Issue 6(1) Spring Conference 2013

(Print) ISSN 1748-9393
(Online) ISSN 2051-5359

British Journal of Undergraduate Philosophy

Editor-in-chief: Dino Jakušić
University of Warwick

Journal of the British Undergraduate Philosophy Society

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Issue 6(1) Spring 2013

www.bups.org/bjup-online

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Editorial

With the new year comes a new BUPS conference and with it the issue of BJUP you are now reading. It has been a turbulent year within BUPS. It started with only a handful of members continuing from the previous committee and the high standards achieved in the previous year, such as setting up our new website and reviving the Journal, had to be met. This year we have decided to make physical copies of our journal available to our readers and contributors. This, of course, came with its set of problems, such as requesting a new ISSN code and reformatting past issues in a print-friendly format. Fortunately, the issues you are now reading should be available in a printed format. We also plan to make all of the past issues available in print and offer them on demand from our website.

As is the practice with BJUP, this issue is mainly based around the submissions to this year's conference, specifically our Spring conference at Heythrop College, London. This issue, however, has seen the unprecedented raise in the numbers of papers submitted to the Journal and the conference. While we hope this interest continues in future we were slightly taken aback by the sheer number of submissions and would like to encourage all the students who were not successful in being published or invited to present at the conference to keep us in mind again for the next issue.

This conference would not be possible without the generosity of Heythrop College, London in providing us a venue for it to happen. We would also like to thank *The Mind Association* and the University of Durham for their generous grants. Of course, the conference would not be realised without our dedicated committee members such as our Conference Coordinator Miriam Malek and Assistant Conference Coordinator Liberty Fitz-Claridge, our Societies Coordinators Oliver Eagle, Emily James and Imran Rashid, our Finance Officer Matt Linsley and our

President Michael Lyons who was, like Spinoza's *conatus*, the force behind the striving of our society to exist.

In reference to the Journal I would like to thank our Commissioning Editor Rory Phillips for skilful and dedicated handling of the numerous submissions which we have received and his correspondence with our peer reviewers. I would also like to thank the rest of the editorial team for their dedicated work and ideas they exemplified while working in LaTeXand discussing papers. I would also like to express a special gratitude to Michael Lyons who did much more than his fair share of work in his role as the Assistant Editor while at the same time balancing it with his presidential and academic duties. I would also like to thank all the other committee members who volunteer to help with editing while not being themselves on the editorial board. Finally, I would like to thank all of our peer reviewers for volunteering to help us regardless of their other commitments: Katharine Hawley, Stephen French, Gerald Lang, Ian Church, Nigel Pleasants, Alastair Gray, Simon Young, Raphael Woolf, E. J. Lowe, Anthony Carroll, Patrick Riordan, Stacie Friend, Kate Hodesdon, Derek Ball, Anthony Price, Alex Baker-Graham, Thomas Brouwer, Elselijn Kingma, Alexander Douglas, Neil Turnbull, Sarah Adams, Daniel Hill, Michael Barnes, Jonathan Banks and Jonathan Head.

In the end, we hope to see you all at the conference and interested in BUPS long past your undergraduate years.

DJ

Contents

The Paradox Of Deontology: Can Such Conflict Ever Be Resolved?*

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Deontology is a normative ethical position characterised by an adherence to moral principles and duties. Such an approach to ethics is often negative; there are certain restrictions of which it is an agent's duty not to violate, for example 'do not kill innocent persons'. Many deontological restrictions are accepted as an integral part of our common sense morality, but on evaluation appear problematic. In this essay I intend to firstly outline what deontological restrictions are and how they can be seen to be paradoxical, and then go on to argue that these issues remain unsolved after evaluating three different attempts to do so from Foot, Nagel and Kamm.

A deontological restriction is a principle which states that it is morally impermissible to perform an action, or in some (rarer) cases such as 'you must keep your promises', to fail to perform an action. According to the deontologist, this restriction must hold even if the action would maximise the good. The theory is therefore a direct contrast to consequentialism, in which the moral value of an action is entirely ascertained from the aggregate good the consequences of doing it will bring about.

With reflection on this framework, it is clear to see that a paradox emerges. A hypothetical situation wherein one agent (A) has to kill one innocent person (B), or else five other agents will each kill one innocent person themselves, can show this. For the consequentialist, it is clear that it is morally permissible for A to kill

*Delivered at the BUPS Spring Conference 2013 on 16-17 February 2013 at Heythrop College, London.

B. However for the deontologist it is not, as A ought not to violate the restriction of 'do not kill innocent persons'. But if they did violate the restriction, they would actually be minimising the violation of that restriction because less innocent people would be dying. Nozick puts the paradox thus:

> "how can a concern for the nonviolation of [constraint] *C* lead to the refusal to violate *C* even when this would prevent other more extensive violations of *C*?"[1]

The first attempt to solve this issue that I will investigate is taken from Foot. Seemingly not controversially, she outlines the problem with deontological restrictions being that they seem to suggest we must sometimes knowingly choose a worse overall outcome or state of affairs over a better one.[2] According to Foot however, this paradox is only an illusion. The idea of a choice between worse or better outcomes as having any moral significance only works within the framework of consequentialism, and will only hold meaning for those who have already accepted this view.[3] It may be possible, if only acting from the virtue of benevolence, to always choose the action that will lead to the state of affairs that provides the best situation for the largest number of people. But non-consequentialist theories must take into account other influences for action, such as behaving morally in the interest of justice, which cannot be detached from its rules of truth telling and respect for rights. Foot argues that this means it is not even possible to undergo a meaningful evaluation of outcomes when the outcomes result from an unjust action.

Even at first glance, Foot's argument that the paradox of deontology is illusionary appears flawed. Non-consequentialists do seem to weigh up dilemmas of justice and rights against aggregate

[1]Nozick [5] p. 30.

[2]Foot [2] p. 198.

[3]Ibid. p. 206.

wellbeing in a meaningful way. Furthermore, as Scheffler notes, the paradox remains even without appeal to 'overall states of affairs'. Foot phrases the paradox in a way that specifically makes reference to an *overall* outcome as the end result of a moral action. This allows her to argue that the paradox is only problematic when coming from a consequentialist point of view, because other ethical theories do not put as much importance on a choice between better or worse overall outcomes. They may, for example, highly regard agent responsibility instead. But the paradox need not be stated in these terms at all, we can easily formulate it so that it makes no mention of overall states of affairs. The paradox is that it is counterintuitive to hold that it is morally impermissible to violate a restriction once, when you know that doing so will mean the same principle is violated more times. Her argument does not remove the paradox when it is stated in these terms, we are not seeing anything through the lens of the consequentialist when the issue is stated in this way.[4]

With the paradox outlined as such, it is easier to see that deontological restrictions are problematic because they go against the idea of maximising rationality. As Scheffler describes, when one action will accomplish a certain desirable goal better than another option it is clearly rational to chose the former over the latter. Consequentialism undoubtedly follows this principle, the goal being the overall good, but deontological restrictions show example of acting against the goal from which the restrictions themselves are derived.[5] That is, unless the purpose behind deontology is for each agent to not violate any restrictions themselves, which is clearly a moral outlook more similar to entirely agent based theory of egoism than the standard version of deontology.

Deontologists surely have their particular restrictions and princi-

[4]Scheffler [7] p. 413.

[5]Ibid. p. 414.

ples because they intend to achieve a certain goal (for example, no innocent people killed). It therefore seems irrational to say that one ought in a particular situation to do the action that aligns with the principle but does not accomplish the goal better than violating it. In order to contest this apparently fatal issue with deontology, the supporter has to outline what else could inspire the deontological restrictions. The deontologist might claim they are not deduced from experience but just intuitively known, killing an innocent person just is morally impermissible. This view does seem to align to the common moral upbringing we share, but in terms of philosophical rationale appealing to intuitions is inconclusive. Even if we all did have these intuitions, what would be the reason for trusting them rather than rationally evaluating the value of the consequences and attempting to bring about what we would desire most. Furthermore the paradox itself also seems perfectly apparent and intuitive when hypothetical situations such as the previously used example of A killing innocent B or five other agents killing five more innocents are considered, so it is equally part of our human practical rationality.[6] That the problems with deontology cannot be solved due to the fact such restrictions violate the principle of maximising rationality seems like the most compelling argument considered so far, and further attempts to solve the issue considered will need to approach the view in a way that avoids this objection.

One such attempt comes from Nagel. His view can be seen as an agent centred justification of deontology, which intends to argue that the deontological restriction is in place for the benefit of the agent who has to commit the act of harm in order to maximise the good. Nagel claims that even as a means to a good end, aiming at evil is to be guided by evil. Evil, by definition, should repel us, and in order for an action to be morally permissible it must always work toward the elimination of evil rather than its main-

[6]Ibid. p. 419.

tenance.[7] Perhaps from an external perspective that can select and reject certain world states a moral choice of evil as a means to more good can be undertaken, but as we are particular persons with internal perspectives, and our choices are of our own actions, we should not do that which is intrinsically evil.[8] Deontology, according to Nagel, works on this basis, as it is right to put restrictions in place such as 'do not kill innocent people' so we are never morally required to aim at evil.

There is a compelling argument here in terms of our psychological motivations and concerning why deontology seems intuitive and to work well with our common sense view of morality. The guilt we feel for inflicting harm upon people who are undeserving is surely a reflection of the damage to our character and integrity 'evil' acts do. Any theory of ethics must, on this line of thinking, take into account our role as moral actors inexplicably linked up with a psychological identity and place in the world and not just consider human beings empty vessels through which good or bad consequences occur. Furthermore, this is tied up with the argument that deontological theories have immense practical worth as they give us a set of principles to abide by and enable us to punish those who stray from them, while consequentialism is far less clear cut.

This may be true, but it is a poor argument for the theory in terms of sound philosophical rationale. Deontology is an attempt to conceptualise how we ought to act as moral agents, not a descriptive theory that only shows how people tend to make moral decisions, and arguments such as these seem to appeal to the latter concern rather than the former. Nagel may be stating the view that we ought not to ever perform an evil act, but this argument can only work in a normative sense if an objective reason as to

[7] Nagel [4] p. 182.

[8] Ibid. p. 183.

why doing evil is harmful to the agent is put forward, other than they struggle to do so or it damages them psychologically. The issue of paradox and failure to maximise rationality still remain for the deontologist, and although we may naturally incline towards it, if after stringent examination it is still shown to be flawed in this way we must be forced to abandon it.

The last attempt to redeem deontology I will look at is a victim centred justification based in rights from Kamm. This approach intends to demonstrate what the absence of deontological constraints would mean for the potential victims, those who would be sacrificed for the greater good. If successful, this would avoid the criticisms of Nagel's problematic agent centred justification. Kamm's argument claims that all human beings have intrinsic value which means they have a status not to be violated, and this is expressed in their rights, such as the right not to be killed.[9] These rights then align to the deontological restrictions; 'do not kill people' becomes a duty that an agent must always abide by regardless of the consequences. Kamm places such great significance on the individual human rights that she insists it is impermissible to agree to be sacrificed in a situation where several people have entered into an agreement that they will do so if they happen to be able to save the others' lives by dying themselves, and everyone has the same chance of being the victim of the violation of the restriction.[10] Her reasoning being that even for an opportunity to increase our survival, it diminishes our status as an individual with the right not to be violated. This proposal seems immediately controversial. Kagan raises the convincing point that increasing our inviolability in this way will mean less may be done to us for the greater good of others, but also that our 'saveability' will decrease; less may be done to others to save us from being

[9]Otsuka [6] p. 203.

[10]Kamm [3] p. 291.

violated.[11]

This conflict between inviolability and 'saveability' introduces the idea of a hierarchy of rights, as part of a victim centred justification, or duties, if viewed from an agent-based perspective. In making complicated moral decisions, it is inevitable that occasionally situations will arise in which two duties conflict. This may mean that although in another context it would be abhorrent to go against the duty of not killing innocent people, if it is in conflict with our duty to *protect* innocent people we should give the latter duty precedence and sacrifice the former. Dividing duties and rights into different categories of importance does seem like a natural suggestion. It appears we can say with confidence, for example, that the duty to not kill innocent people or the right to not be killed is more important or foundational than the duty not to steal from others. But this is because the action of killing seems inherently worse than stealing, whether that be because it is entirely irreparable, psychologically affects more people more deeply, or is intuitively more despicable or unimaginable. The right an individual has not to be violated and the right they have to be saved seem different to this as they more represent two sides of the same coin, and it is unclear why inviolability should take precedence over 'saveability' when both seem to uphold our right to life. Furthermore, an interesting point emerges when the objection is rephrased in terms of duties rather than rights, and the contrast is described as the duty not to kill compared to the duty to protect. It does in fact seem intuitively apparent that the duty not to kill would be of *greater* importance in a hierarchy, due to the active nature of the killing in contrast to protecting. This means that it still seems a defendant of deontology could not appeal to a hierarchy of duties in order to argue that our intuition of saving the larger number of innocent people can work within a deontological moral framework, at least

[11] Otsuka [6] p. 204.

without offering a convincing explanation as to why the duty to protect is more important than the duty to not kill irrespective of numbers.

Not only is Kamm's view unconvincing because she fails to provide an explanation as to why inviolability means more in terms of value than 'saveablity' when both seem to protect our right to life, victim centred justifications of deontological restrictions appear to fail on additional account. The appeal to rights can be outlined in a way that does not escape the original paradox described. The purpose of an individual having the right to life seems superfluous if, in a situation where five more innocent people with that same right will be sacrificed, the deontological restriction cannot be compromised. Kamm's attempt to move deontological reasoning away from an agent centred basis and toward agent neutral value is flawed therefore because if we entirely remove integrity and principle upholding reasons for not violating deontological restrictions, which appeal to our psychological make up at best, the paradox remains and what we supposedly are moral obligated to do will sometimes bring about consequences that undermine the very purpose behind our action.

It cannot be denied there are convincing *prima facie* reasons to adopt deontological restrictions as a framework for moral action. It allows agents to easily structure how they respond to moral situations and how to judge the behaviour of others, works affectively alongside our instinctive view of ourselves as agents responsible for our own actions and the fact that what we do reflects upon our psychological natures, and goes some way to explaining why we intuitively cannot do actions that may be in society's best interest from an external standpoint. But upon any further rational investigation it is apparent that deontological restrictions are logically flawed in that they demand agents in some situations to undermine the very same principle they are trying to uphold. The paradox of deontology will remain unless evidence can be provided as to why some actions that deontology restricts have

intrinsic harm for either the agent acting or the victim, and after looking at their arguments, I conclude that the popular views of both Nagel and Kamm have failed to meet this challenge successfully. If the deontologist encounters a situation wherein violating a constraint they hold would benefit the principle's goals, yet it is still impermissible to do so, and there is no further rationale as to why the violation is morally abhorrent then deontology is doomed to remain highly problematic.

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Assuming That Indeterminism Is True, Is Counterfactual Dependence Explicable in Terms of Quasi-Miracles?*

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Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to provide a positive answer to the question posed above. The foundation of this position will be the work of David Lewis in *Counterfactual Dependence and Time's Arrow* postscript D in which he aims to give an analysis of counterfactual dependence in the indeterministic case. In Part 1 I will give an outline of Lewis' account and Hawthorne's objections to it. In Part 2 I will give Williams' responses to Hawthorne which I take to be successful. However, I believe that the account of counterfactual dependence (CFD) that Lewis provides is, as Williams shows, unsatisfactory in its present form. I will therefore use Williams' ideas to show that CFD is explicable in terms of quasi-miracles but that the Lewisian account must be more carefully and precisely defined in order to do this.

1

In the main body of the paper, Lewis gives an account of CFD in the deterministic case which can be very briefly summarised as follows:

*Delivered at the BUPS Spring Conference 2013 on 16-17 February 2013 at Heythrop College, London.

> A[] → C iff some world where both A and C are true is more similar to our world than any world where A is true and C is false.[1]

Here, 'A [] → C' means: 'If it were that A then it would be that C.' The relation of similarity is then given by the system of weightings below:

(1) Avoid large and widespread miracles.
(2) Maximise perfect match of particular fact.
(3) Avoid small, localised miracles.
(4) Little or no importance to maximise close match of particular fact.

In that order.[2]

Here, miracle means a violation of the laws of nature relative to the target world of the counterfactual. This is a powerful and intuitive analysis of CFD in the deterministic case and it is not up for debate in this essay since we will be assuming indeterminism from this point forward. However, I mention it here because this is the structure that Lewis (and I) wish to maintain in the indeterministic case. Ideally, Lewis aims to adjust the similarity relation so that it is appropriate given indeterministic laws of nature. The rest of the work is then already done since, for present purposes, I will be assuming Lewis' deterministic analysis to be a correct explication of CFD.

Lewis attempts the transition to indeterminism by introducing the notion of a quasi-miracle.[3] A quasi-miracle (QM) is a remarkable, low chance event.[4] This needs some considerable unpacking and it is the way this is done that will allow me to save the notion

[1]Lewis [1] p. 10.

[2]Ibid. pp. 47-48 and Williams [4] pp. 387-388.

[3]Lewis [1] pp. 60-65.

[4]Hawthorne [2] p. 398.

of QMs as an explication of CFD. A QM is an event that is entirely different from the way things usually occur in our world, or the target world of the CF in question.[5] By this I mean that they are not only very low chance events, they are also 'remarkable' enough that they detract from similarity as much as a widespread, diverse miracle does in the deterministic case. This is a complex idea to get across, and doing so in too informal a manner is what leaves Lewis' account open to problems such as I will discuss later. It is more clearly illustrated by example, and Lewis gives one that is convenient to repeat.

Consider a monkey at a typewriter. It would be quasi-miraculous if the monkey were to type a 1000-page dissertation. Now, compare this to selecting some particular random sequence of key strokes S that is also 1000 pages. The chance that the monkey will produce S is just as low as the chance of him writing the dissertation, yet, the latter is a QM and the former is not. This is, in Lewis' terms, because S, though low chance, is not remarkable, and therefore not quasi-miraculous. A quote from Lewis puts this idea neatly: "What makes a quasi-miracle is not improbability *per se*, but rather the remarkable way in which the chance outcomes seem to conspire to produce a pattern."[6] I hope that this will suffice as a working definition of a QM. I know that this definition is not very clear and a little vague, this is unavoidable. The above definition is an attempt to paraphrase Lewis and correctly characterise his definition of a QM as it appears in the paper. Lewis' definition is not perfect and is the cause of nearly all objections to his treatment of the indeterministic case. I will be revising the definition later, but for now, I will use Lewis' as stated above.

Armed with QMs, Lewis must attempt to construct a new set of weightings for the similarity relation in the indeterministic case.

[5]Lewis [1] p. 60.

[6]Ibid. p. 60.

Some of the adjustments are quite neat, for example, there still exists an asymmetry of quasi-miracles. This is because divergence from the target world, which we will assume to be actuality, now doesn't even require a small miracle. With indeterministic laws, it can just be a chance event that causes divergence. However, convergence to the target world, although it no longer requires a large, widespread miracle, does require a QM which detracts from the converging world's similarity. The role of QMs in similarity is well illustrated by a borrowed example. Consider the counterfactual:

> If I had dropped the plate, it would have fallen to the floor.

Assuming indeterminism, there are worlds in which no miracle occurs and the plate flies off sideways when dropped.[7] However, this would require a QM, a low chance and remarkable event, so these worlds are not close to the target world. We can give the revised similarity relation as Williams does in his paper:

(1) Avoid large, diverse QMs (and miracles).
(2) Maximise perfect match of particular fact.
(3) Avoid small localised QMs (and miracles).
(4) Little or no importance to secure close match of particular fact.

In that order.[8]

There is a problem with this new similarity relation. This is that small QMs do not exist, they are simply chance events, and therefore should not detract from similarity as small miracles did. However, this leads to counterfactuals like:

> (1*) If I had dropped the plate $\Box\!\!\rightarrow \{ch(\sim$It fell to the floor$) > 0\}$

[7] Hawthorne [2] pp. 396-397.

[8] Lewis [1] and Williams [4] pp. 389-390.

being true which seems incompatible with (1).[9] Lewis says that in our judgments about CFs, we do not treat (1) and (1*) as incompatible. I agree with Lewis about this. Furthermore, I think that what chance we are prepared to ignore when we implicitly accept compatibilities like this is context dependent. I feel it is reasonable to think that there will be some context dependence necessary to explicate CFD. Since I do not see this problem as a serious threat to Lewis, I will not pursue it further.

I will now look at some problems with Lewis' account given by Hawthorne. There are four problems given in Hawthorne's paper, but Williams' response to the fourth is such a comprehensive and decisive resolution of the issue that I won't mention it here.

1.1 The Division Problem

Consider the monkey at his typewriter again, only this time, the monkey is 'set up' in such a way that the chance of him producing a dissertation is 20%. Consider the counterfactual:

> (2) If the monkey had started to type he wouldn't have produced a dissertation.

There are a number of possible sequences of events $e_1...e_n$ in which the monkey produces some dissertation. Each e_i has very low chance and is remarkable, therefore it is a QM even though the collective chance of all the e_i's is quite high, 20%. Now consider worlds w* in which the monkey does not produce a dissertation and worlds w in which he does. Now, since the w worlds each contain one of the sequences of events e_i, each contains a QM and hence all of them are less similar to the target world than the w* worlds. Therefore, the counterfactual (2) comes out as true despite the 20% chance that the monkey would have produced a

[9] Percival [3] p. 167.

dissertation, which seems an absurd result.[10]

1.2 The Problem of the Abundance of Quasi-Miracles

Lewis says that our world doesn't contain many QMs yet this seems to not be the case. For example, the chance of being dealt a bridge hand of thirteen cards of the same suit is 4 in 635,013,559,600 and it is certainly a remarkable event, it is therefore a QM. Another example Hawthorne gives is that the Sun and Moon have the same apparent diameter when seen from Earth, this too is low chance and remarkable. The problem is, that if the presence of QMs in a world is a ground for its dissimilarity to actuality, as Lewis says, then the fact that QMs are in our world (maybe frequently) makes this element of the similarity relation look unfounded. It seems preposterous to say that a world is dissimilar from actuality because is contains QMs if actuality also contains QMs.[11] There are in fact multiple ways in which this could be problematic for Lewis, I will consider these individually when I look at Williams' response in Part 2.

1.3 The Remarkable Subpattern Problem

Remarkable events can cease to be so if enough events are taking place. For example, if a coin is flipped a million times, the chance of it landing on heads every time is very low, and would be remarkable, so it is a QM. But, If we have enough coin flippers, say $f_1...f_n$, then for large values of n, the chance of one of the f_is getting 'all heads' tends to 1. So, by Lewis' account:

> If N coins are flipped a million times, then none of the coins will land all heads

[10] Hawthorne [2] p. 399.

[11] Ibid. p. 403.

is false for large enough N.

> (Bi) If N coins are flipped a million times, then the *i*th coin will not land all heads

is true.

Now, (Bi) combined with agglomeration:

$$A[] \rightarrow B, A[] \rightarrow C \Rightarrow A[] \rightarrow (BnC)$$

Gives the following result which contradicts (A):

> (B) If N coins are flipped a million times then none of the coins will land all heads

is true.[12]

As it stands this looks like a serious problem for Lewis since unless we deny agglomeration, which is an intuitive rule, we seem to derive a genuine contradiction.

It seems that the Lewisian explication of CFD in terms of QMs has serious issues. All three of the above problems from Hawthorne seem to pose a genuine threat to Lewis' account in its present form. None of the problems I have chosen to include can simply be ignored, all must be addressed if the account is to survive.

2

In this section I will first look at Williams' response to the division problem and show that the costs that he believes Lewis' account to incur in solving this problem can be avoided. Williams also gives responses to the other two problems mentioned above. In solving each, he thinks the Lewisian account incurs further costs. For the purposes of this essay, I will accept that the Lewisian

[12] Williams. pp. 397-398.

account does sustain the damage that he say it does and I will move straight to Williams' solutions to these problems in terms of 'typicality.' However, Williams' account does away with the notion of QMs, I am hoping to save Lewis' QMs in a revised explication that draws on Williams' ideas, but incorporates them into an account that closer mirrors Lewis'.

2.1 Williams' Response to The Division Problem

The response Williams gives to the division problem is simple; in the situation Hawthorne describes, the monkey producing a dissertation is no longer remarkable. This is because in Hawthorne's set up, the monkey is such that there is a 20% chance of it writing a dissertation. Knowing the chances, it is no longer at all remarkable if one is produced. Therefore, the individual cases in which a dissertation is produced are low chance, but not remarkable and hence not QM, so the resulting counterfactual (2) is still false as one would expect it to be. Williams believes that Lewis' account still incurs a serious cost in solving this problem. He thinks that resolving the problem as indicated above requires the use of counterfactuals, i.e. ones pertaining to 'appropriately informed agents' and what they would consider remarkable.[13] If it were necessary to do this it would indeed be a serious problem since analysing CFD without using counterfactuals is a necessary feature of any non-circular analysis. This would hence render Lewis' account uninteresting at the least, and useless at the worst. Fortunately, I believe that the problem can be solved without cost to Lewis' theory.

The problem is in how we understand 'remarkableness.' I would take remarkableness to entail low chance. In fact, as I will discuss later, I think that remarkableness may be understood as low

[13] Williams [4]. pp. 392-393.

chance combined with some other feature. If we think of remarkableness in this way, then it is clear that in Hawthorne's example the monkey producing some dissertation is not remarkable since it is not particularly low chance. This solution is then equivalent to Williams', since the correct analysis of (2) is now produced, but without damaging Lewis' theory. Furthermore, this is how Lewis thought of remarkableness, as something over and above low chance.

2.2 The Other Problems and Typicality

Williams believes that in solving the other two problems, Lewis' account picks up major issues. These are namely, that he must give up on his analytic ambition to account for CFD in terms of similarity due to the Abundance Problem, and that the Remarkable Subpattern Problem forces Lewis to accept an absurd result.[14] Since I am in effect arguing in favour of a Lewisian account, I will concede that Lewis' explication, as it stands, does have these problems and that they would be detrimental to the account.

To solve Hawthorne's problems, Williams introduces the notion of typicality. Typicality is to be understood as something akin to randomness. Clearly, all typical outcomes are random, and it is more than plausible that all random outcomes are typical.[15] This new notion is seen as improving on the idea of remarkableness, one such improvement is that typicality is unquestionably objective. An outcome is typical to the extent that it is random, and random to the extent that it possesses high probability properties (HPP). HPP are as one would expect them to be. For example, in a sequence of a million coin flips, being all-heads is a low proba-

[14]Ibid. pp. 393-400.

[15]Ibid. pp. 23-29.

bility property, whereas having as many heads as tails in the long run is a HPP. Talking in terms of HPP, it is clear that typicality is objective since it involves only events, their relative chances and frequencies, nothing that would suggest needing a particular perspective as remarkableness might.

I will now briefly consider Williams' solutions, in terms of typicality, to the remaining two problems. Firstly, The Abundance Problem, can cause issues in two relevant ways, both analogous to the problems it posed to Lewis' theory. (1) It would mean than under even slight counterfactual suppositions the future would be typical while the past remains atypical. And (2) CFD being analysed in terms of similarity is threatened as it is in the Lewisian case because the actual world is not as typical as the worlds that the analysis of counterfactuals would pick out. But, Williams quite correctly notes that by using the notion of typicality neither of these are an issue. We should always expect the future to be typical, any theory that expects an atypical future, just because atypical things have happened in the past, is a strange one indeed.[16] So problem (1) is resolved, the fact that the future comes out always as typical as possible it not an issue at all, in fact it seems to aline perfectly with our intuitions. In response to (2), Williams points out that unlike the Lewisian case, typicality does not favour 'dull worlds,' i.e. Worlds in which nothing strange happens, because such a dull world would in fact be atypical. Typicality is seen by Williams as a better way of expressing what it means for worlds to be similar to ours.

Secondly, the Remarkable Subpattern Problem is solved as follows. When we were using Lewis' theory, we were forced to accept counterfactuals:

> (Bi) If N coins are flipped a million times, then the *i*th coin will not land all heads

[16]Ibid. pp. 414-415.

as true.

However, using typicality rather than remarkableness, we can see that there is no need to accept (Bi) at all. In fact, for large n it would be atypical if at least one coin didn't land all heads. The reason (Bi) appeared plausible is because the counterfactuals:

> (Ci) If the *i*th coin was flipped a million times then it would not land all heads

are true. However, these do not cause any problems since the contradiction cannot be derived from (Ci).[17] The reason the problem can be solved is that, similar to The Division Problem, the situation Hawthorne sets up is such that the events in question are no longer atypical.

2.3 Remarkableness 2.0

I therefore think that Williams' account of CFD in terms of typicality is successful because it gives satisfying responses to the problems raised against Lewis' theory. However, I still think that CFD can be explicated in terms of QMs. Where Williams comes in, is in how we define a QM. Our original definition was that of a low chance and remarkable event. But, if we are more careful in saying what we mean by "remarkable" then we can incorporate Williams' ideas into the existing Lewisian framework involving QMs. So, let us take a new definition of remarkableness:

> An event e is remarkable iff it is atypical with respect to the laws of nature in the target world.

By atypical, I mean exactly what Williams means, atypicality is something like non-randomness, call it "apparent order." So, a QM then is an event that is remarkable under this definition. If an event is a QM then not only is there a very slim chance of

[17] Ibid. pp. 413-414.

it occurring, it also has this property of apparent order. I think that this may fall quite close to what Lewis envisaged a QM to be, see my Lewis quote in Part 1, this is why I choose to retain that name. I feel I should point out that the "low chance" element of the definition has not disappeared, it is included within atypicality alongside the property of apparent order or non-randomness. The key difference between my account and Williams' is that I use typicality to define QMs then continue as Lewis did, whereas Williams uses typicality in place of similarity. Due to the success of the Lewisian framework in the deterministic case, I feel it is preferable to retain it for the indeterministic case. Therefore, because Williams' notion of typicality, which solved the problems with Lewis' account, is now included within my explication of CFD, I think it is reasonable to say that CFD is explicable in terms of quasi-miracles.

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How to Understand Laws of Nature*

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Throughout science, and particularly in fundamental science, we often feel a need to talk about 'laws of nature'. However, there remain significant levels of disagreement not only about which scientific statements count as laws of nature, but also about what it means to be a law of nature in the first place. I suggest that the best approach to understanding laws of nature is to put them in the context of their explanatory function. They can then be thought of as placeholders which replace complicated or unavailable blocks of explanation – an approach which is rather less mysterious than the regularity or universals accounts, and which also provides a useful means of dealing with problem cases raised by probabilistic laws.

1 Laws and Explanation

It is clear that laws of nature play an important role in explanation, and therefore an examination of the basic structure of explanation will be useful in establishing what laws of nature might be. One particularly common form involves building a chain of states or events, each of which can be said to explain the next: an acceptable answer to the question 'Why X?' will have the underlying form 'A brought about B, B brought about C' and so on until we reach X. For instance, an acceptable answer to the question 'Why did the barn burn down?' may be something along the lines of 'James dropped a cigarette in the hay, the cigarette set the

*Delivered at the BUPS Spring Conference 2013 on 16-17 February 2013 at Heythrop College, London.

hay on fire, and the fire then encompassed the whole barn'.

This can be expanded as follows:

A = James dropping a cigarette
B = the presence of a cigarette in the hay
C = the hay igniting
D = a fire in the hay
E = a fire encompassing the whole barn
X = the barn burning down

Hence the underlying structure of the explanation is given by 'A brought about B, B brought about C, C brought about D, D brought about E, E brought about X'. Notice that in this case, 'brought about' could be replaced by 'caused' in every instance. However, I have chosen this terminology so as to avoid ruling out the possibility of noncausal explanations of this form.

Hempel's influential deductive-nomological view of explanation[1] asserts that in an adequate scientific explanation, the *explanandum* must be a deductive consequence of the *explanans*, which must be a set of premises including at least one law of nature. For an explanation of the above form to satisfy this requirement, we require at least two kinds of premises: first, an assertion that the initial event or state A occurred, and second, for each claim of the form 'A brought about B', an assertion that it is the case that 'Events of type A are reliably followed by events of type B', or similar, with at least one law of nature included amongst this second type. Moreover, even if we do not accept Hempel's account of adequate explanation, it is independently plausible that if we are to accept an explanation of this form, we must accept both that A occurred and is not itself in need of further explanation,

[1]Hempel [3] pp. 163-164.

and that each step in the chain is valid and not in need of further explanation, so we will still require both sorts of premises. If there is an objection to the first sort of premise – for instance, if someone wants to know why James dropped a cigarette in the hay – the appropriate response is merely to extend the chain a little further backwards. But if there is an objection to the second sort of premise, the appropriate response is often to elaborate on the step in question by providing an expansion of the same form: 'A brought about A1, A1 brought about A2, A2 brought about B'. For instance, we might want to know how the cigarette in the hay brought about the hay igniting: an appropriate answer would say that it provided heat which brought about a series of exothermic chemical reactions in the hay which resulted in combustion.

It is clear that if any explanation is ever to be counted as adequate, there must be many explanatory steps which we are willing to accept without further elaboration. Our acceptance will be highly dependent on context – in an everyday situation we may accept the step 'the bringing together of baking powder and vinegar brought about the bubbling' but in a chemistry examination it would be necessary to provide more detail about the detailed mechanism by which the bubbling is brought about. Let us therefore confine our attention to the context of the fundamental sciences, where laws of nature typically tend to appear. When one of our explanatory steps is questioned in such a context, we may choose to justify it either by providing an expanded explanation of the same form, or by invoking a law of nature. Note that this suggests we should add a caveat to Hempel's criteria for adequacy: the appearance of laws of nature among the premises may sometimes be implicit, as the laws in question may not appear directly in the explanation until the premises are expanded in this way. Now, when one of the explanatory steps is under question, there are two distinct reasons why we might decide to invoke a law of nature rather than providing a further expansion. The first and most common is a simple lack of time or inclination – so, for instance, we often cite Boyle's law to explain features of

the pressure or volume of a gas, even though we are capable of giving a more detailed explanation in terms of statistical mechanics. But the second is a lack of knowledge: there is a certain point at the frontier of science beyond which we cannot further elaborate the explanatory steps, because we simply do not know what lies behind them. The question then is what we take ourselves to be doing when we invoke a law of nature in the second case: we are not referring to a known chunk of explanation, and it is not immediately obvious what we intend instead.

In order to answer this question it is revealing to consider the links between the two cases in which we use laws. When we justify some link as a 'law of nature' despite being in possession of a more detailed elaboration of the mechanism which underlies it, we are certainly not thinking of it as a bare regularity – the reference to a 'law of nature' stands for a particular piece of explanation which we have chosen not to give in this case. I would suggest that our attitude is the same even in the cases where further explanation is not presently available to us: by using the term 'law of nature' to refer to such links, we are asserting that there is something underlying the observed regularities, something available to ground them. This need not be an explanation of exactly the same type as we give for our less fundamental laws; for instance, in quantum mechanics, there is no reason to think the underlying connection must be a mechanistic, 'hidden variables' type of explanation which would violate Bell's inequalities. We simply don't know what it is that makes Schrodinger's equation apply universally; we don't even have any idea what kind of thing it might be. But we talk of this repeated behaviour as a law of nature because we believe that it is not mere chance.

It might look as if this notion of lawhood will lead to an infinite regress: if a law is never a basic connection between two things, but always represents some possibly unknown chunk of explanation, then the sequence of explanation can never end. Presumably the world does not contain infinite levels of complexity,

which would suggest that there must be some basic laws of nature about which nothing further can be said. However, this objection rests on the assumption that what grounds a law of nature must be an explanation of the same structure as higher-level explanations, i.e. something which is itself of the form 'A brings about B, B brings about C' and so on. What I claim is less than this: talk of a law of nature merely assumes that there is some real thing grounding the connection, not that it is of any form that we would recognise. When we invoke laws for which we can give no further explanation, the law is intended as a placeholder that represents something of which we have no knowledge or understanding. Someone who is tempted by Humean supervenience, which holds that the world consists of nothing but local matters of fact, may like to think of such a 'law' as a substantial entity that is present at each point in spacetime where it applies and somehow acts as a causal agent that produces the relevant behaviour. Someone who is more metaphysically inclined might think of such laws as relations between universals.

But neither of these theses is necessary to the view of lawhood which I am endorsing. The fundamental point is that we use the term 'law' as a deliberate contrast with the notion of a bare regularity – we call something a law precisely when we have an intuition that it is not merely a regularity. This is not to say that we are actually correct in such intuitions. Possibly Schrodinger's equation simply is a basic regularity in the world about which nothing further can be said, but this is not what we believe, or else we would not refer to it as a law of nature.

2 Features of Laws

One objection to the picture I have been presenting is that laws of nature, understood in this way, would fail to have certain features which are intuitively plausible requirements for lawhood. I examine several of these features and show that our intuitions can

in fact be satisfied by my approach.

2.1 Objectivity

Dretske[2] points out that we believe that laws of nature have always been the same (or if they have changed over time, they have done so in a way that is independent of their epistemological status), and that laws are discovered rather than created, and therefore a statement cannot become a law by being used in a certain way. Now on my account, the fact that a statement is a law is indeed dependent on its being used in a certain way, and therefore it seems that on this understanding laws would fail to have the required objectivity. However, we should be cautious for there are several ways in which the demand for objectivity can be understood. When we say that laws must be objective, do we mean that the law must refer to facts which are objectively true, or do we mean that it must be an objective matter that the law is indeed a law? Dretske is committed to the second kind of claim, but I think that our intuitions about laws really only justify the first. The true force of Dretske's argument comes from our notion that there is something special about certain universal statements 'all F are G' which makes them qualify as laws, something that exists prior to our recognition of them as laws. Thus the argument certainly achieves its primary purpose of showing that laws are not just universal statements that we happen to use in a certain way; but it does not stand against the interpretation I have offered, for on my interpretation, lawhood does indeed depend on something that has always been the case. The fact that it is a law that 'all F are G', depends on the fact that there is some special kind of relationship (for instance, a particular kind of causal chain) between instances of Fs and of Gs, and this relationship existed before we knew of it or postulated the law in question. Such considerations

[2]Dretske [1] pp. 248-249.

explain our intuition that lawhood is not something that we create: only certain universal statements are eligible to be laws, and this eligibility is something that we must discover. Nonetheless, ultimately a statement's status as a law depends also on its being used in the correct way.

2.2 Necessity

Van Fraassen[3] claims that one distinguishing character of lawhood is that if it is a law that A, it is physically necessary that A. Nothing in the account I have given seems to make provision for this special kind of necessity. However, I think Lewis is correct when he argues that the idea of necessity as a criterion for lawhood has things the wrong way round: on the contrary, it is the fact that A is a law that makes it physically necessary that A. Lewis' detailed argument for this goes down the route of possible worlds: he defines physical necessity by the claim 'X is physically necessary in world W iff X is true in every world which is physically possible relative to W', and then defines physical possibility of a world as 'a world W is physically possible relative to world W exactly if the laws of W are all true in W' from which we can deduce 'it is physically necessary that X is true in world W iff X is implied by the laws of W'.[4] However, I do not think we need to subscribe to the possible-world analysis of necessity in order to find compelling the idea that to be physically necessary just means to conform to the laws of nature.

Van Fraassen objects to this account on the grounds that we think of laws as giving reasons why some course of events is physically necessary, a role they cannot perform if being physically necessary is identified with conforming to law, since a reason must be

[3] Van Fraassen [2] pp. 43-45.

[4] Lewis [4] p. 5.

distinct from that which it explains.[5] However, while we do have intuitions that a given course of events happens the way it does because of laws of nature – that indeed, the law makes it necessary that events should occur as they do – I do not think that there is any 'physical necessity,' involved here. Laws make certain courses of events necessary insofar as each event in the sequence makes the following one necessary by bringing it about via a series of steps, since those steps implicitly or explicitly include laws of nature. Hence laws give reasons why events must occur, that is, why certain sequences of events necessarily occur as they do. But it does not follow that laws give reasons for 'physical necessity', as this is a more abstract concept whose use does not fall under our everyday intuitions, and it is therefore perfectly consistent to think of physical necessity as arising out of lawhood rather than vice versa.

A further objection is that, given that we have denied that what counts as a law of nature is an objective matter, it seems that if physical necessity is defined in terms of lawhood we will be forced to deny that what is physically necessary is an objective matter. This may seem counterintuitive, until we remember that it is not the same as saying that what happens and will happen is not an objective matter. Talk of necessity, physical or not, involves taking the structure of actual events and imposing some further structure which picks out certain connections between events as having a certain kind of necessity. Thus we can coherently hold that the actual structure of events is objective while denying that physical necessity is likewise objective, and I think this is enough to satisfy most ordinary intuitions.

[5] Van Fraassen [2] pp. 48-50.

3 Probabilistic Laws

Given the importance of probabilistic laws in modern physics, we should also ask whether this account of lawhood can be extended to probabilistic cases. In fact, this is one of its major strengths. As Van Fraassen points out,[6] many analyses of lawhood have difficulty distinguishing between real and apparent instances of a probabilistic law. Consider a law of the form 'For any X, there is a probability P that it is Y'. Since not all X need be Y, it seems that we could have a case where some X is Y not because of the law but purely by chance. But any account of laws which takes lawhood merely as a property of a sentence or proposition will be unable to explain this difference. For example, the regularity account of lawhood tells us that a law is a regularity having certain properties; it follows that any instance of the regularity is an instance of the law. Similarly, the universals account holds that a law is a relationship between universals, and since it does not seem to make sense to give an account of the means by which such a relationship brings about the required relations between particulars instantiating those universals, we have no way to distinguish between cases when the relation between the particulars is derived from the relation between universals and cases when it is purely accidental.

But on my account, a law refers to some underlying mechanism or substantial entity, it references a particular existent whose presence or absence is a matter of objective fact. For higher level laws we can actually carry out empirical tests to establish whether the relevant mechanism is present and thus confirm whether some instance of X being Y is occasioned by the law or not; for more fundamental laws we presently cannot obtain such confirmation, and perhaps we are prohibited from doing so even in principle, but the analogy to the higher-level case makes it possible for us

[6] See Van Fraassen [2] chapter 5.

to conceptualise the difference between cases where the law is in operation and cases where it is not. A real instance of the law is one where the causal chain goes to completion or the causal agent is present and carries out its usual action; a merely apparent instance is where the causal chain is absent or broken, or the causal agent is absent or fails to act. Indeed, I think this comparison demonstrates that my account of lawhood is considerably less mysterious than competing accounts: the fact that we can say when the law is operating and when it is not is a sign that this account provides more genuine understanding of what a law is and how it produces the effects it is supposed to explain.

4 Conclusion

The claim that a law is something that stands in for a piece of explanation and refers to some concrete mechanism at work in the world has several advantages. Making lawhood dependent on our explanatory practices may appear to threaten its objective status, but objectivity is not altogether lost because the concrete features of the world to which the relevant piece of explanation refers exist with or without human cognizance. The approach may also appear to lack the required element of physical necessity, but this need not concern us if we accept Lewis' suggestion that physical necessity is to be analysed in terms of lawhood rather than vice versa. Finally, the realism about lawhood encapsulated in this approach gives us a concrete solution to problems raised by probabilistic laws in current physics, and this realism gives us a more concrete grasp on what it means to be a law than most of the rival approaches.

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The Human as a Situated Being; on the Heideggerian Underpinnings of the Extended Mind Hypothesis*

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Introduction

Certain aspects of the Extended Mind Hypothesis (EMH) in contemporary functionalism strongly parallel ideas expressed by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. Despite differences in both philosophical approach and focus of analysis, insights from these sources can be seen to be complementary. In this paper I will argue that recognising the Heideggerian concepts implicitly at play in EMH can help to make sense of its claims. The central vision that these views share is a picture of the human as inherently embedded in a meaningful environment, and a rejection of the dichotomy between 'inner' and 'outer' spheres of existence.

In Section 1. I will give a critical summary of EMH as proposed by Clark and Chalmers. In Section 2. I will draw comparisons between some of its central aspects and the Heideggerian concepts of being-in-the-world and readiness-at-hand. Section 3. will clarify the conceptual compatibility of the two approaches, explain how this analysis helps provide a context in which one can best make sense of EMH, and elaborate on the picture of the human that emerges via this synthesis.

*Delivered at the BUPS Spring Conference 2013 on 16-17 February 2013 at Heythrop College, London.

1 The Extended Mind Hypothesis

EMH is a view within the contemporary functionalist school of Philosophy of Mind. For functionalism, mental states and processes are defined in terms of their functionality, not their substantiality. For example, if a particular neural process (N) is known to occur in the brain of a human agent during (and is constantly correlated with) the process of recalling 'from memory' a piece of information (I), then it would be said that N is (at least partly) the substrate in which the process of recalling I is instantiated. The mental process itself is identified with its functional profile – the role that it plays in guiding behaviour and effecting other mental states etc. – rather than with the underlying substance which performs this function. The purpose of this distinction is to avoid a narrow identification of mind with brain, and to allow for the possibility that mentality can be a feature of systems substantially different to ourselves.[1]

EMH, which receives its canonical statement in Clark and Chalmers (C&C)'s paper 'The Extended Mind', asserts that, given this functionalist picture, it is possible to include as vehicles of cognition not only the brain but also the body and environment.[2] It is in this sense that it is claimed that the 'mind can extend outside of the brain'.[3] C&C illustrate this with the example of Otto the Alzheimer's sufferer. Due to the inadequacy of his biological memory Otto carries a notebook in which he records important information. The claim of EMH is that as long as the notebook reliably fulfils the same function of storing information

[1] See Maslin [9] and Fodor [5].

[2] See Clark & Chalmers [2].

[3] C&C make much use of this spatial metaphor, but I will attempt to avoid it here. Its use veils one of the strengths of functionalist language – that, since it is incoherent to talk of the *function* of something as having a location, so it is also to talk of mentality in spatial terms. Mental states are not seen to be *in* the brain in the first place; hence the 'extension' rhetoric can be misleading. See Section 3 for elaboration on this point.

and influencing behaviour as biological memory does for others, then we can characterise Otto-the-organism-and-his-notebook as a 'coupled cognitive system', linked in an *active* two-way interaction.[4]

The interesting implications are: (a) that Otto is not seen to be merely a passive recipient of information from his notebook, and the notebook not as *merely* a brute physical object 'external' to Otto, but that the two parts of the system are actively constitutive of Otto's existence as a locus of thought and action; and (b) that for such a system to be possible, for the notion of an 'extended', coupled system to be coherent, Otto must be embedded in a world of meaningful objects.[5] The objects that play an active role in his thought and action must be experienced by him as bearers of purpose – as things which are *for a use* – and as existing with reference to other functional items. These implications parallel key Heideggerian concepts. An exposition of these will in turn make clearer the claims of EMH.

2 Comparison with Heidegger's Being and Time

2.1 Being-in-the-world

In *Being and Time* Heidegger seeks to give an account of the fundamental nature of being human.[6] His approach is *phenomenological* – it proceeds through a description of experience "in the very way in which it shows itself from itself";[7] and it is *existential* – it is concerned with the question of the nature of being or exis-

[4]Ibid. p. 8.

[5]The latter of these implications is not recognised explicitly by C&C, but a consideration of it can be found in Wilson [11]. See in particular p. 174 and pp. 183-184.

[6]Heidegger [7]. I will refer to ideas mainly expressed in Division 1.

[7]See Wrathall [10] p. 9 and Heidegger [7] pp. 26-30, §7.

tence, not, for example, with the nature or limits of knowledge.[8] Heidegger claims that, prior to a disinterested cognitive relation to the world of physicality, our fundamental way of being is that of 'being-in-the-world'. This is the primordial mode of being of Dasein.[9]

This mode of being-in does not "designate a spatial 'in one another' of two things objectively present".[10] It means to live or to dwell in, to have a familiarity with, the world. For Gelven, "the real meaning [of being-in-the-world] is that my *surroundings* (*Umwel*t: 'environment') are not simply *there*, but they affect me and I them".[11] In other words, for Heidegger, the world is not merely an inert setting in which Dasein exists spatially, but is something actively involved in forming Dasein's being.[12]

In this sense Dasein's being-in-the-world parallels EMH's core notion of mutual active involvement between agent and object (implication (a) above). I will now further explicate what Heidegger means by 'the world', specifically the objects that make up its contents, and will argue that this matches the kind of environment in which EMH implies the human agent must be situated (implication (b)).

2.2 Ready-at-hand Objects

Heidegger distinguishes the physical context in which we exist in an 'ontic'[13] sense from the *world* as a normative and functional

[8] See Heidegger [7] pp. 1-3, §1.

[9] 'Dasein' is Heidegger's term for the human being. He uses it not to mean a conscious subject, but to refer to the basic human *way of being*. For a discussion of the term, see Dreyfus [4] pp. 13-16.

[10] Heidegger [7] p. 54, §12.

[11] Gelven [6] p. 59.

[12] The "'world' itself is constitutive of Dasein". Heidegger [7] p. 51, §11.

[13] I.e. as spatial beings "objectively present within the world". Ibid. p. 64, §14.

unity, or totality of objects *qua* 'useful things'.[14] The world is that environment within which one understands one's potentialities and purposes, and is a public and human phenomenon. The world of Dasein is thus, in this 'ontological' sense, "a characteristic of Dasein itself".[15] The environment in which one exists 'ontologically' is the world understood as meaningful context, rather than physical space. Heidegger takes this to be characteristic of being-in-the-world.

Objects in the world are primarily encountered *practically*, and are perceived as useful things – functional items – through this relationship. Heidegger attributes to their mode of being in this relationship the status of 'ready-at-hand'.[16] Objects interpreted *not* as useful things but as brute, spatial objects, from a disinterested 'scientific' perspective, have the status of 'present-at-hand'.[17] Being-in-the-world is therefore being situated in, in the sense of mutual active involvement, a normative and referential totality containing ready-at-hand objects.

Objects are encountered as most ready-at-hand when one's use of them is most familiar and embodied. For example, a hammer fulfils its function best, and is most ready-at-hand, when it "is not grasped theoretically at all", but is simply used. Through such familiarity the hammer becomes 'invisible' to your body; it "withdraws, so to speak, in its character of [readiness-at-hand]".[18] For EMH, a key criterion for an item of 'scaffolding' to form part of a coupled cognitive system is its enabling the maintenance of a

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[14]Ibid. p. 68. *Zeug* is also sometimes translated as 'utensils' or 'equipment'. I will make use of Stambaugh's translation here. See for example, Ibid. p. 68, §15.

[15]Ibid. p. 64, §14.

[16]Stambaugh translates *Zuhandenheit* as 'handiness', but I will instead make use of the more common 'readiness-at-hand', to distinguish from 'present-at-hand' (*vorhanden*). See Ibid. p. 69, §15, and Gelven [6] p. 61.

[17]Ibid. p. 61; Heidegger [7] p. 70, §15.

[18]Ibid. p. 69, §15.

similar level of functional reliability as would an 'internal' mechanism. This reliability is bred by familiarity with the use of the item in question.[19] The more familiar the relationship between agent and object, the more fluent the agent's use of it, and hence, in Heidegger's terms, the greater the object's being as a ready-at-hand object. It is this embodied connectedness in the use of the object, and hence its functional reliability, in virtue of which C&C class the relationship as 'coupled', or mutually active.

Further, Otto's notebook is only able to fulfil its function because of its role as a meaningful object within a wider referential system. It is a vehicle of language: a public, shared system of meaning. Although it is also true that 'the notebook' is, in one sense, a lump of paper and ink, it is not this (ontic) element of its being that is relevant to EMH, nor to Heidegger. To see the notebook as existing *merely* as a spatial object "one must completely disregard or just not see the existential constitution of being-in".[20] The point at which Otto and his notebook can be most naturally said to form a 'coupled system' is when he does not regard it as a physical object external to him, but 'looks through' this aspect of its being and sees only that which it signifies, such as the particular piece of information that he needs to recall.

In short, rather than being the product of an isolated internal self separated from the 'external world', not only are Otto's daily activities contingently entwined with his *physical* environment, but his thought and action is inherently situated in and partly constituted by an interconnected system of *functional* items. Heidegger's 'world' refers to this interconnected referential system, and Otto's notebook qualifies as a ready-at-hand useful thing. Hence, for EMH, Otto's being-in-the-world, and the notebook's being a useful thing are essential to the two parts forming a cou-

[19] See Clark & Chalmers [2] pp. 11, 15.

[20] I.e. one must not take notice of its ontological aspect. Heidegger [7] p. 56, §12.

pled system.

The fact that a ready-at-hand relationship with objects of scaffolding is *essential* to the claims of EMH is paralleled by Heidegger's phenomenological claim to the *fundamentality* of being-in-the-world as a human mode of being. C&C make a similar claim about the evolution of humanity, albeit from a more empirical perspective. They claim that it "seems that evolution has favoured on-board capacities which are especially geared to [manipulating and] parasitising the local environment", and cite language as a central example of an 'extended' (and shared) system of thought.[21]

3 Conceptual Compatibility of EMH and Heidegger, and the Emergent View of the Human

The views of Heidegger and C&C differ in a number of ways, but there is no major contradiction between their claims. In fact, the two approaches are complementary, and, when it is appreciated that EMH rests on the Heideggerian underpinnings I have described, EMH becomes more coherent.

For Heidegger we are always 'in the world' in a pre-cognitive way. "Dasein always has a 'there', a place in which it understands how to comport itself, and within which it has meaningful relationships to other entities".[22] C&C do not explicitly recognise this being-in as *fundamental* and prior to an 'objectification' of the world. There is no conflict here though; C&C are not positing an existential view such as this, but are describing, from an 'objective' perspective, the working of a functional relationship. What is significant is that their view presupposes the concept of being-in-the-world and implicitly entails that, for it to be possible

[21] Clark & Chalmers [2] pp. 11-12.

[22] Wrathall [10] p. 11.

that cognition may 'extend' to incorporate meaningful scaffolding, this be a basic aspect of human existence.

Similarly, C&C are describing an individual's 'cognitive' processes, the type of mental activity that Heidegger sees as secondary, derivative of being-in-the-world. But once again, and for the same reasons, there is no contradiction here, only a difference in approach and focus. EMH is most coherent when set against the Heideggerian view that being-in-the-world is a *precondition* of this sort of mentality. Thinking, knowing, forgetting, and the like, "must be understood *as a modification of primordial being-in*".[23]

Further, we can view C&C's utilisation of the 'internal/external' metaphor as superficial, and perhaps confused. It is precisely this distinction that they are attempting to dissolve: "once we recognise the crucial role of the environment in constraining the evolution and development of cognition, we see that *extended cognition is a core cognitive process*, not an add-on extra", and in doing so "we may be able to see ourselves more truly as creatures of the world".[24]

In these ways, recognition of the Heideggerian underpinnings of EMH helps to make sense of the notion of the 'extended' mind or self. The concept of 'extension outside of the brain' only has the appearance of metaphysical gratuitousness if we come at it with a pre-formed acceptance of the spatial rhetoric of internal mentality vs. external world. The functionalist methodology implicitly supersedes the idea of a fundamental separation between 'inner' and 'outer', and in doing so parallels Heidegger's view that the nature of everyday human existence involves no such distinction:

> It is not the case that human being 'is', and then on top of that has a relation of being to the 'world' which

[23] Heidegger [7] p. 62, §13.

[24] Clark & Chalmers [2] pp. 12, 18 (my emphasis).

> it sometimes takes upon itself. Dasein is never 'initially' a sort of being which is free from being-in [...]. This taking up of relations to the world is possible only *because*, as being-in-the-world, Dasein is as it is.[25]

4 Conclusion

The picture of humanity that emerges from these two perspectives is that of a being whose *primary* way of being is in the world in a broadly Heideggerian sense. However, it also emerges that what is perhaps *distinctive* about humans *is* our ability to distance ourselves from this involved relationship in the world and, at times, view it in a present-at-hand manner. In our *basic* way of being, though, we are no doubt closer to other animals than a more 'rationalist' view of human nature would suppose.[26] Animals also encounter their environment in a purposeful way, but don't (for the most part, I assume) investigate it in a disinterested fashion. For example, my dog does not look upon his lead as a piece of leather and rationally evaluate my motivations for picking it up and walking towards the door; he experiences all this in a ready-at-hand way, he knows what it all means, which is, essentially, "walkies!".

In summary, the important implications of EMH, that a coupled cognitive system involves a mutual active involvement between human organism and environment, and that for this system to be possible the agent in question must be immersed in a functional, meaningful context, are paralleled by Heidegger's notions of being-in-the-world and 'the world' as a referential totality containing useful things. Viewing the claims of EMH in this Heideggerian context makes more coherent the contemporary

[25] Heidegger [7] p. 57, §12.

[26] For views of humanity as rational animal see for example: Aristotle [1], Descartes [3], and Kant [8].

notion of the 'extended mind'. It renders redundant the confusing allusion to an internal/external distinction and highlights the importance of an object's readiness-at-hand to its forming part of a functionalist cognitive system. The two views taken together form a picture of the human as a situated being – inherently embedded in and partly constituted by its environment, and therefore represent a deconstruction of the dualistic barrier between 'inner' and 'outer' realms of mentality, and human existence in general.

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The Best Defence of Libertarianism Still Fails

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Introduction

In this essay, I shall first describe the criticism most commonly thrown at libertarianism, before illustrating what I believe to be the best response available for a libertarian: the defence put forward by Robert Kane. I will conclude by demonstrating that Kane's argument fails to establish that we can be responsible for our choices if determinism is false.

1 The Argument against Libertarianism

Here, I shall illustrate what I consider to be the strongest argument against libertarianism. Initially, however, I will elucidate three assumptions that I rely on in this essay. I feel justified in making these widely accepted assumptions, as there is not enough space to query them directly here, and it is more imperative that I deal with more controversial aspects of libertarianism and its defence. Firstly, I assume that responsibility for our actions requires that we did them freely. By the term 'freely', I designate that the said action/choice was undertaken by a rational agent, who, at the time of acting/choosing, was able to instigate different outcomes, without undue outside influence, such as coercion, blackmail, or fear. Secondly, I assume that choosing is a type of action. Thirdly, I assume that 'responsibility' in this essay refers to the attribute which objectively falls upon a rational agent when they are the, or one of the, ultimate causes of a choice/action. If an action is the result of luck or chance, we cannot be responsible for it.

The intuitive argument against libertarianism has been pithily described by Thomas Nagel. Nagel wrote, "I'm not sure I understand how responsibility for our choices makes sense if they are not determined. It is not clear what it means to say 'I determine the choice', if nothing about me determines it".[1] Presently, I will explain the first part of Nagel's worry, that he is 'not sure [he] understand[s] how responsibility for our choices makes sense if they are *not* determined'. Nagel's worry, based on a common intuition, is this: if exactly the same agent with exactly the same past and exactly the same laws of nature were in two possible, qualitatively identical worlds, with the same history and laws of nature, and in 'world A' they could choose *a* and in 'world B' they could choose *b*, it seems that such a choice is a matter of luck or chance. The intuition is this: If our choices are not determined, i.e. one outcome is not necessitated by the past, the laws of nature, the state of the world external to us, or some preceding attribute of ourselves, it would appear that our decisions/actions are arbitrary matters of luck or chance.

Now, I consider the second part of Nagel's worry, that 'it is s not clear what it means to say *I* determine the choice, if nothing about me determines it'. This is simply an extension of the first part of his worry, and he now refers to *internal* determination, which must be a product of us in some way. This concern boils down to the fact that if our desires, emotions, personalities, past experience, upbringing, etc. do not determine which way we will choose in a given situation, it seems that the only remaining option is that it is a matter of luck or chance. I believe that both parts of Nagel's worry are encapsulated by the intuitive appeal of this induction, which I label the 'Luck Worry'. The 'Luck Worry' is supported by the observations of quantum mechanics, the only empirically observable occasion of undetermined events, in which, for example, the splitting of atoms does seem to be

[1]Nagel [7] p. 58.

arbitrary and a matter of chance.[2]

The Luck Worry

(1) If indeterminism is true, nothing, including anything about me, determines whether I do (a) or (b) at time t[3] *(definition)*

(2) If nothing, including anything about me, determines whether I do (a) or (b) at t, my action is a matter of luck and I am not responsible for it *(intuition)*

(3) Indeterminism is true *(assumption)*

(4) My action is a matter of luck and I am not responsible for it[4]

2 The Best Defence of Libertarianism in Response to the Aforementioned Worry

I shall now explain libertarianism's best defence against the aforementioned worry. It must be noted, that there is both a positive aspect to libertarianism, that free will and responsibility *are* possible, and a negative one, that determinism is false.[5] It must be noted that this essay question only deals with the positive aspect and assumes the negative aspect, as Nagel's worry concerns the compatibility of indeterminism and the personal determination of action and responsibility. The best defence for libertarianism is an argument based on Kane's retort to the accusation that indeterminism is incompatible with free will[6], and, thus, ultimate responsibility. Despite ultimately failing, I consider Kane's defence,

[2] Watson [8] p. 9.

[3] (a) and (b) refer to different actions in a given situation where there are two choices, one of which must be chosen.

[4] Kane [5] p. 299. This is just a précis of Kane's 'Luck Principle'.

[5] Kane [6] p. 33.

[6] Kane [5] p. 299. Kane was responding to Galen Strawson, Alfred Mele, Bernard Berofsky, Bruce Waller, Richard Double, Mark Bernstein, and Ishtiyaque Haji.

relying on his concept of 'self forming actions', to be the strongest so far offered by a libertarian, because it avoids the traps into which other defensive arguments fall. I reject 'agent-causation' arguments for libertarianism, such as those of Thomas Reid[7] and Roderick Chisholm[8], as they attribute a type of causation over and above event-causation[9] and employ different types of metaphysically extravagant concepts to attribute this to. They do not succeed in defending libertarianism from its critics, and spawn further complications. Alongside David Wiggins and Kane[10], I believe it preferable to stick to an argument that cannot be accused of metaphysical extravagance, and relies foremost on our phenomenal understandings of ourselves, and the world around us.[11] Despite their common starting point of eschewing agent-causation, I prefer Kane's argument to Wiggin's, because I hold it to be a clearer and more sophisticated defence of libertarianism. Moreover, Wiggin's argument can be employed by compatibilists[12] (who believe that determinism and free will are compatible), which, although not the matter at hand here, does not aid libertarianism's defence.

I will now demonstrate how Kane argues that an agent can be held responsible for an undetermined 'two-way choice' by explaining the concept of 'self forming actions', and the way in which he employs this concept to defend libertarianism from Nagel's worry. This will be done by (i) initially demonstrating that, according to Kane, a 'set-will action' can be undetermined yet still entail agent responsibility. A 'set-will action', where, unlike in a 'two–way choice', the agent has already decided which course of

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[7]Watson [8] p. 10.

[8]Chisholm [2] pp. 26-39.

[9]Event-causation occurs when events causing other events.

[10]Watson [8] p. 12.

[11]It is this view that leads me to ultimately reject Kane's defense of libertarianism.

[12]Watson [8] p.13.

action to take, describes an action in which indeterminism arises from something external to the agent's choice. Then, (ii) using a 'two-way choice' example, I will use my conclusions from (i), and respond to a possible alteration of the 'Luck Worry' that a critic of libertarianism, such as Nagel, could employ, so as to attempt to demonstrate that we can still hold agents responsible for genuinely undetermined 'two-way choices'.

(i) Initially, I will show how, with an indeterministic 'set-will action', Kane argues that an agent can be responsible, so long as he is *voluntarily* and *intentionally*[13] succeeds in doing an action he tried to do. Peter Pan tries to, and fully intends to, cut off Captain Hook's hand with a swipe of his sword, but due to an undetermined spasm in his brain it is not determined whether he swings the sword in the correct place or not. As Kane does not argue for indeterminism here, but merely the compatibility of indeterminism and free will, I ask the reader to assume that it is entirely undetermined whether Peter succeeds in slicing off Hook's hand.[14] If part (2) of the 'Luck Worry' were to be upheld here, Peter would *not* be responsible for slicing off Hook's hand if he did succeed in so doing, because the act of him so doing was actually undetermined. Kane follows John Austin and Philippa Foot in arguing that this is not the case,[15] as Peter is responsible because he maimed Hook *intentionally* and *voluntarily*. Peter tried to do as he succeeded in doing in this instance and, so, endorsed the outcome. Kane claims that saying Peter is not responsible in the case where he does slice of Hook's hand, clearly does not coincide with what we refer to by 'to be responsible'; he succeeded in something which he was *intentionally* and *voluntarily* trying

[13] Kane [5] p. 309.

[14] If the reader cannot accept this, at least accept that it is undetermined by anything about Peter, as this spasm is the result of some DNA-glitch resulting from incestuous parentage five generations previously.

[15] Austin [1] pp. 153-180; Foot [3] pp. 95-108.

to do, which could not have happened.[16] Kane reasons from this, that, in one of the two possible outcomes, indeterminism does not preclude responsibility. However, Peter would *not* be responsible for refraining from cutting off Hook's hand if he had *not* succeeded, as few would argue he is responsible for an action he has not intentionally succeeded in carrying out.[17] Thus, it is a matter of luck whether he succeeds in his wish, something he can be held responsible for. The 'Luck Worry', as Kane concedes,[18] can here be altered to show that counterexamples referring to set-will actions are still a matter of luck.

The Altered Luck Worry:

(1) If indeterminism is true, nothing, including anything about me, determines whether I voluntarily and intentionally do (a) or (b) at *t (definition)*

(2) If nothing, including anything about me, determines whether I *voluntarily* and *intentionally* do (a) or (b) at *t*, my action is a matter of luck and I am not responsible for it *(intuition)*

(3) Indeterminism is true *(assumption)*

(4) My action is a matter of luck and I am not responsible for it[19]

In (i), I have shown that the 'Luck Worry' relies on an intuitional leap in (2) from 'If nothing, including anything about me, determines whether I do (a) or (b) at *t*' to 'my action is a matter of luck and I am not responsible'. This move does not hold up under scrutiny of a subset of actions, 'set-will actions'. An ele-

[16]It must be here noted, that in (i) the *action* being discussed is the slicing off of Hook's hand, not the choice. We are not discussing the responsibility of the action choice, but for the action of slicing off the hand. In section (ii), more I am, in line with Nagel's worry, discussing determination and responsibility for the action of *choice*.

[17]He could perhaps be responsible for the attempt, but the attempt is not here the action we are discussing responsibility for; we are discussing the slicing off of the hand.

[18]Kane [5] p. 311.

[19]Ibid. p. 299. This is just a shortened version of Kane's 'Luck Principle'.

ment of luck, and thus escape from full responsibility, remains. I will now demonstrate how Kane tries to use this idea of responsibility arising from volition and intent to try and overcome this responsibility loophole with regard to 'two-way choices', those with which Nagel is concerned.

(ii) Undetermined choice, if it exists, falls under a different type of action, it is not a product of a set-will; the agent has undecided, competing motivations for both courses of action (choice is a type of action). To try and demonstrate that we can be responsible for an undetermined, bimotivational choice of this kind, Kane uses the analogy of a different kind of situation, of which this is an example: Merlin and Merlin* are qualitatively exactly the same and have exactly the same past. They live in World A and World B respectively, where the laws of nature and the state of world history are exactly the same until moment *t*, when the choice occurs. Merlin and Merlin* are walking to the teashop in their respective worlds with their last £2.50 in their identical pockets, the price of a bag of jasmine tea. In the doorway of the post office is a homeless woman with a baby. Merlin and Merlin* are torn between *(a)* walking on to the teashop and *(b)* buying some milk formula from the supermarket. On Kane's account, the indeterminism in this case is internal, as it arises from the conflict between two neural processes, which arise from distinct motivations but affect one another. One of these processes is his moral desire to help out someone less fortunate than himself. The other is his desire for jasmine tea. In possible world A, Merlin buys the milk formula, and, in possible world B, Merlin* walks on instead. Merlin and Merlin* both desire both options, and so would endorse either option; through endorsement and effort, neither of them would be disassociated from either outcome.[20] This is what Kane has termed 'self forming actions',[21] henceforth

[20]Ibid. p. 313.

[21]Ibid. p. 315.

referred to as 'SFAs'.

I will now demonstrate how Kane intended SFAs to defend libertarianism against Nagel's worry of the inexplicability of responsibility for non-personally determined events. Kane's description of SFAs, including choice making, is that they are actions where we can choose to do other than we do, 'not merely as fluke or accident'.[22] Although SFAs are a subset of all actions, if Kane had succeeded in proving we could be responsible for them, we could be held responsible for all choices that we make as a result of them. He claims that they coincide with instances of genuine mental upheaval, when we are pulled between two courses of action, both of which have parallel brain processes drawing us to alternate, mutually exclusive, choices. His method of libertarian defence is threefold:

(i) With SFAs, it is key to note that we never just fail by choosing the opposite of what we wanted to do, A or B, because we coincidentally succeed in our effort to pick the other option. Thus, we endorse either outcome, as we were *voluntarily* and *intentionally* trying to do two separate things.[23]

(ii) Kane claims that in situations analogous to the example with Peter and Hook, with set-wills, we can be responsible for doing something that is undetermined, as long as we do so *voluntarily* and *intentionally* and, thus, were trying to do such a thing.[24]

(iii) He argues that the 'Altered Luck Worry', despite its allowances for volition and intent, is invalid against SFAs, as both outcomes of a bimotivational choice would be the result of volition and intent, and so the agent would not be

[22]Ibid. p. 305.

[23]Ibid. p. 315.

[24]Ibid.

disassociated from *either* outcome. We could have chosen *a* rather than *b*, but we would still have done such an action (choice in this case), *voluntarily* and *intentionally*, and so have been responsible for it. Both outcomes, despite being undetermined, would be a result of our own mental processes, two competing ones as it were, and so are fully 'owned' by the agent. He purports that neither outcome would have luck or chance as the ultimately decisive factor, and so irresponsibility is not precluded.

3 The Failure of Kane's Defence

I will now demonstrate that the argument given above in favour of libertarianism fails to establish that we can be responsible for our choices if determinism is false. I will do so by analysing what I hold to be the two strongest unanswered criticisms of Kane's libertarian defence: i) the input of effort objection and ii) the objection that our choices could be decided by luck *immediately prior* to the moment of choice. Both of these are my basis for accusing the libertarian defence of being practical and not theoretical.[25] Kane is so intent on proving his thesis, that he has fallen foul of (i) making neurological claims that require more empirical evidence than he provides, and (ii) not fully resolving the 'Luck Worry'.

3.1 Input of Effort Objection

This objection of the input of effort is is a criticism of Kane's view of quantum indeterminacy in certain choices. It runs as follows: If in two possible worlds, Merlin and Merlin* have the same motivations, personalities, background etc., perhaps an opponent

[25] Watson [8] p. 14. Clarke admitted this with regard to agent causation, and this seems to be true for Kane's account also.

of libertarianism can accept that the two choose differently, but then object that the mental effort involved in possible world A where Merlin chooses (a) to walk on to the teashop is different to that involved in possible world B, where he chooses (b) to buy some milk formula instead. Kane's attempted response to such an objection is twofold:

(1) Firstly, he appeals to alleged counterexamples to this form of objection. For simplicity, I will continue to refer to the example of Merlin and Merlin*. Numerous factors could make the outcome of Merlin's decision indeterminate, such as an indeterminate neural spasm that caused him to be momentarily distracted when he passed the girl with the baby. The cause of indeterminacy is, for the purposes of this argument, unimportant. What *is* important, is that Merlin and Merlin* both put in the same amount of effort, or so Kane believes, and both succeed in what they intended volitionally to do at the moment when the choice occurred and so endorsed their respective actions. Kane then attempts to incite the reader not to consider the effort in one case, but rather to refer to the efforts in both cases as in both, as "in one world one of the efforts issued in a choice and in the other world, a different effort issued in a different choice; but neither was merely accidental or inadvertent in either world".[26] It seems to me that Kane's appeal to counterexamples achieves very little. Despite his apparent faith in this approach as sound defence of libertarianism, the reader is left confused as to how he has overcome the objection of the occurrence of differing degrees of effort for the two outcomes of a supposedly 'indeterminate' choice.

(2) This brings me onto the second aspect of Kane's defence against this objection. He seems to try to sidestep the failure of

[26]Kane [5] p. 317.

> his counterexample response by taking his argument a step further. He argues that not only are events indeterminate, but so are the efforts in the cases of Merlin and Merlin*.[27] He grandiosely states that "there is no such thing as exact sameness or difference of events in different possible worlds. Their efforts were not exactly the same, nor were they exactly different, because they were not exact. They were simply unique".[28] This retort that effort could not be exactly the same in two quantitatively separate worlds is an insubstantial response, as Kane has insisted that the agent's past, the laws of nature, etc. are exactly the same, and gives no explanation for why the case should be different with the effort involved. This is a component of his spurious statements about brain processes.[29] These statements include claiming that the mental upheaval involved with SFAs corresponds with a physical phenomenon: tumultuous neural disarray.[30] The scientific basis for these appeals to the specifics of brain processes is, at best, unclear.

I put the feebleness of this response down to the strength of the objection. A defender of Kane's argument could retort that there is much still to be discovered about the impact of our conscious effort on our neural processes, but this seems to be another speculative, unhelpful claim about "indeterministic noise",[31] which is Kane's term for the chaos in the brain during moments of SFA. If the libertarian claims that we must not confuse attributes of physical effort with the multilinear 'effort' in the brain, he/she seems

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[27] Ibid. p. 317.

[28] Ibid. p. 318.

[29] Watson [8] p. 14.

[30] Kane [5] p. 307. Kane claims that "recurrent networks are nonlinear, thus allowing (as some recent research suggests) for the possibility of chaotic activity, which would contribute to the plasticity and flexibility human brains display in creative problem solving (of which practical deliberation is an example)".

[31] Ibid. p. 312.

to attribute some form of agent-causal factor, of which Kane himself is so disparaging.[32]

3.2 Intrusion of Chance Immediately Prior to Choice Objection

I will here elucidate the objection of chance entering the causation equation immediately prior to the moment of choice. If we accept the given view of two competing neural paths, of which the agent wills the outcome of both, it is hard to argue that luck does not interfere immediately prior to point at which one path 'beats' the other. Kane struggles to overcome this objection throughout his defence of libertarianism, but I have pinned his response down to two key factors:

(1) The first of the factors of Kane's retort to the objection at hand is the claim that it does not actually undermine libertarianism. Kane argues that the connotations of 'luck' and 'chance' differ from those of 'indeterminism'.[33] This objection is simply another wording of the Luck Worry but, according to Kane, we must not let our everyday language understanding of 'luck' and 'chance' to affect our conception of indeterminism. The intrusion of luck and chance is not a tautologous aspect of indeterminism.

    This is an impotent response to the objection at hand, as Kane has once more ducked the issue at hand. The problem is not that opponents to libertarianism automatically take 'indeterminism' to be synonymous with 'luck' and 'chance' and all of the connotations therein construed, but that indeterminism seems to threaten the imposition of luck and chance on our choices and thus removes our control, an apparently necessary corollary of free will.

[32] Kane [6] p. 33.

[33] Kane [5] p. 305.

(2) Kane extends his response to this objection by assuming that the objection relies on an erosion of control and responsibility being inherent in indeterminism. He thinks this is not a necessary feature of indeterminism.[34] Kane argues instead that indeterminism is not a case of chance diving in at the last moment, but rather an issue of indeterminacy in neural processes, which produces 'distracting neural noise'. The overcoming of this indeterministic noise in order to plump for one option or the other is not a matter of chance but rather the result of your effort; thus, if you succeed you are still responsible.[35] On Kane's argument, counterexamples like that of Merlin and Merlin* overcomes this objection of the intrusion of chance, even immediately prior to said choice/action; they demonstrate that you cannot move from indeterminism straight to a lack of responsibility of the agent. This seems to lack an explanation of the arbitrariness of different outcomes; Kane has not given another explanation which would supersede the intuition that luck plays a role in indeterministic actions and choices. Surely it remains possible on his account that this 'distracting neural noise' could be affected by chance.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe that Kane's libertarian response, outlined in section (ii), fails to establish that we can be responsible for our choices if determinism is false. The two objections I discussed are the strongest against Kane's argument, and he is unsuccessful in sidestepping them. In his defence of libertarianism against Nagel's worry of moral nihilism, Kane's argument does not seem to provide a clear, logical defence capable of nullifying the 'Luck Worry', although it sets out to do so. The introduction of SFAs,

[34]Ibid. p. 308.

[35]Ibid. p. 308.

though at first moderately convincing as a case for non-agent-causal libertarianism, instead seems to provide a description for what such a thesis would *require* to be the case. More research must be carried out on the issue of neural effort, but this objection, and the objection from the input of luck, still undermines the libertarian argument. Widespread intuitive support of libertarianism stemming from our ideas concerning autonomy and moral responsibility should not be underestimated. That the arguments currently published[36] in the defence of Libertarianism fail, does not mean that indeterminism and free will are incompatible,[37] just that an impervious defence has yet to be offered.

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[36] This is, of course, limited to only those arguments that I have managed to find.

[37] Van Inwagen [4] p. 158.

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Nihilism, Being and Theology in Nietzsche, Heidegger and Whitehead*

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In this essay I will be discussing a number of themes arising from the thought of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Whitehead. I will begin by discussing Nietzsche's writings on nihilism, and his endeavours to overcome it. I will then outline Heidegger's concerns regarding the outcomes of this project. I will then attempt a remedial synthesis of the two positions by means of the theological thought of A.N. Whitehead. Finally I will discuss possible questions and criticisms which arise out of this synthesis.

Nietzsche announces his diagnosis of nihilism by means of the thought of the 'death of God'.[1] This thought has a twofold meaning: firstly, the progressions of civilisation within the realms of scientific and philosophical inquiry has rendered the metaphysical claims of the Christian God no longer believ*able*. But secondly, the thought possesses a historical nature, separate from the metaphysical sense; that due to the widespread secular nature of European society, the Christian God is no longer believ*ed*. There will be a return to the notion of history later.

Nietzsche saw Christianity as having inherited the metaphysical claims of Platonism, in particular the dichotomy between appearance and reality. He also saw the Kantian framework, with its realm of things-in-themselves, as being symptomatic of this dichotomy. According to the thought of the death of God, all supersensory claims stemming from this dichotomy within the

*Delivered at the BUPS Spring Conference 2013 on 16-17 February 2013 at Heythrop College, London.

[1]Nietzsche [8] Aphorisms 108, 125 and 343.

Platonic framework have been disregarded in both metaphysical and the historical senses. This claim might appear to be almost self-evident to the reader. However, Nietzsche's thought here diagnoses something far deeper than an on-the-surface disregard of belief in the Christian God; it is precisely this belief which has acted as the kingpin of all of our valuation towards life. Like taking an axe to the base of a tall tree, once the foundation of that tree has been removed, the whole tree will follow. The falling of the tree, in this analogy, is nihilism for Nietzsche; namely, that "the highest values are devaluing themselves."[2] Now that the value judgments of the Christian-moral framework have had their foundations removed, we are left with no objective foundation to ground these value judgments upon. The atheists of the 'marketplace',[3] the ones to whom Nietzsche's character of the 'madman' directs his death of God thought in the first instance, are 'incomplete' nihilists, meaning that they still live within the Christian-moral framework without realising the groundless nature of this framework. This is why Nietzsche asserts that the atheists of modern European society are still living under the shadow of God.

The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, which Nietzsche identifies as an inherently Christian value, is that which has led to the death of God. This pursuit is a manifestation of the Nietzschean concept of the will to power, the fundamental drive to self-assertion for all of life. The will to power has been, for the Christian, the 'will to truth'; knowledge *qua* knowledge has been, in Nietzschean terms, a value judgment of life. The will to power is intrinsically linked to value judgments towards life and the world; the will to power is the "authoritative force of value, of devaluing and revaluing."[4] Herein lies the overcoming of ni-

[2]Nietzsche [7] Aphorism 2.

[3]Nietzsche [8] Aphorism 125.

[4]Heidegger [1] p. 82.

hilism for Nietzsche: the will to power has a profound ability to the ends of self-creation and value-creation. While, according to the thought of the death of God, there is no objective reality which acts as a kingpin for our value judgments, to each individual lies the potential to shape the world with their own value creations, in accordance with their own perspective. Within the transient world, the realm of 'Becoming' (in the Heraclitean sense), the will to power manifests itself in human action as self-overcoming; Nietzsche sees this as a positive manifestation, as the will to power can be utilised to affirm the lives of each individual by positing values to the world. This is attained by first overcoming the dichotomy of appearance (Becoming) and idea (what has been thought of as the 'True' world) laid by, and carried on after, Platonism, before the individual, realising that the transient world is the only world where we manifest ourselves, posits their own values onto it, to give the individual's life meaning.

In the rebuttal of the existence of the Christian-moral worldview (inclusive of Platonism and the Kantian framework when referred to hereon) as a result of the thought of the death of God, we ascertain an element of redemption of meaning within the transient world; we can be affirmative towards our earthly existence. Nietzsche noted the paradox of his diagnosis of nihilism, that while nihilism might rob us of all objective, or absolute meaning, the Christian-moral worldview robs us of all meaning, since it preaches passivity, renunciation of the earth, and the self-denying 'will to nothingness'.[5] Once the foundational claim of the Christian-moral view is considered a falsity, it may be the case that there is no meaning *given* to us by some absolute standard, but the capability to create one's own meaning is opened up for us. Nietzsche refers to this attainment of meaning as being 'faithful to the earth',[6] which manifests itself as a notion of reverence

[5]Nietzsche [9] Essay Three, Aphorism 14.

[6]Nietzsche [6] p. 3.

towards the worldly flux of Becoming, now meaningful to us by our own positing of value judgments.

The one capable of this positing of value judgments is the one whom Nietzsche esteems the title of the 'free spirit'.[7] These are the individuals who are able to perform a value-creation within the transient world, free of the resentful and self-denying ethos encapsulated in the Christian ethic. The free spirit is also capable of encompassing all the elements of activity within their life to create an earthly wholeness to their individual existence; Nietzsche uses the example of Goethe as such a spirit, who, rather than being a constitution of his activities (in this case, literature, poetry, philosophy, science, etc.), amounts himself to a self-creating whole. Goethe represents the "hardness of a creator who creates himself."[8]

These free spirits provide Nietzsche with the 'goal' of a goalless world, rendered goalless via the death of God. Were man to stay on the course of the incomplete nihilism of the paradoxical modern European, the Christian-moral atheist, man's history would culminate in the 'last man',[9] the figure of the utmost contempt in Nietzsche's writings. The last man is antithetical in nature to the free spirit: he is the one who would take comfort rather than greatness, the one who is the manifestation of human apathy. The pseudo-happiness of the last man is contemptible, in that he will settle with his lot rather than take up the mantle to create his own life's value, and will accept a life of renunciation in the hope of finding solace. If the project which Nietzsche sets us is not undergone, he believes that the last man will be the destination of mankind, rather than the higher ideals of greatness made manifest in the free spirit.

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[7] Nietzsche [10] Aphorism 2.

[8] Kauffman [3] p.155.

[9] Nietzsche [6] p. 3.

We can see that Nietzsche provides an affirming case for how to overcome the nihilism that ensues from the death of God. One is able to forego the project. Heidegger, however, finds dispute with a number of issues which arise as outcomes of this project. The will to power possesses an intrinsic link to value-positing towards the world, as we have seen. If Nietzsche is to be seen as the culmination and critic of the entire oeuvre of Western philosophy, which he views as remnants of the Platonic metaphysical framework, then his inversion of this, with the project he asserts out of nihilism, leads to what can only be described as a total valuation of the earth. His earthly faithfulness is governed by the principle of dominion, which in turn resides with the determinations of man. Heidegger views this as a negative outcome; Dasein, the Heideggerian term for the being which exists as human, has disassociated itself from *Being* itself. The creative instinct of man, rather than striving for a world-view where both Dasein flows into the world and the world reciprocates his relationship with it, becomes "a business enterprise."[10] The transient world becomes object; with our Nietzschean project of value-positing, we view constituents of the world as being mere resource. It is one thing for Dasein to work *with* the world, but it is entirely another, more negative thing in Heidegger's view, to work *against* the world and to assert dominion over it. An example would be of assistance here: working with the world would be like the windmill or methods of crop rotation, where Dasein, whilst finding use with the world, also protects it, or at least works alongside it. Working against the world would be equivalent to the hydroelectric dam on the Rhine, which assumes mastery over its oppressed resource. Dasein has become 'technological' in his very essence, Heidegger asserts,[11] when he sees the world as mere 'standing-reserve' to his beck and call, whenever he needs to utilise it for

[10]Heidegger [1] p. 64 .

[11]Ibid. p. 4.

his own ends.

Heidegger agrees with Nietzsche that the thought of the death of God and its outcome nihilism is the inevitable conclusion, the crescendo, of Western metaphysics. The "power realm of the modern age"[12] is the last stage of Western philosophy; but it is also the first stage of a new manner of thinking. Rather than Nietzsche's thought of the death of God and the ensuing overcoming of nihilism as this first stage, Heidegger considers it to be the final element and the death knell to the history of thought that follows from the Platonic framework (the history of which it is including within), which has long overlooked the question of Being; every philosopher since Parmenides has been prone to the "forgetfulness of Being."[13] Even Nietzsche recognises this, in Heidegger's view; Heidegger emphasises an aphorism from *The Will to Power* in which Nietzsche states, "to stamp Becoming with the character of Being – that is the supreme will to power" to make this point.[14]

Heidegger takes this to mean that Nietzsche notes the necessitation of Being even within the transient realm, and that would be the culmination of Nietzsche's project if one were able to undergo this imposition of Being upon Becoming. As it stands though, Nietzsche's project leaves no room for Being; this gives him an attribute symptomatic of the history of Western thought which Heidegger, as noted above, believed Nietzsche to be the final stage of. Heidegger himself was less than optimistic about solving the criticisms he raised regarding the Nietzschean project. The now infamous quote of Heidegger from his posthumously published interview in *Der Spiegel*, "Only a god can save us",[15]

[12] Ibid. p. 63.

[13] Phillipse [12] p. 119.

[14] Nietzsche [7] Aphorism 617.

[15] 'Der Spiegel Interview', Neske & Ketterin [5] p. 57.

exemplifies his own resigned passivity towards attempts to revert Dasein from this nihilistic framework to a relationship with Being.

Is there a manner in which to harmonise the project set of us by Nietzsche with the criticisms which Heidegger raises against Nietzsche's project? I would argue that there may be a worthwhile consideration of this attempt at a harmonious synthesis to be found in theological thought. It is obvious that such an attempt cannot be made by means of traditional Christian thought, as Nietzsche's objections would still hold against such attempts. I will assert that a successful attempt at such a harmony is attempted in the philosophy of A.N. Whitehead, albeit unintentionally on his part.

For Whitehead, the 'subjective' purpose of God, here meaning the purpose to be sought within the transient realm, is for man to actualise himself in terms of ensuring that his earthly experiences retain an intrinsic value: "the purpose of God is the attainment of value in the temporal world'," Whitehead asserts.[16] We see a theistic position here which is already clearly devoid of both ascetic and eschatological influences; the former is invalidated by Whitehead's inclusion of earthly actualisation of values, whilst the latter is invalidated by Whitehead conducting a novel interpretation of one of the central themes of Christian eschatology; namely, the Day of Judgment. Instead of viewing the Day of Judgment as a teleological goal within Christian doctrine, Whitehead asserts an affirmative interpretation of it, one which ensures that the present retains its intrinsic value: "The Day of Judgment is an important notion: but that Day is always with us."[17]

Whilst his talk of God derives in some respects from a Chris-

[16] Whitehead [13] p. 100.

[17] Whitehead [14] p. 269.

tian influence, Whitehead voices criticisms of what he refers to as 'communal religion', and also what Nietzsche refers to, in a more contemptuous manner, as 'the herd'. Whitehead asserts that no authentic meaning can be retained for the individual towards the constituent objects of the transient world within communal religion. God is not the shepherd of traditional Christian doctrine, but is to be considered as the "companion','[18] the one who promotes the interests of the individual in the sense that they can attain independent affirmation of and with the world.

Whitehead's thought also urges the individual to embrace the transience of the world, not in terms of the self-denying ethic of traditional Christian doctrine, but by means of what he refers to as the "plasticity"[19] of nature; here meaning that despite the chaotic and temporal nature of reality, we are able to 'mould' it – it can be shaped to our will's own values, so that it may retain meaningfulness. Heidegger also emphasises this attribute in Nietzsche's thought; we may look again at the note by Nietzsche mentioned above regarding Becoming bearing the stamp of Becoming.[20] In the manner that Nietzsche spoke of Being as stamped upon Becoming, Whitehead produces a synthesis of his own, which attempts to affirm life in the realms of both the transient, apparent world, and the theistic world. By the two concepts, the plasticity of the world and God as companion, he shares a similar criticism of Christian doctrine to Nietzsche; namely, the renunciation of earthly value by the 'herd'. This combination of piety with action ensures meaning for the world of Becoming, through a theistic framework, whilst still being leaps and bounds from the Christian-moral framework. On the contrary, Whitehead's thought encourages "intercourse with earthly be-

[18] Whitehead [13] p. 17.

[19] Whitehead [14] p. 42.

[20] Nietzsche [7] Aphorism 617.

ings,"[21] rather than the renunciation of such 'intercourse' as valueless, which Nietzsche sees in the Christian-moral view.

If we are to hearken back to the early stage in this essay on Nietzsche's diagnosis of the death of God, we find in the same aphorism[22] talk of how "the sea is open, though it may not be bright." Kee likens attempts within Nietzschean thought to retain this 'brightness' in our life-projects here to a bird, desperately trying to re-enter the cage in which it has long been shackled, but has now been set outside of it.[23] With Whitehead's thought, the cage door is open for the bird, and it can accept its existential freedom by 'leaving the cage', as well as the brightness which follows. The sea is open for Whitehead, as well as bright: this is something Nietzsche's thought could not, by its very nature, attain.

Heidegger's objections to the Nietzschean project concerned the objectification of the world by Dasein, and the debasement of Being into a mere value judgment; Whitehead avoids this charge. Although emphasising the 'plasticity' of the transient world so we may shape the world into our own values, Whitehead ensures that man reciprocates this shaping; in Whitehead's thought, man is shaped by the world just as much as he shapes the world. When man posits value to the world, this value is only able to bear weight *because* of the world itself.[24] The charge of passivity which is also charged against Heidegger is also avoided by Whitehead's thought: the world is a world of action for Whitehead, and the purpose of God is for man, Dasein, to affirm this activity by means of meaningful intercourse with the world.

One could elucidate this by analogising the issue with the idea of

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[21] Howe [2] p. 139.

[22] Nietzsche [8] Aphorism 343.

[23] Kee [4] p. 31.

[24] Howe [2] p. 139.

placing a postage stamp on an envelope: the stamp, in Whitehead's view, enters into a reciprocated mutual relationship with the envelope; it provides the envelope with meaning (since it can now be effectively posted) and the envelope reciprocates meaning to the stamp, by in turn providing it with an object of meaning.

Whitehead's thoughts on theology provide a satisfactory solution to the objections raised by Heidegger, but there are a number of questions to be raised from the discussions considered here. First, there is a question which arises which concerns the Heideggerian objections, which have acted as the starting problem from which a solution, in the shape of Whitehead's thought, has been reached. This question concerns the essential constitution of man, or Dasein, in the world. Heidegger speaks of technological Dasein, and his urge to view the objects of the world as standing-reserve, as if it were to be diagnosed as a framed condition: that is, a condition to be isolated within a single moment, of a few moments, in history. Dasein as technological is paradigmatic for Heidegger. There is, on the other hand, a possibility to contend here that this behavioural disposition which manifests in Dasein is not a fleeting attribute to a particular world-view within the movement of history, but rather a diagnosis of a fixed attribute to the essential psychology of Dasein.

We may consider this in light of the thought that it is difficult for us to imagine a constitution of Dasein as not being so disposed. An objection could be raised here as to whether it is only difficult for us to do this because we are by necessity dwelling within the "power realm of the modern age"[25]; but a glance across events in history confirms that the modern age is not isolated as being the only time when Dasein has encompassed the essence of technology.

[25] Heidegger [1] p. 63.

There is a second question to be raised here; it is a question which arises out of the previous question. We have seen a successful 'counter-project' of sorts posed by Whitehead to remedy the objections of Nietzsche's project raised by Heidegger. However, in this reading of Heidegger, we have presupposed that the content of Heidegger's objections are negative in the first place. When Nietzsche introduces the will to power, and Heidegger introduces his concept of technological Dasein, we are able to see considerable overlap between the two. If will to power is essentially value-positing, and value-positing leads to technological Dasein, then this much is made clear. The fundamental difference is that Nietzsche views his project to have positive outcomes, whilst Heidegger sees these outcomes as negative. The value-positing towards life does not appear to be an intrinsically negative attribute. This is not to say that it cannot be negative in certain circumstances; but then why are we so inclined to follow Heidegger's thought, that Dasein as essentially technological is never, or cannot be positive?

We now raise a question concerning the practical element of Whitehead's thought. If our view to the world were to be that asserted by Whitehead, would our actions be altered? The nature of Whitehead's thought as discussed above appears to be a psychological disposition: it is our *manner* towards our actions in the world which changes, rather than the actions themselves. The one who follows Nietzsche's thought can still, to return to the analogy used earlier, press the stamp upon the envelope in the same way as the one who follows Whitehead's thought can. The fact that the latter attains what the former cannot, namely a relationship with Being, appears to not have any bearing upon the realm of action, aside from existing in the psychological disposition of the individual.

This talk of Being raises another objection, that Heidegger's criticisms of Nietzsche appear to be conducting something unwarranted by Nietzsche's thought with talk of 'Being' at all. Refer-

ences to Being are scarce in Nietzsche's work, and the aphorism which Heidegger centralises in his discussions of Being in relation to Nietzsche's thought (the aphorism concerning Becoming bearing the stamp of Being[26] doesn't seem to warrant the extravagant interpretation of Nietzsche's thought that Heidegger considers; namely, that Nietzsche's project is lacking because it does not have a place for the concept of Being. In truth, Being does not appear to be applicable according to Nietzsche's framework since he by and large is of the belief that all of the world is necessarily Becoming, rather than the 'True World' of Being, which he dismisses as part of the Platonic framework.[27]

One thing that is a subject of dispute in the thought of Whitehead is, other than the attribute of 'companionship', the character of the 'God' which Whitehead asserts. Not much more is given to the reader on this subject in Whitehead's writings on the nature of God, aside from that discussed. The God which Whitehead speaks of is grounded in reciprocal relationship with the world rather than only relating to is as a resource; this, in Heidegger's terms, allows us to have a closer relationship with Being itself. Are we to induce, then, that there is synonymy between the character of God in Whitehead's theological thought, and the concept of Being in Heidegger's thought? If this is the case, then Whitehead's concept of God is open to the same charge against it that Heidegger's Being has been charged with: namely, that it has no bearing within Nietzschean thought, the thought of Becoming.

We may conclude from this discussion that whilst the objections raised by Heidegger concerning the essence of technology are neither avoidable nor even necessarily detrimental to the individual who undergoes the Nietzschean project of overcoming, we see Whitehead offering a remedy to the objection by means of his

[26] Nietzsche [7] Aphorism 617.

[27] See Nietzsche [11].

active relationship with God and an affirmation towards giving meaning to the world. Heidegger remains unconvincing as to whether Nietzsche's project, devoid of a place for the concept of Being, is lacking as a result. We have also seen that the individual who engages with Whitehead's thought, although attaining a different psychological disposition towards the constituent objects of the world, would appear to actualise themselves in the world in the same manner as the one who undergoes Nietzsche's project. The psychological conceptualisation of items of the world by the one who follows Whitehead's thought would be different from those held by the Nietzschean, though there would not appear to be a difference in actions.

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To What Extent Is Madhyamaka a Reassertion of Original Buddhism?

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Nāgārjuna's madhyamaka school of Buddhism can be seen as a reaction against the Abhidharma systems that arose in the centuries following the Buddha's death. Kalupahana argues that Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā is no more than a commentary on the Buddha's Kaccāyanagotta-sutta, that Nāgārjuna upheld everything the Buddha said and that scholars simply "have shown reluctance to recognise the sophistication with which philosophical ideas were presented by the Buddha 2500 years ago."[1] I intend to illustrate, with recourse to Sarvāstivādan Abhidharma (specifically, their brand of essentialism) and Nāgārjuna's own exposition of the Four Noble Truths within his Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, that Nāgārjuna was clearing the weeds, so to speak, and seeking to reassert original Buddhist teachings and values over the essentialist Abhidharma doctrines popular at the time. In order to achieve this, I will examine the Abhidharma position on essence and explain why Nāgārjuna rejects the notion that any existing thing can have an unchanging, independently existing essence.

The Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma that predated Nāgārjuna posits the existence of dharmas: essential, basic elements that account for the manifestation of all mental and physical phenomena; irreducible, necessary and unconditioned ingredients that combine to form conditioned, impermanent processes and events. The dharmas are posited as necessarily existent. To visualise their motivation for such theorising we can consider the following ques-

[1]Kalupahana [4] p. 5.

tion: how, if all phenomena are dependently co-arisen and impermanent, can distinct attributes in persons and objects seemingly persist through time? To put it another way, if I want to say that the ink on my page is blue and remains blue, I must necessarily concede that there is *something that it is like to be blue*; some characteristic or attribute shared by blue things that allows us to distinguish blue ink from, say, red ink in past writings, present writings and future writings. Thus, we are led to a conception of blueness, an essence that distinguishes blue things from non-blue things in the past, present and future. Sarvāstivādins address this problem thusly: although the Buddha denies essentialism in no uncertain terms (the denial of ātman and the assertion that all phenomena are dependently co-arisen leaves no room for the concept of essence within objects or persons), what if he was referring only to the existence of essences within *this* world?

So, the Sarvāstivādins now posit a two-world view: there are no essences in our conditioned world, but what about essence in an *unconditioned* world? Here, the dharmas can reside timelessly awaiting their moment to somehow migrate to our conditioned realm and exercise their causal efficacy in relation to one another (past, present or future), each existing here only as long as it takes for it to manifest its redness, or any other 'ness' before it is instantaneously replaced by another dharma of the same sort and migrating back to the unconditioned world. If each dharma is basic, timeless and attracts another manifestation of another dharma of its own sort (i.e. a red dharma attracts another red dharma attracts another red dharma and so on), then this explains continuity and persistent characteristics within this conditioned world.[2]

There are some obvious issues with this account. Firstly, there is still ambiguity regarding what a dharma actually *is* – if they are basic and have an intrinsic identity, it is difficult to see how the

[2]Bartley [1] p. 30.

dharmas can manifest as different things. For example, if they are essentially identical, then how is it that they can react to display red ink or blue ink – surely it would be part of the dharma's essence to be red or be blue? Red is obviously different from blue, and so it would appear that we need some added explanation of how the dharmas interact with each other to underpin all phenomena. Alternatively, we could posit that a dharma is simultaneously like nothing and like everything (using 'nothing' in the sense that a dharma does not resemble any single thing, *i.e.* red, blue and so on); a sort of chameleon-like particle that constitutes everything and adapts to its immediate situation.

The analogy that springs to mind is that of physical atoms – we are aware that everything is constituted of atoms, be they blue, red, a chair, a table and so on. Yet we would not say that 'this atom is red', or 'that atom is blue' — they are just atoms. So maybe a dharma is like an atom! This analogy works until we take into account that the Sarvāstivādins specify that as each dharma manifests momentarily, it attracts another *of the same sort* before migrating back to the unconditioned world. If dharmas are like atoms, this would be a pointless assertion, for *all* dharmas would be of the same sort and there would be, indeed there could be, no distinction between a red dharma and a pink dharma -- there would simply be dharmas. Indeed, atoms work in a very different way, and are themselves conditioned according to increasingly complex underlying principles; colour is conditioned, as it owes its existence to the spectrum of light, light absorption and a creature's ability to perceive it. How then can an unconditioned dharma interact with a conditioned, contingent thing such as light to produce a conditioned effect? Furthermore, if a dharma is essentially one thing (such as red) or essentially another (such as blue), or essentially *anything*, then accounting for difference and change is very difficult. The Sarvāstivādins could say that they are not specifying *internal* essence, but *relational* essence, specifically that the dharmas interact with each other, and *this* is their essence, rather than any intrinsic value. Even so,

there is still no real explanation of what the intrinsic nature of the dharmas actually is.

The lack of explanation here is unsatisfactory, for if we want to say that a dharma has unsupported, independent, self-sufficient and unchanging existence, we should also want to say *how* this can be the case rather than merely pointing to causal efficacy in the flux and stating 'well, we assume thus because they cause this and do that'. Added to this, if a dharma is simply 'red' and always attracts like-for-like, then how can we account for the change in a red object when, for example, it is left in the sun and fades from deep red to a very light red? From this last point, and as mentioned previously, we can see that if the dharmas are intrinsically existent and unchanging, then there is a very real problem in using these dharmas to account for change. This is a point that Nāgārjuna pays particular attention to in his Mūlamadhyamakakārikā.

Nāgārjuna contends that anything that has essence is necessarily detached from dependent origination -- a point on which the Sarvāstivādins would agree. After all, their project is to account for persistence and stability within a conditioned world of dependently arisen phenomena — the dharmas are therefore unconditioned and not subject to dependent origination. For Nāgārjuna though, it is not possible for *anything* to be exempt from dependent origination, as we see here:

> Neither from itself nor from another
> Nor from both
> Nor without a cause
> Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.[3]

This is a straightforward enough statement: Nāgārjuna is merely reasserting the Buddha's position regarding the interdependence

[3] Garfield [2] I: 1.

of all phenomena in the *Nidāna-Vagga* section of the Samyutta Nikāya;[4] the Twelve Links described by the Buddha (ignorance; volition; consciousness; name and form; faculties and objects; contact; sensation; craving; attachment; becoming; birth; old age and death) are a circular account of every possible mental and physical phenomenon. Simply put, there is no first cause, no initial building block (and by extension, no dharmas), and everything occurs as a result of the causes and conditions of everything else — there is an infinite web of interdependence that permeates every existing phenomenon: entities are not self-caused, uncaused or caused from another entity with essential identity. The use of 'anywhere' is interesting, as we have already discussed how the Sarvāstivādins posit some unconditioned realm where the dharmas reside. Nāgārjuna is explicitly rejecting any notion of otherworldliness by specifying that dependent origination holds true everywhere, or more accurately, that there is nowhere that dependent origination is not applicable.

Obviously, if every existing phenomenon is dependently arisen, then we are at a loss to theorise about unchanging essences: the very fact that a phenomenon is caused by other phenomena, which in turn were caused by other phenomena ad infinitum means that everything is contingent on everything else. Nāgārjuna thinks that it is nonsensical to try and conceive of essence in such terms, stating:

> Essence arising from
> Causes and conditions makes no sense.
> If Essence came from causes and conditions
> Then it would be fabricated.[5]

Similarly, he believes that to view the world in terms of essence actually leaves a person unable to account for much of the world

[4] Gethin [3] pp. 210-213.

[5] Garfield [2] XV: 1.

around us. This is because essence and dependently arisen phenomena are mutually exclusive -- subscription to one must necessarily exclude the other.[6] The problems that this leads to are vitally important for Nāgārjuna – as well as propagating wrong-view of mundane phenomena, the ramifications for Buddhist practice are grave. The essentialist will not be able to account for suffering, its causes, its cessation (nirvāna) and the Dharma as all of these phenomena are dependently arisen. The real crux of Nāgārjuna's argument, then, is that essentialism precludes moral development, and such preclusion negates the Four Noble Truths. This idea is further developed in chapter twenty-four (Examination of the Four Noble Truths) of the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā.

In chapter twenty-four, Nāgārjuna takes the Buddha's teaching of the Four Noble Truths and asserts the concept of emptiness (of essence) as a logically necessary integral feature of the Truths, stating that without emptiness, there could be no arising and ceasing, and consequently, no existence of the Four Noble Truths![7] It is vital to note that Nāgārjuna is not denying the existence of phenomena when he asserts their emptiness: he is not saying that as phenomena are empty of essence, they are non-existent. Quite the opposite is true, for Nāgārjuna thinks that emptiness *is* dependent origination,[8] and as such, all he is really stating is 'everything is dependently arisen: dependent origination necessarily negates essentialism'. This is only a slight elaboration on the Buddha's original teaching regarding dependent origination.

The argument for this point is surprisingly simple: if, as posited by the Sarvāstivādins, there are unconditioned, intrinsically existent dharmas manifesting in all phenomena, then suffering, which the Buddha specifically taught as impermanent, would (as we saw

[6]Garfield [2] p. 302.

[7]Garfield [2] XXIV: 1; XXIV: 20.

[8]Garfield [2] p. 308.

earlier) have to be permanent – this would negate the Buddha's teaching! In short:

> ...Suffering has been taught to be impermanent
> And so cannot come from its own essence.[9]

For Nāgārjuna, this is a simple reassertion of the Buddha's own words in the *Nidāna-Vagga*. When the Buddha gives the list of the Twelve Links, he is emphasising the interdependence of all phenomena, but suffering's existence is explicit throughout. Henceforth, Nāgārjuna thinks that to deny that suffering is empty is to deny its dependent origination, and so to deny emptiness is to deny not only the existence of suffering (a contravention of the First Noble Truth), but also to deny the truth of the Buddha's teachings; here we can see that Nāgārjuna *does* see his project as reasserting original Buddhist teachings.

The same is true again of the Second Noble Truth; that suffering has a cause. It is easy to see what is coming here, as we have previously said that essentialism precludes dependent origination. If it is held that suffering has an *essential* cause, then it becomes very difficult to talk of the cessation of suffering,[10] as essences cannot change. Further to this, then, the Third Noble Truth regarding the truth of cessation would also be false if an essentialist position is held. Intrinsically existent things cannot cease to be, they are basic and immutable. If, however, we take suffering to be empty of essential existence (and fully subject to dependent origination), then it is easy to see how suffering *can* have cessation -– obviously, writing within a Buddhist paradigm, Nāgārjuna *wants* to say that suffering has cessation. For somebody writing outside of this paradigm, it would not be such a problem to say that suffering is eternal (at least in theory, but such a view would be very bleak indeed!), but I think that even non-Buddhists should want

[9] Garfield [2] XXIV: 21.

[10] Garfield [2] XXIV: 23.

to explain change in non-essential terms. Similarly, it is obvious by now that for Nāgārjuna, the Fourth Noble Truth, concerned with the truth of the path to cessation, must also be empty: how could a practitioner cultivate virtue on the path if the path already had an immutable essence? If ignorance/non-understanding is existent through its essence, then how could we hope to replace it with understanding? Nāgārjuna contends that it would be impossible, and pointless to even try.[11]

It is worthwhile also pointing out verses thirty-one and thirty-two in chapter twenty four of the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā in order to round off just how important emptiness is for Nāgārjuna and the madhyamaka school. In these verses, Nāgārjuna argues that an essentialist position necessarily holds that enlightenment arises independent of a Buddha: that is to say, one who was born unenlightened would be necessarily doomed to remain in this state owing to the immutable nature of essence. Obviously, this is a direct contravention of the ideal of Buddhist practice.

We have seen that Nāgārjuna devised his madhyamaka system not as a fresh, new perspective, or a radical overhaul to take Buddhism in a new direction, but rather as a back-to-basics stripping down of doctrine in an attempt to return to the fundamental messages of the Four Noble Truths: he thought that the Abhidharma systems prevalent at the time were a step away from basic Buddhist principles; that the appeal to essentialism to explain persistence of characteristics and phenomena negated the fundamental Buddhist notions of change, flux and dependent origination; that emptiness was not a new idea, but one that is necessarily implicit in the Buddha's teachings. In explaining his position that the Four Noble Truths — the bases of all Buddhist practice -- require emptiness rather than essence in order to make sense, Nāgārjuna does not push a new agenda but returns to an old one. Emptiness is,

[11] Garfield [2] XXIV: 24; XXIV: 26-28.

according to Nāgārjuna's madhyamaka, inextricable from dependent origination, which is itself fundamental to Buddhist practice and a key teaching of the Buddha: the Buddha who, if essentialism is held to be true, could not have ever reached enlightenment (as he was born 'ignorant')! It is simple to see why Nāgārjuna took issue with this and advocated a return to basics.

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Is Economics a Science?*

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Introduction

The global financial crisis has generated much soul-searching in the field of economics. Leading practitioners now openly question the epistemic status of economic science.[1] In particular, the use of advanced mathematics and econometrics in modelling economic phenomena has been criticised as 'physics envy', and is even considered by some to have contributed to the failure of economists to predict the global financial crisis. This paper seeks to introduce relevant concepts from the Philosophy of Science to clarify the economists' debate. Using these concepts, I advance the view that economics is a science if and only if traditional natural sciences, such as physics, are sciences, with two important qualifications.

It should be noted here that my approach differs greatly from existing literature on this subject. It is traditional for philosophers when debating whether a certain field of study is a science or not to first give an account of what it means to be a science and then to see whether the particular field of study meets those criteria. However, finding scientific demarcation criteria continues to be a philosophical hot potato.[2] This paper seeks to sidestep the demarcation issue by arguing that, wherever the demarcation of science and pseudo-science may lie, economics should always be classified

*Delivered at the BUPS Spring Conference 2013 on 16-17 February 2013 at Heythrop College, London.

[1]Buiter [3]; Krugman [13]; Kirman [12].

[2]See Hansson [9].

in the same group as physics.

I proceed as follows. Section 1 outlines the central criticisms of economic science. Section 2 then addresses these criticisms, and demonstrates that they apply equally to physical science. Section 3 compares the status of economics under a *dichotomous* understanding of the term 'science' with the status of economics under a *continuous* understanding of the term 'science' that goes from *less* scientific to *more* scientific. I argue that, in principle, economics is just as scientific as physics even under a continuous measure of scientific status with the important qualification that anti-reductionists are not forced to hold this view. Section 4 considers a further qualification which states that under definitions of science that refer to the category of phenomena described in the field of study (as opposed to its standard methodological practices), anti-physicalists are not forced to accept that economics is a science if and only if physics is a science. Section 5 concludes.

1 Criticism of the Dismal Science

Contemporary economics progresses via the construction of economic models and the testing of observational predictions that are entailed by those models.[3] All economic models posit the existence of economic agents such as consumers, firms, and governments. Simplifying assumptions about these agents enable us to model their behaviour. For example, we might assume that consumers try to maximise a utility function subject to a budget constraint when making a choice between different bundles of goods. These assumptions, when operationalised in a defined economic domain, yield empirical hypotheses that can be tested against economic data such as prices.[4]

[3] Hoover [10] pp. 67-78.

[4] See Appendix (A) for a typical consumer utility-maximisation problem.

Criticism of contemporary economics as a science consists of two related arguments. Firstly, critics such as McCabe[5] have argued that the assumptions in economic models are too simplistic and do not accurately describe real phenomena. For example, economic models traditionally assume that agents are rational in the specific sense that their preferences are complete, transitive, and independent from irrelevant alternatives.[6] However, results from experimental economics suggest that people's preferences often violate at least one of these three criteria.[7] Studies in behavioural economics abound with examples where humans disobey assumptions that economists traditionally make in modelling human behaviour, rendering the conclusions of such models unsound.[8]

The second dimension to criticism of economics as a science concerns the use of mathematics. Several prominent economists have criticized the equilibrium-based approach of economics.[9] Traditional economic theory assumes that the economy can be modelled as a system of simultaneous equations that can be solved to derive equilibrium. Equilibrium in economic variables may never actually occur in the real economy, and there may be more than one unique equilibrium, but equilibrium does exist in a theoretically meaningful way and the economy works towards this state. Dynamic stochastic general equilibrium models (DSGE models), which generate macroeconomic hypotheses based on microeconomic foundations, typify this methodological practice and are widely used by economists to model the effects of exogenous shocks on macroeconomic behaviour. However, critics have pointed out that the economy often moves towards a state of se-

[5]McCabe [14] pp. 364-365.

[6]Arrow [1] pp. 28-30.

[7]McCabe [14] p. 365.

[8]See Kahneman & Tversky [11] for the classic paper in this area.

[9]See Buiter [3] & [2]; Kirman [12].

vere disequilibrium, as in the case of the recent global financial crisis.[10] DSGE models did not predict the crisis, largely because of this bias towards equilibrium states. Economic methodology, they argue, is severely limited by the inappropriate formalisation of economic models, which subsequently cannot account for the endogeneity of economic variables. The quest for mathematical formalisation biases economic modelling towards assumptions that do not hold in the real world. This was perhaps best put by Paul Krugman[11] in his famous claim that economists "mistook beauty for truth" in academic work leading up to the financial crisis.

2 Why these Criticisms Apply Equally to Physical Science

It will be instructive at this point to introduce a concept from the Philosophy of Science: observational versus ontological equivalence of two scientific theories. A scientific theory T1 can be observationally equivalent with another theory T2 even though it is ontologically non-equivalent.[12] For example, Fresnel's equations concerning the behaviour of light over different refractive indices yield hypotheses that are observationally equivalent with hypotheses derived from Maxwell's equations.[13] However, the two theories involve sharply different ontological commitments. To simplify, Fresnel posited that light travels as a wave through an ether whereas Maxwell posited that light travels as a wave independent of any ether.

In response to the first criticism that economics is not a science since it invokes unrealistic assumptions, it could be argued that

[10] Haldane [8].

[11] Krugman [13].

[12] Nagel [16].

[13] Worrall [20] pp. 107-108.

the assumptions economic science makes are only relevant in so far as they yield observationally non-equivalent hypotheses.[14] Economists do not (typically) truly believe that humans are rational agents (in the strict sense of 'rational' as understood above). Instead, the assumption that agents are rational is justified by the fact that it yields simplified theories with far-reaching hypotheses that are empirically confirmed. In many cases (particularly in macroeconomics), adjusting the microeconomic assumption that consumers are rational increases the complexity of economic theory without yielding observationally non-equivalent (or 'novel') hypotheses.

Importantly, the history of physical science is replete with similar methodological practices – the case of the Fresnel and Maxwell equations is by no means unique. For example, at velocities smaller than the speed of light, Newtonian mechanics is observationally equivalent with Einstein's theory of relativity, despite the different ontological commitments.[15] Furthermore, to this day, it is common methodological practice to model physical phenomena at the super-atomic level using Einstein's equations since they are simpler and observationally equivalent (approximately) with quantum mechanical equations. To criticise economics as a science for the reason that it invokes simplifying assumptions the ontological commitments of which we know to be false, leads us also, then, to criticise physics as a science. In other words, if we accept that physics can be a science despite its unreal simplifying assumptions, then we must also accept that economics can be a science despite its unreal simplifying assumptions.

In response to the second criticism that economic models are inappropriately formalised and are therefore inaccurate, it could be argued that greater not less formalisation is needed to improve

[14] See Friedman [7] pp. 14-16 and pp. 30-33.

[15] Worrall [20] p. 109.

their predictive power. Crucially, in order to argue that it is a mistake to formalise economics, one must posit that there is some property of economic phenomena that makes them resist formalised scientific inquiry (see below for a consideration of this kind of postulation). Without such a property distinguishing economic phenomena from any other empirically observable phenomena, there is at least as much reason to think that the failure of economists to predict the global financial crisis was caused by under-formalisation rather than over-formalisation. While DSGE models are limited, they can be augmented with techniques to account for endogenous learning and 'non-rational' features of human agents.[16]

Importantly, the methodological practice of retaining and adjusting previous models in the light of predictive failure is abundant in physical science as well as economics.[17] For example, in meteorology, the failure to predict certain weather events does not entail the dissolution of the entire methodological practice of using ensemble forecasting to model meteorological phenomena. Instead, meteorologists exert themselves to develop even more sophisticated techniques that incorporate previously neglected variables and capture a greater range of interactions.[18]

The arguments given here are sufficient, I hope, to show that if physics is considered a science, then economics, which shares the methodological practices of physics, must also be considered a science. It is implicitly assumed here, that although no particular definition of science has been advanced, any definition of science will classify in the same category any two fields of study that share the same methodological practices (see Section 4 for definitions of science that do not concern methodological practices,

[16] See Colander et al. [5] for one example of how this can be done.

[17] Worrall [20] pp. 104-110.

[18] See Molteni et al. [15] and Weickmann et al. [19] for typical examples.

and the consequences for my argument).

3 The Classification of Economics under a Dichotomy Versus the Classification of Economics under a Continuum

So far, I have defended economic science from its two central criticisms and argued that those criticisms, in any case, apply to physical science as well. Indeed, I have demonstrated that physical and economic science share similar methodological practices. If we accept that if economics is a science then at least physics is also a science (to which the critics of economics would not presumably object – see below), and if we accept that if physics is a science then economics is a science (the argument developed in Section 2), then it follows that economics is a science if and only if physics is a science. Of course, this does not by itself establish that economics is a science, but there are few who would contend that the greater part of contemporary physics is not in fact scientific. Indeed, the current popular dismissal of economic science as 'physics envy' reveals the implicit assumption in critiques of economic methodology that physics is to be considered a true science.

But it could be argued at this point that the implicit assumption that economics is either a science or it is not a science ignores the relative scientific status of economics compared with physics. Under a continuous variable of 'scientific status', it may be argued that economics is at least *less* scientific than physics. The complexity of modelling social phenomena may make economics less able to give us precise natural laws in the way that physical science is able to do so.

This point is indeed compelling, and it seems obvious that the practice of economic science is indeed *less* scientific than physical science (even though people may disagree as to how wide the gap really is). However, it should be noted that it is only less scien-

tific in practice and not in principle; the complexity of economic phenomena may make contemporary economics an imprecise science, but there is nothing intrinsic about economic phenomena that makes them resistant to scientific inquiry. The difference is one of quantitative difficulty rather than qualitative difference. In fact, we could theoretically reduce economic phenomena such as consumers to more basic physical entities (see below for concerns about this theoretical possibility). Indeed, recent results in neuroeconomics, though limited, at least provide a conceivable way in which the choices of economic agents could be reduced to neuronal activity in the brain.[19] If this programme is possible, then in principle there is nothing even quantitatively different about the scientific status of economics relative to physics, since economics could be considered as a higher level abstraction of physical science.[20]

However, the possibility of inter-theoretic reduction is the subject of much debate in contemporary Philosophy of Science.[21] If one holds that inter-theoretic reduction is not possible, then it is indeed possible to claim that economics is less scientific than physics even in principle. However, it is important to note that this does not entail that under a dichotomy of science and non-science, economics can no longer be treated in the same class as physics, even for an anti-reductionist.

4 Non-methodological Definitions of Science

There is one further qualification to make to the argument that economics is a science if and only if physics is a science. Although no definition of science is offered in this paper, it was noted above

[19] Camerer et al. [4].

[20] Ibid. pp. 54-55.

[21] See Feyerabend [6] for the classic dissenting view.

(in Section 2) that it was implicitly assumed that any definition of science will assign to the same category any two fields of study that share their methodological practices. However, there could be definitions of science that do not concern methodological practices. In particular, there could be definitions of science that refer to the type of phenomena that the theory describes and predicts. Under such a definition, for example, it could be argued that the social phenomena with which economics is concerned are qualitatively different from natural phenomena with which the sciences are concerned.[22]

It may well be the case that social phenomena and natural phenomena differ in the ease with which they may be modelled. However, in order to argue that social phenomena are qualitatively different from natural phenomena, one would be forced to accept an anti-materialist position. If one holds that social phenomena resist scientific inquiry, then that is to say (assuming the possibility of inter-theoretic reduction) that social phenomena cannot be described in a physical theory. This would be in contradiction of the physicalist doctrine that everything that exists is at least in principle describable in a physical theory.[23] Critics of economics as a science could at this point bite the bullet of their contention that economic and natural phenomena are qualitatively different. But for a physicalist, it still holds that, even under definitions of science that refer to the type of phenomena being described and predicted, economics is a science if and only if physics is a science.

[22] Ormerod & Helbing [17] pp. 137-138.

[23] Stoljar [18].

5 Conclusion

Since the global financial crisis, several prominent economists have questioned the epistemic status of economics, particularly its scientific status. This paper has introduced concepts from the Philosophy of Science to clarify the debate. Specifically, this paper has demonstrated that economics is a science if and only if physics is a science, with two important qualifications. Firstly, anti-reductionists are able to claim that economics is not as scientific as physics if 'scientific' is understood to be a continuous variable (although if scientific is understood to be a dichotomous variable, then they are still forced to accept the original conclusion). Secondly, anti-physicalists are not forced to accept the conclusion if science is defined with reference to the type of phenomena a theory describes and predicts rather than with reference to standard methodological practices.

The conclusion and its qualifications may help economists to clarify their own positions, particularly with regard to future changes in economic methodology. Following the global financial crisis and the questioning of the scientific status of science, this paper and its conclusion may offer economists hope to believe that their discipline is not, in principle, facing an existential crisis. Careful reasoning about the epistemology of economics, informed by an understanding of the Philosophy of Science, will help to attain an improved state of economic theory and its methodology in the near future.

Appendix

(A): A typical utility-maximisation problem

Assume the consumption set (the set of all possible consumption bundles under no budget constraint) has L commodities and is limited to positive amounts of consumption of each commodity. Let x be the vector $x = \{x_i; i = 1,...L\}$ containing the amounts of each commodity, then:

$x \in \mathrm{R}_+^L$.

Assume also that the prices (p) of the L commodities are positive

$p \in \mathrm{R}_+^L$,

and that the consumer's wealth is w, then the set of all affordable packages (the budget set), is given by:

$B(p, w) = \{x \in \mathrm{R}_+^L : \langle p, x \rangle \leqslant w\}$,

Where $\langle p, x \rangle$ is the dot product of p and x (the total cost of consuming x of the products at price level p):

$$\langle p, x \rangle = \sum_{i=1}^{L} p_i x_i.$$

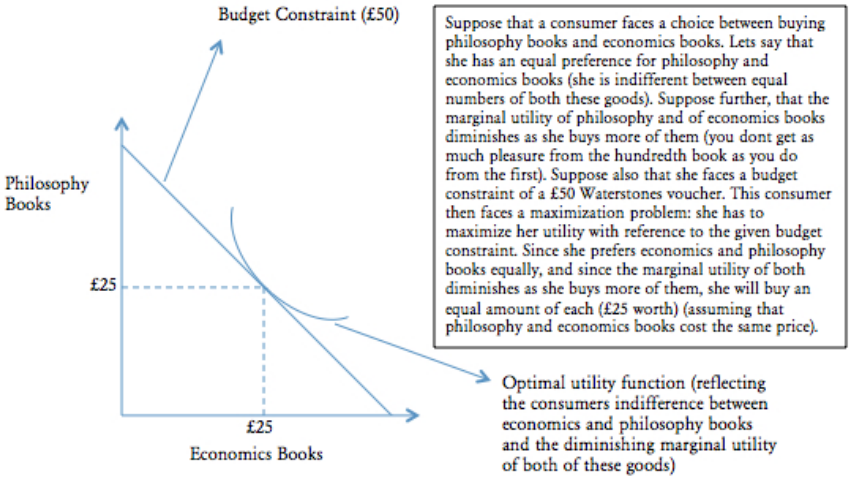
The consumer would like to buy the best bundle of commodities it can afford. In other words, it has preferences over all the possible bundles of commodities. Assume that the consumer's utility function (u), which expresses these preferences, is a real valued function with domain of the commodity bundles, or

$\mathrm{u} : \mathrm{R}_+^L \to \mathrm{R}$.

Then the consumer's optimal choices $x(p, w)$ are the utility-maximising bundle that is in the budget set, or

$x(p, w) = \mathrm{argmax}_{x* \in B(p,w)} u(x*)$.

(See the following page for a simplified graphical representation of the problem).



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Interviews

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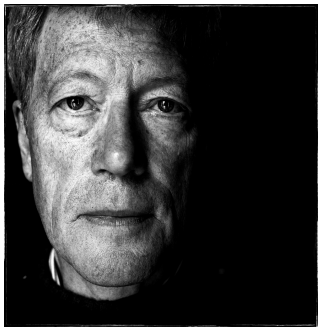

How would you define 'Philosophy', and why should one 'philosophise'?

I follow the ancient definition: the pursuit of wisdom, which is not the same as the pursuit of knowledge. One should philosophise by addressing what is puzzling, difficult or challenging in our world, and looking for ways to understand it and if necessary to change it or be reconciled to it.

What is your first memory of 'philosophising', and did your attraction to Philosophy immediately grow from there? If not, where did it come from?

First encounters with art, literature and music aged around 15 raised in my mind the puzzle as to what art means and why it is so powerful. That shaped my future career.

At what point in your life did you decide that you would like to be a philosopher, and what motivated that decision?

I never made the decision. It happened in the course of my study and writing. My ambition has always been to be a writer.

Have you always been particularly interested in the areas of Philosophy your work tends to focus on (i.e. Aesthetics and Political Philosophy)? If not, when and how did you gain these interests?

Aesthetics has always been my interest. Political philosophy came later, through trying to understand why I disagreed with the or-

thodoxies of the 1960s. I spoke out in defence of broadly conservative positions during the seventies, when I was teaching in the university of London, and Ted Honderich thought this to be so strange, so daft and so amusing that he asked me to write a book on *The Meaning of Conservatism* for a Penguin series he edited. I did so. It was the first time I had thought at all systematically about politics, and the book was greeted with howls of anger and derision. That was when I first realised that the conservative position in politics stood in need of defence, and a better defence than I had given it. Since then I have thought a lot about this, and tried hard to raise the level of debate among politicians and opinion formers.

If you had to name only one major research interest of yours, what would it be?

The nature and meaning of music.

Your two most recent books (*Our Church* and *The Face of God*) both discuss Religion, a subject that you are generally not known for writing about. Would it be possible for you to briefly summarise the central theses of each book, and your motivations therefor?

The Face of God argues that human beings face each other and the world, that the face is not reducible to physiognomy, and that this creates a posture towards reality that can be described as 'supernatural'. *Our Church* argues that the Anglican Church is a genuine vehicle through which the message of the Gospels has been communicated to the English. My motivations in writing these books were many, but principally the desire to confront the growing atheism of our society.

What, if anything, persuaded you away from Atheism?

The dreariness of its defenders.

Is there anything that you are working on currently?

A novel and a book of stories.

Why did you never go into Politics?

I tried and was rejected – see 'How I became a Conservative' in *Gentle Regrets*.

What precisely do you think the relation is between Religion and Aesthetics?

Both are concerned with the world and its contents as ends in themselves; both tell us that things have a meaning as well as a use; both teach us that we are less interesting than the world we contemplate.

How does working within academia compare with working outside of it? Do you prefer one to the other?

I prefer to be outside academia for two reasons: the academy is cluttered with orthodoxies and irrelevancies, and I like to work to my own rhythm.

Is there any advice you can give to undergraduates who are also aspiring to become philosophers?

Engage in as much discussion with friends and tutors as possible: always try out your ideas and never be taken in by them just because they are yours.

Christopher Peacocke
Columbia University and *University College London*

What is your first memory of 'philosophising', and did your attraction to philosophy immediately grow from there? If not, where did it come from?

I remember there were three events:

(1) When you do Maths at a certain stage you learn the principle of induction on natural numbers, and I remember asking my teacher at Magdalen College School whether this principal could actually be proved. He must have had a bit of background in Philosophy of Logic, because he referred to Russell and Whitehead, which amazingly happened to be in the school library.

(2) Like many other students, I had to read some Sartre for French A level, and you get a little bit of existentialism in that.

(3) When I went to Oxford to do PPE, my principal interest was actually at that point in Politics, rather than Philosophy; but I just got hooked on Philosophy in the first weekend – I was reading E.J. Lemmon's 'Beginning Logic' and some Hume, and I just got grabbed by the subject.

I then didn't really want to do anything else. I dropped the Politics aspect of PPE very quickly; Politics certainly at that time was an extremely humdrum subject. You just did some British Politics and institutions; it was not anything of any high level theory, or anything really demanding. My year was the first year you were allowed to do just two subjects at finals; I just did the Philosophy and Economics.

I liked the Economics a lot actually. My tutor said I really ought to do Economics rather than Philosophy, because people had

been trying to do Philosophy for about 2000 years, and it was extremely unlikely that I could make any substantial contribution whatsoever. Whereas with Economics, people had only been doing it for just over 100 years, there were probably lots of new theorems within reach (low hanging fruit). As it happens, he was right about that; that was in the early 70s when he said that. A lot of major theories were proved that were not particularly difficult to prove. Nonetheless, if you get engaged with fundamental issues of Philosophy, nothing else is going to do!

At what point in your life did you decide that you would like to be a philosopher, and what motivated that decision?

I always wanted to do it after my first year as an undergraduate. The subject just grasped me – there was nothing else that I really wanted to do. I was interested in Economics, but it didn't capture me in the same way. I had some other interests; when I applied to Oxford as an undergraduate, I only had one A level (I applied in my second year of sixth form), and that was actually in Music. Amongst other things, I'm still interested in Music (Music Perception, Musicology, etc.). Occasionally I teach Music Humanities to undergraduates. Had I been forced to be neither a Philosopher nor an Economist, I might have been a Music critic.

Have you always been particularly interested in the areas of Philosophy your work tends to focus on (i.e. Epistemology, Metaphysics, and the Philosophy of Mind)? If not, when and how did you gain these interests?

The answer to that question is actually no, that wasn't really what I started off on. When I was a graduate student, Philosophy of Language was very much the fashionable subject that people would talk a lot about (Davidson, Dumett, and Quine to a certain extent). I became interested in Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, and Metaphysics very much via the theory of Meaning. I was initially interested in the theory of Meaning…the theory of Truth…then you naturally turn to the question of what is involved with understanding these expressions, and if you press

that question hard and deep enough, the question will take you into all three areas.

I remember having a somewhat heated argument with my undergraduate tutor when discussing Descartes, and I remember arguing that there wasn't anything to be done in the Philosophy of Mind: it was either a matter of Empirical Psychology, or some boring conceptual analysis (I would be extremely embarrassed to see a transcript of what I said at that time)...

I didn't really get interested in those areas until I was a tutor at Oxford (you are forced to teach widely there). So partly there was a route via understanding, and what's involved in understanding. The other route was perception. At the point when I plunged into being a tutorial fellow at New College (Oxford), you had to teach Locke, Berkeley and Hume, and they're a little grim on perception. I had to believe that it must be possible to do something a little bit better in that direction, which was what drew me into perception.

From those two issues, the three interests started to join up, starting from questions on the theory of understanding.

If you had to name only one major research interest of yours, what would it be and why?

If I'm allowed to say something very general, it would be the relation between Metaphysics on the one hand, and the theory of intentional content/Epistemology on the other. I've come to think of Metaphysics as more fundamental in the order of philosophical explanation than the theory of Meaning, Epistemology, the theory of norms associated with various concepts and contents. The general question of what's the relation between the metaphysics of that domain, the various concepts of that domain, and various norms governing judgments involving concepts of that domain has been exercising me systematically since 2008. That's a general issue of enormous interest to me in the particular cases of magnitudes, time and the subject of consciousness. There's also a

question: "What should be the correct form of a theory of those relations, to apply generally to any domain?". In one form of another, that's been exercising me in recent years and will probably go on doing so.

Your two most recent books (*The Realm of Reason* and *Truly Understood*) cover respectively the two areas of Philosophy where your work perhaps is most renowned, Epistemology and the Philosophy of Mind. Would it be possible for you to briefly summarise the central theses of each book, and your motivations therefor?

The Realm of Reason was an outgrowth of earlier interests in *The Study of Concepts* (1992) and *Being Known* (1999) books. I came to be somewhat dissatisfied with some aspects of the treatment of concepts that I had given in *The Study of Concepts* – I came to think of it as insufficiently rationalist, for various reasons. In fact, I came to think that almost as soon as the book was published! I came to think that you had to have a rather different kind of model of the relation between understanding (or grasp of a concept) on the one hand, and what gives a thinker reasons for applying a concept on the other – something more structured than what is given in *The Study of Concepts*.

What I came to think was that something much more like a traditional rationalist account of various concepts (not only logical and mathematical concepts, but also perceptual concepts, observational concepts, psychological concepts, etc.) ought to be given. Moreover, you ought to be able to explain the various entitlement relations in which contents stand (when they are the content of judgments) in terms of the nature of the understanding. That is a natural Leibnizian idea, that it's somehow the nature of the understanding that generates your ability to appreciate that certain principles are correct (whether they're true or always truth preserving).

So that was one line of influence that got me to thinking about the issues that are in *The Realm of Reason*. The other one was just

more historical – I mention in the Preface of that book; it was the 50th anniversary of Quine's *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*, and there were many conference discussions about that famous paper, and where things then stood about the issues it raised. Even before I got interested in the more rationalist theories, I had always been interested in the connection between a theory of concepts, and a theory of *a priori* status of certain contents. Although there was some development of that from the approach in *A Study of Concepts*, I thought that the revised more rationalist view that I later developed also had consequences for the *a priori*.

So a lot of those occasions celebrating the 50th anniversary of Quine's paper prompted me to write up some of that material, I was asked to give some lectures at Harvard too. Also, it prompted me to think more generally about how a rationalist treatment of concepts might be developed along more contemporary lines. That's what lead to it.

So there is this nexus of relations between Truth, Justification, and Understanding, that has always exercised me in various ways. One of the directions my thought has taken in recent years is to consider much more carefully the relations between the metaphysics in the domain and that nexus of relations.

In *Truly Understood*, I was really pushing that program further. It doesn't actually discuss the *a priori* very much, partly because I think its main claims can be defended without appealing to any notion of the *a priori*. It is a book that is generated by the very general thesis that a concept is individuated by its fundamental reference rule (the most basic conditions for falling under a concept – that's a classical Fregean idea). It's motivated also by the idea that the grasp of a concept is simply having tacit knowledge of some kind of fundamental reference rule; my claim is that from those explanatory resources you can develop an account that explains how various mental states and their conceptual relations can give you reasons for making judgements. The book also contains throughout an account of the grasp of psychological con-

cepts and observational concepts within that general model.

Is there anything that you are working on currently?

Yes, two things. One is a particular instance of that programme of relating theses in Metaphysics and treating Metaphysics as prior in the order of philosophical explanation of various epistemic and understanding phenomena. I'm just finishing a book on the first person and the self; this was something that developed again in quite a surprising way. I gave a joint seminar about five years ago with Béatrice Longuenesse (it was a joint Columbia-NYU seminar), entitled 'Kant and Contemporary Issues'. We looked at various contemporary issues that Kant expresses views on, discussed the defensibility of Kantian views on those issues, and what a Kantian view looked like in a modern day context.

When doing that, I came to reread and rethink about something I probably hadn't thought about since I was an undergraduate, which was Kant's treatment of the Paralogisms. I came to think there were possible answers to Kant's objections to Descartes that Kant didn't really consider or take account of. Not that I wanted to be a Cartesian, but I did think that there were certain notions (awareness of your identity over time for instance) that are: entirely legitimate, not correctly described by Kant, and available to Descartes as a basis on which one could give a theory on the first person and the self, which could made legitimate the idea of having awareness of one's identity over time. That was a little thread that I pulled on gently, hoping the thread would not break as I went further...

Then in 2008 I starting thinking more about those themes, and tried to develop an account of the first person way of thinking (the first person primitive contents as they appear in perception, memory, and action awareness), and integrate it with a metaphysical theory of the subject of consciousness. I developed an approach under which the metaphysics of being a subject of consciousness is more fundamental than the first person modes of presentation and has to be used in explicating what the first per-

son non-conceptual mode of presentation in perception actually is.

The second part of the book goes on to discuss various notions of self-consciousness (reflective self-consciousness, certain kinds of perspectival self-consciousness and interpersonal self-consciousness…). Those accounts are supposed to be built on the more primitive account on the subject of consciousness and the first person way of thinking. That topic is obviously of interest in its own right – it's something on which some of the greatest philosophers have expressed views (of one kind of another), so I hope when that theory comes out, it can be read as self-contained. I was also motivated by the idea that this is one particular area in which one could develop in some detail a view on which the metaphysics of subject of consciousness is explanatorily prior to various epistemic phenomena and famous phenomena in the Philosophy of Mind involving the first person. Instinctively, the first person can be explained in Metaphysics first as more fundamental in the explanatory order of things.

In a way that was really a digression. I want to get back to working on the larger project of taking the Metaphysics as explanatorily prime in various domains, and then explaining concept mastery of various epistemic phenomena relating to the domain, in terms of the explanatorily prior Metaphysics… and so I'm gradually moving back into doing that, as the book on the first person is being finished. It is with the publishers at the moment, and awaiting comments from Oxford University Press advisors. When they come back, I will no doubt revise it substantially and then I hope that will be out in the next 18 months or so (other tasks permitting…).

7) What differences have you found between the U.S. and the U.K., from the perspectives of both the student and the teacher?

I spent quite a lot of a time visiting the States before we (my family and I) decided to move there in 2000, so I had some experience of the place over the years. Even before I did my DPhil, I taught

for a year in Berkeley. I had many friends there.

(From the perspective of a teacher):

One of the things that I was struck by most when I started living here and working permanently in the American system is the fantastic freedom generated by having the course system. There is a certain kind of 'dead hand' of institutionalised canonical syllabi, certainly in the places where I worked in the U.K. (Oxford and Kings College London). There's a centralised syllabus, you've got separate colleges, and the people who are teaching you are different from the people who are examining you (there has to be a centralised syllabus under such an arrangement). It acts as a drag on things! If you were to have an upper division undergraduate course in the Philosophy of Mind in the States, you can teach the current stuff. If you're working on something that's relevant to current issues, you can put that in too. I think the integration between research and teaching is much easier in the American system. I personally find it's more fun to teach undergraduates with a course system. At the graduate level though, things are not that different as between the UK and the US.

(From the perspective of a student):

There are other virtues of the British system. People do get more tutorial hours, certainly in the places where I've taught. But I think for undergraduates who want to follow the subject as it's currently done by those who are actually shaping some part of the discipline, it's probably more fun to be working in the American system.

Still, my views on this are nothing special. We were keen when we moved in 2000 that our children should have an American undergraduate education. You get a terrific undergraduate education in the U.K. if you really know what you want to do and are happy to specialise. If you want a certain kind of breadth (which is of course always important when you're doing Philosophy), if you're not quite certain before the age of 20 which subjects you'd

like to specialise in, the course system in an American university is going to be much better for you. Both of my children benefited from that; certainly my daughter found that she got a lot of individual attention in her final 18 months at Harvard. So you can get good experiences in both systems, but if you're lucky enough to be at a major research university in the States, and you like the breadth (and the breadth *is* particular importance if you intend to be a philosopher), you'd be well off there.

Is there any advice you can give to undergraduates who are also aspiring to become philosophers?

(1) Just pursue what interests you. You should never take your agenda as set by the current state of the subject. Anybody who's ever done something in Philosophy has basically reacted against something that has happened in the past, or else has launched out on an entirely new direction of their own. If there are interesting questions that seem obviously philosophical, whatever the subject concerns, my advice would be just to plunge in.

(2) Don't be afraid to think positively about broadly speaking conceptual/philosophical issues that arise as a result of disciplines other than philosophy. There isn't such a thing as 'Pure Philosophy' (I think). I doubt that if there is or ever was such a thing and if there ever was, it's probably not Philosophy as its best. So read in other parts of the library, and think about questions that arise out of adjacent subjects you are doing.

(3) I got a huge amount out of making visits to the U.S. I was lucky to have a Kennedy scholarship at Harvard, and spent a year talking to philosophers at Berkeley. If you get the chance to study overseas, I would seize it. Even if you want to go back to take a Philosophy job in Britain, people who've had proper experience elsewhere often look extremely attractive to university departments in Britain. It's enormously helpful to have different perspectives on what the conditions of adequacy are on a subject, what questions you ought to be addressing, and what you shouldn't take for granted. It's very easy growing up philosoph-

ically in just one country to neglect other approaches that actually you might find very stimulating if you were forced to address them.

The BUPS committee is very grateful to both Roger Scruton and Christopher Peacocke for taking the time to answer our questions.

Issue 6(1)
Spring Conference 2013

Journal of the British Undergraduate Philosophy Society

(Print) ISSN 1748-9393
(Online) ISSN 2051-5359