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University of Tabriz

Philosophical Investigations

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Metaphysics of Logical Realism*

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Abstract

Despite the often false impression that the analytic philosophy as an anti-metaphysical movement has nothing to do with metaphysics, there can be found good reasons to grant the metaphysical dispositions of analytic philosophers, and thereby, to minimize the anti-metaphysical nature of analytic philosophy in its all phases. Since analytic philosophy is a historical movement the main nature of which developed through several stages, the very kinds of metaphysical dispositions within each one of its various stages can be easily portrayed. In the meantime, logical realism as the early stage of analytic philosophy contains plenty of metaphysical dispositions. Undoubtedly, one cannot say that analytic philosophy in this period was not committed to metaphysical theses about the plurality of entities, the ultimate nature of reality and the logical structure of the world. In this paper, then, after giving a relatively complete explanation of the logical realism, we claimed that although logical realists rejected the traditional speculative metaphysics of their predecessors, they also replaced it by the metaphysics of logic that pursues the metaphysical aims, this time, by logical means. So, we portrayed this kind of metaphysics as Bolzano's Semantic Platonism, Frege's and Russell's Pluralistic Platonism, Russell's Pluralistic Atomism, and Wittgenstein's logical atomism.

Keywords: *logical realism, metaphysics of logic, semantic Platonism, pluralist Platonism, logical atomism.*

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Introdoction

Analytic philosophy is a philosophical movement whose main activities have developed in several stages. Its first stage began with the Logical Realism. Logical realism as a general name for the first phase of analytic philosophy includes Bolzano's semantic Platonism and pluralistic Platonism of Frege and the early Russell as well as logical atomism of middle Russell and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. According to Smith, "logical realism is characterized by a Platonic theory of universals, direct realism in perceptual theory, and intuitionism in ethics" (Smith, 1997: 3). Likewise, "insisting upon the independence of the object of knowledge from the knower, defending a correspondence theory of truth, rejecting the doctrine of the internality of all relations and affirming the reality and objectivity of relations" (Hacker, 1998: 15) are all the characteristics that Hacker ascribed to logical realism. But it seems that not both definitions are comprehensive and, thus, that is not the case that all logical realists (for instance, Frege, Russell and early Wittgenstein) have consensus on all parts of both definitions. My proposal is that if we define logical realism as a thesis which asserts that we can represent reality through logical analysis of language, then the problem will be solved.

To give an explanation for our demonstration, it should be said that although logical realists agree with other streams (or stages) of analytic philosophy on the idea that "language misleads us" (Hylton, 1998: 53), there are also three essential features that distinguish them from other movements of analytic philosophy, and we can present them as fellow:

- (1) Logical realists make use of (formal) logic which is the best instrument for analysis of language.
- (2) Logical realists believe that merely by using formal logic (i.e. the very formal logic that have been used by logical analysis) they can manifest and overcome all perplexities of language.
- (3) Logical realists have a realist (metaphysical) conception of logical analysis.

The notable thing about (1) and (2) is that analytic philosophers in the face of misleadingness of language are divided into two groups:

(a) Ideal language philosophers, and (b) Ordinary language philosophers. In this regard, logical realists and logical positivists have some sympathy with (1) and (2), because both of them as Ideal language philosophers make use of formal logic as the best instrument for analysis of language and believe that by appealing to logical analysis they can manifest and remove complexities of language.

Undoubtedly, analytic philosophy in the stage of logical realism was committed to metaphysical theses about the ultimate nature of reality and the logical structure of the world. Although logical realists rejected the traditional speculative metaphysics (specifically, that of the absolute idealism), their aims, unlike logical positivists, were not anti-metaphysical. In fact, by using a new method and tool (i.e. formal logic), they intended to replace traditional speculative metaphysics by various forms of putatively analytic metaphysics of facts and their constituents; the very analytic metaphysics that is concerned with abstract entities which are, like Plato's Ideas, mind-independent, non spatio-temporal, imperceptible and yet objective (Frege, 1964: xvi), or with facts and their constituents (Russell, 1918: 112). Furthermore, if we see that *Tractatus* denied metaphysical propositions and insisted that any attempt to state metaphysical truths would necessarily result in nonsense, it does not denote that Wittgenstein has not believed in the existence of metaphysical truths; on the contrary, most parts of *Tractatus* attempt to state such truths, no matter how strictly they can be shown (Wittgenstein, 1922: 4.121). Even now, *Tractatus* and its ineffable metaphysics (i.e. propositions which show or display the logical form of reality) belong to the very analytic metaphysics that we can find in Frege and Russell. Therefore, it is not unreasonable that after entitling this kind of analytic metaphysics as the metaphysics of logic, Hacker stipulates that "it {*Tractatus*} also brought to full fruition the metaphysics of logic that had flowered at the hands of Frege and Russell" (Hacker, 1998: 17).

There are, in fact, various fragments on the part of logical realists which are compatible with these criteria. In this paper, therefore, after pointing out these fragments and tracing the mode of the formation of logical realism, we illustrate the metaphysics of logic in logical realism.

Beginning of Logicism

To detail the three-mentioned properties of logical realism, we must start with Logicism. Logicism, according to Glock, “is the project of providing mathematics with secure foundations by deriving it from logic” (Glock, 2008: 28). Then, its aim is to define the concepts of mathematics in purely logical terms (including that of a set), and to derive its propositions from self-evident logical principles. Although Frege’s *Begriffsschrift* (1897) was watershed in this regard, several ancestors of logical realism had a share in its development. And we will show it by representing the mutual relationship between mathematics and logic.

It is well known that sciences, during the nineteenth century, were under the influence of mathematics. But, in the late 19th century, the emergence of new disciplines (like psychology) and the appearance of essential changes within mathematics (including arithmetizing the mathematics and algebra, deriving theorems not from intuitive truths but from axioms and definitions, interest in the nature of natural numbers, and finally introducing the non-Euclidean geometries) cast doubt on the certainty of mathematics, and a fundamental crisis ensued. As the crisis appeared, the mathematicians and then philosophers were inclined to propound the interaction between logic and mathematics in order to establish a new formal language (or logic) by means of which they could increase the formal rigour of mathematics, secure its foundations, and remove the crisis. This is the main task of a project that entitled Logicism and, as we shall see, it was founded by Bolzano and Boole, established by Frege, and culminated by Russell and Wittgenstein. Therefore, we must start our investigation from this point; here is the point from which logical realism and its metaphysics of logic have originated.

Bolzano’s Semantic Platonism

Bolzano’s philosophy of mathematics is reminiscence of Leibnizian project of unifying human knowledge through purely mathematical rules. But, unlike Leibniz, he resumes this project in order to unify human knowledge (especially, mathematics) through purely logical rules (Shea, 1983: 292). Bolzano’s most important innovation in this

regard is his method of variation. Its main aim is to understand what happens to truth-value of a complex proposition when we change one of its components (i.e. a concept or another proposition). This method allows him to provide precise definitions of a large range of logical concepts, and to apply them to mathematics (Simons, 1999: 109-136). By using this method in logic, he took considerable steps to diminish the crisis; he first saved mathematics from intuitionism, then proved the objectivity of logical truths, and finally established anti-psychologism in logic. According to Bolzano's philosophy of mathematics, logical rigour is achieved by purely analytical methods, which do not require recourse to subjective intuitions and pictorial ideas. So, he is the first one who saved mathematics from Kantian intuitionism and opened the way for objective and anti-psychological attitudes in logic. Bolzano's attitudes in this regard, for the same reason, are "entitled semantic Platonism" (Centrone, 2010: vii). According to his view, logical rules are not produced by our mental and linguistic processes, rather, like Plato's Ideas, they are true as such independent of whether anyone ever calls or judges them as true. Then, we can take Bolzano as one of the forerunners of logicism who believes in objectivity of logical truths; a belief which can be found in Frege and Russell.

Boole's Symbolic Logic

The most important innovation of Boole's formal logic is his symbolic logic. Its advantage over Bolzano's formal logic is that it has never insisted that all propositions divide into subject and predicate. In fact, he was the first to apply mathematical concepts to logic and he opened the way for his successors (for instance, Frege and Russell) to make use of symbolic logic. According to Boole, mathematics is not the science of number and quantity; rather, it is a kind of formal language which everyone can employ in different kinds of utterances (Boole, 1854: 20). Thereby, he revived Aristotelian syllogistic logic by reducing it into algebra. Strictly speaking, by putting stress on analogy between the disjunction/conjunction of concepts and the addition/multiplication of numbers, he mathematized logic in terms of algebraic operation on set, and thereby reduced it to a set of self-sufficient rules and symbols whose scientific rigours are the same as

those of mathematics. In the meantime, we must remember that although Bool's name must not be placed alongside the logical realists, he has provided a new platform for logical realists by following reasons: he first taught logical realists the proper way of criticizing Aristotelian logic, and then, by mathematizing logic took an important step toward logicism.

Frege's Pluralistic Platonism

Although Frege's logical system was much benefited by Bolzano and Boole, it also abandoned their defects. On the one hand, Like Bolzano, he has purified mathematics of intuitionism and insisted on anti-psychologism in logic. However, he has never grounded his logic on Aristotelian syllogistic logic. On the other hand, like Boole, he has criticized Aristotelian syllogistic logic and mathematized the logic. But, he has not mathematized the logic in order to display it as a branch of mathematics; rather, he mathematized the logic in order to secure the foundations of mathematics by deriving it from logic, that is, "in order to reduce the whole of mathematics into logic" (Frege, 1979: 205). Moreover, he has founded his logic not (like Boole) on algebra but on function and argument.

For these reasons and for the sake of Aristotelian logic's inability for securing foundations of mathematics, Frege decided to establish new formal logic which could rigorously formalize mathematical reasoning and pursue the connection of its inferences in order to overcome the imperfections and misleadingness of mathematical language. in this context, natural language does not work, for "every many of the mistakes that occur in reasoning have their source in the logical imperfections of {natural} language" (Frege, 1979: 143). Indeed, one might think that "language would first have to be freed from all logical imperfections before it was employed in mathematical investigations" (Frege, 1979: 266). This great task has been undertaken by his *Begriffsschrift* in 1897. According to *Begriffsschrift*, subject/predicate distinction belongs to natural language and since we are easily misled by natural language, we ought to see our task as that of freeing us from the surface level of natural language and penetrating to its deep level in order to establish the priority of thought (Frege, 1972: 112-113). If we go beyond surface level of natural

language, we will see the priority of thoughts; because the rules of logic have their real place not in language but in pure thought (Frege, 1979: 270). Although the sentences of natural language are necessary, they are imperfect tools for expressing the thoughts. So, we should be cautious. For,

We should not overlook the deep gulf that yet separates the {surface} level of language from that of the thought To be sure, we distinguish the sentence as the expression of a thought from the thought itself. We know we can have various expressions for the same thought. The connection of a thought with one particular sentence is not a necessary one; but that a thought of which we are conscious is connected in our mind with same sentence or other is for us men necessary (Frege, 1979: 259, 269).

As we will see below, the most important characteristic of *Begriffsschrift* is that it allowed Frege to establish logicism by introducing new terms (including set, function, argument, thought, sense, etc.) to logic. The results are very advantageous: it not only makes it possible for Frege to provide the first complete axiomatization of first-order logic (propositional-and predicate-calculus) and even to exhibit the logical content of signs, but it also allows Frege to pursue his metaphysical dispositions; the very dispositions some of which are, for some reasons, Platonistic in tune. Therefore, our task is to see the way Frege pursued his metaphysical dispositions through his formal logic and its specialized terms.

The key terms, in this respect, are thought (*Gedanke*) and sense (*Sinn*). Concerning thoughts, Frege speaks as if they are made up of parts, so that a philosophical analysis would presumably be a process of decomposing a thought into its constituent parts. That is why he says: “thoughts have parts out of which they are built up. These parts, {as} building blocks, correspond to groups of sounds, out of which the sentence expressing the thought is built up” (Frege, 1979: 225). Moreover, in *Basic Laws of Arithmetic* he says that “if a name is part of the name of a truth-value, then the sense of the former name is part of the thought expressed by the latter name” (Frege, 1964: 90). Here Frege’s citation means that the meaning (*Bedeutung*) of a sentence is

its truth-value; its sense is the thought it expresses. On the one hand, by speaking about the constituent parts or the logical structure of thought, he insisted that we can distinguish parts in the thought corresponding to parts of a sentence, so that the structure of the sentence can serve as a picture of the structure of the thought (Frege, 1984: 390). On the other hand, he took language as a mirror that can represent the logical structure of the world. On the whole, however, his main idea about these constituent parts of thought and sentence compels him to yield to some kind of semantics the acceptance of which is equal to accepting some kind of ontology. We can clarify Frege's assertion that "every sentence expresses a thought and every thought can be divided into two parts" as so: our sentences are about sets of objects in the world, and each one of these objects has properties which are expressed by concepts, they also have some positions with each other which are expressed by relations. That is why, as we observed, he emphatically remarked that "we can distinguish parts in the thought corresponding to parts of a sentence, so that the structure of the sentence can serve as a picture of the structure of the thought". Then, there is a correspondance between the constituent parts of thought (including object, concept, and relation), and the constituent parts of sentence (including proper names, one-place predicate, and multi-place predicate) out of which the sentence expressing the thought and even the constituent parts of mathematics (i.e. argument and function) represent the logical structure of the world (Mendelsohn, 2005: chapter 5).

In "On Sense and Meaning" (1892) by distinguishing between sense (*Sinn*), meaning (*Bedeutung*) and ideas (*Vorstellungen*), Frege offers further analysis of these concepts (and more specially the concept of sense). Thereby, being concerned with logical content of signs, he introduces their meaning as the object they refer to, their sense as the mode of representation of that referent, and their ideas as the subjective association of individuals. Therefore, by doing so, he opens the way to objective interpretation of senses. Here, as we see, Frege's remarks are similar to what he presented about thought in his earlier works. Just as a sense is grasped by any person who understands the sign and yet it exists independently of being grasped, so a thought can be communicated between different persons and yet

it is true or false independently of someone grasping or believing it (Frege, 1984: 157-177).

Now, one can see the advantages of Frege's logical analysis, especially when it serves as a proper tool for satisfying his metaphysical dispositions. One can see, indeed, how Frege pursued his metaphysical dispositions through his formal logic and its specialized terms (including thoughts and senses). But, as we will see in the conclusion, it does not mean that logic produces metaphysics, it only implies that logic is a proper instrument (or a method) for achieving metaphysical thesis; in fact Frege and other logical realists pursued metaphysical aims by logical means. Therefore, it is worth to consider the utilities of this means.

The first utility of such means (i.e. Frege's logical analysis) is its anti-psychologistic attitude in logic. This attitude is a necessary condition of objective interpretation of thoughts and senses, or, exactly speaking, it helps Frege to pursue metaphysical dispositions without involving the mental complexities like those of traditional speculative metaphysics. It allows Frege to assert that thoughts and senses, if true, are not only true independently of our recognizing them to be so, but that they are independent of our thinking as such. A thought or a sense does not belong to the person who thinks about it, as nor does an idea to the person who has it. Everybody who grasps a thought or a sense encounters it in the same way, as the same thought. Otherwise two people would never attach the same thought (or same sense) to the same sentence (or same word), but each would have his own thought (or sense) (Frege, 1979: 133). It is for this reason that Kenny, following Dummett, remarks that:

Frege disentangled logic from psychology, and gave it the place in the forefront of philosophy which had hitherto been occupied by epistemology. It is this fact which, more than any other, allows Frege to be regarded as the founding father of modern analytic philosophy (Kenny, 1995: 210).

The second utility manifests itself when Frege, by criticizing psychologism, paves the way for objective interpretation of logical concepts. This objective attitude in logic is what helps Frege to realize

his metaphysical dispositions. As a matter of fact, Frege's main aim of providing these concepts is not merely to criticize psychologism in logic, but he seeks to constitute the three-world ontology, like that of Plato, by logical means. Indeed, Frege's ideography by introducing thoughts and senses attempts to establish that thoughts and senses are not produced by our mental operations, since "they are objective and existing independent of any one's in fact having grasped it" (Frege, 1964: xvi):

Thoughts are not mental entities, and thinking is not an inner generation of such entities but the grasping of thoughts which are already present objectively (Frege, 1980: 67).

Therefore, Frege's philosophy of logic and mathematics not only combats psychologism, but also erects the three world ontology of Plato. It must be said that, in his view, thoughts and senses are abstract entities which are non-spatio-temporal and imperceptible, yet objective. Indeed, like Plato's ideas, they belong to a third realm that contrasts with the subjective realm of private ideas, and material realm of spatio-temporal things. The point is that we see how Frege, like Plato, commits himself to weighty metaphysical claims about the third realm (i.e. mind-independent abstract entities).

Russell's Pluralism

Like Frege, Russell took his formal logic as an ideal language which avoids the apparent logical defects of natural languages. But his use of new formal logic was wider than Frege, since he applied the new logical techniques more than Frege at the service of metaphysical (and even epistemological) dispositions. It is well known that when Russell, at first, entered Cambridge, the prevailing thought was the same which was propagated by McTaggart; the same version of German idealism which held sway in Britain between the 1870s and the 1920s (Soames, 2003: 94). Though towards the end of 1898 he rebelled against the idealism, Russell also gets steeped in a philosophical system which was vindicated by the idealists. In other words, although he was interested to make a philosophical system like that of the idealists; his favorite conception of system was quite

different from that which they had presumed: his conception of system was not monistic; but it was pluralistic.

For this reason, Russell combated the idealists because of their denial of a plurality of entities (Monk, 1996: 114). Hereafter, he embraces an exuberantly pluralistic realism, and, in place of the synthesis characteristic of the neo-Hegelian idealism, he espouses analysis (Hacker, 1998: 15). That is why he describes analysis as the identification of the simple parts of mind-independent, non-linguistic complexes (Russell, 1992b: xv). He conceives of the matter of analysis as objective and non-linguistic (Hacker, 1998: 15), one which Hylton called the realist conception of philosophical analysis (Hylton, 1998: 42). He seeks to establish his pluralistic realism through logical analysis of language; one which Hacker called metaphysics of logic (Hacker, 1998: 17).

This kind of logical analysis which serves as his pluralistic realism developed in two phases. The first phase which began with *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903) continued until 1905. In this period, he pursued his pluralistic realism by adopting a luxuriant ontology similar to that of Plato. For this reason, it is entitled Russell's Pluralistic Platonism. In the second phase, which began with "On Denoting" (1905), Russell renounced the Platonist luxuriant ontology of *The Principles of Mathematics*, and pursued his pluralistic realism by resorting to some kind of reductive atomism; one which Strawson entitled "reductive atomistic analysis" (Strawson, 1992: 20). Therefore, in this paper, we will discuss Russell's pluralism under the titles of "Russell's Pluralistic Platonism" and "Russell's Pluralistic Atomism".

1. Russell's Pluralistic Platonism

Before 1905, Russell did not emphasize the analysis of propositions so much as the analysis of concepts of which a proposition is made up. As is remarked before, Russell described this kind of analysis (i.e. logical analysis of concepts) as the identification of the simple parts of mind-independent, non-linguistic complexes, and conceived of the matter of analysis as objective. Therefore, this kind of analysis, which Russell often called definition, consisted of "the analysis of complex

ideas into their simple constituents” (Russell, 1992a: 18), or “the analysis of an idea into its constituents” (Russell, 1992b: 111). For this reason, he adopted a pluralistic ontology similar to those of Plato and Frege, and thereby, took everything that we seem to be able to name (including chimeras, numbers, Homeric gods...) as real (Russell, 1992b: 466):

Whatever may be an object of thought, or may occur in any true or false proposition, or may be counted as one, I call a term... every term has being, i.e. is in some sense. A man, a moment, a number, a class, a relation, a chimera, or anything else that can be mentioned, is sure to be a term; and to deny that such and such a thing is a term must always be false (Russell, 1992b: 44-45).

Then, Russell’s metaphysical dispositions rooted in his pluralistic Platonism. It is true that after 1905, he keeps his pluralistic project away from Platonism and fills its place in reductive atomism, but he insists on advancing his pluralistic project (and its metaphysical dispositions), this time, through logical analysis of propositions. So, *The Principles of Mathematics* is undertaken to satisfy the first phase of this project.

In *The Principles of Mathematics*, Russell’s more important mission was to resolve Frege’s paradox of sets, and even to protect logicism from the paradox by means of a theory of type which is entirely supported by his pluralist Platonism (Russell, 1992b: xi). Having relied upon this theory, he prohibited say of a set X what can only be said of X’s members, notably that X is or is not a member of X itself as a meaningless formula. The reason for it, according to Russell, was that at once we ascribe to a set what cannot be ascribed to it. Then, by proposing the theory of type, which is entirely supported by his pluralist Platonism, he assumed that there are infinite sets (or sets of numbers) for mathematical operations. It implied that there are infinite things in the world, since numbers in sets have the same role as things or names in sentences. As we observe, this form of speaking has a metaphysical nature; it reminisces of Plato’s metaphysics. Any kind of discussion concerning entities belongs to the scope of ontology and metaphysics. So Russell also adopted a

pluralistic system and discussed a plurality of entities in order to satisfy his metaphysical dispositions. The notable point is that he did so by logical means.

2. Russell's Pluralistic Atomism

One of the revolutionary changes brought about by "On Denoting" (1905) was the idea that shifted the emphasis from the analysis of concepts to the analysis of propositions. Although Russell's pluralistic project was not by any means put aside in this period, it kept away his early Platonism and sustained some kind of reductionism. Its main idea was that the form of the sentence will not in general be a good guide to the formation of the propositions (i.e. the underlying logical form), since a sentence with an expression like "The present king of France" in spite of its outward meaning does not really denote anything (Russell, 1905: 483-484). He assumed that the structure (or form) of a sentence does not generally correspond to the structure of the proposition expressing it (i.e. its underlying logical form). Just as all of the sentences containing definite descriptions or proper names express a proposition whose logical form is that of an existential quantification, one can lay aside the existence of dubious entities by logical analysis of propositions. Then, in "On Denoting", by adopting some kind of reductionism (or cautious constructivism), Russell analyzed such troublesome sentences as "the present king of France is bald" into a quantified conjunction, viz, "there is one and only one thing which is a present king of France, and everything which is a present king of France is bald", and thereby asserted that the troublesome expressions such as "the present king of France", "chimera" and "square circle" are incomplete symbols. Although they have no meaning and do not stand for anything by their own, they can be paraphrased in the context of the meaningful sentences in which they occur. By doing so, briefly, he uncovers the true logical structure of propositions and facts; a structure which can differ essentially from the misleading grammatical structures of the original sentences expressing the facts (Russell, 1905:479-493).

One can overtly grasp the prologation of this project in "Knowledge by Description and Knowledge by Acquaintance" (1912), and even in *our Knowledge of External World* (1914).

Russell's main objective in both writings was to reinforce the project of "On Denoting" by furnishing it with the theory of acquaintance (and its Ocam's razor). His aim was to find the true logical form of propositions and facts in terms of such an analysis; a form which can differ substantially from the misleading grammatical form of the sentences of natural language expressing those facts (Russell, 2012: 31-40). In this sense, logic is concerned with the analysis of logical forms (i.e. with the kinds of propositions, with the various types of facts, and with the classification of the constituents of facts (Russell, 1990: 67). Then, if one analyzed the sentences properly, he or she will find that they correspond with the facts they express. That is, the process of analysis is complete when one has found the ultimate components and structures of reality. In such a case, as Hylton mentioned it, one knows that he has done this because the final list of constituents of reality is all objects of sensory acquaintance (Hylton, 1998: 45; 1990: ch.6). So, it implies that it is no longer necessary to suppose that every object of discourse stands for a reality.

This project culminated in Russell's logical atomism, where he pursued his metaphysical dispositions more eagerly. In "The philosophy of logical atomism", he considered his logical system as a certain philosophical position on the basis of which a certain kind of metaphysics emerges (Russell, 1956: 178). Having pursued a pluralistic metaphysical aim by his logical system, he described it as below:

The logic which I shall advocate is atomistic, as opposed to the monistic logic of the people who more or less follow Hegel. When I say that my logic is atomistic, I mean that I share the common-sense belief that there are many separate things: I do not regard the apparent multiplicity of the world as consisting merely in phases and unreal divisions of a single indivisible Reality (Russell, 1956: 178).

Russell used the term "atomism" in contrast to the idealists in order to prove that there are discrete facts composed of particular things. Such particular things are the atoms which form the basic units in his philosophy. Hence, logical atomism is a metaphysical theory which,

like many other philosophical systems (including those of the idealists) seeks to give a synoptic account of reality. But, unlike many others, Russell's system is completely consistent with the actual or potential findings of science, since "it seems that science has much greater likelihood of being true than any philosophy... {And it} shall be wise to build philosophy upon science, because the risk of error in philosophy is pretty sure to be greater than science" (Russell, 1956: 340). Although philosophy depends on scientific findings, it can suggest general hypotheses as to the fundamental features of the world (i.e. hypotheses about facts and their ultimate constituents) by means of logical analysis; those which science is not yet in a position to confirm or confute (Russell, 1956: 341).

In Russell's philosophy, this great task was undertaken by his logical system, while the sciences only presuppose them, logical analysis can reveal the fundamental structural features of the world. So, the first obvious thing to which logic draws our attention is that "the world contains *facts*, which are what they are whatever we may choose to think about them, and that there are also *beliefs*, which have reference to facts, and by reference to facts are either true or false" (Russell, 1956: 182). In "the philosophy of logical atomism" he exposes facts as bellow:

When I speak of a fact- I do not propose an exact definition, but an explanation so you will know what I am thinking about- I mean the kind of thing that makes a proposition true or false. If I say "It is raining", what I say is true in a certain condition of weather and is false in other condition of weather. The condition of weather that makes my statement true (or false as the case may be) is what I should call a "fact" (Russell, 1956: 182).

It is clear from the passage that Russell's logical atomism seeks to depict the relationship between the objective world of facts and our linguistic capacity to access it. By appealing to his logical system, he suggests that "the words in a proposition would correspond one by one with the components of the corresponding fact, with the exception of such words as "or", "not", "if", and "then", which have a different function" (Russell, 1956: 197). He seeks to reveal the correspondence

of propositions with facts and also the correspondence of names in propositions with the constituent components of fact. Therefore, propositions are true when there is a one-to-one correlation between the way its linguistic constituents are arranged and the particulars that hang together in the world.

In “The philosophy of logical atomism”, while depicting the isomorphic relation between propositions and fact, he divides all propositions into atomic propositions and molecular propositions, and then concludes that the world does not contain facts that correspond to molecular propositions (Russell, 1956: 188). In his mathematical logic, by analyzing the complex and misleading sentences of natural language, he uncovers the true logical structure of propositions and their corresponding fact. The result is that the world is made up of ultimate ingredients from which more complex structures such as facts are composed. These are the ultimate atoms arrived at through logical analysis.

Thus, logical analysis is a metaphysical theory which claims that new formal logic can mirror the structure of reality. As mentioned before, the two theories of descriptions and acquaintance are key components in the theory. It must be said that if all sentences were complex (or molecular), then there would be no direct way of hooking them up with the world of fact (viz. there would be no fact in the reality corresponding with the molecular sentences), and logic could not be said to be a discipline concerned with truth. That logic is so concerned with truth means that there must be singular (or atomic) sentences. Furthermore, if these are to be true (i.e. correspond with the world of fact), their denoting constituents must be meaningful (i.e. denotes to the object which we are acquainted with in the world of fact).

Equipping logical atomism with two theories of descriptions and acquaintance, he asserts that:

We do accept, in ordinary daily life, as particulars all sorts of things that really are no so. The names that we commonly use, like “Socrates”, are really abbreviations for descriptions; not only that, but what they describe are not particulars but complicated systems of classes or

series. A name, in the narrow logical sense of a word whose meaning is a particular, can only be applied to a particular with which the speaker is acquainted, because you cannot name anything you are not acquainted with...{Therefore} the only words one does use as names in the logical sense are words like "this" or "that" (Russell, 1956: 200-201).

According to this passage, if a sentence contains a description, it will never mirror those fundamental features of the world that Russell labels atomistic facts. Those facts are reflected only in the atomic sentences of his logical system, and they are all singular sentences containing proper names. Therefore, Russell's logical atomism is a pluralistic metaphysical system concerning an isomorphic relationship between language, meaning and the world of fact.

Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism

The metaphysics of logic that had flowered at the hands of Bolzano, Frege, and finally, Russell's logical atomism has been brought to full fruition by Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (1922). Evidently, Wittgenstein's logical atomism, at least in some senses, is similar to that of Russell. Although both of them have some sympathy with the conviction that philosophy is identical with the logical analysis of propositions into their ultimate constituents and that this would also reveal the ultimate constituents of reality, they can be distinguished from each other due to the fact that they suggest different views on the nature of logic.

What helps Wittgenstein in constructing the metaphysical system of his logical atomism is the picture theory of language which asserts that "the proposition is a picture of reality" (Wittgenstein, 1922: 4.01). One cannot deny that it is largely Kantian in tone. While Russell was affected by the empiricist idea that the constituent parts of reality should be objects of sensory acquaintance, Wittgenstein intended a Kantian project of establishing the condition for the possibility of linguistic expression of reality. His main aim was not to establish the precise nature of objects, because propositions of logic as tautologies do not make claims the truth-value of which depends on how things actually are, they only "show that they say nothing" (Wittgenstein, 1922: 4.461). His concern was to show that the existence of objects

and atomic states are the main condition of the possibility of the linguistic expression of thought of reality. Thus, the aim of *Tractatus*, like Kant's *Critique*, was "to draw a limit to thought, or rather {for the sake of its giving linguistic twist to the Kantian enterprise}, not to thought, but to the expression of thoughts" (Wittgenstein, 1922: Pref). Thoughts are neither mental processes nor abstract entities; they are meaningful propositions and sentences which draw the limits of the world, since "the limits of language (which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world" (Wittgenstein, 1922: 5.62). Also, thoughts can be completely expressed in language, since "it will only be in language that the limit can be drawn, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense" (Wittgenstein, 1922: Pref). So, by determining the limits of the linguistic expression of thought, philosophy can display the limits of thought: it is by logical analysis of language (and only in language) that we can show that some combinations of signs are nonsense (Wittgenstein, 1922: 4.466). There are, indeed, things that cannot be thought or put into words. They manifest themselves; "they are what is mystical" (Wittgenstein, 1922: 6.522). And "what cannot speak {or thought} about we must pass over in silence" (Wittgenstein, 1922: 7). Although any attempt to state such mystical truths as metaphysics, theology, ethics and mysticism would necessarily result in nonsense, it does not imply that Wittgenstein has never believed in such truths. In fact, most parts of *Tractatus* were attempts on the side of Wittgenstein to state them, even though, strictly speaking, they can only be shown. Therefore, Hacker is quite right to compare Wittgenstein and Kant as so:

Just as Kant had drawn the bounds of knowledge in order to make room for faith, so too the young Wittgenstein drew the limits of language in order to make room for ineffable metaphysics (Hacker, 1998: 13).

Conclusion

We began this article by defining the logical realism as a thesis which asserts that "we can represent reality through logical analysis of language". In this regard, having referred to the logical realists' common assumption that "language is misleading" and their assertion that "logic can eliminate the misleadingness of language", we

portrayed their metaphysics of logic which pursues metaphysical aims by logical means. So, our main aim was to show that although logical realists rejected the traditional speculative metaphysics of their predecessors, it did not imply that they were not interested in metaphysics. It must be mentioned that not only good reasons can be found to grant the logical realists' metaphysical dispositions and theses, but also we can show that there is a common course only within which all metaphysical (traditional metaphysics as well as analytic metaphysics) activities are possible. In other words, there is the four-stages-course which must be traversed by anybody who is engaged in metaphysics: every metaphysician begins with a general question about the facts, and then makes use of a particular hypothesis in connection with that question; furthermore he enjoys a special method or tool in order to prove his hypothesis, and finally takes for granted the existence of some of the basic metaphysical entities and concepts. In this respect, we cannot exclude logical realists from the metaphysical circle. Like all metaphysicians, they begin with a general question about the reality (i.e. they seek to give a general explanation of the world), though they do so not by considering the relationship between thought and reality but by considering the relationship between language and reality. They also make use of a particular hypothesis in connection with that question, though the nature of their hypothesis is different from that of traditional metaphysicians. For example, when logical realists make use of this hypothesis that "language is misleading", their work is like Plato's hypothesis that "the sensible world is shadow". Furthermore, like all metaphysicians, they enjoy a particular method in order to prove their hypothesis, though they replaced the traditional methods (for example, Plato's dialectic) by their new method (i.e. mathematical logic). And finally, their ultimate results are like those of traditional metaphysicians, though the content of their metaphysical theses manifests itself not in the form of Plato's ideas or Descartes' substances but in the form of Frege's ideas and thoughts, Russell's pluralistic atomism and Wittgenstein's ineffable metaphysics.

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The Need for the Dualist View to Combat Extremism*

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Abstract

This paper argues that we will never get rid of the extremist mentality unless the dualist view prevails and is taught as part of the educational system. The dualist view takes account of both sides of an argument whereas the extremist view promotes one side unequivocally without considering the merits of the opposing view. The merits of the dualist view can be taught in schools so that everyone learns to recognise that mentality when it is evident not only in other people's behaviour but also in their own thinking about things. The dualist view is a flexible one involving trial-and-error processes as we work our way through life. That view is contrasted with the monist view that focuses on one point of view to the exclusion of all others. The extremist's view is usually monistic and is intolerable of views that contradict or dispute their dogmatic view of things. This paper therefore examines these two contrasting views. It outlines the spectrum between monist and dualist ways of thinking, and it concludes that systematic form of dualism is possible that takes the middle way between the extremes of dogmatic and sceptical thinking. Only through dualist studies will the dualist view be more thoroughly developed, as is outlined here.

Keywords: *extremism, behaviour, the middle way, dualism, philosophy.*

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Introduction

The dualist view is about seeing both sides of an argument and the merits and demerits of both sides. The monist view concentrates on one side of the argument to the absolute detriment of the other side. Thus, extremists generally adopt a monist view and do their best to eliminate the other side as if it had no merits whatsoever. They think that their view is the absolute truth and any argument opposing it must *ipso facto* be false and ultimately evil and despicable.

It is argued in this paper that the dualist view needs to be adopted universally before the extremist mentality can be brought under control instead of being an enduring source of enmity and conflict among humanity. Unless this dualist view is taught as a part of the educational system, people will continue to go to extremes in their thinking without being critical of the thought processes that lead them to such extremes. Learning the dualist view requires at least the following:

1. A self-referential attitude that enables individuals to refer back to their views and view them critically instead of applying them absolutely as if they represent ultimate and irrevocable truths.
2. The ability to distance themselves from their views so that they are seen for what they are. Extremists typically take their views personally so that any opposition to them is taken personally.

War is nearly always the result of extremist views of some kind being pursued to their logical conclusion. Thus, the unyielding pursuit of nationalist interests was the underlying cause of the World War One, and the aggressive, militaristic policies of fascist governments caused World War Two. The warmongering mind is one of inflexible dogmatism. There is a story told of Napoleon Bonaparte that before he imprudently invaded Russia, he was presented with a pamphlet which argued very persuasively against such an invasion. He summoned the author and told him that he had read the pamphlet but nevertheless the invasion would go ahead as he had already committed himself to it. The unfortunate consequences of his inflexibility are well-known. Thus, the dualist view may involve changing one's mind in the face of inconvenient facts.

Democracy depends on the dualist view which allows opposing views to be voiced without being suppressed or forbidden. The suppression of opposing views can lead to authoritarian government and ultimately to tyranny. In Great Britain a dualist way of thinking arose out of the civil war of the 17th century CE. Instead of the forces of the King and Parliament fighting each other on the battlefield, they began to oppose each other in the House of Commons. To this day, HM Government sits across from HM Opposition with more than two swords' width between them. This kind of rivalry permeates the two party systems which are fundamentally dualist in nature. It allows the conservative and progressive sectors of society to present their opposing views to the public so that an overall consensus can be reached concerning the best course of action. When one sector seeks to impose its views in a draconian way over the whole population, the government becomes extremist and authoritarian. Thus, when the progressives used the French Revolution to enforce their views, they ended up executing the aristocracy which in their view stood in the way of progress. Similarly, right-wing fascist regimes imprison or execute dangerous radicals who threaten the established order.

The dualist view leads ultimately to a holist position in which all opinions, beliefs and points of view have their place. Wisdom consists in viewing the whole picture and not being tied down by narrow parochial interests dictated by race, religion, nationality, culture, commercial interests and so on. Humanity has already wasted countless time, effort and manpower in futile wars and disputes that amount to little or nothing in the grand scale of things. What matters in the end is the welfare and future of the whole human race and the dualist view is concerned to promote that view above all others.

2. The nature of the dualist view

The dualist view is about being interactive with our beliefs and opinions. We hold them at arm's length so that they do not possess us. It is about self-reference in which we refer back to our beliefs to criticise them. The monist view on the other hand sees everything in terms of one thing which is thought to be the ultimate, absolute solution to complex problems. An obvious example of a monist solution is the view that capitalism is the one and only solution to all economic problems as

opposed to any alternative that favours state intervention. The opposing communist view that promotes state intervention is equally a monist view that fails to take account of the capitalist one. Nowadays, there are few economies in the world that are not a mixture of these two approaches between which a balance is sought through monetary and fiscal policies.

Reality is not so simple that one 'ism' alone can encompass everything about it but monist thinkers consistently behave as if their 'ism' can do so. Monist solutions to our problems are static, monolithic and inviolable to criticism. They are applied absolutely and without alteration so that they lead inevitably to dogmatic extremism in which the opposing view is demonised. If we interact dualistically with our views we can then deal with them objectively and do not take them to heart as being the ultimate solution.

Thus, the dualist view itself is treated monistically when it is applied as if it is the one and only way of looking at things. Like any 'ism' dualism has its limitations and dualist theory aims to clarify these limitations as well as its areas of applicability. It is self-referential and is open to all kinds of interpretation. To that extent it is more like a science than a doctrine or dogma. The point is that we can choose to interact or not to interact in a dualist way and therein lies the reality of freewill. For example, we can stop doing things if we put our minds to it. Dualism is about building up the inner strength to resist and desist when we need to do so. It is about knowing when to stop and think on the one hand and when to get things done on the other hand.

When the dualist view is applied, it usually means interacting between two points of view. But the resolution between these points of view is variable. It does not necessarily mean taking the middle path between extremes, or some kind of compromise between them. The resolution may mean correcting an imbalance in which one behavioural extreme has been taken too far. For example, the world is currently weighed down with increasing debt that threatens the future stability of the world's economy. If nothing is done about this trend, a catastrophic collapse in the financial markets seems inevitable. The dualist view means recognising the extent to which such extremes of behaviour need to be corrected to ensure that future progress is balanced and

productive. Thus, applying the dualist view demands intuitive insight and foresight since there is no simple dualist formula that can be applied to all circumstances.

In the physical world, dualist interaction is ubiquitous and it consists in one-to-one interactions in which an exchange between disparate processes produces something different. There is no logical equivalence between the one and the other because complex processes are involved, especially with regard to biological entities. Living processes are complexes of dualist interactions. They have their roots in chemical interactions such as that between sodium and chlorine producing an entirely different substance – salt.

We are dualist beings because of our biological nature. We have internal workings that interact on a one-to-one basis with our external environment to keep us in harmony with it. We breathe in air and expel carbon dioxide. We imbibe food and drink and expel liquid and matter accordingly. The metabolic processes inside us involve dualist interactions that are markedly different from the activity in inorganic matter such as liquid and metal. As social beings we constantly interact with each other and with society and its institutions. Our thoughts are influenced by such interactions, and other people's thoughts are changed as a result of our interaction with them. What is inside us changes when we interrelate with what is outside us. This contrast between the internal and the external is inherently dualist.

Being human means being in two minds about many matters. When we are all of one mind, we may be blinded to other ways of doing things and can harm ourselves, other life-forms and the planet in general because we are collectively stupid, and create bubbles, bottle-necks and other excesses which led to the world-wide financial crisis of 2008. Crowds are not always wise since they can be driven into riotous anarchy by fashionable excesses to which over-clever people drive them with their specious rhetorical arguments.

However, we are also a self-correcting species that realises its mistakes and can do something about them. Humanity's activities are not entirely unconscious or random like the swervings of bird flocks or the stampedes of animal herds. Our activities are constantly being observed, monitored and commented upon by self-appointed experts,

journalists, pundits, academics and the like. By examining the consequences of our actions, we can rectify our mistakes, and this is done by interacting dualistically with our problems. As dualists, we do not expect to get everything right all at once but may hope to do so in the long run.

Single-minded persons often commit atrocities, like Nazi officers who plead that they are only following orders when they slaughter people mindlessly. Man's inhumanity to man often results from the voice of authority being pursued single-mindedly and inhumanely. Single-mindedness is fine in moderation and within reasonable limits. We often need it to get things done. But it is taken to extremes by absolute monists (as mentioned below) who know no limits in pursuing their ends. The dualist view draws attention to our limitations in that regard because it reminds us of the need to be self-critical. We can stop ourselves and think again and be less sure of our own reasonings. The interactive aspect of dualism reinforces this critical self-reference.

We are capable of being self-conscious, self-corrective beings who examine what we are doing and thinking and correct ourselves when necessary. In interacting with ourselves, we figuratively loop back into our former thinking and correct it accordingly. This is basically what self-consciousness involves when we are aware of what we should or should not be doing or thinking. The dualist view thus refers to self-conscious activity that involves trial-and-error; a common sense procedure that also underlies the scientific method and has ensured the remarkable success of science in transforming our society largely for the better. Dualist thinking therefore moves forward recursively in a dynamic and flexible way. It embraces opposing points of view instead of being stuck unyieldingly in one extreme viewpoint. This dynamic view is not completely realist or idealist, empiricist or rationalist, logical or intuitive. It embraces all of these in an interactive manner, that is to say, it moves from one viewpoint to the other and *vice versa*, according to what needs to be done in the real world in correcting imbalances, redressing injustices, and loosening rigid points of view.

We should regard opposing positions, such as left-wing/right-wing and empiricism/rationalism, as *dualist challenges* rather than irreconcilable paradoxes. These positions constantly challenge us to

make sense of them and we live our lives confronting them and dealing with them. To take one side to the exclusion of the other side is the easy monist solution which invariably amounts to an extreme point of view. It is more intellectually and morally satisfying to accept the dualist challenge and to make the most of it to be best of one's abilities.

Perhaps the ultimate dualist challenge is to live as if one is going to live forever and also as if this is the last day of our lives. Resolving this paradox requires us to actively find the most important and lasting things to do, and the resolution demands our constant attention. If we regard it as nothing more than an irreconcilable paradox then we have no incentive to make anything of it. Thus, paradoxes should be regarded as dualist challenges to be overcome rather than dismissed because they are paradoxical. We overcome them by constantly doing things to get beyond them and to make better sense of life as a result.

As human beings we are both unique individuals distinct from society and collective units intimately involved in society. These incompatible positions must be constantly reconciled and this is best achieved when we are in a dualist frame of mind. As individuals we are not so unique that we can live entirely to ourselves. Extreme individuality makes no more sense than extreme conformity. We can learn to balance the two in a dualist manner. Our word 'idiot' comes from the ancient Greek word meaning those who live for themselves alone and do not participate in society at large. To make the most of ourselves we need to conform and to find our rightful place in society. But this conformity is taken to extremes by those who obey authority single-mindedly. They are in a monist frame of mind and may lose their humanity by being in thrall to ideas, beliefs or opinions that are regarded as real and inviolable. They become pawns in the nefarious activities of the state or of some organisation whose activities are divorced from the interests of humanity as a whole.

We all have this problem of balancing individual self-expression with the social conformity that is needed to make the most of ourselves, and this balancing involves what is here called 'dualist interaction'. We interact with opposing ideas in a genuine effort to seek the best way forward instead of being stuck in the rut of one way of thinking. There is always another way of looking at things, and this is the essence of

open-mindedness. We obey the laws of society because we have good reason to do so but we are not above breaking the law if only because we are human and not mindless automatons. If we are sufficiently moved by the injustice of certain laws, we may purposefully break them. Thus, we interact with these laws when we think about them critically and do not just obey them mindlessly.

The dualist view recognises the fragility of our humanity and is therefore the default position for human beings. Other animals may be driven by instinct and impulse but we always have the choice of doing or not doing what we feel like doing. We need to be fully aware of our potential for wicked and evil acts to avoid actually doing them. This is what self-control is all about. It is based on knowing what we can do and what we should not do. This two-minded duality makes us dynamic and uncertain animals that are always trying to do things better in the future – every day being ‘Groundhog Day’ as in the outstanding feature film of that name. We are all hoping to experience the perfect day in which everything goes according to plan, though we might never achieve it.

However, many philosophers avoid this obvious duality in favour of a monist view of ourselves and the universe. They wish to see us as purely material beings or in the contrary view as purely spiritual beings. The dualist view is too untidy and illogical as it gives us a very complex interactive account whereas their inclination is to reduce everything to one thing or idea. Their thinking is discrete and categorical, and the truth is often conceived to be static, unyielding and eternal. But in the dualist view, truth is something we are constantly striving for by interacting with our environment. It is a process of continuous advancement and enlightenment rather than a fixed goal to be arrived at.

2. The importance of the dualist view

The words ‘dualism’ and ‘duality’ are often used pejoratively to refer to contradictory and confusing behaviour: for example, the duality of behaving with sympathy at one moment and with hostility at the next moment. The dualist view itself is avoided and often dismissed without further examination. It is considered too indefinite and flawed to be seriously considered.

However, a better understanding of dualism is a tool that we can use to cope with conflict and uncertainty in our daily lives. Conflicting opinions are a necessary dynamic which can make or break an organisation. When people take sides and regard their opinions are more certain and truthful than those of the opposing side, the dualist view helps us to resolve the matter one way or the other. It may be uncertain as to which side is correct, beneficial, or whatever, but dualist thinking is about dealing with uncertainty rather than shying away from it.

Uncertainty is a necessary aspect of the human condition. Life would be boring if everything is predictable and reliable. If the outcome of a football game is certain beyond doubt, there would little point in paying to watch it. A football team that could win all its matches without fail would be promoted to a league of its own.¹ Similarly, there would be no need for leaders, politicians or managers if every situation pans out predictably and there are no doubts about how to deal with it. Computers and other machines are used when routines, processes and procedures can be worked out mechanically or algorithmically. When machines can deal with unpredictable situations as we do all the time, they will be the equal of us. (Turing's test is not rigorous enough to determine when computers are truly indistinguishable from human beings. The computer would think for itself and show that is thinking for itself without referring to anything else.²)

Whatever is discrete and measurable can be analysed by logic and mathematics. But when we think ahead and make choices between alternatives, the process is often intuitive and qualitative. Decisions made on logical grounds can be as extreme as those made by intuition. If the bankers had thought dualistically instead of logically they might have recognised the extremes to which their behaviour was tending. The bankers' and financiers' activities before the credit crunch of 2008 were doubtless backed up by a whole array of reasonable arguments. The fact is that they were too rational and failed to think outside the box. It was not so much collective insanity that led to the credit crunch as too much trust in the rationality of their actions. Only a leader imbued with a flexible, dualist outlook could have broken the mould and shown them that they were going to absurd extremes in their reasonings. Obviously such a leader never emerged at the right time.

Success in life is a black-and-white matter. Either we are successful at getting the job done or we are not – as a matter of fact. But how that success is achieved is not so clear-cut. In practical terms, we are concerned here with the means by which we may or may not achieve success through dualist thinking. A successful person is usually not just a lucky person but also one who takes account of both sides of any argument and also of the extremes to which each side may be taken by those who are prone to such extremes. In that way, they are able to take a balanced view of any situation and make realistic decisions which bear fruit.

The dualist view does not make us any less decisive in our actions. Indeed, it gives a rational basis for decisiveness. Systematic dualism (as discussed below) considers the extremes to which our thinking can go. By so doing, it clarifies situations by revealing imbalances, imperfections, injustices, bottlenecks, and distortions which can be addressed and rectified. It clearly shows the direction in which action must be taken to achieve harmony, redress imbalances, perfect imperfections, remedy injustices, and relieve bottlenecks and distortions. We can only hope to avoid taking an extreme view in politics by carefully considering the opposing view and evaluating its merits in a dualist fashion. The resulting view is more balanced when it enables us to act more justly having taken account of all factors involved in the situation.

Dualism is part of the human condition as we are alternately active and passive beings. It is in our nature to alternate between self-assertion and self-denial. We may assert ourselves boldly and then retract into our respective shells when things go wrong as a result. This alternation is at the root of the contrast between dogmatism and scepticism. We may be over-confident of our beliefs or have no confidence in them at all. The history of philosophy may be viewed dualistically as an oscillation between dogmatism and scepticism, between the confident assertion of belief and the diffident doubt of it.³ Evidently, philosophy is undergoing a sceptical phase at present. Perhaps it is now the time for some dogmatic, one-sided dualism to help us control our obsessions so that they do not control us. As correcting such imbalances is part of the dualist view, it can be used to extremes to re-establish a balance by

which things can move forward in a rational and controlled way. It is an imbalance when we have lost control of aspects of our lives. Our interests are a part of our life and not the be-all and end-all of it. The dualist view helps us to keep them in their place. We learn to externalise them by interacting with them dualistically. Conflicts can then be considered objectively to ensure that we deal with them in a balanced and systematic way. Kipling's well known 'If' poem also advocates the avoidance of extreme reactions to the 'imposters' of 'triumph and disaster' which in the cold light of day may not be as alluring or as depressing as they seem at the time.

Thus, the dualistic view is not simply about moderation in all things. It is about recognising the complications involved in a situation and, if necessary, going to opposite extremes to rectify an imbalance. For example, the prevalence of intolerance in some sectors of the community may itself be intolerable and require extreme measures to rectify it, as Karl Popper recognised in his 'Principle of Toleration' (Popper, 1945: 265).

We cannot tolerate all forms of behaviour without question as is implied by extreme multiculturalism. A limit to tolerable behaviour must be set in the interests of social harmony.

Another example is Aristotle's 'golden mean' between two extremes (Aristotle, 1987: 104). This is a static and artificial division that does not reflect the complexity of the real world. Thus, thinking of courage as a mid-point between rashness and cowardice is of no help in practical situations where something must be done or not be done, as the case may be. The courageous person does not deliberate between two extremes but acts intuitively because something must be done. Intelligent decisiveness comes from taking account all the circumstances involved in a situation. Thus, seeking a fixed balance between two extremes is naïve dualism if it does not result from a systematic view of the whole and of all the possibilities, as is argued below.

3. Avoiding the muddled middle

In Charles Dickens' novel, *Hard Times*, there is a character called Stephen Blackpool whose catchphrase is "'tis aw a muddle". He is a mill worker in the industrial north of England who cannot bring himself

either to side with his fellow employees in their dispute with the mill owners or to take the protection offered by the latter. The employees wish to change their working conditions for the better whereas the employers want to preserve the status quo and protect their company's profitability and position in the market. The employees take a progressive view and the employers a conservative one. Blackpool sees the merits of both sides and refuses to identify with one extreme or the other. Inevitably, he is despised and shunned by both sides and leaves the town. When he is falsely accused of a bank robbery, he returns to the town to clear his name but falls down a mineshaft on his way there. Eventually he is found and in his dying words says it is a muddle from first to last. If things had not been so muddled, he would not have needed to come back. If the workers had not been in a muddle among themselves, they would not have misunderstood him, and so on (Dickens, 1854: 267-8). Stephen Blackpool is one of Dickens' many exaggerated characters who nevertheless gives us an insight into the human condition. We can interpret him as a naïve dualist who is mired in the muddled middle. He sees that the truth is never as black and white as the clear thinkers make it out to be. The truth lies within the two extremes and it is easier to take sides than work out what should be done. The problem is to maintain a dualist view while avoiding uncertainty and indecision. Blackpool lacks the mental equipment to see his way forward, and therefore everything seems incorrigibly muddled to him. In short, he sits uncomfortably on the fence because he is not a systematic dualist who understands the nature of his position and is confident of its superiority over the extreme positions which it abhors.

The systematic dualist recognises that there are only two clear responses to a confusing situation in which people take sides against each other. One can join one side or the other or one can work towards a resolution, reconciliation or synthesis which will take the situation forward and make progress possible. Taking the first alternative, the systematic dualist would join one side or the other and work hard to moderate the views of that side and achieve a reconciliation of some kind. Taking the second alternative, he or she would be confident enough to persuade both sides that conflict and confrontation cannot achieve their ends. In Blackpool's case, the first alternative is more

likely to be successful than the second one, given the passions of both sides in such 19th century conditions. However, Blackpool clearly lacked the leadership qualities required to take the dynamic and purposeful action that the situation demanded. It is arguable that successful leadership depends on the use of systematic dualism to a greater or lesser extent.

Dualism is often associated with shiftiness, prevarication, hypocrisy and even immorality. But systematic dualists by virtue of being systematic in their thinking are also being consistent, reliable and moral in their behaviour. They are no longer being systematic when their behaviour lacks integrity. If they acquire the depth in philosophy that systematic dualism demands then they are more in touch with themselves and are less inclined to misbehave. Their conduct can be consistent with the highest standards of honour and respectability though being human means that they may fall from grace as readily as anyone. The moral lapses of the eminent persons in sport and entertainment (for example, the professional golfer, Tiger Woods) come to mind in that regard. Sooner or later, insincere, immature or malign personalities reveal their inadequacies as they are deficient in the self-criticism that the dualist view demands. They no longer see themselves as others see them and are therefore incapable of behaving themselves.

4. The relationship between dualism and monism

At one extreme, the monist view is uncompromisingly focused on one viewpoint whereas in the dualist view there are no fixed either/or, black/white alternatives as far as our beliefs and opinions are concerned. Opposing alternatives are always up for consideration. The moderate or systematic dualist never excludes entirely any opposing view, and this includes even the monist view. Extreme monism in this context is a single-minded and exclusive devotion to ideas, ways of thinking, ideas, hobbies, lifestyles, and so on. Monism is not an absolute alternative to dualism as it has its place in human affairs just as dualism has, and indeed it forms part of the dualist view. There is therefore a spectrum of monist and dualist views such that there is no clear dividing line between them. We can all be monists and dualists to some degree

or other. But we must never lose touch with our inner dualist and become absolute or extreme monists.

Absolute monists who give no credence to opposing views can be a menace to society, especially when they know no bounds to their fanaticism and enthusiasm. Terrorists, extremists and hot-headed fanatics are typically absolutist in their thinking. Less extreme monists are simply bores when they systematically interpret everything in relation to one thing. These include those whom the essayist William Hazlitt graphically describes as ‘people with one idea.’ (Hazlitt, 1824: 59-69). Having one idea means that every conversation is brought round to it as if it were *sine qua non* of their existence.

However, we are all moderate monists in our everyday pre-occupations with hobbies, football teams, shopping or whatever grabs and interests us most in life. Moderate monists are amateur enthusiasts who may be fanatical about their interests but only within limits. Their interests are always balanced by other interests and responsibilities such as earning a living, pursuing a career, raising a family, political activity and so on. We can therefore distinguish absolute, extreme and moderate monists along a spectrum that includes the dualist view at its moderate end. The full spectrum between monism and dualism may be represented as follows:

Absolute Monists - Extreme Monists - Moderate
Monists/Systematic Dualists - Naïve Dualists - Absolute Dualists

The spectrum ranges from absolute clarity to absolute obscurity, as absolute monists have absolutely no doubt about their beliefs as much as absolute dualists doubt absolutely everything as a matter of policy. Absolute dualists have no views of their own and are true sceptics. They apply their scepticism single-mindedly so that paradoxically they are absolutely monistic in that regard. The same kind of paradox arises when dogmatic left wingers become fascists in enforcing their views, or when extremely conservative people are notoriously lax and permissive in their moral behaviour. In other words, absolutists end up chasing their tails and confirming that which they deny. These distinctions are summarised as follows:

- ***Absolute Monists*** despise moderation and give no credence to opposing views. They know no bounds to their fanaticism and enthusiasm and are often a menace to society. Terrorists, extremists and hot-headed fanatics are typically absolutist in their thinking. In absolute dualism, the world is divided absolutely into black and white, good and evil, matter and spirit, mind and body and so on. The thinking of absolute monists is dominated by categorical thinking in which the world is divided into rigid categories. You are either for them or against them.

- ***Extreme Monists*** systematically interpret everything in relation to one thing without using violence to enforce their views. Having one idea means that every conversation is brought round to it as if it were *sine qua non* of their existence. To be obsessed about one's hobbies, about losing weight or about any number of such fixations is to be an extreme monist. Thus, those suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) are invariably extreme monists.

- ***Moderate Monists*** are what we all are in our everyday pre-occupations with hobbies, football teams, shopping or whatever grabs and interests us most in life. As moderate monists we are amateur enthusiasts who are fanatical about our interests but only within limits. We are not obsessive about them to a fault, as such interests are always balanced by other interests and responsibilities such as earning a living, pursuing a career, raising a family, political activity and so on. But moderate monists are also systematic dualists by the very fact of being moderate in their monist indulgences.

- ***Systematic Dualists*** recognise when faced with opposing sides that there are only two clear responses to a confusing situation in which people take sides against each other. One can join one side or the other or one can work towards a resolution, reconciliation or synthesis which will take the situation forward and make progress possible. Taking the first alternative, the systematic dualist would join one side or the other and work hard to moderate the views of that side and achieve a reconciliation of some kind. Taking the second alternative, he or she would be confident enough to persuade both sides that conflict and confrontation cannot achieve their ends. Thus, systematic dualists work hard to reconcile extremes and may even resort to extremes in their

dualism if the end justifies the means, that is to say, the end of achieving moderation and good sense.

- *Naïve Dualists* are without any systematic approach by which to cope with their dualist views. They have the muddle-headed, fence-sitting kind of dualism in which one is unable to make up one's mind. They are like Buridan's ass that had equal piles of hay on either side of it. As it was unable to make up its mind which pile to eat, it starved to death. Such dualists clearly lack the internal *nous* and the leadership qualities required to take the dynamic and purposeful action that the situation demands.

- *Absolute Dualists* are sceptical of all beliefs whatsoever. They tend to divide the world absolutely into good and evil, matter and spirit, mind and body and so on. They lack a stable belief system by which to relate one side to the other. The Manicheans were absolute dualists as was Descartes with his mind/body dualism which lacked a coherent interaction between these extremes. These views are also absolute in that they interpret the world from one sceptical point of view. Like all absolutists you are either for them or against them from their point of view.

In everyday life, we can be both moderate monists and systematic dualists. When we want to get things done, we are generally single-minded about it and have no doubts about it. When we are faced with problematic situations then the dualist within us comes to the fore. We need to take account of opposing views and perhaps carefully consider both sides of the argument. We have to be open-minded when we want to reach a clear view of things. But when it is clear that things have gone to extremes and a serious imbalance has occurred then the moderate monist will find plenty of reasons to do what needs to be done.

We also incorporate both dualist and monist ways of thinking without being aware of it. The latter means being moderate in our prejudices and pre-occupations, and the former means recognising the alternatives that are always possible. We must judge when to be carefully doubtful and when to be cautiously certain. Great and successful leaders are usually adept in combining moderate monism with systematic dualism. They are generally dualist in their thinking

and are invariably flexible and creative in their behaviour while also being certain and sure-footed in their decision-making. An outstanding example of this is Oliver Cromwell whose conversation could be baffling and hard to understand but whose actions and battle strategy were decisive and effective.⁴ This duality is often called ‘common sense’ but dualist theory goes much further than Thomas Reid and the Scottish Common Sense School in elucidating what it is.⁵

We can all identify with Robert Graves’ poem, “In Broken Images”.⁶ We are “slow, thinking in broken images”, while others are “quick, thinking in clear images.” We reach a new understanding of our confusion while others experience a new confusion of their understanding. The systematic dualist view is that clarity resides with facts, things and events while confusion and uncertainty may justly reign in our views, opinions, beliefs, convictions which are peculiar to ourselves. Formal linear logic is needed for the former but a dualist, dynamic logic is required for the latter. We may be certain, reasonable and logical about facts that we all share but we often have to suspend judgment about our own opinions. A different logic is required in which the middle view is not excluded. Thus, dualist logic is not the same as formal logic. Changes of mind may lead us to contradict ourselves. We must be more inclusive in our thinking. Being open-minded and forward thinking means that we hold our opinions at arm’s length and with some doubt and uncertainty. In contrast, the absolute monist errs in attributing absolute truth and clarity to his or her beliefs and in attempting to eliminate doubt in matters in which doubt is more often a virtue than a hindrance. It is nearly always the case that “much might be said on both sides”.⁷

Nevertheless, decisiveness is not incompatible with dualist thinking. In daily life, it is often necessary to be decisive and sure-footed. Systematic dualists must necessarily hone their judgments to ensure that decisive action is taken when required. They will thrive on opposing arguments and on the pleasure of reconciling them to achieve worthy ends which are otherwise defeated by the acrimony aroused by such oppositions. They will seek unity and unanimity in relation to the aims of society. Effective leadership can always inspire and motivate people so that they fight for common causes rather than against each

other. But it is successful only when it eschews the extremes and shows clearly the benefits of the middle way. When left wingers and right wingers make enemies of each other then the middle way is lost and society can lose its sense of direction.

5. The fundamental nature of dualist interaction

When the dualist view is systematically developed in dualist studies, the importance of the dualist interaction emerges. The dualist interaction is a one-to-one relationship between two things which is fundamental to the universe from the quantum area of existence up to gravitational relationships between galaxies, stars and planets. It is entirely material, entirely a part of the physical world, and is always amenable to causal explanation. The development of this notion in dualist studies gets rid, once and for all, of occult, supernatural entities in the brain and the universe in general. However the availability of causal explanation is limited by the extent of our scientific knowledge. At the moment, it is clear that our knowledge is insufficiently advanced to account for all dualist interactions in the universe. But, from a philosophical point of view, dualist interaction can be used, figuratively speaking, as an Occam's razor to sever the Gordian Knot of tangled philosophical problems such as the following:

The Mind/Body Problem. Dualism has been too closely associated with Cartesian dualism which posits the existence of a mental/physical divide that is too rigid and narrow to explain the complexities of brain activity. Descartes famously distinguished rigidly between mind/body and mental/physical by making them distinct substances or things instead of continuous processes that are implied by dualist interaction (Descartes, 1986: 54). When we apply dualist interaction universally it becomes clear that notions such as immaterial, spirit, soul, and vital energy (*élan vitale*) are superfluous entities that ultimately cannot be defined. The continuous nature of dualist interaction means occult entities are not required to explain, for instance, self-consciousness. Our self-consciousness may be thought of metaphorically as a turning of brain activity to make self-awareness possible. Exactly what interactions are required in physical terms depends on further understanding of brain activity. Subjectivity

therefore refers to the misfit between what is going on within our physical bodies and the environment in which they exist. We need to be constantly alert and attentive to overcoming that misfit. The problem of how the mind influences the body vanishes when we explain all our experiences in terms of dualist interactions. The word 'mind' becomes an empty notion. If it is uninformative to say that the brain moves the body, it is even more uninformative to say that the mind moves body. When we move our limbs, all kinds of dualist interactions are involved which are not yet fully understood. The processes involved are wholly physical and material and no spiritual or immaterial explanations are required. The unified activity of these dualist interactions is all that is required, and these might ultimately be explained in terms of neural networks and the like. The role of dualist studies is to show how this unified activity is sufficient to explain our ability to move our limbs at will, and that the unified activity is entirely material and not spiritual or occult in any way.

The absolutism/ relativism problem. The only absolute that we require is the continuous existence of dualist interaction that links us to external reality. The 'now' or 'nunc stans' of present existence is a unified absolute that is only sustained by continuous dualist interaction between ourselves and our external environment. We can be absolutely sure of our relationship to external reality because of the work that we are constantly doing, both consciously and unconsciously, to stay in touch with it. Everything is relative to what we are doing. The same applies to the relativity of our beliefs and opinions. We have to work at keeping them down-to-earth. We also need to work constantly at relating our views to those of other people and ultimately to society as a whole. Dualist studies deals with this problem through contextualisation, that is to say, by putting things into context and by seeing things from different perspectives. In that way, we begin to see things as a whole instead of confining everything to one or more perspectives as if nothing else important existed in the world.

The sceptical/Dogmatic problem. We can never be absolutely certain about anything. But at the same time, there is no need to be sceptical about everything. The problem of dealing with doubt and uncertainty still remains since the dualist view seems to put us perpetually on the fence. We are apparently prevented from making our

minds up altogether. However, by developing the dualist view we can fine tune our reasoning without lapsing into abject scepticism or rigid dogmatism. For example, the logical law of the excluded middle is confined to its proper place instead of being applied to all of our beliefs and opinions as well as to discrete objects in external reality. In other words, the ‘either/or’ distinction applies rightly to the existence of things and events in the real world. They either exist or they do not exist and there is no doubt about it. We may be totally certain that tables and chairs exist in the next room if this is factually the case. In such practical matters there is little doubt in the matter. But if we allow our beliefs and opinions about political and religious matters to be held with absolute certainty then we may be led down the path of extremism. We may feel honour bound to impose our views on other people willy nilly. The dualist view helps us to moderate such views and to take due account of the merits and demerits of opposing views. Thus, an understanding of the relationship between dualism and monism helps us here.

6. The social usefulness of the dualist view

Some Aims of Dualist Studies

- To train the mind to cope with extreme thought tendencies and to avoid complete scepticism on the one hand and complete dogmatism on the other hand;
- To show that dualist thinking is not necessarily vague or indecisive and is in fact necessary for correct and productive thinking;
- To show how new ideas can change society for the better;
- To instil philosophy with renewed vigour;
- To understand better what it is to be human, especially in contrast with what is considered to be inhuman, in thought and behaviour.

The Application of Dualist Studies

Dualist studies involve applying the dualist view to practical areas such as management, crime and punishment, education, future studies, and extreme ways of thinking. An outline follows the dualist approach to each of these areas:

A dualist approach to management: The dualist view is essential to successful management. It consists in understanding the extremes of opinion and attitude to which both employers and employees are prone

and which pervade every workplace. The dualist view can help managers deal with situations that demand intuitive insight more than incisive logic. The distinction between naïve and systematic dualism is useful here in which the former refers to confused and muddled thinking whereas the latter involves organised and purposeful thinking to deal systematically with confusing and conflicting situations. Such distinctions help us to understand conflicts between rival groups within the workplace and with leadership dilemmas such balancing friendliness with aloofness. The successful manager learns intuitively how to maintain a balance between being friendly with employees and keeping his distance from them and is thus behaving in a dualist manner in that respect.⁸

A dualist approach to crime and punishment: At present, crime is punished very unevenly and often ineffectively. Punishments are meted out in an unsystematic way that leads to the extremes of under and over punishment. Those who might be punished with leniency are often given custodial sentences that ruin their lives, while others who deserve very harsh punishment to put them on the right track are often treated too leniently. When dangerous people finish their term of ‘punishment’ they are let out into the community and may endanger the public. The conservative view is that criminals should be punished with longer jail sentences. The liberal view is that people should be rehabilitated and not merely punished by jail sentences. The dualist view is that the person should be punished, not the crime. In other words, law-breakers should be punished not by fixed, predetermined sentences but according to what is required to ‘cure’ them of their social deviance and hopefully make honest citizens of them. A *social treatment system* is therefore required to change our criminal justice system and to ensure that those who need lenient treatment are given it and those who need harsh treatment are also given it.⁹

A dualist approach to education: In one respect, we need education to be thumped into us if we are to imbibe successfully such basic skills as reading, writing and arithmetic. But in another respect we need to absorb knowledge and understanding in our own way and in our own time. When these two contrasting approaches are insightfully combined, they interact to produce the best kind of education. The first

approach may be called ‘Mode 1’ and the second ‘Mode 2’. Mode 1 emphasises the skills, knowledge and abilities that should be inculcated through education, whereas Mode 2 emphasises the cultivation of individuality and creativity. In the dualist view, both these approaches are combined in an imaginative way.¹⁰ Another way of putting it is that we must both ‘fill the vessel’ and ‘kindle the fire’ in our dualist educational approach. Plutarch is often quoted as saying that a child’s mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled.¹¹ But children’s minds need also to be filled with facts, poems, stories, languages and all the skills needed to understand society and take their place in it. Their memories need to be developed just as much as their interests and passions kindled and promoted. Thus, a dualist approach to education involves as much disciplined learning as free learning.

A dualist approach to future studies: Though we live in the present we constantly look back to the past and forward to the future. Studying the past helps us to predict the future, and looking to the future helps us to anticipate things being better than they are at present. But we can be too pre-occupied with the past at the expense of the future and vice versa. These are monist views that look exclusively in either one direction or the other. It means that we dwell too much in the past or look too confidently to the future. The *retrospective* view looks to the past and *prospective* view to the future. The dualist view helps us to place equal value on both these views. We move in a dynamic way from one to the other without being stuck in the past or leaving everything to the future.¹²

A dualist approach to eliminating extremes of thought: Systematic dualism is essential for creativity as it depends on our maintaining a balance between thinking too much or too little. It is arguable that those ‘geniuses’ who perform extraordinary feats of creativity are only able to do so because they are systematic dualists who avoid self-defeating extremes in their thinking. They develop their mental powers in a purposeful fashion without taking themselves too seriously on the one hand or belittling themselves too much on the other hand. Often we are in doubt whether to think too much of ourselves or too little. Here are the extreme consequences of the opposing tendencies involved:

Thinking too much of oneself

May lead to

Hot-headed extremism

Involving

Brazen overconfidence

And *in extremis* to

Thinking too little of oneself

May lead to

Empty-headed indifference

Involving

Insipid lack of confidence

And *in extremis* to

Homocidal sociopathy suicidal self-abnegation

It appears that too many young people are prone to these extremes these days, leading to an outbreak of massacres and suicides, as reported in the mass media. Suicide bombers seem to incorporate both these strands in their thinking. Their unbalanced thinking twists these strands into a deadly double helix, the antithesis of DNA which gives life instead of taking it. They think too much of themselves and too little at the same time. They arrogantly think that their deaths can make a difference while by making out that their lives are worthless enough to be terminated instantly. They achieve nothing lasting by their senseless actions. A rational dualist interaction between these extremes is required to avoid being possessed by them beyond sense and reality. Thus, a greater understanding of our essential duality is the next big step forward for humanity.

7. In praise of the middle way

Our capacity for extremism. Perhaps our most admirable and our most dangerous trait is our capacity for excess. The seemingly limitless extremes to which we push ourselves bring out the best and worst in us. Our obsessions can lead us, for example, to climb the highest mountains, write huge novels, built bridges and buildings, and gain immense advances in scientific knowledge, while crippling ourselves with addictions, killing each other in the millions, and destroying the planet in our pursuit of the ‘good life’. From a moral standpoint, it is usually obvious which of these are beneficial and which are harmful. But it depends on our state of mind whether we adopt the first and avoid the second. In so far as we have personal insight and self-discipline we

can avoid harmful states of mind when we recognise them as such. We can choose not to do harm or to have negative thoughts in so far as we have control over our emotions. For example, we can stop being angry with someone when we realise that our anger is unfounded or unreasonable. People about to commit murder or suicide can be persuaded by others to desist. Potentially we can all change our minds if we choose to do so. Therefore, we have enough freewill to consciously avoid going to these extremes if we really want to. A clear method is needed to deal with these extremes, and the following distinctions hopefully help us to recognise extreme and harmful states of mind both within ourselves and in others, so that we can avoid them.

A Schematic Depiction of the Middle Way

	The Will to Power (Nietzsche)	The Will to Understanding (Systematic Dualism)	The Will to Belief (William James)
	□	□	□□
Features:	Carnivorous (Wolves)	Human	Herbivorous (Sheep)
Motivations:	Seeking immediate fame, power or notoriety	Seeking long-term personal development	Seeking security within 'herd/flock'
Traits:	□	□	□□
Relational	Dominant	Independent	Dependent
Prescriptive	Commanding	Questioning	Unquestioning
Doxastic	Dogmatic	Critical of belief	Blind belief/faith
Reactive	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Credulous
Predictive	Deterministic	Latitudinarian	Fatalistic
Attitudinal	Absolute certainty	Relative certainty	Total conviction
Judgmental	Contempt	Respect	Uncritical
Behavioural	Demeaning	Self-critical	Subservient
Effects:	□	□	□
Social	Esoteric	Inclusive	Exclusive
Heuristic	Indoctrination	Teaching	Preaching
Emotive	Hypnotic induction	Rational passions	Mob mania
Dispositional	Them/us discrimination	Tolerance of differences	Indiscriminate love/hatred
Goals:	□	□	□
Epistemic	Messianic knowledge	Hypothetical knowledge	Common knowledge
Personal	Adulation	Truth	Conformity
	□	□	□
Outcomes:	Self-deception	Insight	Delusion

Introducing the middle way. The above three outlooks or ways of thinking characterise human nature from the dualist point of view. We have, on the one hand, the overly strong ‘will to power’¹⁴ and, on the other hand, the overly weak ‘will to believe’,¹⁵ between which the relatively moderate ‘will to understanding’ hovers uneasily. The former two ways represent relatively unreflective and uncivilised aspects of human nature which need to be supplemented by the middle way. Their unreflective and uncivilised aspects emerge when they are isolated from the middle way and are taken to extremes. All forms of political, religious and behavioural extremism result from such a loss of the middle way, as is argued below. This extremist potential persists within us all and we need constantly to guard ourselves against its reassertion and predominance. In so far as there is progress in civilisation, it consists in the middle way being progressively introduced until it forms part of everyone’s mindset and ultimately of the political and social fabric. Civilised behaviour requires the middle way to insinuate its way between these intimate extremes which feed on each other. This process has recurred several times in history when humanist attitudes have come to the fore. Equally, the simplicity and attraction of extreme views has all too often resulted in the loss of the middle way. Until the twentieth century, the appearance of the middle way has been cyclical and impermanent. It remains to be seen whether the twenty-first century will see its permanent institution if it ever becomes an integral part of the educational system.

The Consequences of repudiating the middle way. It may be argued that excess is tolerable while it is related to the middle way wherein we remain human rather than inhuman. We can be a little wicked as long as we repent of that wickedness and resolve to do better. For we need to bear in mind the harm which excessive behaviour does to ourselves and others. We need the restraints of the middle way to function as sociable and rational beings. Repudiating the middle way entirely means losing one’s moral sense or social conscience. Psychopaths and sociopaths feel no shame or remorse because they have lost all restraints over their behaviour and have nothing within them to draw them back from doing their worst. In the same bracket, we may include terrorists, extremists, fanatics, zealots, criminals, rapists, gangsters, gurus, charlatans, and sectarian bigots of all kinds, who commonly scorn the

middle way between the will to power and the will to believe. They seek the nearest way to satisfy their ambitions, desires, compulsions and obsessions. In preying on the populace like wolves on sheep, they dehumanise themselves and demean their victims. They dominate people to achieve their self-serving ends. They are so sure of themselves that they become dogmatic and authoritarian in their behaviour towards others. In the case of religious and political bigots, they exert power over others by means of messianic knowledge which is usually a belief system specific to themselves or the organisation within which they operate. The belief system is often so esoteric and divorced from common life that they adopt a them/us discrimination policy. You are either in or out, for or against, and there is no middle way.

No excuses for repudiating the middle way. Clarifying the middle way helps us to put such people in their place and treat them with the contempt and disapproval they deserve. Neither their genetic inheritance nor their social backgrounds are sufficient to excuse their opprobrious ways of thinking over which they potentially have as much self-control as the rest of us. Their freely adopted attitudes and frames of mind are primarily to blame for their deplorable behaviour. We need not respect or tolerate behaviour and attitudes which cannot be justified by reason or reference to the middle way.

Without the middle way we lose our humanity. In the absence of any middle way, power-mongering and intimidation prevails, and the human race is composed of nothing but knaves and fools, or exploiters and victims. Knaves think too much of themselves and fools too little of themselves. Knaves quarrel among themselves and use fools to fight each other. This can happen in tribal and criminal set-ups that still recur even in developed nations. Such absolute divisions make relations between people problematic, and they erode trust, perpetuate enmity, make co-operation impossible, and prevent us from fulfilling our potential as human beings. Killing each other becomes a routine matter when we have no respect for others as human beings and regard them as dispensable vermin. It is Hobbes's 'state of nature' in which there is "a time of War, where every man is Enemy to every man".¹⁶ The highest human aspirations are thrown away in favour of the lowest and meanest ones, dictated by narrow, personal, group, sectarian, nationalist or

religious matters. Such are the conditions which prevailed under authoritarian regimes such as Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and Pol Pot's Cambodia.

Power and subservience go together. Just as sadism goes along with masochism and *vice versa*, so power-mongering goes along with submission and subservience to a stronger will or character. Power-mongers will always have victims over whom they exert power and influence while their mind-slaves retain an uncritical will to believe in spite of all reason or common sense to the contrary. When people form a mobilised mob or a cowed crowd, they are susceptible to the wilfulness of dominant characters. It is easy to appeal to people's emotions when they form a cohesive tribe that spurns the freethinking individual. Only when people are allowed to think things out as individuals, is it possible for reason and good sense to prevail over crowd-pulling emotion. Thus, the dualist view repudiates the polarisation of these positions in favour of the middle way towards which all positive and progressive movements must tend if humanity is to come together and ensure its collective future.

5- Conclusion

The ultimate truth for human beings lies not in settling for one viewpoint but in incorporating all viewpoints by interacting constantly with them to make as much of them as humanly possible. This is clearly the opposite of religious or ideological viewpoints that see only one way forward. It accords with an ongoing dualist view that is constantly interacting with the world and its contents. This whole-hearted position provides us with the open-minded outlook to work out for ourselves what we are to do with our lives. We manoeuvre our way through life on a trial-and-error basis and do not expect everything to be straightforward or made easy for us. In other words, our safety, security and internal well-being lies in constant interaction, in striving to better ourselves, and in taking account of everything in a spirit of open-minded curiosity and vitality. Being open to all things promotes optimism whereas confining ourselves to one point of view or mindset depresses and stunts us as human beings. Dualism can be all things to all men but only by bringing all views into its omniscient fold. This is no easy task but we can all learn to work at it if we have the will to do

so. Thus, the task of dualist theory is to supply the reasons and rationale for doing so, and this is a beginning not an end.

Notes

1. Perhaps such an outstanding team might become an exhibition team that tours the world, like the basketball team, the Harlem Globetrotters, its members becoming celebrities in their own right. However, competitive sport usually involves an element of uncertainty and unpredictability to attract spectators and partisans.

2. A. M. Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," *Mind*, 1950, Vol. LIX, No. 236. This famous paper is excerpted in Hofstadter and Dennett's book, *Mind's I*, Penguin Books, 1982, pp.53-68. However, the question of whether a machine is thinking or not may be resolved by observing how it is behaving to itself. Thus, self reference is more important than its reaction to people in the way suggested by Turing. Its inner life, consciousness and self-identity can give it feelings and thoughts of its own. We will react emotionally to their displays of emotion and will either empathise or not as the case may be. What we are actually feeling may be uncertain even to ourselves, and computers would need to behave likewise if they are to be likened to us.

3. This dualist view of the history of philosophy is outlined in my book, *What is Philosophy?* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2008).

4. Cf. Sir Walter Scott's extraordinary portrayal of Oliver Cromwell in his novel, *Woodstock* (1826). It seems convincingly true to life.

5. Thomas Reid's view of common sense consisted of a psychological examination of the five senses laid down by Aristotle plus a list of common sense principles that served only to stultify metaphysical discussion. See, for example, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, Essay VI, Chs IV-VI in *The Works of Thomas Reid*, ed. Sir W. Hamilton, (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895), pp. 434-461.

6. Robert Graves' poem 'In Broken Images' is freely available online

7. Joseph Addison (1672-1719), in his *Roger de Coverley* essays in *The Spectator*, no.122, July 20, 1711, (London: J.M. Dent, 1909), p.149. See also no. 117, July 14, 1711 (p.128):

"There are some Opinions in which a Man should stand Neuter, without engaging his Assent to one side or the other. Such a hovering Faith as this,

which refuses to settle upon any Determination, is absolutely necessary to a Mind that is careful to avoid Errors and Prepossessions.”

8. This is the subject of my paper entitled “The Role of Dualist Thinking in Management” which was presented to the Seventh International Philosophy of Management Conference at St. Anne’s College, Oxford on Friday 23rd July 2010.

9. The ‘social treatment system’ is elaborated in my e-book entitled *Punish the Person, not the Crime! Proposing a Social Treatment System to Punish Lawbreakers*, (Amazon Kindle, 2013).

10. Cf. *The New Production of Knowledge*, Michael Gibbons, C. Limoges, H. Nowotny, S. Schwartzman, P. Scott, and M. Trow. (London: Sage, 1994).

11. The quotation is in fact a paraphrase from a passage in *Plutarch’s Moralia*, Vol. One, III ‘On Listening to Lectures’, (*Περὶ τοῦ ἀκούειν - De recta ratione audiendi*), 48 C2–D4, trans. by Frank Cole Babbitt, (Loeb edition, London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1927). pp. 257-259. A fuller paraphrase might be as follows: ‘The mind is not to be filled like a vessel (□□□□i□□□ but requires kindling like wood to provide new illuminations and insights through speech and text.’

12. There is more on these distinctions in my article, Posterity—An Eighteenth Century Answer to God and Religion, *The Humanist*, Vol. 71 (2), March/April 2011, pp. 39-40. It is also reprinted in my book, *American Papers on Humanism and Religion*, (Almostic Publications, 2014).

13. As to be found in his *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and other works. For example, *thus Spoke Zarathustra* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), ‘Of Self-Overcoming’ (*Von der Selbst-Überwindung*), p. 136: “That is your entire will, you wisest men, it is a will to power.” (*Das ist euer ganzer Wille, ihr Weisesten, als ein Wille zur Macht.*)

14. Cf. William James (1897), *The Will to Believe*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), pp. 1-31.

15. Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, Part I, Ch. 13, (1631 – London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 186.

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Has Richard Rorty a moral philosophy?*

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Abstract

I try to show that Richard Rorty, although is not a moral philosopher like Kant, nevertheless, has moral philosophy that must be taken seriously. Rorty was not engaged with moral philosophy in the systematic manner common among leading modern and contemporary moral philosophers. This paper has two parts: first part, in brief, is concerned with principles of his philosophy such as anti-essentialism, Darwinism, Freudism, and historicism. Second part which be long and detailed, considers many moral themes in Rorty's thought such as critique of Kantian morality, solidarity, moral progress, cruelty and concept of other, etc. Subsequently, I will try to answer the research question of the article namely, has Rorty a moral philosophy?

Keywords: *moral philosophy, solidarity, moral progress, Kantian ethics, Rorty*

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Introduction

It is well known that Socrates was the first philosopher in the western tradition who attempted to use philosophical arguments to produce an ethics. He started the first systematic philosophical attitude to morality and moral concepts, while many western philosophers, after him (even some Islamic philosophers) continued his way. But, we do not consider the chronological study of moral theories in history of ethics. In the 20th century, usually, contemporary philosophers such as Levinas¹, Foucault² and other moral philosophers tend to pay more attention to moral issues. Richard Rorty is one famous philosopher from this century whose undoubtedly profound moral messages in his philosophy are not hidden from the eyes of his avid readers. However, many may be surprised at the title of this article which, of course, does not set out to offer complete answers to this question, because the critics will wonder whether Richard Rorty, like Kant, really has a philosophical account of moral thought and practice or not. It has to be allowed that Rorty has not engaged with moral philosophy in the systematic manner common among leading modern and contemporary moral philosophers. He has even been always hesitant to use or apply the label of "philosophy" to whatever it is he sees himself as doing. Therefore, we should be a little cautious about this subject. The issue of morality in his writings (from *Philosophy and Mirror of Nature* (1979) to *An Ethics for Today* (2010)) is sporadically expressed.

This paper has two parts: the first part, briefly, is concerned with principles of his philosophy; the second part, is a long and detailed consideration of many moral themes in Rorty's thought such as the critique of Kantian morality, solidarity, moral progress, cruelty and the concept of the Other, etc. Subsequently, attempts will be made to answer the main question of the article: is Rorty a moral philosopher?

Before going further, it is necessary to present certain explanations to better understand why one cannot say that Rorty is a moral philosopher. The hypothesis I put forward in this article is that when you carefully look at his philosophy, you will see in him a moral message for mankind: it is a morality for living in a liberal society. All his efforts have been directed towards this great goal. Of course, ethics or moral philosophy is the branch of philosophy that involves

metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. In other words, moral philosophy is the area of philosophy concerned with theories of ethics, with how we ought to live our lives. All moral philosophers from Plato to the present age have been considered moral act and value in the mentioned theories. Rorty criticizes all the above theories about ethics.

Principles of Rorty's Philosophy

At the outset, let us consider the principles of the pragmatist philosophy of Rorty. Our purpose is to show those principles form his moral philosophy. I do not want to get into details of the principles because a full explanation of those principles is outside the scope of this article. Here, I will try to explain those principles in brief.

Anti-essentialism: This view is a critical reaction against essentialism³. Anti-essentialism in Rorty's philosophy is an objection to contemporary essentialism that attempts to look for hidden "reality" under all "appearance". Rorty completely denies it; from the Rortyan outlook, the reality-appearance distinction is a relic of our onto-theological tradition which some contemporary philosophers (like M. Heidegger) have criticized. Rorty, in *Truth and Progress*, writes: "for we have learned (from Nietzsche and James, among others) to be suspicious of the appearance-reality distinction. We think that there are many ways to talk about what is going on, and that none of them gets closer to the way things are in themselves than any other. We have no idea what 'in itself' is supposed to mean in the phrase 'reality as it is in itself.' So we suggest that the appearance-reality distinction be dropped in favor of more useful ways of talking." (Rorty 1998:1). For this reason, in connection with this distinction, he suggests another distinction that has a moral content: the distinction between morality and prudence. He says that the latter distinction forms the Kantian ethics that Nietzsche and Dewey strongly deny. Having been influenced by them, Rorty accepts the pragmatic approach to morality and in *Philosophy and Social Hope* attempts to explain his moral philosophy.

Rorty clearly denies the human essence as one of the sources of moral laws. Dann in his *After Rorty: The Possibilities for Ethics and Religious Belief* (2010) writes: "Rorty's beginning point in his treatment of ethics, questioning the usefulness of extrinsic and intrinsic

definitions of human nature, is a good place to start in the critique of traditional ethical theory" (Dann 2010: 81). Rorty seems to replace traditional morality with a postmodern one. Traditional morality from Socrates to Levinas – in the Platonic-Aristotelian-Christian-Judeo traditions – tends to interpret morality as the means to the fulfillment of a fixed or unchanging human nature. According to this view, there is no fixed human essence. Rorty accepts this view and he becomes an anti-essentialist philosopher. Therefore, Rorty's concept of self-creation begins with a rejection of the traditional idea of a fixed or essential human nature. That is, this neo-pragmatist philosopher begins with a radical sense of sociological and historical contingency of the self (Huang 2009: 229). In other words, he doesn't believe that all humans have a common nature.

Darwinism: Through Dewey, Rorty became acquainted with Darwinism in philosophy. He says that "Dewey, in turn, was grateful to natural science, especially as represented by Darwin, for rescuing him from early Hegelianism" (Rorty 1991b: 63). In fact, it can be said that this is also true about Rorty himself because he is a new Dewey who, according to some interpreters, has attempted to combine the postmodern approaches with classic pragmatism in order to make his neo-pragmatism. For example, for Darwin, like Rorty and Dewey, the human nature is a part of material nature and the mind and the self a participant in the flux of events, not spectators. Also, according to Darwinism, there is no absolute, fixed, eternal, and immutable center for human existence. If we accept this view, no longer can the fixed essence of man be accepted, which, consequently leads to anti-essentialism. The clearest descriptions of Darwinism are founded in Rorty's essay, "Dewey between Hegel and Darwin"⁴. In addition, Rorty borrows historicism from Hegel and naturalism from Darwin. Therefore, there is no doubt that his neo-pragmatism is based on the Hegelianism and Darwinism. Rorty's approach to morality is closer to his Darwinism and Hegelianism. He, in "Dewey between Hegel and Darwin" says that "in this attitude towards morality, it seems to me, we get a genuine marriage of Darwin with de-absolutized Hegel" (Ibid: 13).

Freudism: He speaks of him in his writings, especially in "Freud and Moral Reflection"⁵. Freud is a pivotal thinker for Rorty, serving as one

of the masters of re-description and decentering of the self. Freud denies a fixed nature for man, dividing it into three parts. It is important to bear in mind that Freud is displacing Kantian–Christian teaching about universal moral claims and dispositions. Freud, Rorty holds, has changed our picture of human nature and his picture is completely different from the pictures which Plato and Kant, even Nietzsche, represented. Rorty summarizes the point: "It has often seemed necessary to decide between Kant and Nietzsche, to make up one's mind – at least to that extent – about the point of being human. But Freud gives us a way of looking at the human being which helps us evade the choice.... For Freud eschews the very idea of a paradigm human being.... By breaking with both Kant's residual Platonism and Nietzsche's inverted Platonism, he lets us see both Nietzsche's superman and Kant's moral consciousness as exemplifying two out of many forms of adaptation, two out of many strategies, for coping with the contingency of one's upbringing" (Rorty 1989: 35). In his view, Freud and Nietzsche have ended all attempts to discover a common human nature or a fixed center for the self. In other words, Freud was to discredit the idea of the true human self, and thereby the idea of the search for a permanent and unchangeable self behind ever changing accidents.

Historicism: As already mentioned, historicists like him, Rorty says, deny "that there is such a thing as "human nature" or the "deepest level of the self". Instead, they "insist that socialization goes all the way down – that there is nothing "beneath" socialization or prior to history." (Kuipers 2013: 86). Although Historicism of Rorty is similar to Hegel's but there are differences. It should be stressed, however, that the sort of historicism Rorty represents and describes is a nominalist, heroic, Romantic, existential, poetics, and narrativist historicism⁶. Also, in *Essays on Heidegger and others* (of course in footnote 8, p55), Rorty explicitly says "Historicism is a special case of naturalism" (Rorty 1991a: 55). So it can be concluded that the two (Historicism and naturalism) are intertwined and both of them have been included in his Darwinism. We should not forget that his view of morality is based on these principles. He believes that to accept non-representationalism is to require historicism. This marries up with his belief that "if one adopts a non-representationalist view of thought and language, one will move

away from Kant in the direction of Hegel's historicism⁷." (Rorty 2007:133). He proposes, for instance, putting a stop to providing justifications for different democratic institutions with an appeal to supra-historical reason. Therefore, according to him, Solidarity, as a core of moral philosophy, doesn't need to be based on objective foundations and is actually rather a matter of contingency. Historical stories about social and spiritual movements are the best instrument for studying human beings, for they supply vocabularies for reflection on morality, by means of which the individual is able to tell coherent stories about his own life (Rorty 1989: 69).

Critique of Kantian ethics

We must first examine his critique of Kant's moral philosophy and, by extension, his endorsement of John Dewey's critique of Kant's morality. All above principles as already noted, Kant's conception of distinct and discoverable moral principles in practical reason and, by extension, the conception of morality as being based upon a rational and universal human faculty for resolving moral dilemmas by referring to such principles is, for Rorty, simply metaphysical principles derived from religious teachings. Rorty uses the Darwinian attitude for considering Kantian ethics. He suggested that:

"All inquiry – in ethics as well as physics, in politics as well as logic – is a matter of reweaving our webs of beliefs and desires in such a way as to give ourselves more happiness and richer and freer lives. All our judgments are experimental and fallible. Unconditionality and absolutes are not things we should strive for ...Darwinians cannot be at ease with the Kantian idea of a distinctively moral motivation, or of a faculty called "reason" that issues commands. For them, rationality can only be the search for intersubjective agreement about how to carry out cooperative projects... To say that moral principles have no inherent nature is to imply that they have no distinctive source. They emerge from our encounters with our surroundings in the same way that hypotheses about planetary motion, codes of etiquette, epic poems,

and all our other patterns of linguistic behavior emerge. Like these other emergents, they are good insofar as they lead to good consequences, not because they stand in some special relation either to the universe or to the human mind" (Rorty 1989:188–90).

This Deweyan or post-Darwinian view of morality fits well with Rorty's conception of morality. Thus, Rorty, a strong recent critic of Kant, in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, writes: "Kant, acting from the best possible motives, sent moral philosophy off in a direction which has made it hard for moral philosophers to see the importance, for "moral progress", of "detailed empirical descriptions". Kant wanted to facilitate the sorts of developments which have in fact occurred since his time – the further developments of democratic institutions and a cosmopolitan political consciousness. But he thought that the way to do so was to emphasize not pity for pain and remorse for cruelty but, rather, rationality and obligation – specifically, moral obligation. He saw respect for "reason", the common core of humanity, as the only motive that was not merely empirical – not dependent on the accidents of attention or of history. By contrasting "rational respect" with feelings of pity and benevolence, he made the latter seem dubious, second-rate motives for not being cruel. He made morality something distinct from the ability to notice, and identify with, pain and humiliation" (Rorty 1989: 192-193). In addition to this, at odds with Kantian moral philosophy, Rorty denies the universality of moral principles and human nature. And he insists that the progress of social morality is the extension of solidarity on the basis of 'we-intentions' and the destination of individual morality is a 'liberal ironist'. The "ironist", according to Rorty, is one who faces up to the contingency of his or her own most central beliefs and desires, namely his or her dependence on his or her cultural and social context and process of socialization. Therefore, "liberal ironists" are those people who include among their ungrounded desires their own hope that suffering will be diminished, that the humiliation of human beings by other human beings may cease (ibid.). The concept of solidarity is related with irony.

This solidarity is achieved by a perpetual extension of her concept of 'we' or 'one of us'. The liberal ironist's sense of solidarity does not result from trying to attain some putative human essence, but by cultivating her sensitivity to manifestations of suffering and cruelty, a sensitivity which increases with the assistance of literary criticism.

This solidarity is achieved by a perpetual extension of her concept of 'we' or 'one of us'. The liberal ironist's sense of solidarity does not result from trying to attain some putative human essence, but by cultivating her sensitivity to manifestations of suffering and cruelty, a sensitivity which increases with the assistance of literary criticism.

He takes most of his ideas from Dewey whom he adored as a philosophical hero, two others being Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Rorty, in *Philosophy and Mirror of Nature* (1979), holds Dewey as one of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century. In particular, Rorty finds in Dewey an anticipation of his own view of moral philosophy, taking himself as continuing the work of Dewey to criticize traditional metaphysics and its basic problems such as theory of Truth, concept of Experience and ethics. Rorty claims that Dewey tries to liberate our culture from supposed obstacles which hold up its further development and the realization of social hopes. Certainly, Kantian philosophy and especially his moral philosophy is an obstacle which holds up the realization of social hopes. Dewey and Rorty agree that philosophers should turn their attention toward the questions of a just society because democracy as a just society is the common search for justice. He is a liberal relying on democracy instead of philosophy; and he is a pragmatist comfortable with contingency and solidarity instead of theories. Finally, he follows his old teacher John Dewey. About Dewey on democracy, Rorty says that "he praised democracy as the only form of "moral and social faith" that does not "rest upon the idea that experience must be subjected at some point or other to some form of external control: to some 'authority' alleged to exist outside the process of experience" (Rorty 2007: 40). Of course, Rorty is an atheist philosopher and by no means can it be said that he has a theology, whatever it is, in his philosophy. The common point between both of them is the view that the essence of democracy is in moral values

expressed in societal procedures and human relationships, and in critical citizens who are committed to these values.

Rorty introduces morality in *Philosophy and Social Hope* more than in his other writings. He is strongly influenced by Dewey's naturalistic and Darwinist pragmatism. He, like Dewey, does not accept the distinction between prudence and morality. "Dewey suggested", Rorty says "that we reconstruct the distinction between prudence and morality in terms of the distinction between routine and non-routine social relationships. He saw prudence as a member of the same family of concepts as 'habit' and 'custom'. All three words describe familiar and relatively uncontroversial ways in which individuals and groups adjust to the stresses and strains of their non-human and human environments. It is obviously prudent both to keep an eye out for poisonous snakes in the grass and to trust strangers less than members of one's own family. 'Prudence', 'expediency' and 'efficiency' are all terms which describe such routine and uncontroversial adjustments to circumstances" (Rorty 1999: 73). The distinction between prudence and morality compares with that of social custom and law.

According to Rorty's 'philosophical hero', John Dewey, this Kantian morality-prudence distinction and the Kantian notion of moral autonomy (autonomy "in the sense of obedience to reason's unconditional command") are irreconcilable with the Darwinian account of the origin of the human species.

Rorty believes that the bases of ethics are neither a religion nor a moral law. He says: "as I read the history of philosophy, Kant is a transitional figure – somebody who helped us get away from the idea that morality is a matter of divine command, but who unfortunately retained the idea that morality is a matter of unconditional obligations. I would accept Elizabeth Anscombe's suggestion that if you do not believe in God, you would do well to drop notions like "law" and "obligation" from the vocabulary you use when deciding what to do" (Rorty 2007:187). Moreover, it can be said that emotions are not reason and rational arguments do not play a role in Rorty's moral philosophy. In other words, Rorty attempts to re-establish the central role that emotions played in the early Enlightenment. While in Kant's morality, there is a question of obedience to universal rules of pure practical

reason, for Hume the grounds and ultimate ends of morality should not rest on intellectual faculties but on sentiments. In Hume's morality, emotions are not under the control of reason but within a web of sentiments that allow feelings to control themselves.

The priority of solidarity to objectivity

Perhaps, it can be said that the central core of the article is "solidarity", for it forms the spirit of his moral philosophy. I want to explain and elucidate what Rorty means by the two concepts of "solidarity" and "objectivity" and why he strongly advocates choosing the former over the latter. In other words, in *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, he searches for forms of solidarity which are not determined by objectivity. He opposes attempts to anchor solidarity or responsibility for each other in human nature, a commonly shared humanity, or in natural human rights. Solidarity with others is a chance hit, a form of alliance with others which we have created and which is based on our ability to see others as members of a "we community."

In the process, I emphasize the moral messages of Rorty's philosophy, and show that Rorty himself admits that there is some sort of mysterious "moral foundation" which takes the place, or plays the role, of a metaphysical foundation. The moral philosophy that he has pursued since the publication of his famous book, that is, *Philosophy and the Mirror of nature* has not any similarity with current philosophies of ethics. In other words, it is neither deontological⁸ morality nor a religious ethics but is a neo-pragmatic ethics. This ethics is different from other moral philosophies. First, it focuses on society, rather than on lone individuals, as the entity which achieves morality. For example, in Dewey's words, "all conduct is ... social." Or in Rorty's words, "imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers". In fact, his social hope as a substitute for Kantian or religious ethics plays a role in his neo-pragmatic ethics. Secondly, it does not hold any known moral criteria beyond the potential for revision. Third, pragmatic ethics may be misunderstood as relativist, as failing to be objective, but it is like suggesting that science fails to be objective. Ethical pragmatists, like scientists, can maintain that their endeavor is objective on the grounds that it converges towards something objective.

It allows that a moral judgment may be appropriate in one age of a given society, even though it will cease to be appropriate after that society progresses or may already be inappropriate in another society⁹.

Now another point is that Rorty devotes parts one and two to exhaustively exposing the flaws in the traditional interpretations of the mind as a mirror of nature (for example, in Descartes and Kant), of knowledge as the perspicuous representation of or correspondence to a nonhuman and independent reality, (corresponding theory of truth) and of philosophy as the discipline which evaluates the claims to knowledge of the rest of our culture. In the process, he surveys the history of epistemology from its Greek origins to its recent demise. Then in part three, he sketches out an alternative picture of an "edifying" philosophy as opposed to a "systematic" philosophy. He portrays the picture of his moral philosophy within "edifying" philosophy and this picture becomes very clear in his last writings (such as *Philosophy and Social Hope*). Here, Rorty begins with the following proclamation:

"There are two principal ways in which reflective human beings try, by placing their lives in a larger context, to give sense to those lives. The first is by telling the story of their contribution to a community. This community may be the actual historical one in which they live, or another actual one, distant in time and place, or a quite imaginary one, consisting perhaps of a dozen heroes and heroines selected from history or fiction or both. The second way is to describe themselves as standing in immediate relation to a nonhuman reality. This relation is immediate in the sense that it does not derive from a relation between such a reality and their tribe, or their nation, or their imagined band of comrades. I shall say that stories of the former kind exemplify the desire for solidarity, and that stories of the latter kind exemplify the desire for objectivity. Insofar as a person is seeking solidarity, he or she does not ask about the relation between the practices of the chosen community and something outside that community. Insofar as he seeks objectivity, he distances himself from

the actual persons around him not by thinking of himself as a member of some other real or imaginary group, but rather by attaching himself to something which can be described without reference to any particular human beings" (Rorty 1991b: 21).

Pragmatism defends the solidarity against objectivity:

"Pragmatists would like to replace the desire for objectivity – the desire to be in touch with a reality which is more than some community with which we identify ourselves – with the desire for solidarity with that community. They think that the habits of relying upon persuasion rather than force, of respect for the opinions of colleagues, of curiosity and eagerness for new data and ideas, are the only virtues scientists have. They do not think that there is an intellectual virtue called 'rationality' over and above these moral virtues" (Rorty 1991b:39).

It can also be said that solidarity has particular relation with moral progress. For Rorty, we can even find some moral virtues in scientific developments. Thus, Rorty suggests that "we substitute for familiar discussions of scientific method an inclination to praise the sciences for their frequently exhibited moral virtues and for their contributions to human solidarity" (Guignon & Hiley 2003:91).

Rorty, in fact, develops his notion of solidarity as the foundation of a liberal culture in direct confrontation with the main tenets of Kant's moral philosophy. Although one possesses a skeptic attitude towards the existence of a common human nature, this does not, in Rorty's opinion, remove the fact that we have a particular kind of "moral obligation to feel a sense of solidarity with all other human beings." This is an important principle particularly for Rorty, because the liberal society outlined by him rests on its wide ranging recognition.

Solidarity, according to him, is not something pre-existing that we can find outside in life-world, yet it is something that needs to be created by the "imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers" (Rorty 1996: xvi). Therefore, to Rorty, there is no solidarity

objectively in the world. He proposes that we can create it among our fellow sufferers.

Rorty's solidarity is, by no means, achieved by philosophical inquiry or reflection, or by removing prejudice and achieving any supposed objectivity. Rather, it is actively created through using the imagination to see and describe others as fellow sufferers, sensitizing ourselves to the pain, and in particular humiliation, of other human beings. Then, for creating solidarity, there is no need for a larger shared power such as God, Truth, or rationality which has to be invoked in order to demonstrate that we all share something in common (Rorty 1996: 91). Rorty's call for putting aside the quest for metaphysical foundations for solidarity comes not only from his pragmatist philosophy; it also builds on the practical ethos common to human beings. Rorty clearly denies the essence of human as one of the sources of moral laws. He seems to replace traditional morality with Nietzsche and Levinasian vision. Traditional morality from Socrates to Levinas – in the Platonic-Aristotelian-Christian traditions – tends to interpret morality as the means to the fulfillment of a fixed or unchanged nature of human. According to this view, there is no fixed essence of human. Rorty accepts this view and he becomes an anti-essentialist philosopher. Therefore, Rorty's concept of self-creation begins with a rejection of the traditional idea of a fixed or essential human nature. That is, this neo-pragmatist philosopher begins with a radical sense of sociological and historical contingency of the self (Huang 2009: 229). In other words, he doesn't believe that all humans have a common nature. In this area, he was inspired by criticisms provided by Hegel's historicism, Nietzsche's attack on metaphysics and Derrida's deconstruction of logocentrism.

Here, Rorty speaks of a 'de-theologized and de-philosophized' notion of solidarity, in which solidarity is not a characteristic of human's fixed nature but the effect of a process of acculturation developed in specific historical circumstances. Imagination would also contribute to the cultivation of the 'feeling' of solidarity as an 'expansive sense of solidarity' would be the offspring of the 'imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers.' In this context, Rorty defines ethics as 'the ability to notice, and identify with

pain and humiliation', and portrays a 'greater human solidarity' as the main path to moral progress.

Moral progress

Rorty holds that the task of moral education is not to overcome one's natural feelings and emotions, but to expand it. To create solidarity is to be sensitive to the pain and sufferings of other people. He claims that moral progress is a matter of ever-present sympathy with others. Increasing sympathy leads, Rorty claims, to creation of solidarity. Rorty suggests that "it is best to think of moral progress as a matter of increasing sensitivity, increasing responsiveness to the needs of a larger and larger variety of people and things. Just as pragmatists see scientific progress not as the gradual attenuation of a veil of appearances which hides the intrinsic nature of reality from us, but as the increasing ability to respond to the concerns of larger groups of people... so they see moral progress as a matter of being able to respond to the needs of ever more inclusive groups of people" (Rorty, 1999:81). Is his view similar to a Benthamian utilitarianism? Obviously, Jeremy Bentham and the utilitarian program are obvious points of origin for Rorty's political and moral outlook. Utilitarianism, the ethics of the "greatest happiness principle", is probably the best known system of making decisions. Basically, according to the utilitarian, those actions are good which maximize happiness in our society and those actions are bad which minimize happiness and cause pain. In other words, Utilitarianism is the idea that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by its contribution to overall utility: that is, its contribution to happiness or pleasure as summed among all persons. Rorty was quite aware of it: "utilitarians like me think that morality is the attempt to decrease the amount of suffering among human beings"¹⁰.

Moral progress happens in history and that is why it is a historical contingency. Rorty says: "in the course of history, we clever animals have acquired new desires, and we have become quite different from our animal ancestors, for our cleverness has not only enabled us to adjust means to ends, it has enabled us to imagine new ends, to dream up new ideals. Nietzsche, when he described the effects of the cooling off of the sun, wrote: "And so the clever animals had to die.'" (Rorty

2010:13). Rorty's approach to moral progress is upon our understanding of social and historical conditions which we can change some conditions. Also he holds that:

"My position entails that feelings of solidarity are necessarily a matter of which similarities and dissimilarities strike us as salient, and that such salience is a function of a historically contingent final vocabulary... The view I am offering says that there is such a thing as moral progress, and that this progress is indeed in the direction of greater human solidarity. But the solidarity is not thought of as recognition of a core self, the human essence, in all human beings. Rather, it is thought of as the ability to see more and more traditional differences... as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation – the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of "us". That is why I said... that detailed descriptions of particular varieties of pain and humiliation (in, e.g., novels or ethnographies), rather than philosophical or religious treatises, were the modern intellectual's principle contributions to moral progress" (Rorty 1989:192).

For Rorty, moral progress is not a matter of increasing moral knowledge whereas modern philosophers such as Kant, Rorty says, who see morals as resting on metaphysical questions like "but is there a God?" or "do human beings really *have* these rights?" presuppose that moral progress is at least in part a matter of increasing moral knowledge, knowledge about something independent of our social practices: something like the will of God or the nature of humanity (Rorty 1999: 84). Unlike Kant, Rorty is almost closer to Hume¹¹ than other modern philosophers, because, for the latter, morality is a matter of sentiment not reason.

Sentiment and imagination in moral progress are two interrelated concepts that Rorty has included in his view of moral philosophy. His point is that moral progress is not a matter of an increase in rationality,

nor does it involve developing what Dewey called intelligence. The crucial factor is sympathy, how widely one is willing to draw the limits of one's moral community. Thus, moral progress for Rorty is a matter of increasing "sensitivity" and one's responsiveness to "the concerns of ever larger groups of people" (Rorty 1999: 81). Moreover, Rorty repeatedly and strongly insists that our commitment to human rights and other fundamental moral principles (like justice) cannot be effectively justified by resorting to universal rationality and rational laws but instead depend on shared emotions and sentiments. What makes us moral is that we feel our common emotions like empathy, suffering, etc. Rorty clearly claims that moral progress is this progress of sentiments. For example, we can imaginatively feel ourselves "in the shoes of the despised and the oppressed" (Rorty 2001: 358).

The most important message in moral progress, according to him, is that cruelty and suffering should not be existing in liberal democracy. Rorty believed that "a democracy is distinguished not only by its form of government, but also by the presence of institutions such as free press, free universities, and an independent judiciary. These intuitions help the nation come to grasp with the existence of previously unrecognized forms of cruelty and suffering: the cruelty of whites against blacks, for example, or the suffering of gays. In a fully democratic society, unnecessary suffering would not exist (Rorty 2006:81-2). Of course, note that the condemnation of cruelty does not mean that liberal democracy will prevent the suffering, cruelty, and humiliation in democratic societies because suffering, cruelty, and humiliation cannot be eliminated from human life, but can be decreased. Therefore, it is clearly evident that suffering, cruelty, and humiliation cannot be totally ignored, playing important roles in Rorty's moral philosophy.

Conclusion

To put things in perspective building on the above, it can certainly not be said that Rorty, this neo-pragmatist thinker, is like Kant, a moral philosopher. Therefore, one can attest that the answer to this question will not be easy. Rorty has a special moral philosophy that does not refer to or correspond with any Kantian or Christian morality. Rorty is standing on Darwin's and Dewey's shoulders. However, his moral

philosophy is based upon Darwinian-Deweyian ethics none of which has any metaphysical foundations. As already mentioned, Darwinism as one of his principles of Rorty's thought, manifests itself in moral topics. According to Rorty moral consciousness as a historical conditioned is a product of social and political consciousness. Of course, this does not mean that he is not a Marxist thinker because the grand narrative has no place in his philosophy. Two points arise here: obviously, Darwinism and historicism are both components of Rorty's philosophy. Also moral progress and solidarity are interrelated concepts in his moral philosophy. Rorty's assertion of the contingency of self and his appropriation of the Freudian conception of the self will serve as a basis for a discussion of Kantian versus Deweyan morality, moral deliberation and, finally, Rorty's notions concerning cruelty and human solidarity. If anyone wants to know what pragmatic ethics is, he must directly listen to these among Rorty's words: "I don't think pragmatists have a special ethics. They have, if you like, a special meta-ethics. That is, they're dubious about the distinction between morality and prudence. Immanuel Kant is still the greatest influence on academic moral philosophy. If you read Kant, you think of morality as a very special, distinct phenomenon having little in common with anything else in culture. Dewey wrote book after book saying we don't need a great big distinction between morality and everything else; we don't even need a great big distinction between morality and prudence. It's all a matter of solving the problems that arise in relations between human beings. When these problems become acute we call them moral problems, when they don't become acute we call them prudential problems. It's a matter of importance rather than, as Kant thought, a difference between reason and emotion, or reason and sentiment, or the a priori and the a posteriori, or the philosophical and the empirical, and so on. Basically what Dewey did for moral philosophy was just to help get rid of Kant. I don't think the pragmatists have any further contribution to make to ethics"¹². I think that the question this paper raises is an open question and Rorty is a moral philosopher unlike Kantian or Christian or even utilitarian moral philosophers. He wants us to embrace social life back so that we can live in peace with others and in this life we do not resort to philosophical principles to make life better, but our motto is one thing, and that is solidarity with other

people, whether Muslims or Christians or Buddhists, etc. According to him, experiencing solidarity with others is the basis of a democratic society and should be strengthened so that moral life could improve, namely, the reduction of all forms of cruelty and suffering through strengthening our moral solidarity with others, which is the central aim of Rorty's moral philosophy. Despite Rorty's pragmatist eschewal of a theory of the Good and a foundationalist morality, he can be seen as a moralist. Finally, it can be said that his morality is similar to a postmodern ethics.

Notes

- 1 . Both Rorty and Levinas are critics of a foundation-orientated metaphysics. Rorty plays down the question of the final foundation by showing that it is asked from a metaphysical tendency which is better resisted. Metaphysical foundations are not necessary and not desirable. Not necessary, because our actions do not change through their presence or absence.
- 2 . Foucault, like Rorty, was an anti-representationalist and historicist thinker. See: Chandra Kumar, (2005) "Foucault and Rorty on Truth and Ideology : A Pragmatist View from the Left", in *Contemporary Pragmatism Vol. 2, No. 1 (June 2005)*, 35–93
- 3 . History of essentialism is long. We know that "essentialism originated from Parmenides, Plato, and specially Aristotle, but has declined since the criticism of British empiricism beginning in the seventeenth century. It was revived in the middle of the twentieth century and is represented in particular by Kripke. Contemporary essentialism claims that some properties of an object are essential to it and that so long as it exists, the object could not fail to have them." See also, Bunnin, Nicholas & Yu, Jiyuan (2008) *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* (John Wiley & Sons).
4. See "Dewey between Hegel and Darwin" by Richard Rorty In Herman J. Saatkamp (ed.), *Rorty & Pragmatism: The Philosopher Responds to His Critics*. Vanderbilt University Press (1995)
- 5 . Look at: "Freud and Moral Reflection." In *Essays on Heidegger and Others*. Vol. 2, *Philosophical Papers*, 143–163. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991
- 6 . I think that the most clear description was found in the following book: Hall, David L.(1994) *Prophet and Poet of the New Pragmatism*, SUNY Press
- 7 . Of course, he has raised the issue of holism

8 . Deontology is an approach to ethics that focuses on the rightness or wrongness of actions themselves, as opposed to the rightness or wrongness of the consequences of those actions. It argues that decisions should be made considering the factors of one's duties and other's rights (the Greek 'deon' means 'obligation' or 'duty').

9 . For more see: LaFollette, Hugh (2000). "Pragmatic ethics". In LaFollette, Hugh. *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*. Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 400–419

10 .Rorty, Richard (2012) "the moral purposes of the university: an exchange", <http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/archives/University/2.3IRortyetal.pdf>.

11 . In making sentiment the primary constituent of a common moral identity, Rorty invokes the legacy of David Hume. That Hume's's thought is a source of protopragmatist stirrings is nothing new; William James suggested as much in the 1898 essay credited with launching the pragmatist tradition. For further study, see: Rasmussen, Dennis. C (2013) *The Pragmatic Enlightenment: Recovering the Liberalism of Hume, Smith, Montesquieu, and Voltaire* (Cambridge University Press)

12 . For more see: an interview with Richard Rorty in Philosophy Now 2016 at https://philosophynow.org/issues/43/Richard_Rorty

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Lakatos and Hersh on Mathematical Proof*

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Abstract

The concept of Mathematical Proof has been controversial for the past few decades. Different philosophers have offered different theories about the nature of Mathematical Proof, among which theories presented by Lakatos and Hersh have had significant similarities and differences with each other. It seems that a comparison and critical review of these two theories will lead to a better understanding of the concept of mathematical proof and will be a big step towards solving many related problems. Lakatos and Hersh argue that, firstly, “mathematical proof” has two different meanings, formal and informal; and, secondly, informal proofs are affected by human factors, such as individual decisions and collective agreements. I call these two theses, respectively, “proof dualism” and “humanism”. But on the other hand, their theories have significant dissimilarities and are by no means equivalent. Lakatos is committed to linear proof dualism and methodological humanism, while Hersh’s theory involves some sort of parallel proof dualism and sociological humanism. According to linear proof dualism, the two main types of proofs are provided in order to achieve a common goal: incarnation of mathematical concepts and methods and truth. However, according to the parallel proof dualism, two main types of proofs are provided in order to achieve two different types of purposes: production of a valid sequence of signs (the goal of the formal proof) and persuasion of the audience (the goal of the informal proof). Hersh’s humanism is informative and indicates pluralism; whereas, Lakatos’ version of humanism is normative and monistic.

Keywords: *formal proof, informal proof, practical proof, humanism, proof dualism.*

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A formalistic definition of "mathematical proof" which is frequently seen in various related courses and textbooks is something like: A finite sequence of sentences in a formal language, arranged by a certain set of rules (each sentence in the sequence is either an axiom or an assumption or follows from the preceding sentences in the sequence by a rule of inference).

But this definition is neither inclusive nor exclusive. It's not inclusive because mathematicians sometimes use the term "proof" to refer to arguments that do not satisfy the formalistic definition. There are visual proofs, computer-assisted proofs and heuristic proofs. On the other hand, the definition is not even exclusive for some mathematicians and philosophers. For example, intuitionists do not accept the validity of non-constructive proofs even though those proofs can still satisfy the criteria of the formal definition (some lines of the argument can be inferred directly from the principle of excluded middle without being constructed or inferred from preceding formulas in the sequence). As another example, social constructionists believe that an unpersuasive argument should not be called a "proof"; whereas, there is no such condition in the formal definition of proof.

Such and similar problems have motivated theoreticians to look for better or less problematic definitions. One such attempt is to embrace dualism and use the disjunction of the formalistic definition and one or more other complementary definitions to craft a disjunctive definition of "proof". A disjunctive definition of a concept C is the disjunction of a number of subdefinitions, each of which covers only a subset of the concept's extension (whereas, the whole disjunction covers the complete extension). In this case, the disjunctive definition of proof will look like: "A finite sequence of sentences in a formal language, arranged by a certain set of rules OR ...". Using disjunctive definitions to define a concept is appropriate when the concept in question is not mononuclear.

The definitions of mathematical proof independently developed by Lakatos and Hersh are both disjunctive definitions. By accepting the formalistic subdefinition as one part of their subjunctive definitions, in contrast to intuitionists, they acknowledge the validity of all classical arguments, including the non-constructive proofs. However, in

contrast to formalists and Platonists, by adding some humanistic subdefinition of proof, which takes either psychological or sociological parameters into account, they evidently highlight the role of human factors in any acceptable definition of proof. In their account, the inadequacy of the classical (formalistic) definition was mainly caused by neglecting such human factors. The purpose of this essay is to introduce Lakatos' and Hersh's definitions, to compare them with a critical approach and to show that despite having similarities in regard to their dualist and humanistic approaches, their definitions have significant dissimilarities and are by no means equivalent.

It's worth noting that the controversy over the definition of proof is conceptual. This kind of controversy can be solved (though never fully resolved or settled) by a critical comparison of rival theories and definitions or sometimes even by introducing new definitions. A solution in this case consists of clarifying the philosophical and logical implications of the controversial concept in question, eliminating misunderstandings and getting closer to a mutual understanding between the proponents of the rival theories. In this sense, it seems that a critical study and comparison of these two theories will help us achieve a better understanding of the concept of mathematical proof and mathematics (in general) and even make a big step towards solving some relevant problems (about proof) in Paramathematics¹ and computer sciences.

Hersh's Theory

In "The Mathematical Experience" (1981) Ruben Hersh and Phillip Davis use a fictional dialogue between an ideal mathematician (I.M.) and a student (Student) to examine the concept of proof. Student asks I.M. what a mathematical proof consists of.

I.M.: [...] Anyhow, what you do is, you write down the axioms of your theory in a formal language with a given list of symbols or alphabet. Then you write down the hypothesis of your theorem in the same symbolism. Then you show that you can transform the hypothesis step by step, using the rules of logic, till you get the conclusion. That's a proof.

Student: Really? That's amazing!... I've never seen that done.

I.M.: Oh! Of course no one ever really does it. It would take forever! You just show that you could do it, that's sufficient (Davis &Hersh, 1990:39).

But Student, who is not convinced with the answer, keeps asking for a definition of proof.

I.M.: Well, it's an argument that convinces someone who knows the subject.

Student: someone who knows the subject? Then the definition of proof is subjective; it depends on particular persons. ...

I.M: No, no. there's nothing subjective about it! Everybody knows what a proof is. Just read some books, take courses from a competent mathematician, and you'll catch on.

...

Student: Then you decide what a proof is, and if I don't learn to decide in the same way, you decide I don't have any aptitude.

I.M: If not me, then who? (Davis &Hersh, 1990:40)

In this dialogue, IM implicitly admits that the formalistic definition of proof does not adequately describe the proofs we use in practice; meanwhile he fails to present an objective definition for it. In return, he offers a criterion (Persuasiveness and institutional legitimacy) to verify the validity of a given proof.

In his "What Is Mathematics, Really?" (1997), Hersh takes a clearer stance:

Mathematical proof" has two meanings. In practice, it's one thing. In principle, it's another. We show student what proof is in practice. We tell them what it is in principle. [...]. Meaning number 1, the practical meaning, is informal, imprecise. Practical mathematical proof is what we do to make each other believe our theorems. It's

argument that convinces the qualified, skeptical expert. [...] meaning number 2, theoretical mathematical proof is formal. [...] it's transformation of certain symbol sequences (formal sentences) according to certain rules of logic (modus ponens, etc.). (Hersh, 1997:49)

Olsker adds the following explanation to clarify Hersh's standpoint on the subject:

The practical meaning implies that proof has a subjective side; the goal of a proof is to convince the mathematical community of the truth of a theorem. That is, mathematics is a human endeavor, since proofs are written, read, understood, verified, and used by humans.(Olsker, 2011:36)

There are three points that need to be taken into consideration: First, we should not think that the informal and imprecise nature of practical proofs makes them non-rigorous as well. Hersh has repeatedly emphasized that the meaning of rigorous proof needs to be refined to include proofs adequately supported with machine computations or numerical evidences as well as those with strong probabilistic algorithms (Hersh, 1997:58).

In his "Proof: Its Nature and Significance" (2008), Detlefsen offers a better understanding of rigor. First of all, he emphasizes that formalization and rigor are mutually independent. "The prevailing view of proof sees rigor as a necessary feature of proof and formalizability as a necessary condition of rigor." (Detlefsen, 2008:16) "Rigorous proof, on this view, is reasoning all of whose inferences track purely logical relations between concepts. (Detlefsen, 2008:17)

This can explain the traditional and common misbelief that rigor and precision of a mathematical proof should necessitate its independence of empirical experiences as well as intuition, natural language and common sense (and consequently, the belief that "rigorous" and "formal" are co-extensional). Detlefsen holds that the traditional belief mentioned above stemmed from the dominance of formalism and syntacticalism during the late 19 and early 20th centuries. He then offers an alternate account of mathematical

precision by disconnecting it from formalization and explaining it in terms of explanatory content. He argues that a similar viewpoint exists even in the traditional approach according to which a mathematical argument is considered to be of the highest precision only when it has the highest explanatory potential. In fact, while avoiding the possible gaps in an argument, we achieve the highest level of certainty only when the premises of the argument can explain its results successfully.

In Detlefsen's account, the precision of an argument is tied with its explanatory potential. The more precise and rigorous an argument can be, the better its premises can explain the result. When the explanatory potential becomes more transparent, we are more content to add missing information to close the gaps between premises and the result; while on the other hand, adding more formalization to the argument will decrease the level of transparency and precision along with it. Hence: "A reexamination of the commonly presumed connection(s) between rigor and formalization would thus seem to be in order." (Detlefsen, 2008:19)

It can now be seen that practical proofs, for their high transparency, can be of such a great and unmatched help for understanding and developing mathematics in its generality as well as specific procedures like hypothesizing, finding contradictions, creative reasoning and conceptualizing. Understanding something is nothing but explaining it in a successful and efficient way. This result leads us to the second important point: We should not think of practical proofs as "pseudo-proofs", "immature proofs", "fake", "second class" or anything of the sort. On the contrary, practical proofs make mathematics progress. They are what mathematicians call "proof". Formal proofs should be actually called "logical proofs" rather than "mathematical proofs": "Real-life proof is informal" (Hersh, 1997:57) Therefore, practical proofs, despite being informal, are rigorous and explanatory. They play an unmatched role in the progress of mathematics and they are what mathematicians refer to as "proof" in practice.

The third point in understanding Hersh's theory is that proofs in addition to their logical and lingual aspects have mental aspects as well. Hersh uses the terms "convince", "convincing" and "being convinced" to highlight this aspect of the debate. Olsker has also

correctly emphasized on the same point. In addition to these all, it also seems that we need to emphasize on the social aspects of proofs. The fourth important point is a proof's institutional legitimacy as distinct from the mental persuasiveness or convincing power. Olsker though seems to have neglected this distinction and mixed the mental and social (and institutional) aspects of the debate together:

As pointed out by Davis and Hersh above, and by others, when a mathematician reads a proof to determine its validity, he or she makes that determination based on whether or not he or she finds the proof to be convincing. That is, the mathematician makes a judgment based on subjective criteria. The Clay Mathematics Institute, which offers a one million dollar prize for a proof of any one of seven mathematical conjectures, stipulates that any proof must be published and accepted by the community of mathematicians for two years before a prize will be awarded. Because the validity of a proof depends on acceptance by mathematicians, that validity is inherently subjective. (Olsker, 2011:37)

For a proof to be qualified to win a million dollar prize it has to have been published for two years. In a more general sense, a proof can be identifiable and referable among mathematician only if it is published (it won't have objective existence if it's not published). Unlike Olsker (above), it seems to us that the validity of proofs is not "inherently subjective" if it's a matter of social and institutional credibility.

In Hersh's account, not only proofs, but also every mathematical entity is a socially constructed concept. For example, if a singular term in Geometry refers to something objective and abstract for a Platonist and refers to basically nothing for a formalist, for Hersh, it refers to something in "the social - conceptual world" (Davis &Hersh, 1990:19) or "the shared conceptual world" (Davis &Hersh, 1990:163). He adheres to the Kuhnian belief that scientific change is a change in what scientists do in practice, rather than a mere change of theories. Hersh sympathizes with Kitcher in generalizing and extending the idea into mathematics. He emphasizes that Kuhnian approach is

powerful and convincing when applied to the history of mathematics. (Hersh, 1997, 225)

In the scope of what we learned so far about Hersh, we can now more easily understand and formulate his disjunctive definition of proof. In Hersh's account, a "proof" should satisfy one of the following two conditions:

- There is a sequence of logically arranged well-formed formulas in a formal system (= formal subdefinition); or
- There is a successfully accomplished practice to convince the community of mathematicians (= practical subdefinition).

In other words, there are two parallel types of proofs:

- Formal proof: A finite sequence of well-formed formulas each of which is either an axiom or an assumption or the product of applying a rule of inference to a preceding formula in the sequence.
- Practical proof: A successful practical attempt or endeavor to convince the community of mathematicians to accept the truth of a claim.

If we label these two subdefinitions with P and Q, the complete definition of proof will be "P or Q" and this is what a disjunctive definition should look like. It's needless to add that Hersh can rely on the second part of his disjunctive definition for justifying or explaining any kind of controversial proofs.

Lakatos' theory

About three decades before Hersh, the Hungarian philosopher, Imre Lakatos made similar claims in his book, "Proofs and refutations: the logic of mathematical discovery" (1957) and his article, "what does mathematical proof prove?" (written between 1959 and 1961). Lakatos uses a fictional dialogue as well, though unlike Hersh who used various historical examples in his imaginary dialogue between S and IM, Lakatos composes a dialogue between a teacher and students which particularly concentrates on the heuristic proofs for two theorems of Euler and Cauchy.

At the beginning, the teacher mentions a conjecture he had discussed with students earlier (Euler's conjecture: For any given

polyhedron, if V is the number of vertices, E is the number of edges and F is the number of faces, the equation $V-E+F=2$ is always true). He says: “We tested it by various methods. But we haven't yet proved it.” (Lakatos, 1976:8) Then he presents some kind of heuristic proof for it, which he later calls pre-formal proof.

Teacher: ... I have one [(a proof for this theorem)]. It consists of the following thought-experiment.

Step 1: Let us imagine the polyhedron to be hollow, with a surface made of thin rubber. If we cut out one of the faces, we can stretch the remaining surface flat on the blackboard, without tearing it. The faces and edges will be deformed, the edges may become curved, but V and E will not alter, so that if and only if $V - E + F = 2$ for the original polyhedron, $V - E + F = 1$ for this flat network ... [(fig. 1)].

Step 2: Now we triangulate our map — it does indeed look like a geographical map. We draw (possibly curvilinear) diagonals in those (possibly curvilinear) polygons which are not already (possibly curvilinear) triangles. By drawing each diagonal we increase both E and F by one, so that the total $V-E+F$ will not be altered ... [(fig. 2)].

Step 3: From the triangulated network we now remove the triangles one by one. To remove a triangle we either remove an edge- upon which one face and one edge disappear, or we remove two edges and a vertex - upon which one face, two edges and one vertex disappear... [(fig. 3)].

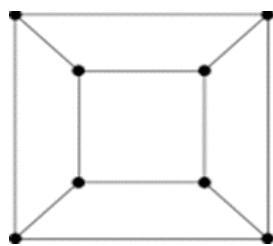


fig. 1

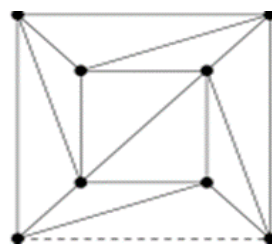


fig. 2

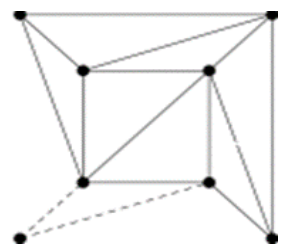


fig. 3

T

hus if $V - E + F = 1$ before a triangle is removed, it remains so after the triangle is removed. At the end of this procedure we get a single triangle. For this $V - E + F = 1$ holds true. Thus we have proved our conjecture.

DELTA: You should now call it a theorem. . . .

ALPHA: . . ., But how am I to know that it can be performed for any polyhedron? For instance, are you sure, Sir, that any polyhedron, *after having a face removed, can be stretched flat on the blackboard?* I am dubious about your first step. (Lakatos, 1976, pp.8-9)

Students Beta and Gamma also shed doubts on second and third steps of the experiment. The teacher then admits that he is not sure of any of those steps and those doubts can be well-grounded.

TEACHER: I admit that the traditional name 'proof' for this thought-experiment may rightly be considered a bit misleading. I do not think that it establishes the truth of the conjecture.

DELTA: What does it do then? What do you think a mathematical proof proves?

TEACHER: This is a subtle question which we shall try to answer later. Till then I propose to retain the time-honored technical term 'proof' for a *thought-experiment - or 'quasi-experiment'* - which suggests a decomposition of the original conjecture into subconjectures or lemmas, thus embedded it in a possibly quite distant body of knowledge. Our 'proof', for instance, has embedded the original conjecture - about crystals, or, say, solids - in the theory of rubber sheets. Descartes or Euler, the fathers of the original conjecture, certainly did not even dream of this." (Lakatos, 1976:10)

Lakatos repeats this proof in the formerly mentioned article ("what does mathematical proof prove?") too and this time using a monologue discourse he takes a clear stance in regard to the nature of mathematical proof. In Lakatos account, mathematical proofs are basically of three different types:

- Pre-formal proofs (the first type): These are proofs presented before a formal system is fully developed, just like the proof of the Euler's conjecture we observed above. Lakatos' proof for the Euler's conjecture may look artificial but he shows that this kind of proof is found in abundance in mathematics (another example is the proof for Cauchy's theorem).
- Formal proofs (the second type): These are proofs in a developed formal system. This type of proof fits well in the formalistic definition of proof. An example is the proof of the following equation in Zermelo's formal system: $A \cup (B \cap C) = (A \cup B) \cap (A \cup C)$
- Post-formal proofs (the third type): These are proofs of meta-theorems of a formal system in absence of any meta-theory or formal meta-system. Examples of this type of proof are the proofs of the undecidability theorems in logic and the principle of duality in projective geometry.

Even though Lakatos says that mathematical proofs are essentially of three different types: pre-formal; formal and the post-formal, it is not hard to see that two of these three types - the pre-formal and post-formal proofs - are both "informal" proofs, as distinct from the formal type of proofs. Lakatos holds that informal proofs render a lower level of certainty compared to formal ones, but they also prove statements and theorems that are clearer and more tangible. They prove things that mathematicians are really interested in. Formal proofs, on the other hand, are absolutely reliable; though sadly, it's not always clear what their reliability is actually about. (Lakatos, 1978:69)

We can summarize Lakatos' theory here. There are two general types of proofs: Formal proofs and informal proofs.

- Formal proof: a process that proves a sentence in a formal system using the system's axioms and rules of inference in the form of a finite sequence of well-formed formulas starting with axioms or premises and ending with the desired result.
- Informal proof: a process that shows the truth of a statement with heuristic reasoning. In other words, it uses a correct mental experience to analyze the main statement to simpler and more evident statements until counter examples (if any) appear, concepts are detected and

clarified and eventually an informal mathematical theory is shaped and finally, the desired statement shows up as an outcome of this theory.

Somewhat similar to the points we made about Hersh's theory, there are also three important points about Lakatos' theory:

First and foremost, the same point we made about the rigor and precision of Hersh's practical proofs also hold about Lakatos' informal proofs. If a proof is informal, it doesn't mean that it is imprecise. In particular, if we take Detlefsen's viewpoint about the relation between precision and explanatory power and transparency into account and compare Lakatos' heuristic argument for Euler's theorem with it, we can see that proof is reasonably precise. The cuttings, making triangles and then omitting those triangles one after another can explain the result ($V-E+F=2$) fairly well. However, in all such heuristic and informal proofs, there is always a chance that some hidden assumptions are neglected or remained unsaid (in this case, the assumption that the polyhedron has no cavity), but this level of fallibility doesn't make it any less proof; it just makes it different from a formal proof and leads to the conclusion that informal proofs (unlike the formal ones) are falsifiable and that's why they can be called "quasi-empirical". Basically, we are facing some synthetic and "a posteriori" element in it, as opposed to something purely analytic and "a priori".

The second important point is that Lakatos has presented historical and empirical evidences for the existence of informal proofs. This is important because Lakatos' proof for Euler theorem might look artificial at the first sight and generalizing the concept to the real world of mathematics might seem dubious. In fact, he uses his example to elaborate the difference between informal and formal proofs, but then he offers real and historical examples as well. In particular, he mentions and explains the heuristic proof for Cauchy's theorem and the concept of uniform convergence. (Lakatos, 1976:144)

The third important point about informal proofs is that in addition to be valid independent from the formal definition of validity, they even play an immensely important role to help mathematicians pick the right formal axioms to construct formal systems. From this point

of view, it can be said that informal proofs provide the base and foundation for validity of formal proofs. Lakatos holds that pre-formal proofs are an important part of the procedure to make informal mathematical theories, which are the main base and source for construction of formal systems. (Lakatos, 1978:62)

Similarities and differences

Hersh and Lakatos accept the formalistic definition of proof, though they don't believe it to be adequate. Therefore, each of them adds an informal subdefinition to it and constructs a new definition in form of a disjunction. The idea behind this type of disjunctive definition is rooted in a more basic and fundamental doctrine in regard to the nature of any given concept (such as proof), which can be called "Dualism". Dualism, in general, is any theory that recognizes two and only two independent and mutually irreducible principles or entities or meanings, which are sometimes complementary and sometimes in conflict. I am using the word "proof dualism" with the same considerations: "mathematical proof" has two and only two independent and mutually irreducible meanings. We can see that Lakatos and Hersh are proof dualist. Had they believed that all proofs share a single and unique essence, they would have definitely formulated a new, but unique definition to replace the classical and traditional one. That's actually what Kitcher does. He says: "Proofs are sequences of sentences which [...] codify psychological processes which can produce a priori knowledge of the theorem proved." (Kitcher, 1989:37)

In addition to the structural similarity mentioned above, both Hersh and Lakatos share the idea that mathematics is a human activity. Lakatos emphasizes "mathematical activity is a human activity" (Lakatos, 1976:146). Hersh calls this understanding of mathematics "Humanism" and says: "I use "humanism" to include all philosophies that see mathematics as a human activity, a product, and a characteristic of human culture and society." (Hersh, 1997: xi) He then presents a list of old and modern humanists in the history, which includes Lakatos as well: Aristotle, Locke, Hume, Mill, Peirce, Sellars, Wittgenstein, Popper, Lakatos, Tymoczko and Kitcher. Hersh is a humanist and calls his own approach "Social-historical approach"

(Hersh, 1997: 24) and says: “Mathematics is human. It's part of and fits into human culture.” (Hersh, 1997: 22)

One of the most important implications of such as approach is that our cultural needs and values play an important role in convincing the community of mathematicians and that the study of the concept of proof cannot be fully accomplished without a cultural and historical study of mathematics. In other words, definition of proof requires historical and sociological elements beside logic and syntax.

There are different versions of proof or rigor, depending on time, place, and other things. The use of computers in proofs is a nontraditional rigor. Empirical evidence, numerical experimentation, probabilistic proof all help us decide what to believe in mathematics. Aristotelian logic isn't always the only way to decide. (Hersh, 1997: 22)

That's why (along with Kitcher) Hersh construes activities of mathematicians in a Kuhnian framework. Lakatos, on the other hand, considers the study of mathematicians' methodological goals and decisions as complementary to logic and syntax.

But mathematical activity produces mathematics. Mathematics, this product of human activity, ‘alienates itself’ from the human activity which has been producing it. It becomes a living, growing organism, that *acquires a certain autonomy* from the activity which has produced it; it develops its own autonomous laws of growth, its own dialectic. The genuine creative mathematician is just a personification, an incarnation of these laws which can only rely on human action. (Lakatos, 1976:146)

Let us see how this personification and incarnation is to be rendered by mathematicians. We return to the dialogue between Teacher and Students and proceed from the point Student Gamma proposes a counter example in which the polyhedron has cavity and Euler's conjecture doesn't hold for it anymore and the theorem must surrender to the counter example. Student Delta, however, is not happy with this methodological decision:

DELTA: But why accept the counter example? We proved our conjecture, now it is a theorem. I admit that it clashes with this so-called 'counterexample'. One of them has to give way. But why should the theorem give way, when it has been proved? It is the 'criticism' that should retreat. It is fake criticism. This pair of nested cubes is not a polyhedron at all. It is a monster a pathological case, not a counterexample.

GAMMA: Why not? A polyhedron is a solid whose surface consists of polygonal faces. And my counterexample is a solid bounded by polygonal faces.

TEACHER: Let us call this definition Def. 1 (Lakatos, 1976, pp.15-16)

The teacher and students then continue suggesting better definitions for simple polyhedron trying to amend the shortcomings of the previous definitions at every stage. In the end, after examining various counter examples and changing the definition for 6 times, they came to the agreement that Euler's theorem holds for simple convex polyhedron.²

On the surface of the dialogue, Lakatos seems to be describing the procedure of defining the concept of polyhedron by the teacher and students, but at a deeper layer, he is explaining the process of making methodological decisions: When mathematicians encounter counter examples, they refine their auxiliary hypotheses to protect the hard core of their research program (as per negative heuristics), but if these measures fail to resolve the anomalies, they use positive heuristics to adjust their concepts and axioms. Lakatos could have followed to Kant's recommendation and stay in the methodological level, but he proceeds to the ontological level and uses a Hegelian dialectical approach to explain the logic of mathematical discovery (maybe his realism and anti-relativist approach is the reason he makes this step to ontology). He claims that it is mathematics (itself) which is incarnated through the mathematicians' dialogues and decision-making procedures. In fact, for Lakatos, the Hegelian and metaphysical concept of heuristics is the base for the Kantian concept of heuristics in methodology: "The Hegelian language, which I use here, would I

think, generally be capable of describing the various developments in mathematics.” (Lakatos, 1976:145)

For example, when explaining development of mathematics, Lakatos uses the rational evolution (thesis, antithesis and synthesis) and the technical term, “proof-generated concepts”, which are those concepts which are created during a heuristic procedure. Examples of such concepts are “simple polyhedron” (in the previously discussed example) and “uniform convergence” (in the proof of Cauchy’s theorem).

Lakatos (unlike foundationalists) doesn’t reduce the entire concept of proof to logical and lingual elements; however, (unlike Hersh) he explains these informal characteristics in terms of an informal logic rather than cultural and historical values. Therefore, even though Lakatos and Hersh both reject the platonic and foundationalist viewpoints and emphasize on human and mental characteristics of proof (such as mental experiment, decision making and convincing power), Lakatos has a methodological approach, while Hersh’s approach is sociological.

The other difference between Lakatos and Hersh is the relation between formal and informal proofs in their theories. For Lakatos, the different types of proofs are in a linear and longitudinal relation with each other. He has pre-formal, formal and post-formal proofs. Pre-formal proofs develop in informal theories and help those theories develop. On the other hand, formal proofs can only be valid in formal systems that have been created on the basis of informal theories, which owe their development to informal proofs. Finally, post-formal proofs can only exist when formal systems are already developed.

Hersh, on the other hand, puts informal proofs on a par with formal ones and calls them practical proofs. The relation is parallel rather than linear.

In other words, for Lakatos, the informal and formal proofs are in a linear relation inside a single research program, namely mathematics. For Hersh, formal and practical proofs are two parallel but distinct research activities practiced by two different institutions: Formal logic and mathematics.

Summary and conclusion

Mathematicians sometimes use the name “proof” for arguments that do not satisfy the formalistic definition of proof. Visional proofs, computer-assisted proofs and heuristic proofs can be mentioned as examples. Lakatos and Hersh are two Philosophers of mathematics who attempted to present alternate definitions for “proof” to solve this problem. Theories presented by these two philosophers have similarities and dissimilarities:

Similarities:

1- Proof dualism: “Proof” has two different meanings, formal and informal (Hersh prefers to say ‘practical’). Formal proofs are those that (more or less) satisfy the classical definition, while informal proofs are heuristic and rigorous arguments that have been successful in convincing their audience in the community of mathematicians and they are valid exactly in this sense and for this achievement. According to both Lakatos and Hersh, the disjunction of these two definitions results in an overall better definition of “proof”.

2- Humanism: Lakatos and Hersh share the opinion that mathematics (in general) and mathematical proof (in particular) are human activities. Mathematics is affected by mathematicians either by the methodological decisions they make or by the cultural values they embrace. Foundationalism in mathematics indicates a non-human point of view. For logicians, mathematics refers to the objective and abstract world of sets and is independent from mathematicians and their decisions or values.

Dissimilarities:

1- Linear Proof dualism vs. Parallel Proof dualism: Lakatos sees informal and formal proofs in a linear relation with each other and speaks of pre-formal and post-formal proofs; whereas, Hersh holds that informal proofs are (Which he calls “practical proof” to distinguish them from formal proofs) are on a par with formal proofs. Linear proof dualism is based on the assumption that mathematics has some standard pattern of evolutionary or historical development – pre formal, formal and post formal stages. Accordingly, the two main types of proofs are provided in a single organism and in order to

achieve a common goal: incarnation of Mathematics (i.e., mathematical concepts and methods and truth). However, according to the parallel proof dualism, two main types of proofs are provided in order to achieve two fundamentally different types of purposes: production of a valid sequence of signs and persuasion of the audience.

2- Methodological vs. Sociological Humanism: To explain the concept of proof as a human activity, Lakatos emphasizes on epistemological and methodological purposes and activities of mathematicians; whereas, Hersh concentrates on psychological and sociological attributes. Lakatos' humanism can be explained in the scope of Hegelian dialectic, while Hersh's humanism can be best understood in the framework of Kuhn's scientific revolutions. Besides, Hersh's humanism is informative and indicates pluralism; whereas, Lakatos' version of humanism is normative and monistic.

Each of these two theories has advantages and disadvantages over each other and compared to other rival theories, which are beyond the scope of this essay. The main goal I accomplished in this article was to introduce and compare Lakatos and Hersh's theories and clarify their fundamental similarities and dissimilarities. As Popper has correctly pointed out, two important steps towards the solution of any philosophical problem are: (1) composing the solutions and ideas in form of theories (Popper, 1996:53) and (2) comparing those theories with each other (Popper, 1996:54).

Notes

1. By "Paramathematics" I refer to any interdisciplinary field that is not a branch of mathematics, but related to it. For example, Philosophy of Mathematics, History of Mathematics, Sociology of Mathematics, Mathematics Education, etc.

2. Without cavity and stretchable to a plane, Ibid, 34-36

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Dose the Conceptual Interdependency of Belief and Desire Undermine the Normativity of Content?*

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Abstract

The normativity of mental content thesis appears to have been influential in contemporary philosophy of mind. Paul Boghossian (2003, 2005) has developed an argument for the normativity of mental content on the basis of two premises, i.e. firstly, the normativity of the notion of belief and secondly, the priority of the notion of belief to the notion of desire. In his recent article Alexander Miller (2008) has criticised Boghossian's argument for the normativity of mental content. To make the objection against the normativity of content, Miller has argued that the second premise of Boghossian's argument is mistaken since belief and desire are conceptually interdependent. My purpose in this paper is to show that content normativity thesis prevails Miller's attack. In order to establish the claim I will argue that content is normative even if belief and desire are conceptually interdependent.

Keywords: *normativity, belief, desire, content, interdependency.*

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Introduction

It is widely held that a concept is normative only if it is constitutive of our understanding of a statement given that the statement entails an *ought*. In his papers (2003, 2005) Paul Boghossian has developed an argument for the thesis that mental content is constitutively normative. The argument is criticized by a number of critics. In this paper I will address to a key objection against the normativity of content thesis proposed by Miller (2008).

In section one of this paper I will reformulate Boghossian's argument for the thesis in details. I will then, in section two, clarify Miller's objection against the normativity of content thesis. In sections three and four, I will propose a new argument for the normativity of content thesis to show that Miller's objection fails.

1- The normativity of content

Boghossian's normativity of content thesis can be clarified via the following four steps:

In the first step, Boghossian claims that belief attributions are constitutively normative since, “it is a condition on understanding them that one understand that one *ought* to believe that P only if P” (Boghossian 2005: 212). In other words, he argues that the concept of belief is normative since grasping an attribution of belief for someone requires grasping that the attribution implies an *ought*, i.e. that she *ought* to believe that P only if P. This is called the normativity of belief thesis in the literature and is endorsed by many key philosophers (see Engel 2001; Gibbard 2003, 2005; Shah 2003; Shah and Velleman 2005; Wedgwood 2002). The following example will clarify the idea:

- (1) Marco understands that Ebenezer believes that P.

According to the normativity of belief thesis implies:

- (2) Marco understands that Ebenezer ought to believe that P only if P.

In the second step, Boghossian claims that there are no norms governing propositional attitudes other than belief. He considers the

case of desire and states that desire attributions are not normative: “suppose I say of Ebenezer that he *wants* that Howard Dean be the next President. In making this attribution, am I in any way speaking oughts? ... Ebenezer’s desire has conditions of satisfaction – it will be satisfied if and only if Dean is the next president. But, in and of itself, this doesn’t translate either into a correctness fact, or in to an *ought* of any kind” (Boghossian 2005: 213). Boghossian notes that of course an individual may have a particular desire (for X, say) because she believes it to be a way of securing the satisfaction of another desire of hers, and hence it might be said that the desire is correct to the extent that her belief is true. However it does not show that the desire itself is the subject of normative evaluation; rather, this is the underlying belief. What Boghossian insists on is that there are no *oughts* about desires by virtue of the mere fact that they are contentful states: “it’s not clear to me, then, that there are norms on desire merely qua contentful state” (Boghossian 2005: 213).

From the considerations embodied in the first and second steps, Boghossian concludes that what is responsible for the normativity of belief attribution relates to the concept of belief and not to the concept of content. Since, if content is constitutively normative, all the other contentful attitudes, including desire, should be normative too. Boghossian clarifies this point as follows: “if it’s genuinely constitutive of content that it be normative, shouldn’t it carry this normativity with it wherever it goes?” (Boghossian 2005: 212)

In the third step, Boghossian endorses the idea that our understanding of content has to go through understanding the attitudes that have contents as their objects: “I take it that the concept of a proposition, or content, just is the concept of whatever it is that is the object of the attitudes” (Boghossian 2005: 214). This consideration, of course, implies that the concept of content may be introduced in connection with attitudinal concepts other than that of belief, say, and desire. Boghossian, however, asks, “whether any non-belief based understanding would covertly presuppose an understanding of its role in belief” (2005: 214). This question is considered in the fourth step of the argument as follows.

In the fourth step, Boghossian argues that the concept of belief is indeed prior to the concepts of the other propositional attitudes, including the concept of desire: “grasp of the concept of desire seems to asymmetrically depend on our grasp of the concept of belief in just the way that, I have argued, the normativity of content thesis requires” (Boghossian 2005: 215). This consideration implies that we understand the role that content plays in propositional attitudes generally only *through* our understanding of its role in belief: “we would understand content only through belief, and belief only through normative notions” (Boghossian 2005: 214). Boghossian argues that since the concept of belief is normative, the concept of mental content is also normative: “if our grasp of the notion of content were somehow to depend in a privileged and asymmetric way on our grasp of the concept of belief, then our only route to the notion of a contentful state would be through our grasp of a constitutively normative notion ... that would be enough to substantiate the claim that content itself is normative” (Boghossian 2005: 213).

Boghossian emphasizes that the asymmetry in our understanding of belief and desire is a necessary condition for the normativity of content: “if, however, it is not true that content depends on belief, that content may be understood through its role in other non-normative attitudes ... then we would not have a thesis of the normativity of content but only the rather different thesis of the normativity of belief” (Boghossian 2005: 214).

Below, in order to attain a clearer perspective on the overall argument, I have reformulated the premises and conclusions of Boghossian’s argument. The argument involves the following four premises:

- (3) The concept of belief is normative.
- (4) The concept of desire (and also all the attitudinal concepts other than belief) is not normative.
- (5) Our understanding of content has to go through understanding the attitudes that have contents as their objects.
- (6) The concept of belief is prior to the concept of desire (and also to other propositional attitudes).

Premises (5) and (6), according to Boghossian, imply:

(7) Our understanding of content has to go through understanding of belief.

From (3) and (7) the argument infers the normativity of content:

(8) The concept of mental content is normative.

This is because “[according to (7)] we would understand content only through belief and [according to (3)] belief through normative notions” (Boghossian 2005: 214).

2- Miller on the conceptual interdependency of belief and desire and the normativity of content

In his recent article, Alexander Miller (2008) argues that premise (6) of Boghossian’s argument is implausible. Miller claims that there is good evidence which shows that belief and desire are conceptually *interdependent*. That is, “thinking of someone as having beliefs involves thinking of them as at least capable of having desires, and thinking of someone as having desires involves thinking of them as at least capable of having beliefs” (Miller 2008: 237). He argues for the interdependency thesis via the following plausible consideration: both beliefs and desires potentially feature in the generation of *action*. He clarifies this as follows: “grasping the concept of belief... involves grasping that beliefs can lead to action by combining with desires” (Miller 2008: 237) and, “grasping the concept of desire... involves grasping that desires can lead to action by combining with beliefs” (Miller 2008: 237). For example, according to Miller:

(9) Marco understands that Ebenezer believes that there is beer in the fridge.

Implies:

(10) Marco understands that (if Ebenezer believes that there is beer in the fridge and Ebenezer desires to drink some beer then, *ceteris paribus*, Ebenezer will reach for the fridge).

Likewise

(11) Marco understands that Ebenezer desires to drink some beer.

Implies:

(12) Marco understands that (if Ebenezer desires to drink some beer and Ebenezer believes that there is beer in the fridge, *ceteris paribus*, Ebenezer will reach for the fridge).

These points, according to Miller, are good reasons to endorse the interdependency thesis between belief and desire, far from being a unidirectional relation of priority between the two.

It should be noted here that Bykvist and Hattiangadi (2007) have tried to show that premise (3) of Boghossian's argument is false. Nonetheless, Miller claims that, even if they failed to undermine the normativity of belief, Boghossian's argument for the normativity of content is still implausible. This is because, as explained in section A, Boghossian's argument for the normativity of content is based on both main premises of (3) and (6), and Miller attempts to demonstrate the falsity of premise (6). As Miller puts it: "even if Bykvist and Hattiangadi are wrong about the normativity of belief- and I do not say that they are- Boghossian's argument for the normativity of content would still grind to a halt" (Miller 2008: 237).

In what follows I will argue that Miller's interdependency thesis, even if true, cannot undermine Boghossian's normativity of content thesis.

3- Dependent normativity and independent normativity

In order to pave the way to defuse Miller's attack I will first distinguish between the two senses in which Boghossian claims that belief and content are normative.

I remarked above that, according to Boghossian's argument, belief is normative since understanding a belief attribution requires understanding that forming the belief is constrained by an ought, but content is normative for we understand content only through belief which is a normative notion. The idea, it seems to me, shows a kind of asymmetry between belief normativity and content normativity. That is to say, in Boghossian's argument belief normativity is independent of content normativity but content normativity requires belief normativity (as according to the argument content normativity *follows*

from the assumption that we understand content only through belief *which is a normative notion*). To abbreviate the idea that there is such an asymmetry between belief normativity and content normativity, from now, I will say that, in Boghossian's theses, belief is independently normative but content is dependently normative.

Note that the constraints 'independent' and 'dependent' on the notion of normativity should not remind the notion of spectrum; that is, by saying that in Boghossian's argument belief is independently normative but content is dependently normative I do *not* mean, that the latter concept is less normative than the former one. What I mean is simply that belief normativity is independent of content normativity, that is, belief is normative as such. But this is not the case for the other way around, if it turned out that belief is not normative it would follow that content is not normative.

4- Miller's objection against the normativity of content fails

My claim is that Miller's argument against Boghossian's content thesis does not work. In order to establish the claim I will argue that Boghossian could endorse Miller's reflection that belief and desire are conceptually interdependent, whilst manoeuvring to preserve his argument for the normativity of content. My alternative argument on behalf of Boghossian for the normativity of content has the following three premises:

(12) The concept of belief is independently normative.

This premise is grounded on the basis of Boghossian's consideration, embodied in the first step of his argument, according to which understanding a belief attribution requires understanding that forming the belief is constrained by an ought.

(13) We understand content only through understanding contentful attitudes.

This premise comes through the consideration that there is no independent account of content in hand. The concept of content can be introduced only via the concept of contentful attitudes, for contents are just what the attitudes are attitudes towards.

(14) Belief and desire are conceptually interdependent.

This premise reflects the argument of Miller rehearsed above according to which belief and desire are conceptually interdependent.

I will now argue that the three premises entail Boghossian's normativity of content thesis.

Since (13) holds that understanding content requires understanding an attitude, say, understanding desire, and that (14) holds that desire and belief are conceptually interdependent, it follows that understanding content requires understanding both desire and belief. In short, (13) and (14) imply:

(15) We understand content only through understanding belief and desire.

Since (15) holds we understand content only through understanding belief (and desire, of course) and that (12) holds that belief is an independent normative concept, it follows that we understand content only through an independent normative concept which is belief. This means that content is dependently normative. In short (12) and (15) imply:

(16) Content is dependently normative.

I said that the normativity of content is dependent, for the normativity of content follows from the normativity of belief, so it is a dependent normativity.

5- Conclusion

My argument above, if true, then justifies my foregoing claim that even if we give up the conceptual priority of belief over desire in favor of the idea that belief and desire are conceptually interdependent, it is justifiable to believe that the concept of content is normative. Thus, Boghossian's argument prevails Miller's attack.

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Plantinga's Reformed Epistemology and Religious Extremism: Some Historical Evidences*

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Abstract

According to Plantinga's reformed epistemology, as perceptual beliefs, religious beliefs are properly basic, and therefore need no additional justification. But as it has been said frequently, this idea may lead to relativism. In this paper, first, we argue that not only its relativistic aspect allows for religious extremism, but also it could be used to justify that kind of extremism. Then, reciting some historical testimonies, including John Calvin, Khawarij, Ibn Taymiyye and Seyyed Qutb, we suggest that in principle, for many centuries extremists have derived a benefit from an idea similar to reformed epistemology to justify committing violence and other unacceptable behaviors.

Keywords: *Alvin Plantinga, reformed epistemology, religious extremism, relativism.*

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Introduction

As much as Plantinga's reformed epistemology (RE) was very effective and has some recommendations, it has received considerable critics and rejections. Usually, such criticisms focus on theoretical aspect and, especially neglect one of its problematic aspects from practical point of view. Probably, that is because for the People in developed countries, including philosophers, who live in modern societies in the West, this negative aspect is not outstanding. But who live in societies which are toward extremism, comprehend that how such relativistic thesis could serve to extremism. The irony is that in such societies, religious intellectuals welcome to RE and consider it as a good means in order to both escape extremism and keep the religious faith.

In this paper, we will suggest that in reality, RE could serve as a justification for committing violence and religious extremism. Furthermore, its basic idea is not so creative, but a simple version of it could be found in some religious and mystical traditions. Calvin and Barth are known as pioneers of Plantinga, but we suggest that this is not confined to western culture and in the East, as much as, the West, there are such ideas.

The main claims of RE

We know what RE asserts. But here we point to some basic elements directly related to my concern.

1. Traditional foundationalism is not satisfactory, because of its dependence to evidentialism, the problem of self-justifying of basic beliefs and their restricting to perceptual and rational beliefs. (Plantinga, 1983: 59-61)

2. As an alternative to foundationalism, he introduces a new epistemic rule and criteria, which is known as reformed or moderate foundationalism or RE. According to RE, every normative judgment concerning the beliefs of a person, or a group of peoples, is dependent to his own epistemic and cognitive atmosphere and mood. But its surprising demand is that belief in God is really a basic one and we are justified to hold it, without basing that belief on other beliefs. (Plantinga, <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/religion-and-epistemology>). In other words, "It is entirely right, rational, reasonable,

and proper to believe in God without any evidence or argument at all” (Plantinga, 1983: 17). The main question is this: why evidentialist believes in the past, in the existence of other persons and other minds and material objects in the absence of any argument, but in the case of believe in God the same rule does not apply, while the epistemic status is the same in both cases?

3. He considers the sense of Divinity as a peculiar sense to some people who have original and rich spiritual life. Beliefs issues from that sense are properly basic and therefore are justified.

Religious extremism

It is commonly said that today is the time for battle of ideas. Every practice and action based on an idea or assertion and what we assert theoretically functions as a foundation or a motive to act in accordance with it. What we consider as religion, although beliefs are its essential part, but never confined to certain subjective and doxastic aspect. As Peirce said, “It is absurd to say that religion is a mere belief. ... religion is a life, and as a life can be identified with a belief, only provided that belief be a living belief, a thing to be lived rather than said or thought” (Peirce, 1974: 306). Holy books of certain religions as well as the traditions of prophets clearly confirm the social aspects of such religions. But it is possible that somebody's conception of a religion would imply to problematic, radical and controversial beliefs. In this circumstances religious extremism rises.

Two terms of “religious fundamentalism and “religious extremism” come together. Far from its first meaning, today “fundamentalism” refers to “extreme and agonized defense of a dying way of life.” (Marsden, 2006: 4). But, according to religious extremism, “People with strong religious belief want to force their view of the word on others. They feel that only those who follow their “true” religion should be able to make important decisions. It has been said that: “The potential for violent conflict exists when our beliefs command us to do something aggressive to another group... like take their lands because we believe our deity [God] promised it to us.’ (Dan Smith, 2003)”

Thus, the latter is more radical than the former, and I think the former has less negative results to social life. Therefore, in this paper,

we concentrate on religious extremism. Now it's time to ask what is the relation between RE and religious extremism?

The great pumpkin objection and religious extremism

This assertion that believe in God is properly basic, confronted with many objections, which the most important of them is the great pumpkin objection. If believe in God was basic, then every belief would be so. The core of this objection is that RE has some relativist implication. I think that Plantinga's response is not clear and satisfactory. He says, "what reformed epistemology holds is that there are widely realized circumstances in which belief in God is properly basic, but why should that be thought to commit him to the idea that just about any belief is properly basic in any circumstances, or even to the vastly weaker claim that for any belief there are circumstances in which it is properly basic." (Plantinga, 1983: 74).

Trying to answer the great pumpkin objection, Plantinga claims: "Followers of Bertrand Russell and Madelyn Murry O'Hare may disagree; but how is that relevant? Must my criteria, or those of the Christian community, conform to their examples? Surly not! The Christian community is responsible to its set of examples, not to theirs." (Planting, 1983: 77) But you imagine that instead of planting, an extremist makes such assertion, as it frequently happens. It is possible that just when you hold some religious belief as basic, other one considers certain other religious belief or beliefs as basic, as well. Indeed, Plantinga takes a seris of Christian beliefs as basic ones. But if, using same rule and criteria, another one takes different series of religious beliefs as basic, beliefs which plainly are extremistic, how we can escape this contradiction? If, for instance, a person holds the belief that "it is not only permissible killing unbelievers, but preferable", how Plantinga could stop this illegitimate usage of his thesis? This is not a thought experiment, but we can cite many concrete examples, as we will do. Thus, the problem roots in his basic claim, that is, "the belief in God is properly basic".

It is evident that this is a version of the great pumpkin objection. Believing that the great pumpkin returns every Halloween, has no considerable effects in human social life, but asserting that "it is not

only permissible killing unbelievers, but preferable”, has a trouble effects. great Pumpkin objection becomes more and more important, if we replace it with our radical assertion.

Plantinga allows some kind of rational assessment, but it is far from the traditional foundationalism or evidentialism. Distinguishing between properly basic beliefs with other beliefs, he says: “...A Belief B has warrant for S if and only if the relevant segments (the segments involved in the production of B) are functioning properly in cognitive environment sufficiently similar to that for which S's faculties are designed; and the modules of the design plan governing the production of B are (1) aimed at truth, and (2) such that there is a high objective probability that a belief formed in accordance with those modules (in that sort of cognitive environment) is true; and the more firmly S believes B the more warrant B has for. (Plantinga, 2009: 439-440)

But theory of warrant would not be helpful, because to claim that believe in God is properly basic, could not satisfy warrant obligation. I suggest that in this case, essentially warrant theory has nothing to do with his reformed epistemology, because the first could not remove relativistic mark of the later.

Plantinga's reformed epistemology implicitly considers normative judgment concerning the beliefs of a person to be depended to the set of his beliefs. This relativistic perspective leads to solipsism. A solipsist is resistant to contrary perspectives, viewpoints and beliefs such a person not only presents no argument for his beliefs, but also considers contrary arguments invalid and absurd. Thus, he imposes what he considers as truth, without any possibility of error. It seems that Plantinga's theory is a roll-back to before 17th century epistemological atmosphere, i.e., before John lock and the tolerance idea. Ironically, Plantinga gives permission to people who take contrary evidences insufficient, to emphasize on their assertions. Plainly, in social life, this approach is not safe, if lead to radical actions.

Now, it is necessary to consider Plantinga's answer to this later objection. He maintains: “a person who carelessly arrives at morally repugnant beliefs is guilty, even if he holds that beliefs should be arrived at carelessly.” (Planting, 1983: 36)

This is insufficient and in turn confronts with another objection. It is possible that others consider my radical beliefs invalid, while my opinion is different. Inspired reformed epistemology, if I insist on my extremist and immoral beliefs and realize them in my actions, could Plantinga find any Postern? This objection becomes more and more important, if we outline his view concerning the sense of Divinity. Everyone could claim to be equipped with that sense, as many extremists do. Every religious extremist appeal to something similar to sense of Divinity, otherwise he never could stimulate his followers to do what he finds as right choice. The only possible way to justify religious violence is this.

In practice, if, on the ground of something like the sense of Divinity as well as my military, religious or charismatic power, I insist on my radical beliefs and realizing them, which results in committing violence, how you can stop me by arguing against my opinions or by appealing to universal moral rules, or something like them? The point is that, rational reasoning couldn't stop any extremist, but every extremist needs certain amount of rationalization to justify his extremism.

Blanshard's predication

I think that, Brand Blanshard gives the most Decisive answer to Plantinga, as if he has predicated RE: "We cannot dismiss the claim to such knowledge by saying that we have never ourselves experienced it and do not understand what is claimed. There are many vivid and important experiences that remain sealed to most of us. We may never have followed the mathematical flights of von Neumann, or caught what Schonberg was trying to say with his strange new scale, or experimented with LSD. Still, these things are not wholly cut off from us, for we know the kind of experience that mathematics and music give and can improve our grasp of it; and though the visions of the LSD addict seem remote, we at least know their conditions and could produce these in ourselves. But the experiences alleged by Barth and Brunner are not like this. They are not only meaningless to reason but unachievable by any effort or technique. They have no conditions in the brain or mind of the person who has them; they are discontinuous with our psychology, with our logic, and even with our ethical

ideals. They are granted to some persons and withheld from others on grounds that are admitted to be impenetrable. Even by the person who has them they are incapable of analysis or expression, and by the person who does not have them they cannot be engendered, examined, or imagined. (Blanshard, 1966:p. 69)

Thus, Blanshard rejects Plantinga's assumption that religious experiences are same as perceptual ones. We have the capacity to justify and explore perceptual experiences, while we have no means to explore and justify religious experiences and assertions at all. Blanshard describes religious and mythical assertions as this: "They are not only meaningless to reason but unachievable by any effort or technique. They have no conditions in the brain or mind of the person who has them; they are discontinuous with our psychology, with our logic, and even with our ethical ideals. They are granted to some persons and withheld from others on grounds that are admitted to be impenetrable", (ibid, p 142)

As a final assessment, he says: "The attempt to defend religious knowledge by a return to irrationalism will not serve. The universe is not to be conceived as a gigantic layer cake in which the lower stratum is governed by scientific law and an intelligible logic, and the upper stratum is somehow released from these restrictions into the freedom of incoherence. The theologians who have tried to fix these boundaries have not been able to respect them, and in the attempt to do so they have not only reduced religious knowledge to something dangerously like zero but managed to cast a skeptical shadow over " (ibid, p 211)

Religious problems, such as moral problems, are not merely theoretical problems, but have many practical implications. Therefore, to evaluate reformed epistemology, it is not permissible to neglect practical implications and results. Psychological characteristics of human beings induce them to extremism, but some suitable means as Plantinga's, and some ground as RE, has the effect of paving the way for extremism.

Some historical evidences

In the history of the West, and especially, of the East, there are certain famous elites and movements, whose Kay doctrine have some

similarities with RE. Unfortunately, most of them have extremist tendency. In this place, in order to show Unagreeable effects of such doctrines, we briefly explore certain extremist doctrines which have something to do with reformed epistemology.

I. John Calvin

John Calvin is one of the most famous religious extremists. His ruling over Geneva in the 16th century is a good example of the ruling of an extremist doctrine. As he himself said, we Know that Plantinga finds the roots of reformed epistemology in Calvin. Aleksander Santrac shows that Plantinga borrowed the term of “the sense of Divinity” of Calvin, although there is some differences between them. (Santrac, 2011).

In natural sciences, because of methodological necessities, this is not permissible that the conduct of scientist enters in our judgments concerning a theory. But, as we argued in the beginning, in religious doctrines, it is different. It seems that we should not ignore some relations between Calvin’s theological doctrine, in the one hand, and his conduct as an extremist ruler, in the other hand. At least, his appealing to the sense of Divinity, which served as a permission for his extremism, is problematic, as if it was as an excuse in order to commit violence.

II. Khawarig

Khawarig, as an extremist group, was the primary version of Daish and Taliban. They committed violence and imposed strong religious rules. It was said that “they was judged without any basis, but according to their own conception. Therefore, there were no criteria concerning religious knowledge, practice and leadership. (Moftakhari, 2000: 91). What constitutes the essence of that kind of extremism? They followed a rule like Planitinga’s RE. It was said that: “one of the most important theoretical rules of Khawarig was the sharp gap between “I” and “other” in religious beliefs. I’m just in the right way and no other one, except my colleagues. Everyone who is not with me, is in the camp of pagans, even if he has been called Muslim.” (Alashari, 1415: 7-8). This is an instance of religious solipsism which also involved in RE.

III. Ibn Taymiyye and Seyyed Qutb

Ibne Teymiyye (1263- 1328) is one of the most controversial figures in Islamic world. He rejects rational arguments which are not based on Quran and Tradition of the Prophet Mohammad. Reason is valuable as long as it is parallel to religious texts. According to him, even concerning theological aspect of religion, for example, the existence of God, only Quran gives true rational reasons. (Great Islamic encyclopedia, paper no. 1008). Also, similar to Plantinga, he suggests that: "therefore, if we reject reason and rational knowledge in some case, it is not same as rejecting all of rationality and rational items. (Ibn Taymiyye, 1954). That is because alone pure religious viewpoint is rational. As a Hanbali Muslim, his conception of reason rejects philosophical approaches and claims that in the Quran and the tradition of prophets, God manifests himself through natural signs not rational and logical arguments. (Ibn Taymiyye, 1972: 158)

Inspired Ibne Teymiyye, Seyyed Qutb based the new form of religious extremism in the Islamic world. Seyyed Qutb himself confesses to the role of Ibn Taymiyye in constructing his theory. Seyyed Qutb maintains that "the struggle between the believers and their enemies is in essence a struggle of belief and not in any way of anything else" (Qutb, 2007:110). Also, "the whole world is steeped in jahiliyyah [=Ignorance] ", a "jahiliyyah . . . based on rebellion against God's hakimiyyah [sovereignty] on earth".(ibid:510-511) All societies, including those claiming to be Muslim, were regarded by Qutb as mujtama'at jahiliyyah (pagan societies). Man is at the crossroads and that is the choice: Islam or jahiliyyah. In the base of these judgments, he derived his extremist conclusion, which consists in to remove all jahili influences through jihad (holy war). According to the Qutbian system, Jihad (either violent or non-violent) is the means by which "all satanic forces are abolished and God's hakimiyyah is established on earth". (Qutb, 2007: 154-183). But his controversial thesis is that "As jahili societies will always be in opposition to Islam Jihad for Qutb has two primary functions: the defense of the right of Muslims to believe and live by principles of Islam and also the struggle to establish Allah's sovereignty worldwide In Qutb's opinion, to reduce jihad to self-defence is to diminish the greatness of the Islamic way of life and leaves open the possibility that mankind will be left "on the whole earth

in evil, in chaos and in servitude to lords other than God". (Quoted from: <http://www.islamdaily.org>)

Seyyed Qutb, in turn, shaped theoretical basis of Alqyaede and Ayman al Zawahiri. (Murr, 2004). The foundational fundamentalist thesis which they learn of Ibn Taymiyye is that what we believe, whether other people consider it rational or not, is legitimate and true; and we can practice and behave in the base of our own comprehension. This idea is the result of some thesis very similar to Plantinga's RE. To put it more clear, the fideism involved in RE, which remarked by some critics (e.g. Penelhum, 1983), in the one hand, and Seyyed Qutb's view point, in the other hand, both confirm the personal conceptions concerning religious matters, without any respect to what the majority of people believe.

These historical cases have something in common with RE, that is, to embrace Personal conceptions instead of following universally authentic reasoning. Even if in one case you were exempt of arguing for your assertions, you would find a good base for extremism.

Discussion

What I offer is basically the Great Pumpkin Objection to RE, except that religious extremist hypotheses are substituted for the Great Pumpkin hypothesis. These differ from the Great Pumpkin hypothesis in that there might be serious this-worldly consequences if someone acted on the hypothesis (e.g., people who have different beliefs might lose their lives). But here is a problem. Plantinga and other defenders of RE think that they have a satisfactory response to the Great Pumpkin Objection. They might be right, or they might be wrong. If they're right, then their response to the Great Pumpkin Objection is equally a response to my objection in which the Great Pumpkin hypothesis is replaced by a hypothesis based on religious extremism. Also, Plantinga does not respond to the Great Pumpkin Objection by saying that belief in the Great Pumpkin is harmless; hence his actual response is not refuted by an argument in which the belief is harmful. But if Plantinga and other defenders of RE are wrong, this would need to be shown. There is a large literature on this question, involving delicate issues in epistemology. In this paper contributing to this theoretical

debate is not my concern, because my hypothesis is that the response of the defenders of RE to the Great Pumpkin Objection is not satisfactory. After all, it seems that Blanshard's reasoning is the most reliable basis to defend my hypothesis.

Thus, this research is a preliminary one to study the results of realization of RE, on the one hand, and its similarities with certain traditional theories, on the other hand.

As it was said before, for western people who live in the modern societies, it is hard to comprehend dangerous misuses of such theories as RE. Essentially, peoples who experienced extremism and irrational theories could apprehend the trouble results of rejecting evidentialism and reasoning. Therefore, RE could be as a bad weapon in the hand of bad peoples, as historical instances confirm this. It should be emphasized that practical results of Plantinga's RE follows no logical process or reasoning, but it is largely issues from human psychological characteristics. RE could serve as an excuse. Our appealing to excuse is not the result of a rational process.

Even if it was the case that extremists are successful because of "their organizational structure than their theology" (Iannaccone and Berman, 2006), this explains the causes of extremism, while it is evident that in justifying every version of extremism and inducing people to it, it is necessary appealing to some theoretical and theological foundations. Every extremist needs an unquestionable territory in order to force people to obey, and that is what RE supplies. From practical aspect, in the religious problems, evidentialism is the safest approach and RE is the most dangerous one.

Conclutions

We showed that, one the hypothesis that the response of the defenders of RE to the Great Pumpkin Objection is not satisfactory, RE could be used as an extremist mean or as an excuse. We presented two reasons for this claim. First, Blanshard's argument, which we found it as a good response for RE. Second, some historical evidences which confirm similarities between RE and some extremist ideologies.

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The Ethics (*Ethos*) of History*

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Abstract

*This paper provides a critical analysis of Heidegger's brief remarks in his "Letter on Humanism" in which he links ethics to ethos and ultimately to our relation to time and history. Central to this analysis is the phrase of Heraclitus, $\epsilon\theta\omicron\varsigma$ $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\acute{o}\pi\omicron\iota$ $daim\acute{o}\nu$, from which Heidegger claims that human living (*ethos*) is inseparable from the event of appropriation (*Ereignis*) which generates our historical destiny. Through further analysis that draws from the work of Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben, it is shown just how Heraclitus's phrase can be interpreted differently and thus presents us with an idea of human destiny that serves to qualify Heidegger's claim.*

Keywords: *Heidegger, Nancy, Agamben, ethos, finite history, destiny.*

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How is it possible to speak of the ethics of history? Certainly when the word “ethics” is understood solely from its modern determination of a normativity with respect to living, the expression the “ethics of history” makes little sense. And yet the expression is not without significance for we know that with respect to the interpretation of history there is a normative force at work in the questions and decisions involved in any interpretation. We can see something of this, more generally so, in a philosophy of history such as Hegel’s where history becomes the scene of the actualization of human freedom. And if we broaden the meaning of the word “ethics” through its etymology, our expression can actually revert to something like a tautology. Ethics, as we know, is derived from *ēthos*, which in ancient Greek pertained first and foremost to an individual’s accustomed place. It pertained to the habitual and the customary, and in this basic determination *ēthos* approximates what the early Hegel called positivity—the historical element in a religion or a society which is opposed to the purely natural. What is positive is the historically given, produced in the generational movement of life. For Hegel this positivity amounts to traditional authority and the task is to reconcile it with reason where it would be transformed into living history. Suffice it to say that in this regard at least human history is the portrayal of human *ēthos*, or better, *ēthos* is inseparable from a historical element.

These brief preliminary comments serve to point us to the specific focus of my remarks, namely, to Heidegger who in a more decisive way links ethics to *ēthos* and ultimately to our relation to time and history.¹ In the “Letter on Humanism” from 1946 Heidegger responds to the question about writing an ethics by placing the question of ethics against the background of modern technological life and framing it in its relation to ontology, insisting that what needs to be determined first is precisely what ethics and ontology themselves are. To this end, while noting that ethics appeared for the first time in the school of Plato where it is taken up in relation to philosophical science, Heidegger provocatively claims that “the tragedies of Sophocles ... preserve the *ēthos* in their sagas more primordially than Aristotle’s lectures on “ethics.” He explains this claim with the equally provocative remark that the essence of this *ēthos* is captured in

the simplicity of the three word saying of Heraclitus: *ēthos anthrōpōi daimōn*. Heidegger then comments that this saying is usually translated as “a man’s character is his *daimōn*,” but this translation is a modern one and attention should be paid to the meaning of *ēthos* as abode, dwelling place. More specifically, according to Heidegger “the word [*ēthos*] names the open region in which man dwells,” allowing what pertains to man’s essence to appear. As one could anticipate, Heidegger has translated the saying of Heraclitus in relation to the “truth of being” as the primordial element of the human, and the ethics that ponders the abode of man Heidegger calls “original ethics.”² But as Heidegger himself admits, this original ethics that thinks the abode of man is not really an ethics at all; it is ontology.

But how does this bear on the issue of history and our concern with the ethics of history? Certainly what Heidegger means by the truth of being is not without its historical element. In fact this relation between the truth of being and the historical occupies Heidegger’s thinking throughout the 1930s and 40s. In recognizing this, it is curious to see just how Heidegger has translated the saying of Heraclitus in the “Letter on Humanism.” He initially leaves the word “*daimōn*” untranslated and then in his subsequent analysis he translates it with only one of the possible meanings of the word, namely, pertaining to a god. His most complete translation of the saying soon follows along with a more precise determination of the phrase he had chosen to translate for the Greek *daimōn*: “The (familiar) abode of man is the open region for the presencing of god (the unfamiliar one).” (Letter on Humanism,” 258) While this complete translation resonates with what is at the center of the being question for Heidegger, it avoids the word that has most frequently been used in modern translations for the Greek *daimōn* and which would directly introduce the historical element into the saying of Heraclitus, namely, fate (*Schicksal*). Perhaps Heidegger’s choice of a word and the resulting determination of meaning in this matter had everything to do with his current situation and his interpretation of his time in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Certainly it does have something to do with his change of perspective from *Being and Time* where the word ‘fate’ designated the condition of a Dasein in which it takes over what has been handed down to it. In any case, without reverting to the usual

modern translation, it is yet to be determined in a more precise way—and in a way that does not abandon the intentions within Heidegger’s thinking—how the idea of the ethics of history can be pursued from this starting point. And this is the specific focus of my remarks.

Let me proceed here by noting, along with Heidegger, the insufficiency of the modern translation: “man’s character is his fate.” The insufficiency, though, has just as much to do with the inadequacy of the translation of *daimōn* as with that of *ēthos*. In point of fact the word *daimōn* is the more difficult word to translate since its meaning shifts in its various usage and its etymological meaning is impossible to discover with certainty. In Homer the word is indeed often synonymous with *theos*, a god, but it is not simply interchangeable with it. According to Walter Burkert, the word refers generally to a force that drives one forward where no agent can be named. What is being ordained in the driving power of *daimōn* is never visible.³ In this sense *daimōn* signifies something like fate or destiny, and there appears to be little conceptual difference here between *daimōn* and *moira*. But even this association between these two words depends on a meaningful translation. *Moira* does not simply mean fate as an inevitable outcome, but pertains foremost to portion and the apportionment that is the order of life. And in *daimōn* one must hear the associated verb *daiomoi*, which means to divide, to make a cut, and thus *daimōn* can pertain to the invisible power that assigns a portion—what we ordinarily describe as one’s lot in life.

Accordingly, when Heraclitus says *ēthos anthrōpōi daimōn*, not only must we hear in the word *daimon* the sense of one’s lot in life, but also we must hear in the word *ethos* the original sense of the word as the haunt of an animal, the customary place from which it may be expected to appear, to show itself. Thus, as one among several possible translations, Heraclitus’s expression can read: “in the living and shaping of human life (where human life comes to appear) the human lives out its good or ill fortune. This translation has the virtue of bringing us closer to the *ēthos* of Sophocles. As we learn from *Antigone*, it is in relation to the *daimonic* that the human is said to be most strange (*deinotaton*). The human has this designation of strangeness—perhaps it is best to say being formidable—precisely

because it is only the human animal that has the capacity to create; and this capacity to create is more than an ability for the production of artifacts. It is primarily an ability for the creation that occurs by virtue of being that being who is never helpless before its future.⁴ In this resourcefulness lies the making that is self-creation—the bringing of a human life into its very being. And apropos the tragic, such living and shaping involves the double destiny of not being able to know all that the individual says and in wanting to know the individual is subject to error and hubris. And for Heidegger too, even in a desperate time of need, the human is not helpless before its future, and in the living and shaping of life commensurate with Dasein's belonging to being, the human faces this double destiny of not knowing and being subject to error.⁵ Certainly it cannot go unnoticed here that Heidegger speaks of error and errancy in his essay "The Anaximander Fragment," which was also written in 1946.⁶ On Heidegger's account, in the unconcealment of beings being itself is withdrawn and thus concealed: "the brightness of the unconcealment of beings darkens the light of being." By virtue of this withdrawing "beings are adrift in errancy," establishing "the realm of error" as the sphere of common history. "The inability of human beings to see themselves corresponds to the self-concealing of the lighting of being."⁷

In order to bring closer this thinking of Heidegger and with it the idea of the ethics of history in relation to our starting point, let me offer yet another possible translation of Heraclitus's expression: "in humankind's place in life there is the elemental power of destining." This translation also requires further determination. Specifically, it requires that we determine the meaning of the "place in life" to which we belong, this in-habiting that is now capturing the evolving sense of *ēthos*. In his 1941 lecture course entitled *Basic Concepts* [*Grundbegriffe*], Heidegger provides us with a direct answer to this query:

We must listen our way into that place where we ourselves belong. With this, reflection leads us through the question as to whether we still belong anywhere at all. Even to merely anticipate where we could belong, it is necessary to experience ourselves. This means

“ourselves” not according to any historiologically given condition... but “ourselves” in respect to what determines us and is other than us, which nevertheless governs our essence. We call this, arbitrarily at first, the inception of our history. By this we do not mean history as a series of events in terms of a “causal nexus,” of which what occurs later and today is an effect. History means, again at first appearance arbitrarily, *the happening [Ereignis] of a decision about the essence of truth*. The manner in which the whole of beings is revealed, in which man is allowed to stand in the midst of this revelation, is grounded and transformed in such a decision. Such a happening is exceptional, and this exceptional history is so simple when it happens and prepares itself that man at first and for a long time thereafter fails to see it and fails to recognize it. This is because his vision is confused by habituation to the multiplicity of the ordinary..... Remembrance of the inception of our history is the awakening of knowing about the decision that, even now, and in the future, determines Western humanity. Remembrance of the inception is therefore not a flight into the past but readiness for what is to come.⁸

This passage, in its succinctness, actually captures the entirety of the translation of the saying from Heraclitus and not just the translation of *ēthos*. In it we see Heidegger making three interrelated claims. With some interpretation we can state them as follows: 1) properly speaking, our place in life involves our belonging not simply to history with its factuality, but to the inception of history; 2) by virtue of this inception, we are involved in a decision about the essence of truth, i.e., our place in life entails the specificity of our time, which gathers together historical life in its conditions and values; 3) remembrance of the inception is a readiness for what is to come, i.e., our place in life is oriented to the arrival of what occurs at the inception as destining. Let us consider these claims in more detail.

As we could anticipate from the outset, in the first claim Heidegger does not locate the inhabiting in which human life comes to appear where one would expect to find it, namely, in what Hegel comes to call *Sittlichkeit*, ethical life—the life of family and civil society and its institutions. It is not found, in other words, in the norms of living together that we find, as our classic example, in Sophocles’ *Antigone*.

Rather, the place to which we first belong and which governs our essence is the inception of our history. By any standard this is a remarkable claim, a claim that, to say the least, is indicative of the shift in Heidegger's thinking in comparison with his earlier work. In linking human living not simply to history but to the inception of history, the issue for Heidegger is no longer the determination of Dasein's stretching along between birth and death as such, that is to say, it is no longer a matter of Dasein's historicity, but of the determining that occurs in advance of Dasein's historical enactment. This shift is, of course, the turning with respect to his question of being in which, as we see throughout the 1930s and 40s, Heidegger is concerned with the issue of origination.⁹

But what then does it mean to belong to the inception of our history? The answer to this question is complicated in part because Heidegger will use other terms alongside that of inception which in itself produces a complication. In the "Origin of the work of Art" from 1935/6, for example, Heidegger tells us that "as every origin [*Ursprung*] has its inception [*Anfang*], so every inception has its beginning [*Beginn*]."¹⁰ The three terms indicated here, fashioned in a common relation, are all indicative of an event involving a point of departure. The complication lies not just in the fact that Heidegger brings these three terms together, but that the terms themselves become entangled together. In his preliminary considerations to his 1943 lecture course on Heraclitus, Heidegger notes that for his title, "'*Der Anfang des abendländischen Denkens (Heraklit)*' one might also say '*Der Beginn (oder der Ursprung) der Philosophie im Abendland*'."¹¹ The entanglement occurs here because Heidegger intersects the ontological with the historical. Thus on the one hand the terms are indicative of the birth of presencing, as if Heidegger were employing these terms in an attempt to re-think the Greek *arche*, which, as we learn from Aristotle, has multiple meanings in its ordinary use. Common to most of these meanings is the notion of "first," of what is at the beginning.¹² As it pertains to the movement of being, "first" is understood as that out of which being becomes and that which rules in the becoming. Thus *arche* has for Aristotle the sense of a ruling beginning that is unsurpassable. If Heidegger is indeed thinking *arche* in relation to at least two of the terms,

Ursprung and *Anfang*, he will not only disengage these terms from this classical determination of *arche* as that which establishes command and also rule—as it becomes translated into the Latin *principium*—he will also disengage it from its connection in Aristotle with cause (*aitia*).¹³ But, on the other hand, the terms are indicative of a historical meaning, of how presencing becomes history. For Heidegger the Presocratics are *anfängliche Denker* and the birth of metaphysics begins in Plato and Aristotle.

For us to then see precisely what Heidegger means by inception, we need to briefly sort out this entanglement. Immediately following the sentence in the “Origin of the Work of Art” Heidegger writes:

The [beginning] is that through which the always-sudden inception arises up, as something already found. An occasion belongs to the way the beginning is this one or that one. And the occasion is always a coincidence or happenstance, a happenstance in the light of and the breaking-open region of the inception as the leap of an origin, i.e., as a leap wherein the truth as openness of beings arises. Where this happens, history commences [*anfangen*].¹⁴

While Heidegger continues to stress the connection between the three terms, we can begin to see here the difference between *Beginn* and *Anfang*. *Beginn* has the sense of the place from which something starts, and as such can be left behind. With an inception, *Anfang*, something originates and as an occurrence completes itself only at its end.¹⁵ In saying this Heidegger is surely not suggesting that there is a teleological component in this kind of occurrence; rather, he is pointing to what is essentially configured by an initiating, founding event. *Anfang* is an inception in the sense of *incipere* as to take in hand, to seize. *Anfang* is that which seizes and takes hold first, not unlike what happens in *thaumazein*, wonder, which Plato tells us is the *arche* of philosophizing.¹⁶ *Anfang* thus conveys in a way that *Beginn* does not, the character of an address; i.e., its character is that of an initiating claim to which one responds, taking hold of one, as if captured by it. As such it is not that which has started and is left behind as something finished, but that which, in being unfinished, comes toward one. In belonging to Western history we are captured by that founding event of Western history that has issued in the

technological and globalized life we currently inhabit. To add then the third term, the initiating event is only understandable in relation to *Ursprung* as the event proper. In the “Origin of the Work of Art, Heidegger writes: “Art lets truth originate [*entspringen*].... To originate something by a leap, to bring something into its being from out of the source of its nature in a founding leap—this what the word origin means.”(The Origin of the Work of Art: 77-8.) In originating, something rises up and is brought into being, and for Heidegger presencing itself is to be understood from this sense of the originary.

Let us return to our question: What does it mean to belong to the inception of our history? In relation to the *inceptive* we can now say that it means to be seized by an event of appropriation (*Ereignis*) in which being is given to us and enables our being to become what it is. It is to be in relation to what being initiates and what generates thereby historical destiny (*Geschick*). To relate this to our translation of Heraclitus’s saying: in the inception of history something has been sent our way, and it is in relation to this sending (*Schickung*) that we have our place in life. But relating to this sending is more than hearing a message, as Heidegger seems to be announcing at the outset of the key passage from *Basic Concepts*, for according to Heidegger, the source of the sending is constituted by a certain reserve, a certain holding back. “To hold back,” Heidegger tells us, “is in Greek *epokhē*,” and accordingly the destiny of being can be described in relation to epochs in which the original sending of being is “more and more obscured in different ways.”¹⁷ What is being described here is the essential forgetting that characterizes the history of metaphysics in relation to which, for philosophy at least, a recollection in metaphysics becomes necessary. Such a recollection thinks history as the arrival of truth’s essence, i.e., the revealing/concealing that Heidegger thematizes in relation to *aletheia*. Hearing the message will thus require a specific task for contemporary philosophy. It is no longer a task of taking hold of the givenness of things in which beings are gathered together in a definite manner but one of thinking the arriving from and departing into a hidden being through a destructuring of epochs. Despite its speculative and grand narrative overtones, the task of thinking is an urgent one for Heidegger precisely because, as we have already noted, “the inability of human beings to see themselves

corresponds to the self-concealing of the lighting of being.”¹⁸ And in relation to this task destiny is not at all the outcome of an inevitable course of events; it is rather something of the opposite, a contingency, since we can respond differently to the opening of human destiny.¹⁹ This is just what Heidegger puts in play in what he calls inceptive thinking, namely, the preparatory thinking for another beginning beyond the first beginning which occurred in Greek philosophy that would initiate another history.

To belong to the inception of our history, then, is not a matter of a passivity in which we simply take over a heritage. It is rather a matter of being set within the historical as the happening itself in relation to which “we have to be concerned with the meaning, the possible standards, the necessary goals, the ineluctable powers, and that from which all human happenings begin [*anheben*].”²⁰ If these goals and powers came to pass long ago, they still await the liberation of their influence. And so Heidegger contends that what is most futural is the great inception as the hidden destiny of all inceptions. But herein lies the problem of human living that we have already alluded to: the hidden destiny of all inceptions is forced aside, if not refuted, by “what they themselves begin and by what follows them.” (*The Basic Questions of Philosophy*: 38). For Heidegger, this means that “the customariness of that which then becomes accustomed becomes master over that which is always uncustomary in the inception. Therefore, in order to rescue the inception, and consequently the future as well, from time to time a breaking of the mastery of the customary and the all too accustomed is needed. The overthrowing of the customary is the genuine relation to inception.” (Ibid) In his 1937-38 lecture course from which this passage is taken, *The Basic Questions of Philosophy*, Heidegger continues his remarks using the language of revolution, contrasting it with the conservative in which there is a holding onto what began as a consequence of the inception. In this context, the ethics of history, we might say, is one that is concerned with a certain renewal. And in this context we should see that what Heidegger is suggesting here mirrors Hegel’s analysis of positivity. Just as Hegel sees the necessity of a purging of the dead elements of the tradition or for the sake of living spirit and its truth, for Heidegger too, there is an overturning of the customary for the

sake of a different kind of living spirit. But what exactly this renewal entails beyond the overthrowing of the customary is not yet fully clear. What is clear is that for Heidegger it will affect our place in life. In the first draft of this 1937-38 lecture course Heidegger writes: “The determination of the essence of truth is accompanied by a necessary transformation of the human.... This transformation signifies the dislocation of humanity out of its previous home into the ground of its essence in order for the human to become the founder and the preserver of the truth of being.”(Ibid: 181)

If we ask ourselves now where we stand with respect to the further determination of the saying of Heraclitus that in our latest translation reads “in humankind’s place in life there is the elemental power of destining,” we see that we have for the most part really captured only half of the translation. What we have captured is the specific determination of *ēthos*, as the abode of the human, as being-in-relation to history as happening (*Geschehen*) from the event of being. Without explicitly identifying it as such, we have been describing at the same time what Heidegger means by original ethics.²¹ As noted at the outset, this ethics has little to do with what we mean by ethics today. An original ethics does not offer guidelines for acting in everyday situations, and in fact it shuns the realm of valuing insofar as valuing has come to mean nothing more than an estimating from subjectivity. And this means for the ethics of history that we are not concerned with what in another context deserves the most serious attention, namely, a historiography of poverty or injustice, or any other ethical history organized around a value of the present. But at the same time, what is meant by the ethics of history cannot be without significance for the way in which the determination of our living gets worked out in relation to its aspirations. What the ethics of history must ultimately capture, if not the idea of an original ethics as such, then is certainly one of its conclusions, namely, that ethical life is inseparable from “our relation to both time and history.”(Hermeneutics as Original Ethics: 42) Heidegger seems to bring us closer to what needs to be captured from the way in which destining, and with it the second half of our translation, is to be understood.

To pursue this and at the same time to begin to bring the entire analysis together, we need to see precisely what it means with respect to history to speak of destining and not destiny. Minimally, it would seem to convert destiny as allotment and order in life to that of an “ever moving order of presencing-absencing.” (*Heidegger on Being and Acting*: 271) But it is precisely here that Reiner Schürmann warns us we must be most careful in reading Heidegger. The boundary of the last epoch of metaphysics should not be seen as an opening of a place or site where an idea of humanity, thought in relation to the crisis of the current epoch, is restored. Such a view would amount to, in Heidegger’s words, “chasing after the future so as to work out a picture of it through calculation in order to extend what is present and half-thought into what, now veiled, is yet to come.”²² Such chasing would still move within the prevailing attitude belonging to technological, calculating representation. No historiographical representation of history as happening “ever brings us into the proper relation to destining.” If the efficacy of a beginning inception remains in force for philosophy and for our living, this truth cannot be measured by any history or historical thinking.²³ Any talk of a renewal amounts to, again in Schürmann’s words, “a disseminating crisis.” Minimally then, we can say that in destining we remain in relation to what comes first, and only in this engagement where we conduct ourselves according to the truth of being is there the “to come” that will transform history. Now, while it would be possible for us to continue to follow Heidegger in this matter of what is first, for the sake of the very idea of the ethics of history presented here, I want to pursue this still open issue of destiny and history through the interpretive extension of Heidegger’s thinking undertaken by Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben.

Nancy, for his part, interprets destining, which for him still holds to the “logic” of *Ereignis*, as finitude. Here finitude is defined not in opposition to the infinite as simple limit, but in relation to the non-appearing of being itself; i.e., finitude means “we are infinitely finite, infinitely exposed to our existence as a non-essence.” We are, in other words, infinitely exposed to the otherness of our own being. We begin and end “without having a beginning and an end that is ours.” (*The Birth to Presence*: 155) Finitude is thus a lack of accomplishment of an

essence of existence, or better, it is the emptying out of essence (Ibid: 158). To say this yet one other way, existence is simply abandoned to its very positing, constituting the finitude of being. Accordingly, our history can only be finite history—“the becoming present of existence insofar as existence is itself finite.”(Ibid: 163) To make this idea of history clearer Nancy contrasts it with finished history in which history maintains its end. Finished history is thought as a collection that can be collected. But Nancy insists that this idea of history as collecting and collection, a history perhaps where there is the becoming subject of substance, a history that issues in a grand narrative, is exhausted. In contrast to this there is history precisely as history—a finite history that entails the rupturing of history where there is the infinite deferral of any nature.”²⁴ This history as happening is thus history without summation, a history that has not and cannot absolve itself, as Hegel, in principle at least, proposes. And so, for Nancy, finite history is not the accomplishment of essence, but simply an arriving. Destining is destiny without destiny.

But if destiny is simply arriving what significance can this hold for our living? In what sense can we still speak in a credible manner of the ethics of history? To answer this question we need to see precisely what Nancy means when he says that finite history pertains foremost to a history that is “infinitely exposed to its own finite happening as such.”(*The Birth to Presence*: 157) For Nancy it means that the model of historical time is nothing other than an opening of a spacing of time, “the happening of the time of existence” where “we” happens. Finite history, in other words, entails the very notion of “our time.” Our time would have to be some aspect of time without stopping time. It would be a certain suspension of time, an epoch, a spacing where something takes place precisely by being ours. But what is ours is not a collective property “as if first we exist and then we possess a certain time.”(Ibid: 151) Rather, it is our being in common, which Nancy thinks precisely as exposure. Our time as the happening of history becomes the time in which being-in-common happens, and finite history is the becoming present of existence as finite: “History is the proper exposition of existence.”(Ibid: 161)

Now, Nancy will say this in yet another way. Nancy calls this being-in-common, this exposition of existence, sharing (*partage*). The word sharing means first of all to divide something up; it is an act of division. But sharing also means to take part in something. Taken together sharing names community, not as a common being, but as a relating in which there is exposure to others. Hopefully without appearing forced, with Nancy we are translating the apportionment that is destiny not as that which comes from the outside, but as that which has entered into the very fabric of existence. If the *daimōn* is not an unknown god, but rather the apportionment given to human life, then here the *daimonic* is “the spacing and distancing that opens up world.”²⁵ Thus Nancy will translate the “decision” that becomes our time as a decision to enunciate our “we”—a decision “about if and how we allow our otherness to exist.” We have to decide to make history, “which is to expose ourselves to the non-presence of our present, and to its coming.” (*The Birth to Presence*: 166) And in this exposing is the conduct toward which thinking strives, a conducting “in such a way as to take the measure of the incomprehensible interval between every ‘thinking’ (idea, representation, etc.) and the fundamental action through which it makes itself think.”²⁶ Accordingly, with Nancy’s interpretive extension of Heidegger’s thinking we have before us another possible translation of Heraclitus’s saying *ēthos anthrōpōi daimōn*. The saying can now read: in being infinitely exposed to our own finite happening, there is sharing (i.e., allotment, portioning out).

Let me turn now to Agamben. Agamben’s translation of destining draws us into an even greater analysis to which I may be unable to do justice here. To begin, it is interesting to see in an analogous way to Nancy, how Agamben characterizes “our time.” In a small essay from 2006, Agamben asks about what it means to be a contemporary. Citing Nietzsche’s “Untimely Meditations” Agamben notes how Nietzsche attempts to situate his own contemporariness with respect to the present by being out of joint. The true contemporary is one who neither coincides with nor simply placates oneself to the demands of the current times. But it is just because of this that the true contemporary is best at grasping his or her own time. The contemporary is in a relationship with his or her own time precisely by

being able to keep a distance from it. But how is such distancing and thus seeing possible? It cannot be a matter of simple reflection for the question would remain as to how, in the reflection, one could see differently. Agamben claims that what the contemporary sees is not some other time that is then contrasted with the contemporary times, but rather, in language reminiscent of Heidegger's description of the being event in the "Anaximander Fragment" essay, the very darkness rather than the light of one's own time. Every time, i.e., every epoch, holds obscurity, and the contemporary is one who knows how to see this obscurity.²⁷ Agamben's description of seeing this darkness suggests something of the impossible and should remind us of Heidegger's question concerning where we belong (and thus to our place in life) in relation to the truth of being. In the darkness of the sky, Agamben notes, what we perceive is actually the light that cannot reach us "since the galaxies from which the light originates moves away from us at a velocity greater than the speed of light." (What is the Contemporary: 46) And so the contemporary who fixes his or her gaze on the darkness of the epoch is attempting to perceive, in that darkness, a light "that infinitely distances itself from us, yet is voyaging toward us. Our time is, in fact, most distant, it cannot in any way reach us. And so, for Agamben: "Contemporariness inscribes itself in the present by marking it above all as archaic. Only those who perceive the indices and the signatures of the archaic in the most modern and recent can be contemporary." (Ibid: 50) Agamben's "archaic" functions in a way similar to Heidegger's inception. It is, in Agamben's words, that which is "contemporary with historical becoming and does not cease to operate with it." (Ibid) "The present [or what we can call the proper dwelling place of humanity] is thus nothing other than this un-lived element in everything that is lived," and so the contemporary is one who returns to a present where we have never been (Ibid: 51).

This peculiar way of accustoming oneself to "our time" reflects Agamben's understanding of our historical being in general, which approximates that of Heidegger being discussed here. Agamben reads Heidegger to be saying with respect to *Ereignis* that it is a movement of concealment without anything being hidden or anything hiding. Accordingly, what is at issue in the event is destiny without destiny,

and with it the abandonment of the human to itself. Now, according to Agamben—and let me read this sentence carefully—“this abandonment of the self to itself is precisely what destines humankind to tradition and to history, remaining concealed, the ungrounded at the ground of every ground, the nameless that, as unsaid and untransmissible, transmits itself in every name and every historical transmission.”²⁸ For Agamben the question then becomes one of seeing how this ungrounded foundation is actually the taking place of language as the event of speech. It is not that Heidegger does not himself take up this question. Of course he regards the experience of language to be precisely that of saying (*Sage*) coming to speech, i.e., of the experience of the difference between language and speech. But for Agamben this is not an experience that I have been called to by a voice (as in the voice of conscience). Agamben calls his version of this transmitting of the untransmissible in relation to the being of the human, as the taking place of language, the experience of infancy.

So, what is infancy? For Agamben infancy frames the character of the potentiality of language that, in turn, will describe in yet another way the *ēthos* of the human. His use of the word suggests that he wants to make a reference to the child, and indeed this is so with an important qualification. What is distinctive of the condition of the child is being without language while having the potentiality of language, and thus the ability to grow up in a language. Beginning with the condition of childhood there is a movement—one we associate with chronological development—in which language is acquired as an actualization of a potential. Now the qualification. Agamben does want to think of infancy in this way, but not literally, as if our relation to infancy is only in this chronological development. Infancy means then first of all that we are *not* simply the animal with language, as Aristotle states in what is now the classical definition of the human, but the animal deprived of language. And to further invert this classical distinction, Agamben claims that it is the non-human animal that actually is the one by nature with language. To be more precise, the animal with its voice, its *phone*, is one with its language. With its voice the animal communicates immediately without signs, whereas the human animal does not have language in this natural way. The human animal is at first only capable of speech, and thus must in some

sense acquire it, receive it, as if it comes from the outside.

Accordingly—and this is the second point—what infancy means more precisely is to register on an ontological level as an experience of speechlessness—an experience prior to saying “I” and with it the very idea of subjectivity. In speaking the human subject emerges from infancy, which now functions as the negative ground of our being, as the very potentiality of language. The origin in relation to which we have our place in life lies here. It is an origin that we can never grasp. It is that in relation to which we remain divided for it is “the place where one can never really be from the beginning.”²⁹ And thus here too the origin is not a first cause but that which moves between being first and the present moment, transforming pure language into speech. In this mediation, which now sets out the difference between language and speech and which we can say along with Agamben is the *ēthos* of our humanity, is history. To quote Agamben: “the human is nothing other than this passage from pure language to discourse, and this transition, this instant, is history.” (Agamben, *Infancy and History*: 56)

From this account of the *ēthos* of our humanity Agamben seems to give us a modern version of Sophocles description of the human animal. Indeed, it is the case that here too the human is the one who is not helpless before its future, but also here we find the human whose destiny is one with “its praxis and its history”—a self-giving of a foundation. And with this account we have yet another possible translation of Heraclitus’s saying. For Agamben, our habitual dwelling place is nothing other than that of the *daimōnic* as, recalling from its verbal form, what lacerates and divides. The *daimōn* is first the one who cuts and divides, for “only insofar as it is what divides can the *daimōn* also be what assigns a fate and what destines.” (*Potentialities*: 118) A *daimōnic* scission thus threatens the human in its very *ēthos*. Our place in life can never be grasped without receiving a laceration. Thus as Agamben himself translates the saying: “for man, *ēthos*, the dwelling in the ‘self’ that is what is most proper and habitual for him, is what lacerates and divides, the principle and place of a fracture.” (Ibid) Corresponding to this, the activities of philosophy and our living must have their beginnings in marvel and wonder. For Agamben, the philosopher can only ever return to where language has

already happened. He or she must be at home in the marvel and the division. But if the return is the supreme problem for the philosopher, Agamben asks what is the “there” to which he or she must, in the end, return? What if, Agamben asks, the place to which we return is simply the trite words that we have? And, if so, perhaps we could also translate Heraclitus’s saying in a final way: “(in) the haunt of the human <history, language, transmission> is the division and the force that drives us forward.

Notes:

1. See Dennis J. Schmidt, “Hermeneutics as Original Ethics,” in *Difficulties of Ethical Life*, ed. Shannon Sullivan and Dennis J. Schmidt (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 35-47.

2. Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” in *Basic Writings*, revised edition, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 256-58.

3. See Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 180-181.

4. “Only against death can he call on no means of escape; but escape from hopeless diseases he has found in the depths of his mind. With some sort of cunning, inventive beyond all expectation he reaches something evil, and sometimes good.” Sophocles, *Antigone*, trans. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 360-364.

5. See William J. Richardson, “Heidegger’s Fall,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 69, 2 (Spring 1995), 229-253.

6. It would be easy at this point to offer the case of Heidegger himself as an illustration of this falling into error. About this so much has been written. See especially, William J. Richardson, “Heidegger’s Fall,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 69, 2 (Spring 1995), 229-253.

7. Heidegger, “The Anaximander Fragment,” *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 26.

8. Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, trans. Gary Aylesworth (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 17.

9. To list the texts where Heidegger deals with the issue of origination would be to catalogue most of Heidegger’s lectures and writings from 1935

through 1946. The issue is especially prominent in *Heraklit* (Band 55), *Beiträge* (Band 65) and *Über den Anfang* (Band 70).

10. Heidegger, "Origin of the work of Art, First Version" in *The Heidegger Reader*, ed. Günter Figal, trans. Jerome Veith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 149. I have modified the translation for a consistency to be explained below. English translations of Heidegger's works will add confusion to this complication by translating *Anfang* as beginning, as we see here and in Hofstadter's translation of the original published version of the "Origin of the Work of Art." Heidegger's use of these three terms is worked out in a masterful way by Reiner Schürmann, whose translation of the terms I am following here. See Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*, trans. Christine-Marie Gros in collaboration with the author (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), Part Three.

11. Heidegger, *Heraklit*, Gesamtausgabe Band 55 (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1987), 3-4.

12. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1012b34-1013a23.

13. For Aristotle all causes are principles. See *Metaphysics*, 1013a17. Aristotle will also identify the *arche* with the *telos* since without the end in the beginning there can be no becoming. Heidegger, of course, does not regard being teleologically, and yet the relation stands for Heidegger. See Heidegger's remark in "The Origin of the Work of Art": "A genuine inception [*Anfang*], as a leap, is always a head start, in which everything to come is already leaped over, even if as something disguised. The inception already contains the end latent within itself." Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1972), 63; English translation by Albert Hofstadter, "The Origin of the Work of Art," *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 76.

14. "Wie jeder Ursprung seinen Anfang hat, so jeder Anfang seinen Beginn. Das is Jenes, wobei als einem Vorgefundenen der immer plötzliche Anfang anhebt. Dass der Beginn gerade dieser oder jener ist, dazu gehört ein Anlass. Und der Anlass ist immer ein Zufall, zufällig nämlich im Lichte und im aufbrechenden Bereich des Anfangs als des Sprunges eines Ursprungs, d.h. eines solchen, worin die Wahrheit als Offenheit des Seienden entspringt. Wo dieses geschieht, fängt geschieht an." Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes, Erse Ausarbeitung," *Heidegger Studies* 5 (1989), 21.

15. See Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«*, Gesamtausgabe 39 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1980), 3.

16. See *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 122.

17. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambauch (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 9.

18. Heidegger, "The Anaximander Fragment," *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 26.

19. To be precise, Heidegger does say that the sequence of epochs is not accidental. The key passage reads: "The sequence of epochs in the destiny of being is not accidental, nor can it be calculated as necessary. Still, what is appropriate shows itself in the destiny, what is appropriate shows itself in the belonging together of the epochs." *On Time and Being*, 9.

20. Heidegger, *The Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected 'Problems' of 'Logic'*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 38.

21. "If the name of 'ethics', in keeping with the basic meaning of the word *ēthos*, should now say that 'ethics' ponders the abode of man, then that thinking which thinks the truth of Being as the primordial element of man, as one who ek-sists, is in itself the original ethics." "Letter on Humanism," 258.

22. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 48.

23. See Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 147.

24. Nancy, *On the Creation of the World or Globalization*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 79.

25. See Walter Brogan, "The Parting of Being" On Creation and sharing in Nancy's Political Ontology," *Research in Phenomenology* 40, 3 (2010): 299.

26. Nancy, *A Finite Thinking*, ed. Simon Sparks (Stanford: Stanford university Press, 2003), 190.

27. Giorgio Agamben, "What is the Contemporary," *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stephen Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University press, 2009), 44.

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Relativism: Protagoras and Nelson Goodman*

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Abstract

Discussion of the many faces of relativism occupies a highly prominent place in the epistemological literature. Protagoras in ancient Greece and Nelson Goodman in the modern period are two most notable proponents of relativism. In the present article, I discuss and explain relativistic approaches of these two important relativists. I will first briefly define and review some faces of relativism. Then I will discuss and elaborate Protagorean or true-for-me relativism and Goodman's radical relativism in turn. I will argue that there are crucial difficulties in Protagorean and radical relativism, and that these difficulties, as the realist philosophers insist, make these two faces of relativism undefensible. No doubt, these two shapes of relativism have paved the way for anti-realism. In the end, it will appear that Goodman's radical relativism and so the theory of worldmaking, like Protagorean relativism, suffers from a fatal flaw: the flaw of self-refuting.

Keywords: *Protagoras, Nelson Goodman, relativism, true-for-me, worldmaking.*

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Introduction

Some thinkers maintain that our thoughts about the world are influenced by such things as point of view, temperament, capacities, language, conceptual schemes, scientific paradigm, historical periods, and culture. These thinkers are relativist, and their approach has been called relativism. Relativism, as mentioned, takes many shapes and forms. Realists hold that reality is independent of our thinking, even if it is up to us how we think about it. Relativists, on the contrary, hold that what there is, and what is true, depends on many things such as point of view and conceptual schemes, and consequently a neutral standpoint for evaluating the cognitive norms and moral values is not available to us.

Relativism is frequently defined negatively, in terms of the doctrines it denies, as well as positively, in terms of what it affirms. A number of philosophers who, despite their protestations, are frequently accused of being relativists—Hilary Putnam, Nelson Goodman, Richard Rorty, and maybe even Jacques Derrida—can be seen as negative relativists in so far as they tend to deny universalism and objectivism, but do not accept straightforward attempts to relativise epistemic and moral values to social or historical contexts. (see, Baghramian, 2004:3)

Relativism is a form of anti-realism. Realism and anti-realism have stronger and weaker forms that can be separated from each other. The word ‘real’ is derived from Latin *res*, which means things both in the concrete and abstract sense. Thus, ‘reality’ refers to the totality of all real things, and ‘realism’ is a philosophical doctrine about the reality of some of its aspects. (Niiniluoto, 1999:1).

As realism is divided into several subdisciplines, the doctrines of anti-realism are likewise divided into a number of varieties. Relativism is in fact a bundle of different doctrines. We can distinguish between the broad categories of cognitive, moral and aesthetic relativism. Cognitive relativism can be subdivided into categories such as ontological, semantical, epistemological and methodological. Any of these four categories may include some items. Ontological categories include objects, facts, world and reality; semantical include truth, reference and meaning; epistemological categories include perception,

belief, justification and knowledge; methodological categories include inference, rationality and progress; and moral categories may include at least customs, values, ethics, law, politics and religion.

On the other hand, there is a great variety of factors which some category might be taken to be relative to. Some of the most important factors are: persons, groups, cultures, environment, languages, conceptual frameworks, theories, paradigms, points of view, forms of life, gender, social class, social practices, social interests and values. Relativity to individual persons has been called 'subjectivism' and 'protagoreanism'. Relativity to cultures is 'cultural relativism'; relativity to languages or conceptual or theoretical frameworks is usually called 'conceptual relativism' or 'framework relativism', or 'incommensurabilism'; relativity to viewpoint is 'perspectivism'; relativity to gender is 'gender relativism'; and relativity to social factors is 'class relativism', or 'social relativism'.(Ibid, 228).

It is also helpful to distinguish between local and global form of relativism. The former restricts its claim to a specific category (as reality that may be relative to culture), while the latter generalizes this claim to all categories. For example, global subjectivism asserts that everything is relative to individual persons, but local subjectivism may be restricted to morality only. (Ibid.229).

Discussion of the many faces of relativism occupies a highly prominent place in the epistemological literature. Why is this? Briefly, the reason is because of the theoretical interest and varieties of arguments for philosophical and epistemic relativism. Relativist, from Protagoras to postmodern philosopher, frequently appear able to start from plausible, commonly held assumptions about the nature of knowledge and deduce from these assumptions that we really know from our points of view, our mental structure, our forms of life, our languages, our conceptual frameworks and soon. Non- relativist philosophers then face the task of identifying the mistake in these otherwise plausible assumptions.

The measure of all things

The first known statement of a relativist position in western philosophy is a famous dictum by Protagoras.He famously asserted

that ‘Man is the measure of all things: of the things which are that they are, and of the things which are not, that they are not’(Plato, 1997:*theat.* 152-a1-3). What did he mean? Plato took him to mean: ‘Each things appears [phainesthai] to me, so it is for me, and as it appears to you, so it is for you-you and I each being a man’ (Ibid. 152a6-8).

This famous dictum can be interpreted from individualistic, ontological, logical, alethic and cultural points of view.

It seems that ‘man’ in the dictum refers to the individual person, and that Protagoras’ thesis has more in common with modern subjectivist views than relativism. SextusEmpiricus at times interprets Protagoras’ dictum as a subjectivist thesis in the sense that ‘every appearance whatsoever is true’ (Burnyeat 1976a:172).

The ontological dimension of Protagoras’ relativism commits him to the view that ‘what appears to each individual in the only reality and therefore the real world differs for each’ (Guthrie, 1971:171).

The logical reading of the doctrine is supported by Plato’s report that Protagoras rejected the principle of non-contradiction. The logical interpretation is also favoured by Aristotle who argued that for Protagoras ‘contradictory statements about the same thing are simultaneously true’ and that ‘it is possible either to assert or deny something of every subject’ (Aristotle, 1908: *Met.* [100] b)

Plato also attributes a thesis of alethic relativism, or relativism about truth, to Protagoras, to the effect that if somebody believes or judges P, then P is true for that person (Baghrmian, 2004:29). Whatever the preferred interpretation of Protagoras relativism, it is a mark of the great anxieties caused by Protagoras’ arguments that both Plato’s theory of Forms and Aristotle’s formulation of the categories, which included the category of ‘the relatives’, were, in part, attempts to neutralize the threat posed by it (Barnes, 1988:90).

Plato in *Theaet* offers three interlinked arguments to show that relativism is self-refuting. Suppose you come to a decision in your own mind and then express a judgement about something to me. Let us assume with Protagoras that your judgement is true for *you*. But isn’t it possible that the rest of us may criticise your verdict? Do we

always agree that your judgement is true? Or does there rise up against you, every time, a vast army of persons who think the opposite, who hold that your decisions and your thoughts are false? ...Do you want us to say that you are then judging what is true for yourself, but false for the tens of thousands? ...And what of Protagoras himself? Must he not say this, that supposing he did not believe that man is the measure, any more than the majority of people, then this *Truth* of his which he wrote is true for no one? On the other hand, suppose he believed it himself, but the majority of men do not agree with him; then you see to begin with- the more those to whom it does not seem to be the truth outnumber those to whom it does, so much the more it isn't than it is? (Plato, 1997: *Theaet*, 170d-171a)

One main objection to Protagorean relativism is that, when we form our beliefs and theories, we are aiming to represent things as they really are. That means we think it is possible not only to succeed, but to fail. We succeed when our beliefs and theories represent things as they are, and we fail when they do not (See. Kirk, 1999:39).

It has also been argued that the main problem with Protagorean relativism is that a relativist cannot distinguish between what is right and what one thinks is right. Hilary Putnam maintains that the relativist cannot make sense of the distinction between being right and thinking that he is right. However, the distinction between being right and thinking that one is right is essential to our ability to distinguish between asserting and making noises (Baghramian, 2004:35).

Aristotle argues that Protagoras' doctrine implies that contradictory judgements are true at the same time about the same thing. Aristotle says,

Again, if all contradictory statements are true of the same subject at the same time, evidently all things will be one. For the same thing will be a trireme, a wall, and a man, if of everything it is possible either to affirm or to deny anything (and this premise must be accepted by those who share the views of Protagoras). For if any one things that man is not a trireme, evidently he is not a trireme; so that he also is a trireme, if, as they say, contradictory statements

are both true. And we thus get the doctrine of Anaxagoras that all things are mixed together; so that nothing really exists. (Aristotle, 1908: Met, book Γ, 1007621)

The relativist assumes that every utterance and its negation is true. Therefore, the relativist is unable to make a meaningful statement, and even the very expression of relativism as a position is meaningless since it does not exclude its denial. In this way relativism involves flouting the law of non-contradiction.

Mind, Language and the world

Is the world come ready-made or we divide it into various categories and kinds by applying a conceptual scheme or categorical framework? Are we buildworks by building systems of beliefs? Is this a true proposition that worlds are created through system of description, and different worlds are created by different systems of description?

No doubt our thoughts about the world are influenced by such things as point of view, capacities, experiences, temperament, religion and culture. But some thinkers maintain that we make or construct the world. Nelson Goodman goes much further and maintains that, not only what exists itself depends on us, but even reality is relative. Quinesuggests that even the ‘truths’ of logic and mathematics may be ‘revisable’ and are not ‘necessary’ in any respectable sense. These thoughts sum up under the title of ‘conceptual relativism’.

Before elaborating the Goodman’s conceptual relativism, let me mention very briefly to Popper’s three worlds.

In popper’s terminology, *world 1* contains physical things and processes -from middle-sized ordinary objects to small (atoms), large (stars, galaxies), and process like entities (fields of force).

World2 is the domain of consciousness, in both animals and human beings. It consists of the mental states and processes within individual minds. For humanity, world 2 thus contains what is called ‘psyche’ or ‘soul’.

World3 consists of the products of human social action. It consists of abstract entities like propositions, arguments, theories, and natural numbers (see Niiniloto, 1999:23).

Many people can doubt about the reality of Popper's *world 2* and *world 3* and maintain that these two world and theirs entities are relative to language and conceptual schemes or to culture. But most people properly think that Popper's *world 1* and entities within this world are real and completely mind- independent. An ontological realist insists that world 1 is ontologically mind- independent. Even if we can interact with it and transform it though our actions, we are not the creators of the world 1. Religious man and woman believe that in the beginning of time the world was created by God.

The anti-realist, on the contrary, insists that 'reality' simply is the picture presented by human judgement, not some unreachable abstraction we are perpetually striving to grasp. This is the position that Goodman embraces. According to Goodman one builds worlds by building systems of beliefs. Goodman's position stems from the long-standing dispute between realist and anti-realist philosophers.

We can find the seed of this line of thought or conceptual relativism in German idealism, especially, in Kant's transcendental idealism and Nietzsche's perspectivism. The basis of Kant's transcendental idealism is the distinction of appearance and things in itself. According to Kant our empirical knowledge is a compound of that which we receive through impressions, and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself. Kant argues that:

What objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us. We know nothing but our mode of perceiving them. (Kant, 1933: A42-B59)

Intuitions are those representations by means of which objects are given to us, and concepts those by means of which we think about objects. Accordingly, objects of our cognition are mere appearances. In sum, our mode of cognition determines objects constitution. For Kant, the categories of understanding are the universal and necessary

conditions of thought and knowledge. But new Kantian thinkers do not insist on there being a unique and immutable scheme.

Nietzsche reject the distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal world. He claims that we not only construct the world in which we live but also can construct it in different ways. Nietzsche writes of the invention of thinghood and [our] interpreting it into the confusion of sensation (Nietzsche, 1968:§552). He argues: ‘the value of the world lies in our interpretation... previous interpretations have been perspective valuations by virtue of which we can survive in life’ (Ibid.,§616). He also writes of truth as something which is ‘a mobile army of metaphors ... [he proclaims that] truths are illusions of which we have forgotten that they are illusions’ (Nietzsche, 1999: 146).

According to Nietzsche, since we cannot appeal to any facts or criteria independently of their relation to the perspectives we have, we can do little more than insist on the legitimacy of our own perspective, and try to impose it on other people. In sum, Nietzsche’s perspectivism refers to this position that truth is relative to historically conditional points of view.

Goodman and radical relativism

Nelson Goodman in *Structure of Appearance and ways of worldmaking* changed the current conception of conceptual relativism and developed what he called a “redical relativism”. As Harris properly says, the title, *ways of worldmaking*, is appropriately chosen because Goodman really means that we actually make different worlds by creating different theories or systems. (Harris, 1992:65) But every systems consist of many statements that may be incompatible whit each other. Goodman observes that apparent conflicts between plausible statements can often be resolved by relativization to frames of reference:

Consider, to begin with, the statements ‘the sun always moves’ and ‘the sun never moves’ which, though equally true, are at odds with each other. Shall we say, then, that they describe different worlds, and indeed that there are as many different worlds as there are such mutually exclusive truths?

Rather, we are inclined to regard the two strings of words not as complete statement as 'under frame of reference A, the sun always moves' and 'under frame of reference B, the sun never moves' – statements that may both be true of the some worlds. (Goodman, 1978:2)

According Goodman we can have many description of the world, but there is no way of describing the world independently of all frames of reference. Much more striking thing is the vast variety of frames of reference or versions and vision in several sciences... Even with all illusory or wrong or dubious versions dropped, the rest exhibit new dimensions of disparity. Here we have no neat set of frames of reference. (Ibid, 3)

In Goodman's radical relativism even truth is relativized to different worlds or versions. No doubt this relativism is consistent with the pragmatic theory of truth. Indeed, the only guiding principles for system choice and 'worldmaking' are pragmatic. Correspondence with a world independent of all versions has no place in Goodman's philosophy. He explicitly rejects the notion that there is any sort of criterion or test for measuring the accuracy of a theory by its correspondence with world in any realist sense (Goodman, 1972:30). However, he insists that contradictory and incompatible sentences cannot be simultaneously true of the same world.

I maintain that many world versions-some conflicting with each other, some so disparate that conflict or compatibility among them is indeterminable- are equally right, nevertheless, right versions are different from wrong versions: relativism is restrained by consideration of rightness. Rightness, however, is neither constituted nor tested by correspondence with a world independent of all versions. (Goodman, 1996:144)

Goodman wants to replace the objective notion of truth with the relative concept of rightness. Description of the world from a realist point of view can be true or false. In Goodman's relativism the truth and falsity of judgements are relative to the versions of individual.

The idea of worldmaking is the ontological aspect of his relativism. Goodman describes the process of worldmaking in terms of composition and decomposition. He argues that:

Much but by no means all world making consists of taking apart and putting together, often conjointly: on the hand, of dividing wholes into parts and partitioning kinds into sub-species, analyzing complexes into component features, drawing distinctions; on the other hand, of composing wholes and kinds out of parts and members and subclasses, combining features into complexes, and making connections. Such composition or decomposition is normally effected or assisted or consolidated by the application of labels: names, predicates, gestures, pictures. (Goodman, 1978: 7-8)

We have to ask whether Goodman's relativism and worldmaking should be understood literally or metaphorically. Is he simply confusing World 1 and 3? Before answering to these questions, let me to refer to Goodman's important article under the title of 'on star making'. He in that article replaces the concept of worldmaking with the notion of starmaking and claims:

Now we thus make constellations by picking out and putting together certain stars rather than others, so we make stars by drawing creation boundaries rather than others. Nothing dictates whether the sky shall be marked off into constellations or other objects, we have to make what we find, be it the Great Dipper, Sirius, food, fuel, or a stereo system. (Goodman, 1996:145)

Stars and constellations are made by us. Worlds or world versions are constructed by human beings. No doubt, many versions of the world can be right, but many other versions of the world are wrong. Therefore, some ways of worldmaking yield true or right worlds and that others yield false worlds. Although Goodman calls his position "radical relativism" he, at the same time, imposes severe restraints to that. He says, 'willingness to accept countless alternative true or right

world-versions does not mean that everything goes, ...that truths are no longer distinguished from falsehoods, but only that truth must be otherwise conceived than as correspondence with a ready-made world (Goodman, 1978:94). If some world-versions are to be right and others wrong, there must be some standards or “rightness” according to which such an assessment is made. Goodman’s standard of rightness is his notion of *fit with practice* (*Ibid*, 138).

Now we must answer to the above mentioned question: whether Goodman’s Idea of worldmaking should be understood literally or metaphorically? Goodman says, ‘we do not make stars as we make bricks; not all making is a matter of molding mud. The worldmaking mainly in question here is making not with hands but with minds, or rather with languages or other symbol systems’ (Goodman 1996:145).

Does he mean that we have to take his Idea of worldmaking metaphorically? The answer is no, because he then adds: ‘yet when I say that worlds are made, I mean it literally...’ (*Ibid*). Thus, he clearly wishes to make the radical claim that the project of worldmaking goes all the way from artefacts to what the realist takes to be objective, non-relative physical reality.

Goodman’s position has interesting relations to Thomas Kuhn’s claims about theory-relative ‘worlds’. Also, since according to Goodman individual statements have truth-values only relative to some theory of description or some frame of reference, he also aligns himself very closely with Quine’s holism. These similarities are readily apparent in Goodman’s discussion of the comparison of ‘the sun never moves’ and ‘the sun always moves’. But unlike Quine, who gives ontological preference to a world composed of physical objects, Goodman does not attribute ontological priority to any particular frame of reference (see Harris, 1992, 61-68). Goodman, like Kuhn, maintains that there are no good epistemological grounds for preferring one kind of system or frame of reference to another.

Objections to worldmaking theory

Goodman’s radical relativism faces several difficulties. There are some subtle objections to his theory. One problem facing Goodman is how to distinguish between right and wrong versions. As we saw,

Goodman argues that a description is right if it fit with the practice for which the version has been constructed. Goodman relativises the rightness of design and truth of statements to a system. There are criteria of rightness or 'fit', but they are based on the specific purpose that a version serves. This allows us to assess judgments within a given system or version, but we are left with no metacriteria to adjudicate between all those versions that are internally coherent or workable (see Baghramian, 2004:232).

Furthermore, Goodman's criteria of rightness might be interpreted as relative to his own meta-theory of worldmaking. Harvey Siegel says, meta-version is itself only one countless possible meta-versions. So the restraints on radical relativism which keep it from being the case that "everything goes" in Goodman's relativism are themselves relative to Goodman's meta-version. Relativity of versions re-arises at the level of meta-version. In short, it is the case that not "everything goes" *only in Goodman's meta-version* (see Harris, 1992: 70-71).

According to John Searle, when Goodman writes, "we make stars by drawing certain boundaries rather than others", there is no way to understand that claim except by presupposing something there on which we can draw boundaries ... contrary to Goodman, we do not make "worlds" ; we make description that the actual world may fit or fail to fit. But all this implies that there is a reality that exists independently of our system of concepts. Without such a reality, there is nothing to apply the concept to (Searle, 1997: 22-28).

As we saw, Goodman argues that 'we make constellations by picking out and putting together certain stars rather than others' (Goodman, 1996:145). He also insist that 'when I say that worlds are made [by us], I mean it literally (Ibid). It seems certain that it is up to us whether and how we use words 'star' or 'Himalayas'. But that by no means implies that the existence of star or Himalayas is also up to us. They are out there regardless of how we descript them. As John Searle says, 'different descriptions of facts [...] came and went, but the facts [such as Himalayas] remained unaffected' (Searle, 1997: 28-29).

It is important to emphasize that, as Harvey siegel has argued, Goodman's relativism, like all other relativistic claims, is self-refuting

because Goodman believes his ‘restraints on radical relativism, his criteria of rightness to be version- neutral, and to pick out his version as right. But, by his own scheme, those restraints, those criteria cannot be seen as version- neutral, but rather must be seen as part of his meta-version-and so cannot non-question-beggingly pick out his version as right’ (Siegel, 1987: 155-6).

The relativist tells us things are relative to A, B or C, but this is a self-refuting claim that we are not really capable of taking seriously. This is not to say that relativistic position is not a serious one about our epistemological and cognitive relationship to the worlds. Rather, it seems certain that we cannot help but believe in some rational and ontological principles and facts such as, non-contradiction, causation, deductive reasoning and external worlds. It seems certain that existence of something are relative to A, B or C, but there is a logical error in argument from “it is possible to relativise some things to A, B or C” to “it is possible to relativise everything to A, B or C”. In other world, relativism loses all meaning if we try to relativise everything. The game of relativizing itself presupposes non-relative reality.

Conclusion

Protagoras in ancient Greece and Nelson Goodman in modern period are two outstanding proponents of relativism. Protagoras relativises truth to man: man is the measure of all things. Goodman claims that rightness of description and truth of statements are alike relative to system. He also relativises ontology to version, and maintains that there is no realistic ontology of physical objects to make any one of the choices metaphysically or scientifically more desirable than any other choice.

The main problem with Protagorean relativism is that a relativist cannot distinguish between what is right and what one thinks is right. False beliefs and self refutivity are other difficulties of Protagorean relativism.

Goodman’s position faces several difficulties such as: (1) since there is no meta criteria to adjudicate between versions that are internally coherent or workable, he cannot distinguish between right

and wrong versions; (2) relativity of versions re-arises at the level of meta-version; (3) Goodman's worldmaking presuppose something out there on which we can draw boundaries and complete the process of worldmaking. In short, Goodman's relativism, like all sorts of relativism, requires a context and in any context, there are necessarily truths and mind-independent realities.

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The Creation of Necessity: Making Sense of Cartesian Modality*

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Abstract

In Descartes theological writing, he promotes two jointly puzzling theses: T1) God freely creates the eternal truths (i.e. the Creation Doctrine) and T2) The eternal truths are necessarily true. According to T1 God freely chooses which propositions to make necessary, contingent and possible. However the Creation Doctrine makes the acceptance of T2 tenuous for the Creation Doctrine implies that God could have acted otherwise--instantiating an entirely different set of necessary truths. Jonathan Bennett seeks to reconcile T1 and T2 by relativizing modality to human understanding. I argue that Bennett's approach to Cartesian modality is misplaced: One does not have to resort to conceptualism about modality in order to explain the subjective language found in Descartes or to reconcile Descartes' Creation Doctrine with the necessity of the eternal truths. After showing that Bennett's argument implies that Descartes held the non-eternality of the eternal truths and the independence of the eternal truths from God, I show that if one understands Descartes' use modal terms as indexed to God's willing, then apparent contradictions vanish. In addition, I show that if one evaluates the truth value of modal propositions 'non-bivalently', then one can also unravel the apparent contradiction. One can reconcile Descartes' Creation Doctrine (T1) and the necessity of the eternal truths (T2) without Bennett's conceptualism.

Keywords: *Descartes, creation doctrine, eternal truths.*

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Introduction

In Descartes theological writing, he promotes two jointly puzzling theses that scholars have called, ‘peculiar’¹ ‘strange’² ‘incoherent’(Curley, 1984: 569-597), and ‘counter-intuitive.’³ They are as follows:

T1) God freely creates the eternal truths (i.e. Descartes’ Creation Doctrine).

T2) The eternal truths are necessarily true.

According to Descartes’ Creation Doctrine, God freely chooses which propositions (including those of logic and mathematics) to make necessary, contingent and possible. However, the Creation Doctrine (CD) makes the acceptance of *T2* tenuous for CD implies that God could have acted otherwise—instantiating an entirely different set of necessary truths. Intuitively, though, this seems to make the eternal truths not really necessary after all! Commentators have sought various ways to harmonize these two theses without undoing Descartes’ other important claims.⁴ Some have argued that Descartes did not hold to *T1* throughout his career.⁵ Others have rejected *T2*, arguing that for Descartes, there are no necessary truths (Frankfurt, 1977: 36-57). In the paper, “Descartes’s Theory of Modality,” Jonathan Bennett seeks to reconcile *T1* and *T2* by relativizing modality to human understanding. Bennett writes, “I submit that our modal concepts should be understood or analyzed in terms of what does or does not lie within the compass of our ways of thinking.” (Bennett, 1994: 647). So for Bennett, ‘impossible’ merely means that humans are unable to conceive otherwise: “‘impossible that P’ means that no human can conceive of P’s obtaining while having P distinctly in mind; and similarly for P’s possibility and its necessity”(Ibid). By making the truth value of modal propositions dependent on human perception, Bennett is able to make room for Descartes’ Creation Doctrine. He writes:

Given that all modal truths are at bottom truths about what we can conceive, and given that God made us how we are (this being a truism for Descartes), it follows that God gives modal truths their status as truths. He made it

necessarily true that $2+2=4$ by making us unable to conceive otherwise (Ibid, 649). (Emphasis added)

Although, Bennett's attempt to reconcile *T1* and *T2* has many advantages, namely its ability to handle what he calls the "Bootstraps Problem," it suffers from two fatal flaws: First, on Bennett's view, the eternal truths are not truly eternal; and second, the eternal truths depend on human perception for their necessity; and these are views which Descartes explicitly denies. An additional concern for Bennett's position is that it entails that Descartes overlooks the relationship between conceivability and actuality. Bennett argues that Descartes overlooks the consequences of his alleged modal conceptualism for his arguments in the *Meditations*:

By keeping voluntarism [or CD] out of [the Meditations], Descartes helped hide from himself the split in his thought. Had he let it in, it would have...compelled him to become explicitly clear about how indubitability relates to truth. Perhaps Descartes was subliminally aware of this, that being why voluntarism does not show up in the Meditations or either of its cousins—the Discourse on the Method and the Principles of Philosophy (Ibid, 652-653).

All other things being equal we would hope that Descartes did not embrace a view that undermined his arguments in the *Meditations*. In order to avoid this less-than-ideal consequence of Bennett's view, I would like to offer an alternate reading of Descartes which reconciles *T1* and *T2* and avoids the problems that plague Bennett's account. But before proceeding, let us examine the textual evidence for *T1* and *T2*.

The Creation Doctrine

I have asserted in *T1* above that Descartes held that 'God freely creates the eternal truths.' As stated above, this is part of Descartes' Creation Doctrine; but what exactly does CD entail and how does it generate the difficulties mentioned above? First, there are three main components of Descartes' Creation Doctrine. 1) God is the efficient cause of all things. Descartes clearly states this in a letter to Mersenne. He writes, "You ask by what kind of causality God has established the eternal truths. I reply: by the same kind of causality as He created all

things, that is to say, as their efficient and total cause” (CSMK 3:25). 2) Since all things are created by God, all things depend on God. Descartes writes in the *Sixth Replies*, “...there is nothing whatsoever that does not depend on [God]. This applies not just to everything that subsists, but to all order, every law, and every reason for anything’s being true or good” (CSM 2:293)⁶. 3) God freely creates the eternal truths. Descartes concept of divine freedom was quite different from the received view (or St. Thomas’ view).⁷ For Thomas, God cannot help willing what is good, true and beautiful because these eternal truths are part of God’s very nature—they ‘reside’ in His intellect. Therefore, when God chooses to create, the choice to create is free, but the choice of eternal truths is fixed by God’s nature. In short, God is not able to make the eternal truths other than what they are. This thereby ensures their necessity—the eternal truths could never have been other than what they are. For Descartes, Thomas’ account of God’s freedom in creation limits God’s freedom and power and in addition, threatens His simplicity.⁸ Because of this, Descartes believed that ‘indifference’ was required for divine freedom. He writes in the *Sixth Replies*, “As for the freedom of the will...It is self-contradictory to suppose that the will of God was not indifferent from eternity with respect to everything which has happened or will ever happen...”(CSM 2:291). Descartes goes on to explain that if God had beliefs about what was “good or true” before God willed them to be, He would be impelled by his beliefs to create accordingly and therefore, He would not be truly free:

...it is impossible to imagine that anything is thought of in the divine intellect as good or true, or worthy of belief or action or omission, prior to the decision of the divine will to make it so. I am not speaking here of temporal priority: I mean that there is not even any priority of order, or nature, or of rationally determined reason’ as they call it, such that God’s idea of the good impelled him to choose one thing rather than another. (CSM 2:291-2)

Descartes is careful to emphasize the ‘simultaneity’ of God’s believing and willing so that one will not necessitate the other. Therefore, for Descartes, God selects the eternal truths arbitrarily (or

more fairly ‘indifferently’): In short, God is free to “make it not true that all radii of the circle are equal—just as free as He was not to create the world” (CSMK 3:25). The result of the doctrine of divine indifference is that God’s power and freedom is unlimited. God is free to instantiate whatever mathematical, logical and moral truths he wishes. As we see in this selection from a 1644 letter Mesland, God even was free not to create the law of non-contradiction or to make $2+2\neq 4$ (CSM 2:294):

“The power of God cannot have any limits...[This] shows us that God cannot have been determined to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together, and therefore he could have done the opposite” (CSMK 3:235).

And for Descartes, the result of God’s actual decision to will the law of non-contradiction into being, is that it ‘becomes’ necessary.

In order to help us understand the nature of the contradiction between T1 and T2, let us rewrite T1 as T1’ according to what we have learned about what Descartes means when he says that God freely creates the eternal truths.

T1’: If God freely creates the eternal truths, then God could have made $2+2\neq 4$.

As we have seen above, Descartes believed that God’s freedom in creation entails that God could have made the laws of mathematics different than what they are so the consequent follows from the antecedent. Now let us turn to the textual evidence for T2:

The Necessity of Eternal Truths

In addition to being freely and indifferently created, Descartes also believed that the eternal truths are necessarily true (as stated in T2 above). In a 1640 letter to Mesland, Descartes writes that God willed “that some truths should be necessary” (CSMK 235). What does Descartes mean here by necessity? Descartes describes the eternal truths, such as the truths of geometry, as having “a determined nature, or essence, or form...which is immutable and eternal” (CSM 2:45). There are also texts where Descartes speaks of the eternal truths holding in all possible worlds (although, it is important to note that

Descartes probably didn't think of 'possible worlds' in the same way as contemporary metaphysicians). For example, Descartes writes in the *Discourse on Method*, "I showed what the laws of nature were, and... to show that they are such that, even if God created many worlds, there could not be any in which they failed to be observed" (CSM 1:132). In addition to the passages listed above, there is also systematic, inter-textual evidence for Descartes' belief in the necessity of eternal truths (Kaufman, 2002: 24-41). Descartes' commitment to true and immutable natures in the ontological argument, his belief that we clearly and distinctly perceive necessary truths, and his commitment to the *a priori* in his physics would all be undermined if the eternal truths were not necessary in the strongest sense (Curley, 1984: 547). Therefore, in order to avoid destabilizing many of Descartes' views, we must have a robust understanding of the necessity of the eternal truths. So we can rewrite T2 as T2':

T2': If the eternal truths are necessarily true and $2+2=4$ is an eternal truth, then $2+2=4$ is a necessary truth.

As I showed above, Descartes believed that the eternal truths are necessarily true. I also showed that a simple mathematical truth, like $2+2=4$, is an example of an eternal truth. Therefore, for Descartes $2+2=4$ is necessarily true.

If the contradiction between T1 and T2 was not immediately apparent above let me use the amended T1' and T2' to show that a direct contradiction follows from their joint acceptance:

T1': If God freely creates the eternal truths, then God could have made $2+2\neq 4$.

a₁) God freely creates the eternal truths.

b₁) God could have made $2+2\neq 4$

c₁) If God could have made $2+2\neq 4$, then it was possible for $2+2\neq 4$.

d₁) It is possible for $2+2\neq 4$.

e₁) Therefore, it is not necessary that $2+2=4$.

T2': If the eternal truths are necessarily true, then it is necessarily true that $2+2=4$.

a₂) The eternal truths are necessarily true.

b₂) Therefore, it is necessarily true that $2+2=4$.

As one can see e_1 and b_2 follow from $T1'$ and $T2'$, respectively, and that e_1 and b_2 are directly contradictory: It is impossible that $2+2=4$ is both necessarily and not necessarily true. In the following section I will discuss Bennett's proposed solution to this difficulty.

Bennett's Conceptual Analysis of Modality

As mentioned above, Bennett seeks to reconcile $T1$ and $T2$ through relativizing modality to human perception. He argues that since what is necessary is just what humans (and perhaps other persons) believe is necessary, then God's indifference in creation does not undermine the strong modal status that necessary truths require in Descartes' work. To support this claim, Bennett points out that throughout Descartes writings is an "intensely subjectivist strand, in which issues about what is really the case are displaced by or even equated with issues about what to believe or about what can be believed." (Bennett, 1994: 651). Indeed, Descartes stated quest in the *Meditations* is to find indubitable propositions to form a solid base for knowledge—Descartes often emphasizes our perception of truth over truth *simpliciter*: This is evidenced in the following passages:

*We should think that whatever conflicts with our ideas is absolutely impossible and involves a contradiction.
(Emphasis Mine—CSMK 3:202)*

There is no point in asking by what means God could have brought it about from eternity that it was not true that twice four make eight, and so on; for I declare that this is unintelligible to us. (Emphasis added—CSM 2:294).

In these passages it seems that Descartes is saying that the truth of modal propositions is relative to our perceptions of them. In addition, in texts such as the following letter to Arnauld, Bennett argues that what Descartes is saying is that when God wills certain modal 'propositions,' what God is really doing is willing a determinate set of human mental faculties. Descartes writes:

...I would not dare to say that God cannot make a mountain without a valley, or that one and two should not be three. I merely say that he has given me such a mind that I cannot conceive a mountain without a valley, or an aggregate of one and two which is not three, and that such things involve a contradiction in my conception. (CSMK 3:358)

According to Bennett, the pairing the statements, “It is not impossible for God to make an uphill without a downhill” and “we cannot conceive of an uphill without a downhill” (Ibid, 645) should lead the reader to believe that the truth value of modal propositions is dependent on human perception. The modal proposition “it is impossible for there to be a mountain without a valley” is true only because we think that it is true.

One key benefit of Bennett’s interpretation is that it addresses the ‘Bootstraps Problem’—a problem that plagues all non-conceptualist interpretations of Descartes’ Creation Doctrine, according to Bennett. The problem is that if God were free to choose any set of eternal truths, God is then able to select those truths that guarantee *Himself* necessary existence. The flip-side of this, though, is that God was also free to choose his own *non*-existence (or his own contingent existence). So did Descartes really think that God was indifferent with respect to the nature of his own existence? It seems that Descartes would have rejected the possibility of God bringing about his own non-existence; but the difficulty is finding a principled and textually plausible way to insulate God’s person from Descartes’ own Creation Doctrine. For Bennett, God’s necessity just consists in our inability to conceive of God’s non-existence. The Bootstraps problem is not a problem on Bennett’s interpretation because it is meaningless for the conceptualist to ask if it ‘was’ possible for God to bring about his own non-existence. Why? Namely, on a conceptualist framework, humans are not able to ask these questions. Some may object that this is not really a solution at all; because what is in question is God’s modal ontology. But, to ask such a question, according to Bennett, is to presuppose non-conceptualism or commit a category mistake. Although it might be a misnomer to call Bennett’s interpretation a ‘solution’ to the Bootstraps problem, it does at least untie that particular knot for

Descartes. However, as we shall see next, by untying this knot, Bennett creates some additional tangles for himself.

Objections to Bennett's View

Although Bennett's interpretation has much in its favor, textual support, an interpretation that takes both *T1* and *T2* into account, and a 'solution' to the Bootstraps Problem, it also suffers from some serious difficulties. As mentioned above, if Bennett's view is correct, Descartes would be guilty of ignoring the question of how our perceptions of what is necessary is connected to what is actually necessary.⁹ We will not rehearse this objection again, but will move on to two, more serious objections: First, on Bennett's view, the eternal truths would not be eternal and second, the eternal truths would not be dependent on God, but on his creatures.

First, if the modal status of propositions depends on human perception alone, then the eternal truths cannot be eternal for the obvious reason that humans are finite. This is a serious departure from Descartes' intentions. He is clear that the eternal truths have been true for all time (and/or have been timelessly true). And second, Descartes is clear that the eternal truths depend on God alone and not on his creatures. However, on Bennett's interpretation, the necessity of eternal truths depends on the persons who perceive them; their necessity is not dependent on God, but on created beings. Descartes, however, is clear that there is no one thing that is not dependent on God. The following texts provide evidence both for the eternity of the eternal truths, and their sole dependence on God: Descartes writes that "...we should not suppose that eternal truths 'depend on the human intellect or on other existing things'; *they depend on God alone*, who as the supreme legislator has ordained them from *eternity*" (Emphasis mine—CSM 2:293). Again Descartes is unequivocal about the dependence of all things on God when he writes, "...there is nothing whatsoever that does not depend on [God]. This applies not just to everything that subsists, but to all order, every law, and every reason for anything's being true or good" (CSM 2:293). Additional evidence for the eternity and divine dependence of the eternal truths can be found in the *Fifth Meditation*:

When, for example, I imagine a triangle, even if perhaps no such figure exists, or has ever existed, anywhere outside my thought, there is still a determined nature, or essence, or form of the triangle which is immutable and eternal, and which is not invented by me nor does it depend on my mind. (Emphasis added—CSM 2:44-45)

And in Descartes' First Letter to Mersenne, he writes:

The mathematical truths that you call eternal have been laid down by God and depend on him entirely, no less than the rest of his creatures. Indeed, to say that these truths are independent of God is to talk of him as if he were Jupiter or Saturn and subject him to the Styx and the Fates (Emphasis added—CSMK 3:23).

So from the above, it is clear that Bennett's interpretation cannot be right because Descartes is very clear that the eternal truths must be both eternal and dependent on God alone.

Bennett, however, is not without a response. He argues that the first objection (i.e. that on his view the eternal truths are not actually eternal) misunderstands the nature of his conceptualist account of modality. When the critic wonders if the eternal truths are actually eternal, this question presupposes a non-conceptualist understanding of modality. The conceptualist cannot countenance such a question: "Anything we say now about the modal status that a proposition had or does or will have, or would have if..., must be determined by our actual present intellectual limits." (Ibid: 664). Given these limits, the eternal truths are eternal—humans cannot conceive of a time when the eternal truths did not or will not hold. According to Bennett, this is all the content we are entitled to give the concept of eternity. Although, conceptualism about modality may be a coherent position deserving of defense, it is a different question whether or not Descartes himself was a conceptualist. It seems that the most natural reading of the text (CSM 2:44-45, CSMK 3:23-24), would lead any non-philosophically motivated reader to conclude that Descartes literally believed that the eternal truths have been true and will be true eternally.

Bennett does not directly respond to the second objection (i.e. that on his interpretation the eternal truths depend on created beings and not on God) but focuses on a text that seems to explicitly contradict his position:

“Hence we should not suppose that eternal truths ‘depend on the human intellect or on other existing things’; they depend on God alone, who is the supreme legislator, has ordained them from eternity”

Bennett argues that Descartes only appears to contradict his conceptualist position, because he is replying to a critic who has asked if the “truths depend solely upon the intellect while it is thinking of them, or on existing things, or else they are independent...”¹⁰ (CSM 2:281).

According to Bennett, Descartes’ response is that they do not depend on the human intellect *in this way*—while the intellect is thinking of the eternal truths. So he concludes that Descartes only appears to say that the eternal truths do not depend on the human intellect, but in fact, Descartes is only denying that they depend on the intellect while it is thinking of them.

Bennett’s reading of the above text is questionable: if Descartes wanted to say that the necessity and the eternity of the eternal truths depend on human perception in any way, then Descartes was philosophically sophisticated enough to unequivocally state this. Even if one grants that Bennett’s reading of this single text is plausible, Bennett does not address all the other texts that clearly state that the eternal truths depend on God alone (CSM 2:44-45, CSMK 3:23-24). It is strange that Bennett thinks that this single text is the only truly problematic text as the overall impression one receives from reading Descartes’ theology is that everything, including the eternal truths depend on God.

I believe that there is a better way to account for the subjective language that Bennett observes in Descartes. Descartes often speaks in subjectivist language because his project of methodological doubt required it. Bennett notes that passages, such as the above following, prioritize human subjective impressions: “Everything which

I...understand is ...created by God so as to correspond...with *my understanding of it*" (CSM 2:54). It sounds at first as if God creates the world to match our perceptions. But this is taking the above quote too literally. Given the supremacy of God in Descartes' theology, it is unlikely that Descartes intended this interpretation. There is another explanation for the "intensely subjectivist strand" (Bennett, 1994: 651) that we find in Descartes. Descartes stated objective in the *Meditations* is to find solid, indubitable truths on which to base human knowledge. If Descartes was a conceptualist, then there would be no need to question the reliability of his perceptual faculties as he does in the *Meditations*. Descartes wants to find some propositions that are actually true so that we might have a solid foundation for all knowledge. In short, Descartes project of methodological doubt explains the subjective language that Bennett observes. Descartes believed that having clear and distinct perceptions of some idea meant that this idea was actually true independent of our thinking that it was true. It is the fact that certain things are necessary that we cannot conceive of them otherwise, not the other way around. Bennett has the causal direction backwards: Our concepts are not what 'create' necessity, but it is because God willed certain propositions to be necessary that we conceive certain things as necessary. Our understanding is constrained precisely because God has made certain things impossible (possible, contingent, necessary etc.). Since God is not a deceiver, God is able to fashion our perceptual faculties in such a way so that they will correspond to what is real: "Everything which I clearly and distinctly understand is capable of being created by God so as to correspond exactly with my understanding of it" (CSM 2:54). The reason our subjective modal impressions are the way they are is because God made modal truths the way they are.

An Alternate Account of Cartesian Modality

A more accurate interpretation of Cartesian modality would ideally embrace both T1 and T2, while giving a plausible answer to the 'Bootstraps' problem. It was the original difficulty of reconciling T1 and T2 that motivated Bennett's conceptualism. But, as we have seen, Bennett's route is not textually open to us. Therefore, there must be a

way to coherently embrace both T1 and T2 while avoiding Bennett's conceptualism about modality.

As I argued above, there is a strong textual case that Descartes would have embraced T1' and T2'. (I don't think this claim would be very controversial among Descartes scholars). I also argued above, that what follows from T1' is e_1 and what follows from T2' is b_2 . And e_1 and b_2 are directly contradictory:

e_1) It is not necessarily true that $2+2=4$.

b_2) It is necessarily true that $2+2=4$.

If Descartes means the same thing by each of his terms in e_1 and b_2 then Descartes has directly contradicted himself. However, I will argue that for Descartes, these propositions are not contradictory. This is because of the way Descartes uses the modal terms that are involved in the supposed contradiction above. In short, the modal terms Descartes uses are indexed to God's willing. So the sense in which Descartes uses, 'possible' or 'could' depends on what relation the term bears to God's willing. For example, in passages where Descartes is specifically addressing God's freedom in creation, modal terms used should be understood as indexed sans God's willing of the eternal truths. In other words, by formulating the Creation Doctrine, Descartes is imagining God 'before' He has willed what is to be necessary. Speaking in this way e_1 is true: God could have made it so that $2+2 \neq 4$ and so it is not necessarily₁ that $2+2=4$. However, God has timelessly willed that $2+2=4$ so cum God's willing the eternal truths, it is necessary₂ that $2+2=4$. This makes b_2 also true. So given the adjusted meanings of necessarily₁ and necessarily₂, e_1 and b_2 do not involve a contradiction:

e_1) It is not necessarily₁ true that $2+2=4$.

b_2) It is necessarily₂ true the $2+2=4$.

I am not accusing Descartes sloppy equivocation because Descartes only uses necessity₁ when he is speculating about divine freedom (or when he speaks about what is possible for God). Because of this, the Descartes scholar can make a principled distinction between the two senses of 'necessity' that Descartes uses.

Some might argue that ‘necessity₂’ is not what we mean when we call something ‘necessary’. If a proposition could have been otherwise, then it is not really necessary. Although we might wonder if Descartes’ notion of ‘necessity’ is robust enough for us, Descartes would have been satisfied with his account of modality. This is because for Descartes, God’s willing something to be a certain way is sufficient for it to be that way. When God willed $\Box P$, His will guaranteed that $\Box P$. So, necessity₂ is real necessity for Descartes. Some might object that Descartes is cheating—that his explanation seems cheap and unsatisfying. Descartes, however, is not being disingenuous. In fact it is what we should expect of Descartes given his Creation Doctrine—that all things originate from the will of God (Kaufman, 2005: 1-19). Descartes scholar, Dan Kauffman makes the excellent point that to expect to know why ‘ $\Box P$ ’, beyond that God willed that ‘ $\Box P$ ’, is to “expect something to which we are not entitled” because the question “‘Why did God do a?’ is in principle, unanswerable”(Ibid, 18-19). The question is unanswerable because if God had a reason for willing ‘ $\Box P$,’ then God would not be indifferent with respect to ‘P’. Therefore, for Descartes, God’s will is what distinguishes necessarily₁ ‘P’ and necessarily₂ ‘P’. To require more of Descartes is to commit a Cartesian category mistake.

If the above account of necessity is not convincing, there is another, related way to reconcile e_1 and b_2 : this involves the way that we understand the phrase ‘not true’ in e_1 ’above. When Descartes speaks of what God could have timelessly willed, Descartes is speaking of a ‘time’ when nothing (short of God’s existence) had a truth value. On CD one can infer that ‘before’ God’s decision to will, all truth values were undefined. So for example, one might ask if $2+2$ ‘did’ equal 4 sans God willing it to be so; but since this proposition did not exist, it had no truth value. So e_1 ’is not false: $\sim\Box(2+2=4)$, but not because it is false that $\Box(2+2=4)$, but because it is undefined that $\Box(2+2=4)$. E_1 and b_2 seem contradictory because we are thinking in terms of 2-valued logic, but in situations like the one that Descartes is considering, 3-valued logic is called for.

In Saul Kripke’s work on modality, he developed a 3-valued logic that is applicable to descriptions of modality in Descartes’ Creation Doctrine. For Kripke, “‘necessarily Fa’ means ‘a is F in every world

where a exists.”¹¹ So worlds where a does not exist, do not count against the necessity of Fa. So the world where God has not yet willed any proposition is a world where $2+2\neq 4$ because this proposition does not ‘yet’ exist. Necessarily $2+2=4$, is true because on Kripke’s system of logic we are allowed to ignore worlds with empty domains—namely the world that existed sans God’s willing mathematical propositions. Therefore, e_1 and b_2 are not contradictory in 3-valued logical systems such as Kripke’s.

The ‘Bootstraps’ Problem

Last, what might we say about the Bootstraps problem? Could it be that, Descartes thought God was indifferent with respect to his own existence? Could God have brought it about that He did not exist? It seems that Descartes would have made every attempt to block this undesirable consequence of his Creation Doctrine. But Descartes does not explicitly address this issue. There could be three reasons why Descartes did not address this: 1) Descartes overlooked this consequence of his Creation Doctrine 2) Descartes did not state the implications of CD because he was afraid of being charged with heresy or 3) Descartes thought that the answer was obvious. First, let us assume that Descartes was too good of a philosopher to overlook such obvious and major implications for his view; therefore, I will rule out 1, leaving either option 2 or 3. I will argue that either option represents a solution to the ‘Bootstraps’ problem. It will be sufficient for our purposes to show that either 2 or 3 will work because my goal is just to demonstrate that there are responses to the Bootstraps problem available to the non-conceptualist.

Second, it is possible that Descartes meant to have CD apply to God’s own person. On this view God was indifferent with respect to his own existence: God was free to bring about His necessary existence or was free to bring about His own non-existence. There are texts that imply that Descartes might have meant this. In the *Fifth Meditation* Descartes’ explains that our understanding of the necessity of God’s existence is like the necessity of certain geometrical properties:

Certainly, the idea of God, or a supremely perfect being, is one that I find within me just as surely as the idea of any shape or number. And my understanding that it belongs to his nature that he always exists is no less clear and distinct than is the case when I prove of any shape or number that some property belongs to its nature (CSM 2:45).

In the above text, our understanding of the necessity of certain mathematical truths is being paired with our understanding of God's necessary existence. This text seems to imply that if God's existence and the existence of certain mathematical properties are similar, then God could also have also brought about His own non-existence. This view has the advantage of straightforward consistency—Descartes does not need to make an exception for God's person in CD. Although this interpretation diminishes God's supremacy, Descartes might argue that limiting God's freedom/power in any way (even his freedom to bring about his own non-existence) is limiting God's supremacy.

According to the third option, Descartes did not address the bootstraps problem because he thought the answer was obvious. There are hints in Descartes' writings that he did not believe that the Creation Doctrine applied to God's own person. For instance, Descartes writes to Mersenne that "the existence of God is the first and most eternal of all possible truths and the one from which alone all the others proceed" (CSMK 3:24). This passage implies that God's existence is immune from the effects of CD—that God was not indifferent with respect to his own existence. Descartes also seemed to think (as can be seen in the above texts) that God could not have brought it about that there was a class of things that existed and did not depend on God's conservation. Descartes writes, "there cannot be any class of entity that does not depend on God" (CSM 2:294). This leads us to believe that Descartes thought that God was not indifferent about the dependence of all things on Him. Another reason why we might believe that the above two propositions represent a higher-order necessity for Descartes, is that his argument for the existence of God depends on God being a necessary being. If it were possible for God to instantiate the eternal truths and then bring about His own non-

existence, then Descartes' argument for God's existence¹² in the *Third Meditation* would fail. It might seem *ad hoc* for Descartes to make an exception to CD for God's existence. However, this exception is consistent with Descartes' theological views. God's existence and the dependence of all things on God was a foundational belief for Descartes. There are some beliefs that one takes as basic that cannot be analyzed further. For Descartes, God is the most basic and absolute ground of being.

Conclusion

Bennett's approach to Cartesian modality is misplaced: One does not have to resort to conceptualism about modality in order to explain the subjective language found in Descartes or to reconcile Descartes' Creation Doctrine with the necessity of the eternal truths. After showing that Bennett's argument implies that Descartes held the non-eternality of the eternal truths and the independence of the eternal truths from God, I offered two arguments reconciling the Creation Doctrine with the necessity of the eternal truths. First, I showed that if one understands Descartes' use modal terms as indexed to God's willing, then apparent contradictions vanish. Second, if one evaluates the truth value of modal propositions 'non-bivalently', then one can also unravel the apparent contradiction. After arguing that one can reconcile Descartes' Creation Doctrine and the necessity of the eternal truths without Bennett's conceptualism, I addressed the Bootstraps problem. I argue that there is textual evidence for two, different interpretations that both adequately address the problem. Although, there is not enough space in this paper for a full-scale analysis of the Bootstraps problem, the point is that one does not need to resort to conceptualism in order to offer a consistent interpretation of Descartes.

Notes:

1. Louis Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume: Continental Metaphysics and the Development of Modern Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).
2. Nicholas Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

3. Alvin Plantinga, *Does God have a Nature?* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1980) in Dan Kauffman, "Descartes's Creation Doctrine and Modality," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 80 (2002): 25.

4. Namely, Descartes' *a priori* physics, his clear statements that God is not a deceiver, his view that clear and distinct ideas are a guide to truth, and Descartes' arguments for the existence of God.

5. A. Koyre, *Essai sur l'idée de Dieu et les preuves de son existence chez Descartes* (1922): 19-21. in Harry Frankfurt, "Descartes on the Creation of Eternal Truths," *The Philosophical Review* 86, No. 1 (1977): 36-57.

6. All references to Descartes' writings come from either CSM: John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Duglad Murdoch (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, volumes I and II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) or CSMK: John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Duglad Murdoch, and Anthony Kenny (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, volume III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

7. I label Thomas' position as the traditional view although other scholastics (Scotus and Suarez) differed in their creation doctrines.

8. Henry Frankfurt argues that Descartes might have been motivated by concerns about God's simplicity when he formulated his Creation Doctrine: Descartes was concerned that by giving logical or temporal priority to God's intellect in creation, would create more than the accepted distinction of reason in God rendering God a complex entity. Therefore, Frankfurt argues that Descartes might have formulated CD as a response to scholastic views that he believed threatened God's simplicity.

9. And if they are not, God is a deceiver.

10. This is Bennett's translation of the Sixth Objections (CSM 2:281)

11. Gramme Forbes, *An Introduction to Modal Logic*, unpublished manuscript.

12. The argument for God's existence in the *Third Meditation* grounds God's existence is the dependence of all things on God.

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Place Goes Wrong in Treating Mind-brain Relationship

Clarifying why identity theory is neither reasonable nor a mere scientific problem in disguise*

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Abstract

U. T. Place claims that philosophical problems concerning the true nature of mind-brain relationship disappears or is settled adhering to materialism, especially type identity theory of mind. He takes above claim as a reasonable scientific hypothesis. I shall argue why it is not as he claims. At first, to pave the way for refutation, I will briefly clarify Place's approach to the subject in hand; although the rest of the paper will also contain more details about his position. Then, I will reduce his position into four theses and try to prove that the main claim of type identity theory is neither reasonable nor a mere scientific problem in disguise. I think that we ought to regard type identity theory, at most, just as a hypothesis which approximately displays the function of mind-brain relationship but tells us nothing justifiably about its true nature.

Keywords: *mind, brain, identity, analytic and synthetic, a posteriori necessity, internalism, externalism.*

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I. Place's approach in outline

It seems that identity is an issue in which usually the metaphysicians or the logicians are interested. However, the person who is the true pioneer of what became known as the identity theory of mind, whose papers paved the way for turning contemporary philosophers to materialism is not a metaphysician or logician; rather he is a psychophysicologist whose name is U. T. Place. Although he introduces himself as the one who is sympathetic to behavioristic approach attributed to Ryle and Wittgenstein (Place, 2004a, p. 45), in general, he is a part of an influential philosophical tradition elaborated in *the bundle theory of mind*, whose gist can be reported as

The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different, whatever natural propension¹ we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented, or of the materials of which it is composed (Hume, I, IV, §VI).

Such viewpoint caused Place to firmly adopt a reductive approach to the mind so that, regardless of some adjustments, it has remained unchanged from about 1950s until his death in 2000. According to his adopted view, conscious experiences are not events which have occurred in a mysterious place so-called *the mind*, nor are events managed by such entity which has been brought into being from a completely different material compared to what our body has been made of. He holds that conscious experience (or what is usually recognized as a mental event), “is an integral and vital part of the causal mechanism in the brain that transforms input into output, stimulus into response, thereby controlling the interaction between the organism and its environment” (Place, 2004j, p. 28).² Although, this functional definition is not necessarily inconsistent with a dualistic

approach; he expressly emphasizes on a reductive one and believes that all states of consciousness are processes in the brain (Place, 2004a, pp. 46-7 & 2004j, p. 15), that it is a *reasonable scientific hypothesis* (Place, 2004a, p. 46). (See also: Ayer, 1971, p. 23.) But when one asserts that “all A's are B's”, there will be always an ambiguity of how it must be interpreted; “all A's have the same intension as B's have” or “all A's have the same extension as B's have”. What Place intends, as I think, is the latter (Place, 2004f, p. 87).¹ So to say that “all states of consciousness are processes in the brain” is not to say that “these two are synonyms”. It is to say that there are two types of things, mental events and *a certain as yet unspecified type of cerebrospinal activity*, “which do not just happen to satisfy two descriptions but are such that the features that lead us to apply the one description also leads us to apply the other, and where the absence of the same features would in all cases lead us to withdraw both” (Ibid, p. 82). This perfect correlation between two types of events, in such a way that causes them to be equivalent, finally convinces him to acknowledge their identicalness (Ibid, p. 89). He casts his hypothesis in *Leibniz's principle of the identity of indiscernibles*² as below

$$(1) \quad \forall x \forall y [(A_x \equiv A_y) \supset (x = y)]$$

Leibniz's principle has been previously refuted by Kant (A264 / B320 & A272 / B328 & A281-2 / B337-8). To find an outlet keeps Place away from being confronted by Kant's critiques, if there is any, I propose another formulation for his hypothesis. Place speaks about a common property which can be attributed to a brain process same as a mental event (Place, 2004g, p. 102); instead, I suggest to speak about two different but equivalent types of describing an event. It can be formulated as

$$(2) \quad (\forall x)(M_x \equiv B_x)$$

That is to say, scientific research will ultimately show that for any event x there is an equivalence between analyzing it as a mental and as a brain event. Our suggested formula contains the very equivalence which Place looks for. Applying one of these two descriptions leads us to apply the other; if not, in all cases leads us to withdraw both. So,

the only problem confronting the psychophysicist is the problem of showing how a mental event could be equivalently described as a brain process or vice versa. This formula cannot be ruled out of court by a priori philosophical argument³ because it is basically proposed to explain the abundance of experimental observations and will be lastly verified by them, so its truth is a posteriori. This is parallel to the fourth Newtonian rule emphasized in *Principia*: “propositions gathered from phenomena by induction should be considered either exactly or very nearly true notwithstanding any contrary hypotheses, until yet other phenomena make such propositions either more exact or liable to exceptions” (Smith, 2004, p. 159).⁴ In brief, Place's reductive approach to the true nature of mind-brain relationship is entirely same as Schlick's approach to the fate of all philosophical problems, wherein he says: “some of them will disappear by being shown to be mistakes and misunderstandings of our language⁵ and the others will be found to be ordinary scientific questions in disguise” (Schlick, 2002, p. 19).

II. Refuting Place's approach

Place develops his hypothesis in such a way that one may think it will lastly make its rival positions become no longer in use. Moreover, there may be some connections between his approach and artificial intelligence, which has recently attracted remarkable attentions towards itself. Due to this supposed connections, disapproving his approach is not easy. But I think his hypothesis is not reasonable as he claims. Since I challenge the justifiability of his position, especially of reducing mental events to brain events and philosophical problems to scientific ones, it will be necessary for me to discuss and try to raise a number of problems concerning which one of his hypotheses is untenable. I am going to do so via discussion about four theses supporting his position. I think whatever makes these theses valid (or invalid), will also be able to strengthen (or weaken) his position. The reader will give me the greatest aid in the task of trying to make these matters clear if he kindly assumes that nothing is clear in advance.

Thesis (1): whatever can be disregarded in a physical explanation, can be ontologically disregarded too.

According to statement (1), Place's hypothesis is some sort of intertheoretic reduction adopted for explaining the relationship between events but, at the end, he utilizes it to give a materialistic conclusion about the essential nature of what we called mental. As a general rule, if we develop a new and very powerful theory which entails a set of propositions and principles that can almost perfectly mirror the propositions and principles of some older theory or conceptual framework, and if the older one parallels a portion of the newer one when they are meticulously analyzed, then we may properly conclude that we have apprehended the very same reality that is incompletely described by the old framework, but with a new and more penetrating one (Place, 2004f, p. 89; Churchland, 1999, pp. 26-7). So a materialist may argue as below:

Premise (1): what is now apprehended by a physical conceptual framework is the very same reality that has been already apprehended by a psychological one.

Premise (2): the physical framework just needs to presuppose only one type of matter for a proper explanation and prediction.

Conclusion: if a chain of causes is required to explain an event then, based on identity theory, those links of the causal chain where a dualist fills by events occurred in (or managed by) a mysterious entity so-called the mind can be filled by the cerebrospinal events. Therefore, quite the opposite of a dualistic claim, there is no justified reason for presupposing a type of matter rather than what the physical framework presupposes.

It is an ontological restriction deduced from a physically efficient explanation. But “there is no conceivable experiment which could decide between materialism and epiphenomenalism”, Smart asserts (Smart, 1959, p. 155). Because what epiphenomenalist supposes rather than materialist has no causal effect and hence does not appear in the causal chain required to explain an event, so it can be omitted in an explanatory reasoning. But, despite this, we are not justified to omit it

ontologically. Therefore Place cannot justifiably settle disputations in favour of a materialistic position.

Smart's disputation holds an internalistic approach to the justification, so Place, in reply to his objection, appeals to an externalistic response. He abandons his rival objection by reliance on a commonsense belief, holding that any hypothesis of mind ought to be consistent with our commonsense and to explain it as a matter of fact, as much as possible.⁶ As a commonsense belief, we all believe that '*how and what we think and feel affects what we say and do*'. It seems that identity theory is more compatible with the above belief than epiphenomenalism or even psychological parallelism (Place, 2004c, p. 79). Perhaps, we initially think that Place can avoid Smart's objection by using an externalistic approach, but it will finally make his program end up methodologically in an incompatibility. Although this incompatibility is a short cut to rebut Place's hypothesis but I leave it to be discussed in thesis (4).

Let us turn to materialist argument especially where he claims: those links of the causal chain filled by mental events can be equivalently filled by the cerebrospinal events. It is what I cast in statement (2). If so, we have

$$(3) \quad (\forall x)(M_x \supset B_x)$$

That is to say, for any event x if regarded as a mental event then scientific researchers will ultimately show that what occurred is a brain event; however, Place's assertion is partly stronger. He claims what occurred is a certain, yet unspecified type of brain event (Place, 2004f, p. 82 & 2004c, p. 76). But is it a universal proposition applying to all states of mental events whatsoever, as Place claims?⁷ Is pain a certain type of brain event, for example, C-fibers firing? If so, then there might be a madman (or even a Martian) who sometimes feels pain, just as we do, but whose pain differs greatly from ours in its causes and effects;⁸ in this case, could we justifiably claim that he feels whatever, if he feels one, but his feeling is not pain?⁹ How should he behave or react so that we are convinced that he is in pain? Although the case of madman (or Martian) is sufficient to show that Place's assertion is not applicable to all states of mental events

whatsoever, but of course, objections are not restricted to these unusual cases. Neuroscientists recently hold that the functional properties of neurons and the functional architecture of the cerebral cortex are dynamic, some modifications in neural network have been seen which are effective in recovery of function after neural lesions, and thus a part of neural network might undertake the role of other ones (Gilbert, 1999, p. 598). So while Place insists on the one-to-one match between a given type of mental event and an unspecified type of brain event, neuroscientific discoveries show that mental events might be realizable to a great extent. Place's interpretation of statement (3) unjustifiably ignores these discoveries. After all, his other assertion might still be justified: *these objections have been put forward by scientific researches and can be settled by the same researches as well*. So the disputation about the true nature of mind-brain relationship is still a scientific issue. However, analyzing Place's response to token identity can refute this assertion as well.

Physical multiple realizations of mental events, beside other reasons, lastly convinced some such as Davidson to introduce a version of token identity which I formulate as:

$$(4) \quad (\exists x)(M_x \wedge B_x)^{10}$$

That is to say, there is at least an event, such as *a*, regarded as a mental event causally related to a physical event, such as *b*. Since, to Davidson, there is no strict psychophysical law relating a mental event to a physical one,¹¹ so if two events instantiate a strict law then both are physical; that is, *a* itself also must be a physical event (Davidson, 2001a, especially p. 224). For two reasons, Place rejects token identity. I formulate his first reason, based on what logical empiricists named *verification principle*, as these:

Premise (1): When we utter a statement, it is factually significant, if and only if, we can specify any observations relevant to the determination of its truth or falsehood. But if it is of such a character that the assumption of its truth, or falsehood, is consistent with any assumption whatsoever concerning the nature of our future experience, then it is, if not a tautology, a mere pseudo-proposition.¹²

Premise (2): Unlike type identity physicalism, token identity physicalism rests not on the outcome of future psychophysiological research but on an a priori argument; that is, it is not committed to any prediction as to what future empirical research will reveal (Place, 2004f, p. 88 & 2004c, p. 73).

Conclusion: So any putative psychophysical token identity statement is not factually significant.

Assessing truth-value of our suggested formulas, (2) and (4), help us to understand Place's another reason. "There is no conceivable prospect of the truth of any psychophysical token identity statement being established in the future that does not depend on the prior establishment of the truth of a psychophysical type identity statement", he writes (Place, 2004f, p. 88). I can add, moreover, if statement (2) is false then statement (4) will be consequently false too; in other words, if we are to abandon the former we have to abandon both. These two replies of Place to token identity offend the other part of his hypothesis; because he, contrary to his previous claim, settles the debate on type and token identity by a priori argument rather than scientific research.

Type identity, based on statement (2), implies another consequent statement as below; in a way that statement (2) is a conjunction of statement (3) and (5).

$$(5) \quad (\forall x)(B_x \supset M_x)$$

That is to say, for any event x if regarded as a brain event then scientific researchers will ultimately show that what occurred is a mental event; of course, according to Place's type-type identity, it is a certain type of mental event. But what is claimed to be revealed, is not of those possible results straightforwardly verified or disproved by experiment, rather it is of those which is manifested through one's own introspective reports and we have no choice but to postulate it as a fact of what occurred within individuals. Due to this, Place adopts a behavioristic approach (Place, 2004a, p. 45)¹³ or somewhere employs *the adverbial theory of sensation* (Place, 2004a, pp. 50-51 & 2004j, pp. 15-6). Although these solutions are partly effective, there are still

some problems which are yet open to debate. (a) We do not know for certain that the adverbial theory is applicable to all mental events (Lowe, 2004, pp. 118-9). (b) Place holds, for most cognitive concepts, there can be an analysis in terms of dispositions to behave. There is, however, no limit to the ways in which individuals might manifest a given mental event; so in giving a definition for it, we will have an open-ended list of behaviors. But no term can be well-defined whose definition is open-ended and unspecific (Ibid, pp. 42-4; Churchland, 1999, p. 24). Moreover, as I think, “an open-ended list” is not to say that if we can anyhow add more behaviors to the list then we will correspondingly come nearer to understand the given mental event. There is no guarantee for this achievement. (c) Based on *invert spectrum argument*, it seems perfectly conceivable that two individuals' color experiences might be systematically inverted with respect to each other. If it was the case, both of them would nonetheless have exactly the same powers of color-discrimination and, other physical circumstances being equal, both of them would apply color terms to objects in exactly the same way (Lowe, 2004, pp. 53-5). That is to say, two perfectly different mental events might have been felt even in exactly the same physical and behavioral circumstances. (d) There is also a more fundamental problem. Behavioristic approach is based on an assumption that language and behavior always function in the same way, always serve the same purpose: to manifest what occurs within (Wittgenstein, §304).¹⁴ What does convince us not to doubt this presupposition?¹⁵

All these demonstrate that our suggested formula, statement (2), although is useful to clarify what Place exactly claims but is inadequate to explain the true nature of mind-brain relationship. Recently, some physicalists prefer to substitute type identity with strong and weak supervenience. According to proposed definitions for them (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 558), I formulate strong supervenience as

$$(6) \quad \Box[\forall B(B_x) \supset \exists M(M_x)] \wedge \Box(M_x \supset B_x)$$

And weak supervenience as

$$(7) \quad \Box[\forall B(B_x) \supset \exists M(M_x)] \wedge (M_x \supset B_x)$$

Although, on the one hand, the former may acknowledge a reductive approach¹⁶, as I think, it is not appropriate for depicting Place's standpoint about how linguistic conventions necessarily determine the referent of a given name. It will be discussed with more specifics in thesis (3). On the other hand, the latter does not seem to be so that lastly obliges us to subscribe to reductionism (Davidson, 2001a, p. 214); furthermore, it does not satisfy Place's position on the true nature of mind-brain relationship. Because his position is a materialistic one, and any robust materialistic position needs to guarantee that what is material determines all that there is in the world, whereas it cannot give such guarantee (Kim, 1993, p. 63).

Briefly, there are, of course, numerous events physically related to each other but if we try to insert these related events in a determinate one-to-one correspondance imposing an ontological restriction on them, then things will not turn out as we assumed.

Thesis (2): there are psychophysical causal laws appropriate to mature our understanding of mind-brain relationship.

Type identity needs some sort of psychophysical causal laws whereby can relate and reduce one type of events to another. Since Place holds that “any dispositional statement is itself a universally quantified causal law in the sense that is required” (Place, 2004c, p. 74 & 2004g, p. 103 & 2004h, p. 108), thus it is obvious that he will refute any disapproval of regarding dispositional statement as, for example, token identity elaborated by Davidson.

According to token identity, Davidson asserts that there is no psychophysical law that causally relates and reduces one type of events to another. He holds that “any effort at increasing the accuracy and power of a theory of behavior forces us to bring more and more of the whole system of the agent's beliefs and motives directly into account”. Furthermore we traditionally regard human as a rational agent so, in inferring this theory from the evidence, all the requisites of being a rational agent must be fulfilled. These requisites result in more or less acceptable theories in such a way that there is no objective ground for any choices (Davidson, 2001a, pp. 221-2). It is because we may give necessary conditions for acting on a reason;

however, we cannot give sufficient ones. What prevents us from giving both necessary and sufficient conditions for acting on a reason also prevents us from giving serious laws connecting reasons and actions (Davidson, 2001b, pp. 231-3 & 2001a, pp. 223-4). “There may be true general statements relating the mental and the physical, statements that have the logical form of a law; but they are not law-like”, Davidson adds. Even if, anyhow, “we were to stumble on a non-stochastic true psychophysical generalization we would have no reason to believe it more than roughly true” (Davidson, 2001a, p. 216). In other words, there is a difference between *being causally related* and *being in such a way that can instantiate a law*. There may be some dispositions, as Place claims, which make a given man have some behaviors but it is not to say that, based on these dispositions, there must also be a law relating situations and behaviors in such a way that *whenever that given man had been faced with such-and-such situations, and if such-and-such further circumstances had been satisfied, he would have behaved in such-and-such a way*.¹⁷ We cannot say so. Because, on the one hand, human is a rational agent; he ceaselessly considers various factors surrounding him, thus he may suddenly give up an action and busy himself with an unpredictable one. Therefore, his action cannot be described in a *closed system*¹⁸ and hence there cannot be psychophysical laws, those which his situation and behavior instantiate as cause and effect.¹⁹ On the other hand, such psychophysical laws are to reduce human behavior into world of physics while the rational aspects of human behavior have no place in the world of physics. Imagine how odd it is to say that Newtonian laws will properly answer if the material particles are truthful representations of their mass or of the magnitude of exerted forces. In general, Davidson claims that a universal true statement is law-like if, and only if, can be capable of sustaining a true counterfactual conditional while a dispositional statement is not so. Unlike him, Goodman puts forward considerable reflections which can affect both Davidson's and Place's position.

First, Goodman asserts that counterfactual conditionals and laws capable of sustaining them have their own difficulties and are troublesome (Goodman, 1983, pp. 3-27 & especially pp. 34-8). So he offers focusing on dispositions instead of dealing with counterfactual

conditionals and their sustaining laws (Ibid, pp. 38-9 & pp. 86-7). He, of course, emphasizes that it is not certain this changing in strategy solves anything by itself (Ibid, p. 40), whereas, Place thinks it can be so. In any case, since dispositional statement says something exclusively about the internal state of a thing (or an event) while counterfactual says in addition something about the surrounding circumstances (Ibid, pp. 39-40), therefore turning from the later to the former is also in accord with Place's internalistic approach which I will clarify in thesis (4).

Second, when we distinguish law-like from non-law-like, we do nothing except seeking to know which one is justifiably capable of receiving confirmation from our observations. Suppose that a scientist, here a neuroscientist, by means of electroencephalogram observes that “whenever a mental process occurs, there occurs a corresponding brain process that has the same degree of complexity as the mental process reported by the subject, has all the causal properties required to generate the behavior that the mental process is supposed to generate, and whose occurrence is a causally necessary condition for the occurrence of that behavior” (Place, 2004c, p. 76). Based on his observation, he makes hypothesis H_1

H_1 : All mental processes are brain processes.

He may seem justified to believe in H_1 because a number of evidences confirm it. But some further examples will show that his accepted theory of conformation not only includes a few unwanted cases, but is so completely ineffectual that it virtually excludes nothing. Suppose that, for example, all instances of crudes extracted before a certain time t are black. At the time t , it depends on our observations recorded up to time t , all evidence statements assert that crude a is black, that crude b is black, and so on; and each confirms the general hypothesis H_2

H_2 : All crudes are black.

Now suppose that, after time t , environmental conditions change in such a way that we can observe an instance of gray crude, for the first time. Let us introduce another hypothesis H_3 as this

H_3 : All crudes are blay.

That is to say, any instances of crude are blay, if observed up to time t and in that observation it is black, otherwise, it is gray if observed after time t for the first time. If so, then at time t we have, for each evidence statement that given crude is black, a parallel evidence statement asserting that that crude is blay. And the statement that crude a is blay, that crude b is blay, and so on, will each confirm the general hypothesis H_3 that all crudes are blay.

Now, while the neuroscientist seems to be justified to believe in H_1 , nevertheless, based on his accepted theory of confirmation, we have a serious problem of H_2 and H_3 . They make incompatible predictions about the result of observation after time t . According to the former, what we will observe is an instance of black crude; whereas according to the latter, we will observe an instance of gray one. We are not justified to hold one and reject the other because they both are confirmed equally by evidence statements describing the same observations.²⁰ If so, then we may introduce one (or more) alternative(s) for H_1 which are based on evidence statements describing the same observations, but make incompatible prediction. These cases, “though seldom encountered in practice, nevertheless display to the best advantage the symptoms of a widespread and destructive malady” (Goodman, 1983, p. 80).

It shows that hypotheses, and indeed laws, are not merely summaries of the observations (Ibid, pp. 84-5), otherwise, laws could be justifiably confirmed only by them. There may be no certain relationship between evidence cases and laws. But if there is no such relationship then what determines the genuine nature of laws? Unfortunately, there is not still a complete agreement on how this question ought to be answered. “Empiricists are inclined to interpret laws as summaries of observation. Realists are inclined to interpret laws as tendency statements grounded in a hierarchy of assumptions about the natures of the physical systems which possess them.”²¹ Yet other philosophers are inclined to interpret at least some Laws of Nature as grammatical rules, specifying the way in which certain concepts are to be used” (Harré, 2000, p. 221). Now, which account ought to be preferred? It seems that there is no one common feature

which marks out all and only laws, that is to say, there may be a family resemblance between the various cases in which we would use the term “law” (Ibid, p. 221; Wittgenstein, §67). While the laws are so then it is quite misleading to claim that, by means of laws, you are to know the true nature of mind-brain relationship. However, it seems that Place claims to do so.

Thesis 3: over the times, scientific discoveries develop/readjust the meaning of words employed to describe our mental life.

Nowadays, it is too difficult to neglect the success of scientific approach in making a great deal of alterations around us. Thus, materialists are used to speaking about these successes in such a exaggerated manner that one may assume our perception of mental events (e.g. pains, itches, mental images, and so on), as other issues, is also exposed to a gradual development/readjustment in meaning so that the meaning of our words will eventually not be as it has been before. It is this standpoint that Place employs to deal with a problem that threatens the validity of his approach. When we claim that there is a perfect correlation between two events in such a way that implies their identicalness, there exists a necessity here (Place, 2004f, p. 82). But to Place, it is just analytical propositions which are referring to such perfect and hence necessary correlations. If so, since the truth value of these propositions is determined completely and exclusively by linguistic conventions, then these propositions basically do not refer to factual states of affairs expected to be revealed through a scientific discovery.²² As a permanent tradition in philosophy, those propositions referring to factual states of affairs have been regarded as synthetic not analytic, as ones referring to contingent states of affairs and not to necessary ones. So in arguing for type identity theory of mind, Place needs to argue for the existence of a kind of proposition that is necessarily true and its truth value determines anyhow by referring to factual states of affairs not exclusively by some linguistic conventions. By criticizing Quinean skepticisms on the sentences such as “Whatever is green is extended”, where, according to Quine, *it is not clear whether it is true analytically or synthetically* (Quine, 1951, pp. 31-4), Place found what he was looking for. He writes:

There is a linguistic convention whereby the predicate “green” ... is restricted in its application to extended substances and their surfaces; and if we apply the principle that a statement that is true solely by virtue of linguistic convention is analytic, that makes the statement “Whatever is green is extended” an analytic proposition. ... However, to claim that there is evidence for the existence of a linguistic convention that forbids the ascription of color predicates to non-extended objects is not to deny that underlying that linguistic convention there is a contingent fact about the physics of light, namely, that, as far as we know, photons can only reach the eye of an observer if they are emitted from and/or reflected by some kind of extended object, and that, consequently, it is only such objects that can be distinguished by their color (Place, 2004d, p. 153).²³

This could be the very Archimedean support needed to dislocate the rigid boundary seemed to be drawn between analytic and synthetic statements forever. The thing needed to be solved was introducing a process through which a synthetic proposition could transform to an analytic one. If he could anyhow do so then the problem would be solved completely. For Place, of course, we are acquainted with such process; or at least, scientists must be so (Place, 2004e, p. 179). He holds that, as a result of cumulative empirical discoveries that render the old manners of talking inconveniently and inappropriately,²⁴ some of the sentences that previously expressed an analytic truth cease to do so and sentences that were previously synthetic become analytic (Place, 2004d, p. 154).²⁵ In his 2004f paper, Place more clearly explains how aforesaid transformation occurs:

[We all know that] the observations on the basis of which we describe a sample as a case of water and the observations on the basis of which we describe it as H₂O are widely separated. Nevertheless, the fact that the predicates have the same extension ... is so well established and so widely known that “Water is H₂O”

has become an analytic statement and, by the criterion of what it is self-contradictory to deny, a necessary truth. That this conceptual connection has developed is shown by the observation that in cases of doubt a chemical test showing that a sample has the chemical composition H_2O takes precedence over all other criteria in showing that it is in fact water. A similar outcome is to be expected in the case of consciousness and the particular pattern of brain activity, yet to be identified, in which presumably it consists. As things stand, the existence of such a pattern of brain activity is... a hypothesis that will be confirmed or disconfirmed by future neuropsychological research. If, as seems increasingly probable, such research establishes both the existence and the nature of the pattern of brain activity in which consciousness consists, and these results become widely known, the development of a similar analytic and necessary connection between the two is to be expected (Place, 2004f, p. 84).²⁶

In brief, he holds that the attribution of a property which has been experimentally discovered about an object becomes sometimes so well known that can be expressed in an analytical proposition.²⁷ Place's standpoint herein, as I construe, is based on the following three theses:

Thesis 3.1: For any name or designating expression X , there exist specified descriptions²⁸ (or maybe an unspecified cluster of descriptions²⁹) P which the members of a linguistic community believe that ' P_X ' and summarize the meaning of X .³⁰

Thesis 3.2: These very descriptions are sufficient to pick out an individual α uniquely, which is the referent of X .³¹

Thesis 3.3: It is just by an analytical proposition that can necessarily attribute the entire descriptions P (or most of them) to ' X '.

Place necessitates the above-mentioned triplet because he firmly believes that it is what occurs when we are referring to something or ascribing a property to them.³² He believes that we employ the denotation of a noun or designate expression as a criterion for deciding whether or not a given instance belongs to the extensions of a singular (or even a general) name;³³ and it is just due to the fact that the meaning of a name summarizes all properties attributing to its referent. But is it exactly so?

Let us take the case of “*Chehel-Sotoun*”, a very famous mansion in Isfahan.³⁴ Supposing that the meaning of “*Chehel-Sotoun*” summarizes all properties which a competent Iranian historian can express about this mansion, if someday these properties (or even some of them) are not attributable to the present referent of “*Chehel-Sotoun*” then do we say that the meaning of aforesaid name has changed or it has no referent now? Do we get into trouble in identifying the referent of “*Chehel-Sotoun*”? Certainly, it is not what occurs for most of us (or at least for Iranian people). Moreover, we do not even try to determine which or how many of these properties must remain fixed so that we can be sure that the aforesaid name does not lose its referability. Here, someone, such as Searle, claims that in spite of this fact that we do not necessarily need specified properties to be sure that the aforesaid name does not lose its referability, it is an undeniable fact that “*Chehel-Sotoun*” has a sufficient but so far unspecified number of these properties commonly attributed to it so that any possible extension lacking at least some of these properties could not be the referent of it (Searle, 1958, p. 172). Although Searle admits that most of these properties just assign contingent facts to our referent but it cannot convince him to claim that a given proper name in itself has no sense, because he did not know “how, unless the name has a sense, is it to be correlated with the object?” (Ibid, p. 168) So if it can be conceivable to explain the correlation between a proper name and its referent without supposing any sense then both theses (3.1) & (3.2) will be completely abandoned. We know, at least now, it has been possible by the *causal theory of reference* presented by Kripke.

Kripke asserts that ‘names are rigid designators’; that is to say, each of them, regardless of which properties attributing to its referent,

in every possible world designates the same object (Kripke, 1980, p. 48). According to him, properties have no determinant role in identifying the referent of a name. Most of people know nothing of why a mansion must be named “*Chehel-Sotoun*” while it has only 20 columns, some of them even wrongly think it has a porch with 40 columns; nevertheless, they have no problem in identifying the referent of “*Chehel-Sotoun*”. In explaining why it is so, Kripke writes:

It is in general not the case that the reference of a name is determined by some uniquely identifying marks, some unique properties satisfied by the referent and known or believed to be true of that referent by the speaker. First, the properties believed by the speaker need not be uniquely specifying. Second, even in the case where they are, they may not be uniquely true of the actual referent of the speaker's use but of something else or of nothing. This is the case where the speaker has erroneous beliefs about some person. He does not have correct beliefs about another person, but erroneous beliefs about a certain person. In these cases the reference actually seems to be determined by the fact that the speaker is a member of a community of speakers who use the name. The name has been passed to him by tradition from link to link (Ibid, p. 106).

He then adds, as an implicit conclusion, the general term employed in assigning a type of objects functions in the same manner too; it has “a greater kinship with proper names than is generally realized”, he says (Ibid, p. 134). Possession of most of those properties, by which we originally identified the instances of a kind, “need not be a necessary condition for membership in the kind nor need it be a sufficient condition” (Ibid, pp. 119-21). The terms such as pain, impression, imagination and the like are also so (Ibid, p. 148). In these all cases “the reference actually seems to be determined by the fact that the speaker is a member of a community of speakers who use the

name". It appears that *causal theory of reference* presents a better picture than that given by descriptive theses (3.1) & (3.2).

But what can we do about thesis (3.3)? Is it just an analytic proposition which can attribute a necessary truth to 'X'? Do we have a necessary truth of 'X' attributed by a synthetic proposition? In other words, do we have a *posteriori necessary truth* of 'X'? To Kripke, some of the problems which bother people in these situations come from a confusion, between what we can know *a priori* in advance and what is *necessary* (Ibid, p. 109). He holds that objects (or a type of them) "may be named by ostension, or the reference of the name may be fixed by a description" (Ibid, p. 96).³⁵ *By this initial naming, we refer to their essence with no regard to their actual existence or even any possible status of existence that they may have.*³⁶ Due to this, the given name can rigidly designate its own referent in every possible world.

Now, suppose that a physicist stochastically comes across some evidence for a new kind of matter. He uses, for example, Φ as a name rigidly designating the matter he has come across. By further research, it is discovered that ' Φ ' is a new element with atomic number n . It is certainly something he did not know in advance. It can be imagined that this might be an unfamiliar state of an element one of those discovered previously or even an unknown composition. But once he knows that this is a truth of the very nature of the substance of which it is made of,³⁷ it cannot then be imagined that this thing might have failed to be an element with atomic number n . Let us introduce E as "being an element with atomic number n " then we can formulate above situation as

$$(8) \quad \Box(\forall x)(\Phi_x \supset E_x)$$

According to statement (8), necessarily for any matter x , if it is an instance of ' Φ ' then it has n proton. But to Place, who believes in a descriptive theory of reference, a proposition such as "' Φ ' has n protons" is a synthetic proposition expressing a contingent truth of ' Φ ' (Place, 2004f, p. 82) which if becomes so well established and so widely known, it may transform to an analytical proposition

expressing a necessary truth of ' Φ '. As he construes, the situation must be casted as

$$(9) \quad (\forall x)(\Phi_x \supset \Box E_x)$$

According to statement (9), for any matter x , if it is an instance of ' Φ ' then this is a priori known via meaning which necessarily has n protons. But it is clearly wrong that a scientist, who is to know the true nature of something, thinks the necessity, revealed by his scientific research is a necessity coming from meaning. If the necessity is so then he can significantly claim nothing about the true nature. Instead, he ought to think that that a necessity comes from the essence of what science deals with, which is verified by experiments. That is what statement (8) expresses; *a posteriori necessary truth of ' Φ '*. So, if Place is to speak about the true nature of mind-brain relationship then he ought to abandon thesis (3.3).

Thesis 4: *what is called a mental event is entirely what occurs in one's inside, especially in his cerebrospinal system.*

Although Place's approach is fundamentally based on an internalistic approach to the mind-brain relationship, he frequently oscillates between internalism and externalism. But what does it distinctly mean, having an internalistic (or externalistic) approach to the subject in hand?

Suppose that there is a set of factors F to possess a given property P in such a way that a subject S possesses property P if and only if F is satisfied. According to internalism, none of F s presupposes the existence of anything other than the given S to whom that property is ascribed; but to externalism, there may be at least one member of F which is not so (Goldman, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, when we discuss a given mental event, if we assume that none of the factors necessary to possess it presupposes the existence of any individual other than the subject to whom that event is ascribed then we have an internalistic (or individualistic) approach to the issue. And if we do not employ such assumption then we have an externalistic approach to the issue. Here, what is so important is that the former can be differently stated; no mental event presupposes the existence of the subject's body: it is

logically possible that a disembodied mind exists to which that event can be ascribed (Putnam, 1975, p. 220). This statement, which is traditionally attributed to Descartes, adopts a view to the intrinsic nature of mental event. Place intends to show that even if, anyhow, we can abstractly observe a mental event,³⁸ we will not be inevitably obligated to reach to the Cartesian conclusion. It is not an event over and above the physical and physiological processes in one's inside. He writes:

I shall assume that ... statements about pains and twinges, about how things look, sound, and feel, about things dreamed of or pictured in the mind's eye are statements referring to events and processes that are in some sense private or internal to the individual of whom they are predicated. The question I wish to raise is whether in making this assumption we are inevitably committed to a dualist position in which sensations and mental images form a separate category of processes over and above the physical and physiological processes with which they are known to be correlated. I shall argue that an acceptance of inner processes does not entail dualism (Place, 2004a, pp. 45-6).³⁹

Therefore, due to the fact that Place has focused all his attention on the discussion of the true nature of mind-brain relationship, it makes no sense that he is not seriously asserting anything of the true nature of mental events when he says: "the properties attributing to mental events can be the properties of a brain process, as Leibniz's Law requires". Consequently, he should believe that what determines the intrinsic nature of mental events must occur in one's own body, especially in his own cerebrospinal system, not in a mysterious place so-called the mind. Thus, according to him, when we discuss the intrinsic nature of a given mental event, we have no need to presuppose the existence of anything other than the body of whom that event is ascribed to.⁴⁰ This is an internalistic (or individualistic) approach to the subject. But if he is going to be an internalist so he has to retain the approach through his program and never puts an assertion

offending this approach. He is not methodologically justified to temporarily change his entire approach to the subject whenever he reaches an impasse. Anyway, it is indeed an undeniable fact that he occasionally did so.⁴¹

Conclusion

Let us summarize what we have accomplished up to now, if we have done any. As we have seen, Place, sympathetic to Schlick, holds that philosophical problems about the true nature of mind-brain relationship disappears and is settle adhering to materialism and then we will find ourselves faced with a purely scientific issue, namely, whether there is in fact a physiological process that is identical with a given mental event. He holds that this empirical problem will also be settled by further psychophysiological researches (Place, 2004b, p. 54 & 2004c, p. 74). *First*, I hope to have proved that there are still various stubborn philosophical problems which are yet unsettled. Therefore, discussing the true nature of mind-brain relationship is not, at least so far, a mere scientific problem in disguise. *Second*, even if the philosophical objections will be settled in favor of a materialistic view, I hope to have proved that the identity theory is not as tenable that Place claims. To be sure, it is not to say that we ought to abandon Place's position entirely. In denying the justifiability of his position, we must be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. It is a remarkable fact that physical methods work well in so many domains. For *what need explaining in those domains are structures and functions*. If these are all that must be explained about mind-brain relationship then, although we do not have anything close to a complete explanation of them yet, we will have a clear idea of how we may explain them by means of physical accounts. These are *the easy problems of consciousness*, in D. Chalmers' words, because they concern the explanation of cognitive abilities and functions (Chalmers, 2007, p. 226 & 233). To explain a cognitive function, we need to only specify a mechanism that can perform the function. The methods of cognitive science are well-suited for this sort of explanations, and so are well-suited to such problems. Nevertheless, the key issue is that there are some other problems concerning the subject in hand which are not so. These are *the hard problems of*

consciousness because they persist even when the performance of all the relevant functions is explained (Ibid, p. 225 & p. 227). It is widely agreed that conscious experiences arise from physical bases, but we have no good explanation of why and how they arise. Why should physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all? It seems objectively unreasonable that it should, yet it does (Ibid, p. 226 & p. 228 & 233). So, Place's reductive approach may solve some of the easy problems, but it justifiably tells us nothing about the hard ones, something about the true nature of mind-brain relationship and its components. It is why I believe that discussing the true nature of mind-brain relationship is not a mere scientific issue in disguise.

Notes

1. Smart also presented an explanation the same as what Place asserted in his 2004a paper (Smart, 1959, p.145-7). But, thereafter, Place aimed at completing it.
2. See: Place, 2004c, p. 80 & 2004g, p.102.
3. It is what Place introduces as the main characteristic of his hypothesis (Place, 2004c, pp. 72-3).
4. To observe a more explicit diction where Place has used this criterion, see: (Place, 2004b, pp. 54-5 & 2004c, pp. 79-80).
5. One of these linguistic analyses will be discussed later, in thesis (3).
6. Commonsense belief is justifiably applied as much as a fact served to verify the result of our researche. A commonsense belief, as I construe, satisfies all conditions proposed by Goldman to be weakly justified at the primary level (Goldman, 1988, p. 59). Place speaks about commonsense beliefs, and about our ordinary psychological language indeed, as if there is no reasonable doubt about the justifiability of our primary reliance on them (Place, 2004j, p. 28). We should reinterpret them in a new and more penetrating framework, not try to eliminate them. This is a sort of Reliabilism counted as an externalistic theory of justification (Goldman, 1988, p. 65).
7. See: Place, 2004a, p. 47.
8. See: Lewis, 1983, pp. 122-3.
9. D. Lewis presents a solution for this problem (Lewis, 1983, p. 126).

10. Kim proposes statement (7) instead of statement (4) in order to formulate Davidson's position (Kim, 1993, pp. 57-64; Davidson, 2001a, p. 214). This suggestion seems to be more accurate but, about the subject in hand, it is not so. For if I follow Kim, in contrast to Davidson's position, I have to cast Place's statement (6). But the latter statement, as I think, does not correspond to Place's standpoint about linguistic conventions and how the referent of a given name is necessarily determined by them. For more details you can see the following discussion of thesis (3).

11. It will be more discussed in thesis (2).

12. See: Ayer, 1971, p. 16 & p. 20.

13. Moreover, his 2004i paper is a perfect instance of this approach.

14. To read a more fundamental one, see: Wittgenstein, § 294.

15. If that is not so 'there is no way ... whereby we can use the introspective reports of other people as evidence of the nature of their mental processes or have any reason for believing in the existence of such processes in the case of others' (Place, 2004c, p. 79). It is an implicit reliance on an externalistic approach to subject in hand which is not finally to Place's advantage. I will speak more about it in thesis (4).

16. McLaughlin, unlike Kim, does not agree with this idea (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 559; Kim, 1993, p. 57).

17. See: Kant, A 91-92 / B 124.

18. In this system 'whatever can affect the system must be included in it' (Davidson, 1999, p. 30); see also: Davidson, 2001a, pp. 219-220.

19. We [cannot] expect ever to be able to explain and predict human behavior with the kind of precision that is possible in principle for physical phenomena. This does not mean there are any events that are in themselves undetermined or unpredictable; it is only events as described in the vocabulary of thought and action that resist incorporation into a closed deterministic system (Davidson, 2001b, p. 230).

20. I have modified Goodman's counterexample; anyway, see: Goodman, 1983, pp. 73-4.

21. See: Place, 2004g, pp. 100-101.

22. Place introduces analytic and synthetic as this: "a statement is analytic, necessary, and true a priori if and only if, without being a statement about the meaning of words and expressions contained in it, its truth is

determined completely and exhaustively by the linguistic conventions governing the construction and use of the sentence that is used to make it. By the same token, a statement is synthetic, contingent, and true a posteriori if and only if its truth is determined partly by the linguistic conventions governing the construction and use of the sentence used to make it and partly by virtue of a correspondence between the meaning of the sentence when uttered in a relevant context, as determined by those conventions, on the one hand and the way things actually are, were, might have been, or possibly will be in the aspect of the world to which the sentence relates on the other” (Place, 2004d, p. 150); see also: (Place, 2004e, p. 172).

23. Place discusses two other cases of this very class. See: Place, 2004e, p. 172.

24. Although the proponent of eliminative materialism insists on this very idea too (Churchland, 1999, pp. 44-5), contrary to Place, has no suggestion to clearly show how it can be possible.

25. Moreover, an analytic truth may become an analytic falsehood. “Take for example the principle that whales are fishes. If we adopt the medieval definition of a fish as a creature that lives in the sea and propels itself through the water by means of fins and a characteristically paddle-shaped tail, the statement ‘Whales are fishes’ is an analytic truth, since, on that usage, the criteria for assigning an object to the class ‘whales’ include those for assigning an object to the class ‘fishes’. But once we adopt the modern convention according to which a fish has to be cold-blooded and reproduce itself by means of eggs fertilized outside the body and which precludes anything that is a mammal from also being a fish, the sentence ‘Whales are fishes’ becomes an analytic falsehood. However, because of the changed conventions, the proposition that ‘Whales are fishes’ used to express, given the previous conventions, is not the same proposition as that which the same sentence now expresses” (Place, 2004d, p. 149).

26. Elsewhere, he repeats this very assertion. See: Place, 2004f, p. 87.

27. See also: Ayer, 1971, p. 95.

28. It is based on *descriptive theory* of proper name which is specifically attributed to Frege and Russell. For example, see: Frege, 1948, p. 210, especially footnote 2.

29. It is based on *cluster theory* of proper name which is specifically attributed to P. F. Strawson and J. R. Searle. For example, see: (Searle, 1958, p. 171).

30. “While particulars exist independently of human and animal conception ..., they are formed into classes only by virtue of the intensions or concepts imposed on them by the mind” (Place, 2004d, p. 152).

31. “The very existence of the classes that constitute the extension of a general term and the very possibility of making an identifying reference to the object picked out by a singular term depend on the intension of the general term and the sense of the singular term” (Place, 2004d, p. 152).

32. Although, on the one hand, the theses (3.1) and (3.2) are basically of those which have an internalistic approach to how the referent of a given name is determined, on the other hand, Place's focusing on convention and “what we do according to them in referring to something” (Place, 2004d, p. 146) is such that it may be right to think that his explanation must have an externalistic approach to the present problem. Because being justified due to a factor which is not immediately in one's own epistemic access is the characteristic of externalistic approach to the subject. This is one of the cases that will be discussed when I get to thesis (4).

33. It seems that he is impressed by Frege when he asserts: “The referent of a proper name is the object itself which we designate by its means” (Frege, 1948, p. 213).

34. The name, meaning “Forty Columns” in Persian, was inspired by the twenty slender wooden columns supporting the entrance pavilion, which, when reflected in the waters of the fountain, are said to appear to be forty.

35. To prevent some misunderstandings, he comments his assertion as this: “two things should be emphasized concerning the case of introducing a name via a description in an initial baptism. First, the description used is not synonymous with the name it introduces but rather fixes its reference. Here we differ from the usual description theorists. Second, most cases of initial baptism are far from those which originally inspired the description theory. Usually a baptizer is acquainted in some sense with the object he names and is able to name it ostensively. Now the inspiration of the description theory lay in the fact that we can often use names of famous figures of the past who are long dead and with whom no living person is acquainted; and it is precisely these cases which, on our view, cannot be correctly explained by a description theory” (Kripke, 1980, footnote 42).

36. Although Kripke does not clearly assert this but it can be implicitly inferred from his statements especially when he explains how we use the term “tiger” to designate a species (Kripke, 1980, pp. 119-121), or when he explains what is the original concept of cat (Ibid, p. 122). To read a clearer

account of this, see: Larijani, S. (1996/1997), *Referring and Necessity*, first edition, Mersad Press, Ghom, pp. 118-126.

37. A truth of the nature is a truth of what the object could not have failed to have, what it could not have lacked while still existing (See: Kripke, 1980, footnote 57).

38. He never refutes the existence of such private experiences; see: (Place, 2004j, pp. 27-8).

39. There is nothing that the introspecting subject says about his conscious experiences which is inconsistent with anything the physiologist might want to say about the brain processes which cause him to describe the environment and his consciousness of that environment in the way he does (Place, 2004a, pp. 51-2).

40. Although I regard him as an internalist, it is not to say that he believes what is referred by our introspective reports and usually expressed via the words are some sort of mental entities which epistemic access to them is of one's own privilege. He holds that the thoughts, as Frege put this term, are not some sort of entities inside the heads of those who subscribe it, or entertain them; but they are purely linguistic entities closely related to the sentences used to express them. They clothe themselves in the material garment of sentences and thereby become comprehensible for us. Anyway, it cannot be a perfect intentional turning in his internalistic approach to an externalistic one in 2004d; because his 2004f and 2004g papers seem to be as internalistic as his 2004a paper. So I regard it as one of his few odd claims same as what he claims about ontological status of dispositions (Place, 2004g, pp. 100-101) or as an inconsistency brought into being due to his inattention to have a unified approach to the subject in hand.

41. See, for example, his answer to rival objections in thesis (1) and his statements in thesis (3) of linguistic conventions and how the referent of a given name is determined by them. Moreover, his statements of how we employ our commonsense practical beliefs in resolving cognitive dissonances that we may confront, is also another reason subscribing his occasionally appealing to those factors which are not immediately in one's epistemic access (See: Place, 2004e, pp. 175-7). All of these are based on an externalistic approach.

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The Humanisti Heritage of Muhammad Arkoun*

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Abstract

This article presents Muhammad Arkoun's (1928-2010) key ideas on ethos, civil society, and secularism. Following reflections on adab, Arkoun's inspiration for rethinking Islamic heritage (turāth), this contribution shows how Arkoun reconsiders the impact of philosophy, both in theology as well as academic scholarship. The paper displays his hopes for generating an innovative intellectual education, which eventually leads to a humanistic consciousness within the Islamic as well as the non-Islamic realm. The paper closes with a display of Arkoun's thoughts on the emergence of individual citizenship.

Keywords: *Arkoun, adab, humanism, Qur'an, hermeneutics, secularism, de-mythologization, philosophy of religion, contemporary Islam.*

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This article presents Muhammad Arkoun's (1928-2010) key ideas on ethos, civil society, and secularism. Following reflections on *adab*, one of Arkoun's inspirations for rethinking Islamic heritage (*turāth*), this contribution reflects on how Arkoun reconsiders the impact of philosophy, both in theology as well as academic scholarship. The paper shows how Arkoun hoped to generate an innovative intellectual education, which would eventually lead to a humanistic consciousness within the Islamic as well as the non-Islamic realm. Arkoun's analytical project does not rely on Islam as a remedy for social challenges, but rather on an emancipated secularism in whose realm a patient pedagogy will lead humanity to establish stable values as bases for fighting “underdevelopment, ignorance, eruptions of violence, corruption, and intolerance”(Arkoun 1994: 86). The paper closes with a display of Arkoun's thoughts on the emergence of individual *citizenhood*.

The intent of this paper is to engage thoroughly with Arkoun's thought and, in consequence, to offer sufficient learning material for students of Islamic theology and philosophy of religion to gain a broader picture of the wide spectrum of contemporary Muslim thought. It aims at providing an incentive for the pursue of critical-reflective scholarship in the field of modern Islam

Source of Inspiration: *adab*

Arkoun's philosophical project is inspired by a holistic approach to education, called *adab*.¹ In its frame, education is a task which ultimately leads to the emergence of a 'new ethos' within what he calls a solidarity project among cultures. According to Arkoun, the tradition of *adab* embodies an Islamic concept of holistic learning, which carried the prospect for this 'new ethos'.

In Arkoun's narrative, *adab* belongs to a body of knowledge, which was for a period of time oppressed or silenced by dominating orthodoxies, or what Arkoun terms the *hegemonic reason*. Such marginalized knowledge needs to be brought to light and examined as to which degree and in which way it could and did contribute to human knowledge about the world and our being in it (Arkoun 1994: 76). *Adab* is a tradition of writings on human ethics, education and behaviour and sometimes also identified as Islamic *humanism* or Islamic humanist

culture itself.² One representative of this humanist tradition is Ibn Miskawayh (932-1030 AD), a Persian neo-Platonist, humanist and ethicist, on whose work Arkoun wrote his doctoral thesis.³ Ursula Günther suggests that it is this initial study on Islamic humanism, as presented by Miskawayh that set the foundation of Arkoun's "long-term project of a critique of Islamic reason embedded in the generic context of religious thought"(Günther 2004: 129). And indeed there exist striking parallels between elements of Miskawayh's *adab* and Arkoun's deconstructivist approach.⁴ Commonalities include the openness towards diverse, also non-Islamic sources of knowledge, the necessity to overcome borders of religious doctrines, and the liberalization of thinking.⁵ Expected results are no less than all-penetrating mental and cultural "renewal and creativity"(Arkoun, 1994: 77). Arkoun, throughout his work, consequently attempts to unravel and deconstruct cultural and religious restraints. He promotes multi-level scientific communication and sharing of knowledge ('collective birthright of humankind') and the application of numerous scholarly disciplines in order to germinate a more inclusivist approach to religion.⁶ Another parallel between *adab* and Arkoun's approach is the hope that enhancing human sciences means to agree on a practical ethical framework which instructs people towards, both moral thinking and behaviour. As Goodman formulates Miskawayh's views on humanity: "Society", Miskawayh argues, "is our means to this end: Each of us is necessary to someone else's perfection, and all of us must cooperate to provide the material base necessary to humanize our existence." This incorporated the idea that humankind ought to be developed into an educated and hence moral culture as part of the "fulfilment as individuals and as a species" and to seek "inner sustenance [...] in the clarity and learning of the mind, the rule of reason, nourished not by the sunna of the Prophet but by *paideia*, the *adab* of humanity"(Goodman 2006: 109). Already here we can glimpse a possible tension between the philosophical approach to life and knowledge as opposed to the traditional theological advance. As I mentioned earlier, much of the hopes for the contemporary Muslim world, according to Arkoun, rests on rethinking the Greek heritage, specifically the sciences and philosophy. Arkoun applies the same critique to humanities as practised at Western institutions of education, as we will encounter later.

Referring to the prosperous times of philosophy and natural sciences within the Islamic ruled realm of the medieval ages, Arkoun contends that within the exclusivist interests of the self-established orthodoxies “neither the Qur’an nor the Prophet encouraged the study of these subjects; quite to the contrary [...].”(Arkoun1994:74).

In contrast, “Miskawayh’s philosophical interests centred mainly upon ethics and political thought. He presents philosophy as the sole ‘true education’ (*adab haqiqa/ alethine paideia*), and as the way to salvation (*najah/soteria*).”⁷ Some might detect that the dichotomy of religion ('Qur'an' or 'Prophet') and philosophy is artificially constructed, and indeed, this construction is found in numerous references to Arkoun's thought. Still, even though Arkoun does very rarely delve into contexts of eschatology, he agrees with Miskawayh’s idea that philosophy is the main deliverer of holistic education, while at the same time Arkoun looks into the Islamic social and scriptural heritage to find dynamics towards his anticipated philosophical project. Arkoun's project anticipates how Islamic thought reviews its often marginalized (also Hellenist-based) heritage and generate autonomously a reliable way of formulating authentic values for today’s (also culturally religious) societies. Here Arkoun's project also brings up questions about identity and management of cultural (politico-religious) heritage that this article will touch up in later paragraphs.

Ethos, Islamic Studies and Philosophy

Arkoun promotes the development of an ethos which goes beyond principles of Western enlightenment and renaissance. Some contemporary thinkers of Muslim descent contend that the transfer of models of 'development' from one culture (here 'the West') onto another culture (here 'the Muslim-majority countries') is the only remedy for socio-economic challenges of contemporary Muslim -majority countries. These accounts are based on the artificial dichotomy of 'the West' and 'the Other' and do no justice to the complexity of inter-cultural dynamics and influences, shared and contesting histories, as well as the manifold factors that play into current impacts on countries' social well-being. In contrast to such fast-fixing approaches of - woefully much too often - far dispatched-from-reality-intellectuals,

Arkoun attempts an all-around critical evaluation of the entire mental heritage of cultures that are historically connected. Arkoun addresses foremost the realm of civilizations that has developed around the Mediterranean Sea. Arkoun admitted that it is not possible for him or any single person to conduct such a critical project. It is, he proposed, a project of solidarity among those cultures, with the aim of betterment of the social conditions for all. Arkoun was hence a stern promoter of the discipline of Mediterranean Studies within the humanities. Here Arkoun shows similarity to the project of Fazlur Rahman, who endeavoured a spirit towards the better of each individual, which then spills her goodness into the wider society.⁸ We see that Arkoun's ideas of course reach beyond Islamic traditions such as the *adab*. This is because all intellectual movements are for him only a portion of all possible rich sources of inspiration.

One project that tries to define stable social values with reference to religious consciousness is the *Weltethos* project formulated by the German scholar Hans Küng. Muhammad Arkoun is one of the representatives of religious denominations who were frequently addressed and asked for advice and support by Hans Küng for this project. Muhammad Arkoun amongst other scholars signed the "Universal declaration of global ethos" presented 1993 at the first parliament of world religions.⁹ The tenets of this declaration were as follows: "Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life, commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order, commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness, commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women." I take it that the establishment of these values is what lies in some form or another at the heart of Arkoun's overall project. When we speak of an Arkounian 'new ethos', it must contain in a narrow sense at minimum these above mentioned tenets.

Considering such tenets as goals of Arkoun's work, I take a look at his more specific proposals of reform, here with regard to scholarship of Islamic Studies. Arkoun pins much hope on innovation within the academia, the realm in which he was active most of his scholarly life. He opts for a reformation of both, confessional and Western Islamic scholarship. A distinction between these two Islamic studies is

important to draw. In institutions of higher learning within some non-Muslim majority countries with a significant proportion of Muslim citizens Islamic studies exists of both, non-confessional and confessional discipline. In Germany, for example, students can choose to study Islam as a curriculum portion from within cultural studies or inter-religious non-Islamic courses (often within departments of ethnology, anthropology, cultural studies, Christian Protestant and Catholic institutes). Since some years, students can also choose the confessional study of Islam at state-universities. Here they are instructed in the classical disciplines of Islamic sciences (*tafsir* (تفسير), *asbāb al-nuzūl* (أسباب النزول), *fiqh* (فقه), history of Islam etc.) leading towards a degree that enables these students to enter professions such as religious school teachers, imams, and pastoral councillors.¹⁰ The difference between these two types of Islamic studies is not to be found so much in the degree of trust to scientific measurements (for that also scientific findings about the history of Islam and the Quran can be included in confessional Islamic studies, as they are similarly applied within confessional Biblical and Christian studies), the distinction is found in the choice of profession. The confessional degree enables students to take on roles of religious guides while the non-confessional degree enables students to inquire Islam as a cultural phenomenon.

Ursula Günther delivers a thorough account of Arkoun's critique of both scholarships. Hence I mark what is important for our purpose. On bottom line Arkoun states that confessional Islamic studies should open up for additional disciplines like social sciences and overcome the limits of thinking as set by orthodoxy. Non-confessional Islamic studies should give up their clear-cut box-thinking -studying a subject from only one hermeneutical perspective- and they should become engaged in a dedicated discourse about current issues, cause and effects in the Islamic world, which means to include knowledge about the social circumstances and cultural factors that play a role in the system (especially to the religiously informed patterns of thinking and praxis). Both confessional and non-confessional scholars must reach what Arkoun calls a meta-level on which both types of scholars achieve autonomy and where it does not matter from which cultural or religious background the scholars come (Günther 2004: 107). I think Arkoun also

addresses here, amongst others, the Islamic world which includes Muslim Diaspora communities and the new generations of Muslims born in non-Muslim countries. Arkoun himself taught many students with this background.

For the inner-Islamic debate, as we already know, he most strongly recommends a reassessment of *turāth* (heritage). Islamic historiography uses, in the eyes of Arkoun, mechanisms of selection and distortion, for example, apotheosis of heroic acts and mythologization of authorities (Günther 2004:112). Of these mechanisms one always needs to be aware when dealing with scriptural writings. In addition, he heavily criticizes the low intellectual quality of inner-Islamic religious discourses, speaking of what he calls the “scandalous shortcomings of Islamic discourses.” (Günther 2004:108). Apparently – and of course we know this from the cases of the trials against Abu Zayd in Egypt and against Fazlur Rahman in Pakistan– even if Muslim intellectuals have something to add to the religious discourse, they are often excluded from the discourse.¹¹ The fate of being excluded from the religious discourse in core Islamic countries is that of several modern Muslim thinkers who often need to pronounce their words in the non-Islamic realm.

Arkoun sees in some Western Orientalist accounts of Islam (which I tend to distinguish from value-open non-confessional religious studies approaches) the propensity to support the exclusion of non-mainstream Islamic thought. What Arkoun portrays here is a 'scholarship' that contributes to the exclusion of already marginalized thought that has been produced by Muslims for Muslims. Also Western scholarship should adopt a more critical and detailed perspective on Islam, since Islam is diverse and not represented solely by a dominant orthodoxy.¹² It must be the task of Western scholarship to inform students and in consequence the public about this diversity in order to shape awareness of the many facets and hence more realistic picture of Islam.

Since Arkoun is deeply rooted in the philosophical tradition and the Parisian school of deconstructivism, he finds a starting point for reform within the academic humanities. He pleads for reforms within all disciplines, including the confessional as well as scientific Islamic

studies and calls for introducing philosophical learning and teaching in, both, curriculum and methodology. He considers such things as crucial for expanding the horizon of education since the “philosophical attitude is the basis for the mental flexibility and openness” (Günther 2004:108). Hence philosophical studies will contribute to holistic education, which is necessary for aiming at the new ethos. We see again that Arkoun closely links education with an emerging humanism. This becomes apparent in his critique of the history of philosophy in confessional Islamic studies. He makes out a decline of culture of knowledge in Islamic culture since the 10th century, more specifically since the dominance of the theological thought of al-Ghazali. Arkoun acknowledges specifically the diminishing of *ijtihad*, individual thinking applied to Quran and *hadith* in order to derive legal opinions.¹³ Along this line Goodman mentions al-Ghazali’s opposition to much of Miskawayh’s humanistic and secular elements.(Goodman 2006:113). Here I assume that Arkoun adopts an assertive position towards *adab* and Miskawayh’s draft of humanist thought while also taking on a critical stance to al-Ghazali’s hostility to elements of Miskawayh’s thought. Arkoun recognizes the negative influence of the line of thought established by al-Ghazali, on which Islamic orthodoxy heavily draws on. But he wants to make clear that Islam is not inherently anti-humanistic or anti-philosophical. He contends that it is a misconception that with al-Ghazali’s critique of philosophy there was “put an end to the successes of Greek thought by contributing to the victory of orthodoxy.”(Arkoun 1994:75). What must truly occur is a recovery, or in Arkoun's term an archaeology, of suppressed and marginalized streams of Islamic thought, especially those in the fashion of Averroism. In all, deconstruction of Islamic thought is the decisive tool for this archaeology.

Secular and Muslim Civil Society

I understand Arkoun’s proposals for reforming education to be ultimately geared at changing society, by means of evolving responsible, self reflective and critical citizens. In this endeavour solidarity of sciences must go hand in hand with solidarity of ethics. Politics should aim at building and preserving a civil society of tolerance (*Toleranzgesellschaft*). The system in use must be an

institutionalized democracy which constitutes a society that is equally progressive and moral.¹⁴ Arkoun criticizes governments of Islamic countries, which do not allow freedom of thought, equal rights, education, and universal suffrage. He seems indeed quite sceptical towards the possibility of establishing democracy and civil societies in Islamic countries (Hendrich 2004: 306). On the other hand he is also critical of secular democracies. We will find that Arkoun often embraces certain outcomes of secularism, but at the same time also investigates them critically. One could call this a love-hate relationship of Arkoun towards liberalism and secularism. In example, France is, in the eyes of Arkoun, not truly enlightened, since it actively and forcefully opposes public expressions of faith. He calls the French state system a “militant secularism” which attempts to be a model of an enlightened secular state (Arkoun 1994:77). However, a truly enlightened state is aware of the religious fact (*fait religieux*) and its mechanisms within society and does not on the contrary chose to ignore or even fight it. He says the religious reality is part of social reality and cannot be successfully denied. According to Akroun, ignoring the *fait religieux* leads to a gap within society, from which one side will favour a religious leadership and the other support rational and secular leadership. The study of Arkoun's writings has led me to the conclusion that Arkoun anticipates that religion is an impending factor of all societies, and that he takes this for granted and does not explain how he comes to believe this, other than maybe observation. However, it is certain that he pleads for an emancipated secularism that is aware of the penetrating dimension of religion. Arkoun seems to say that reality cannot be divided into that of belief and that of secular history, since both interact and perforate each other.¹⁵ With this conscience then politics must lead towards an autonomous civil society under the guidance of the proposed solidarity of science and ethics. On this depends nothing less than a ‘common future of all peoples.’ (Cf. Arkoun, ‘Auf den Spuren, 145.’) Discourse about this common future must take place in an atmosphere of freedom of will and thought. Ideologies (in Marx’s sense of the term) will not be able to enhance the establishment of a responsible civil populace. Attempts of reading from the Quran that Muhammad was a socialist or democrat or that all modern natural-scientific findings are already prescribed in the Quran,

become, in Arkoun's view, ridiculous enterprises. These readings are reactions to modernity, but they do not constitute a modern way of inquiry. They project our own beliefs onto religious writings. According to this line of thought, Arkoun rejects the idea of the need for establishing a theocratic society in order to deliver people from mischief. Of course, some Muslim responses to modernity try to read the necessity of a unity of state and religion from Islamic history and Islamic scriptures (Quran, *sunna* and *sīra*). And Arkoun admits that Muhammad reinvested religious symbols, the symbolic capital, in order to make the eschatology of the new religion relevant for the people at that time and place. Yes, the new path to salvation must have been paved with new rules for society. But the actual "making of Islam into a state" took place due to the demand for a centralized administration of the fast expanding Islamic empire. Arkoun seems to say that neither Muhammad nor the Quranic text suggested such a unity, but that the demand for it was a late sociological phenomenon. He writes, "since the death of the Prophet, Islam has never recovered the special circumstances permitting its double expression as symbol and politics [...]." (Arkoun 1994:21).

Reflecting on a potential frame for a civilian society, Arkoun is indeed sceptical about French laicism, or 'militant secularism'. However, he was a member of the 'Committee for Laicism' in France.¹⁶ Arkoun's view on secularism is mainly a critique of the idea that separating state and religion on legal and administrative levels is at all possible, because religion still influences society. He is not denying the need for such artificial divisions, but - as we have seen above - calls for a secularism which is not blind to the religious fact as social fact. Further, in his remarks on nationalism, Arkoun objects the feasibility of seeking a unity of a pantocratic *umma* as long as the freedom of the individual is not guaranteed.

Arkoun believed that nationalism of Islamic countries always relies on a mythologized Islam, which in form of the '*ulama*' supports its interests. Nationalism is a political system favoured by numerous Islamic countries and such an attempt at unifying Islamic people is the establishment of the *Arab Islamic League*. This creation of unity must be understood as a reaction by Islamic countries to what is perceived as Western dominance in an effort to 'cure' Islamic cultures. But as long as

an artificial unification is enforced on a still illiberal people, democratic structures have no future. Arkoun notes: “[...] these people possess a wealth of resources still poorly understood, poorly interpreted, and insufficiently exploited. In vain they request means of democratic expression; explosions of anger are quickly repressed, dismissed as ‘betrayal’ of the national cause, [...]” Arkoun makes clear that “in the end, genuine unity must result from the freely expressed will of all citizens, but the path that leads there remains long, muddy, and disconcerting.”(Arkoun 1994: 29). We see here again a reflection of the goals of a global ethics projects as Arkoun embraces the freedom of will and expression and human rights.

Arkoun as a well-established intellectual observed and commented on movements of thought on both, the Islamic and the non-Islamic academic and political realms. He proposed that intellectuals play a crucial part in sharpening the awareness of the need for the rights of people. But Arkoun is questioning the intellectual and epistemological abilities of intellectuals who address issues of human rights like free choice of religion, freedom of thought and expression. This is because intellectuals are themselves often caught in a vicious circle. Their role is to critique and rethink conditions of society. They ought to contribute to shaping public opinion by making background information of political and social issues comprehensible and accessible to the public, and to communicate their critiques. But if rights of freedom of speech and opinion are not granted to them in the first place, they can hardly contribute to shape the awareness of the need of such rights for an oppressed populace. How can deliverers liberate the conscience of the people, if they are not free themselves? Here Arkoun reflects again back on Islamic history and finds positive impulses. For example, he believes that the original *umma*, during the lifetime of the Prophet, had the merits of an ideal community due to its “spiritual quality” (Arkoun 1994: 53). Such quality was determined through the immediate and intense link between God and the hearts of the people within the Quranic discourse. Arkoun does not think this original community, where the spirit dynamically informed people towards change, is something today’s Muslim communities could revive or imitate. Today’s societies’ source of change is the constant act of rethinking truth-claims, as held e.g. by the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

These truth claims are mostly thought as ultimately mutually exclusive and any thinking based on exclusivism cannot contribute to holistic and critical enquiry into the human condition. Here Arkoun pleads for a paradigm shift: “A reciprocity of consciousness as a base for an exchange of rights and duties on a level of legal equality would come only after there occurred an epistemological, hence mental, break with the concept of theological truth developed in the three revealed religions.”(Arkoun 1994: 54). The mental break with exclusivist truth claims will enable intellectuals to enter a meta-level from which all strive to reveal mechanisms behind human phenomena, regardless, as said above, of their own backgrounds or affiliations. Above all, a common formulation of the values of an ideal society must occur outside religious exclusivist thinking. Although Arkoun did not compose a list of the often mentioned base-values for the new ethos, he was concerned with finding a methodology to discover ways of maximising freedom from political, ideological, religious manipulative powers.

Intriguingly, even if Arkoun pleads for overcoming the borders of religious thinking and truth claims, he still finds inspiration for a model of the ideal community in divine revelation or as Arkoun calls them, the ‘vistas of liberation.’¹⁷ This stance might illustrate Arkoun’s internal conflict between Islamic/religious and non-Islamic sources of inspiration. Arkoun believes that the event of revelation plus the religious texts potentially create a positive force for the advancement of the person towards responsibility, which entails awareness of rights and duties.¹⁸ At this point in his writings I can only find reference to the Quran as an example of scripture that implies such liberating powers. This Quranic material operates with narratives which speak of personal responsibility towards the will of God. Arkoun admits that the ‘modern’ notion of citizen has no immediate foundation in the scriptures. But it seems for him that scriptures lay down basic criteria for a kind of God-fearing *citizenhood*. The evolution of a person towards a responsible citizen is one of Arkoun’s central issues that invokes the question of personhood and human rights. In this context he admits that “Muslim theological thought has not committed itself to the kind of modern interpretation that would highlight” ‘problems’ “in contemporary discourse on human rights.”(Arkoun 1994: 56). As we shall see,¹⁹

Arkoun's reading of sura 9 suggests that a discussion about human rights might have already been initiated by the Quranic discourse. The above quotation shows that to him the Quran contains the dynamic for forming a responsible and autonomous individual. Regarding sura 9 he writes "the fundamental message of sura 9 is not outmoded," (Arkoun 1994: 56) and he says one efficacy of the Quranic discourse is the "deployment of the free person." (Arkoun 1994: 57).

The birth moment of the Muslim personality is charged with rich symbolic investments of formerly profane actions. Violence is one of these notions that the Quran turns into a sacred action, when carried out for the defence of *al-haqq*. Arkoun pays much attention to sura 49 and 9 when it comes to talking about the emergence of the person, even though, as mentioned above, it is not clear how he hopes to establish his ideas from the Quranic material. One reason for Arkoun to have chosen to dedicate a great deal of notice to sura 9 could be that it includes themes particularly important for formulating Islamic beliefs: the pact between Muhammad and others (9:1), covenant between God and God's people (112) [1], believers/unbelievers (9: 20, 23-4, 29, 30, 54, 71, 75, 80, 84) [2], oaths between believers and opponents [3], victory and triumph (9:14, 72, 89, 100, 111), gaining paradise (9:72), dooming in hell (9:35), belief/unbelief in afterlife (9:85), fight against unbelievers/warfare (9:5, 16, 20, 24, 41, 44, 73, 81, 86, 88, 90-94), *al-haqq* (9:29), ethics (9:100), *hajj* (9:3). The sura clearly states what the person has to do in order to gain salvation.²⁰ It becomes clearer now that Arkoun is concerned with the sociological and anthropological reading of the Quran.²¹

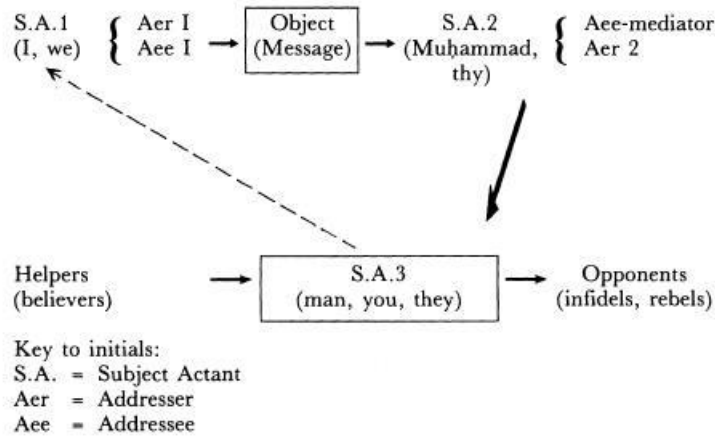
The discourse of transcendence and of absoluteness opens an infinite space for the promotion of the individual beyond the constraints of fathers and brothers, clans and tribes, riches and tributes; the individual becomes an autonomous and free person, enjoying a liberty guaranteed by obedience and love lived within the alliance. The consciousness of the person, thus liberated, does not even require the mediation of another human consciousness, as it does in Christianity, which depends on the mediation of Jesus; the ontological access of a Muslim is direct, total, and irreversible. [...] Qur'anic discourse has broadly demonstrated its efficacy as a space for the emergence, training, and deployment of

the free person, who enjoys guarantees of life, property, family, and private domicile not as “citizen” of a civil society managed by elected representatives or by universal suffrage (sovereign of the nation founded in 1789 by the French Revolution) but as God’s partner in an eternal compact (Arkoun 1994: 57).

Arkoun also explores the dialogical nature of the Quran. Arkoun identifies a general technique of the Quranic discourse which is mostly comprised of: “‘**We**’ of the addresser (called God in the discourse of faith), the ‘**thou**’ (Muhammad), the ‘**you**’ comprising the believers, ‘**he**’ and ‘*they*’ (man and the people still outside the new emerging space of communication). This configuration of pronouns establishes the basic, constant space of communication and meaning in the entire discourse of the Qur’an.” Throughout the Quranic discourse there is a tension amongst these protagonists (addressee and addresser, subject and object): “[...] through which there emerges a consciousness of **culpability**. Through it, man thereby comes to be transformed into a conscious, reflective subject in the sphere of ethics and law. He becomes responsible for every thought, action and initiative in his life.”(Arkoun, ‘Revelation Revisited’, 12-3.)

From this third perspective, it suffices to establish that what can be called the qur’ānic stage, the instantiation of a new religion, is a complex historical process engaging simultaneously social, political, cultural, and normative factors. These are entangled with ritual, customs, ethics, familial structures (see family; tribes and clans; kinship), competing structures of the imagination and the collective interactive memory of such entities as Jews, Christians, Sabians (q.v.), polytheists (frequently termed “pagans”), and all cultural groups of the ancient Near East. All these modes and manifestations of the historical existence of such social groups in Arabia are not only present in the qur’ānic discourse but transformed. They have been sublimated, uprooted from their local conditions to constitute an “existential paradigm” of the human condition. Divested of its particularity, this qur’ānic paradigm is capable of producing and informing individual and collective existence within the most diverse cultural and historical contexts.(Arkoun, ‘Islam’, EQ)

Furthermore he suggests a semiotic analysis as displayed in a diagram in the article “*Notions of Revelations.*”



Sura 9 delivers all material for this “dramatic structure” of the Quranic discourse and reading it, according to the diagram, restores its possible meaning to the first audience in its historical context. As said before, the sura needs to be read in the light of the different protagonists, whose interaction establishes profound tension within a “historical paradigmatic drama.” (Arkoun, *Reform or Subvert*, 126.) In the context of reading sura 49 and 9 Arkoun writes:

*The groups of protagonists are transformed into protagonists of a **spiritual drama** [sic]. The political and social situations and what is actually at stake are sublimated into paradigms of conduct and recurrent choices inexorably involving the ultimate destiny of every soul (person) confronted at the same time with temptations, constraints and solidarities of the immediate life (al-dunyā, or ‘society’ as we could call it today) [...]. (Ibid, 127f.)*

The Quran involves the addressees into a dialogue that leaves them transformed. The drama displays the individual’s struggle for salvation against the odds of its own social, political and historical reality.²²

According to Arkoun, Quranic revelation contributed to the liberation of the person from tribal codes. The new allegiance is based on obedience of the individual to God. Surely there is a tension between such a model of personhood and that of the 'Western ideal' (however

authentic or feasible) of moral autonomy. Arkoun speaks explicitly of the “Muslim person”, or the “person of Islam” who appeared first when the people of the former *jāhilyya* committed “to the faith and to fighting (*jiḥād*) for the Prophet’s cause, the small group of early believers (*mu’minūn*) [...]”(Arkoun 1994: 89). The growth and recurrence of this person he says comes down to the normative character and mythological structure of Quranic discourse, the force of ritual and the promise for salvation, the centralization of state “which took ‘true religion’ (orthodoxy) under its protection and drew legitimacy from it in return”, and the image of original Islam and the narratives of “universal ‘Islamic’ history” as “initiated by the Prophet for individual and collective behaviour.”²³ As Arkoun notices, “the emotional climate that predominates in Muslim societies today renders the scientific study of a large number of delicate problems impossible”(Arkoun 1994: 93). Still, he, in contrast, mentions the importance of the image of the initial Islam for the beliefs and developments in Islamic societies. He does not judge whether this widespread and traditional image of early Islam is wrong or misleading, but stresses its impact:

One can never overemphasize the role and recurrent power of the politico-religious imaginary put in place by what I have called the Medinan experience. All historical activity of any significance in the Islamic domain has been a result of this imaginary. These activities themselves presuppose the production of a type of person who has internalized all the representations, all the ideal symbolic images carried by traditional Islamic discourse. [...] The person should be studied as a haven of liberty; choices are made, options eliminated, and combinations put together to make up each *personality* and eventually to confirm the *selection* of the personage, the leader, the imam at the level of local group, the nation, and the community of believers. Such a study becomes indispensable to a reconstruction of the delicate mechanisms that definitively order both individual destinies and the historical development of societies.²⁴

The basic personality receives, according to Arkoun, the meaning of the initial set up of the Muslim person; in other words, what it means to belong to Islam according to the context of the ‘Medinan experience.’ Arkoun is aware that this concept of person is not the same as a modern notion of responsible individual with particular freedoms. However, he

seems to attribute a positive effect to the notion of revelation and the dynamics of the first Muslim *umma*.

Reflections

This article sets out to contribute to filling a lacuna of scholarly representation of minority Muslim intellectual thought on religion, Islam, the Quran, society and reform. Especially within English speaking scholarship Muhammad Arkoun's work is rarely reflected upon in a thorough fashion. He is often mentioned amongst other names listing 'progressive Muslims', 'contemporary Muslim thought', 'reformism in Islam' etc. It is not uncommon to find his and other names in sometimes more polemic than scholarly pieces which try to either seize his project for the points being made, or to criticize and reject his approach, without having formerly attempted to understand his concepts. Consequently, the search for details of his project results often in vain. Hence, I believe it is essential to present voices like his in a close-to-objective and representative manner, before one enters into controversial discussions about the contents. Only by a proper engagement with the scholarly accounts of these self-proclaimed Muslims, a scientist of religion can begin to compare and discuss them towards specific questions, frame them within current discourses in social and theological studies.

Through a consideration of what we have found above, portray of Arkoun's concepts can be summed up as follows. Arkoun draws on both, concepts from Islamic heritage as well as the non-Islamic intellectual sphere. He views religion as an immanent part of social reality and tries to reconsider some dynamics of Islam that seem helpful in the project of liberating people from all backgrounds from constraints on thought, politics, ideology etc. Nothing less than the formulation of a new ethos is on his mind. There is no one possible frame in which this liberation can take place, neither the re-projection of a supposedly known past, nor the un-reflected attempt to imitate *adab*, nor the adoption of some principles of enlightenment, often termed and quickly rejected as a product of the West. He asks cultures from shared histories around the Mediterranean to join into a critical reflection process towards a project of formulating values that will be the basis for a living together where the individual as well as the society benefit broadly from

development (mental, social, political, economical). Whether this constant reflection and criticism might one day overcome the religious fact, Arkoun does not touch upon. For him religion is and remains a fact of the social and historical set-up of all civilizations involved, whether they call themselves Muslim, Christian or secular. However, only in a frame of 'healthy' secularism, a process conscientisation can take place. Such secularism, in the broadest sense, encourages evolution of thought and does not dictate thoughts in any direction, e.g. pro or contra religiosity. Arkoun seems to believe that the most effective impulses for a liberation-of-the-mind project will be given from within academia and consequently in all learning institutions, where philosophical reflection, freedom of thought and individual responsibility is taught and encouraged. He promotes an advancement of education on all levels in order to enable an autonomous civil society that is then empowered to make reflexive decisions and to gain responsible suffrage. In the context of Muslim-majority countries such progressive education must entail critical engagement with the own heritage (*turāth*), the reconsideration of marginalized Islamic philosophies and the inclusion of non-Islamic sources. It does not suffice, in the eyes of Arkoun, to either reject religion as a hindrance to modernity, nor to mythologize religion into an absolute remedy. Through education, this is Arkoun's hope, democratic structures will be erected and existing ones stabilized, freedom of thought and expression strengthened, as well as autocratic regimes and ideological infiltrations (e.g. extremism) challenged.

The liberating elements of religion can only be discovered when truth-claims of self-established orthodoxies are overcome, horizons are broadened and a plurality of world views can be accepted. This also means to overcome internal power struggles of religious and political elites, in order to instead concentrate on analysing the prerequisites which are necessary for an improvement of the human condition. Arkoun's ideas open a huge spectrum of possibilities of how to talk about religion and society, in a fashion that is respectful and constructive. His philosophy contributes to a global advance of contemporary humanistic thought, and deserves integration into the curriculum of both, Islamic theology as well as non-confessional religious studies.

Notes:

1. Greek counterpart: *paideia*. In ‘ancient Greek’ *paideia* meant “a system of broad cultural education” or formally “the culture of a society.” *The Oxford Dictionary of English*.

2. The term *adab* existed in similar use in pre-Islamic time. *Adab* in its oldest meaning “implies a habit, a practical norm of conduct, with the double connotation of being praiseworthy and being inherited from one’s ancestors.” (Gabrieli, ‘Adab’, EI)

3. Arkoun’s PhD thesis on Miskawayh from 1970 is discussed in detail by Günther in her PhD thesis *Mohammad Arkoun*, 161-7. Arkoun also wrote an entry on ‘Miskawayh’ in EI², vol.7, 143-4.

4. Groff, *Islamic Philosophy*, 6: *Adab* “comprises knowledge of poetry, rhetoric, oratory, grammar and history, as well as familiarity with the literary and philosophical achievements, the practical-ethical wisdom and the exemplary individuals of the pre-Islamic Arabs, Indians, Persians and Greeks. It can be said to encompass the natural sciences as well, although its primary focus is always on the human. [...] at its apex, the *adab* tradition – at least as interpreted by Islamic humanists such as Abu Suleyman Muhammad al-Sijistani, al-Tawhidi and Miskawayh – gave rise to the cosmopolitan ideal that wisdom and moral exemplars could be drawn from many cultures, and that their insights were the collective birthright of humankind.”

5. Arkoun, “Auf den Spuren,” 148. Arkoun on *adab*: “[...] in what I have called the philosophical *adab (paidaia)* of the 4th [AH] or 10th [AC] century, we can see a liberalisation of the cognitive activities, similar to those of the European Renaissance [...]” He asserts though that even Renaissance as well as enlightenment were not absolutely free from theological influences.

6. Arkoun often mentions the necessity and usefulness of a range of disciplines which he would like to link through a general sense of philosophical scrutiny. Those disciplines are linguistics, philology, semiology, literary studies, anthropology, psychology, history, philosophy, archaeology and sociology. Since he regards religion as one of the most succinct expressions of human existence, the disciplines of researching this element of the complexity of humankind must be versatile. Arkoun takes up positively from *adab* two aspects which are worth being carried over into present academia: “Intellectualizing scientific disciplines (*al-ulum*) [...]” and “liberalization of cognitive activities.” ([...] Intellektualisierung der wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen (*al-ulum*) [...] and “Liberalisierung der kognitiven Aktivitaeten.” Arkoun, “Auf den Spuren,” 148.)

7. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, 231. Kraemer refers to Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, 49-50. See also how Walzer reflects on translations from philosophical works in Greek into Arabic, “Some Aspects of Miskawayh’s *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*,” cited in Kraemer 232-3.

8. Völker, Katharina (2015), ‘Two Accounts of Quranic Revelation – Fazlur Rahman and N.H. Abu Zayd on Muhammad’s *Contribution*’, in: *Journal of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*. Eds. University of Birmingham (UK) and Monash University (Australia) (London: Routledge, 2015), 271-286.

9. Küng, *A global Ethic*, 47. Cf. *Declaration toward a Global Ethic* (<http://www.urbandharma.org/pdf/ethic.pdf>). Regarding the critique of instrumentalising religion for state-power interests interesting parallels exist between Küng and Arkoun. Küng believes that in the early 4th century, Catholicism was instrumentalized by the Roman Empire, which was best demonstrated by symbolically attaching the Cross of Jesus Christ the bringer of peace, to the shields with which the Roman Empire set out to oppress other people to be conquered. Similarly, Arkoun contends that the merge of state and religion was a socio-political necessity at the time of the expansion of the Islamic Empire.

10. Völker, Katharina (2013), ‘A Danger to Free Research and Teaching in German Universities? The Case of Muhammad Sven Kalisch’, in: Paul Morris, William Shepard, Toni Tidswell, Paul Trebilco (eds.), *The Teaching and Study of Islam in Western Universities* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 175-85. Proceedings to the conference: *The Role of the Study of Islam in the Western University*, CSIMCNZ (Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim Cultures, New Zealand), University of Otago, 2009. See also my discussion in: Völker, Katharina (2014), ‘Parameters of Teaching Islam *Freely*’, in: Erich Kolig, *Freedom of Speech and Islam* (London: Ashgate, 2014), 209-224.

11. Günther, *Mohammad Arkoun*, 109. Günther writes with reference to the Abu Zayd case: In most countries of the Near and Middle East the socio-political circumstances do not allow for a development of innovative streams. The frame, in which discourses are enabled, are strictly determined. Intellectuals hence criticize that when they are resisting the dominant conventions, public opinions and official ideologies, they face isolation from the scientific community, in worst case scenarios they'll have to suffer a fate similar to that of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd [...].“ (my translation) of: „In den meisten Ländern des Nahen und Mittleren Ostens sind die sozio-politischen Bedingungen nicht gegeben, die notwendig sind, damit sich innovative Strömungen entfalten und etablieren können. Der Rahmen, innerhalb dessen Diskurse stattfinden können, ist weitgehend vorgegeben. Darum kritisieren

Intellektuelle, die sich weigern, sich den herrschenden Konventionen anzupassen, d.h. der öffentlichen Meinung und der offiziellen Ideologie zu folgen, eine Isolierung als der jeweiligen wissenschaftlichen Gemeinschaft, schlimmstenfalls müssen sie ein vergleichbares Schicksal wie Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid in Kauf nehmen [...].”

12. Arkoun finds that Western scholarship promotes the dominance of orthodoxy when it considers it to be the only representative of Islam being worth studied and taught. He explicitly refers to van Ess as an example. Even further he writes “certain renowned Orientalists have helped to enrich the apologetic literature on Islam.” (Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, 102.)

13. cf. Völker, Katharina (2014), ‘Mohammad Arkoun: The Quran Rethought - Genesis, Significance, and the Study of the Quran’, in: Edmund Weber et al. (eds.), *Journal of Religious Culture*. Goethe-University, Frankfurt am Main - Institute for Religious Peace Research. No. 189 (2014). (<http://web.uni-frankfurt.de/irenik/rekultur189.pdf>)

Ghazali's critique of philosophy has been often studied towards its actual impact on the intellectual development of Islamic thought. However the scholars do not agree on the *potenz* of this impact. Ghazali's critique often serves as a practical marking point for the teaching of Islamic history in order to simplify a chronology of Islamic intellectual endeavour (in the fashion of Islamic thought 'pre-Ghazali' and 'post-Ghazali').

14. Hendrich (*Islam und Aufklärung*) writes with reference to Arkoun that democracy is “Voraussetzung einer neuen Kultur der Kreativität und des moralischen Konsensus.” See also Hendrich's remarks on Arkoun's assessment of develop democratic structures, 306.

15. “Secularism with its juridical, philosophical underpinning continues to prevail in most Western, societies, but many churches, religious institutions, and civil organizations are making claims for articulating an encompassing theological-philosophical vision integrating the three concepts, person-individual-citizen, which they regard as inseparable.” (Arkoun, “The State, the Individual, and Human Rights.”)

16. Cf. Arkoun's CV on the ‘Ibn Rushd Fund for Freedom of Thought’ webpage (www.ibn-rushd.org/English/CV-Arkoun.htm).

17. Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, 34. Arkoun's detection of liberating dynamics within revealed book-religions finds similarities in the liberation philosophies of Paolo Freire, Fazlur Rahman, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Hans Küng, Farid Esack, Amina Wadud, and Asma Barlas.

18. “Revelation as collected in the sacred writings contains starting points, strong roots, and carrier concepts for the emergence of the person as a subject

equipped with rights and as an agent responsible for the observance of obligations toward God and peers in the political community. The idea of peers does not coincide, of course, with the modern idea of citizen [...].” (Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, 55.)

19. Völker, Katharina (2012), 'The Emergence of the Responsible Person', in: K. Völker, *Quran and Reform: Rahman, Arkoun, Abu Zayd*, p. 151-153.

20. In sociological terms we can say that Arkoun speaks of the ‘myth of probation; (*Bewährungsmythos*) and the origin of the basic Muslim personality (this last expression is used by Arkoun numerous times). The sociologist Ulrich Oevermann uses the term *Bewährungsmythos*, to describe the myth of religion that claims the necessities for gaining salvation.

21. Schönberger, p.11 comments on Arkoun, *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, 50. “Although the Qu’rān is the basis of the imaginaire, it is not a static concept; it is rather a dynamical one that is interdependent with the ethic of Islam. In doing so, Arkoun’s anthropological orientation is to unearth the ‘myth of origins’ and the ‘regimes of truth.’”

22. Regarding the emerging of the consciousness of the self see Arkoun, *Reform or Subvert*, 279-80 (re. Qur'an verse 9:5).

23. Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, 89. As a remark: If one takes these criteria for the success of the Muslim person, it is understandable if researchers conclude a different image of early Islam, which then cannot serve anymore as this support for the constructed Muslim identity today. See studies on early Islam by the ‘Saarland School’, and research by Cook/Crone, and Kalisch.

24. Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, 90. Arkoun’s understanding of the Muslim person seems to resemble what he calls the ‘basic personality’. He explicitly refers in this context to neo-Freudian psychoanalyst and ethnologist Abram Kardiner, who formulated that every culture brings forth a concept of personality, which then finds variation and development: “[...] with the help of the Islamic example, one could revive the concept of basic personality launched not long ago by the psychiatrist Abram Kardiner but left behind by anthropologists.” Here a description by the sociologist Renner: “Die Basispersönlichkeit setzt sich zusammen aus denjenigen Persönlichkeitselementen, die die Mitglieder einer Gesellschaft aufgrund der gemeinsamen Erfahrungen in der frühen Kindheit miteinander teilen. Danach ist die Entstehung einer basalen Persönlichkeitsstruktur vor allem in den Sozialisierungspraktiken und –erfahrungen wie Stillen, Entwöhnen, Reinlichkeitstraining begründet... “Renner, Kulturtheoretische und kulturvergleichende Ansätze,” 182.

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