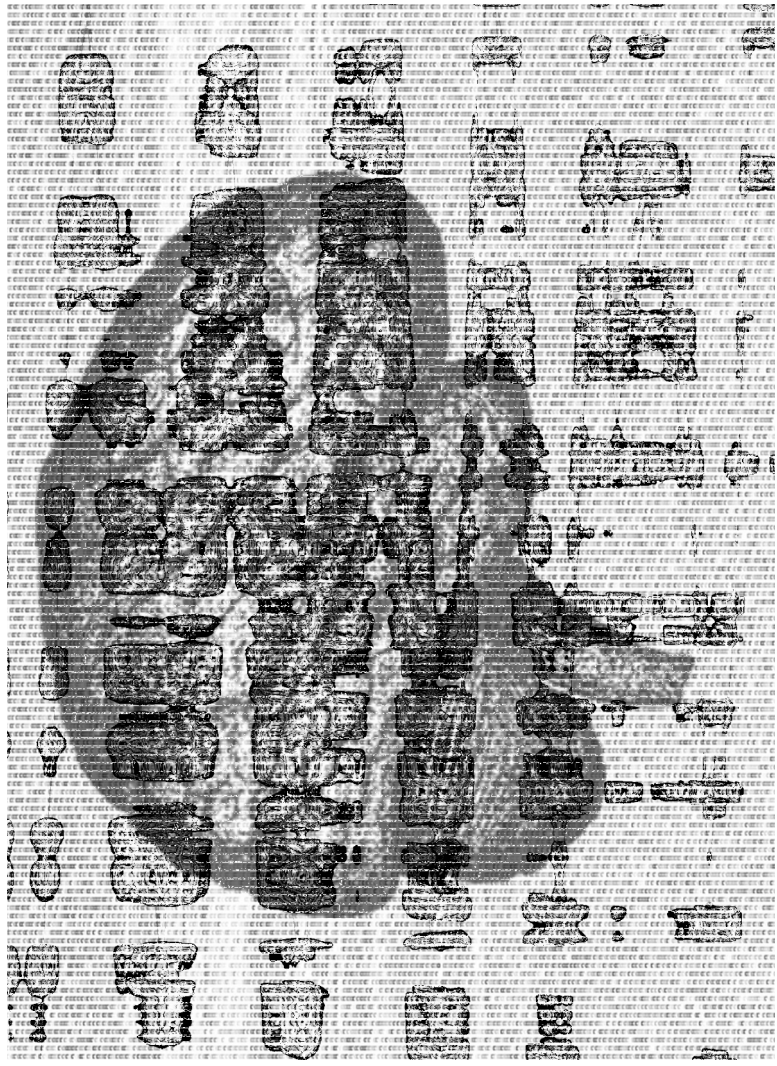
PROBLEMS WITH THE "PROBLEMS" WITH PSYCHOPHYSICAL CAUSATION



NOAH McKAY

ABSTRACT

In this essay, I defend a mind-body dualism, according to which human minds are immaterial substances that exercise non-redundant causal powers over bodies, against the notorious problem of psychophysical causation. I explicate and reply to three formulations of the problem: (i) the claim that, on dualism, psychophysical causation is inconsistent with physical causal closure, (ii) the claim that psychophysical causation on the dualist view is intolerably mysterious, and (iii) Jaegwon Kim's claim that dualism fails to account for causal pairings. Ultimately, I conclude that these objections fail and that dualist interactionism is no more problematic or mysterious than physical causation.

I. INTRODUCTION: REVIVING DESCARTES'S DEAD HORSE

In 1643, René Descartes, that venerated defender of the immaterial soul, received a letter from Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, demanding that he explain "how the human soul can determine the movement of the animal spirits in the body so as to perform voluntary acts—being as it is merely a conscious substance."[1] This question, and others like it, have proven notoriously problematic for proponents of dualist interactionism. Psychophysical causation, causation of physical events by mental events, within a substance-dualist framework is widely thought to be inexplicable, mysterious, and inconsistent with a properly scientific view of the world, and this is taken to be a serious—indeed, a lethal—defect in the Cartesian account. In Jaegwon Kim's words, Cartesianism "founders on the rock of mental causation."[2] In this essay, I will respond to various formulations of the problem of psychophysical causation from a dualist perspective. The dualism I represent is a broadly Cartesian substance-dualist interactionism (hereafter simply "dualism") according to which (i) human minds are immaterial, non-spatial, non-composite substances, (ii) mental properties and events are *irreducibly* mental—that is, they are not identical with, nor are they in any way reducible to, physical properties or events—and (iii) that some physical events are caused by mental, rather than physical, events (and vice-versa)—in sum, the archaic and very unfashionable position that the human person is, in Gilbert Ryle's deliberately abusive terminology, a "Ghost in [a] Machine."[3] I do not

1 David Robb and John Heil, "Mental Causation," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified October 10, 2018, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mental-causation/.

2 Jaegwon Kim, "The Nonreductivist's Troubles with Mental Causation," in *Supervenience and Mind: Selected Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 339.

3 Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1949), 16.

pretend that psychophysical causation is the only problem with which dualism so characterized must grapple, nor do I intend to offer positive argumentation for dualism in this essay. I wish simply to remove what is probably the most serious and definitely the historically predominant obstacle to those considering dualism.

II. THREE FORMULATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

In this section, I will present explanations of and responses to three different versions of the problem of psychophysical causation: (i) the claim that, on dualism, psychophysical causation is inconsistent with physical causal closure (the "Closure Problem"); (ii) the claim that psychophysical causation on the dualist view is intolerably mysterious (the "Mystery Problem"); and (iii) Jaegwon Kim's contention that dualism fails to account for causal pairings (the "Pairing Problem.")

A. THE CLOSURE PROBLEM

First, many philosophers find dualism problematic in that it conflicts with the principle of the causal closure of the physical world. This principle is formulated by Jaegwon Kim:

> *The causal closure of the physical domain*: If a physical event has a cause at *t,* then it has a physical cause at *t.*[4]

Causal closure boils down to the claim that any physical event can be explained solely in terms of other physical events. If this is true, it poses a problem for the dualist, for if some physical event, E, has a sufficient mental cause, M, at some time, *t* (which is indeed often true if dualism is true,) then E also has a sufficient physical cause, P, at *t*. However, this means that E has more than one sufficient cause; that is, E is *causally overdetermined*. If we reject the possibility of genuine causal overdetermination—as nearly all philosophers of mind do as two events cannot both be *the* cause of something, since that would be redundant—this means that only one of either P or M caused E. Because causal closure dictates that E must have a physical cause, P must win out over M. This means that M is not causally efficacious in bringing about E; indeed, if causal closure is true (and causal overdetermination is rejected), no mental event *ever* causes *any* physical event to occur.

The heart of the problem here is obvious: the causal closure principle constitutes a flat denial of the dualist's thesis that non-

This description should be taken to exclude the "non-reductive" materialist's account of mental properties and events.

4 Jaegwon Kim, *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 15.

redundant, two-way causation occurs between the physical and mental domains. Causal closure is generally taken as an *a priori* premise in physicalist literature, and if it is so taken in the above argument, then the Closure Problem is question-begging: it presupposes the falsity of dualism from step one.

Can the anti-dualist present some *argument* for causal closure? Although such arguments are seldom offered, they do exist and are typically built upon empirical considerations.[5] Andrew Melnyk, for instance, offers an enumerative-inductive argument for causal closure from the prior success of science in uncovering purely physical causes for previously unexplained phenomena.[6] If science hasn't met with immaterial causes in past cases, it probably will not meet with them in future cases—or so the argument goes. This case for causal closure seems to me to be very weak; the fact that science has, so far, uncovered purely physical explanations for an impressive number of physical phenomena does not mean that it will uncover such explanations for *all* physical phenomena. Such extrapolation-with-abandon on the part of the physicalist seems to me to be entirely unjustified and indeed nearly as question-begging as the bare assertion of causal closure. This is especially so since the philosophical literature abounds with positive arguments for dualism; dualists have offered *warrant* for belief in irreducibly mental events that causally influence the physical world and so have offered warrant for believing that future scientific research will *not* uncover exhaustive, purely physical causal explanations for all physical events. John Foster argues that, given the relative meagerness of scientists' understanding of brain function, and given pre-scientific considerations offered in support of dualism, the sort of evidence that Melnyk appeals to "simply does not support the conclusion that the brain functions in a way which could be wholly accounted for (even from a God's-eye view) on the basis of its physical character and physical laws."[7]

Furthermore, I think we ought to be skeptical of claims made by the likes of Melnyk that science is marching forward in inexorable progress against the immaterial. Many reputable theistic—and even non-theistic—philosophers and scientists in the last few decades have drawn attention to phenomena in cosmology, microbiology, and genetics which appear to defy naturalistic explanation and which seem to accord better with what Richard Swinburne terms *personal*

5 Justin Tiehen, "Explaining Causal Closure," *Philosophical Studies : An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 172, no. 9 (2015): 2418, doi:10.1007/s11098-014-0418-5.

6 Andrew Melnyk, *A Physicalist Manifesto; Thoroughly Modern Materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 289-90.

7 John Foster, *The Immaterial Self: A Defence of the Cartesian Dualist Conception of the Mind* (London: Routledge, 200), 105.

explanation: the fine-tuning of physical constants and quantities in the universe for the existence of conscious, interactive life, the information content of DNA sequences, and the enormous probabilistic difficulties facing naturalistic accounts of the origin of life, to name a few.[8] Whatever our estimation of theism, and whether or not we think that these phenomena are ultimately naturally explicable, we ought at least to admit that science is having a bit of a *hard time* subsuming these sorts of phenomena under purely physical causal explanations. Not only does Melnyk's enumerative-inductive inference to causal closure reach far beyond what his premise justifies, but this premise itself is open to serious question. The Closure Problem, therefore, seems to me to be hopelessly weak at best and question-begging at worst.

It is worth noting at this point that some philosophers have formulated the problem of psychophysical causation in terms of energy conservation, arguing that dualistic psychophysical causation would "create" new energy in the human brain, thereby violating fundamental physical laws.[9] This formulation of the problem is, I submit, little more than a narrowing of the Closure Problem, since conservation laws apply only to causally closed systems, and so any anti-dualist appealing to conservation laws must beg the question by presupposing causal closure. This is certainly not the only defect in these arguments (Robin Collins has discussed others), but it is decisive in my view.[10]

B. THE MYSTERY PROBLEM

Second, the problem of psychophysical causation might be put as the objection that psychophysical causation on dualism is somehow *mysterious* to an intolerable degree; this is probably the most prevalent version of the problem in the philosophical literature. I will address three ways in which the "Mystery Problem" might be formulated: first, it might be formulated as the objection that dualists are unable to provide an adequate *mechanism* for psychophysical causation; second, it

8 Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 35-38. See Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Antony Flew and Roy Abraham Varghese, *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York: HarperOne, 2007); and Stephen Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design* (New York: HarperOne, 2009) for interesting discussions of these problems by credentialed philosophers.

9 Howard Robinson, "Dualism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* last modified February 29, 2016, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism/.

10 See Robbin Collins, "Modern Physics and the Energy-Conservation Objection to Mind-Body Dualism," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (Jan. 2008): 31-42. Collins argues that energy conservation laws are not universally generalizable, since they do not apply in General Relativity theory, and that quantum mechanics sets a precedent for causal interaction without energy transfer.

might be formulated as the objection that dualism posits unintelligible causal relations between radically different kinds of substances; third, it might be put as the objection that dualist psychophysical causation is exceedingly *strange* and wholly *unfamiliar* to us, and should therefore be eliminated in favor of more familiar (i.e. physical) causes.

The first instance of the Mystery Problem objects that no mechanism for dualist psychophysical causation is available—that is, we cannot think of *how* mental events might cause physical events. This objection fails, for no matter what account of causation the anti-dualist espouses, he must posit a great number of instances of causation for which no mechanism can be provided, for which no *how* can be given. For he must inevitably admit *immediate* causation at some level. Consider a commonplace example of physical causation: the throwing of a baseball causing the shattering of a window. It will be helpful, both for clarity and for precision, to represent this event by the following finite series:

$$P_1 \rightarrow P_2 \rightarrow P_3 \ldots P_{n-1} \rightarrow P_n$$

In this series, each term stands for a physical event, and "→" stands for "causes." The first term, P_1, stands for the throwing of the baseball, and the last term, P_n, stands for the shattering of the window. The terms in between stand for all of the events in the causal chain between P_1 and P_n—for instance, the flying of the baseball through the air, the contact of the baseball with the glass, etc.[11] Presumably, providing a mechanism by which P_1 causes P_n consists of identifying and describing the intervening events between P_1 and P_n in the above series. In other words, to provide a mechanism is to describe precisely *what happened* between P_1 and P_n. (Allegedly, this is necessary to give an explanation for how P_1 caused P_n.) I do not know how else one might construe "mechanism" in this objection; it cannot refer to a literal mechanical, chemical, or micro-physical apparatus since many instances of physical causation—such as a baseball's shattering of a window—do not involve any mediating apparatus. Furthermore, by describing the intervening events between P_1 and P_n, we would describe the operation of any apparatus involved.

Now, if the above series is finite, then the causal relation (represented by "→") between any one of the events in the series and the event directly following it must be *immediate*; that is, there must be *no mechanism* by which one event causes the next, since there are no intervening events between them. *Nothing happens* between, say, P_1 and P_2. There is no *how*. So the principle behind this version of the Mystery Problem applies equally to purely physical causation—indeed,

11 These events can be taken as physical events of any sort, as complex or as basic, as enduring or as fleeting, as you like; my argument works at any level of reduction.

to causation of *any* kind. In Foster's words, "presumably the notion of direct causation is not as such problematic: indeed, whenever causation operates, there has to be *some* direct causation."[12] The dualist is free to say that, when a mental event causes a physical event, the last mental event in the causal series causes the first physical event in the series *immediately*, without any intervening causes; only a "→" separates them. And, no charge can be brought against them that cannot also be brought against one who claims that baseballs shatter windows.

But what if the number of events in the causal series is *infinite* such that, for any two events in the series, there is always at least one intervening event between them? While this proposal might eliminate immediate causation, it ultimately renders provision of a mechanism for *any* instance of causation impossible, because it is impossible to enumerate and describe each of the infinitely many intervening events between two events in the series. We might try to solve this by subsuming every intervening event between P_1 and P_n under a single term, P_S, so that all of the infinitely many events between them are summarized as "the baseball flew through the air and collided with the window." However, the same problem arises here as with a finite series: no mechanism has been provided by which P_1 caused P_S or by which P_S caused P_n. Thus, the positing of infinite causal series does nothing to strengthen the objection.

Second, the Mystery Problem might be taken as the charge that dualist psychophysical causation is implausible in that it posits causal relations between two fundamentally different kinds of things, things which, in Howard Robinson's word, "lack that communality necessary for interaction."[13] The assumption here is that the mind, in order to interact causally with physical objects, must share a certain set of characteristics with those objects, or that it must belong to the same ontological "realm." In response, the dualist might ask: why? Why think that causation could not occur between two things with radically different characteristics or belonging to different ontological categories? The anti-dualist might point out that familiar cases of causal interaction between physical objects would be impossible unless all of the objects in question shared certain properties, such as spatial location and extension. And since the dualist's immaterial ego does not share these properties, this excludes it from causal interactions with physical things. However, it is hard to see how this follows: after all, the dualist does not assert that psychophysical causation is anything like physical-to-physical causation. If the anti-dualist's claim is that immaterial minds cannot stand in the same sorts of causal relations in which physical things stand to one another (or in which mental events stand to one another), his

12 Foster, *The Immaterial Self*, 86.
13 Robinson, "Dualism."

claim is not very interesting; the dualist does not postulate that the causal relations between minds and bodies are of this sort. Furthermore, I do not see how an argument could be made that there *cannot be* any other sorts of causal relations; there is just no good reason to accept the claim that fundamentally different things cannot interact. In Kim's estimation, this version of the Mystery Problem "is incomplete and unsatisfying. As it stands, it is not much of an argument; rather, it only expresses a vague, inchoate dissatisfaction."[14] As it turns out, this objection begs the question against the dualist's thesis that causal relations do, in fact, bridge ontological realms.

Third, the Mystery Problem might be put as the objection that psychophysical causation is exceedingly *strange* or *unfamiliar* to us relative to physical-to-physical causation and so ought to be jettisoned in favor of the latter. It might be argued that physical causation is the most credible explanatory resource we have, since we are constantly surrounded by it; we are much better acquainted with it than with any ghostly causal powers that the dualist might posit. So, we ought to eliminate such unfamiliar causes in favor of purely physical ones whenever possible—which turns out to be always. The Mystery Problem in this form is question-begging in two ways: first, it begs the question against the dualist's claim that psychophysical causation is explanatorily indispensable; second, if dualism is true, every one of us is intimately acquainted with psychophysical causation, since we engage in it moment-by-moment. Indeed, if dualism is true, then we are arguably more familiar with psychophysical causation than we are with physical causation; there is nothing unfamiliar or mysterious about it. The anti-dualist could only deny this by presupposing dualism to be false.

The Mystery Problem is bankrupt. In fact, it is a pseudo-problem; that is, the dualist need not worry about solving it, because there is not even a problem to solve. Mental-to-physical causation on dualism is no more mysterious, implausible, or inexplicable than physical-to-physical causation.

C. THE PAIRING PROBLEM

In his book, *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*, Jaegwon Kim offers a version of the problem of psychophysical causation that he calls the "Pairing Problem:"

> Let us begin with a simple example of physical causation: two guns, A and B, are simultaneously fired, and this results in the simultaneous death of two persons, Adam and Bob. What makes it the case that the firing of A caused Adam's death and the firing of B caused Bob's death, and not the

14 Kim, *Physicalism*, 74.

> other way around? What are the principles that underlie the correct and incorrect *pairings* of cause and effect in a situation like this?[15]

Kim's answer: A stood in certain *spatial* relations to Adam at the moment it was fired that B did not, such that the bullet fired from A rather than from B killed Adam, and likewise for B and Bob. Kim goes on to argue that, since souls are not located in space, the dualist cannot give a similar explanation of why certain souls cause physical events in certain bodies, rather than others. After all, we can imagine a scenario in which two souls in qualitatively identical states cause qualitatively identical physical events in qualitatively identical bodies. Which soul caused which event in which body? Since neither soul is in space, the dualist cannot appeal to spatial relations to answer this question. In order to account for the pairings, the dualist needs some relation, R, analogous to a spatial relation, in which each soul stands to only one body. According to Kim, they do not have one.[16] As it turns out, Kim intends this as a more rigorous formulation of the third version of the Mystery Problem above; since souls are dissimilar to physical things in that they are non-spatial, they cannot interact with them.

The pairing problem is open to multiple objections (some of which Foster has enumerated), but I will focus on what I take to the most lethal: I contend that the dualist may properly take R to be a *basic* relation, that is, a relation that cannot be analyzed or explained in terms of other relations, and so Kim's demand for a description or an analysis of such a relation from the dualist is unreasonable.[17] When the physicalist asks, "How is it that certain bodies are united with certain minds and not with others?" the dualist may justifiably answer, "They just *are*." They need go no further than saying that one soul in the above example does, in fact, stand in some relation R to one body in which the other soul does not stand to that body that accounts for the relevant pairing.

Kim objects to this answer: "For it concedes that the notion of 'union' of a mind and a body, and hence the notion of a person, is unintelligible. For what is it for a wholly immaterial thing to be 'united' or 'joined' with a material body with a specific location in space? The word 'united' merely gives a name to a mystery rather than clarifying it."[18] This is false; to admit that R is *unanalyzable* is not to admit that it is unintelligible. Even if the dualist cannot analyze R in terms of other more basic relations, this is unproblematic, for neither can this

15 Kim, *Physicalism*, 78-79.
16 Kim, *Physicalism*, 79-80.
17 See Foster, *The Immaterial Self*, 87-91. Foster contends that it is conceivable that indeterministic physical laws might result in a similar pairing problem for physical causation, and so the physicalist faces the same difficulty.
18 Kim, *Physicalism*, 78.

be done, ultimately, with the spatial relations that determine physical causal pairings. For instance, if we start with *spatial contiguity* as our candidate for this relation, we can analyze it in terms of distance and direction, and perhaps these can be analyzed in terms of more basic spatial relations. But if contiguity is to be defined non-circularly, Kim's analysis must eventually terminate in some *basic* spatial relation R★ that is unanalyzable in terms of other relations, just as R for the dualist is unanalyzable.[19] To put it another way, the dualist might ask, "How is it that bullet B stands in the relation of spatial contiguity to Bob, but A does not?" to which Kim might answer, "Because bullet B stands in such-and-such more basic spatial relations to Bob, which bullet A does not." However, Kim cannot keep this up forever. The dualist can ask the same question about these more basic relations, and eventually Kim will have to answer, "It just *does*."

This does not mean, of course, that R★, whatever it is, is unintelligible: Kim may clarify R★ by pointing to examples in the physical world where R★ is exemplified, such as the rifle example. In the same way, the dualist may point to examples in which R is exemplified: each of us is one such example. Further, he can make intelligible claims about R; namely, that it is the relation in which one's mind stands to one's body such that the former is able to cause changes in the latter and vice-versa. A similar claim could be made about R★. So, Kim is in the same boat as the dualist: physical causal pairings are ultimately determined by unanalyzable spatial relations that can only be clarified by example. The pairing problem, then, turns out to be another pseudo-problem, as it ascribes unintelligibility to unanalyzable relations, when in fact such relations can be perfectly intelligible and must be countenanced by any account of causation, including Kim's.

CONCLUSION

The above formulations of the problem of psychophysical causation are entirely unsuccessful as refutations of dualism. Those of them that are not question-begging can be applied with equal force against any account of physical causation. Cartesianism has not foundered on the rocks just yet; if it is to run aground, it must be elsewhere.

19 It is technically untrue that such an analysis *must* terminate in an unanalyzable spatial relation: R* might be analyzed in terms of causal relations. That is, an object A might be said to stand in R* to an object B iff A stands in such-and-such causal relations to B. But if R* is analyzed in terms of causal relations, it cannot serve to determine causal pairings, since it presupposes them.

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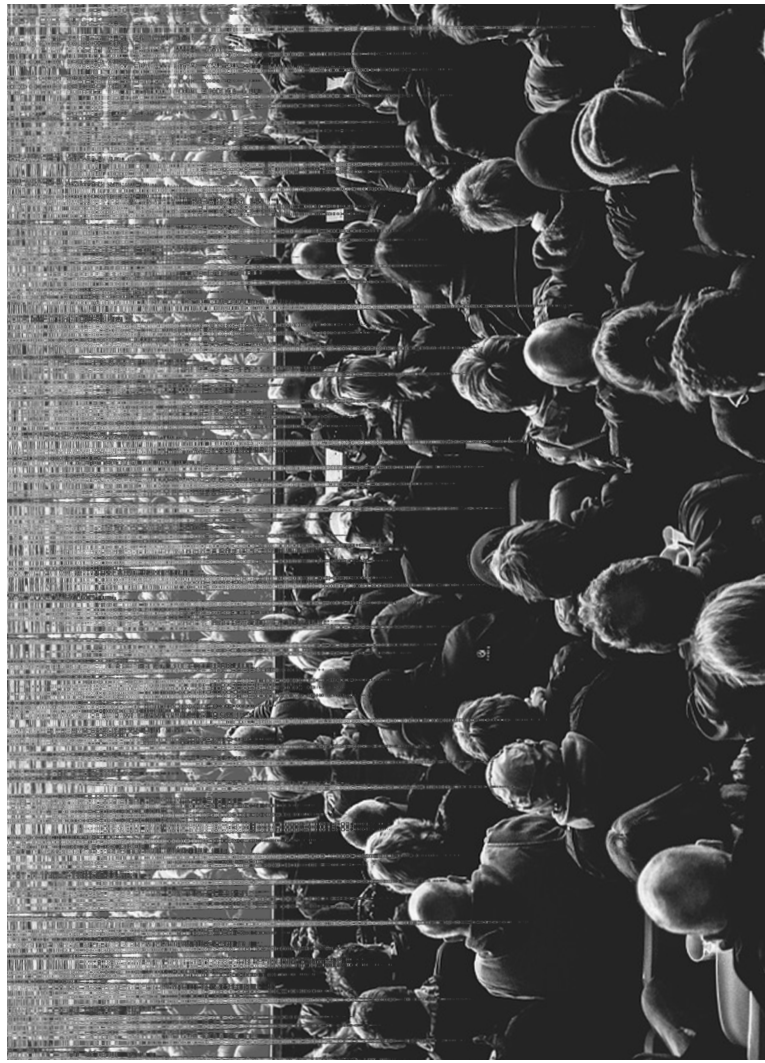
MARY DOES NOT LEARN ANYTHING NEW:

APPLYING KIM'S CRITIQUE OF MENTAL CAUSATION TO THE KNOWLEDGE ARGUMENT AND THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS



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ABSTRACT

Within the discourse surrounding mind-body interaction, mental causation is intimately associated with non-reductive physicalism. However, such a theory holds two opposing views: that all causal properties and relations can be explicated by physics and that special sciences have an explanatory role. Jaegwon Kim attempts to deconstruct this problematic contradiction by arguing that it is untenable for non-reductive physicalists to explain human behavior by appeal to mental properties. In combination, Kim's critique of mental causation and the phenomenal concept strategy serves as an effectual response to the anti-physicalist stance enclosed within the Knowledge Argument and the Zombie Thought Experiment.

The viability of mental causation in the discourse of mind-body interaction is an assumed tenet in psychology. This is also intimately associated with non-reductive physicalism, which holds that though everything can be explained via reduction to physics, there are multiple methods of describing physical reality. Therefore, various areas of the specials sciences—such as psychology, economics, and biology—are more abstract and have the capacity to satisfy certain descriptive and explanatory interests that fundamental physics cannot.[1] This approach is relevant to the philosophical discussions surrounding the Knowledge Argument and the significance of zombies. The Knowledge Argument, as presented by Frank Jackson, claims that conscious experience necessitates non-physical properties.[2] First put forth by David Chalmers, the Zombie Thought Experiment was constructed to elucidate issues concerning the relationship between consciousness and the physical world.[3]

Nevertheless, non-reductive physicalism seems to hold two opposing views: that all causal properties and relations can be explicated by physics and that special sciences have an explanatory role. Jaegwon Kim attempts to deconstruct this problematic contradiction by arguing that it is untenable for non-reductive physicalists to explain human behavior by appeal to mental properties. This paper is divided into three sections: Section I will discuss the principles of externalism, causal closure, and explanatory exclusion and how they pose problems for mental causation within a physicalist framework—they will also be applied to the Knowledge Argument; Section II will propose and critically appraise various rebuttals to the exclusion argument; Section III will attempt to apply Kim's reasoning to the Zombie Thought Experiment.

1 William Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 129.

2 Martina Nida-Rümelin, "Qualia: The Knowledge Argument," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified November 23, 2009, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/qualia-knowledge/.

3 Robert Kirk, "Zombies," *The Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified March 16, 2015, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/zombies/.

I.

Kim begins his argument with the following question: through what mechanism or process does a mental event manage to initiate, or insert itself into, a causal chain of physical events?[4] Such an inquiry stems from the ambiguity surrounding how mental states could directly influence neurophysical mechanisms. This intermingling of categorically different substances—as hypothesized by Descartes—would imply that the nonphysical mind must be able to affect the conditions of the physical mind; nevertheless, this interaction has not been adequately clarified.[5]

Conversely, one of the most discussed arguments against physicalism—the Knowledge Argument—is predicated upon the notion that complete physical knowledge of a conscious entity would not also encompass the experience of being that entity. Frank Jackson presents this with a thought experiment about a brilliant scientist named Mary:

1. Mary understands all the neurophysical information regarding human color vision before her release from a monochrome environment.
2. However, before her release, there is some information that she lacks concerning the subjective experience of color.
3. Therefore, not all information is physical information.[6]

The purported conclusion derived from this example is that there are certain truths regarding the subjective experience, or qualia, of seeing red that escapes the neurophysical one; thus, physicalism is incomplete.

As a thesis about semantic content, externalism serves as a significant challenge to the utilization of mental causation within a physicalist framework to explain behavior. Accordingly, the process of individuating mental states requires consideration of the physical environment and the linguistic standards of one's surrounding community.[7] Thus, the content of intentional states is extrinsic.[8] This is problematic in that causation is intuitively understood to involve intrinsic features. Consequently, the externalist ways of characterizing the content of mental states makes them unsuitable for causal involvement.[9] When contextualized within psychology,

4 Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind* (Westview Press, 1996), 439.
5 Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 443.
6 Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia," in *Mind and Cognition: An Anthology*, ed. William G. Lycan and Jesse J. Prinz (MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 659.
7 Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning'," *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 7 (1975): 131-193.
8 Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 445.
9 Julie Yoo, "Mental Causation," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified 2006, https://www.iep.utm.edu/mental-c/#SH3bii.

the contents of beliefs, desires, and other propositional attitudes have no causal relevance; only the syntax is of significance.[10] Kim illustrates this by presenting a classic example: Putnam's Twin-Earth Thought Experiment. Accordingly, an Earthling refers to H_2O upon utterance of "water" whereas a Twin-Earthling refers to XYZ—a superficially identical yet compositionally different substance—upon the same utterance. They behave in an identical fashion; however, when contemplating ideas about what they both call "water," they are thinking about distinct things. The culminating conclusion is that the meanings of words are not holistically psychological—the content of mental states does not completely depend on intrinsic properties.[11] Therefore, mental states—which depend on extrinsic properties—lack causal relevance. With regards to Jackson's thought experiment, it can be argued that the qualia from experiencing the various colors does not have any residual effect on Mary's behavior.

Another argument against mental causation within a physicalist framework revolves around the causal closure of the physical domain. Cartesian interactionism postulates that both mental and physical events can occur as links within the same causal chain. To the contrary, physicalism is committed to the proposition that the only causes are physical causes; everything can be exhaustively described and explained by physics.[12] Kim asserts that a physicalist must reject the mental realm as an ontological equal of the physical realm. Therefore, mental causation must be ruled out.[13] Nonetheless, non-reductive physicalists maintain that certain systems can have irreducible mental properties. Such a position is at odds with physicalism and is thus unsustainable.

The problem of explanatory exclusion emerges from the non-reductive physicalist view that mental causes are distinct from physical causes. Instantiations of mental properties are associated with particular physical properties. These physical properties can be seamlessly integrated within a causal chain that produces behavioral effects; however, this seems to make mental properties to be causally stagnant and thus "excluded" from causal explanation.[14] Moreover, if both the mental property and the physical property are said to be causal, a case of overdetermination results.[15] This seems to contravene the "maxim of explanatory simplification," which seeks to explain behavior

10 Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 452.
11 Putnam, "Meaning of 'Meaning'."
12 William Jaworski, "Mental Causation from the Top-Down," *Erkenntnis*, 65, no. 2 (2006): 68.
13 Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 453.
14 John Heil and David Robb, "Mental Causation," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified October 10, 2018, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/mental-causation/.
15 Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 455.

with the fewest posited premises.[16] Additionally, it is unclear how a certain mental state can catalyze a series of neurophysical mechanisms. This problem can be best articulated by the following set of jointly inconsistent claims:

1. Actions have mental causes.
2. Actions have physical causes.
3. Mental causes and physical causes are distinct.
4. An action does not have more than one cause.[17]

Claims 1 through 3 indicate that actions can have multiple causes, whereas Claim 4 suggests that they do not. Consequently, for a non-reductive physicalist, denunciation of one of the claims is needed to maintain argumentative coherence; however, this is difficult. Rejecting the first claim would be problematic for a non-reductive physicalist: to deny the existence of mental events or their causal influence seems to contradict the theory's basic premises. Rejecting the second claim would be at odds with non-reductivists' commitment to physicalism.[18] Rejecting the third claim would contradict non-reductivists' commitment to anti-reductivism.[19] Rejecting the fourth claim insinuates that events can be causally overdetermined. According to Kim, either mental events are realized by, or supervene on, physical events; nevertheless, in both cases, mental events require physical events to exist and therefore both cannot provide independent and fully satisfactory causes for actions.[20]

These components of Kim's argument are relevant to discussions surrounding the Knowledge Argument. By function of the principles of externalism, causal closure, and explanatory exclusion, the qualia associated with seeing color for the first time does not confer novel information regarding the neurophysical facts of human vision. The content of the derived qualia lacks causal significance.

Kim discusses various models that could explicate the role of mental events.[21] The epiphenomenalist model asserts that mental states are mere byproducts of neurophysical states and lack any causal role. The model of supervenient causation views mental states as a potential cause due to its supervenience on neurophysical states. The reductionist model—which Kim considers to be the most efficacious and simple—identifies mental states with neurophysical states, which function as the only stimulus for other physical states.

16 Jaegwon Kim, "Mechanism, Purpose, and Explanatory Exclusion," *Philosophical Perspectives* 3 (1989): 93.
17 Jaworski, "Mental Causation from the Top-Down," 170.
18 Jaworski, "Mental Causation from the Top-Down," 171.
19 Jaworski, "Mental Causation from the Top-Down," 129.
20 Jaworski, "Mental Causation from the Top-Down," 172.
21 Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 455.

II.

Though the contentions proposed by Kim are challenging for non-reductive physicalism, there are various responses.

One potential reply to the exclusion argument falls within the designation "autonomy solutions." As previously discussed, Kim argues that non-reductive physicalism is guilty of pitting higher-level mental properties against their corresponding lower-level neurophysical properties in determining causation.[22] However, according to some, this description is reductionist and deceptive; rather, psychological justifications—and others in the special sciences—are independent of physical explanations in that they refer to their own collection of rules and abstract away from the details of physical explanations.[23] Subsequently, exclusion of mental causation can be prevented within a physicalist framework; both descriptions can coexist.

This approach is best illustrated by the dual explanandum strategy. Accordingly, purely physical explanations of behavior are not capable of satisfying certain explanatory interests: why Syria is engulfed in conflict cannot be explained via the interaction of molecules and atoms. In his argumentation, Kim produces a paradox of psychological explanation: he claims that psychological explanations—which refer to mental states—lack objective status and are excluded by neurophysical explanations, which, in turn, are incapable of fulfilling explanatory interests that fall within the domain of psychological explanations.[24] An unappealing ultimatum results: either neurophysical statements—which can elucidate objective relations but cannot answer certain special questions—or psychological statements—which can answer certain special questions but cannot describe objective relations—are accepted. In contrast, the dual explanandum strategy revolves around the notion that causation cannot be extricated from the explanatory schemes in which it functions.[25] It argues that the causal relations that emerge from psychological explanations and neurophysical explanations serve different purposes; they form mutually exclusive and autonomous causal lines that are relevant to different properties of the end effect.[26] Neurophysical explanations can describe the interaction of atoms, whereas psychological explanations can clarify "the successful or unsuccessful interaction of organisms with their natural, historical and cultural environment."[27]

22 Heil and Robb, "Mental Causation."
23 Frank Jackson, "Mental Causation," *Mind* 105, no. 419 (1996): 386.
24 Karsten R. Stueber, "Mental Causation and the Paradoxes of Explanation," *Philosophical Studies* 122, no. 3 (2005): 256.
25 Yoo, "Mental Causation."
26 Heil and Robb, "Mental Causation."
27 Stueber, "Mental Causation and the Paradoxes of Explanation," 256.

This separation can be described by differentiating "triggering" and "structuring" causes. The former refers to the mechanism by which a particular effect is induced and lies within the purview of neurophysical explanations; the latter refers to the motive for why a particular effect is induced and lies within the purview of psychological explanations.[28] For example, the thermostat activates the furnace due to a low external temperature (triggering), but the organization of the circuitry forms the pre-conditions (structuring) that enable the low temperature to exert its effect.[29] With respect to the human mind, the external conditions that galvanize bodily behavior are mediated by the agent's learning history.[30]

Nonetheless, it has been argued that this strategy violates the causal closure of the physical domain. By claiming that certain aspects of the final effect can be attributed to causes that are irreducibly mental, the proposition of physicalism is infringed.[31] If this is not the case, then the problem of exclusion persists.[32] This is an unsustainable position for a non-reductive physicalist to hold.

Another reply to the exclusion argument is classified as the "inheritance solution." This is derived from a problem associated with Kim's critique: a property needs to be causally efficacious in the process of production for it to be considered as causally relevant to the production of certain effects.[33] Accordingly, what deems a property to be causally efficacious is that its instantiation leads to the manifestation of the effect. However, it has been argued that a distinction can be made between that which is causally relevant and that which is causally efficacious. From this, it follows that a psychological explanation is inefficacious but relevant because "its realization programs for the realization of a lower-order efficacious property and, in the circumstances, for the occurrence of the event in question."[34] In other words, it acquires this causal relevance due to its close interaction with its neurophysical realizer.[35] Psychological explanations and neurophysical explanations are not in competition for causation but are rather in cooperation; this circumvents the problem of causal overdetermination.[36]

Though this solution seems to be effective, counterarguments can be proposed. One is that causal inheritance is simply a form of

28 Fred Dretske, "Reasons and Causes," *Philosophical Perspectives* 3 (1989): 10.
29 Dretske, "Reasons and Causes," 11.
30 Yoo, "Mental Causation."
31 Kim, "Mechanism, Purpose," 101.
32 Yoo, "Mental Causation."
33 Frank Jackson and Philip Pettit, "Program Explanation: A General Perspective," *Analysis* 50, no. 2 (1990): 111.
34 Jackson and Pettit, "A General Perspective," 115.
35 Frank Jackson and Philip Pettit, "Functionalism and Broad Content," *Mind* XCVII, no. 387 (1988): 399.
36 Heil and Robb, "Mental Causation."

supervenience causation.[37] Accordingly, the mental property that is realized by its neurophysical counterpart is neither necessary nor informative; reduction is the only solution. Another identifies causal inheritance as a mere appeal to epiphenomenalism.[38] Since causal inheritance credits causal relevance to mental properties in virtue of their physical realizers, they "mental properties" have no inherent and independent causal power. Thus, they are superfluous.

The various replies to the exclusion argument have not been effective. They seem to indirectly appeal to mental causes as being ontologically equal to neurophysical causes in that they affect some aspect of the end result. Such an implication contradicts the basic thesis of physicalism. Kim's argument is successful in indicating that the non-reductive physicalist position is unmaintainable by analyzing the contradictory nature of its fundamental premises. It is also noteworthy in that its assertions are relevant to multiple philosophical contexts. With respect to the problem of consciousness in a physical world, implementation of Kim's approach begets interesting conclusions.

III.

An attempt at refuting the viability of physicalism, the Zombie Thought Experiment is founded upon a simple hypothetical scenario: there exists a system that is physically identical to a conscious entity but lacks that consciousness completely.[39] Such an approach presents a significant challenge to physicalism in that it obeys the casual closure of the physical domain, yet maintains that a fully physical account is insufficient: it does not describe how it is "to be like" something. From this, Chalmers differentiates between the "easy" and "hard" problems of consciousness.[40] Accordingly, the former revolves around the neurophysical processes that underlie discerning stimuli, reporting information, or assessing internal states; such activities embody puzzles that can be deciphered via empirical investigation. However, the latter involves the difficult prospect of reconciling the existence of qualia with a neurophysical description of the mind; an effective solution would require an explanation of the relationship between neurophysical processes and consciousness on the basis of natural principles. Chalmers introduces an epistemic argument to ground his contentions:

37 Jaegwon Kim, "Blocking Causal Drainage and Other Maintenance Choices with Mental Causation," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 67, no. 1 (2003): 171.

38 Ivar Hannikainen, "Questioning the Causal Inheritance Principle," *Theoria: An International Journal for Theory, History and Foundations of Science*, SEGUNDA EPOCA 25, no. 3(69) (2010): 275.

39 David Chalmers, *The Character of Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 108.

40 Chalmers, *Character of Consciousness*, 105.

1. There is an epistemic gap between neurophysical and phenomenal states.
2. If there is an epistemic gap between neurophysical and phenomenal states, then there is an ontological gap, and materialism is false.
3. Thus, materialism is false.[41]

He then delineates three argumentative avenues by which materialists can oppose the epistemic argument: Type-A, Type-B, and Type-C materialism.

Type-A materialism flatly denies Claim 1: there is no epistemic gap between neurophysical and phenomenal states. This approach denies the existence of consciousness and phenomenal states; descriptions of neurophysical processes can exhaustively explain human behavior. Chalmers suggests that such a stance is extremely counterintuitive and lacks a strong argument.[42]

Type-B materialism accepts that there exists an epistemic gap but rejects Claim 2: there is no ontological gap. Consequently, phenomenal states can be identified with neurophysical states.[43] An example of this would be the identification of water with H_2O. Nevertheless, Chalmers claims that this approach is untenable; the epistemic gap with consciousness seems to be distinct from epistemic gaps in other domains. In other words, the identification between consciousness and neurophysical states is "epistemically primitive." The identity is not deducible from the complete physical state.[44]

Type-C materialism also accepts that there exists a deep epistemic gap between neurophysical and phenomenal states but claims that such a gap is closeable with further empirical investigation. Therefore, phenomenal states are deducible in principle from physical states, but these inferences are unavailable now.[45] Chalmers contests the plausibility of this argument via a categorical approach. By not designating consciousness as a functional concept and by classifying physical descriptions of the world as structural-dynamic descriptions, Chalmers asserts that consciousness cannot be implied by a neurophysical description. Thus, either Type-A or Type-B materialism can be accepted; there is no distinct space for Type-C.[46]

Kim's argument is relevant to this discussion in that his approach seems to embody a hybrid between Type-B and Type-C materialism and—via the principle of explanatory exclusion—rids consciousness

41 Chalmers, *Character of Consciousness*, 112.
42 Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 215.
43 Chalmers, *Character of Consciousness*, 117.
44 Chalmers, *Character of Consciousness*, 118.
45 Chalmers, *Character of Consciousness*, 126.
46 Chalmers, *Character of Consciousness*, 130.

or qualia from any causal role in the physical realm. When combined with the phenomenal concept strategy, Kim's reasoning can thus serve as a successful response to the Zombie Thought Experiment because it leads Chalmers to accept epiphenomenalism as the only viable solution. Subsequently, epiphenomenalism fails to integrate with a naturalistic worldview and to respond to the problem of psychophysical emergence.[47] Therefore, Chalmers' argument seems unsustainable.

As aforementioned, Kim advocates for a reductionist model, which seems to be the most efficacious. Instantiations of consciousness, or qualia, can be reduced to corresponding neurophysical mechanisms. This adheres to the basic tenets of Type-B and Type-C materialism; with further empirical investigation, the ambiguities surrounding phenomenal states will be explicated by neurophysical processes. Furthermore, as previously indicated, it is unclear how consciousness, or qualia, would be able to exert an effect within the physical realm. The Zombie Thought Experiment seems to reinforce this by inverting the archetypical issue of mental causation; if zombies are physical duplicates that behave in an identical manner yet lack qualia, then qualia have no role in affecting or determining behavior.[48] Epiphenomenalism—or what Chalmers designates as Type-E dualism—is the best available option.[49] Consequently, there exists only an epistemic gap between neurophysical and phenomenal states.

The phenomenal concept strategy serves as a valid challenge to Claim 2: the inclusion of an epistemic gap does not necessarily imply the existence of an ontological one. Chalmers forcefully claims that physicalism denies "the manifest" and the "further truth that we are conscious." It can be argued, however, that phenomenal states simply assume the presence of ontologically separate and non-physical entities.[50] According to this approach, physicalists can accept the conceivability of zombies while insisting that consciousness, or qualia, is a conceptually isolated phenomenal concept which is intrinsically related to the neurophysical.[51] For example, there exists legitimate skepticism regarding the obviousness of qualia as ontologically separate from the standpoint of psychological language. If terms such as "pain" referred to private, subjective experiences, it would be expected that the derivation of the appropriate use of the term would only occur via introspection.[52] Nevertheless, conceptual analysis of psychological language reveals that the usage of the word "pain" is learned by

47 Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 229.
48 Kirk, "Zombies."
49 Chalmers, *Character of Consciousness*, 144.
50 Peter Carruthers and B. Veillet, "The Phenomenal Concept Strategy," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 14, no. 9-10 (January 2007): 212-36.
51 Kirk, "Zombies."
52 Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 217.

associating linguistic behavior with non-linguistic behavior; it is not a private process.[53] Moreover, by appeal to ontological naturalism, consciousness, or qualia, seems to not exist; if the behavior of the zombie can be exhaustively described by neurophysical mechanisms and is indistinguishable from its duplicate, then qualia may not exist. Additionally, it is unclear how such phenomenal states could emerge from neurophysical states. If there exists a gap between neurophysical and phenomenal descriptions, how would it be possible for neurophysical processes to give rise to consciousness, or qualia? There is no appropriate response from epiphenomenalism.[54]

Furthermore, the phenomenal concept strategy would offer an appropriate response to Claim 2 of the Knowledge Argument. As opposed to learning a new fact—regarding color—that operates outside the neurophysical description, Mary simply understands an "old fact in a new way"—i.e. she has acquired a phenomenal concept of a neurophysical mechanism. Ultimately, this phenomenal concept can be explicated in neurophysical terms.[55] Consequently, phenomenal concepts can be reduced to physical properties of experiences.

In combination, Kim's critique of mental causation and the phenomenal concept strategy serves as an effectual response to the anti-physicalist stance enclosed within the Knowledge Argument and the Zombie Thought Experiment. By demonstrating that subjective experience, or qualia, is causally inert and is not ontologically independent, this approach pushes advocates of anti-physicalism to accept epiphenomenalism as the only viable alternative. In turn, epiphenomenalism suffers from an inability to integrate with a naturalistic worldview and to respond to the problem of psychophysical emergence. Thus, the contention that the supposed existence of consciousness is sufficient reason for the failure of physicalism is not successful.

53 David W. Schaal, "Naming Our Concerns about Neuroscience: A Review of Bennett and Hackers Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience," *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* 84, no. 3 (2005): 683-92.

54 Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 239.

55 Nida-Rümelin, "Qualia: The Knowledge Argument."

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THE FIRES OF CHANGE:
KIRK, POPPER, AND THE HERACLITEAN DEBATE

HOLLY COOPER

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore a prominent question of Hericlitean scholarship: how is change possible? Karl Popper and G. S. Kirk tackle this same question. Kirk asserts that Heraclitus believed that change is present on a macrocosmic level and that all change is regulated by the cosmic principle *logos*. Popper, on the other hand, claims Heraclitus believed that change is microcosmic and rejected that all change is regulated by *logos*. I argue for a combination of aspects from each of their claims and conclude that change is present both microcosmically and macrocosmically and that all change is governed by *logos*.

INTRODUCTION

A fire was struck between two scholars on October 13, 1958 during a meeting of the Aristotelian Society in London. In his address to the group, Karl Popper—the then-president of the Society and one of the most well-known philosophers of the twentieth century—criticized Geoffrey Kirk—a scholar of Ancient Greek who was small-time compared to Popper—for his work on Heraclitus.[1] This criticism ignited a feud comprised by series of heated essays that the men composed over the next few years. I will primarily be focusing on two of these: Kirk's "Popper on Science and the Presocratics," and Popper's "Kirk on Heraclitus, and on Fire as the Cause of Balance."[2]

The debate, for the most part, can be captured within one central question that Popper outlines concisely: "*How is change possible*? How can *a thing* change without losing its identity—in which case it would no longer be *that thing* which has changed?"[3] Popper keeps with the traditional line of thinking and argues that Heraclitus believed that everything is constantly changing: everything is a process rather than a "thing." His thesis, attributed to Heraclitus, is as follows: "there are no (unchanging) things; what appears to us as a thing is a process. In reality a material thing is like a flame; for a flame *seems* to be a material thing, but it is not: it is a process; it is in flux; matter passes through it; it is like a river."[4] It is certainly necessary to note that Popper's emphasis is specifically on the micro; when he refers to a "thing," he means an individual object/process. He considers the macro, the whole of the universe, only briefly, and quickly turns away from it again, not

1 Karl R. Popper, "Back to the Pre-Socratics: The Presidential Address," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 59 (1958-1959): 1; 15-17; G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

2 G. S. Kirk, "Popper on Science and the Presocratics," *Oxford University Press* 69, no. 275 (1960): 318-339; Karl R. Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus, and on Fire as the Cause of Balance," *Oxford University Press* 72, no. 287 (1963): 386-92.

3 Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus," 386.

4 Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus," 386-87.

giving any credit to the idea of cosmic change.[5] Kirk, on the other hand, offers the unorthodox claim, which in reality was already being argued around one hundred-fifty years prior, that Heraclitus posited constant change in *the world as a whole*, rather than in singular "things."[6] Like Popper, Kirk does not *reject* the idea running counter to his—that change is present in singularities—but rather gives it far too little credit.

Here, I explore both sides of this debate; however, ultimately, the ideas of both philosophers are correct in their own way, and the combination of certain elements from each of their papers offers a more comprehensive understanding of what Heraclitus actually taught. The correct conjunction of their claims is this: both at the micro-level of singular objects and the macro-level of the universe as a whole, and everywhere in between, everything is in a constant state of change which is governed by the cosmic principle *logos*.

I. MOTION IN THE WHOLE AND THE SINGULAR

The first point to prove is Popper's idea that motion, or change, is present in singular objects. Kirk rejects the permeance of the idea of motion in singularities, suggesting that Heraclitus did not insist that "all things are a process," but that the world of objects is more ordered than Popper asserts.[7] This claim does not make much sense if one consults the evidence. For instance, Heraclitus accordingly says in **F32**, "God: day/night, winter/summer, war/peace, fullness/hunger. He changes like fire which, when mixed with spices, is named according to the savour of each."[8] Regardless of what or who "God" is in this fragment, Heraclitus is clearly not only recognizing but *emphasizing* the flux between opposites of particular things. It is not entirely clear what he means by "mixed with spices," but it seems to me that the

5 Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus," 388. I will return to this passage in the next section.

6 Aryeh Finkelberg, "On Cosmogony and Ecpyrosis in Heraclitus," *The American Journal of Philology* 119, no. 2 (1998): 195; Kirk, "Popper on Science," 337. Kirk's argument regarding Heraclitus is nestled underneath a larger argument concerning Popper's theory of scientific intuition, which I try my best not to be distracted by. Because of this, however, it is more difficult to pinpoint where Kirk's exact thesis regarding Heraclitus lies in his paper—if he even posits an exact thesis at all; for the most part, he is just responding to Popper's criticisms, so I am simply paraphrasing his argument here.

7 Kirk, "Popper on Science," 338.

8 *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and the Sophists*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 41. All translations of fragments in this essay come from Waterfield. Popper later criticizes claims such as this one that are attributed to Hippolytus's *Refutation of All Heresies* (Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus," 390-91.)

very fact that Heraclitus ascribes a "savour" to *each singularity* is enough to prove that the change contained within "things" is an important part of his philosophy. We can further affirm this if we look at **F13**, in which Heraclitus recognizes more singularities: "living and dead, sleeping and waking, young and old."[9] Again, there are several instances here of singular conditions that are affected by motion and process. For example, the processes of waking up and falling asleep affect the conditions of being awake or asleep. This importation of process onto condition alone is enough to rectify Kirk's disproportionate claim.

We must next look to the several fragments which support Kirk's idea that change is present in the unified whole of the universe, not just the singular. Let us take two examples together: that the universe is "single and common"[10] and that "war is common, and strife is justice, and that everything happens in accordance with strife and necessity."[11] It is not difficult to interpret the first example: the universe, in truth, is a unified whole; it is "common." We can see in the second example that war is "common" as well; strife is present in the most general sense of the universe. It is not only the singularities that are governed in accordance with flux, but in fact "everything," which I take to mean every possible combination of things up to the entirety of the universe.

Finally, we must combine these two ideas—that change is present both in the micro and the macro. It is now that we arrive at the pinnacle of Heraclitean imagery: "'It is impossible to step twice into the same river…It scatters and regathers, comes together and dissolves, approaches and departs.'"[12] This image, which is truly more like a motion picture, captures the essence of the correct combination of Kirk and Popper's claims. The pieces of the river—the singularities, the billions of drops of water that make it up—altogether form the whole river, but neither the individual part nor the complete whole is constant. The drops all move and change, but because of this, the river as a macrocosm in its entirety is never exactly the same. Taken this way, the moving image of the river is unable to fully support, in their indignation, either Popper or Kirk's argument.

Popper, on one hand, has an interpretation of the river that differs from the one given above. He claims that "the rivers are concrete rivers," which symbolize concrete singularities, including people.[13] This is indeed strange: Popper is giving microcosmic qualities to the river. He even imposes plurality onto the rivers; there are several of them, so therefore the river, to him, cannot represent a unified whole. But this seems counter-intuitive for his argument. How can singular things be

9 *The First Philosophers*, 39.
10 *The First Philosophers*, 38.
11 *The First Philosophers*, 40.
12 *The First Philosophers*, 41.
13 Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus," 388.

in motion if the river symbolically ascribes concreteness to them? How can Popper make a claim so absurd as to say that humans and rivers are concrete? It seems that if Popper really meant to preserve the fluidity of singularities, then he would have picked a word better than "concrete," so what meaning can he really expect us to see here? I hold this against him: the image of a "concrete river" is truly oxymoronic.

Kirk, on the other hand, briefly implies a different interpretation: that the river as a whole remains the same river while only its parts change.[14] Both men favor the phrase "same river" but in two different senses: Popper, because the rivers are "concrete," and Kirk, because he means to highlight not the concreteness of the river but the opposite. To Kirk, the river is in motion, but there is some other form of stability aside from concreteness that pervades it.

II. MEASURE, LAW, AND LOGOS

This other form of stability is the subject of our next discussion. In things both singular and general, there is some aspect of the *constancy* of motion, not just the presence of it. That constancy, though, does not arise from things in virtue of themselves. Instead, it arises from what Waterfield translates as "the principle" in the Heraclitean fragments. It is *logos*—the ultimate voice of cosmic law and measurement. This is the subject in which Kirk is right and Popper is partly wrong.

Kirk attributes to Heraclitus the belief that all things, although in motion, maintain an equilibrium which is guaranteed by *logos*. Change is present both singularly and universally, but *logos* naturally regulates this change in order to preserve general stability.[15] Popper rejects this: while he does say that things appear stable, so the processes behind them must be measured and lawlike, he vehemently denies that *all* changes are stable and that *logos* is common between all things. Essentially, he rejects that Heraclitus believed any of the following: (*a*) that *all* changes are regulated as opposed to only certain ones; (*b*) that fire is the cause of regulation; and (*c*) that fire is synonymous with *logos*.[16] Popper claims that he is completely unable to find even a trace of the doctrines that he rejects in the fragments or any other ancient sources.[17] Quite frankly, he has not looked hard enough. These elements that Popper deems "absurd" are all important components of Kirk's correct argument that, according to Heraclitus, constancy in motion is a characteristic of all things and that this is made possible by overarching *logos*.

14 Kirk, "Popper on Science," 338.
15 Kirk, "Popper on Science," 338.
16 Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus," 390.
17 Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus," 390.

I would like to begin with a consideration of (*c*)—that fire is synonymous with *logos*. Heraclitus outlines in one fragment the "turning-points of fire." Fire turns to sea (which is half earth and half lightning), and then sea returns to "the same principle [*logos*] as before it became earth."[18] The starting point here is fire, so if sea must return to the starting point of the cycle before it became earth, and what it is returning to is *logos*, then Heraclitus must equate fire with *logos*. From this, we have proven (*c*) to be true.

We must next prove (*a*), that *all* changes are regulated as opposed to only certain ones. It will be easiest to do this by first providing evidence for balance in microcosms and then providing evidence for balance in macrocosms.

According to one fragment, "[t]he sun, according to Heraclitus, is new each day."[19] Heraclitus also says, "The sun will not overstep its measures."[20] Even Popper admits, correctly, that it can be seen from the first fragment that Heraclitus regarded the sun as a singularity.[21] From the second, we see that the sun—a singularity, a microcosm—must necessarily stay within the bounds of measure, proving that microcosmic motion, according to Heraclitus, is regulated.

So now we turn to the macro. Heraclitus says that "the principle [*logos*] is common."[22] We saw earlier that Heraclitus believed the universe to be a unified whole—to be common—and now we are seeing that *logos*, too, is common. The connection between *logos* and universal oneness is undeniable, especially if we supplement this fragment with another: "[i]t is also law to follow the plan of the one."[23] The "law" can be taken to be *logos*, while the "one" can be taken to be the macrocosmic universe. *Logos* pervades throughout the whole of existence.

Finally, I turn to (*b*), that fire is the cause of regulation. Heraclitus claims that order cannot be attributed to any god or man, but that it instead "always was and is and shall be an ever-living fire, flaring up in regular measures and dying down in regular measures."[24] Clearly, measure and regularity here are attributed to fire, which, as we have seen, is equated with *logos*. This fragment is enough evidence to prove that Heraclitus believed (*b*)—that fire/*logos* is the cause of universal equilibrium.

It is unclear why Heraclitus held the beliefs that he did regarding motion and regulation, as we have seen. Due to the fragmentary nature

18 *The First Philosophers*, 42.
19 *The First Philosophers*, 43.
20 *The First Philosophers*, 43.
21 Popper, "Kirk on Heraclitus," 387-88.
22 *The First Philosophers*, 38.
23 *The First Philosophers*, 45.
24 *The First Philosophers*, 41-42.

of the Heraclitean works that the philosophical world has access to, it is easy to speculate about what Heraclitus meant, especially regarding the *logos* that we have just discussed. Several unanswered questions still remain about this subject, even after hundreds of years of scholarship. For example, why would Heraclitus believe fire to be *logos* when water seems to work just as well for his purposes, especially since his image of the river seems to serve basically the same purpose as any image of fire that he sets forth? Through what physical or metaphysical means did Heraclitus believe his conception of *logos* to regulate the universe? And in regard to the two philosophers that we have been focusing on, why would Popper choose to attack Kirk over ideas that seem to be obviously present in the Heraclitean fragments? When one attempts to answer these questions, the fragments must be carefully examined, and the examiner must fit them together like pieces of a puzzle. However, as we now know, it is easy for philosophers to force puzzle pieces into place when answering these questions instead of thoughtfully placing them.

CONCLUSION

These questions are important, but the fundamental question remains the same: "How is change possible?" We have seen that both Popper and Kirk's responses to this are correct in some ways and defective in others. The attitudes of both men in their papers are seething; they are riddled with indignation. It may be for this reason that they seem, at times, to posit claims that are not fully coherent with their general arguments and even sometimes go as far as contradicting themselves. They have fallen victim to the very thing Socrates warned against when he said to Gorgias, "So I'm afraid to refute you, lest you suppose that I speak from love of victory, not in regard to the subject's becoming manifest, but in regard to you."[25] If only these two men had been able to put aside petty differences, they might have been able to engage in a dialogue that would have done the philosophical community a world of good by pushing us ever closer to the true understanding of what Heraclitus did, in fact, believe. Instead, they only divided the two schools of thought even more. However, as we have seen, Popper is correct on microcosms, Kirk is correct on macrocosms, and *only* Kirk is correct regarding motion. By expanding on elements from Popper's highly traditional view and Kirk's largely controversial view, a conception of Hericlitean thought has been formulated that I believe is more accurate than either of theirs taken individually—that both the macro and the micro are everchanging, but that this motion is kept in check by the universal governing principle *logos*.

25 Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. James H. Nichols Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 39-40.

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DOMESTIC IMPERIALISM:
THE REVERSAL OF FANON

J. WOLFE HARRIS

ABSTRACT

Frantz Fanon's works have been invaluable in the analysis of colonies and the colonized subject's mentality therein, but an analysis of the colonial power itself has been largely left to the wayside. The aim of this paper is to explicate a key element of Fanon's theoretical framework, the metropolis/periphery dichotomy, then, using the writings of Huey P. Newton and Stokely Carmichael, among others, show its reversal within the colonial power. I will analyze this reversal in three ways: first, the reversal of the relationship between, and the roles of, the metropolis and periphery; second, the role of police and the differences between the colonial police and the police within the colonial power; and third, the modified role of prisons within the colonial power.

INTRODUCTION

Mentioned by name across the writings of Angela Davis, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and Huey P. Newton, Frantz Fanon's influence on the Black Liberation movements, which emerged during the early 1960s, is undeniable, and his works remains foundational for the theoretical integrity of these movements. More than giving accurate descriptions of the psychological status of colonized subjects, Fanon sought to create an all-encompassing theory of colonialism. Within this theory is the metropolis/periphery dichotomy: the relationship between, and the roles of, the periphery from which capital is exacted, and the metropolis into which this capital is siphoned. This dichotomy, however, is only accurate within the colony: for all the theorizing Fanon did, he failed to look outward; he failed to examine the colonial powers themselves. Within the colonial powers, we see the reversal of this dichotomy: no longer is the periphery subjugated and exploited by the metropolis, but rather the metropolis—while still being the site of capital production and refinement of raw materials—is subjugated and exploited by the periphery. The aim of this essay is to explicate Fanon's metropolis/periphery dichotomy and to expand on Huey P. Newton's conception of domestic imperialism by the reversal of this dichotomy within the colonial powers.

I. METROPOLIS/PERIPHERY DICHOTOMY

Fanon, despite his prolific writing, did not ever explicitly outline the structure of colonialism; rather, his theories merely described colonialism's effects. In order to synthesize these effects, let us begin with Paul Sweezy, who, during the Dialectics of Liberation conference in 1967, outlined the fundamental aspect of the metropolis/periphery dichotomy. The result of capitalist subjugation and exploitation of colonies, he asserted, was the "transfer of wealth from the periphery

to the metropolis and correspondingly [the destruction of] the old society in the periphery and [reorganization of] it on a dependent satellite basis."[1] In addition to this, it is also only due to this transfer of wealth that the metropolis was able to so rapidly develop. It is from this fundamental aspect of the dichotomy that the other aspects follow.

If the role of the metropolis was simply oppression of the periphery, in a purely repressive sense, it would fail. Utilizing power as both a productive and repressive force, the metropolis did not merely extract wealth and resources from the periphery, as one might do in the case of imperialism; rather, it reorganized, as Sweezy said, the structure of the periphery on the basis of dependency. Without the metropolis's ability to refine the raw materials which were extracted from the periphery—and to a larger extent, without the colonial power's willingness to purchase the goods made within the colonial metropolis—the periphery would starve. The economic reality of the periphery, and the colony as a whole, was, therefore, the economic reality of the colonial power, of the foreign bourgeoisie.[2] Moreover, the colonial power frames its exploitation as a concern for the interests of the colonized subject. This concern for interests, however, comes only after a phase of capital accumulation, wherein the colony becomes a market for the goods they produce themselves. Therefore, instead of the economically unviable model of slavery, the foreign capitalists and colonial powers sought the "protection of their 'legitimate interests' using economic agreements."[3] Since the colony is structured as a dependent satellite, and with the phase of capital accumulation within the colony and the consequent formation of the colony as a market, the colonial subject has "legitimate interests" in the continued existence of the metropolis/periphery dichotomy. This is the foundation upon which subjugation is hereafter justified.

While the national bourgeoisie may come to hold ownership over a number of factories or farms, the economic reality is constituted in such a way by the foreign bourgeoisie that, despite seeming economic independence, the national bourgeoisie are still entirely dependent upon the colonial power to buy their products. This dependency was fostered in a few ways, but perhaps the most notable was the United States' conversion of various Latin American countries into one-crop economies. The result was that after fifteen years, "the US controlled 70 per cent of Latin America's sources of raw materials, and 50 per cent of its gross national product."[4] Moreover, economic aid, such as

1 Paul Sweezy, "The Future of Capitalism," in *The Dialectics of Liberation*, ed. David Cooper (New York: Verso, 2015), 99.
2 Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 122.
3 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 27.
4 John Gerasis, "Imperialism and Revolution in America," in *The Dialectics of*

loans, are only given to the colonies for the purpose of maintaining the factories and buying manufactured goods, in order for the metropolis to continue to function as such.[5] Alongside this conversion, Roosevelt conceptualized the colonial police: unlike American soldiers, who are more easily identified and attacked by the colonized, a police force consisting of the colonized themselves is much harder to identify as the enemy, and, furthermore, their loyalty to foreign capital "could be guaranteed by their economic ties to those interests."[6]

The local police, in the pockets of foreign economic interests, and the subjugation of the colonies themselves to these same interests via tampering by the colonial power are the fundamental means by which the colonial power maintains control—even once all their soldiers and bourgeoisie have left—and further solidifies the metropolis/periphery dichotomy.

II. DOMESTIC IMPERIALISM

Within the colonial power, however, and specifically in each major city, Fanon's metropolis/periphery dichotomy, whose fundamental functions and means of maintenance I have just explicated, is reversed. In all of Huey P. Newton's writings, the concept of domestic imperialism is mentioned only once, but it is this concept, along with Stokely Carmichael's speech at the Dialectics of Liberation conference two years prior, which makes the reversal possible. Domestic imperialism is to be broadly understood as "an imperialistic variation of imperialism… [through which] the whole American people have been colonized, if you view exploitation as a colonized effect."[7] The exploitation which I will be considering as a colonized effect is precisely the kind of exploitation and oppression which I have already explicated as present in the colony and in those who contribute to the continued existence of the metropolis/periphery dichotomy and the modified role of police—and more specifically the new role of the prisons.

The metropolis in America is the place which has the largest capital-capacity—that is, the city's capacity to produce and reproduce capital—and simultaneously has the largest sections of poverty. To contrast, the periphery, rather than the target of economic exploitation, is the funnel into which capital, extracted from the inhabitants of the metropolis, is siphoned. Carmichael writes,

> The American city, in essence, is going to be populated by the peoples of the Third World while the white middle classes will flee to the suburbs. Now

Liberation, ed. David Cooper (New York: Verso, 2015), 80.

5 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 59-60.

6 Gerasis, "Imperialism and Revolution," 79.

7 Huey P. Newton, "On the Peace Movement," in *The Huey P. Newton Reader*, ed. David Hilliard and Donald Weise (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 152.

> the black people do not control, nor do they own, the resources—we do not control the land, the houses or the stores. These are all owned by whites who live outside the community. These are very real colonies, in the sense that there is cheap labour exploited by those who live outside the cities.[8]

In the colony, the colonized live in the periphery, and it is from the periphery that raw materials and capital are extracted and siphoned into the metropolis. In the American city, although the raw materials are still imported from either colonies or rural areas, the actual capital extraction takes place within the metropolis. The site of capital production and reproduction, despite this, has not changed. It is still within the metropolis that the factories are located, and in the case of the colony the products would be exported to the colonial power or sold back to the inhabitants of the metropolis. In the case of the American city, however, the products of the metropolitan factories are exported to the periphery and seldom are sold back to the colonized Americans. It is from this reversal of the extraction and siphoning that, as with Fanon's dichotomy, the rest follows.

The means of economic subjugation of the inhabitants of the American metropolis, however, have not changed all that significantly. The colonized Americans, within the inner cities—which are sometimes unaffectionately called ghettos—are entirely dependent on periphery capital, rather than foreign capital. Government relief, much like the economic aid and loans given to the colonies, is only meant to increase the dependency of the colonized upon the colonial system. Instead of fostering self-sufficiency, this type of aid merely provides money with which to survive, refusing to improve the conditions which make survival unsure. This is common practice in colonialism, though: by refusing to address the underlying causes of "underdevelopment" or poverty, the colonial powers reduce the colonies' independence. Thomas Sankara, in an interview shortly before his assassination, stated that if their aim was to help, they would

> [g]ive us plows, tractors, fertilizer, insecticide, watering cans, drills, dams. That is how we define food aid. Those who come with wheat, millet, corn or milk, they are not helping us. They are fattening us up like you do with geese, stuffing them in order to be able to sell them later. That is not real help.[9]

In other words, if the aim of government relief was to liberate, it would provide the tools for liberation; instead, it further entrenches the colonized Americans in the system of economic subjugation.

8 Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power," in *The Dialectics of Liberation*, ed. David Cooper (New York: Verso, 2015), 160.

9 JR, "'Concerning Violence' Introduces New Generations to Frantz Fanon," *San Francisco Bay View*, last modified June 30, 2015, sfbayview.com/2015/06/concerning-violence-introduces-new-generations-to-frantz-fanon/.

III. POLICING, POLICE, AND PRISONS

The failure of the policing system in America, compared to the colonial police, is that it is not completely possible to have a "local" police force as Roosevelt conceived of for the colony; the police force within the colonial power can never be fully separate from the colonial system, and more often than not they are visibly integrated within it. Roosevelt's conception of a localized police and militia worked so well precisely because the avenues of colonialism and foreign capital became visually indistinguishable from the colonized. Prior to the localized police; there were marines and foreign police, in other words, it was a *visibly foreign* presence. After the local police were implemented, this visibly foreign presence disappeared and was replaced with a police force which was virtually indistinguishable from the colonized. In America, however, this cannot be the case, as we are already accustomed to the colonized occupying a role within the police force. There is already a long history of the inhabitants of the inner cities—the colonized of America—seeing past the veneer of inclusionist policies within police departments, as evidenced by the general aversion Black Liberation movements had towards the police. In other words, instead of seeing a black police officer as a representative of the colonized, he is seen as a traitor to his roots. The police have sought to fight this characterization of them by implementing various diversity programs or workshops, posting videos online of officers playing basketball with a group of kids in Harlem, and so on. These attempts, however, have not served to change the function of the police for which they are reproached: these are mere superficial attempts to cultivate a more palatable appearance to those who do not know the true nature of policing.

Can this, however, not be said of Roosevelt's localized police? Despite the change from a foreign presence to a native appearance, is not their function—their *raison d'etre*—still the same? It is true that the local police fulfill the same purpose as the American police—namely the enforcement of the economic supremacy of the colonizer and the economic subjugation of the colonized—but the difference lies in a level of abstraction and separation which is not, and cannot be, present in American policing. In other words, the police in America are always *American* police, whereas in the colony the police are, for example, *Haitian* police: the police in the colony are, on some level, separate from the colonial system precisely because they are the police of the colony, not the colonial power. On the one hand, in the localized police of the colony, their loyalty to the colonial power is maintained through their economic subjugation—through the already existing economic dependency which has been deliberately fostered by the colonizing

force—but this is formulated in terms, to return to Fanon, of "legitimate interests." On the other hand, the American police are not dependent on these same interests; they act, unabstracted and unseparated, on the whims and interests of the state. While individual police might have economic interests which motivate them to policing—such as the need for a wage in order to purchase food and afford rent—the *system of policing* is not beholden to the economic supremacy of the colonial power; they are rather the lackeys of this economic supremacy and are responsible for its maintenance. American police, despite their recent efforts to the contrary, can never escape this because it would mean a level of abstraction and separation that is not possible domestically; it would mean the police would no longer be beholden to the authority of the colonial power—that is, the state—and would rather act in their own "legitimate interests," as the localized police do in the colony. In other words, in order for the American police to be separate from the colonial system, the system of policing would necessarily have to be separate from the state and the state's interests and, instead, operate according to its own "legitimate interests."

If the role of policing is to enforce the economic supremacy of the colonial power and the economic subjugation of the colony, what, then, is the role of prisons? It is first important to investigate the premise upon which the police and prisons are eternally justified—namely, the underlying socio-political theory which believes that the currently existing social order is "functionally stable and fundamentally just."[10] If the current order of things is fundamentally stable and just, then any action contrary to this must, *by virtue*, be undesired and offensive. It is this premise which underlies the whole of the penal system: that because the current social system is stable and just, actual or potential criminals *must* be morally depraved.[11] Fanon said in *The Wretched of the Earth* that "the 'native' is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values… In other words, absolute evil."[12] It is only through understanding what the basic, fundamental premise is—upon which the entire penal system is justified—that the importance of Fanon's words can be properly understood; if it is true that the penal system is founded upon this premise and that any opposition to it is therefore antithetical to, or void of, ethics, then the native—the colonized—is, by virtue of their being native, already fundamentally opposed to this order, and, therefore, morally depraved.

10 Bettina Aptheker, "The Social Functions of the Prisons in the United States," in *If They Come in the Morning*…, ed. Angela Y. Davis (New York: Verso, 2016), 51.
11 Aptheker, "The Social Functions," 51.
12 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 6.

Understanding that the penal system is based upon the foundational claim that the currently existing social order is fundamentally stable and just, and that because of this the colonized are seen as morally depraved or ethically void, we can now investigate the role of prisons. It is upon that same premise that their role is determined: the penal system must, necessarily, guard this social order from attack, and consequently the role of the prison is "the confinement and treatment of people who are actually or potentially disruptive of the social system."[13] In other words, prisons confine and rehabilitate any who might do, or have done in the past, harm to the colonial order. However, due to the basic premise upon which the penal system is eternally justified, those who would oppose the colonial order are determined by the colonial power *a priori*. Those who live in the American periphery are fundamentally aligned with the social order and have no reason to seek its demise, for they are the modern colonizers and benefit from its continued existence, while the modern day colonized subject—those who are exploited by the current system—are in no way inclined to advocate for the colonial system's existence, and it would be in fact contrary to their self-interest to do so. It is on this basis that they are deemed criminal.

Furthermore, it is due to the colonial system itself that individuals are compelled to resort to criminal activity, "not as a result of [conscious] choice—implying other alternatives—but because society has objectively reduced their possibilities of subsistence and survival to this level."[14] These criminal acts, however, are not merely criminal: they are acts which are opposed to the colonial system under which the perpetrators are subjected, and, moreover, they are acts of survival, of necessity, not of greed. They are on this basis *political acts*. The colonial system, however, cannot have its opposition so openly known. As in the case of the Haitian Revolution, any hint of successful revolt might inspire others to do the same, and news of revolt *must* therefore be suppressed from reaching the ears of the oppressed. Towards this aim, the American police have defined the political act as criminal so that revolutionary movements are discredited and, furthermore, "affirm the absolute invulnerability of the existing order."[15] The role of the prison, and the penal system in general, is therefore operational upon the assumption that the currently existing social order is fundamentally stable and just and uses this foundational premise in order to *a priori* label the colonized as criminal—as ethically void—so that the everyday political acts of revolt they commit can be redefined as *criminal* in order to eternally justify the existing order.

13 Aptheker, "The Social Functions," 54.

14 Angela Y. Davis, "Political Prisoners, Prisons & Black Liberation," in *If They Come in the Morning...*, ed. Angela Y. Davis (New York: Verso, 2016), 35-36.

15 Davis, "Political Prisoners," 31-33.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of this essay, I have explicated the essential structure of Fanon's metropolis/periphery dichotomy in the extraction of capital from the periphery and siphoning of capital to the metropolis, in the economic subjugation, and in the role of Roosevelt's colonial police. Furthermore, taking this essential structure and expanding on Huey P. Newton's conception of domestic imperialism, I have shown that within the colonial power there is a reversal of Fanon's dichotomy: the metropolis, while still being the site of capital production and reproduction, is now also the site from which capital is extracted, and it is into the periphery, rather than the metropolis, that this capital is siphoned. The same economic subjugation which existed in the original metropolis/periphery dichotomy is still present. Although economic aid previously functioned as the capital which the colonized would use to invest in and buy the products of the factories of the metropolis, now it functions as mere means of survival. Both types, however, have the common goal of furthering the economic dependence of the colonized subject upon the colonial power structure. The colonial police—in the colony indistinguishable from the other colonized subjects—are, in America, completely visible and as such take up the very different project of defining the political and the criminal as a means to suppress the effectiveness of liberatory actions and further entrench the colonized in their dependence.

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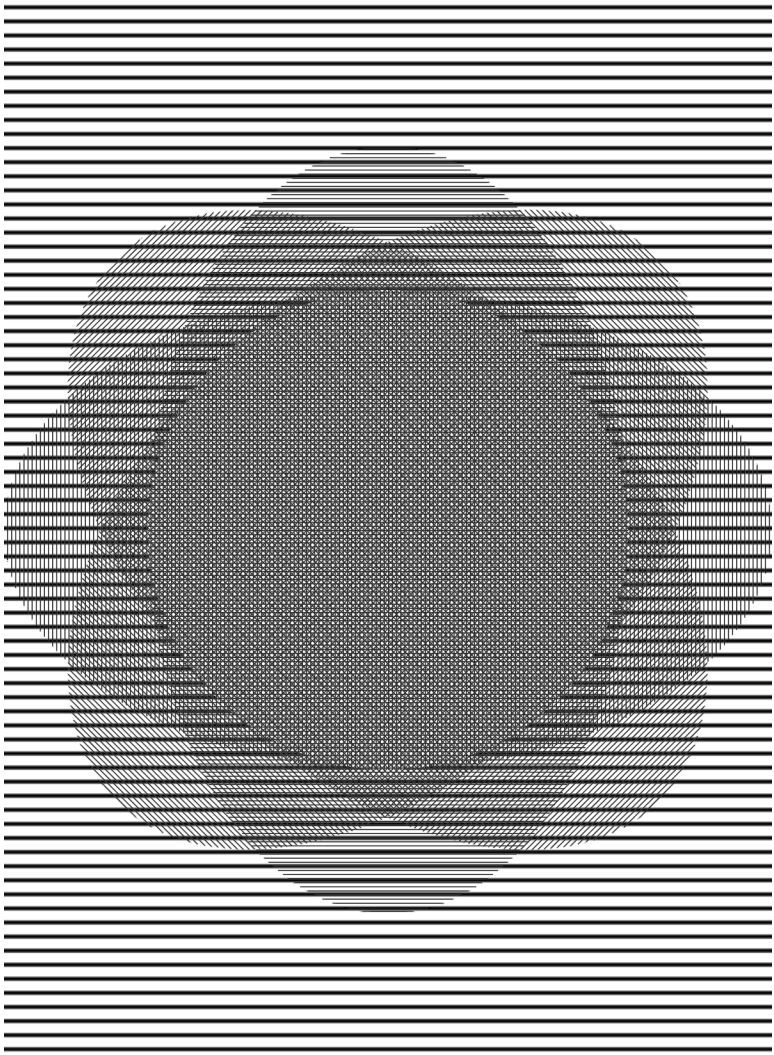
FREEING MYSTICISM:

EPISTEMIC STANDARDS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE



JOHN COONEY

ABSTRACT

With the growth of epistemology, an important debate in philosophy of religion has arisen: can mystical encounters—purported feelings of intense unity with the divine—serve as epistemic warrants? In this paper, I examine two of the most prominent and promising standards by which to determine the veridicality of such encounters—those of William Alston and Richard Swinburne—and demonstrate their respective strengths and shortcomings. Considering these shortcomings, I compose and defend my own set of criteria to use in evaluating the veridicality of putative mystical experiences which draws upon the subject's religious tradition, rationality, and affectivity.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since William James published his seminal book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902, mysticism has taken hold of the discussions of theologians and philosophers alike, mainly in the debate over its status as an epistemic warrant.[1] This debate asks whether a subject is justified in forming beliefs about God based on a mystical experience. In this paper, I seek to contribute to this epistemological discussion by determining the grounds on which we can deem a putative mystical encounter veridical.[2] Amongst scholars who have argued for mysticism as a source of epistemic justification, many possible solutions have been posited. Unfortunately, not one has contained a truly compelling standard for determining the authenticity of mystical experiences. I thus attempt to remedy the shortcomings of the standards proposed by William Alston and Richard Swinburne by offering a standard which draws on the subject's religious tradition, rationality, and affectivity in considering the veridicality of a purported mystical experience.[3]

I. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF CURRENT THEORIES

Those who argue that mystical practices can serve as epistemic warrants fall on a spectrum concerning standards of veridicality. On one end are theories that seek a vantage point external to mystical practices themselves from which to judge the veridicality of mystical

1 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Penguin Group, 1982).

2 Several of the scholars referenced below use "authentic" and "genuine" synonymously with "veridical." While recognizing their nuances, I will keep with this pattern and use all three words interchangeably.

3 Unless otherwise stated, I will operate within the Christian mystical tradition throughout this paper. I do this both because it is the context in which the above authors write and because it is the tradition with which I am most familiar.

experiences. On the other end, there are the less popular self-authentication theories.[4] These theories allege that mystical experiences are, by their very nature, veridical. In this section, I will expose the shortcomings of the two most promising approaches—William Alston's and Richard Swinburne's—before showing how my suggested epistemic standard can avoid them.

In *Perceiving God*, William Alston defends the ability of mystical practices to serve as epistemic warrants by demonstrating them to be socially established doxastic practices. Any doxastic practice is "the exercise of a family of belief-forming mechanisms" and requires what Alston terms an "overrider system," i.e. a system—to determine whether an experience is genuine by comparing it to background beliefs and other doxastic practices.[5] "Attached to each practice," he writes, "is an 'overrider system' of beliefs and procedures that the subject can use in subjecting *prima facie* justified beliefs to further tests when that is called for."[6] To take an everyday example, consider the overriders we place on sense perception; whenever we perceive something through the senses, we scrutinize it through the lens of reason, memory, the testimonies of others, etc., to determine the likelihood that our perception is accurate. Such consultation with overriders can either be subconscious (e.g. when something seen is typical) or conscious (e.g. when something seen is atypical). In instances where a perception is not countered by the overrider system, we are justified in taking it to be veridical. Regarding Christian mystical practices (CMP) specifically, Alston lists "the Bible, the ecumenical councils of the undivided church, Christian experience through the ages, Christian thought, and more generally the Christian tradition as normative sources of its overrider system."[7] In other words, Christian mysticism cross-references the content and phenomenological characteristics of an experience with the Bible, ecclesial authority, and Christian tradition to determine whether it is veridical.

Alston exhibits sound philosophical work in his book, and his overrider system has several benefits. Its concrete standard operates as a rigorous vetting system, preventing the undesirable and untenable conclusion that any putative mystical experience is veridical.[8] Additionally, the fact that it has a corollary in other doxastic practices

4 Robert A. Oakes, "Mysticism, Veridicality, and Modality," *Faith and Philosophy* 2, no. 3 (1985): 217-24. To my knowledge, Robert Oakes—with whom I will not here contend—is the only serious proponent of self-authentication.

5 William Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 165.

6 Alston, *Perceiving God*, 159.

7 Alston, *Perceiving God*, 193.

8 This is to say that he disallows self-authentication theories.

serves to increase its credibility. Yet, despite these valuable elements, Alston's system suffers from several difficulties.

Jerome Gellman notes the first shortcoming in his article, "A Problem for the Christian Mystical Doxastic Practice." Gellman argues that Alston's proposed overrider system for Christian mystical practices has been compromised by mistaken physiological theories, the historical marginalization of women, and "the Church's need to impose ecclesiastical order on uncontrolled spirituality."[9] If the standard being used in determining an experience's genuineness is compromised—in this case, through ignorance and historical struggles for power—then it cannot be counted on to produce accurate evaluations. Notice that Gellman's critique does not attack the idea of an overrider system itself but rather what Alston chooses to include in CMP's specific overrider system. The problem lies in the fact that the content of CMP's overrider is rooted in history and doctrine, both of which are, at least in part, products of chance and not divine revelation.

The second difficulty with Alston's overrider system also stems from his emphasis on doctrine.[10] In *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, Father Joseph de Guibert discusses the discernment of spirits in mysticism. He composes a long list—quoted partially by Alston—of the respective effects of godly and satanic spirit-fueled mystical experiences. He then issues the following note of caution: "because a thought contains nothing contrary to Church doctrine or because an impulse has nothing incompatible with the law of God in it, it does not thereby follow that either should be immediately regarded as an inspiration of a good spirit."[11] Assuming that a demonic force could create a pseudo-mystical experience without contradicting Church doctrine, de Guibert concludes that the standard of veridicality must not rely solely on the intellectual content of an experience but take into account the affective content as well, for an evil spirit cannot replicate both the intellectual *and* emotive dimensions of a mystical experience. It is the evil spirit's inability to bring about peace which prevents a fall into a Cartesian universal skepticism regarding mystical experiences. In light of de Guibert's concerns, clearly, Alston fails to consider the affective component of mysticism seriously enough.

The third problem plaguing Alston is one that he himself points out—the question of religious pluralism. Terrence Tilley formulates the

9 Jerome Gellman, "A Problem for the Christian Mystical Doxastic Practice," *Philo: The Journal of the Society of Humanist Philosophers* 13, no. 1 (2010): 26.

10 I use the word "emphasis" because, while Alston does include other elements in the content of his overrider system for CMP, the focus is heavily doctrinal and ecclesial.

11 Joseph de Guibert, *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, trans. Paul Barrett (London: Sheed and Ward, 1954), 139.

problem in this way: "Because mystical practices in different religious traditions have different background beliefs and overrider systems, they are irreducibly different, not a single practice with multiple variations."[12] Under Alston's framework, no unified mystical doxastic practice can exist but rather only a multiplicity of practices equal to the number of diverse religious beliefs. Even within one religious tradition there can exist hundreds of different practices. Alston's response to religious diversity is less than satisfying: "In the absence of any external support for supposing that one of the competing practices is more accurate than my own, the only rational course for me is to sit tight."[13] Indeed, he even concedes later that "diversity reduces somewhat the maximal degree of epistemic justification derivable from CMP" and "reduces the rationality of engaging in CMP."[14] Any standard of veridicality tethered to specific religious traditions and beliefs will inevitably run into this problem of religious pluralism, but it is worth asking whether a more persuasive response than "sit tight" can be had.

The final critique of Alston's overrider system is one that no other author has, to my knowledge, noted. Alston's system includes a qualifier: mysticism seldom yields new beliefs. This restriction is the natural consequence of his judging veridicality by doctrine and previously held beliefs, for a person's mystical experience must necessarily conform to the belief system they held prior to the experience, or else it cannot be considered veridical. I quote Alston at length:

> In MP [mystical practices] God may appear to me in an experience as supremely loving, but I already firmly believed that. There isn't even any significant updating to be derived here.... The experience can add to my total sum of justification for believing that God is loving, even if it doesn't add to the firmness of the belief...it must be acknowledged that CMP does not typically alter the major outlines of a person's faith. Ordinarily the subject already has a more or less firm Christian faith, which is left largely unchanged by mystical experience. What the experience does yield, cognitively, is: (a) information about God's particular relations to the subject; (b) additional grounds for beliefs already held, particularly the belief that God does exist; (c) additional "insights" into facets of the scheme.[15]

Alston's view is internally consistent but problematic. A true mystical experience ought to be the pinnacle of spirituality and epistemology, yet under Alston's model, belief-altering mystical experiences are likely to jeopardize the experience's veridical status.[16] Consider that many

12 Terrence Tilley, "Religious Pluralism as a Problem for 'Practical' Religious Epistemology," *Religious Studies* 30, no. 2 (1994): 162.
13 Alston, *Perceiving God*, 274.
14 Alston, *Perceiving God*, 275; 279.
15 Alston, *Perceiving God*, 207.
16 Perhaps the best example of this is Paul's conversion on the road to

mystical experiences catalyze religious conversion. Insofar as conversion involves not "insights" into a doxastic practice but rather challenges to it, Alston's overrider system may skew too conservative in ruling such experiences unveridical. It is at least worth seeing whether we can come to an improved standard, since Alston's approach sits uneasily with the oft-accepted notion that mysticism is authoritative for the individual. As James writes, "the existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretension of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictators of what we may believe."[17] Alston, it would seem, attempts to win mysticism's veridicality by sacrificing its potency.

Richard Swinburne posits a more promising view than Alston's. Swinburne's "Principle of Credulity" (POC) states that granted the absence of particular counter-considerations, a subject (*S*) is justified in taking their perception to be genuine. Swinburne enumerates four such "special considerations": (1) the conditions of the perception or the subject are unreliable, (2) claims made under similar circumstances have proved false, (3) it is very improbable on background evidence that *X* was present, and (4) *X* was probably not the cause of the perception.[18] Presuming the absence of these considerations, Swinburne argues that *S* is justified in taking their perception of *X* to be veridical.[19]

Swinburne's standard for veridicality has its benefits. Most prominently, it maximizes the number of mystical experiences considered veridical without doing so indiscriminately, which is an improvement on Alston's more circumscribed view. The POC also has the benefit of being independent of doctrinally and historically based criteria. Finally, Swinburne outmaneuvers the issue of religious pluralism by not basing his criteria in the specific content of the experience but rather the circumstances surrounding it.

The POC faces two major challenges, though. The first is causal convolution. On account of Swinburne's first counter-consideration, all causally overdetermined mystical experiences—such as those which occur under the influence of psychotropic drugs—are ruled unveridical. The converse side of this issue is the impossibility of verifying the ultimate cause of an experience. Without including an additional criterion, Swinburne cannot escape the evil-spirit dilemma, for it is possible for an evil spirit to contrive a pseudo-mystical experience that does not violate any of the above considerations. In other words, his standard does not allow for the subject to accurately

Damascus. We should be wary of excluding one of the most quintessential mystical experiences from our veridical canon.

17 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 427.

18 Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 311-14.

19 This does not mean that the experience is necessarily veridical, only that *S* is *justified* in believing it to be so.

determine the principal source of a mystical experience, whether it be God or something more nefarious.

The second challenge of the POC is that it does not hold mysticism to an appropriately high standard. Swinburne certainly raises the bar for mystical experience candidates, yet, as the evil-spirit dilemma shows, the POC cannot weed out all counterfeit experiences—say nothing about natural experiences mistaken as mystical. These problems demonstrate that the POC is incomplete (as opposed to inherently misguided), making it no more ideal a standard for veridicality than Alston's.

II. RECONSTRUCTING A STANDARD OF VERIDICALITY

Following the analysis of Alston and Swinburne, we can articulate demands of an improved standard of veridicality. First, our standard needs to allow for new beliefs. The subject must be justified in accepting beliefs that are both consistent with their religious tradition and those which potentially expand or overturn it. Second, it must have the ability to weed out false and counterfeit mystical experiences or, at the very least, be able to make distinctions between experiences that have a higher probability of being veridical and those with a lower probability. Third, without disregarding them, it cannot be too dependent on doctrine and precedent. While these are the three essential requirements, an ideal standard should also allow for causally overdetermined experiences, avoid the problem of religious pluralism, and demonstrate a basic consistency with historically accepted accounts of mystical experiences.

To meet these demands, I propose the following criteria. They are divided into two categories: nonnegotiable and ancillary. The former must be met in order for an experience to be deemed veridical; concurrently, there is nothing conclusively (non)confirmative about the latter criteria, but they can serve to reinforce the confidence of the subject.

A. NONNEGOTIABLE:

1) The doctrinal/intellectual element of the experience must conform to previously held beliefs or those of an established religious tradition to the degree that a subject can rationally accept its content. If mysticism is to be considered seriously as an epistemic warrant, we must be able to evaluate instances of it on rational grounds, not just moral and affective ones. Some critics may be dissatisfied with the lack of a strict rule by which to judge the issue of doctrine, but having an indefinite threshold is useful for

several reasons. It first allows for the openness to newness that is present but limited in Alston's framework. Where Alston limits verification to the subject's religious tradition, this criterion allows him to seek verification through other established traditions. For instance, we can now allow Paul's mystical experience to remain veridical without tripping over his transition from Judaism to Christianity. Second, it comes closer to solving the problem of religious diversity and solves it on the intra-denominational level. By using the subject's rational purview as the measure of an experience's intellectual content, the standard avoids being constrained to a single tradition. Religious lines become malleable, and intra-denominational division becomes virtually irrelevant. By way of illustration, a Muslim can perceive God as Trinitarian and need not dismiss his encounter as unveridical (although he also need not accept it). That is to say, if he can reasonably assent to the idea of a triune God, he is not required to consider the experience unveridical simply because it is incompatible with Islamic belief. Finally, this criterion circumvents Gellman's objection that the Christian mystical tradition has been compromised by historically contingent sources but still functions as a restraint on putative mystical experiences, since the measure is not a specific tradition but the limits of the subject's own rationality.

2) The experience must be free from Swinburne's four special considerations, with minor alteration. Swinburne's considerations do well in setting a minimum bar for vetting mystical experiences. The one caveat regarding this criterion is that if an experience meets the other criteria in my proposed standard to an extraordinary degree but does not pass all of the considerations, then the subject may be justified in taking the experience to be overdetermined. For instance, if a subject had taken a psychotropic drug prior to a mystical experience, but the experience met all of the remaining requirements of the standard—including the ancillary criteria—then he could reasonably take the drug to be the proximate cause of a genuine mystical experience. This qualifier is an improvement in that it permits overdetermination while still rejecting experiences that fail to pass the fundamental conditions of any doxastic practice. Ultimately, this criterion serves a twofold purpose: it functions as a preliminary vetting mechanism and also helps diagnose overdetermination. In the latter case, if overdetermination is proven, this criterion is not overridden, for it is a nonnegotiable, but takes on its secondary function.

3) There ought to be an engaging or arresting of all of the subject's faculties. This criterion differentiates between true and false experiences. During a true experience, discursive reasoning is suspended—although situational-awareness will still occur—the will is concordant with

God's, bodily needs and desires are mitigated, and various physical reactions sometimes take place (among these accessory phenomena, Albert Farges lists stigmatization, levitation, luminous effluvia, odoriferous effluvia, mystical abstinence, inedia, and power over nature).[20] A false experience—one caused by psychotropic drugs, for instance—will likely only employ one or two faculties. This criterion also differentiates between mystical and other forms of religious experience. For example, a Marian apparition would not be considered a mystical experience in the truest sense of the word, for God is not the direct object of the experience, even if it is religious in nature. There are two lines of justification for this criterion. First, it tracks the experiences of many mystics who describe their encounters with the divine as including the entire person.[21] Second, it respects a mystical experience as a unitive event. Mystics in most of the world's main religious traditions are careful to use non-dualistic language. If a mystical experience brings a person into (comm)union with God—and perhaps the rest of the natural world—then it follows that the subject should be personally unified as well. Hence, this criterion is an important factor in the discernment of varieties of religious experiences and of veridical mystical experiences. This criterion sharply departs from both Alston and Swinburne's systems. Each author heavily emphasizes the state of the subject prior to a mystical experience (e.g., background beliefs or levels of intoxication), but this criterion focuses primarily on the actual experience rather than its external context.

4) The experience ought to be transformative, catalyzing effects in the subject that last beyond the experience itself. We should expect a direct encounter with God to be a life-changing event. In the ordinary course of life, far less spectacular occurrences spark such about-faces: near death experiences, stints in prison, a cannonball to the leg, happening upon scripture, etc. If these events—which are hardly pedestrian but still less marvelous than an instance of mysticism—are sources of transformation, then mysticism most surely would be as well. Consider for instance, the change of trajectory in Gautama Buddha's life following his mystical enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, or Henry David Thoreau's mystical union in the woods. Mystical experiences of all varieties are transformative for the subject whether in the formation of new beliefs, the reassurance of previous beliefs, the persistence of the

20 Albert Farges, *Mystical Phenomena Compared with Their Human and Diabolical Counterfeits*, 2nd ed., trans. S.P. Jacques (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1926), 514.

21 Teresa of Ávila, *The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila by Herself*, trans. J.M. Cohen (New York: Penguin Group, 1957), 107-44. Saint Teresa, for instance, describes how during her mystical experiences she was able to read Latin and understand divine mysteries (intellect), levitate (body), and set aside all earthly desires (will).

affective dimension present during the experience itself, a permanent physical brand (e.g., stigmatization), or a will that is more closely aligned with God's. Unlike Alston's overrider system, this criterion prevents the standard from being too dependent on the doctrinally based criteria, which are not reliable.

B. ANCILLARY:

Before exploring the ancillary criteria, a few notes about their use. While an experience can be deemed nonveridical, not all experiences that we can justifiably call veridical are necessarily so, meaning that a spectrum of certainty accompanies each "veridical" mystical experience. If a subject meets all nonnegotiable criteria, they have sufficient epistemic warrant (just as sense perception may be relied on as accurate even if it is not infallible). Hence, the role of ancillary criteria. They do not determine whether an experience has warrant, but they serve to increase the subject's certainty in the experience's veracity. Ancillary criteria, then, are dissimilar from the overriders and counter-considerations in that they are unable to render an experience unveridical but only add to a subject's confidence.

1) The subject is reasonably predisposed to a mystical experience. By "reasonably predisposed," I simply mean practiced in introspective awareness and the discernment of emotional and spiritual states—especially through prayer, mediation, self-examination, etc. While mystical encounters require no preparation on the part of the subject, a contemplative or other individual so practiced will be able to judge the experience's veridicality with greater accuracy. In some ways, this is an extrapolation of Swinburne's first consideration: veridicality is, in part, proportionately correlated with the reliability of the subject. However, this criterion is more nuanced in that it also judges the *degree* of veridicality.

2) The experience is accompanied by a sense of indubitability concerning the veridicality of the experience and the accuracy of its content. A person who doubts their experience little-to-none can enjoy a higher degree of confidence in its veridicality than a person plagued by intense doubt. This is a thin criterion, but it can be useful to the subject all the same—particularly if mystical experiences bear any internal mark of veridicality. Again, the subject's certainty has no role in Alston or Swinburne's standards.

3*) The experience is consistent with those of others.* No plausible reason exists to believe that God appears to every person in the same manner or discloses the same content. If, however, a subject can cross-check their experience with the experience of another, then they naturally stand on firmer epistemic grounds, in just the same way we trust

scientific trials that are replicable. Simply, if two experiences are phenomenologically similar but dissimilar in content and cause, we cannot issue differing verdicts on the question of veridicality. The implication of this principle—sometimes referred to as the principle of causal indifference—is that if an experience coincides with other accounts, then the subject can demonstrate more confidence in the genuineness of their experience. Of course, a mystical encounter unlike any before it may be veridical nonetheless.[22]

CONCLUSION

If we make the assertion that mystical experiences possess epistemic warrant, we must also admit that the beliefs derived from these experiences are of the highest kind. How could knowledge acquired via a direct encounter with the transcendent God be otherwise? This being said, they are also the most dangerous, especially if wholly authoritative for the subject. Accordingly, we must find a way to preserve the power and authority of mystical practices while simultaneously ensuring their authenticity.

In attempting to meet this challenge, I believe I have moved the present conversation forward by determining the qualities that ought to be incorporated into an effective veridicality standard. Nevertheless, many questions are left to be answered. Even if proved veridical, is mysticism authoritative for others or only the subject? Wholly or partially? Can better knowledge of mysticism as a doxastic practice make it as useful as sense perception? To conclude with the famous words of the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner, "In the days ahead, you will either be a mystic (one who has experienced God for real) or nothing at all."[23]

22 To further distinguish this criterion from the second nonnegotiable, consider them in terms of form versus content. A Christian can have a mystical experience that is doctrinally sound yet be wholly unprecedented in the way it is perceived (i.e. similar in content but not form). This does nothing to decrease the veridicality of the experience. Nonetheless, a person who has an experience that is doctrinally sound and parallels the perceptive characteristics of another's experience (i.e. similar in content and form) can exhibit greater confidence in the veridicality of their experience.

23 Many thanks to Dr. Edward Glowienka, whose insights greatly informed this paper.

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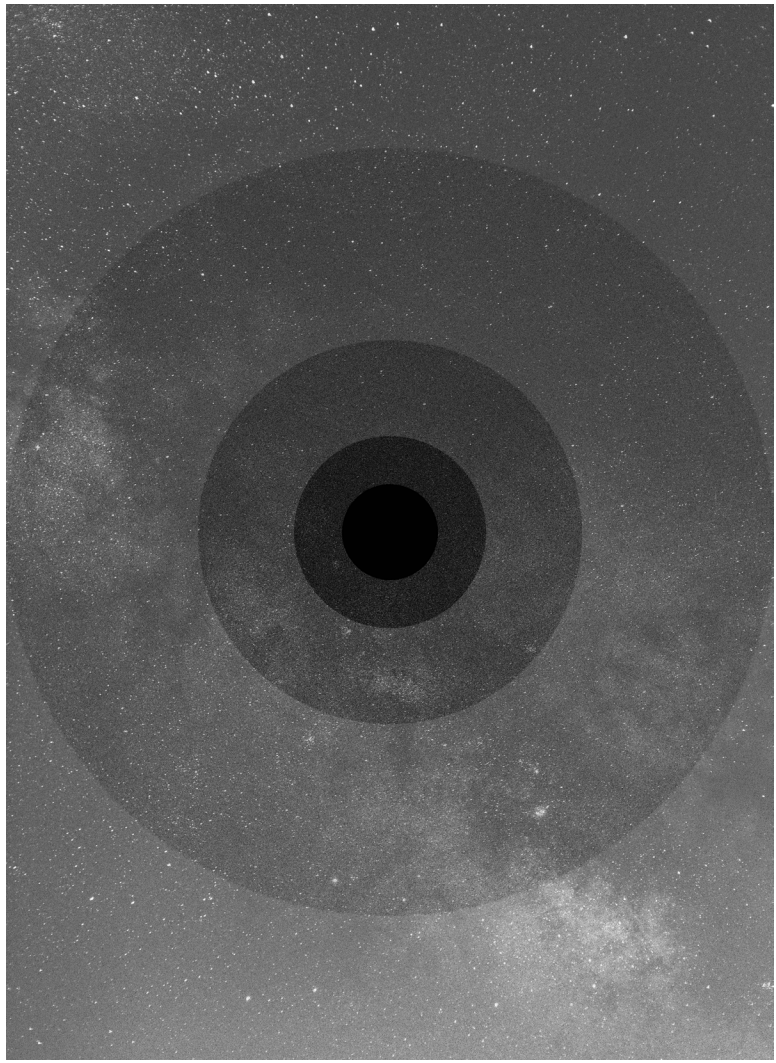
A FRACTAL UNIVERSE AND THE IDENTITY OF INDESCERNIBLES



MATTEO CASAROSA

ABSTRACT

The principle of Identity of Indiscernibles has been challenged with various thought experiments involving symmetric universes. In this paper, I describe a fractal universe and argue that, while it is not a symmetric universe in the classical sense, under the assumption of a relational theory of space it nonetheless contains a set of objects indiscernible by pure properties alone. I then argue that the argument against the principle from this new thought experiment resists better than those from classical symmetric universes three main objections put forth against this kind of arguments.

INTRODUCTION

The principle of Identity of Indiscernibles is usually formulated as follows: if, for every property F, object x has F if and only if object y has F, then x is identical to y.[1] It can be written in the notation of symbolic logic as:

$$\forall F(Fx \leftrightarrow Fy) \rightarrow x=y, \text{ where } F \text{ is a property.}$$

However, there are in fact several versions of the principle, corresponding to different classes of properties. Not all versions of the principle are controversial. Consider the distinction between pure and impure properties.[2] *Impure* properties make reference to particular substances (e.g. being the wife of Socrates) while *pure* properties do not (e.g. being a wife). If one allows impure properties into the class considered, then the principle seems trivially true: for example, the impure property *being distinct from y* will certainly discern any x from y.[3]

There is an ongoing debate regarding discernibility through pure properties. Although in recent times the discussion has included empirical arguments,[4] one of the main objections to the principle being necessarily true is based on thought experiments that present a symmetric universe in which the principle is apparently violated.[5] A symmetric universe is a possible universe composed of some intrinsically indistinguishable objects, arranged in such a way that

1 Peter Forrest, "The Identity of Indiscernibles," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified August 15, 2010, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-indiscernible/.

2 For a detailed discussion of the distinction see e.g. Gary S. Rosenkrantz, "The pure and the impure," *Logique et Analyse* 22, no. 88 (1979): 515.

3 Max Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles," *Mind* 61, no. 242 (1952): 153-64 considers this same property and concludes that some forms of the principle really are tautological.

4 Steven French, "Identity and Individuality in Quantum Mechanics," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified August 3, 2015, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qt-idind/.

5 The first argument of this kind has been presented in Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles." The author presented a universe containing only two spheres of the same size.

all spatial relations among them are mutual—for example, a universe composed of just three qualitatively identical spheres situated at the vertices of an equilateral triangle. Responses to this argument are generally based on some sort of reinterpretation of the visual and spatial construction proposed in the thought experiment.

In this paper, instead of a symmetric universe, I describe a fractal universe and argue that—while there are asymmetric relations among the objects that compose that universe that would seem to make them discernible, and it is not in fact a symmetric universe in the classical sense—under the assumption of a relational theory of space it nonetheless contains a set of objects indiscernible by pure properties alone. I then consider three remarkable objections grounded in thought experiments according to which a symmetric universe is reinterpreted as (i) a non-Euclidean universe comprised of just one object, (ii) one multilocated object, and (iii) comprised of one extended simple object. I aim to show that the first objection does not apply at all to this fractal universe and that the other two are made less plausible due to considerations regarding complexity.

I. THE THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

Imagine infinitely many concentric (i.e. having the same center) rings. The radii of these rings increase and decrease without bound. Each one has radius half of that of the one which immediately surrounds it and double of that of the one which it immediately surrounds.

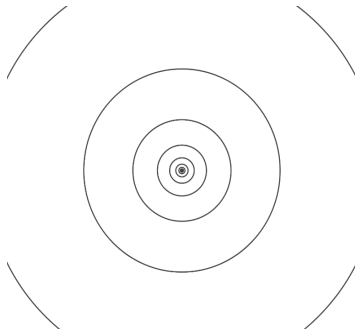


Fig. 1

Now, these rings are, relationally speaking, all in the same situation. Every one of them is inscribed into infinitely many rings, and every one of them contains infinitely many rings. The ratio of one ring to another cannot differentiate them. This is in fact a fractal universe: it appears the same independently of the scale at which you look at it.

It would seem, however, that they are all discernible through pure properties alone, since they are all different in size, and size seems to be analyzable without reference to any particular substance—i.e. it seems to be a pure property. However, under a relational theory of space, there is no absolute size; every measure is relative to other measures.[6] It would make no sense to think of a universe identical to our own except in size. Under such a theory size is in some sense an extrinsic property, and therefore it is not a pure property if the other entities to which it makes reference are particular substances (i.e. *this* ring rather than *a* ring).

I have already laid out some considerations in defense of the thesis that *all* the rings in this fractal universe are indiscernible through pure properties alone; in the following section I will consider some other plausible objections and build a more formal defense of the thesis.

II. INDISCERNIBILITY, ASYMMETRY AND AUTOMORPHISMS

There is certainly some important difference between this fractal universe and symmetric universes presented in previous discussions of the Identity of Indiscernibles. In fact, the fractal universe is not symmetric at all in the obvious sense. Consider any couple of rings: one of them is inside the other, and "being inside" is an antisymmetric relation.[7] They all would seem therefore to be discernible. Still, that does not prove that they are discernible by means of pure properties alone, for "being inside X_k," where X_k is a particular ring, is not a pure property, since it is plainly analyzed in terms of a particular object—namely, X_k. Moreover, if we were to "loosen" this property to make it pure, it would no longer differentiate the rings, since "being inside another ring" is common to them all. The fractal universe is not symmetric in the classical sense; however, if we consider the set of all rings in the universe as the domain of a formal language, it appears to be symmetric according to a kind of symmetry described by Caulton and Butterfield.[8] They call an *automorphism* (or even, in fact,

6 Ian Hacking, "The Identity of Indiscernibles," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 72, no. 9 (1975): 249-56.

7 David H. Sanford, "The Problem of the Many, Many Composition Questions, and Naive Mereology," Noûs 27, no. 2 (1993): 219-28; Shieva Kleinschmidt, "Multilocation and Mereology," Philosophical Perspectives 25, no. 1 (2011). As intuitive as it can be, this may not be completely uncontroversial. Sanford cites a possible counterexample from a novel by Jorge Luis Borge: "I saw the Aleph from all points; I saw the earth in the Aleph and in the earth the Aleph once more and the earth in the Aleph." Kleinschmidt offers a scenario in which a time-traveling wall ends up being one of its own bricks.

8 Adam Caulton and Jeremy Butterfield, "On Kinds of Indiscernibility in Logic and Metaphysics," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 63, no. 1

symmetry) of a domain D a permutation of the domain under which the extensions of all the predicates are invariant. That is, a one-to-one, surjective function f from D to D such that for all n, for all predicates P of arity n and for all $b_1,...,b_n \in D$:

$$P(b_1,\ldots,b_n) \leftrightarrow P(f(b_1),\ldots,f(b_n))$$

It seems that the fractal universe has non-trivial automorphisms. For example, the permutation which maps each circle to the one immediately surrounding it will do the job. The reason for this is just the fact that it is a fractal; therefore, it should appear the same regardless of scale, regardless of which ring you chose as your point of reference, so to speak. Each one of these automorphisms intuitively corresponds to a zoom.

This last point, I argue, shows that any two rings are indiscernible through pure properties alone. We can postulate that every pure property of some object x corresponds to a sentence true "of" x. In other words, we can assume that for all pure properties p and for all entities a there exists a predicate P and quantifiers $Q_1,...,Q_n$ such that

$$a \text{ has } p \equiv Q_1\ x_1, \ldots, Q_n\ x_n\ P(a,x_1, \ldots,x_n)$$

Now, we are ready for a theorem. Let a be an element of D, let P be a predicate, let $Q_1,\ldots,Q_n$ be quantifiers and let f be an automorphism of D; then we have:

$$Q_1 x_1, \ldots,Q_n x_n\ P(a,x_1, \ldots,x_n) \leftrightarrow Q_1 x_1, \ldots,Q_n x_n\ P(f(a),x_1, \ldots,x_n)$[9]$$

We have in fact proved that a and $f(a)$ have the same pure properties, or at least the same pure properties corresponding to first order sentences. However, if we broaden the definition of automorphism to higher order predicates, a similar theorem holds for higher order sentences.

III. CONFRONTING OBJECTIONS TO SYMMETRIC UNIVERSES

There are three main objections to thought experiments regarding symmetric universes against the Identity of Indiscernibles.

The first is what we might call the *Non-Euclidean Space objection*. Ian Hacking considers several thought experiments about couples of allegedly distinct but indiscernible objects and insists that they all can be reinterpreted as involving just one object.[10] Most readers interpret Hacking as suggesting that any symmetric universe made of a couple

(2012): 27-84. This classical sense seems to require every binary relation to be symmetric.

9 This can be proved by induction on the arity of P.

10 Ian Hacking, "A Leibnizian Space," Dialogue 14, no. 1 (1975): 89-100, doi: 10.1017/S00122173000456.

of allegedly distinct objects could be interpreted as a non-Euclidean universe (i.e. a universe violating some laws of Euclidean geometry, which can be imagined as having bent space) with just one object inside of it.[11] Max Black's two spheres, for example, would be empirically undistinguishable from just one sphere in cylindric space.

It seems that a cylindric space reinterpretation does not fit well with the fractal universe I have described. In Black's thought experiment, if you want to go from one sphere to the other, there is just one direction you can travel in. In our universe of concentric rings, you can move radially in any direction and you will always meet another ring. If you want to argue that those are all the same ring, you are committed to the claim that the space they inhabit is bent not just in one direction but in any direction. Therefore, a cylindric space would not help, nor would many others; however, one may wonder whether a spherical one could. There are, however, empirical differences between the Euclidean depiction of the fractal universe we have naturally imagined and what would be the case under this tentative reinterpretation in spherical geometry. Quite simply, the rings would not be *Euclidean* circles. Every circle in Euclidean space has circumference π times its diameter. Circles in spherical space, on the contrary, *never* instantiate that ratio; rather, the ratio between one spherical circumference and its diameter varies but is always less than π and more than two. We can therefore make explicit that the rings in the fractal universe are Euclidean circles; this would leave that universe conceivable. In fact, I am quite confident that most readers had conceived it as Euclidean from the beginning.

Another reason can be given for the conclusion that the rings cannot be identified one with the other—namely, the discernibility between the exterior and the interior region defined by each ring. Imagine an observer traveling outwards from one ring to another. The observer can ascertain, when he crosses the outer ring, that he is crossing a ring *from the inside.* (Since the ring is an Euclidean circle, it appears nearer on both sides than it is in front of the observer). The observer can therefore infer that the ring he has reached is not the same he left moving *outwards*.

What I have offered here is not a rigorous proof that no non-Euclidean space can allow us to reinterpret the rings as just one ring, which would require extensive mathematical work, but I believe it is a good informal argument for that conclusion. The conclusion would completely undermine the *Non-Euclidean Space objection*; it would not just make it less persuasive as a metaphysical interpretation of the

11 Katherine Hawley, "Identity and Indiscernibility," *Mind* 118, no. 469 (2009): 101-19.

qualitative facts described but rather excludes it altogether.

I will now consider the other objections together, because my rebuttals to the two of them are very similar.

O'Leary-Hawthorne argues that bundle theory suggests reinterpreting Black's two spheres as one multilocated sphere.[12] Let us call this the *Multilocation objection*.

Hawley suggests redescribing sets of indiscernible objects as one extended simple object, contrary to the intuition that a simple extended object must have a connected location.[13] Let us call this the *Extended-simple objection*.

Both attempts face some difficulties which have been highlighted in the literature; my present aim, however, is just to show that the fractal universe resists both objections better than previous thought experiments. The rationale behind the claim is simplicity.

The argument goes as follows: both multilocation and disconnected extended simples are somehow suspect. If confronted with that which at first seems to be a pair of distinct objects, you would and should require some evidence before you conclude that they are really either the same, multilocated object or a disconnected extended simple. There seems to be a *presumption* that they are distinct; after all, even the *possibility* of multilocation and disconnected extended simples is not obvious, while the existence of multiple distinct being seems undeniable, *pace* Parmenides.

However, if confronted with such a situation you might, despite the presumption, grant non-negligible plausibility to both the multilocation and the extended simple hypotheses.

Now, what if you were confronted with infinitely many seemingly distinct objects? Would not it be infinitely more unbecoming to suppose that there is just one entity? After all the multilocation or extended simple objects, if applied to a couple of objects, would correspond to one disputable identity claim. The same strategies, if applied to what seems to be an infinite multitude, would correspond to an infinite conjunction of such claims.

Moreover, if we want to allow that seemingly distinct rings could really be just one entity, by way of multilocation or *extended-simpleness*, conflating all of them would be just one possibility among many—many of which would not eliminate the indiscernibility. Suppose, for example, that there were just two multilocated rings, which occupy concentric circular regions *alternately*. They would be indiscernible by

12 John Hawthorne, "The Bundle Theory of Substance and the Identity of Indiscernibles," *Analysis* 55, no. 3 (1995): 191-96.

13 Hawley, "Identity and Indiscernibility," 101-19; Ned Markosian, "Simples," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 76, no. 2 (1998): 213-28.

pure properties alone, for reasons similar to those mentioned for the initial interpretation with infinitely many rings. Therefore, one needs something more specific than a claim like "In the imagined universe there is a multilocated object," or "In the imagined universe there is a disconnected extended simple object."

These considerations are meant to highlight that both objections—if applied to the fractal universe—result in very complex and specific claims, which would be unbecoming unless one has strong, independent reasons to favor that interpretation over the natural one, which involves infinitely many indiscernible rings.

This response does not show that the multilocation objection and the extended simple have no force against the new thought experiment, as was the case for the Non-Euclidean Space objection, but it nevertheless shows that they face further difficulties other than those already present in previous symmetric universes.

CONCLUSION

The Principle of Identity of Indiscernibles has been attacked in the past with several thought experiments, which have usually been considered inconclusive. The same set of empirical facts described in the thought experiments can usually be given many different metaphysical interpretations, and it is not easy to say which should be preferred. In this paper, I have presented a new thought experiment whose geometric features secure it against a kind of reinterpretation, and I have defended it against other objections using arguments from theoretical simplicity.

Finally, I must point out that my argument depends on a few controversial assumptions. One is the relational theory of space which, however, seems to be implicitly assumed in many discussions of the Principle; the other, less controversial assumption is the possibility of an infinite multitude of objects. The second commitment is perhaps the most curious. Previous arguments for and against the Principle have no connection with that proposition. If one finds all my other premises true, and still believes the Principle of Identity of Indiscernibles should not be abandoned, they could use the Principle to argue for finitism. Future research could make this an argument worthy of consideration.

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THE NECKLACE VIEW OF THE SELF

XU, YIFENG

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I provide a framework for accounting for the self, based on a reconstruction of Galen Strawson's "theory of SESMETs," or the Pearl view, with Barry Dainton's continuous consciousness thesis. I argue that the framework I provide adequately accounts for the self and is preferable to solely adopting either Strawson's or Dainton's theory. I call my reconstruction the "Necklace" view of the self.

In everyone's daily experience of the world, there seems to be an "I" that exists. It is usually assumed that person must feel, understand, and act from the perspective of their "I," and the "I" is "the self" of that person. Many philosophers have been concerned about the questions, "What is the self?" or "Who am I?" and a popular claim today is that one experiences one's self as a narrative. Galen Strawson argues against the narrativity view in favour of his materialist "theory of SESMETs (subjects of experience that are single mental things)."[1] I consider Strawson's theory important, except for the counterintuitive consequence that a person's past selves are completely different selves from the person's current self. Although I agree with Strawson that self-experience does not necessarily have the nature of narrativity, and that one's self could often be episodic, I regard the theory of SESMETs as problematic because it eliminates a first-personal claim on past selves in one's history. Since I regard the feature of first-person to be essential to any account of the self, Strawson's theory of the self cannot be a complete one. This paper endeavours to solve this incompleteness by arguing for two states of the self—the diachronic self and the episodic self as one and the same self under different conditions—by combining Strawson's SESMETs theory and Barry Dainton's "continuous consciousness thesis."

Before making criticisms of Strawson's theory, I shall briefly introduce the background of the SESMETs. Strawson challenges the commonly-held view that there is no such thing as the self, and "the self" we speak of in our language is merely a fictional character used for descriptions about human life experience. According to Strawson, such a categorisation of the self—together with the presupposition behind the categorisation that self-experience is a narrative about a person—is mistaken. First, a person does not necessarily have the self-experience which is like a human-life-long narrative, and it is wrong to make the normative claim that one should have one's self-experience as a narrative. There are people who do not consider their selves "as a

1 Galen Strawson, "The Self and the SESMET," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6, no. 4 (1999): 118; See also Galen Strawson, "Against Narrativity," *Ratio (new series)* XVII 4, no. 0034–0006 (2004): 428-52.

human being as a whole" but "principally as an inner mental entity."[2] Strawson insists that, for such a person, there certainly exists a "self," and the person's self is not considered as a narrative.[3] Second, Strawson denies the claim that the self is fictional. He argues for the existence of the self from a material stance, starting with an investigation of people's phenomenological experience about "the mental self" and ends with what he calls "the Pearl view," which "suggests that many mental selves exist, one at a time and one after another, like pearls on a string… each is a fully distinct existence, an individual physical thing or object, though they may exist for considerably different lengths of time."[4] He believes this to be the best one can do to explain what the self is if there is such a (material) thing as "the self."[5]

From my point of view, Strawson deserves credit in arguing against the narrative claim about self-experience and the well-organised investigation of the self as SESMETs. Nevertheless, I disagree with him on the conclusion that his Pearl view is a full account of the self, even from a materialist stance which Strawson holds. The problem with such a conclusion is due to Strawson's claim that the self is not diachronically considered. By "diachronically considered," I mean the feature of long-term continuity which Strawson finds as well as rejects in the narrativity camp's account of the self.[6] Strawson distinguishes two forms of self-experience: the diachronic form—"one naturally figures oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future"—and the episodic form—"one does not figure oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future."[7] As Strawson argues against narrativity, he not only argues that the self is a (material) thing rather than a fictional character, but he also denies the idea that the self should be considered to persist over a long time. The "long time" here might sound controversial. The narrativity camp suggests the time to be human-life-long, but my use of diachronic self in this paper—though within the definition given by

2 Strawson, "Against Narrativity," 429.
3 Strawson, "Against Narrativity," 428-52.
4 Strawson, "The Self," 405-28. By arguing from the material stance, Strawson further clarifies that, according to his materialism, the mental is within the physical realm—which is the only realm—but belongs to the experiential aspects of the physical, distinct from the non-experiential aspects. In other words, Strawson denies the claim made by some materialists that experience is merely neurons firing.
5 Strawson, "The Self," 405-28. Strawson denies the claim made by some materialists that experience is merely neurons firing. He clarifies that, according to his materialism, the mental is within the physical realm—which is the only realm—but belongs to the experiential aspects of the physical, distinct from the non-experiential.
6 Strawson, "Against Narrativity," 430.
7 Strawson, "Against Narrativity," 430.

Strawson—is only to contrast Strawson's episodic self, and it does not have such an implication.

In "Against Narrativity," Strawson makes the convincing argument that *many* people experience their selves synchronically (viz. they experience their selves as something only at present and not in the past or future), and their self-experiences are episodic. So far, his claim sounds plausible and adequate. However, in "The Self," Strawson radicalises that claim by asserting that the self should *only* be considered as "the single mental self at any given time without thinking of the self as something that has long-term continuity."[8] Our consciousness, according to Strawson, constantly slips from the consciousness about the self from time to time, meaning that every person must have multiple episodic self-experiences no matter how long each episode is. Since each phenomenological experience of the self must be episodic instead of diachronic, the metaphysical self must be accounted for episodically.[9] In other words, it is psychological continuity through each episode—i.e. the continuity in the mental state of experiencing the self—that defines the persistence of the self. It seems that Strawson presupposes the sufficiency of cognitive phenomenology to the metaphysical account of the self. Therefore, he comes up with the Pearl view. For Strawson, the self is identical to the episodic self, and each episodic self is independent from all other selves. Although Strawson uses the analogy of a pearl string, it would not make any difference if he simply called the selves "pearls without a string"—which might even be more accurate. If one insists on interpreting "the string," Strawson himself seems to give a suggestion, which is that "the string" represents the history of the biological human being who carries all the mental selves.[10] However, based on the SESMETs theory, such a string analogy seems redundant, because the string is nothing more than a temporal recorder of the selves that are argued to be independent existents. A person's history as a mere timeline would have no effect on any of the person's episodic selves. Correspondingly, the existence and any change of the string has no effect on any of the pearls.

We shall observe a radical separation made by Strawson's SESMETs theory, which is the separation of a person's episodic self-experiences in the past or future from the person at present. Because Strawson has

8 Strawson, "The Self," 423.

9 Strawson, "The Self," 421-4.

10 Strawson does not explain how the string works in the article, but from his footnote 30, he seems to suggest that Dennett's account of the self would be analogous to a pearl string with only one long pearl (Strawson, "The Self," 425). Since Dennett treats the self as the "centre" of a human narrative, it is probably the case that Strawson makes human history analogous to the string of a pearl string (Dennett, "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity").

made the "string of the pearls" nothing but a temporal axis, it becomes the case that, for example, I cannot claim the episodic self which is experienced by the teenage me, YF, from 14 to 15 years old to be "a self of mine" since "my self" can only refer to the episodic self I am experiencing now, and "my self" is an independent existent from "that self" of the teenage YF. The only relationship between the two selves is that they occupy a sequential timeline—which is the history of YF—so that they do not overlap. There seems to be no difference between my recognition of the teenage YF's self and my recognition of any random self which existed around my teenage years. Such a consequence is certainly counterintuitive. Based on the fact that Strawson's Pearl view on its own must face this problem, is there a way to resolve the counterintuitiveness so that the string of mental selves share a more integrated relationship than mere temporal continuity, as well as preserve the distinctions between each two episodic selves?

I suggest a reconstruction of the Pearl view to achieve the aim, by replacing what "the string of the necklace" represents. On the basis of this idea, I bring in Barry Dainton's "continuous consciousness thesis" about the self and combine it with Strawson's SESMETs to become a complete view of the self. Dainton defines the consciousness stream to be the potential for experience, and he claims that a person's self persists as long as their consciousness stays in a continuous stream, despite what happens to their physical body as a consciousness carrier in the middle of the stream. In other words, a person's self can persist even though the person has experiences without a self-experience temporally in between the consciousness stream, so long as the potential for experience is continuous. Dainton regards his view as having an implication that the self is "nothing other than the potential… a continuous potential for experience"—namely, nothing more than a continuous consciousness stream.[11] Notice that, according to this claim, phenomenal continuity is sufficient for the persistence of a self, and psychological continuity (which Strawson argues for) is not necessary. Although such a view is different from Strawson's SESMETs view, Dainton's theory of the self in its nature does not deny SESMETs as selves but accounts for another type of the self; I call it "the diachronic self" because it fits into Strawson's definition of the diachronic form of self-experience and it contrasts with Strawson's episodic self. Besides, Dainton's theory holds a neutral position on whether the self is a material thing in the Strawsonian sense, because it would depend on whether experience—which the self is capable of being

11 Barry Dainton, *Self*, trans. Wang, Youlu (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature & Art Publishing House, 2016), 89; 95.

conscious of—is material, so Dainton's theory certainly does not challenge Strawson's materialist stance.[12]

All these features in Dainton's theory provide the possibility for a reconstruction of the Pearl view. Instead of regarding Dainton's and Strawson's theories as different views on one thing (the self), I suggest that we should regard them as two states of the self: the episodic self and the diachronic self. Since it is a reconstruction of the Pearl view, I choose to use an analogy of "a pearl necklace:" the pearls on the necklace represent episodic selves that Strawson argues for (the SESMETs), and the string of the necklace represents the continuous potential for experience shared by the SESMETs. When I say that the diachronic self and the episodic self are two states, I mean that they are essentially the same self—the consciousness that is capable of experiencing—but under different conditions; the diachronic self is the whole stream of consciousness which can potentially be the subject of all experiences including self-experience, while an episodic self is the same consciousness only at the time of being the subject of a self-experience. What the string provides is a more integrated relationship between the episodic selves, meaning that the episodic selves on a same necklace are not only linked by a sequential history but also connected by a co-consciousness (i.e. the sole continuous potential for experiences). Although my recognition of my present self is distinct from my recognition of the teenage YF's self psychologically, it is a distinction between episodic selves but not necessarily a distinction between diachronic selves. As long as my consciousness at present is still the same potential for experience as the teenage YF's consciousness, I share the same diachronic self with the teenage YF.

The reconstruction also survives several concerns about what can happen to a person's physical body. For example, a dreamless sleep would cause an interruption to a psychological continuity so that the episodic self before the sleep would be independent from the episodic self after the sleep. Using the pearl necklace analogy, these two episodic selves are represented by two individual pearls. Nevertheless, the two pearls can still be connected by the necklace string by being the same diachronic self as long as the two episodic selves constitute a continuous consciousness stream. More cases are suggested by Dainton such as mental transfer between physical bodies, space transmission, and transhumanism through biological technologies.[13] For all of these cases, there are disputes on whether one's self can be kept after such changes are made to one's physical body. The Necklace view gives an assertive answer: the diachronic self persists as long as the consciousness

12 Dainton, *Self*, 90-216.
13 Dainton, *Self*, 141-216.

is continuous, and the episodic self persists as long as the psychological cognition is continuous. From this answer we shall see that the self is freed from any temporal physical carrier of it, because the persistence of the self does not depend on the persistence of any human body (or transhuman body). A self may perish even though the human body is maintained (e.g. if one's consciousness stream ends as one's human body enters the vegetative state, the self no longer persists). On the contrary, a self may persist—diachronically, or both diachronically and episodically—though the physical carrier is destroyed.

The idea of reconstructing Strawson's theory roots in the concern that an account of the self—which I take as an attempt to answer the question, "Who am I?"—should be thought about from an "I-perspective." If we accept the claim given by the narrativity camp that the self is merely a fictional character used in a narrative, we would be committed to accounting "who I am" from a completely third-personal view: whatever we say about ourselves, we would speak as a storyteller describing a series of events. To me, this is absurd. Strawson, aiming at a metaphysical account of the self, starts his argument from everyone's self-experience. From this point, I think Strawson is at least on a more correct path. The endeavour I made to reconstruct Strawson's theory in this paper has been based on the will to make the theory more plausible so that we could apply it to answer the question "Who am I?" from an I-perspective. However, one may find an underlying assumption inherent in all three theories—Strawson's view, Dainton's view, my Necklace view—that the persistence of the self is objectively and, therefore, third-personally verifiable. The question would then become, "Since it is agreed that the feature of first-person is essential to the self, is it even possible for one to talk about someone else's self?" The Necklace view clearly suggests that we can at least verify the existence and persistence of any self, but if one holds the idea that a person's self should not be accountable by anyone but the person, one would be likely to deny the possibility. Leke Adeofe, for example, spells out his concern in the article "Personal Identity in African Metaphysics:"

> Western metaphysics... formulations of schemata for continuity theories... neglect the first-person perspective...Yet concerns about, say, my personal identity, are about me, and one would expect personal identity discussions to reflect this subjective aspect of the issue...there is nothing personal about personal identity without the person.[14]

The Necklace view would surely count as one of the "Western metaphysics" Adeofe refers to. According to Adeofe's concern, our attempt to account the self has been mistaken from the very beginning because we

14 Leke Adeofe, "Personal Identity in African Metaphysics," *African Philosophy: New and Traditional Perspectives*, ed. Lee M. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

should not have regarded the self to be accountable fully from a third-person perspective at all. Nevertheless, if we assume that the self can be accounted for from a third-person perspective, the framework provided by the "Necklace view" is more adequate than either Strawson's SESMETs or Dainton's continuous consciousness thesis.

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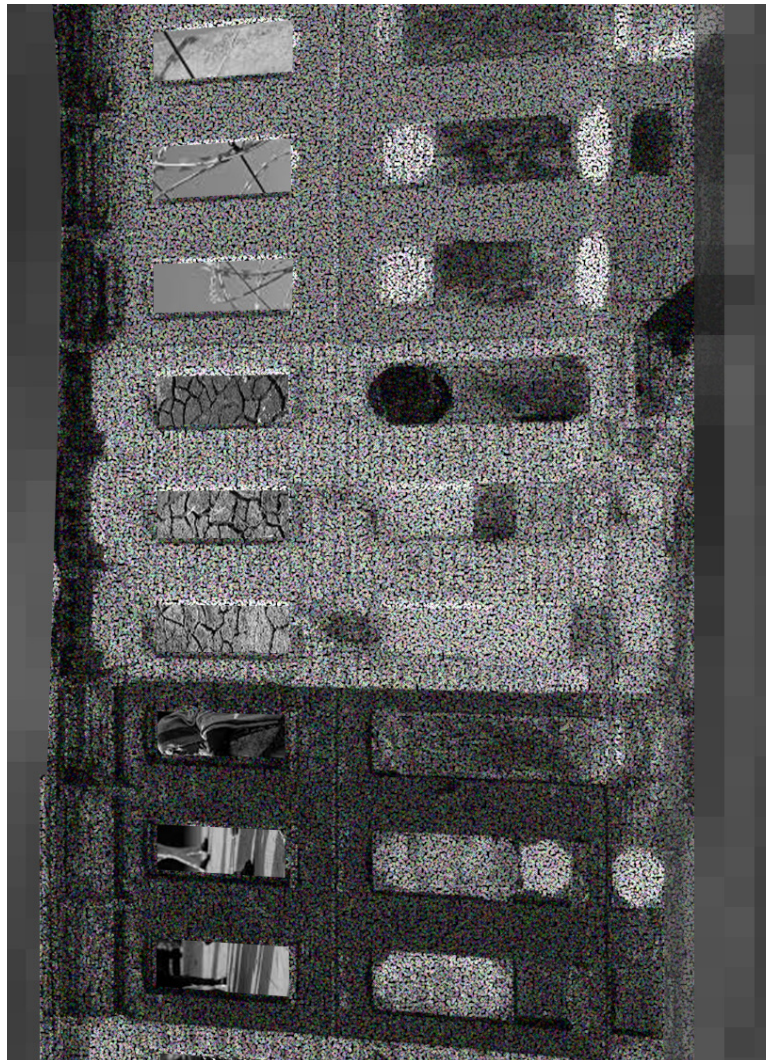
A PRAGMATIC LOOK AT SCHOPENHAUER'S PESSIMISM



ALLISON PARKER

ABSTRACT

Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy is a depressing read. He writes many pages about how suffering is the norm, and any happiness we feel is merely a temporary alleviation of suffering. Even so, his account of suffering rings true to many readers. What are we to do with our lives if Schopenhauer is right, and we are doomed to suffer? In this paper, I use William James' pragmatic method to find practical implications of Schopenhauer's pessimism. I provide a model for how we are to live our lives in a suffering world, a model that provides means to reduce suffering.

INTRODUCTION

Schopenhauer introduces his pessimistic philosophy in the article "On the Sufferings of the World" by pointing out to the reader that our lives are full of suffering. He writes that "misfortune in general is the rule" by which we live our lives.[1] He defines suffering as the positive force instead of as the negative. Suffering or evil is not the absence of good, but a positive force in its own right. Schopenhauer states that human pain and suffering outweigh pleasure and joy. He identifies that suffering does, however, have its uses. He writes, "if the lives of men were relieved of all need, hardship and adversity… they would be so swollen with arrogance that, though they might not burst, they would present the spectacle of unbridled folly—nay, they would go mad."[2] Schopenhauer shows how humanity's expectations, hopes, fears, and desires—everything that flows from the imagination and makes up the majority of humanity's mental life—are the source of humanity's greatest sufferings just as they are the source of humanity's pleasures. Schopenhauer then lays out how different religions and traditions deal with human suffering, identifying that the Christian idea of atonement for sin is a good model, although an unpleasant one, and ends his essay by stating that we are fellow sufferers in this world and that we can recognize another's vice as being a part of the fall that has become us all, and therefore sympathize with those who do us wrong. However, perhaps there is more to gain from Schopenhauer's pessimism than sympathy for others. A look at William James' pragmatic method might show the reader what more we can get out of Schopenhauer's pessimism to make it applicable to our personal lives.

I. JAMES' PRAGMATISM

In a series of lectures given at the Lowell Institute in Boston in 1906 and at Colombia University in New York in 1907, William James

1 Arthur Schopenhauer, "On the Sufferings of the World," in *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer: Studies in Pessimism*, trans. T. Bailey Saunders (Blackmask Online, 2004), 2.

2 Schopenhauer, "On the Sufferings," 2.

defined the pragmatic method as a way in which "to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences."[3] The pragmatic method is a way to view philosophical theories in light of which theories are the most practical or which ones are the most useful for people. In the preface of these lectures, James asserts that most of what we learn from the world comes from our experience, not what we read in books. This paper will attempt to use James' pragmatic method to view the pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer chiefly expressed in his essay, "On the Sufferings of the World." If the world is full of suffering and misfortune, as Schopenhauer argues, then we must find ways of dealing with this painful world. We must understand the implications this metaphysical view has for our lives and then attempt to see how we can remedy some of the problems of our world through practical measures that we can implement in our daily lives. This paper will focus mostly on suffering rather than a full account of Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, since suffering is the most concrete and evident aspect of his pessimism that we are faced with in our daily lives.

II. "ON THE SUFFERINGS OF THE WORLD"

Schopenhauer opens "On the Sufferings of the World" by noting that it is absurd to view all of the suffering in the world "as serving no purpose at all and the result of mere chance."[4] Shortly after that opening paragraph, he states that "misfortune has its uses" in that it keeps us steady and sane.[5] Schopenhauer uses the Christian model of atonement for sin, not out of any responsibility toward the religion or out of any reverence to God, but because the understanding of suffering in the world being the fault of human nature and thus falling under human responsibility is a useful way of picturing the suffering of the world. Schopenhauer ends his essay in a call to action, telling his reader that, in light of his discussion about the sufferings of the world, we should have "tolerance, patience, regard, and love of neighbor."[6] Not only does Schopenhauer give us an argument for his metaphysical view, but he recognizes that his view has implications on how we should live our lives and treat each other. However, Schopenhauer's main concern in this essay is to show that suffering is the general rule by which the world is maintained rather than to give us a plan on how to live in such a world. This paper will attempt more of the latter—showing how we are to live if we are to adopt Schopenhauer's account of suffering.

3 William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1921), 45.
4 James, *Pragmatism*, 2.
5 James, *Pragmatism*, 2.
6 Schopenhauer, "On the Sufferings," 9.

Schopenhauer addresses various topics in the realm of suffering, each of which must be dealt with if we are to understand the practical impliacations of his work. He addresses the lives of animals and how their lives relate to human lives, the issue of procreation and whether or not it is justifiable to bring life into a world in which it is doomed to suffer, and the role that reputation—or what we think other people think about us—plays in our suffering. Since these are the topics that Schopenhauer concentrates on, each of these topics will get a section in this paper which explains his views and attempts to show how we can interpret each in a pragmatic way. We can use the lives of animals as a model for how we could reduce suffering, even though there is a fundamental difference between animals and humans: the Will. We can justify introducing new humans into the world of suffering by differentiating various types of suffering and realizing that we have the power, in some cases, to exchange one type for another. We can reduce the pain caused by our thoughts about the opinions of others by viewing our own lives on their own, without comparing them to the lives of others. The suggestions offered at the end of the following sections amount to recognizing the ways in which we suffer. Schopenhauer might be right that suffering is the norm, but if we can recognize the cause of many of our sufferings, we can be more conscious about them and make decisions that attempt to reduce the amount of suffering we and others endure. We know we suffer, but we do not always know why. Understanding why will shed light on small things we can do to adjust our views and actions to reduce suffering.

III. ANIMAL LIFE AS A MODEL

Schopenhauer offers the way animals experience suffering and pleasure as a contrast to human experience. Animals live in the present moment, being able to enjoy life without fears, regrets, or other mental phenomenon to disturb their peace of mind. Schopenhauer seems to envy the ability of animals to enjoy the present moment undisturbed. He states that when we hope for something and look forward to it, we enjoy it less when it comes along because it often falls short of our expectations. Animals do not suffer this experience of disappointment since they do not hope toward something better in the future. They are allowed to be surprised and pleased by every pleasant moment instead of being disappointed that it did not match their expectations. However, he also acknowledges that animals pay a price for this peace of mind. They are unable to hope in times of trouble and unable to hold onto pleasant memories when they are suffering, making their suffering even more painful as a result.

Should we attempt to be more like animals, not allowing our fears or hopes to take away from the small pleasures of life? If we were to

take up such a method of thinking, some might say we would lose our sense of purpose, which is a higher pleasure than the physical pleasure that animals enjoy. We would also be unable to combat our moments of suffering with hopes and pleasant memories that might give us strength and courage. However, if we were able to enjoy the present moment like animals do—not expecting anything or fearing anything—but also able to hope in times of trouble, we might be able to keep a little bit of the best of both worlds This is a possible practical implication. At least in our pleasant moments, if we can attempt to forget our fears and regrets, we might be able to enjoy those moments a little more, which is some small progress.

There is a fundamental way in which humans and animals are different which is relevant to our ability (or inability) to enjoy the present moment as animals do: the Will. Schopenhauer writes that "Will is the lord of all worlds."[7] By this he means that Will is in reality a unity but that individuals fragment it, breaking it up, by viewing themselves as individuals with independent wills. Each human, then, has an individual will, but it is a broken fragment of the real Will, constantly striving for that endless, timeless, completely free reality without ever being able to achieve it because it is not whole. Humans cannot view life as cats and dogs do because they are aware of themselves as individuals with individual wills, which automatically dooms them to a hopeless life of frustration. What we can do, though, is recognize that we are not the only broken fragments of Will. All other humans share that quality with us. That thought should make us feel a little less alone and a little more understanding of others.

IV. PROCREATION

If life is determined by suffering, is it better to not exist at all? Would we be better off to annihilate such a world full of pain and hardship? These are questions that Schopenhauer brings up in his essay. Even if we do not have a red button to push to end the world—although there are some who might, in fact, have such a power now—these questions are still important to consider because most of us do have the ability to continue the human race in some small degree. Perhaps this is a more applicable question to our own lives: is it right to bear children into such a world for them to suffer as we have suffered—or, as Schopenhauer puts it, "would not a man rather have so much sympathy with the coming generation as to spare it the burden of existence?"[8] We do continue to bear children even though we know they will suffer, but this could be due to our own faulty nature,

7 Arthur Schopenhauer, "The Vanity of Existence," in *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer: Studies in Pessimism*, trans. T. Bailey Saunders (Blackmask Online, 2004), 10.

8 Schopenhauer, "On the Sufferings," 3.

unable to rationalize the consequences of our actions, especially those actions which afford us a great sense of physical pleasure in a world that continually denies us such pleasures. If we make it our goal to alleviate suffering if we can, it seems like refusing to have children would be one step toward that goal, if those children will only add to the amount of people suffering already.

However, to remove suffering from the world is not the same as to remove the people who suffer. It might be true that no existence at all is better than an existence filled with pain and suffering, although I hesitate to admit that positively, but the possibility of an existence without pain or suffering—or one at least with more pleasure than pain—is itself more valuable than nonexistence. The goal is not to achieve "no suffering at all," but rather "no suffering in people's lives." Removing or preventing life does not solve the problem. We must find other ways to alleviate suffering, if that is our goal. We must at least try a little longer, although it might be a possibility that our goal is unreachable and a complete end to existence is the only remedy. The practical implication of this discussion is that preventing new people from being born into a suffering world or ending the existence of people who are already suffering should not be done because doing those things also removes our possibility of life without suffering, which is the true goal.

However, as Schopenhauer describes, there is a purpose for suffering. He states that "a certain amount of care or pain or trouble is necessary for every man at all times. A ship without ballast is unstable and will not go straight."[9] Suffering and pain keep us in check. They teach us lessons and help us to grow. If we did not have suffering to keep us occupied, we would find ways to entertain ourselves, which might be more devastating than the suffering we are currently subject to. There are countless stories of people who were only able to accomplish great feats because their suffering made them strong, opening their eyes to things they would not have seen otherwise. If suffering is helpful, though, perhaps we should allow it and stop trying to relieve ourselves from it. However, not all types of suffering are helpful, and perhaps we can choose. We can barter for the kind of suffering that will help us the most. People do this all the time: they choose to toil and work to avoid the suffering of starvation, thus exchanging one form of suffering (labor) for another (starvation). We can choose to work and struggle to end certain kinds of suffering. In this way, we can at least take comfort in the fact that our suffering has a purpose, even if it is just to alleviate another form of suffering. We can also take comfort in the fact that we are actively choosing to engage in it for a higher cause. If Schopenhauer is right, we will never reach a point where we will not have any suffering at all, so we will always have plenty to keep us busy. We can choose to make progress even though we will

9 Schopenhauer, "On the Sufferings," 2.

suffer the whole way and even though we will never reach total freedom from suffering.

V. REPUTATION

Schopenhauer discusses one factor of our ability for reflection that contributes greatly to human pleasure and pain: "ambition and the feeling of honor and shame; in plain words, what he thinks about the opinion other people have of him."[10] Our concern for our reputation takes up a good deal of our thoughts, directs and controls our actions, and constitutes a large quantity of our anxiety: we worry about what people think of us. Most people differentiate between a healthy concern for reputation and an unhealthy one. It is perhaps admirable to desire to please people, make them happy, and be concerned if they think ill of us. However, this concern for other people's opinions is often taken to the extreme, where vanity and pretentiousness are the vices of an exaggerated concern for one's reputation. Anxiety about what other people think of oneself is also a great cause of depression if one is unable to shake the disturbance of being disliked or disapproved of, or the false belief that one is disliked or disapproved of.

One solution could be to disregard the opinion of others when that opinion concerns oneself. However, this solution can have downfalls. A complete disregard of the opinions of others prevents people from growing, from being able to accept constructive criticism, or from changing one's actions based on the opinion of others in a healthy way that better serves the opinion-holder as well as the subject. I turn to Marcus Aurelius to provide a solution. Marcus Aurelius, in his *Meditations*, wrote that Epictetus said that "man must discover an art (or rules)… in respect to his movements…that they have regard to the value of the object."[11] The "value of the object" here is contrasted with "the perceived value of the object." Instead of being concerned with how our movements and actions are perceived, we must consider their actual worth. That worth is gauged by how they benefit ourselves and those around us. If one's actions give him pleasure because they impress others, that in itself has no real value. If one's actions help others and provide an example for his neighbors to live by to better their own lives, then those actions do have value. Reputation itself is not bad or harmful, but it must be considered in a way that best helps those around us and works toward easing their pain and suffering. It is true that reputation is the source of much of our suffering, but we can attempt to use reputation as a tool to provide others with an example of how to live—not simply because impressing others gives us pleasure, but because to alleviate suffering, we must help our neighbors to see new

10 Schopenhauer, "On the Sufferings," 4.

11 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1997), 11; 137.

ways to live their lives that reduce suffering for themselves and those around them.

Another great source of discontent is the tendency to compare one's own lot to the lot of others. If one sees that his neighbor suffers less than he does, he will feel indignation at the inequality of life and suffer more because of the comparison. Again, one must consider Marcus Aurelius' use of Epictetus' statement about the true value of an object. In order to avoid the feeling of inequality one feels when comparing one's misfortune to the fortune of others, one must consider his own life on its own, deciding its value independent of the comparison it has to the lives of others, and then deciding on methods to improve that life. Schopenhauer is right to say that we suffer when we consider the opinions of others too much. He would also be right in saying we suffer when we spend too much time on our opinions of the lives of others. Both of these sufferings, however, can be remedied by shifting one's gaze to the actual value of one's actions and directing one's movements toward increasing that actual value.

CONCLUSION

Schopenhauer makes a strong case for his pessimistic philosophy. We cannot deny how much we suffer in our lives, and we cannot fail to see that others suffer as well. For those who agree with Schopenhauer that suffering is the positive force of life, we must then ask ourselves how we will continue living in such a world where pain is the norm. By reading Schopenhauer's essay in a pragmatic way—viewing his concepts in terms of precepts for our behavior—we can attempt to alleviate the suffering we all endure. I am not doing anything here that Schopenhauer has not already thought of, for he ends his essay telling his reader to sympathize with others and act in a way that produces the least amount of suffering for those who are already experiencing so much suffering. However, we can add to this statement and develop a model for how we are to live our lives in a suffering world by analyzing his various points and considering the practical implications of them, by "try[ing] to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences."[12] Philosophy need not be limited to a select group of professors who think and write on profound questions about the universe that others not trained in philosophical discourse cannot understand. Philosophy can, and should, be understood as a search for truth for the purpose of living our lives in the best way possible.

12 James, *Pragmatism*, 45.

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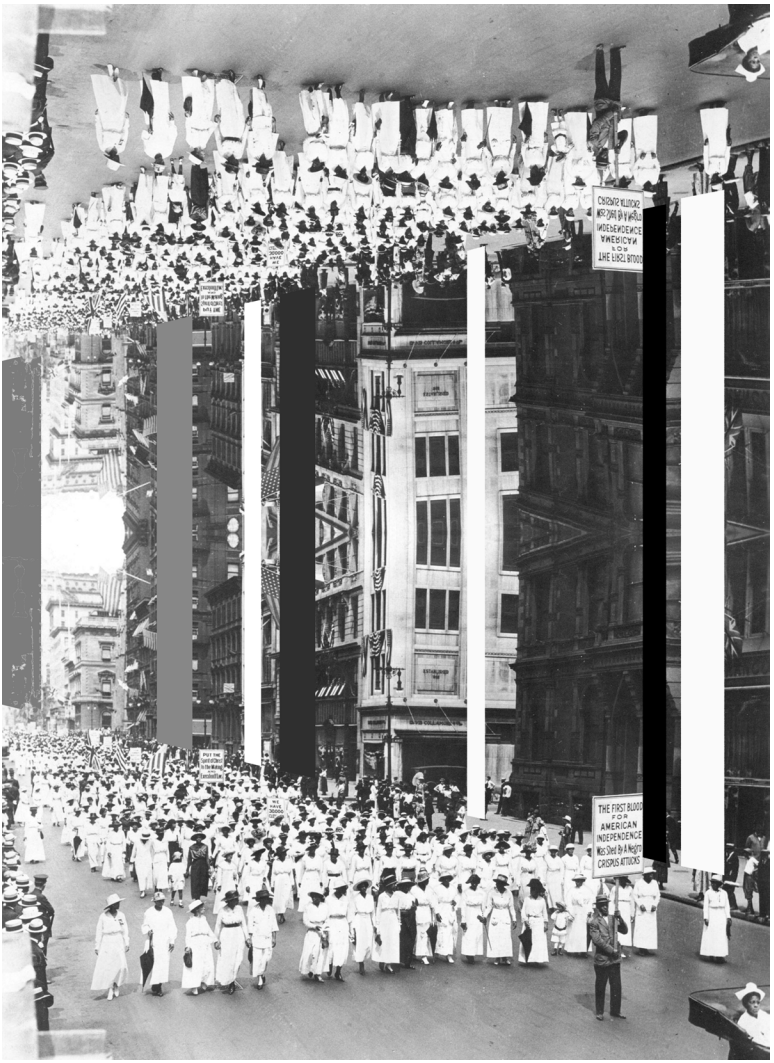
Allison Parker will complete her BA in philosophy and English at Austin Peay State University in May 2019. She is minoring in Spanish, creative writing, and linguistics. She is currently the editor of Austin Peay's student-run literary magazine, *Red Mud Review*. After she graduates, she intends to pursue an MFA in writing fiction at the University of Memphis.

DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS IN TODAY'S BLACK AMERICA



L.E. WALKER

ABSTRACT

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois introduces double consciousness as a result of racial prejudice and oppression. Explained as a state of confliction felt by black Americans, Du Bois presents double consciousness as integral to understanding the black experience. Later philosophers question the importance of double consciousness to current race discussions, but this paper contends that double consciousness provides valuable insights into black and white relations. To do this, I will utilize the modern slang term, "Oreo," to highlight how a perceived incompatibility between blacks and whites could prevent America from achieving a greater unity.

Despite the decades since emancipation, America still struggles with issues of race. We continue to be a society of disunity, violence, and anger toward one another—a melting pot threatening to boil over. The "negro problem" (the race problem), as it was called by W.E.B. Du Bois in his "Study of the Negro Problems," is a complex number of social problems related specifically to race issues.[1] In this paper, I explore a small—but significant—piece of Du Bois' theory: double consciousness. First discussed in *The Souls of Black Folk*, the value of double consciousness has been criticized by recent philosophers. The plausibility of a universal double consciousness has been called into question, deemed a political "tactic" by Allen and an absurdity by Reed.[2] However, I plan to argue that double consciousness remains a relevant theory to America today and that through its understanding we can find unique insights into the current relationship between blacks and whites. To start, I will define Du Boisian double consciousness utilizing Du Bois' various works, then discuss the critiques of Du Bois' mentioned above. Expounding upon Du Bois' theory to discuss the double consciousness of today, I will use the modern slur, "Oreo," to highlight a current worldview of incompatibility between blacks and whites. This perceived incompatibility could prevent American society from dealing with the bigger issue we face: racial prejudice.

In *The Souls of Black Folk,* Du Bois establishes several features of double consciousness. First, double consciousness is not a "true self-consciousness," which is defined as an awareness of the self.[3] Instead, it is the "peculiar sensation" of "always looking at one's self through the

1 Robert Goodings-Williams, "W.E.B. Du Bois," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last updated summer 2018, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/dubois/; W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11, no. 1 (Jan. 1898): 3.

2 John P. Pittman, "Double Consciousness," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last updated March 21, 2016, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/double-consciousness/; Adolph Reed Jr., *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 125.

3 Joel Smith, "Self-Consciousness," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last updated July 13, 2017, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/self-consciousness/.

eyes of others," and "measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."[4] Du Bois lays claim to two things. The first is the awareness of a second "self" created by "others" who dislike you. The second is the feeling, or "sensation," that comes from reflecting on the second self.[5] This second consciousness is not a second you but rather society's concept of what-it-is-to-be black created by those "others"—white Americans—whose racial prejudice results in disdain toward the dark race.[6] Lawrie Balfour calls double consciousness "an internal echo of white America's judgement" on blacks,[7] and as Du Bois explains in his "Conservation of Races" essay, at times judgement about a black person's "natural abilities" or "political, intellectual, and moral status" appears incorrect, altered by prejudice.[8] In another oft quoted section, Du Bois adds that black Americans "ever [feel their] twoness" as "an American, a negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals."[9] This feeling of "twoness," of a conflict between the selves, is constant. The souls, thoughts, strivings, and ideals he mentions initially go unspecified, but as Du Bois describes examples of the white world teaching contrary negative beliefs about the black race, the picture grows clearer. The first example considers doctors and ministers taught by whites to be ashamed of the "lowly" tasks of their black brethren. The second is about the black artist who cannot revel in the beauty of her own culture without confusion. The whites—her influential patrons—despise her race and find nothing worthy in black "soul-beauty."[10] Forced to see themselves through hateful eyes in a world controlled and ordered by those who condemn them, Du Bois believed it inevitable that blacks would learn to question, belittle, and degrade themselves—as this is what happens to those living under oppression and hatred.[11] It does not seem far-fetched to Du Bois that some of these negative feelings would be internalized, meaning that blacks began to take up that hateful charge against themselves as well.[12] Hegel's phenomenology tells us that having our humanity rejected results in anguish, and I believe that Du Bois considered the hatred of black

4 W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2003), 9.
5 Frank M. Kirkland, "On Du Bois' Notion of Double Consciousness," *Philosophy Compass* 8, no. 2 (2013): 139.
6 Goodings-Williams, "W.E.B. Du Bois."
7 Lawrie Balfour, "A Most Disagreeable Mirror: Race Consciousness as Double Consciousness," *Political Theory* 26, no. 3 (June 1998): 349.
8 Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," accessed April 2018, par. 1, http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-conservation-of-races/.
9 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 9.
10 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 10.
11 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 13.
12 Ernest Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness: The Unsustainable Argument," *Massachusetts Review* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 224.

identity to have similar results.[13] Perhaps Du Bois did not give clear cut examples of the thoughts, strivings, or ideals, because he did not believe they were needed. Individual strivings could vary depending on environment, but the overall anguish of double consciousness itself was universal. As a state of confliction, double consciousness was felt by black Americans struggling with a prejudiced definition of "blackness," or what-it-is-to-be black, given by a contemptuous white America. This definition can be hateful, shaming, or contrary to how blacks perceive themselves, but it always results in a sensation of duplicity that entails internal strife.

While a powerful sentiment, double consciousness has not gone without critique. I will not deal exhaustively with all issues found with Du Bois' double consciousness in this paper but rather focus on one of the most impactful—the universality objection. Ernest Allen Jr. believes Du Bois was speaking specifically to the educated black elite of the time: the Talented Tenth.[14] Allen points out that Du Bois' examples of conflict—the black minister, doctor, and artist—were things only the Talented Tenth could understand.[15] Raised within educated white society, Allen believes the Talented Tenth, of which Du Bois was a part, had already given up their black ideals for the white American way of life. Without any black ideals of their own, there could not have been a conflict between black and white ideals as Du Bois claimed.[16] Allen believes Du Bois' created the existence of *distinct* black and white ideals to prove that blacks were capable of holding ideals in any form. This was meant to stop white Americans' continuous denial of black humanity.[17] Du Bois hoped, according to Allen, that having whites' respect would provide the Talented Tenth with the self-esteem and power to eventually bring blacks completely into American society.[18] If Allen is right, double consciousness portrayed as a universal sensation was merely a tactic to gain sympathy and approval from a white audience. In reality, it was nothing more than the issue of a select few used to help Du Bois achieve certain political goals.[19]

Allen was not the only one to question the universality of double consciousness. Adolf Reed Jr. thinks a feeling of divided identity amongst the general black populace is absurd, but Du Bois' reputation as a prominent black thinker causes many readers to assume double consciousness exists—even without evidence.[20] There are black Americans, such as Molefi Kete Asante, who claim never feeling double

13 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 227.
14 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 228-29.
15 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 229.
16 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 221.
17 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 230.
18 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 236.
19 Pittman, "Double Consciousness."
20 Reed Jr., *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 125; 97.

consciousness.[21] Even if some sort of double consciousness existed, there seems to be no reason to assume it was felt the same way by every black American.[22] For most, the universality issue seems to pose a two-pronged objection: (1) it is unlikely that double consciousness as Du Bois formulated it ever (or could ever) universally affect the general population of black Americans, and (2), as (1) seems improbable, Du Boisian double consciousness has little value to understanding the black American experience today.

Before we can combat the universality objection, we must first establish that double consciousness exists. To do this, I look to the term "Oreo," which is a slang word I often heard used by my white peers while growing up. It was explained to me as meaning "black on the outside, white on the inside." Merriam-Webster defines the term more fully as "a black person who adopts the characteristic mentality and behavior of white middle-class society."[23] The term reveals a world view consistent with double consciousness. By implying that there is more to being black than just skin, one defines what-it-is-to-be black as having at least two components: skin tone, and a certain set of characteristics. To be black instead of an "Oreo," I must have black skin *and* a certain set of "black" characteristics. Like the double consciousness I defined on page 4, the term shows the presence of a societal definition of what-it-is-to-be black beyond having black skin. So, there *is* evidence for a black societal definition, but we must take it further. As Allen says, finding a foundation for double consciousness at any point in time "does not imply that every black individual [has] felt the pulls of divided loyalties in the same way, or even that he or she experienced any such tension at all."[24] I will agree that it is unlikely double consciousness is felt by every black American, but I deny that this fact prevents double consciousness from being valuable in understanding current black relations.

Double consciousness, as I have articulated it in this paper, utilizes the idea of a societal definition of blackness. It is possible that while not all black Americans are aware of the definition, it could still exist. Black Americans who find themselves in frequent contact with white Americans are far more likely to become victims of double consciousness, since double consciousness requires contact with whomever defines the second self. In *Souls*, Du Bois mentions the first time he understood that there was a social barrier was after he was rejected by a white classmate.[25] Alternatively, Asante, who claimed he

21 Pittman, "Double Consciousness."
22 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 244.
23 Merriam Webster Online, s.v. "Oreo," accessed April 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Oreo.
24 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 244.
25 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 8.

did not feel double consciousness, grew up in a tight knit community of Africans who did not believe they were inferior to whites. Asante admits that he and his community had "no reference points outside of [themselves]" and adds that had he gone to school with whites as a child, things could have been different.[26] It seems experiencing double consciousness requires frequent contact with white Americans, possibly because dealings with whites puts one in frequent interaction with the prejudiced definition of blackness. Being constantly reminded of such a negative interpretation of what-it-is-to-be black could then cause double consciousness. Blacks who do not interact with whites as often would be less likely to experience double consciousness, as they are less likely to be in frequent contact with a negative idea of blackness. Allen himself explains that separation was the choice for many blacks who, in the hopes of security, receded from main American society and formed their own communities.[27] Doing so would have prevented opportunities to come into contact with the negative definition of blackness and thus would have protected blacks from the effects of double consciousness.

While it is possible that Du Bois explained this veil as a separate symptom of prejudice, it seems that current society has inserted a similar incompatibility directly into our definition of what-it-is-to-be black. My white peers could not fathom that I could have black skin and characteristics in common with them, yet still fall under the jurisdiction of blackness. Therefore, instead of amending what black meant so that I would be included, I was cut out completely. My white peers' idea of black remained intact, while I was forcibly re-identified. This idea that I could not have any trait in common with my white peers and still keep my black identity is a troublesome one. If a part of what defines white and black are incompatible things, we may be unable to relate, unite, or coexist.

Du Bois believed that in the solution of the race problem, America would reach a unity he calls the "ideal human brotherhood." This solution would be a time where blacks did not struggle for equal claim against other races, but rather worked in unity with others to form a better American society. Du Bois believed blacks and whites both had talents that could amend one another's faults.[28] There was little reason for drastic separation, as, in the ways that mattered, blacks and whites were akin enough to strive for their own race ideals and still help one another at the same time.[29] Unfortunately, the segregation of races was not built on a difference between black and white identities but rather on the prejudice that remained after emancipation. Prejudice kept the

26 Pittman, "Double Consciousness."
27 Allen Jr., "Du Boisian Double Consciousness," 244.
28 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 14.
29 Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," 17.

veil that withheld blacks from the white world and created toxic double consciousness, and prejudice continues to do so. Double consciousness still alters modern minds, a societal definition of black still hangs over our heads, and though the definition could be different now than what it was for Du Bois, what remains is the barrier that held blacks and whites apart. The societal definition of blackness still has input in how blacks are seen, how they are allowed to interact with the world, and how the world is allowed to interact with them. These attributes of double consciousness are merely secondary symptoms of the larger problem: prejudice. However, without understanding that society includes a fundamental basis of disunity in the very definition of black and white identities, we cannot possibly begin to unravel such a knot as the race problem.

Double consciousness continues to have further implications. If the term "Oreo" implies a societal definition for blackness, then we must ask if there is a societal definition of whiteness as well. It seems possible that there is, but still, whites would not have double consciousness. To understand why, I define double consciousness using neutral terms below:

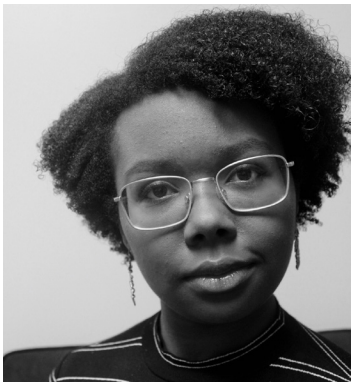
> A state of confliction felt by an identity group, X, struggling with a prejudiced definition of what-it-is-to-be X given by a contemptuous oppressing group, Y. This definition can be hateful, shaming, or contrary to how X perceives themselves but results in a sensation of duplicity that entails internal strife.

Du Bois believed that racial prejudice created double consciousness, and much of black racial prejudice can be attributed to going from oppression to oppressor-and-oppressed cohabitation. There is little evidence that white Americans have had a similar experience, but other races with histories of oppression may be able to relate. For an identity group, X, to claim double consciousness, they must be an oppressed group with an oppressor, Y. If Y does not have power (be that political, social, or economical) over X, X cannot claim double consciousness. This is because Y's prejudice and power gives them the capability to cause tangible consequences for X. So, whites (as Y) would not have a claim to double consciousness even though a definition of whiteness would exist. However, oppressed groups within America (and possibly otherwise) *could* claim a sense of double consciousness as long as they fit the requirements above.

Further still, there is the fact that "Oreo" is used by both blacks and whites to refer to the same type of person. Blacks use the term derogatorily, whereas, as I said before, whites do so and believe it a compliment. Could blacks' definition of blackness be the same as the whites'? It seems more probable than not, as I did not fit the definition of either for the same reasons, implying similar requirements. This on

its own elicits many questions about how deeply a societal definition can affects us, even without our awareness.

I do not have time to fully explore all the questions that can arise from the presence of a contemporary double consciousness, but it is evident that double consciousness has important implications in the race discussions of today. While an incompatibility between blacks and whites persists within the very way we define ourselves, we will be unable to pursue the American unity for which many hope. Though double consciousness is but a piece in the complex puzzle that is today's race issue, it holds within intriguing details of the circumstances under which black and white Americans live and interact. It would do us well as a nation to continue studying double consciousness as a symptom of racial prejudice but to never forget that it is a symptom, not the disease. Until we are able to combat racial prejudice, and all of its convoluted history, double consciousness will remain a herald of our defeat against one of America's greatest shames.



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L.E. Walker is a junior at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, where she double majors in philosophy and psychology. Her current philosophical interests include moral philosophy, philosophy of mind, phenomenology, and anything Immanuel Kant. After graduation, she plans to pursue a PhD in philosophy and become a professor.

RIPPING THE CURTAIN:

A CONVERSATION WITH PETER ROLLINS, PhD

ABOUT PETER ROLLINS:

Peter Rollins is a writer, philosopher, storyteller and public speaker who has gained an international reputation for overturning traditional notions of religion and forming "churches" that preach the Good News that we can't be satisfied, that life is difficult, and that we don't know the secret.

Challenging the idea that faith concerns questions relating to belief, Peter's incendiary and irreligious reading of Christianity attacks the distinction between the sacred and the secular. It blurs the lines between theism and atheism and it sets aside questions regarding life after death to explore the possibility of life before death.

Peter gained his higher education from Queens University, Belfast where he earned degrees (with distinction) in Scholastic Philosophy (BA Hons), Political Theory and Social Criticism (MA) and Post-Structural thought (PhD). He's the author of numerous books, including *Insurrection*, *The Idolatry of God*, and *The Divine Magician*. He was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, currently lives in Los Angeles and will die somewhere as yet not known.

Stance*: We want to thank you for letting us interview you. We have a lot of questions that we're very excited to ask. Our first question is a very simple one: how did you get into philosophy?*

Rollins: I went to a school where education wasn't really valued and came out of school with basically no qualifications and no interest in anything intellectual. I had never really read a serious book in my life. I had no interest in abstraction. But, when I was seventeen, I had an experience that made my world strange—politically, religiously, and culturally. I think that's kind of where philosophy starts, even historically; it starts when the world becomes strange, and you don't have the conceptual tools to make sense of it. So, when I was seventeen, for the first time ever, I started to take an interest in the world—in my world. One could call this event a type of conversion but not in the religious sense of that term. At a fundamental level, this was not a move from one way of seeing the world to another but rather an event of subtraction—not an event of addition. It was an event that helped me experience everything in a new way.

PHILOSOPHY DOESN'T SO MUCH JUSTIFY ONE'S WORLD BUT RATHER MAKES IT EVEN MORE STRANGE BY CHALLENGING SOME OF OUR MOST BASIC AND CLOSELY HELD ASSUMPTIONS.

At seventeen, I experienced an ontic shock. In my attempt to make sense of that experience, and distance myself from it, I briefly embraced a more confessional religious view of the world. I also turned to the academic world, mostly to find ways to rationalize and justify my new worldview—to make it stick. Like so many newcomers to philosophy, I tried to use it in an apologetic way. But, thankfully, those who taught me did a great job. They helped me to see that philosophy doesn't so much justify one's world but rather makes it even more strange by challenging some of our most basic and closely held assumptions.

S*: It sounds like what happened with your background was very much a mixture of theology and philosophy. You speak a ton about that in your works, both in your podcasts and your writing. How do you think philosophy and religion intersect? Can you have one without the other?*

R: Great question. My thinking has always been connected to what happened when I was seventeen, to that event that shook my world. It was a very existential experience. I mean, I got rid of everything I owned. I disowned my family at the time. I stopped this course in computer studies I was doing. Basically,

it changed everything. Doing these things was not some kind of moral or immoral act or some statement. It was a reboot, one which gave my world a sense of depth and purpose.

My subsequent interest in philosophy was really an interest in trying to understand what was happening in that event and what universal significance—if any—it had. I turned to philosophy in order to explore existential questions. When I discovered the philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich, I resonated deeply with what he meant when he talked about Ultimate Concern. Tillich wanted to explore what it means to be grasped by an event that moves us beyond utilitarian calculation—whether it is a cause, a person, a belief. What does it mean to care so much about something that it is beyond economics? Tillich is a philosophical theologian—or a type of existentialist theologian—because he is interested in exploring what grasps him in an unconditional, absolute way.

You can believe in God and not be caught up in that belief at all, which Heidegger called the God of ontotheology. Tillich is very critical of this. For Tillich, there is a deep sense in which everyone is religious. Religion, in its widest meaning, is ontological. It's part of subjectivity. It will manifest in all manner of ways—in the lover's commitment to their lover, the logicians' fidelity to logic, the artists sacrifice to their art, and the activists' devotion to their cause. This doesn't mean absolute commitment is always good. Ultimate Concern can be seen in the fascists' willingness to die for their cause. It has divine and demonic manifestations.

FOR ME, PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY MEET IN THE EXPLORATION OF MEANING.

So, for me, philosophy and theology meet in the exploration of meaning. Other animals don't have this trans-utilitarian clutch to meaning in the way that humans do. They don't overvalue things. They are all perfect Utilitarians. They've all read Mill and Bentham. They all maximize pleasure and minimize pain, which is called Instinct. But humans don't; humans are terrible Utilitarians. We self-sabotage. We over-value things that we know are bad for us. Just think about making money. How damaging can that be to yourself?

Whether people are narrowly religious or not, we all have this drive. And for me there's two types of religious responses to this: there's religion that promises an object that can satisfy your

ultimate concern, and there's religion that can help you mobilize and weaponize your ultimate concern without trying to help you try to fulfill it. Philosophy and theology can help us parse out what that means and how to navigate it.

S: *In that answer you touched a little bit on Christian existentialism. You talk about Kierkegaard a fair amount, who is canonically called a Christian existentialist. Do you see your work as a part of a Christian existentialist tradition?*

R: The Christian existential tradition definitely made an impact in my early education. Existentialism as a whole is a part of the tradition that has informed and enriched me. I remember being very impacted by Gabriel Marcel. One of the interesting things about existentialism is that you have people who seem very different when it comes to their view on God. You have people like Nietzsche or Sartre sharing the name of existentialist with Gabriel Marcel and Søren Kierkegaard—and then you have someone like Heidegger. They all have different understandings about God, but they all agree in rejecting what Pascal called the God of the philosophers—the God before whom one does not dance, in Heidegger's words. Likewise, this idea of God is one that I have been critical of throughout my work. Personally, I am drawn to Nietzsche more than Kierkegaard, but I like them both. Do you want me to say anything more about that, or are you going to move on to the next question?

S: *If you'd like to expand, please do.*

R: Existentialism is deeply important, but I think the term "existential" is old fashioned now. The existentialists were central in opening up the idea that we should resist the turn to a one-dimensional, mechanistic view of the universe. Humanism is connected with the rejection of a transcendental dimension to reality. What you are left with are things like evolutionary psychology, behaviorism, and crude materialism. With the existentialists, you don't have this humanist, scientistic reduction. Existentialism opens up the way to understand a type of transcendental real within the material world. This has many different names. The Unconscious in psychoanalysis, superposition in physics, uncertainty in mathematics, dialectics in philosophy, and freedom in the work of Sartre. This mode of thinking offers an intellectual defense against determinism by showing how the universe has a type of novelty, a type of incompleteness, and antagonism hard-baked into it, which prevents the universe from being reduced to something purely mechanistic.

S: *If you're a little bit itchy about the label of "existentialist," how would you rather label yourself as a philosopher? What would you say is the specific type of philosophy you do?*

R: That brings us to the interesting question of definitions. I don't think most philosophers worry too much about defining themselves. The best definitions come along after you've died. Definitely existentialism, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and radical theology are some of the disciplines that have honed my thinking, and they are the types of fields that I am interested in. I do use the word "pyrotheology" to describe what I do, but in many ways that term is still quite empty. It gives the illusion of a finished position, but it is still in process and will only become truly meaningful in time.

S: *We find it very interesting how you integrate psychoanalytic concepts into your work. As undergraduates we don't often see a mix of psychoanalysis, theology, and philosophy. How would you say your understanding of psychoanalysis has impacted the development of your philosophical ideas?*

R: Psychoanalysis has become very important to me, particularly the work of Lacan. In Lacan, the insights that Freud had concerning the unconscious have significance for broader philosophical concerns. Psychoanalysis proper aims at understanding an original nothingness that explains human behavior. Psychoanalysis is a part of the tradition of non-reductive materialism.

WE CAN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND HOW RELIGION OPERATES AS A WAY OF TRYING TO DEAL WITH A CERTAIN EXCESS THAT ARISES FROM A LACK.

One of the reasons for my interest in Lacan specifically is because his work offers great insight into the nature of religion. Psychoanalysis helps us to see religion as actually related to the management of drive. We can begin to understand how religion operates as a way of trying to deal with a certain excess that arises from a lack. Psychoanalytic theory can take up the religious mantle by offering ways for us to theorize about "original sin," while also helping us free ourselves from its negative impact. In Christianity, this is called Salvation; in analysis, the Cure.

S: *We're going to continue with some questions about some ideas that are individualistic to you. Could you give a quick overview for our readers of what pyrotheology is and why it's significant to you?*

PYROTHEOLOGY IS NOT JUST A THEORY OF LIFE. IT'S ABOUT EMBRACING THE STRUGGLE OF LIFE, ENJOYING OUR LACK, FINDING FREEDOM FROM THE TYRANNY OF HAPPINESS. IT'S ALSO A SET OF PRACTICES DESIGNED TO HELP PEOPLE LIVE INTO THIS THEORY.

R: In a way, pyrotheology is nothing. It's just an invented word. Sometimes in order to corral your work, it's good to use a phrase or a word. A psychoanalyst friend of mine, Chris Fry, invented the term. We used it initially to describe an event we were running in Belfast, but I started to use it to describe the particular style of radical theology I was developing. What I love about theology is that it is not simply an intellectual discipline. It's also got a practical component. When I talk about liking theology, I'm not referring to confessional theology. I'm talking about a type of radical theology that is both a theory and a technology—the two wings that allow it to take off. Most disciplines have a practice. Biology takes form in surgery. Chemistry feeds the creation of medications. You've got physics which can help in the creation of new technologies. Pyrotheology is not just a theory of life. It's about embracing the struggle of life, enjoying our lack, finding freedom from the tyranny of happiness. It's also a set of practices designed to help people live into this theory.

If I wanted to put it in a nutshell, I might say that pyrotheology is designed to help people move from the idea that God is an object that you love to the idea that God is a name that we give to the depth we experience when we love. God is not, then, a sacred object but a name for the sacred experienced in objects. By "sacred," I mean to name a transcendental, or non-reductive, element within life. The technology of pyrotheology is split into two elements called Transformance Art and Decentering practices. Together they are designed to move people into a joyful embrace of the struggle of life, finding enjoyment and depth in the act of love.

S*: You talk about that in your book,* Insurrection. *You state that trying to reach God through rituals objectifies God and ultimately won't fulfill our true desires. You further explain that we may experience God through acts of love, as you just said. In what ways would you say are acts of love distinct from rituals?*

R: I'm a big believer in rituals. We all have liturgical elements of our life, practices that we live by, whether it's as simple as a

coffee and cigarette every morning before the rest of the family wake or poker once a month with friends. Actually, most religious rituals, the best ones, are designed to keep you at a *distance* from God. They are designed to help you experience what's called the death of God. For example, the role of a covenant is to get you distance from God. When you think of a contract, a contract is designed to protect you from the desire of the other, to give you distance from them. With a contract, you don't want your business partner to screw you over. It's designed to protect you from their desire. When we see the covenants in the Hebrew scriptures, they are designed to create a distance between the people and God, just like a child has to gain a distance from their parents to avoid psychosis. In scriptural terms, God might decide to destroy the world in a flood.

TAKE THE EXAMPLE OF THE LAST SUPPER. IT IS A RITUAL BASED AROUND THE SHARED DEATH OF GOD. IT'S A WAKE.

This goes even further in Christianity, because here some of the rituals are designed not simply to separate you from God but to enact the death of God. Take the example of the Last Supper. It is a ritual based around the shared death of God. It's a wake. It's a time for people to gather around a shared loss and find a way to live with it. In this act we enter into what is called the epoch of the Holy Ghost, the time in which the supernatural transcendental is emptied into a type of material transcendental. The community becomes the site of change in the world.

A lot of my work is designed to help people ritualistically enact this separation and loss. The rituals do not help us escape the world but to enter more fully into it. One of the interesting things about Christianity is that it takes seriously our desire to be like God—to lack the lack. But it then offers us the story of God becoming human and entering into the world. So, to become like God, we are put on a journey in which we are to become fully human. It takes us back to the place where we started but enables us to embrace that place rather than avoid it.

S*: It sounds like you're hinting at this idea of incompleteness that we have in our relationship with God. You talk about this briefly in one of your episodes in your* Archive *podcast, an episode called "God Of This World." You discuss accepting our incompleteness in general. Why do we need to accept our incompleteness, and how do you feel accepting our incompleteness makes us a better person?*

R: Great question. First of all, on a very superficial level, people think, "Okay, there's a certain incompleteness," right? We don't know everything. We are lost in the world. We find ourselves with a particular language, in a particular era, with a particular intelligence, with particular interests and moods. Saying that there's a certain sense in which we are incomplete is not a very radical statement. It's one of the least radical statements you could make, really.

There are two types of incompleteness, broadly speaking. One is the idea that we are incomplete because of our lack of knowledge but that if we had the mind of God, everything would make sense. If we knew the location of every atom in the universe, and the direction they were going, and the speed they were going, and if we had an infinite mind to be able to calculate the results of that, then we would know the future, and we would know the past. Basically, the universe is a closed system. There is a blueprint; we just don't have it.

OUR EXPERIENCE OF BEING INCOMPLETE AND OUR EXPERIENCE OF LACK IS ACTUALLY A PRIVILEGED EXPERIENCE OF TRUTH, THAT THERE IS SOMETHING INHERENTLY LACKING IN REALITY ITSELF.

That's not what I'm saying. The other position is that our experience of being incomplete and our experience of lack is actually a privileged experience of truth, that there is something inherently lacking in reality itself. Lack does not simply come from ignorance. There is a lack that actually reflects the truth. Now, of course, the simple way of describing that is by looking at a field like quantum mechanics, where we see undecidability hard baked into its very development. Something that was discovered in the early experiments with light was a strange phenomenon in which light would act as a wave or a particle depending on how it was observed. Insights such as these do not arise from a lack of understanding; they actually arise from deep understanding.

To apply this to the area of religion, we might say there are two types of religious expression. One type of religion says, "You can be made complete in this life or the next. Your incompleteness is partial, and reflective of the human condition, immorality, or illusion;" and, of course, there are secular versions of this. For instance, I live in Los Angeles and find it to be one of the most religious places in the world. On every street corner there

are prophets promising that they can bring wholeness and completeness if you just do the right yoga moves, if you just do cross-fit, if you just have enough money, look the right way. That promise is everywhere. That's why I don't think we're less religious today. I think we're as religious as ever; we just don't go to church for it.

But there is another type of religion, something that the philosopher John Caputo would call religion without religion—or I would label, after Bonhoeffer, Religionless Christianity or pyrotheology. In this approach one says, "No, your lack is not something that is contingent, that can be gotten rid of. It is actually the very site of truth."

This gets to the heart of the main difference between Kant and Hegel. For Kant, we do not know everything, but there is an Everything that is beyond our reach. But, for Hegel, there is an inherent incompleteness in reality itself. Our sense of incompleteness is not a contingent historical experience. It connects us with the very nature of reality itself. Our existential incompleteness connects us with an *ontological* incompleteness.

This is expressed in the very project of dialectics, which could claim to be the greatest invention/discovery in history. It works from the insight that there is an antagonism in reality that is irresolvable. To embrace your incompleteness means to go with the flow of the universe, rather than against its grain. Basically, when you're able to experience and accept that incompleteness, you are in sync with a fundamental truth about reality itself.

This is beautifully expressed in the Christian tradition when Christ cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" on the cross. In most religions, when you experience the loss of God, it's because of something bad you've done or because of your inherent limitations. But Christianity has this wonderful claim that God experiences the loss of God, which means that there is something incomplete within the Absolute itself. The lack you feel is an expression of the lack in reality. In theological terms, when you feel yourself separated from God, you are one with God, because God is not one with God.

S: *To go off of discussing the lack that we have, you talk a lot about embracing doubt also, particularly in the talk that you give called "Material Faith." You say that there are times when you might know that something has a good chance of being false, but you choose to believe it anyway. We're wondering, would you say that there are useful false beliefs?*

R: Yes, in my work, doubt is important. How I approach doubt has changed over the years. From my first book to my more recent work, I've deepened and shifted my understanding. I'm very interested in what people are certain about. I want people to doubt their conscious way of seeing the world so that they might come into contact with their disavowed beliefs. We have lots of useful false beliefs, something that is particularly easy to see in people suffering a psychotic break. Just think about someone at night who thinks that there's a murderer in their cupboard or sharks under the bed. These are false beliefs, empirically, and most people who are having them even know that they are, but they have them anyway. One of the reasons for having these false beliefs is that they are useful to the individual, even when they cause the person a certain suffering. The "killer in the cupboard" belief protects from something worse, perhaps from the truth that they feel a murderous intent inside. We prefer to have these weird fantasies than to actually discover what lies beneath. This is a version of the old idea about the "noble lie." We often embrace false beliefs because they help us get through life. They keep our inner life in check.

IN TERMS OF A USEFUL FALSE BELIEF, WE HAVE LOTS OF THEM, BUT THEY ALSO SPEAK A TRUTH, A TRUTH THAT WE ARE UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO HEAR.

In terms of a useful false belief, we have lots of them, but they also speak a truth, a truth that we are unable or unwilling to hear. Psychoanalysts are trained to listen to our noble lies, to hear the truth that they speak. In a very important sense, psychoanalysts are literalists. This is why I'm a literalist. When a literalist reads the Bible, they take it as truth, just like how an analyst, when they hear a dream, takes it as truth. It might be empirically false, but they don't ask, "Oh, you dreamt about a red bus, and you're running for this red bus, and you couldn't catch it. Have you ever run for a red bus?" That's not really of interest to them. They take the dream as subjectively true, and they want to decipher it and bring the truth to the surface.

In the same way, I take a religious text as true; that's the literalist side of it. It's one of the reasons why I'm not a progressive. I bracket out the historical question, because I'm interested in what it means symbolically, what it means in terms of the subjective truth of the experience of the people who wrote it or the people who relate to it. In this way, the analyst ultimately wants to help us dissipate the noble lie, but they also respect it.

They respect why we need false beliefs. While a belief can be empirically false, it can hold a person together.

S: *You're talking about the weight of subjective truths and objective truths that we have, specifically with beliefs. Are you implying that subjective and objective truths have equal weight in our human experience, or is one more weighted than the other?*

R: I actually was having a discussion about this with a friend recently, because he feels that psychoanalytic theory doesn't take objective truth seriously. If someone is talking about an abusive past, the question the analyst always asks is not so much "Did it happen?" but rather the subjective dimension to it. That's a difficult one, but what I would say is that the same event can happen to two people and that for one person it's traumatic and that for the other person it isn't. Two children might hear their parents argue—something small like that—and for one of them, this objective, empirical reality has a deep impact on their subjectivity, while for the other it is irrelevant. I'm primarily interested in how and why certain events cement themselves in our lives and how we can move beyond the destructive results of some of these.

I'M PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN HOW AND WHY CERTAIN EVENTS CEMENT THEMSELVES IN OUR LIVES AND HOW WE CAN MOVE BEYOND THE DESTRUCTIVE RESULTS OF SOME OF THESE.

S: *I want to jump back a little bit to your answer before that, when you were talking about disillusion. You talked about how false or subjective beliefs that we have sometimes get us to the truth efficiently. In the video that you call "Transformance Art," you talk about how Christianity needs to rupture systems in general, which is almost to say that we need to disillusion ourselves from those false beliefs. In "Zombie Drive," one of your podcasts, you mention consumerism explicitly. What other systems do you think need to be ruptured, that Christianity can rupture, and how are they different than the beliefs that we need to maintain to get closer to the truth?*

R: I would argue that Christianity has primarily a main goal in what is called Salvation. Namely, not freedom to grasp the Lost Object or the Sacred Thing that will make us whole and complete, but freedom from the idea that there *is* a Lost Object or Sacred Thing out there that will make us whole and complete. That's the "zombie drive" I was talking about, and I would argue

that it is the drive that lies behind so many human problems—what Freud called the Death Drive.

I THINK CAPITALISM IS PRIMARILY A MODE OF DESIRE, AND I THINK THAT IT'S THE MOST OBVIOUS EXAMPLE OF THIS DRIVE TO ESCAPE FACING THE LACK.

I think it is the core, actually, of capitalism. I think capitalism is primarily a mode of desire, and I think that it's the most obvious example of this drive to escape facing the lack. Capitalism is about the drive to accumulate capital without end. At its core, it's not about getting money to buy a nicer car or a nicer house. When you give yourself over to capitalism, you give yourself over to frenetic drive for the abstract increase of capital. All the things you can buy are kind of secondary to that, and the problem with that is that we end up killing ourselves and hurting people around us.

One of the defenses of capitalism is that it is, for better or worse, natural. But, one of Freud's insights is to show how unnatural it is. Other animals don't engage in this type of activity. When an instinct is met, it is satisfied. Drive is not satisfied in the same way as Instinct. The more we get, the more we want. If our drive focuses on shelter, for example, we want to always have a bigger house, or two houses, or a different house. This is a type of perverse selflessness in that we actually engage in an activity that we know is destructive.

We see this beautifully expressed in the Hebrew scriptures, which introduce humans by way of a type of Oedipal complex. In the Oedipal story you have Oedipus, who wants to sleep with his mum, right? And then his father gets in the way, and he kills the father and sleeps with his mother. He thinks it's going to be a blessing, but it's a curse. To understand this in a very basic sense, the mother is a symbol of completeness, wholeness, oceanic oneness, the return to the womb, the pre-subject-object divide. The father is the symbol of what gets in the way of that, what stops us from getting what we want. Oedipus breaks through that prohibition to get the blessing, and it's actually an utter disaster. In the very act of fulfilling your dreams, you will experience a type of subjective destitution. Only when you fulfill your dreams are you directly confronted with the truth that your dreams will not fulfill you.

This is exactly what plays out in Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve want a piece of fruit, then there's a prohibition that says, "You

can't eat of it." They start to really want to eat of it. It appears as something that will make them like God, which will make them complete or bring them to a state where they lack the lack. But it's the very prohibition that creates the lack that they think will be filled by transgressing the prohibition. They break the prohibition, they get the blessing, and it's a disaster.

The entire Judeo-Christian tradition starts off with a very clear example of the birth of human subjectivity that maps onto the theory of the subject we find in psychoanalysis. We're either unhappy because we don't get what we want or unhappy because we do, right? We're either depressed, which is the sadness of not getting what you want, or we're melancholic, which is the sadness of *getting* what you want.

IN CHRISTIANITY, THE CURTAIN RIPS, AND YOU REALIZE THERE'S NOTHING IN THERE. THERE'S NOTHING ON THE OTHER SIDE—THAT THE MAGICAL FRUIT WAS ONLY AN ILLUSION CREATED BY ITS VERY INACCESSIBILITY.

The whole Biblical tradition starts with this, and then Christianity replays this dilemma and offers a solution in the Crucifixion. To understand this, you just need to see that the Temple of Jerusalem has the same structure as the Garden of Eden. It's split into three. You've got a court of Gentiles where people can hang out. You've got a massive curtain, and behind the curtain is a Holy of Holies. This corresponds to the garden, the prohibition and the magical fruit that lies on the other side of the prohibition—the fruit that gains its magic precisely by being prohibited. In Christianity, the curtain rips, and you realize there's nothing in there. There's nothing on the other side. That the magical fruit was only an illusion created by its very inaccessibility.

Capitalism is the expression of a form of Oedipal desire. The very framing of my work is to argue that Christianity—rather than being about some belief in gods—is a counter cultural subversive collective of people who are freed from this frenetic drive who have done this by passing through nihilism—the Crucifixion, the death of God—and found a way of living that is freed from the *negative dimension* of Drive. For me, Christianity isn't about being nice to your neighbor. That's just being human, right? It's not about morality any more than it's about belief. Rather, Christianity is designed to free us from a certain form of political, cultural, and religious life that is premised on the

drive for completeness, a pursuit that actually makes us feel all the more incomplete. In a nutshell, I'm saying the good news of Christianity is not you can be whole and complete: that's the promise of the serpent, which is the Superego. Rather, I'm saying that the good news of Christianity is that you can't be whole or complete. When you can embrace that and come to the altar and kneel, you will find freedom, joy, and a new form of life unimaginable to you before that event. This is exorcism. It is the removal of that serpentine voice that promises happiness while only ever delivering sadness.

S: *It sounds like what you're describing is a lot of what you attribute to the word grace—this existential tension of how, when we realize that the curtain is ripped and when we see that there's nothing behind, we're still freed in spite of the expectation of something behind it. With your concept of grace, you also talk about forgiveness—forgiving yourself and forgiving others. In what ways do you think that grace differs from forgiveness?*

R: I really like that question. Maybe they are two lights on the same thing. Grace is the experience of radical acceptance, and forgiveness is what flows from that radical acceptance. I'm using these words in a technical sense here. Forgiveness doesn't mean that you say to someone who punches you in the stomach, "It's okay, whatever."

FOR ME, ORIGINAL SIN IS JUST A WAY OF REFERRING TO ORIGINAL LACK. IT IS THE NAMING OF AN ONTOLOGICAL INCOMPLETENESS IN THE WORLD THAT IS INSCRIBED IN SUBJECTIVITY.

For me, Original Sin is just a way of referring to original lack. It is the naming of an ontological incompleteness in the world that is inscribed in subjectivity. That's why I dislike the liberal idea of Original Blessing. The sense of an original blessing is the fantasy generated by the ontological lack. To understand how this relates to the notion of forgiveness, think about money. If you have no money, you have no money; that's nothing. If you have a debt, you don't just have no money; you have a *felt* nothingness. It's a nothingness that is something. It's a nothingness that binds you to institutions you despise. It makes you work in jobs you hate. Debt is like this ontological lack. To pay a debt means to fill it, so if I owe a hundred dollars, I give a hundred dollars. To forgive a debt means you don't pay it. You don't fill the lack. Instead you render it nothing.

You render it into a nothingness that is nothing. So, forgiveness of debt means not that you try to fill the lack in your life but that you're able to accept that lack and, in doing so, rob it of its sting.

TO EXPERIENCE GRACE IS TO ACCEPT THE INCOMPLETENESS, TO NOT BE STUNG BY IT. FORGIVENESS IS THE EVENT OF THIS GRACE.

The main problem with debt is not the lack but the demand to fill the lack. For example, after the housing bubble burst in the early 2000s, some of my friends got into financial trouble. The stress they faced wasn't connected to the debt as such. The problem was connected to the demands they were receiving to pay the debt. The problem was all of the phone calls, telling you that you have to pay it back. In economic terms, bankruptcy is as close to the theological idea of forgiveness that we can get. Bankruptcy means that you don't have to pay the debt, but rather the debt is wiped clean. To experience Grace is to accept the incompleteness, to not be stung by it. Forgiveness is the event of this Grace.

S: *To shift gears a little bit, as undergraduates in philosophy we are often told "If you're going to do that, you're going to have to teach at the university level." However, you haven't chosen to teach at a university level. How did you get to where you are and what do you think is the role of public philosophy?*

R: I'm very passionate about this, although, I don't want to tell too many people the secret or otherwise I'm going to have some competition. But here's the thing: we are re-entering a golden age of public intellectualism. In the old days, if you were driving a forklift truck for eight hours of the day, that's all you did; you drove a forklift truck. Now, you can put in headphones, and you can listen to some of the best teachers around the world for free. If you're driving a car all day, you can be listening to top-quality podcasts as you go. You can be listening to philosophers on YouTube while you do household chores. You can basically self-educate in ways that we couldn't have dreamed of twenty years ago, even ten years ago. With this there's a new range of possibilities for those who work in intellectual fields.

It allows for the possibility of philosophy returning to its roots. There have always been great philosophers who have had very ambivalent relationship with the academy, thinkers who have found themselves more at home doing philosophy in

PEOPLE CHOOSE THIS LIFE BECAUSE OF WHAT IT DOES FOR US, BECAUSE IT ENRICHES AND DEEPENS OUR LIVES AND CAN POTENTIALLY DO GOOD IN THE WORLD.

the streets. They've always inspired me. Whenever I studied philosophy, I never once thought about becoming a university teacher, but I always wanted to do philosophy in the commons. If someone wants to get rich, they shouldn't choose to become a public intellectual. People choose this life because of what it does for us, because it enriches and deepens our lives and can potentially do good in the world. However, it is possible to use the new technologies in order to reach people and to make a living doing it.

S: *You produce content in a variety of mediums. You have the* Fundamentalist *podcast that you do with Elliot Morgan, who's a comedian. You also write books, do seminars, and release YouTube videos. In what ways do you think academic disciplines—like philosophy, maybe other ones—can work to be more accessible to the general public, to somebody who might not have access to all of these different sources?*

R: I think that what we have to do is repeat the founding gesture of philosophy in creative ways that resonate with people. To go back to what I mentioned at the beginning of this interview, we need to make the world strange again. When people realize how weird our world is, when we understand that what we take for granted is bizarre—whether it's religiously, politically, or individually—we are open to new possibilities, new ways of remaking the world. Once you spark off the strangeness of the world, all you have to do is lay some breadcrumbs and say, "Oh, here are interesting people who have thought about these questions."

I'm really excited about the possibility that there can be philosophy podcasts and YouTube channels dedicated to serious thinking and popular speakers out there who are not trying to make someone like Heidegger fun, which would be impossible, but who are able to ask, "What's the question that animated Heidegger? What's the question that animated Camus? What's the strangeness that animated Freud?" and who try to help people experience that.

I'm not saying that's the main role of a public intellectual or philosopher, but it's a great start: to somehow show the world's strangeness. That's what they do in first-year philosophy. You do these funny thought experiments, which are kind of designed

to make you starting thinking about how strange your ways of engaging with the world really are. Today there's a real hunger for public intellectuals, but with the possibilities, there are always dangers. You've got so many pseudo-intellectuals on the internet at the moment.

S: *You said that giving philosophy to people is just one of the jobs of the public intellectual. What other jobs do you think an intellectual would have?*

R: There are so many roles. In the US, one of the roles of a public intellectual today might be to help people reflect more and react less, to help lower defense mechanisms that prevent us from listening to alternative views and listening to people we disagree with. The public intellectual needs to model healthy ways of engaging serious issues in a productive way.

AT THE MOMENT ONE OF THE ROLES FOR A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL MIGHT BE TO TRY TO FIND WAYS TO GET PAST US-AND-THEM POLITICS TO BRING NOVELTY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE BACK INTO POLITICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEBATE.

At different historical moments, public intellectuals will have different roles, but at the moment one of the roles for a public intellectual might be to try to find ways to get past us-and-them politics to bring novelty and the possibility of change back into political and intellectual debate. This is what happened in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Two sides were split and could not find agreement. Eventually, the suffering of the community got so bad that we all had to say, "We have to try to listen to the other person and see what happens." What happened is we just got into a room together—Loyalists and Republicans—and tried to find a novel set of solutions, because the old ones weren't working.

S: *It sounds like a public intellectual needs to be a necessarily generous person, because you are giving and you are doing for people in general. At the same time, it sounds like, when people start philosophy, it might be richer if it's a personal thing that hurts for you—to be uncomfortable and then go out to try to do philosophy. I'm wondering what the dynamic is between philosophy being a very personal thing or being a very public thing.*

R: Yes. You can only hope to use philosophy in a positive way for others if you have allowed it break into your own life and change you—only if you are continually open to practicing that humility every time you approach a new work. In my own life, I started philosophy as a personal endeavor. Then that kind of bled out into a more public arena. For me, philosophy began as a

way to justify my own positions. Heidegger once said something to the effect that the differences between students and lecturers isn't that the students don't know anything, and the lecturers do. It's the other way around: the students know everything, and the lecturers know nothing. First-year student often come to philosophy already knowing the answers and just wanting the evidence to back it up. Gradually, my teachers, through a learned unknowing, showed me that there are many different views and perspectives. They helped me dive into the massive conversation that philosophy is.

What's funny—this is one of the dangers about being a public intellectual—is that people try and ask you on Twitter whether God exists or something equally as strange, because they think it's a question you can put into a hundred and eighty characters. Actually, the progress in philosophy really comes from this very deep dive into the conversation itself.

If you dive in, it breaks you open. It helps you become uncomfortable with your ideas. It helps you interrogate them and develop them. It's not that your current view of life needs to be thrown out. Not at all. That's your starting point. All ways of thinking have something to them, but you want to see how they are woven in to the whole tapestry of thought and then add something to that tapestry.

PHILOSOPHY IS A VERY PERSONAL ENDEAVOR IN MANY WAYS, BUT THE MORE PERSONAL IT IS, THE MORE IT CAN SPEAK TO OTHERS.

Philosophy is a very personal endeavor in many ways, but the more personal it is, the more it can speak to others. The great thing is that I get to think about things that matter to me, so I always reach my audience. Every time I write a book, I saturate my market because the market is me. I think I'm writing for other people, but I'm writing for myself. Perhaps a few other people will read it as well. That also goes with payment. If I write a book, I've already been paid for it because the payment is the writing.

It's like when Kierkegaard said, "When a poet sings, they cry in agony, but when they sing, beautiful music is formed." So, all a poet is doing is crying about how their one true beloved died of tuberculosis, and they'll never love again, right? They're just moaners, but they're moaners whose lips are so formed that when they scream, it's beautiful, and it helps other people. So yeah, the personal and the public intertwine in a good singer-

songwriter, in a good philosopher, and even perhaps in a good mathematician.

S: *That was such a beautiful answer that I want to end it there. So, before we officially sign off, we're wondering if you have any questions for us after the interview?*

R: Not really. I just want to say that I'm so excited about the possibilities open to people who are studying philosophy today, because I think there are new technologies and new ways to do philosophy in public. There are new ways to make a living as a philosopher, using YouTube, podcasting, Patreon; I think students today should be looking seriously at that. They may want to do academic philosophy in a university, but they may also want to find a way to be a freelance philosopher, and there are ways to do that. So, I just want to encourage students today by saying that there are lots of options out there for you.

S: *Alright. We thank you sincerely and wholeheartedly for doing this interview with us. We truly appreciate it.*

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