LABYRINTH

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<u>About This Journal</u>

Why '*Labyrinth*'?

Plato uses the image of a winding labyrinth as a metaphor for the process of philosophical investigation in his dialogue *Euthydemus*. His image expresses his belief that unlike the arts of rhetoric or sophistry – which rely on mere assertion and counter-assertion – philosophy absolutely requires that we retrace our steps in an argument and constantly re-examine our views in order to arrive at knowledge of the true and the good. This is what we as students of philosophy aim to do, and this journal is meant to aid in that process.

Our Purpose

This journal was created with a threefold purpose. First, to provide undergraduate philosophy students with the experience and opportunity of publishing a paper in a philosophical journal. Second, to give an opportunity for students to be involved in peer to peer interaction through the editorial and overall journal creation process. Finally, to showcase the amazing philosophical work that is being done by the undergraduate students at the University of Iowa.

Attention Students:

Please consider submitting a paper for the Spring 2018 issue as the continuation of this journal relies on students like you. The call for papers for the Spring 2018 issue of Labyrinth has been sent out to all Philosophy majors, minors, and EPP majors- submissions are do no later than April 1, 2018. All submissions undergo a blind peer review to ensure a fair selection process. For further inquiries contact Professor Carrie Swanson at carrie-e-swanson@uiowa.edu.

Papers

Science in the face of skepticism

Elias Holman

When posing skeptical arguments to those who haven't thought much about them, the conversation tends to follow a common pattern. This pattern is what I'll call the Argument from Scientific Indifference. The argument claims that while analyzing 'knowledge' or attempting to surmount skeptical scenarios might be interesting language games, science is ultimately indifferent to these endeavors. The scientist here thinks that there is some trick going on, some simple way out of the skeptical conclusions of some epistemic lines of argument. I'll attempt to pin down what exactly the argument is, and for each formulation examine epistemic problems that might arise. I conclude that the argument doesn't actually do a very good job of saving science from the questions of the persistent epistemologist, and that any robust version of the argument would involve some intensive—who would have guessed—epistemological thinking.

The Argument from Scientific Indifference

I'll first demonstrate a scenario under which the argument is invoked, and then attempt to clearly articulate it. First, the epistemologist might forward an argument with skeptical implications. For example, they could go through Descartes' demon argument. A better example of a skeptical argument in this context, though, is more along the lines of Hume's Problem of Induction. SA, the skeptical argument, might go something like this:

SA: 1. Inductive knowledge relies upon the Principle of the Uniformity of Nature—where the Principle is something like "the same input conditions will always lead to the same output conditions."

2. Knowing the Principle of the Uniformity of Nature relies upon doing induction; the reason we believe in the principle is because of our inductive observations.

3. Therefore, we are not justified in believing in induction, as it relies upon a circularity.

Note how this isn't exactly the Problem of Induction; it's a less thorough argument than Hume gives. This formulation helps to demonstrate the problem clearly and concisely, though, without too quickly forcing terms like "a posteriori" onto the bewildered scientist.

In response to such an argument, the scientist is inclined to respond something along the lines of "Yes, but science *works*. It accurately predicts things about the world. We're able to land people on the Moon and build cell phones because of science."

This intuition is what I've been calling the Argument from Scientific Indifference (ASI). I'll first attempt to formulate ASI into an argumentative structure, and then try to evaluate how epistemically interesting the argument is. At first glance the argument seems to take a form like this:

ASI1: 1. If cell phones exist, then we can have scientific knowledge.

2. Cell phones exist.

3. Therefore, we can have scientific knowledge.

This formulation seems to have a couple of problems. We might worry that there isn't really a robust explanation here of the connection between the two parts of the first premise; it isn't clear what the causal connection between cell phone existence and the obtainability of scientific knowledge is. The more serious problem is that the second premise subtly presupposes the conclusion. The only way that we could know that cell phones exist—presumably—is through our experience with them. That is to say, our scientific understanding of them. But that's what's in question. The argument begs the question.

Perhaps rethinking and rearticulating some of these premises might clear up these problems and more clearly capture the intuitions of the scientist.

ASI2: 1. If we didn't have scientific knowledge, it would not be possible to manufacture cell phones.

2. If it were not possible to manufacture cell phones, we wouldn't think that cell phones exist.

3. We think that cell phones exist.

4. Therefore, it is not the case that it is not possible to manufacture cell phones, and by extension, it is not the case that we don't have scientific knowledge.

4a. It is the case that it is possible to manufacture cell phones, and by extension, it is the case that we have scientific knowledge.

This argument is, perhaps, a bit clearer than ASI1. It's logically valid; all that remains is to look at the premises and see if any problems arise. ASI2 is interesting in that the only positive claim it makes about the way that the actual world is now is premise 3, which seems obviously true. Premise 2 is a bit more dubious, but, leaving aside evil demon cases and possible worlds in which cell phones exist but their means of manufacture do not, and just focusing on SA for now, doesn't seem to be too problematic. The real problem with the argument arises with Premise 1. It also seems to beg the question by presupposing the importance of scientific knowledge. If one were to ask the scientist her thinking behind the first premise, she would probably say something like, "Well, it wouldn't be possible because making cell phones requires a certain understanding of electronics, chemistry, etc." This isn't good enough. Even if we assume that we do, in fact, manufacture cell phones, the scientist is not in any position to say that their manufacture requires scientific knowledge. To do so is to presuppose the role that science plays.

This problem can be made more explicit if we substitute scientific knowledge with the existence of God in the argument:

AGI: 1. If God didn't exist, it would not be possible to manufacture cell phones.

2. If it were not possible to manufacture cell phones, we wouldn't think that cell phones exist.

3. We think that cell phones exist.

4. Therefore, it is not the case that it is not possible to manufacture cell phones, and by extension, it is not the case that God doesn't exist.

4a. It is the case that it is possible to manufacture cell phones, and by extension, it is the case that God exists.

This makes clear the issues with ASI2. The argument is the same—so the validity is still there—but the question-begging assumption has been changed. AGI assumes that God's existence plays a pivotal role in the possibility of the manufacture of cell phones. If asked about the thinking behind the first premise, the theist would likely say something like "Well, without God, then humans wouldn't have immortal souls, which are necessary for creativity. Creativity is required to make cell phones". It's clear that claims like premise 1 harbor hidden assumptions which imperil the thinking behind ASI.

I should mention now that the formulations of ASI previously discussed trend towards a popular argument among scientific realists known as the "no miracles" argument. It is very similar to ASI1 and ASI2, but I should make explicit mention of it here due to its popularity. The argument is essentially that the best explanation of the success of science is science's reality. That is to say, the best explanation for why we can make cell phones and land people on the moon is because science works, and not because of an evil demon or something. Put in a clearer argumentative form, it might be:

NMA: 1. Science is very successful. We have cell phones.

2. The best explanation for this success is that science accurately describes the world.

3. Therefore, science is probably true.

The argument is intuitively attractive, but I think that similar problems emerge with NMA as do with ASI1 and ASI2. NMA assumes some base level of the success of science (in premise 1) and the role of science in our observations (in premise 2). As demonstrated above, assuming either of those things puts the scientist on shaky and potentially question-begging ground. I don't think that NMA gets the scientist anything unique and not already captured by ASI1 and ASI2, both of which aren't able to convincingly justify scientific-knowledge belief.

Maybe this is the wrong way to approach the argument. It seems more often that ASI takes on a different structure. It's less about proving the existence of science from the existence of cell phones and more about the indifference of science to epistemological arguments. Something like this might get at that idea:

ASI3: 1. If science reliably produces results—it predicts observations, explains   observations, etc.—then it doesn't matter whether or not it's circular.

2. Science reliably produces results; even if we can't say that these results are in themselves "Knowledge" in some strong sense, they still count toward assessing the reliability of science as a whole.

3. Therefore, it doesn't matter whether or not the justification behind science is circular.

3a. At worst, we end up with a reliable method of evidence generation which produces results with tremendous explanatory and predictive power and we just have to refrain from calling it capital 'K' "Knowledge".

I think that this argument gets at the best parts of ASI and NMA. It's not an argument about the nature of objects in the world, but it captures the intuitive power of NMA while elaborating on the mechanisms behind it. One can't perform a simple substitution of "God" for "Science" and get a coherent outcome here. There don't seem to be the same problems that the other formulations brought about, and ASI3 even seems to bring in some relationship between science and its apparent knowledge-generating power: reliability.

Reliability

The crucial question then relates to the definition of reliability in this context. As I see it, reliability could mean one of two things based on how it's articulated in premise 1 of ASI3. Either it means that our observations align with what we would expect given our other observations, or else it means that science itself is in some sense a 'reliable knowledge-generating process'. I'll look at both to see if any problems emerge.

The first definition says something like:

R1:   A method of knowledge generation is reliable if it produces results (explanatory and predictive power) consistent with our observations (introspective, external etc.)

This definition allows for many knowledge generation processes to be 'reliable' that we might intuitively think should be. Geometry, perhaps, is captured by this definition; we see thats it's impossible to draw intersecting parallel lines both in theory and in practice. R1 also captures an intuitive idea of what reliability is. A given method's reliability is contingent upon its explanatory and predictive power.

There might be a couple of initial worries here. It might be an issue that if we plug in "science" for method and define "science" as "our observations", then we end up with a tautology. To be "reliable" might just be the same as being "science". In that case it doesn't really seem like reliability could be doing much explanatory work in ASI3. The first premise would be rendered something like "If science is science, then it doesn't matter that science is circular". It's difficult to accept that premise as true.

The second worry relates to the potential for degrees of reliability. A method's reliability doesn't guarantee its infallibility. Is it the case that if a method produces a single result consistent with our observations, then it's reliable? That can't be right. The coin-flip method of knowledge generation would be reliable in that case. Nor can a method which produces a single inconsistent result be necessarily called unreliable; our visual faculties fail us all the time in cases of hallucination or misperception. It's clear that there needs to be some sense of a robust or causal connection between our method and our observations. The problem is that we can't really presuppose that in the case of science, because it's science that we're trying to demonstrate the

reliability of. In the absence of such a connection, the best that this definition can offer is the suggestion that given *enough* such consistent results, we can safely think of a method as being reliable.

Aside from a potential paradox of vagueness, this compromise seems to be good enough to serve as a definition here. Given that, what does ASI look like?

ASI4: 1. If science produces results consistent with our observations, then it is a reliable method of knowledge generation.

2. If a method of knowledge generation is reliable, it doesn't matter whether it's circular

3. Science reliably produces results; even if we can't say that these results are in themselves "Knowledge" in some strong sense, they still count towards the assessing the reliability of science as a whole.

4. Therefore, it doesn't matter whether or not the justification behind science is circular.

4a. At worst we end up with a reliable method of evidence generation which produces results with tremendous explanatory and predictive power and we just have to refrain from calling it "Knowledge".

Cleaning up the first premise required booting the indifference to its own premise. Sitting there all alone in the 2nd premise slot, it's looking a lot less reasonable than it did at the end of premise ASI3-1.

What does this second premise mean in the context of the definition of reliability, R1? Something like, "If a method of knowledge generation produces results consistent with our observations, it doesn't matter that it's circular". This is a dubious move at best. The main issue with it that I see is that it leaves room for alternative methods of knowledge generation. To demonstrate this, I propose "Demon Theory"

DT: All of our experiences are caused by a demon. These experiences are internally consistent, although they do not align with the truth.

With this in mind, we plug DT into ASI4:

ADI: 1. If DT produces results consistent with our observations, then it is a reliable method of knowledge generation.

2. If a method of knowledge generation is reliable, it doesn't matter whether or not it's circular

3. This belief generates results consistent with our observations: by definition, the demon's machinations always produce results consistent with our observations. For example, the demon will always make us err when calculating 2+2, and our false belief that

2+2=4 (as it actually equals 5) will always be corroborated when we do that calculation and the demon intercedes.

4. Therefore, it doesn't matter whether or not the justification behind demon-intercession is circular.

4a. At worst, we end up with a reliable method of evidence generation which produces results with tremendous explanatory and predictive power and we just have to refrain from calling it "Knowledge".

The fan of DT would then be able to advance their argument for the truth of demon-intervention using circular logic, something that the scientist undoubtedly wouldn't be too keen on.

Reliabilism

It seems like a daunting task to come up with an account of reliability which doesn't run into question-begging or reductio problems when one attempts to define reliability within the scope of one's experiences. This is the lesson of SA: one can't pull oneself up by one's bootstraps, at least not without incurring very strange consequences.

So then, perhaps Reliabilism could provide some insight into this business of defining reliability. Reliabilism is the view that a belief is justified if it is formed with a reliable process. For the reliabilist, reliability isn't something discovered after the fact by comparing notes with one's expectations. Instead, the conditions for justification exist *external* to the observer.

This means that the scientist can pretty neatly avoid SA. Because justification for belief exists outside of the believer—at least partially—it renders the first premise of SA false; it's no longer the case that science relies on the Principle of the Uniformity of Nature (on a foundational level). The question remains, though, what does this mean for science? Is this going to be a satisfactory solution for the disaffected scientist?

I don't think it will turn out to be. The primary advantage of science over other types of knowledge generation is that it's supposed to give us good reasons for believing. Scientists want to—or should want to—preserve the role of induction in justifying knowledge. By jettisoning it, it's not clear why science is any better than any other types of knowledge generating methods. All science would have a claim to is its reliability, but it wouldn't be a very persuasive claim, absent the explanatory power of induction to back up scientific claims. Even if induction is involved somewhere along the line—as I'm sure any reliabilist scientist would claim—science is not fundamentally justified by induction.

I think that this is a problem for the scientist, and I can demonstrate this with another argument. The Argument from a Reliable God can shed some light on why this reliabilist definition perhaps won't turn out to be a panacea.

ARG: 1. Assume there is a God who intervenes in our lives and is foundationally the font of all knowledge. Even if we do other sorts of supplementary induction, God is the fundamental source of knowledge.

1a. In this way, God is a 'reliable' method for knowledge generation

    2. Whether or not a belief is justified is foundationally or whether or not its generative method is reliable.

    3. Therefore, beliefs formed on the basis of divine intervention are justified. This is true even in the case that the believer has *no reason* to believe in the existence of God.

Now the scientist will say, "Hold up, you just presupposed the existence of God in the first premise. How do you know that God is a reliable way to generate knowledge?" There are a couple of illustrative things about this reaction. It should be clear that science as a knowledge-generating method runs into the same issue. The reason that the scientist appeals to this definition of reliability is because the scientist cannot independently verify the truth of science; that's what's in question from the beginning. The scientist is not as innocent of her own criticism as she might think.

Another issue elucidated by ARG and the scientist's intuition is that the question isn't really about the existence or reliability of God as a method, it's about the fact that the scientist who so defines reliability would be forced to say that, in a world where *such a God actually exists*, the believer with *no reasons* to believe (or even with reasons to disbelieve) are justified in so believing. This is antithetical to the very spirit of scientific inquiry, and I don't think that any defense of scientific knowledge could involve such a conclusion.

The scientist might be inclined to say here something like, "You need a reliable method, but you also need some reason to believe that your method is reliable". That would solve the ARG concern. The issue is that this just circles around back to the initial problems with induction. I've defended the position that the scientist has no such reason to believe that their method is reliable. See ASIs 1 and 2. There's no good way to come up with that 'reason to believe that your method is reliable' within the bounds of doing science, as it will result in either begging the question or unacceptable implications.

Conclusion

I've looked at an internalist understanding of reliability and an externalist one, and both seem to fail the proponent of ASI. ASI is meant to spare science from epistemic quibbling and distinctions-without-differences. As it turns out, ASI threatens to make the situation worse by either severing the connection between one's reasons-to-believe and their justification or alternatively by running into (unavoidable) structural issues. There might be a defense that scientists can offer up to advance the notion that they should be exempt from epistemological concerns, but that defense would probably involve some robust epistemology.

Objections and Questions

Ok, sure, but why should I care? What does it matter whether we have infallible capital 'K' knowledge? Isn't it good enough to have decently reliable methods for generating predictions and explanations? You can't "Know" that there isn't a velociraptor on your roof, but that's not a very interesting insight.

This is the point I addressed under the "Reliability" heading. Appealing to the apparent 'reliability' of science creates a wealth of problems. Any attempt to understand reliability here is going to be unsatisfactory to the scientist. They either allow too much—other theories to fill the same criteria—or allow too little—the scientist is no longer allowed to say that their personal

knowledge does the justificatory work. Pushing the above point just continues to beg the question, a game that other theories—I'm thinking religious fundamentalism—are also happy to play.

Could it be that science is made reliable—in the externalist, reliabilist sense of the word—because of the induction that scientists actually do? "Science" doesn't exist in a vacuum. Only through doing science can it be reliable. If that were true, wouldn't some of the spookiness of the externalism be averted?

Perhaps some of the spookiness, but not all of it. The main problem I see with ASI relying on some externalism is that it runs into the trap it was trying to avoid. The proponent of ASI thinks that science is somehow above these epistemic debates. Enough externalism to avoid SA results in strange consequences for the scientist--namely, that their reasons to believe aren't doing the justificatory work. Not enough,—that is, going with an internalist understanding of reliability—results in question-begging and a reproduction of the same problem articulated by SA.

What then might science be? Why do we tend to think of it as a very different thing than other types of knowledge generation? We like to think that science is a method of knowledge generation totally different than, say, flipping a coin or reading entrails. What accounts for this discrepancy?

It's important to remember that science might just be reliable, as per the reliabilist definition. It's just that I doubt that a proponent of ASI would be satisfied with that externalist claim. What is science as opposed to a reliable process, though? It's hard to say. It might be a merely cultural practice. After all, empiricism only came into the mainstream during the enlightenment, and philosophy and 'science' were indistinguishable until the early modern period.

Proponents of the view that science is somehow different or better than other cultural methods frequently point to things like cell-phones and space-walks as evidence of science's superior truth. I wonder, however, if the same arguments could be made in favor of other cultural practices. Just as one couldn't build cell-phones without science (let's suppose), one couldn't build minarets without Islam; one couldn't build the Coliseum without roman gladiatorial culture; one couldn't make cell-phones without a need or cultural desire for long-range instant communication. Just as Facebook could only start in the US, the Social Credit System could only start in the PRC.

I don't know if that's a satisfactory answer for the advocate of ASI, nor have I thoroughly thought out that position. It's just meant to demonstrate that other positions for science are available other than a seemingly dogmatic pedestal.

You Have Free Will and You Don't

Logan Drake

If you grew up in almost any sort of Christian household, you were most likely told, explicitly and repeatedly, that you, yes you, have free will, and so does everyone else! Free will does a lot of work in Christian theology, and even in many more secular philosophies. The ability for people to freely choose their actions seems necessary for our traditional understanding of moral responsibility. After all, how can we cast moral blame on someone for an action if they did not freely choose it? In addition to doing a lot of philosophical work, free will just feels *obvious*. There are perhaps few things as intuitive as "I have free will." The deeply held belief that those around you are making decisions that are their own, and that you are doing the same, is a difficult one to overcome, and at first glance it's not clear why one would even want to overcome it.

The problem emerges when we contrast free will with another seemingly obvious statement: every event has a cause. "Cause and effect" is a fundamental concept in our understanding of the world, its presence felt in everything from physics to storytelling to billiards. If it's true that *every* event has one or more causes, then every cause is also a caused event, the result of a long series of causes stretching far into the past, presumably to the beginning of time. If every human action is an event, then every human action has a series of causes stretching back to the beginning of time, well past the point of one's birth. If this is true, then how could it be possible for someone, anyone, to have free will? How could a decision be made freely, independent of the long, deterministic causal chain that controls us all? This obvious idea of cause and effect is known as determinism, and it seems to be completely incompatible with the equally obvious idea of free will. How are we to resolve the war between these two intuitive, yet contradictory ideas?

This paper provides an overview of the three main schools of thought on the issue of free will, and some objections to their positions. I'm going to argue that hard determinism is mostly true, but misses the point, that libertarianism is nonsense, and that some form of compatibilism offers the most useful and truthful understanding of free will.

The school of thought known as hard determinism, unsurprisingly, takes a hard stance in favor of determinism. It states that free will is a lie, or more generously, an illusion. If this seems like a dramatic stance to take, that's because it is. Hard determinists seem to be committed to the idea that morality and freedom are "childish luxuries," as Theodore Sider put it in his book *Riddles of Existence*. Giving up on freedom and morality makes many uneasy with hard determinism. It does have in its favor, however, the support of research in physics and neuroscience, and it fits a historical trend. As human understanding has progressed, we have had to accept that our planet isn't the center of the universe, that we are made of the same stuff as sticks and stones, and that we evolved from the same creatures as slugs and rats. We've become less and less special with every step. Maybe now we must accept that we aren't free, that, at bottom, we are all just unconscious piles of matter, coincidentally and miraculously thrown together to create the illusion of a free, thinking being.

Surely there must be a more amiable, less dramatic resolution to the conflict. Libertarians (not those of Gary Johnson) offer such a resolution by proposing the exact opposite: people have

free will, and determinism is bunk. This is, of course, a slightly disingenuous framing. Most all libertarians will not deny that deterministic laws govern most of the physical world, from the way apples fall, to the way billiard balls collide, to the way planets orbit. The one exception though, the special case, is *people*.

Roderick Chisholm gives us a look at how libertarians think about free will in a 1964 lecture at the University of Kansas. He distinguishes between two types of causation: immanent and transient. To avoid perceptions of pretentiousness, and because I can never keep those names straight, we'll refer to them here as *agent causation* and *event causation*. For Chisholm, event causation is the deterministic stuff, guided by rigid laws that result in predictable, repeatable outcomes. When a speeding billiard ball collides with a still one, that's event causation; the result is determined by physical laws and is perfectly predictable. But it's a very different matter when it comes to persons. When you open your closet and choose what to wear for the day, your decision is neither determined nor predictable. It's the result of agent causation. Your choice wasn't random or determined by some fancy equation. It was caused, and it was caused by you.

This is reassuring. We have won a mighty victory and taken back our freedom and recovered our morality! At least, if you don't look too hard. This at first reassuring return to freedom and morality actually introduces a whole slew of new questions, for which Chisholm and other free-will libertarians have been unable to deliver satisfying answers (at least to my mind).

Firstly, libertarianism seems to go against a driving idea behind physics, and scientific progress more generally—that everything is made from the same physical stuff, and that stuff is all governed by the same physical laws. The rather new field of quantum physics, which studies the laws that govern very small subatomic particles, introduces a complication, but it is not a deadly one. Quantum physics shows that subatomic particles are not controlled by the normal, physical laws we are used to, but by probabilistic laws—equations that provide probabilities for various outcomes but don't produce a single answer, as traditional physics equations do.

This may weaken determinism itself as a claim, reducing the all-consuming-ness of cause-and-effect, as it seems physics will not be able to make perfect predictions, even with full information—it may only be able to provide probabilities in some instances. But the fact that the laws are probabilistic instead of deterministic doesn't help us recover free will at all—there's still an outside law producing all events, and hence, no room for free will.

Even ignoring this issue, what gives humans[1] their special and exclusive causal powers? Why do people, of all the things, have the power to escape that otherwise all-powerful causal chain? After all, we are made of the same physical matter as everything else. This seems incredibly arbitrary and arrogant. The most obvious and historically typical answer to this problem is that humans possess some sort of non-physical "soul" which gives them these special powers. Some prefer the term "spirit" or "aura" or something, but we'll group them all together here because, as far as I'm concerned, they all introduce the same difficulties. Namely, what exactly is the non-physical nature of a soul? How does a non-physical soul interface with a physical body? Where do

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[1] I use the words "humans" and "persons" somewhat interchangeably throughout this paper. It's not terribly important to my argument how exactly you define these words; I take them to be the commonly understood idea of what a human or person is, but I don't think it introduces a problem for my argument against libertarians if you want to include sufficiently intelligent or complex animals or computers.

souls come from, and, again, why are they limited to humans? It's difficult to imagine how anything non-physical could emerge from the process of evolution, as well as what evolutionary mechanism would produce something as complex and seemingly unimportant (at least to survival) as a soul.

Introducing a soul creates more problems for the libertarian than it solves. And without it, where is this special agent causation supposed to come from? The brain? Hardly, as the brain is a physical object and therefore obeys the deterministic and/or probabilistic laws of physics. There is no clear answer, which greatly weakens the libertarian's case, and leaves libertarianism, like hard determinism, an unsatisfying solution to the problem of free will.

The most convincing solution to this complicated problem comes from the school of thought known as compatibilism. Compatibilists tow a line down the middle, claiming free will isn't incompatible with determinism. They manage to give us the best of both worlds; their theory purports to be compatible with deterministic physics, while still allowing for freedom and morality. The strength of their argument comes from analyzing just what we mean by "free will." By changing our definition of free will, compatibilists seek to avoid the contradiction altogether.

Alfred Jules Ayer proposes one promising definition of free will. Instead of contrasting free will with determinism, as is done traditionally and as we have done above, Ayer contrasts it with *constraint*. What makes an action free is not that it was not predictable or determined by prior events or overseen by probabilistic laws; instead, the freedom of an action comes from the actor being unconstrained. If I hold a gun to your head and force you to perform some action, that action was not free. If you were raised by overprotective, overinvolved helicopter parents that trained you from a young age to always do what you're told, and those parents pressure you into attending a prestigious, stuffy, elite college you know you'd hate, your decision to attend the school was not made freely. If you had accepting, non-helicoptering parents, and you chose to attend the stuffy school anyway, that action would be free (assuming there were no other constraints placed on you). These claims don't seem too controversial—in fact, they seem to line up with our intuitions. Under hard determinism, none of them, even the last, seemingly free action, would be free. And under libertarianism, they would all be free.

This reframing of free will as being a matter of constraint, and not of determinism, allows Ayer to meaningfully say actions are free or not free, while still allowing for deterministic and/or probabilistic laws to have their traditional control over everything. And by providing a meaningful definition of free will that can exist within determinism, Ayer again allows for morality to exist. We can still say that a person is only morally responsible for actions which they performed freely, but now we mean something slightly different by "performed freely."

Now, holding a gun to someone's head and having an overprotective parent are very different levels of constraint, and it might seem odd to lump them together and treat them the same. This is where compatibilism again has an advantage over libertarianism and hard determinism. Instead of creating a strict dichotomy between completely free and completely unfree, compatibilism allows for freedom to be a matter of degree. We can say that the constraint placed on you by your overprotective parents is less severe than the constraint I place on you when I threaten you with a gun. As a result, the action you perform in response to my threat is much less free than the action you perform because of your parents.

Seeing freedom as a matter of degree fits better with many of our intuitions. If I threaten your family with a gun (I am very into threatening people with guns) and force you to commit a murder to save them, it is intuitive to blame you less in that situation than if you had murdered someone simply because your helicopter parents wanted you to. It certainly seems as if you had much more room to wiggle out of that situation without committing a murder, when the downside is your parents being a little upset with you, rather than when the downside is me killing your entire family.

Ayer's definition of free will and compatibilism, then, seem like the perfect solution to our problem. It gives us a meaningful definition of free will that still, I think, gets at what we really mean when we speak of actions being made freely. It doesn't break physics. It leaves open the possibility for an eventual set of equations which could predict every future action given enough present information. It allows for moral responsibility. We can still say some actions were performed freely, and others were not, and we are only morally responsible for those actions which we performed freely. We aren't limited to saying actions are either completely free or completely unfree, and this in turn allows us to assign moral responsibility in degrees as well, which again seems to fit with our intuitions.

This conception of compatibilism isn't without flaw, however. Mainly: are the laws of determinism not a type of constraint? In fact, you could say that determinism constrains your actions completely—you are constrained to the point where you can only do one action, which was always going to happen. At this point, compatibilism collapses into hard determinism, and we lose freedom and morality again.

The compatibilist could dig their way out by redefining free will again as "free from all constraint except determinism, from which nothing can be free." These "except for this one big convenient exception" solutions often seem like cheap cop outs, and this might seem a little too close to the libertarian's "except for humans, who are very special" excuse. In this case, however, I believe there is an argument to be made for this exception—the way we talk about free will actually does include this exception.

Let's say you hit me and I ask why you did that. If you say "a complex series of physical events stretching back to the origins of the universe caused me to hit you, I had no choice," I'm probably just going to hit you back and say you're stupid. In regular speech, and even in some more technical, philosophical work, Ayer's definition does a good job of getting at what we mean when we talk about free will. It may be true that, as a matter of fact, you hitting me was the result of a complex series of physical events stretching back to the origins of the universe, but when we talk about morals and motivations, contexts where we often bring up free will, that's not at all what we mean, and that's what hard determinism seems to miss.

For these reasons, I believe compatibilism is how we should understand free will. At bottom, we are simply unconscious piles of matter controlled by forces outside our control. But when we talk about free will, we do mean something—we just don't mean "free from all-powerful causal or probabilistic laws." We mean something much more colloquial and difficult to pin down. I believe Ayer's definition is at least workable. I have no doubt more objections can be raised, and further revision may be necessary, but this further work should be done under a compatibilist framework, as it makes the most sense out of the complicated problem of free will.

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Fact-Sensitivity

Jacob Simpson

Introduction

For Colin Farrelly, theories of justice should advance justice in a society, and they should be judged according to their applicability and efficacy.[1] He states that a theory:

> must function as an adequate *guide* for our collective action. A theory of [justice] that yields impotent or misguided practical prescriptions is a deficient theory of justice. If the collective aspiration to implement the conclusions of a theory would not result in any noticeable increase in the justness of one's society, then it fails as a *normative* theory.[2]

If we assume this model of theories to be true, then, according to Farrelly, ideal and extreme non-ideal theories are impotent, and therefore, deficient. Farrelly critiques ideal theories of the liberal egalitarian tradition for assuming full compliance in a realistic utopia, taking a cost-blind approach to rights, and having a limited view of human misfortune; he claims that "the liberal egalitarian theories of justice cannot address the issue of trade-offs that inevitably arises in real non-ideal societies that face the fact of scarcity."[3] The judgement of impotency is also leveraged against extreme non-ideal theories because, according to Farrelly, "*all* existing constraints (even those imposed by an unjust social structure) are taken as legitimate constraints and thus justice simply reaffirms the status quo."[4] Summarily, Laura Valentini explains that Farrelly raises questions about "whether feasibility considerations should constrain normative political theorizing and, if so, what sorts of feasibility constraints should matter."[5]

To assess the feasibility of theories and to prescribe the optimal kind theories, Farrelly uses the concept of fact-sensitivity. The concept, however, is flawed, being dependent on inconsistent conditions and false assumptions about the natures of theories and facts. It is important to reconcile the conditions and assumptions of fact-sensitivity, particularly of extreme fact-sensitivity, because they imply that the more reliant, non-ideal theories are on facts, to the point that the theories become extreme, non-ideal theories, the more deficient they are. But if the conditions and assumptions are reconciled, creating a new concept of fact-sensitivity, then I believe, in opposition to Farrelly, that extreme non-ideal theories would be more applicable and effective in transitioning to a more just society, that theories of extreme fact-sensitivity should not be avoided, but rather, they should be pursued.

In the following sections, I will explain Farrelly's concept of fact-sensitivity with more detail and identify its flaws. Then I will offer an alternative concept of fact-sensitivity that

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[1] For the remainder of the paper, I will refer to theories of justice as "theories."
[2] Farrelly, "Justice in Ideal Theory: A Refutation." 845.
[3] *Ibid.*, 844
[4] *Ibid.*, 846.
[5] Valentini, "Ideal vs. Non-ideal Theory: A Conceptual Map." 654.

maintains its capability for differentiating ideal and non-ideal theories while liberating extreme, non-ideal theories from the critiques by Farrelly.

Farrelly's Concept of Fact-Sensitivity[6]

Farrelly first introduces fact-sensitivity to distinguish between ideal and non-ideal theories according to how they consider empirical realities of the world:

> The disagreement between those political philosophers who feel inclined to invoke highly abstract hypotheticals when deriving the principles of justice, and those political theorists who take seriously real, non-ideal considerations, is a disagreement over how *fact-sensitive* a theory of distributive justice ought to be.[7]

Fact-sensitivity is a spectrum on which theories may be mapped, and it shows "how stringent the requirement of fact-sensitivity ought to be, and the dangers inherent with the extreme positions."[8] On one end of the spectrum is fact-*in*sensitivity, where "one runs the risk of invoking an account of justice that fails to function as an adequate guide for our collective action in the real, non-ideal world."[9] The danger rests in theories that rely too much on idealization—making false assumptions to simplify theories. At the other end of the spectrum, where extreme fact-sensitivity falls, "*all* existing constraints (even those imposed by an unjust social structure) are taken as legitimate constraints and thus justice simply reaffirms the status quo"[10] If theories are extremely fact-sensitive, they accept all existing constraints as legitimate constraints.

The concept of extreme fact-sensitivity may be distilled into three sub-concepts: constraints, legitimacy, and acceptance.[11] Combined, the sub-concepts and their interactions create the conditions for extreme fact-sensitivity. To understand extreme fact-sensitivity, therefore, the sub-concepts must be unpacked independently and analyzed in relation. Farrelly does not define the sub-concepts explicitly, so we must use the little content he offers to grasp the sense of the sub-concepts.

The facts to which theories may be fact-sensitive are facts that function as constraints. Constraints, as I take them to be, are facts that limit the applicability or efficacy of theories. For example, the fact that people die from starvation is a constraint because it would limit the applicability or efficacy of theories if it were accepted as a constraint. This bracketing of the realm of facts means that theories do not become more or less fact-sensitive as they accept facts that do not function as constraints. For example, the fact that I am right handed does not constrain theories.

It is unclear what Farrelly intends for the sub-concept of legitimacy. But it is clear that legitimacy is a property applied to constraints. In context, three meanings for legitimacy may be

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[6] For Sections II-III, "fact-sensitivity" will refer to Farrelly's concept of fact-sensitivity rather than the alternative concept of fact-sensitivity that I propose in Section IV.

[7] Farrelly, "Justice in Ideal Theory: A Refutation." 844.

[8] *Ibid*., 846.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] I use "acceptance" to represent the sub-concept that is the predicate "are taken," as stated in: "*all* existing constraints (even those imposed by an unjust social structure) are taken as legitimate constraints and thus justice simply reaffirms the status quo" (*Ibid.*).

possible. First, a constraint may be legitimate if it is accepted as a constraint in a theory; according to this interpretation, legitimacy is a descriptive matter about constraints in theories. Second, a constraint may be legitimate if it should be accepted as a constraint in a theory; in this sense, legitimacy is a normative matter about constraints in theories. Third, a constraint may be legitimate if it should be a constraint in the real world; on this interpretation, legitimacy is normative matter about constraints in the real world. No matter the sub-concept we use, it is important to note that the property is either legitimate or illegitimate, with no application of the property in between. At the very least, Farrelly, adopts the first sense: if a constraint is accepted in a theory, then the constraint is considered legitimate. Theories accept constraints if constraints are incorporated in theories as assumptions.

In combination, the sub-concepts create the spectrum of fact-sensitivity: extreme ideal theories accept the fewest constraints, and extreme non-ideal theories accept all constraints (and by virtue of acceptance, all constraints are legitimate constraints), and there are theories that fall in between. The spectrum is defined by number of constraints accepted.

Flaws of Farrelly's Concept of Fact-Sensitivity

There are four flaws of fact-sensitivity that demand it to be reconceptualized. The first flaw is that the degree of fact-sensitivity is only dependent on the number of constraints accepted by theories. To only depend on this kind of metric, limits our accounting for the effects of constraints that are independent of the number of constraints accepted. For example, some constraints may be more constraining than others; of course, the degree of fact-sensitivity should be dependent on this kind of effect. Say that one theory accepted starvation as a constraint, and the other theory accepted legacy scholarships as a constraint, and neither theory accepted more than those constraints.[12] According to Farrelly, the theories would be equally fact-sensitive because they accept the same number of constraints. However, the constraints impede the achievement of justice to different degrees: starvation, and the death it entails, is a much greater impediment to achieving justice than legacy scholarships. The metric used for fact-sensitivity does not account for the varied natures of constraints.

The second flaw is that fact-sensitivity requires theories to either fully accept or fully reject a constraint. This requirement assumes that if a constraint is accepted, then all the implications of the constraint are incorporated into the theory. Needless to say, the assumption does not hold true in reality. No matter what, we will be ignorant of some implication, and it is possible that we would decide not to accept particular implications—for good reason or not. According to Farrelly, this scrutiny would not be allowed when determining fact-sensitivity, but fact-sensitivity must allow for variance in the level to which a constraint is accepted.

The third flaw is that fact-sensitivity makes it so that if one accepts a constraint, then it is legitimate. This entailment is hasty and has the consequence of poor implications. The entailment is hasty because to be legitimate a principle, arrangement, or fact must be justified. To suggest that the work of justification is complete simply by accounting for a fact within a theory is reductive

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[12] Legacy scholarships, as opposed to merit- or need-based scholarships, are granted to individuals whose parents, or in some cases, whose grandparents, have attended an institution in the past. Legacy scholarships privilege continuing-generation students over first-generation students, and therefore, they should be considered a constraint.

and misses the mark. The political philosopher may accept starvation in their theory, but it is hard to believe that acceptance entails the justification of starvation.

The fourth flaw is that Farrelly assumes that if one accepts a fact then one is necessarily constrained by that fact. It is wrong to assume that facts function in this way. A fact only constrains a theory if there is no way to counteract the fact with other ideas within the theory; the constraint does not arise from the quality of something being a fact, but rather from our inability as agents to find solutions to the problems that are caused by a fact or a set of facts. In other words, the theory itself is deficient. Ironically, the prime strategy to fix such a theory is to account for more facts in the theory to make the theory workable. Take the case of the political philosopher who accepts starvation. Another fact that could counteract the constraint of starvation is that distribution systems are ineffective, and if we recognize that fact, we find that to fix starvation, in part, our theory should improve our food distribution system. It is possible for facts to liberate theories as well as constrain them. However, Farrelly does not allow for the duplicitous nature of facts in his conception of fact-sensitivity. If facts may only constrain, then of course an extremely fact-sensitive theory would maintain the status quo. But facts work differently.

An Alternative Fact-Sensitivity

Farrelly's concept of fact-sensitivity is misguided, and as a result, it is useless for assessing the applicability and efficacy of theories. In this section, I will present an alternative concept of fact-sensitivity that is built out of the weaknesses of Farrelly's fact-sensitivity. This alternative fact-sensitivity will allow for extremely fact-sensitive theories to be of extreme value in virtue of their accounting for many facts. I will also explain why such non-ideal theory deserve preference over ideal theory and less non-ideal theory. If the alternative fact-sensitivity were in the debate about ideal and non-ideal theory, extremely non-ideal theory would be a better kind of a theory to adopt.

I propose that fact-sensitivity should be a function of the number of facts that a theory accounts for as well as the impact each fact has on determining the workability of theories. In other words, the more facts that a theory accounts for, the more fact-sensitive a theory is, and the more a fact determines the applicability and efficacy of a theory, the more fact-sensitive it is. Conceiving of fact-sensitivity in this way focuses attention on the kinds of facts accepted in a theory rather than only on the number of facts accepted. It is important that fact-sensitivity does not require complete acceptance or rejection of a fact, entailment of legitimacy based on acceptance of a fact, or accepted facts only being thought of as constraints.

As defined here, an extremely fact-sensitive theory may be best equipped to transition us to a more just society rather than a moderately fact-sensitive theory. Although some facts are indeed constraints, such as starvation, there are facts that if concurrently accepted would subvert any significant constraint. In the situation where we do not have a fact to liberate a theory from the constraint of another fact, one's project should be to find the fact that would do the liberatory work. To eventually find that fact and include it in a theory would make the theory more fact-sensitive, applicable, and efficacious. Therefore, extreme fact-sensitivity should be pursued rather than avoided. I believe that extremely non-ideal theories are more valuable than their more ideal counterparts because they incorporate the reality of our world into theory so that we may practicably transition to a more just society.

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The Human Right to Comprehensive Sexual Education

Alexandria Yakes

In this paper, I will argue that access to comprehensive sexual education programs is a human right and must be protected as such. I will formulate my argument through offering a brief positive argument for my claim before exploring four objections. The first objection argues that economics, not human rights theory, is more effective in explaining why comprehensive sexual education programs are important. I argue that there are several *standard threats*[1] facing individuals around the world that can best be remedied by implementation of sex ed programs. These threats negatively impact the urgent human interests of bodily autonomy and freedom of movement; if access to comprehensive sexual education programs is not protected as a human right, then many countries will not be compelled to actualize them. Thus, these urgent human interests will remain threatened. Second, I argue against the claim that abstinence-only education provides better protection of these urgent human interests. Rather, I argue that programs which omit teaching consent actively prevent their students from realizing their human right to bodily autonomy. Third, I will examine comprehensive sexual education's role within the greater fight of combating violence against women and girls and reject claims that sex ed programs fail to help victims of sexual violence. Finally, I will briefly discuss the complicated relationship between the human right to comprehensive sexual education and other human rights, particularly the right to freedom of religion and the right to belong to a nation.

First, it is important to define what is and should be included in comprehensive sexual education programs. I want to stress that this is not an exhaustive list, but I believe it will be a helpful starting point in discussing why we have a moral duty to protect access to comprehensive programs. These programs, first and foremost, should be inclusive. It is vital that conversations regarding gender, sexuality, and area-specific threats are included in sexual education courses. By not doing so, the programs would be ignoring many significant segments of the population and would be much less effective than they should be. Ignoring the specific reproductive challenges facing transgender and intersex individuals, for example, prevents them from understanding how and when to access healthcare and further stigmatizes them in the eyes of their gender-conforming peers. Furthermore, these programs may (and should) look different based on where they are being taught. For instance, I was raised in Douglas County, Omaha, Nebraska, a county known for having one of the highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea in the United States. A comprehensive program in Omaha would be ineffective if it did not discuss these statistics and offer information about local clinics where treatment is offered. Additionally, comprehensive sexual education programs should cover a wide range of topics. At the very least, they should teach consent, how to develop healthy relationships (and understand when one is unhealthy), how to prevent pregnancy and STIs, abortion, health care and birth control options (including abstinence), human anatomy, gender, and sexuality. Again, this list is not exhaustive and should not be taken as such. Finally, a comprehensive sexual education program should be implemented during the first year of schooling and continue until college. For example, consent can easily be taught to young children through educating them to ask before hugging their friends. It is also important for fifth-graders and middle school students to understand the changes their bodies are enduring and how

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[1] Beitz, Charles R. *The Idea of Human Rights*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2011.

to control their emotions in a healthy manner. The programs should incorporate age-appropriate lessons, saving conversations about sex and birth control until middle and high school. We can look to The Netherlands to see how effective early sexual education is in lowering teen pregnancy and increasing birth control use. Dutch sexual education courses begin at age 4 and continue through high school; in turn, 9 out of 10 Dutch teens use birth control during their first sexual encounter.[2] In addition, The Netherlands has one of the lowest teen pregnancy rates in the world.[3] Similar results have been recorded in other countries with comprehensive sexual education, particularly those where the programs begin at a young age. As I will argue later, only a program structure similar to what I have outlined is capable of protecting against the standard threats facing our human rights to bodily autonomy and freedom of movement.

Sexual education is fundamental to implementing the human rights to bodily autonomy and freedom of movement, outlined by the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, respectively. By bodily autonomy, I mean the ability to make decisions regarding who or what uses one's body for what purpose and for how long. By freedom of movement, I mean the right to travel, move, or work as an independent agent, either between countries or within one's own country. Without a comprehensive understanding of how our bodies function, how we can control and use them, and the risks associated with being sexually active, it is impossible to exercise our ability to act as an independent agent. Protecting access to comprehensive sexual education is an important step in combating sexual disease and unintended pregnancy around the world. Many countries have already realized the positive impact of these programs and have taken steps to ensure that all children are exposed to them. However, without recognizing that access to these programs is a human right, many countries will not have an incentive to value them. Thus, if action is not taken to protect comprehensive programs, the damaging and widespread threats related to human sexuality will persist. I will elaborate on these claims by analyzing four common objections to protecting access to comprehensive sexual education as a human right.

The Economic Argument for Comprehensive Sexual Education

The first and most common objection to the claim that there is a human right to access to comprehensive sexual education is not an objection at all; rather, it is an alternative (and, I will argue, extremely problematic) way of analyzing the effectiveness of sex education. Much of the conversation surrounding this issue is dominated by economists arguing for the introduction of comprehensive programs in terms of their efficiency. Their arguments focus on how much money can be saved by teaching children about safe sex and prevention of unintended pregnancies and STIs. According to a study on the cost-effectiveness of one such program, every dollar invested in

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[2] "Most Important Conclusions Sex under the Age of 25," Rutgers.nl (2012), https://www.rutgers.nl/sites/rutgersnl/files/PDFOnderzoek/Factsheet_Seksonderje25ste_ENG.pdf.
[3] "Adolescent Fertility Rate (births per 1,000 Women Ages 15-19)," The World Bank, accessed May 5, 2017, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT.

the program would save $2.65 in social and medical costs.[4] Other programs have the potential to save up to $6 for each dollar invested, as reported by the Brookings Institution (Thomas 2012).[5] While most of these studies were carried out in singular communities, economists believe that the cost benefits of comprehensive sexual education programs would be even greater for a nationwide campaign.

I am not denying the economic benefits of comprehensive sexual education programs. These studies are an important tool for convincing state and federal lawmakers to consider eliminating funding for abstinence-only programs. However, the economics argument does not give us a complete understanding of why these programs are important. Additionally, it does not demand a commitment to what sexual education programs should look like and how seriously states should be punished for not implementing them. Rather, I argue that they ignore and misunderstand how access to comprehensive sexual education programs is an urgent human interest in need of protection. Focusing only on economics distracts from the moral weight of comprehensive sex education's ability to protect individuals from related standard threats.

What are standard threats? Charles Beitz argues for a model of human rights centered around the state responsibility of the protection of individual interests from a particular type of threat, one he calls "standard." According to Beitz, a standard threat is one which is common across societies, can be prevented, and endangers the most urgent human interests. If we accept Beitz's theory of human rights, then what are the standard threats associated with the lack of comprehensive sexual education? In many cases, misunderstanding sexuality and consent can have a dramatic impact on the lives of individuals around the world. In 2012, 40 percent of all pregnancies across the globe - roughly 85 million - were unintended (Sedgh 2014).[6] According to the Brookings Institution, "...unintended pregnancy and childbearing depress levels of educational attainment and labor force participation among mothers and lead to higher crime rates and poorer academic, economic, and health outcomes among children" (Thomas 2012).[7] While this study analyzed unintended pregnancies in the United States alone, it is not difficult to image how these issues are compounded in societies without access to adequate health care and welfare support systems. While worldwide pregnancy rates have dropped over the last two decades, unintended pregnancy remains proportionally higher than intended pregnancy in much of the world. In South America and Southern Africa, for example, more than six in every ten pregnancies are unintended (Kott 2016)[8]. Many studies, similar to those I mentioned previously, have concluded that unintended pregnancies present a serious economic, educational, and/or migratory obstacle for women and children in both developed and developing nations. More specifically, these standard

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[4] Wang LY, Davis M, Robin L, Collins J, Coyle K, Baumler E. "Economic Evaluation of Safer Choices: A School-Based Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and Pregnancy Prevention Program," *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2000, doi: 10.1001/archpedi.154.10.1017.

[5] Thomas, Adam. "Policy Solutions for Preventing Unplanned Pregnancy." Brookings, last modified March 1, 2012. https://www.brookings.edu/research/policy-solutions-for-preventing-unplanned-pregnancy/

[6] Sedgh, Gilda, Susheela Singh, and Rubina Hussain, "Intended and Unintended Pregnancies Worldwide in 2012 and Recent Trends," *Studies in Family Planning* 45, no. 3 (2014): https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2014.00393.x.

[7] Thomas, Adam. "Policy Solutions for Preventing Unplanned Pregnancy." Brookings, last modified March 1, 2012. https://www.brookings.edu/research/policy-solutions-for-preventing-unplanned-pregnancy/

[8] Kott, A. "Rates of Unintended Pregnancy Remain High In Developing Regions." Guttmacher Institute, March 2011, accessed April 25, 2017, https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/ipsrh/2011/03/rates-unintended-pregnancy-remain-high-developing-regions.

threats are a barrier to implementing the basic human rights of bodily autonomy and freedom of movement. The same can be said regarding related issues such as STI transmission; according to the CDC, 15-24 year olds in the United States account for 50% of all new STI diagnosis, but only represent 25% of the sexually active population ("Adolescents and Young Adults" 2017).[9] STIs can interfere with future sexual activity and/or childbearing, thus negatively impacting one's ability to act autonomously. Each of these problems fits the Beitzian definition of a standard threat; they affect individuals across societies and could be significantly reduced by comprehensive sexual education programs.

Furthermore, the standard threats related to lack of comprehensive sexual education threaten many urgent human interests, particularly the human rights to bodily autonomy and freedom of movement. Beitz defines an urgent human interest to be one which is recognized as important in a "normal" or average life. Recall that Beitz's definition of a standard threat states the threat must endanger this particular type of interest. Naturally, humans have an interest in controlling their bodies and in being able to move as they please. These interests are clearly demonstrated by our historical opposition to being enslaved and/or forced to use our bodies in ways to which we are opposed. It was not by accident that bodily autonomy and movement have been protected by human rights doctrine; throughout human history, these two rights have been deemed as two of the most urgent human interests. I argue that lack access to comprehensive sexual education programs is a violation of these two human rights. Comprehensive programs teach young people about their options regarding how they and others can and should use their bodies. Understanding that one has the right to deny any intimate or sexual situation is fundamental to possessing full bodily autonomy. Similarly, having access to knowledge regarding how to seek medical care and what choices are available regarding pregnancy and STIs is crucial for one to be able to act as an independent agent. Individuals without this information may also be limited in their ability to move freely; for example, a woman who must stay at home to raise children whom she had no intention of having may be prevented from pursuing certain professional or academic experiences which would require her to operate outside the home. A conversation regarding the promotion of bodily autonomy and freedom of movement would be incomplete without an emphasis on the importance of comprehensive sexual education; I argue that all three concepts are undeniably linked to one another.

While it is an incredibly important discussion to engage with, the economic argument for sexual education simply cannot account for how urgent human interests are threatened when these programs are not in place. The economist's argument rests upon the assumption that comprehensive sexual education programs will always remain more efficient than abstinence-only education. The implication of this argument must be that if programs focused on abstinence or religious education, for example, are in fact more economical in the long run, then part of our rights to autonomy and movement must be sacrificed in the name of saving money. However unlikely it is for this situation to become reality, the economist's argument nonetheless relies on a potentially-catastrophic principle and cannot, on its own, explain why a comprehensive program should remain funded even when it is not the most efficient option.

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[9] "Adolescents and Young Adults." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last modified December 8, 2017, https://www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/adolescents-youngadults.htm.

Abstinence-only Education and Human Rights

Another prevalent objection to the argument for comprehensive sexual education focuses on abstinence-only programs as an alternative way of reducing unintended pregnancy and STI transmission. The National Abstinence Education Association (NAEA) claims that abstinence programs have been proven to reduce sexual activity amongst teens who have never engaged in sexual activities as well as those who have been sexually active previously (NAEA 2010).[10] They also argue that those who are exposed to abstinence-only education are no less likely to use condoms and other forms of birth control compared to those taught under comprehensive programs (Trenholm, et al. 2007).[11] The NAEA argues that abstinence-only education emphasizes the negative emotional and physical side-effects which can accompany having sex at a young age and believes that these programs are helping to prevent unnecessary pain and stress for young adults. Other birth control methods may sometimes be introduced and explained within these programs; however, strict emphasis is given regarding how abstinence is not only the best method of prevention but, in some cases, the only one which is morally permissible.

Not much work has been done on the relationship between abstinence-only education and human rights. However, a proponent of these programs *could* argue that by educating individuals on the risks involved with becoming sexually active and emphasizing potential benefits of not doing so, abstinence education promotes the exercise of one's freedom of movement. One *could* claim that an education focused on preventing individuals from conceiving a child, contracting an STI, and enduring emotional and physical damage inherently encourages young people to avoid any risk of limiting the options available to them in the future.

It is not the goal of this paper to disprove studies which argue for abstinence-based education, nor will I focus on commonly discussed issues with these programs (such as their implicit heteronormativity and promotion of religious ideals). Rather, I want to analyze how abstinence-based programs are a violation of human rights, particularly with respect to the human right to bodily autonomy.

One of the biggest issues with abstinence-based education programs is their omission of discussions surrounding consent and healthy relationships. Comprehending consent is an essential part of being able to make educated decisions about one's body, yet abstinence-based education omits issues of consent almost entirely. To use the United States as an example, section 510(b) of Title V of the Social Security Act defines abstinence-only education in part as a program which "teaches young people how to reject sexual advances and how alcohol and drug use increase vulnerability to sexual advances." It is not clear what exactly is meant by this vague statement. It seems to claim that these programs teach young people to "say no" to all sexual advances and avoid substances which could inhibit their ability to do so, thus potentially alluding to the concept of consent. However, consent is much more complicated than simply "saying no." Comprehensive sexual education programs focus on how and when to express discomfort with sexual acts and how individuals have the right to retract consent with long-term partners, including within marriage.

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[10] Fratturo, Amy, "Frequently Asked Questions - Correcting Misinformation in the Sex Ed Debate." PDHC, last modified August 25, 2015, http://www.supportpdhc.org/2015/08/common-sense-culture-update-4/.

[11] Trenholm, Christopher, Barbara Devaney, Ken Fortson, Lisa Quay, Justin Wheeler, and Melissa Clark, "Impacts of Four Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Education Programs," Mathematica Policy Research, April 2007, https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/~/media/publications/PDFs/impactabstinence.pdf

Abstinence-based programs make no mention of denying sex within marriage, let alone what to do if one is sexually active outside of marriage. Similarly, abstinence-only education does not teach students to ask for consent and/or respect the decisions made by their partners. These programs entirely miss the role that teaching consent has in preventing future sexual abusers. Explaining to young children that their peers are not their property and that they must respect one another's bodies is essential to establishing patterns of respect and communication among young adults. Additionally, not teaching consent on the basis of waiting until marriage to engage in sexual intercourse implies that married couples can engage in sexual acts without the consent of their partners simply because they are married. By not providing comprehensive information on consent, regardless of marital status, abstinence-based programs are preventing young people from fully realizing their human right to bodily autonomy. Any program or government entity which seeks to limit one's ability to exercise a human right is a human rights violator by definition. Thus, abstinence-only education must be abandoned in its entirety if human rights are to be fully realized and respected around the world.

Violence against Women

One may be inclined to argue that the curriculum of comprehensive sex education programs is not sufficient enough to reduce and eliminate violence against women around the world. Many women and girls who unintentionally become pregnant are victims of abuse perpetrated by older men, their husbands, and strangers. One could argue that comprehensive sex education programs are not an appropriate solution for combating culturally-approved violence against women, such as child marriage. Furthermore, the World Health Organization reports that "women who are coerced into sex or who face abuse from partners are less likely to be in a position to use contraception, and are therefore more exposed to unintended pregnancy than others" ("Not every pregnancy" 2005). [12] According to this objection, the current model of comprehensive sexual education programs is not enough to combat the very serious (and standard) threat of violence which many women and girls must combat every day.

I agree wholeheartedly with the claim that these programs are not defeating rape culture. However, the argument would be more relevant if comprehensive sexual education programs described themselves as equipped to resolve violence against women and sought to do so. This is simply not the case. As previously discussed, comprehensive programs are designed to protect and reinforce our human rights to autonomy and freedom of movement. A secondary goal of these programs, I would argue, is to teach young children that sexual violence is not permissible. These lessons are, at the very least, implicit in discussions about consent, bystander intervention, birth control negotiation, and so on. I want to stress that these lessons can by no means completely eradicate sexual violence against women. I believe that they are an important part of a broader strategy for combating rape culture both globally and within individual societies. Particularly in countries where violence against women is (relatively) discouraged, rather than promoted, comprehensive sexual education programs have the potential to discourage future perpetrators from a young age. This objection is accurate in its claim that comprehensive programs cannot

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[12] "Not Every Pregnancy Is Welcome," World Health Organization, accessed April 26, 2017, http://www.who.int/whr/2005/chapter3/en/index2.html.

defeat rape culture; however, this does not diminish the importance of their ability to promote and protect our human rights.

Religion, Culture, and Human Rights

One of the greatest struggles facing human rights in general is objections based on religious and cultural grounds. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly spells out freedoms of religion and nationality/culture. How, then, do we approach issues of conflict between these rights and others? Examples of these conflicts are numerous. It is not within the scope of this essay to attempt to answer this complicated and delicate question. Rather, I would like to highlight how the human right to comprehensive sexual education could be particularly controversial. If comprehensive programs were adopted, conservative and/or religious parents would likely overwhelmingly call for the ability to take their child out of these programs on the basis of religious and cultural practices. The UDHR also provides for freedom of privacy within the home. This begs the question: to what extent should a parent's freedom of religion and culture restrict their child's human rights to bodily autonomy and movement? This is an issue that absolutely must be grappled with before comprehensive programs can be implemented as a human right. The goal of this essay was to establish the human right to comprehensive sexual education programs; this religious and/or cultural objection only occurs if one accepts my argument. At the end of the day, human rights are always going to conflict with one another. Further work must be done on how to reconcile differences between human rights, specifically when religious and cultural objections are involved.

Conclusion

Why is it essential that access to comprehensive sexual education programs is seen as a human right? As I previously discussed, these programs are an important protection against the standard threats of unintended pregnancy, STIs, and sexual violence that individuals around the world face every day. These threats are direct hindrances on the urgent human interests of bodily autonomy and freedom of movement and can be prevented by state actors. Thus, these programs perfectly fit Charles Beitz's definition of a human right, and we are morally and legally obligated to begin to protect them as such. While it is true that comprehensive programs are an important *tool* for protecting other human rights, this does not negate the importance of treating *access to* them as a human right as well. Human rights status almost guarantees that access to these programs should and will be protected; without this status, many countries (especially those where abstinence-only and religious education prevail) would be under no obligation to respect comprehensive sex education. It would be incredibly damaging and ineffective to label comprehensive programs as merely a "tool". Consider the role that the human right to clean water has in protecting and furthering our human right to basic necessities. If the right to clean water was seen only as an "important tool", not a human right, it would be much more difficult to implement our human right to basic necessities because states would lack incentive to provide clean water. The same relationship holds for comprehensive sexual education and our human rights to autonomy and movement. We cannot fully exercise these interests without also protecting access to comprehensive sexual education as a human right.

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"But I do not know that there would be anything further to say on this topic": Denoting Concepts from the *Principles* to "On Denoting"

Daniel Williams

Bertrand Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* was published in 1903. It presented a departure from the idealist philosophy of mathematics current in Cambridge at the time and extended in his previous *An Essay Concerning the Foundations of Geometry* (1897). Russell's newfound realism led him to seek objective certainty in mathematical truth. The *Principles*[1] is Russell's first attempt to systematically demonstrate the feasibility of the thesis that mathematics is, in some sense, logic. In the *PoM* Russell wrote that the theorems of mathematics could be deduced from logical principles alone.[2] He also made it clear that this was of great significance to philosophy. The reduction of mathematics to logic was to yield much philosophical interest:

> Among those capable of an exact solution we shall find many of the problems which, in the past, have been involved in all the traditional uncertainty of philosophical strife. The nature of number, of infinity, of space, time and motion, and of mathematical inference itself, are all questions to which, in the present work, an answer professing itself demonstrable with mathematical certainty will be given— an answer which, however, consists in reducing the above problems to problems in pure logic.[3]

Russell clearly thought of logicism as not only of significance to mathematics, but to philosophy at large.

The *Principles* is only an informal sketch of the chains of deduction that would be required to prove logicism. The book is written in prose directed at philosophers as well as mathematicians. Russell's logicist project was to culminate in the three volume work *Principia Mathematica* (1910-13), co-authored with fellow Cambridge mathematician Alfred North Whitehead. *Principia* attempted the rigorous deduction of mathematics using the methods of logic and logical symbolism. In doing so, the pair had to invent or improve upon a number of techniques, not least was the formulation of what is now called "quantification theory": the standard treatment of generalized statements in symbolic logic. In the *PoM*, Russell had not adopted quantification theory as we know it, which expresses generality with a variable, tied to a quantifier, whose significance is interpreted over a domain of objects. The *PoM* presents a different story. While Russell does recognize the importance of the variable, instead of the modern quantifier, he has instead "denoting concepts". Since Russell's papers have been made available, scholars have poured over manuscripts from the 1903-05 era trying to discover how and why it was Russell came to reject denoting concepts. This *Principles-era* theory is now understood to be the appropriate target of the famous 1905 "On Denoting" ("against meaning") paper (not Meinong or Frege). My paper will trace the strand of Russell's work from the *Principles* (1903) to "On Denoting" (1905) dealing with Russell's theory of "denoting concepts". In it, we will touch on the theory of denoting

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[1] Hereafter sometimes referred to as *PoM*.
[2] Russell. *Principles of Mathematics*, 4.
[3] *Ibid*., 3-4.

concepts in the *Principles*, Russell's experimentation with function-based theories of meaning and denotation, and finally an argument for rejecting denoting concepts.

In the *Principles*, Russell developed a sophisticated theory of denoting concepts which attempted to explain general statements by positing a relation of denoting. The denoting relation was to explain why, in sentences expressing generality, the propositions named by those sentences' nominalizations were not about the entities occurring in the "term" position, but were instead about entities "connected in a certain peculiar way with the concept" (*PoM*, 53). To understand the problem, we need to understand the theory of logic that Russell is working with at the time. Briefly put, Russell thinks that all propositions must have, as a minimal structure, an entity occurring as "term" and an entity occurring as "concept". The entity occurring as term will be what the proposition is about. But consider the differences between the two propositions, 'Fiona is gray' and 'Some cat is gray'. In the first proposition, the proposition is about Fiona. In the second proposition, however, it is strange to say that it is about some cat. What is "some cat"? Is it about all the cats, ambiguously? Are we to take the collection of cats to be an object? What kind of object is that? An ambiguous object? This is the line of thought that Russell pursues, coming up with a set of distinctions between the objects denoted by "all", "any", "every", "some" and "a". But at the end of the Chapter V of the *Principles* Russell wrote, "In a full discussion, it would be necessary also to discuss the denoting concepts [themselves]: the actual meanings of these concepts, as opposed to the nature of the objects they denote, have not been discussed above. But I do not know that there would be anything further to say on this topic."[4] In fact, pursuing this topic further is what would occupy him for the next two years. The conclusion that such a theory of meaning was untenable is intimately connected to his breakthrough in "On Denoting".

Russell read Frege's work closely only after the *Principles* was written. While it was still in press, Russell was able to make a close study of Frege, making some last-minute changes to the text, as well as adding an appendix discussing Frege's philosophy. Russell's encounter with Frege was to have a marked influence on Russell in the period between *Principles* and "On Denoting", which shows up in Russell's manuscripts, where he experiments with function-oriented theories of meaning and denotation, similar to what Frege had developed.[5]

One of the key mathematical notions to capture in any reduction of mathematics to logic is the notion of a "function". In the *Principles*, building on his earlier work on the theory of relations, Russell had taken mathematical functions to be derivative of propositional functions, which in turn were derivative of relational statements.[6] This is one of the fundamental differences between Russell's logic and Frege's logic. Frege took the notion of mathematical functionality (the notion of a function "carrying" an argument to a value) as fundamental, modeling natural language predication on this basis. On this view, propositions take arguments to the values "true" or "false", while meaning is accorded to the "sense" of the constituents of the proposition. Russell felt this was an incorrect analysis, for a number of reasons which he articulated both in his correspondence to Frege, and in Appendix A of the *Principles*.

First, Russell thought that the denotation of statements was not "the true" and "the false", with "meaning" being accorded to "sense". Russell's commitment to realism demanded that we

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[4] *Ibid.*, 65.
[5] Klement. "Russel's Anticipation of the Lambda Calculus," 23.
[6] *Ibid.*, 21 (cf. *PoM*, 508).

have knowledge of the world, and not just our abstract ideas or mere meanings of it. This meant that he had a peculiar view of propositions, wherein the constituents of a proposition are the entities themselves, not their meaning or sense. Second, Russell could not accept Frege's value-range thesis; although he admired the technical aspects of the thesis, he simply didn't know what they were supposed to be (besides that, they also lead to a contradiction). Yet despite these disagreements, Russell began experimenting with the idea of taking functions as proxies for classes and defining relations in terms of functions.[7] Russell developed notations in which to speak about functions themselves, instead of their values, which bears a resemblance to the Lambda calculus.[8] Many of the early manuscripts between 1903-05 were concerned with working out the implications of the *Principles* view of meaning and denotation, which were increasingly yielding intractable difficulties.[9] Russell's experimentation with functions can be read as part of this project of trying to formulate a logic in which meanings and denotations are kept separate and distinct.

As we know, Russell ended up abandoning the function-oriented view. The reasons remain somewhat obscure, but Russell had been concerned for some time with the analysis of complexes. He wanted to know what analysis consisted in, and how it was that it was capable of yielding knowledge. This in turn led Russell to consider how the constituents of complexes (like propositions) are arranged. When Russell was developing his function-oriented theories, he was also concerned with understanding the nature of functions, how it was they occurred in complex entities like propositions. In the *Principles*' analysis, functions are reduced to complexes containing variables (e.g. "x is a cat" or "x + 2").[10] But after reading Frege, he began to experiment with the idea that functions could be taken as basic, with complexes arising from the application of function to argument, while the values of a function "are complexes formed of themselves together with a term."[11] However, "he eventually returned to the conclusion that the reverse was true: at least [as] many functions could be gotten at by analysis of complexes, and that functions, even propositional functions, are not constituents of their values."[12] The abandonment of the function-oriented view, in favor of one that takes properties and relations as basic, is what we see in "On Denoting".

The significance of "On Denoting" will depend on who you ask. I will focus on its significance from the perspective of Russell's previous theory of denoting concepts. "On Denoting" is Russell's first presentation of the theory of descriptions. It is also Russell's first presentation of the quantificational view of general statements, in which "existence" is no longer a predicate, while the denoting concepts of the *Principles* are abandoned, replaced by contextually defined denoting phrases.

In the *Principles*, Russell's view is that anything capable of being a logical subject is an entity and has "being", as distinguished in some sense from "existing". To "exist" is to be actual, while something can in some sense "be" without "existing" (e.g. fictional objects).[13] But by the time of "On Denoting", Russell had rejected this distinction. He now had a theory by which to analyze statements about entities without any assumption at all as to their existence or non-

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[7] *Ibid.*, 24-25.
[8] *Ibid.*, 26.
[9] Klement. "Disambiguating with the Grain,'" 114.
[10] Klement. "Russel's Anticipation of the Lambda Calculus," 27.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] *Ibid.*, 30
[13] *Principles of Mathematics*, 71.

existence. This would be an essential ingredient in reconstructing mathematics without the naïve assumption of the existence of classes, which led to Russell's paradox. Russell's new theory was to analyze definite descriptions out of sentences through a new theory of general statements. This new theory effectively "broke up" the definite description so that the only thing left were properties and relations ascribed to some variable tied to a quantifier; whether or not anything satisfied the variable, in other words, whether or not anything had, or could have, the properties and relations, was another matter.

Why did Russell abandon denoting concepts? We will probably never know exactly why. But there are sound reasons for rejecting denoting concepts, as Landini has shown, that take into account material from both Russell's manuscripts and fundamental doctrines of the *Principles*. The bottom line is that Russell cannot find a principled way to ground the distinction his denoting concepts require between occurring as term and occurring as meaning.

In the *Principles*, propositions are analyzed into terms and concepts. A term in a proposition is what the proposition is about. Concepts are what are predicated of the term. Unlike Fregean concepts, all concepts are capable of occurring as terms as the same object, on pain of contradiction. But, the reverse is not the case (not every term can be predicated, e.g. "Socrates" cannot be predicated of "tallness"). But there is a special case of concepts called "denoting concepts", which are distinguished by the fact that when they occur in the subject position of sentences, the propositions those sentences express are not about the denoting concepts. Thus, when a denoting concept occurs in the subject position of a sentence, it occurs as concept. Though occurring in the subject position of the sentence, in the proposition it occurs as concept (the distinction being one of linguistic and ontological form, respectively). But, if denoting concepts are to be anything at all, they must be capable of entity occurrences in a complex. For, according to the fundamental doctrine of the *Principles*, everything that has any being whatsoever has to be capable of occupying the entity position in a proposition. It might be thought that we could dodge the problem by introducing denoting concepts which denote whatever denoting concepts we like. But consider the characterization of (what Landini calls "the law of denoting"): "All denoting concepts are derived from class-concepts; and *a* is a class-concept when '*x* is an *a*' is a propositional function. The denoting concepts associated with *a* will not denote anything when and only when '*x* is an *a*' is false for all values of *x*".[14] So, in order for a denoting concept to be capable of denoting another denoting concept, there must be class of true propositions of the form '*x* is a denoting concept'. Any proposition that results from the determination of the variable in this proposition by a denoting concept will be one in which the denoting concept has an entity occurrence. Thus, denoting concepts that denote denoting concepts do not get us anywhere because the denoting relationship ultimately is grounded in entity occurrences in propositions. Furthermore, we cannot simply add quotation marks to whatever denoting phrase we desire and say we have thereby "named" the meaning of the denoting concept. That will be to have travelled the illicit "backward road" from denotation to meaning, which is obviously fallacious, for there is no telling, unless you already have presupposed the meaning, whether the meaning of the denoting phrase in hand is the one intended and not some other meaning.

Russell requires a theory of propositional form that addresses entity occurrences of denoting concepts. But when Russell tries to formulate a theory in which denoting concepts have entity occurrences, he finds he cannot find a way to maintain the distinction between entity

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[14] Landini. "'On Denoting' Against Denoting," 74.

occurrence and meaning occurrence. In "On Fundamentals", Russell attempts to introduce a rule, wherein denoting concepts can occur as entities or as meanings. When a denoting complex occurs as an entity, it occurs as essentially a unity, while when it occurs as meaning, it is essentially complex, and whatever constituents it has are included in the complex of which it is a constituent.[15] But this ends up blocking even trivial generalizations necessary for the derivation of mathematics.

The manuscript of "On Fundamentals" presents the crucial transition from the bramble of theories of meaning and denotation concerning denoting concepts to the pristine theory of descriptions. At the end of the paper Russell writes, "A complex *phrase* which does not express a proposition does not by itself express anything at all; but it may be such that, if it replaces the name of an entity in a proposition, the result is always the expression of a proposition. In such a case, the phrase is said to be a *denoting* phrase."[16] That is to say, denoting concepts are banished, as are all the subtle distinctions made in Chapter V of *Principles* concerning the objects denoted by "all", "every", "some", "any", and "a". By themselves they do not express anything at all. Unfortunately, a close analysis of "On Fundamentals" is outside the scope of this paper. But, Russell does come out with it in "On Denoting", saying "the whole distinction of meaning and denotation has been wrongly conceived."[17] As its replacement, we have what has become the classical view of quantification. The theory of descriptions is presented, as well, which gives Russell the means of supplying his "theory of incomplete symbols" and a way of formulating "contextual definitions" which was to supply so much of the philosophical logic in *Principia*. Russell was indeed mistaken when he thought that there would be nothing to be gained in closely examining denoting concepts.

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[15] *Ibid.*, 61.
[16] Russell. "On Fundamentals," 408.
[17] Russell. "On Denoting," 113.

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Knowledge, Weakness, and the Purity of the Soul

Chance Lacina

The concept of akrasia has been with us for a very long time. The idea behind it is simple: people often know what they think they ought to do, or what is best for them, but they nonetheless do otherwise. In Greek, the word akrasia literally means "without power," or "without rule," but today it is often interpreted simply as the "weakness of will," or a lack of willpower. These distinctions are all subtle and interesting, but for the purposes of this paper I will ignore them. In this paper, I will attempt to persuade you that however we construe akrasia, it is nothing more than an illusion. I will also attempt to persuade you that, if akrasia is merely an illusion, many of our commonsense notions about shame and blame will fail to obtain. I call this the purity of the soul thesis. Perhaps the earliest mention we have of akrasia is in Plato's nearly two and a half millennia old *Protagoras*,[1] wherein Socrates, with the help of Protagoras, rejects the akratic view in favor of what is called the Power of Knowledge argument. In it, Socrates makes the case that ignorance alone, as opposed to weakness or temptation, is what separates us from right action. Knowledge alone is what can save us. Before I turn to the purity of the soul thesis, I am going to attempt to resurrect Socrates' argument. First, I will lay out his premises for the power of knowledge, explain them, and discuss arguments for adding three premises that are implicit in the original argument. Then I will take on the notion of "clear-eyed akrasia," wherein critics insist, despite Socrates' reasoning, that they can have all-things-considered knowledge of the right course of action and still act against their better judgment. Once I have defended Socrates' takedown of akrasia, I will build my own. I will build mine while saving room for those of us who are not hedonists, something Plato's Socrates did not address in the *Protagoras*. Finally, with Socrates' power of knowledge argument in hand, along with my own, I will reveal the purity of the soul thesis.

The Socratic Power of Knowledge

Before I begin, I want to say a little about why I am resurrecting Socrates' argument rather than simply making my own. I am doing this because I think the argument is one of the most fascinating and powerful arguments in the history of philosophy, and because I believe a sufficient refutation of akrasia should include Socrates. I am also resurrecting his argument because I think my argument for the purity of the soul is made stronger by his, as I hope will become clear by the end of the paper.

Socrates begins his argument by laying out what most people think about the power of knowledge in driving our actions:

The opinion of the majority about knowledge is that it is not anything strong, which controls and rules; they don't look at it that way at all, but they think that often a man who possesses knowledge is ruled not by it but by something else, in one case passion, in another pleasure, in

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[1] C.C.W. Taylor (1976). *Protagoras*: *Plato Clarendon Series*. Oxford University Press (Oxford).

another pain, sometimes lust, very often fear; they just look at knowledge as a slave who gets dragged about by all the rest. (325b5-c2)

From here, Socrates begins to examine the akratic view through his characteristic elenchus, using Protagoras as his stand in for "the many," aka the masses, or most people. In any Socratic elenchus, Socrates searches for premises that his interlocutors hold so that he can drive them into a contradiction. This can be an enormously powerful technique, but it depends on the beliefs of the interlocutors. In this case, it depends on the view of the many, and the many, according to Socrates and Protagoras, seem to be hedonists. For clarity and brevity, I provide a simplified gloss of the full arguments in syllogistic form below. In doing so, I hope to preserve the essential elements of the argument.

1. Knowledge is weaker than pleasures and pains in guiding action, and is often overcome by them. (325b5-c2)

2&3. When pleasures are bad (i.e. infidelity) and pains are good (i.e. surgery), it is not because of the pleasure or pain that immediately subsides in them, but because of the pain or pleasure that comes from them down the road. (353a2-354a2)

4&5. When something is called good, it means nothing more than it is pleasurable. Likewise, when something is called bad, it means nothing more than it is painful. Also, something which is called pleasurable is good, and called painful is bad. (354b5-354c5)

6. On measurement of the pleasures and pains expected from a course of action, if the pleasure of an action outweighs the pain of it then it is better. If the pain of an action outweighs the pleasure, it is worse. (354c5-e2)

7&8. All desire is for pleasure, and all desire is in direct proportion to the pleasure expected to result from a given action.

9. If one is capable, they always do what they desire most.

10. By premise 1-9: Often one weighs courses of action and concludes, for example, that the worse/more painful course is preferable to the better/more pleasurable course because the better/more pleasurable course has more bad/pain in it (355a1-3).

11. But premise 10 is straightforwardly absurd (355a4-356).

12. One must always take the more pleasurable and less painful course of action, and thus take the better course over the worse. (356b3-c1)

Conclusion: By 2-12, premise 1 is false; the many are wrong, akrasia is incoherent, and knowledge is stronger than the passions in guiding human activity.

Now to explain the premises. Premises 1-6 are relatively straightforward. Premise 1 is a summary of the quoted paragraph above, and premises 2-6 are carefully teased out of the many via dialectic with Protagoras. The next two premises (7&8) were not present in the original argument, but I will defend their placement here. Since I made the choice to put these premises in,

I should point out how important it is that these premises actually fit the views of the many. I would not want to refute a straw man. If the many that Socrates referred to did not believe that all desire is for pleasure, and that such desire is in proportion with the amount of pleasure expected to be gained from acting on it, then their conception of akrasia could stand firm against our refutation. But I think these premises are fitting of the many, so fitting that it may not have been missing from Socrates' and Protagoras' actual conception of akrasia. Instead, I argue, they were probably built in tacitly. Socrates and Protagoras both had immense experience conversing with their contemporaries. To Socrates it was a duty, to Protagoras a literal career. They likely observed what can still be seen in undergraduate classrooms and elsewhere to this day: most people begin their adult lives as hedonists, and many never stray. They think themselves to be acting to maximize pleasures, and see no object worthier of proportioning their desire.[2]

This brings us to premise 9. I added premise 9 because it seemed to me that even if all desire is for and in proportion with pleasure, if one could still have desires without acting on them, then the whole argument falls apart. For there to be some desire that actually has the power to overcome our better judgment as the akratics are wont to argue, one has to be able to act on it. Premise 9 ensures that action on the greatest desire would be psychologically necessary, as is implied in the whole of the *Protagoras*, and seems difficult to disagree with on any conception of human psychology.[3]

Next comes premise 10. This is the conclusion the many are said to believe. Somehow, Socrates points out, when these same people who agree to with premises 2-9 fail to reach a peak on their pleasure landscape, they attribute it not to measurement error (and thus an error of knowledge), but instead to akrasia (352b3-c2). In premise 11, Socrates rejects premise 10 as straightforwardly absurd. He does this in a couple of different ways, but my aim is not to mount a full defense of his entire argument here; my aim is to outline it and highlight the more difficult points of interpretation. Hopefully, it will be obvious why premise 10 is absurd to the reader. The rejection of premise 10 leads directly to the converse of the akratic view: premise 12. Premise 12 looks relatively innocuous but is has broad implications, which we will explore briefly below and carry us into the next section.

Once premise 12 is established, Socrates begins to diagnose why people claim to be akratic. He starts with an analogy to how objects appear larger up close and smaller at a distance, and sounds are louder up close than at a distance (356a6-c9). From here he asks:

So if our well-being had depended on taking steps to get large quantities, and avoid small ones, what should we have judged to be the thing that saves our lives? The art of measurement or the power of appearances? The latter, as we saw, confuses us and makes us often change our minds about things and vacillate back and forth in our actions and choices of large and small things; but measurement would have made these appearances powerless, and given us peace of mind by

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[2] One can always disagree with the premises as elected from the many by Socrates, or as summarized in my gloss, but I should say two more things in defense of them. First, it must be admitted that at least someone's view of akrasia will be accurately captured by the argument as stated. Second, historically speaking, we can suppose at least Plato and maybe even the real Socrates and Protagoras (assuming they are historically real) believed this to be an accurate representation of the many.

[3] There cannot be a definition of desire that does not compel a person to act in any circumstance. Once compulsory action is granted somewhere in the definition, one has to accept that a *maximal* desire would be irresistible. That would simply constitute the upper bound of what desire *is*.

showing us the truth and letting us get a firm grasp of it, and so would have saved our lives. (356d-e2).

Here, a sophisticated akratic may interject to inquire on precisely how measurement, "would have made these appearances powerless." They may imagine the appearances of pleasure would always be tempting them to commit to them, despite knowing the measurement. Socrates would reject this possibility, however, on account of premise twelve. If premise twelve is true, then it cannot be that be that one can desire a mere apparition over a known good. By the many's own view, one must always take the more pleasurable and thus more good over the less. There is nothing left to desire on their account; not even an ever-present apparition.

The Informative Nature of Emotion

The idea that these appearances are always nagging us is a good starting place to sway our intuitions against Socrates, however. If we are always feeling the slight pull of these apparent temptations, it does feel credible that we eventually start to ponder satisfying them. To hell with measurement, one might say, and knowledge along with it. The truth is these tempting apparitions make it such that ignoring them is impossible. Knowledge is a cold, cognitive thing and these apparitions are hot and active and *must* be sated. This power is sometimes referred to as "clear-eyed akrasia," named for its apparent ability to overcome even all-things-considered knowledge.

The success of this response hinges on the conception of how knowledge is in part related to emotion in Socrates' view. Without speculating what Socrates actually believed about the distinction between knowledge and emotion, I will only point out that in the *Protagoras,* he himself is not ontologically committed to there being one. For all we know, to Socrates, pleasure and pain may be a species of knowledge *in themselves*. On my view of emotion, passion, and pleasure and pain, they *are* species of knowledge. And this means knowledge in itself can be as hot and active as emotion, for they are intimately related. If I am right, then it follows that Socrates can still escape with his argument intact. If affect and emotion are a form of knowledge, then the power of measurement can be every bit as hot and active as the akratic claims "weakness" is. Thus, knowledge retains the informative force that Socrates claims it does. This view can be stated as a new premise for Socrates' refutation of akrasia:

13. Pleasure, pain, and all other affective appearances in perception are a form of knowledge: clear-eyed akrasia is impossible.

The following Venn Diagrams illustrate the difference between akratic views (Figures 1 and 2), and the view I defend below (Figure 3):
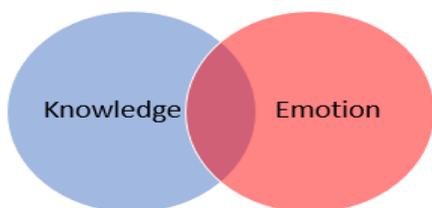

Figure 1: Knowledge and Emotion are separate but overlapping.
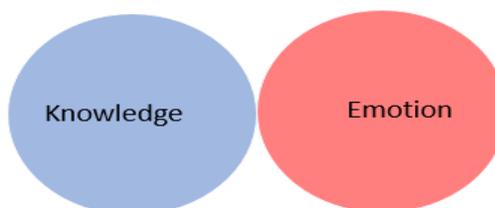
Figure 2: Knowledge and Emotion are completely separate.
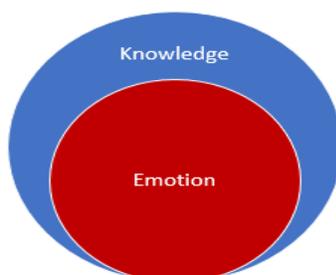
Figure 3: Emotion is a form of knowledge.

To defend the Figure 3 interpretation, it will be helpful to recount how I originally formed it. When I was still an adolescent, my Great Grandma on my mother's side passed away. It was the first time I dealt with a death in my family since the time I became old enough to consider the philosophical implications. After she passed, I remember wondering if she really was watching after our family from heaven, as people often say of those of us who are particularly good people when we die. I had never been taken to church, and so I had never considered the possibility that someone was watching over me seriously before. Now that my Grandma was gone, I could not help but wonder. Was she watching me all the time? If the powers of heaven are like they have been described, then surely she could be. She could peer straight into my soul and see my darkest secrets. She would see every base and immoral behavior I ever committed. What would she conclude, I thought? For a while it troubled me. Eventually, however, reflecting on my Great Grandmother's character and the nature of human choice put me at ease. I realized that for every mistake I make, I have reasons for doing it. Good or bad, there are reasons. And if the reasons were because I was feeling angry or impulsive, then, given the powers of heaven, she would surely be able to see that. And if the reason was because I was feeling tired and infelicitous, given the powers of heaven, she would be able to see that. And so on, and so forth, for every good or bad action, I knew my Grandma would know why. In fact, so I reasoned, given the powers of heaven, she would understand precisely why I did what I did, to a much higher degree of awareness than even I myself had access to. So it must be, I reasoned, that the emotions that often drive my behavior must be a kind of knowledge as well, and therefore knowledge of their effects on my behavior is possible.

To deny this view would be to deny that emotion is informative at all, or that precise knowledge of the true character of the feelings that drive us is inaccessible to us in principle. I am sympathetic to the practical difficulty of measuring knowledge of our emotions and their effects,

especially with regard to the all-things-considered kinds of arithmetic that Socrates seems to think we are capable of. But I am not sympathetic to the notion that such knowledge is impossible to obtain in principle, and that is all I need to defend Socrates' view. His claim, on my interpretation, is that if one *truly knows* what will give one the most pleasure, then one will find it impossible to act otherwise. This *truly knows* is the full awareness of the pleasure and pain, happiness, regret, joy and consternation that would come along with choosing a given action; it means knowing with *feeling* every bit as much as knowing with aloof calculation. Knowing from the view from heaven, for lack of a better term. With such complete knowledge, there would need to be a reason not to act in accord with one's knowledge. But as we have examined, such a reason would count as part of the knowledge to be considered on weighing the decision in the first place. This is why Socrates' conclusion is inescapable even for supposedly clear-eyed akrasia: whenever we fail to do what is right, whenever we seem to lose our way and are "overcome" by passion, it has to be accounted for by some sufficient reason. If one finds themselves thinking their passion has overridden such knowledge, they must remember the impossibility of the claim. Passion is something to be factored in to a decision, as are all the emotional elements involved in the entire course of action. If one still makes a regrettable decision there is only one place left to look: within the errors and ignorance that underlay their decision. On this point, I will allow Socrates to conclude this section with a passage from the *Protagoras*:

> Well then, gentlemen; since we have seen that the preservation of our life depends on a correct choice of pleasure and pain, be it more or less, larger or smaller or further or nearer, doesn't it seem that the thing that saves our lives is some technique of measurement, to determine which are more, or less, or equal to one another? 'Yes, certainly.' And since it's measurement, then necessarily it's an art which embodies exact knowledge. 'Yes.' Now *which* art, and *what* knowledge, we shall inquire later. But this suffices to show *that* it is knowledge, and to provide the demonstration that Protagoras and I are required to give in reply to your question. …. 'Well, if this experience isn't being overcome by pleasure, what is it then? What do you call it? Tell us.' …. Error. (357a6-d1).

The Power of Knowledge Revisited

As we have seen, Socrates rests his power of knowledge argument on the refutation of the many's akratic view. In demonstrating that akrasia is incoherent on the grounds that the many themselves stand on, he clears a path to the conclusion that knowledge has absolute power when it comes to human agency. Many philosophers, however, do not accept the hedonism that lay in the many's akratic view. We saw, for example, that the unstated hedonistic premises "all desire is for pleasure," and "the strength of one's desire is always in proportion to the amount of expected pleasure" were critical to Socrates' refutation of akrasia in the first section. Next, in case the reader is still feeling the pull of hedonism, I will motivate a departure from these premises. I will do this while constructing my own power of knowledge argument—one that holds even if our desires are more extensive than the proportional hedonism we have been working with. Finally, I will argue, on the grounds that the power of knowledge could still be maintained, for the purity of the soul thesis.

Premise 1: The World Pleasure Argument

To begin, I would like to consider a hypothetical world. For purposes that will become apparent shortly, let us call it World Pleasure, or WP for short. Let us suppose for the sake of the following arguments that God exists and can do anything imaginable. Let us also suppose that on some level, just like in our world, some of our desire is for pleasure. In WP, God has made us so that we always feel enormous pleasure whenever we (as individuals) act. Whether we do something banal or something profound, we immediately feel enormous pleasure. Also, in World Pleasure, God has so constituted us that we never feel pain. In a resting state, we merely feel contentment or ease. Now, I want us to consider what to make of hedonism in such a world.

In WP, pleasure is an abundant phenomenon. Each action provides maximal pleasure. How would one decide between these actions? If we are truly hedonists, and all desire is for pleasure, then our decisions in WP would be rendered completely arbitrary. That is, our decision to choose one maximally pleasurable thing X over another maximally pleasurable thing Y would be arbitrary. Both decisions give us maximal pleasure, and we are hedonists—so both decisions would be equally enticing. But herein lies a problem. If our decisions are *completely* arbitrary, how could we make them at all? We have to have *some* reason for choosing maximal pleasure X over maximal pleasure Y. Indeed, in order for our choice to rightly be considered a choice, it must be arrived at through some prior desire. By this logic, however, if particular choices must be made with corresponding desires, then one who desires *only* pleasure cannot make a choice between maximal pleasure X and maximal pleasure Y. That would imply a corresponding desire for something other than pleasure! Thus, WP forces the hedonist into a dilemma: either one could not make any choice at all in WP, or if one could choose, then it follows they must desire something other than pleasure in order to make that choice. In example, one could desire to 'simply make a choice' between maximal pleasures X and Y in order to receive the subsequent maximal pleasure, but this desire itself would not be a mere desire for pleasure but instead a desire to 'simply make a choice'. In order to make any choice in WP, then, since every possible action is maximally pleasurable, we would have to value something other than pleasure. The intuition that if one were dropped into WP right this moment, one could still make desire-driven choices is what I will rest on, for now, to conclude that hedonism is false, and we have pleasure independent values. But this is only part of the WP argument.

The other part considers what would become of ethical decisions in WP. What if, while living in WP you come across a fork in the road: one path is amoral or immoral, and the other bends toward the good? No matter what action you take, you feel maximal pleasure from taking that action. In WP, would one prefer to go around kicking puppies and doing otherwise immoral or amoral things all day, or would one prefer to do things that helped others and made the world a better place? On reflection, I think most people would choose the good, even though the pleasure they receive would be the same no matter what they did. Why not feel good *and* do good? But my argument here is stronger than that. Once we grant that there are pleasure-independent values, which I believe I have demonstrated above, then we must recognize that we have another set of values apart from pleasure which we hope to maximize.[4] If pleasure is not the only thing we desire,

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[4] It may seem strange to call something like "a desire to simply make a choice" a pleasure-independent value, but I think there are countless values like this. The mind is replete with cognitive mechanisms that bias our experiences in certain directions whether or not we find pleasure in those experiences. These biases are value-laden from the outset, in that many of them are attempts to preserve certain features of our environment for processing while selectively dismissing others.

then we will try to maximally satisfy those desires as well. In doing so, if we desire goodness, right action, or justice at all—then we will try to maximally satisfy those desires.[5] Ultimately, I think every decision citizens in WP would make would bend towards justice, because they would quickly come to see what they already on some level know: that right action is worth valuing *in itself*. But the purpose of the WP argument is only to demonstrate that we have pleasure-independent values, right-action or goodness being among them, and as long as those values exist we will seek to maximize them just as we do pleasure-dependent values.

Premise 2: The World Wisdom Argument

Let us consider another hypothetical world, World Wisdom. In WW, in addition to the conditions in World Pleasure, God constructs us such that every time we are about to act for the good and justice we receive non-inferential direct awareness of that fact in proportion to the amount of good we are about to do, and every time we are about to act for evil and injustice we receive non-inferential direct awareness of that fact in proportion to the amount of wrong we are about to do. Every time we are about to do wrong, we immediately and unquestionably know precisely how wrong, and every time we are about to do right, we can tell precisely how right. The most important thing I wish us to glean from pondering WW is that when we compare it to WP, it tells us something new about ourselves. What it tells us becomes apparent when we reflect on which world we would prefer to live in. In WP, if we do wrong, it is difficult for us to know. The only way we know is when we recognize that we value pleasure-independent goods (as premise 1 argues) *and* it is apparent to us when we act against them. In other words, in WP it is easy to be ignorant of our sins and thus easy for us to do wrong, even when we would not prefer to. In WW, we immediately know *in advance* when we are about do good or evil–so it would be easy to change course to protect our pleasure-independent values. On recognizing this, without much deliberation, I think it is clear that most of us would prefer to live in WW over WP. Why? Well, first of all, because in WW pleasure is still abundant (indeed, the number of possible pleasurable actions would be infinite, just like WP). And second, because we prefer the insurance that WW gives us to prevent ourselves from epistemic errors in maximizing our pleasure-independent goods. In WW, we simply gain another power. The power to discern the good from the bad. Thus, to protect our pleasure-independent values, since values are, by definition, that which are desired by us, it follows that we would choose World Wisdom over World Pleasure. The WW argument, in turn, is a proof that knowledge of the rightness or wrongness of our actions is itself a pleasure-independent value.

Premise 3: the Tale of Three Worlds Argument

Now, how do World Pleasure and World Wisdom link up to our initial inquiry into the power of knowledge? How does our consideration of them make it the case that knowledge

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[5] What about a desire for badness, wrong action, or injustice? Will we not try to maximize those as well? Here I will appeal to an asymmetry between goodness and badness that will seem almost question begging (but is not). One property of wrongness or injustice is that it is undermining of one's other goals and values. If all one's needs for pleasure are completely met, there will never be difficult sacrifices between pleasure and meeting one's pleasure-independent goals like goodness or badness. However, since bad actions are invariably self-undermining or undermining of other values, a rational/knowledgeable actor that always receives maximal pleasure will always choose the action that is good over the action that is bad because it will not undermine any of their other values. A lot rides on the success of this footnote, and I do not have the space to flesh this out more here, but I hope to provide a stronger defense of this response here or elsewhere in the future.

necessitates right action? The answer is there are only two things stopping us from actually living in WW or something like it. Both are merely facts of which we are ignorant; both are mere pieces of knowledge or wisdom that prevent us from crossing the metaphysical divide into WW. The first is knowledge of what goodness is, in itself. Second is knowledge of how to redesign our minds in such a way that pleasure is in abundance and we always know the good from the bad. That we need only these two facts could have been realized as long ago as Socrates. And maybe he did recognize all this—maybe that is why he sought to define the good and defend the power of knowledge. He certainly would have seen that, of these two pieces of knowledge, for his fellow Athenians, the chief among them is knowledge of the good or justice. Regardless, this is the last part of the argument necessary to prove that the power of knowledge is such that knowing what is right compels us to do it: Knowledge is all that stops us from a choice we would already make, the choice to become beings that derive authentic satisfaction from doing what is right, and authentic dissatisfaction from doing what is wrong; beings that always choose the good for its own sake.[6] From this power of knowledge argument and Socrates' hedonistic one, it follows that whether hedonism is true or not, Socrates was right: humans never err willingly. The social implications of this Socratic proclamation will be the subject of the final section.

The Purity of the Soul

It is time to lay out all my cards. This is the final argument I have been driving toward for the length of this paper. Only premise 4, 5, 7, and 8 are left to be argued for, because I have already argued for the rest in the previous sections.

1. When pleasure is accounted for, we still have pleasure-independent values like goodness we seek to maximize. Therefore, hedonism is false, and we value the good independently of pleasure. (By the World Pleasure argument.)

2. When we can choose between our world, World Pleasure, and World Wisdom, we choose World Wisdom. Therefore, knowledge of right action is also one of our pleasure-independent values. (By the World Wisdom argument.)

3. Knowledge of the good, and knowledge of how to reconstruct our minds to mirror the effects of WW are all that separates us from always choosing what is right. (By premise 1-2 & the Tale of Three Worlds argument.)

4. If always choosing the good is a function of the soul, then the soul is intrinsically good. (By the definition of intrinsic goodness.)

5. The soul is intrinsically good. (By 3 & 4, modus ponens.)

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[6] I mean to use the phrase *authentic satisfaction* here carefully. I mean *satisfaction* to imply no necessary connection with pleasure. Satisfaction here could be an entirely cognitive or affect-free recognition that some certain conditions are met. Next, the phrase *authentic* intends to emphasize that this conclusion escapes the oft-made charge that goodness cannot be authentic unless it is free from selfish hedonisms. In WP and WW, pleasure is a controlled variable. By WP, we know it is not responsible for all desire, and by WW, we know knowledge of what is right and wrong permits us to maximize our pleasure-independent values. Choosing WW, then, makes our choice for the good authentic.

6. Error is the source of all human injustice; no one errs willingly; knowledge has the ultimate power in human choice. (By 1-12 of Socrates' power of knowledge argument and 1-3 of my own.)

7. Guilt is "I did X wrong." Shame is "I am intrinsically wrong/defective." Blame is "You did X wrong," or "you are intrinsically wrong/defective." (By the Guilt/Shame/Blame argument.)

8. Guilt is knowledge of one's own ignorance, shame picks nothing in the soul out, and blame is misguided whenever it points toward a defect in the soul. (By 5-7.)

Conclusion: The soul itself is pure. If someone acts unjustly, blame only ignorance. (By 1-8.)

At this point one might think there is no need to argue for premise 7 and 8 to maintain the purity of the soul, after all premise 5 follows from 3 and 4 as a matter of logical necessity, and it affirms the intrinsic goodness of the soul. I agree that by the time premise 5 is adopted the thesis can be interpreted as complete, but I think such an interpretation would be a little hasty. In order to recognize the social and psychological import of the purity of the soul thesis the final two premises of this argument need to be argued for, and those final two premises depend on at least one of the power of knowledge arguments (premise 6) to obtain as well. From the very beginning, it seems to me, Socrates was advocating a practical interpretation of philosophy. He meant for it to have practical import. If this is right, then surely the most radical part of his power of knowledge argument is the implications it has for our self-understanding. It is a doctrine of absolute self-compassion, and this cannot be understated: the power of knowledge argument is a doctrine of absolute self-compassion. I sincerely believe that this philosophy is a remedy to the antagonism we hold for those we fail to understand, including ourselves, and thus a remedy for much of the conflict in the world, from within and without.

How are we to interpret what we would choose for ourselves, given that we could move the world around in the way that I attempted to demonstrate that we would? We would choose to be beings of light, but biological and normative privations of understanding prevent us from doing so. In premise 4 I suggest that the definition of intrinsic goodness is that it always chooses the good. The defense of this premise will be brief. What would it be for something to be intrinsically good? It would not simply mean that it is always maximally good. There would then be no distinction between intrinsic goodness and perfect goodness. It must mean that it is good on its own, without any external influence. It is good and would always be good were it not for external forces. If being good is choosing good, then it would choose good and always choose good were it not for external forces. Therefore, if the function of the soul is to always choose the good, then that soul is intrinsically good.

That is as much as I will say in defense of premise 4 in this paper. The next part is trickier. Defending premise 7 and 8 requires I defend a particular linguistic summary of each emotion that fits every example of that emotion. I am also going to launch into the all-things-considered version of those emotions to complete their analysis. For guilt, I am arguing that the entire emotion can be summarized as the feeling that one did something wrong. In other words, when you feel guilty, the corresponding linguistic thought is, "I did something wrong." A distinction is then made for shame.

Shame is the emotion that can be summarized as feeling as though there is something wrong with oneself or with whatever one identifies with. It is tying one's identity in with brokenness or immorality. It is a very toxic emotion. Often guilt is accompanied by shame, and shame is accompanied by guilt, but neither need to be the case. They are entirely distinct. Next is blame. Blame has two different uses that often get conflated together, just as shame and guilt are often associated. This is because one use of blame is to impute guilt or responsibility on someone by saying "You did something wrong," and the other is to impute shame on someone by, in effect, saying "You are broken."

Now the premise 8 follows directly from an analysis of the power of knowledge and the nature of guilt, shame, and blame. Once we see that all vice or immorality is simply an error of some kind, and once we see that the soul itself is always trying to do what is right, we can recognize these emotions for what they are.

Guilt is an awareness of doing something wrong. Since doing something wrong is simply a privation of knowledge of some kind, it follows that guilt is simply knowledge of one's own ignorance. Once one has a strong suspicion that one has done something wrong, it manifests as an emotion. The pit in your stomach when that suspicion arises is guilt. But emotions are just guesses or signposts at best. They are informative, but they are not all-things-considered knowledge. You do not *know* you have done something wrong until you really analyze the situation. The utility of the guilt emotion is that it can point you toward the knowledge you would have needed to avert the situation in the first place. True guilt is when you come to terms with your mistake and recognize it as wrong, if it was indeed wrong. True guilt is knowledge of one's own ignorance.

Shame has an even more novel interpretation on this view. By premises 6-8 we know that the soul is intrinsically good, and we know that ignorance is the sole source of human error. So, how can one feel shame? How can one feel as though they are broken? On the all-things-considered view that Socrates and I have been arguing for, the answer is that one cannot. Shame itself picks nothing out in the soul. Here again, as with the non-existence of akrasia, this conclusion is radically counter-intuitive. There is a simple explanation, however. As with guilt, shame is an emotion. Emotions are, as I have argued, simply a kind of knowledge. An incomplete kind of knowledge. If one can have the feeling that one is broken as a coherent idea, which one can, then one can sincerely hold it regardless of whether it is true or not. It is only when one considers the all-things-considered nature of their soul that one can recognize the inconsistency of this emotion. Still, the emotion of shame, as all emotions, has utility. It drives us to question our deepest motivations. Unfortunately, many of us are so convinced by this intense brand of self-questioning that they conclude there is no moral core at our center, or that whatever is there is severely damaged. In the West, this self-criticism is often reinforced by religious dogmas as well. I want to emphasize, though, that just because an emotion has a humbling, ego-checking utility, it does not follow that this emotion is warranted. Anyone who understands the power of knowledge can check their ego simply by acknowledging their own ignorance. And so guilt serves every purpose that we could hope shame of this kind to serve, but it comes without the existential self-immolation that shame carries with it.

Finally, there is blame. Blame is ubiquitous in our society. If the soul is pure, however, as we have argued, then it only makes sense when it is aimed at guilt. Unfortunately, it is entirely ambiguous, when someone flatly blames someone or another group of people, whether they mean to shame them, or to guilt them, or both. Often, it is both. But as we have seen, shame is a mistake.

No one errs willingly, so to impute brokenness on another person is as terrible a mistake as imputing it onto oneself. It may actually be worse. In Plato's *Gorgias*[7] Socrates argues it is better to suffer evil than to commit it (469b-475e). So again it seems Socrates would agree. But setting the *Gorgias* aside, the conclusion stands that blame is often misused, and our analysis should give caution to anyone who is attempting to lay blame at another's feet. Indeed, the lesson of the purity of the soul argument is that whenever we pass moral judgment on another person we should look first for ignorance, and if we fail to find it, we should only keep looking. Error is part of the human condition, but there is nothing that says it is part of the human essence. In fact, if I am right, it is quite the contrary: the human soul is free from such imperfections, and error arises only from our limited relationship with the world—or more precisely—from our limited knowledge of it.

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[7] Plato. Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 3 translated by W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1967.

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Interviews with Alumnae

About the Interviews

The editorial board sat down with some recent alumnae of the University of Iowa to discuss their background, their changing relationship with philosophy, its role in their lives, and their experience transitioning to new institutions in order to pursue advanced degrees in philosophy. Bekzoda, Evan and Jason will be graduating in the spring of 2018.

Interview with Samantha Gerleman – 2016

Bekzoda Malikova

Bekzoda: Why did you choose your undergraduate major?

Samantha: I was exposed to Philosophy through high school debate and it was the most cognitively stimulating field I had ever encountered. I almost went into a STEM major, but the work wasn't as intellectually fulfilling. I picked up the Ethics and Public Policy major to help contextualize my Philosophy degree, then subsequently declared my Sociology major when I realized that I could triple major without exceeding a typical course load. I also liked Sociology because of how it aimed to explain social inequalities and group behavior.

Bekzoda: What is one challenge you had to overcome in your undergraduate years?

Samantha: Towards the beginning of college, I had a really difficult time being vulnerable. Whether that manifested itself in my personal life or not wanting to look dumb in class, it held me back. I knew that I would be in a better place if I took more chances. I eased into being more open by gradually stepping outside of my comfort zone. In the end, being vulnerable opened a ton of doors for me.

Bekzoda: What is the best memory you have of your years at University of Iowa?

Samantha: The best singular moment was when I got into Stanford. My personal statement for law school applications detailed my difficult home-life, and the application process was the first time that I truly owned my personal history as a strength instead of a deficit. I used the application process as a reclamation of my identity. To get into my dream school because they wanted me for who I really am was a moment of personal redemption. On a lighter note, I also thoroughly enjoyed Late Shift at the Grindhouse movies at FilmScene and once got to play with a whole litter of puppies at the same time.

Bekzoda: Why did you choose Stanford Law?

Samantha: Stanford has a phenomenal loan repayment assistance program for public interest lawyers. Based on my salary projections, Stanford will pay off almost all my undergraduate and law school loans. Other law schools have similar programs, but Stanford has one of the few programs which are independent of the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. Also, being at Stanford is an incredible academic and career opportunity. I have access to basically every career opportunity I could ever want, classes taught by brilliant professors who care about their teaching, and NorCal weather and hiking.

Bekzoda: What sparked your interest in doing research on "Intersections of the ADA and Disabled Parenthood: Problems and Potential Solutions?"

Samantha: I care about both disability and reproductive rights, but the fields have rarely interacted academically even though they frequently interact in lived experiences. I wanted to learn more about how disability law could help remedy a discriminatory history of reproductive oppression for individuals with disabilities.

Bekzoda: What one thing have you done that you're proudest of?

Samantha: I grew-up in a dysfunctional family. There was physical abuse, emotional abuse, job loss, home foreclosure, use of virtually every possible social safety net, near-death experiences; you name it and some variant probably happened. I basically had to raise myself while trying to look after family members with severe mental health and functional limitations. When I was 14, I decided that I wanted more out of my life. I was clinically depressed, socially isolated, on track to fail out of high school, and living an incredibly unhealthy life. Little by little, I became who I wanted to be and was able to graduate high school. When I got to the University of Iowa, I promised myself that I wasn't going to waste my "clean slate" and I didn't.

Bekzoda: What are your future goals?

Samantha: I plan on doing civil rights work once I'm done with law school, probably relating to disability rights. In the future, I want to continue to do public interest work while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Bekzoda: What constitutes success in your mind?

Samantha: I think that success is trying your best to be the type of person that you want to be and growing from your experiences. People can often view personal projects as failures if they don't receive their initially desired goal. To me, it's a huge mistake to think that there is one specific outcome that constitutes success. There are so many different paths that a person's life can follow, and there isn't necessarily a "right" decision or result at any given stage.

Bekzoda: What kinds of things give you the most satisfaction in your field of study?

Samantha: I'm incredibly lucky that I have a career path that is both extremely fulfilling and able to change society for the better. Since being in law school, I've helped individuals get Social Security benefits that lifted them out of homelessness, worked on litigation and advocacy that decriminalizes women's reproductive health decisions, and assisted multiple projects to integrate people with disabilities into their communities instead of institutions. I can challenge and change things that I find unjust, and the work itself requires a lot of nuanced thought.

Bekzoda: Any advice for philosophy students interested in law?

Samantha: Keep your GPA as high as possible, take the LSAT seriously, and spend your undergraduate years exploring whatever peaks your interest. Philosophy trains your brain to "think like a lawyer" because of its analytic rigor, but you can get into law school by studying basically anything. College is an extremely rare opportunity to spend most of your day learning about whatever you want to know; don't squander it by trying to do what you think law schools want to see. Expose yourself to the legal field to make sure that you want to work within it, but don't forsake other intellectual interests.

Interview with Sam Kelso – 2015

Evan Kramer

Evan: What first interested you in philosophy?

Sam: I was trying to take care of some gen ed requirements during my first year at Iowa, and I ended up taking Principles of Reasoning and Introduction to Philosophy in the same semester. Intro was fabulous: it was a small class of honors students, many of whom went on to go to graduate school. It was my first college class where everyone was clearly excited to be there discussing the material.

Anyway, I had many of the common misconceptions about philosophy – for example, that it was mostly ethics, or that it should sound "deep" – many of which were set straight by those classes. I was surprised and impressed by how clear and precise everyone strived to be. Plus, the problems were fascinating. I remember getting hooked on Early Modern epistemology. Are colors real? Who knows, man.

Evan: You also studied English at the undergraduate level. In what way, if at all, do you think your study of English has complemented your study of philosophy?

Sam: Literary criticism and history of philosophy strike me as importantly similar. Literary criticism is (arguably) about reading works of literature for literary insight. History of philosophy is (arguably) about reading works of philosophy for philosophical insight. In each case, there is a drive to appreciate great work more and more completely.

Evan: How did your time in the University of Iowa Philosophy Department prepare you for graduate school? What value was there for you in writing an undergraduate thesis?

Sam: The philosophy department at Iowa was excellent at giving promising undergraduates the opportunity to develop and flourish. When I was there, it was not uncommon for advanced undergrads to take graduate seminars or attend talks and colloquia. Professors and grad students always made us feel welcome. At some schools, you have no choice but to go to a Master's program to get those opportunities.

The undergraduate thesis is a great learning opportunity. It will not be your magnum opus. There are many lessons you can only learn by embarking on a long project, and you would really rather not have to learn those lessons mid-MA thesis or dissertation. Perhaps the most important of those lessons is that good work comes from noticing and fixing problems over and over and over again. If you stay both critical and resilient, you will outpace a lot of the competition.

Evan: Why UC Irvine?

Sam: UCI is a beautiful school with a rising philosophy program. You may know it as the school where Professor Cunning got his PhD. There are actually two philosophy departments at the University, each with its own PhD program: my department, the Department of Philosophy, and its sister, the Department of Logic and Philosophy of Science. That means we have two sets of superstar faculty and two sets of (comparatively shabby) grad students. It makes for a vibrant and productive community. Plus, campus is 15 minutes from the beach, and the climate is lovely.

Evan: Someone's philosophical interests can change such that they find themselves interested in topics they could not have anticipated. In graduate school, you've developed an interest in ancient philosophy. What kindled your interest in that topic?

Sam: I definitely had far too narrow a vision of what direction my interests would develop in. I became interested in Ancient Philosophy when I took a seminar on Plato's *Republic* during my first year. Much like Intro to Philosophy at Iowa, the *Republic* seminar was filled with great students who both loved being there and loved the philosophy. I had read the book, at least substantial portions, at Iowa, but I think back then I had an uncharitable take on the history of philosophy in general. A lot of arguments in historical texts take some getting used to. Always remember that if a view seems obviously absurd, you probably don't understand it; and if it turns out to be false, that doesn't mean there isn't some insight to be gleaned from it. By way of comparison, most paradoxical arguments are obviously unsound, but we still learn a lot from them.

Evan: What has your adjustment to graduate school been like?

Sam: My adjustment to graduate school has on the whole been good. It is definitely not easy to go straight to a PhD program without first doing an MA, and everyone should give serious consideration to whether they might benefit from getting more experience. Fortunately, as I suggested, Iowa does a good job of introducing its undergrads to components of its grad program, which I think is the reason I've been able to weather the changes.

Evan: What advice do you have for undergraduates pursuing philosophy?

Sam: When selecting courses, go for breadth as well as depth. If you want to go to grad school in philosophy, take the maximum number of philosophy courses you are allowed over your degree and make sure you move into upper division courses as soon as you have the chops. Go to office hours to forge relationships with professors. As you practice writing undergraduate papers, giving objections to this or that argument that you read for class, always ask yourself, 'What's the philosophical upshot of my thesis?' Say you show that some obscure 20th century analytic philosopher made a mistake in an argument. Who cares? What does that tell us about the philosophical issues at hand? These are the sorts of follow-up questions on which more advanced philosophical projects are based. Getting in the habit of asking them will help prepare you to write papers in graduate school.

Interview with Brett Karlan – 2015

Jason Messerschmitt

Jason: Can you tell us a bit about why you chose to study neuroscience as an undergraduate?

Brett: I had known for quite a while before beginning undergrad that I was interested, in some way or other, in the study of the mind. In high school, I read philosophical work on the mind (Dan Dennett loomed large, for instance), but it was really the work of several popularizing neuroscientists, including former Iowa professor and mentor-to-my-mentor Antonio Damasio, that really gripped me. I became convinced, with a fervor that only 18-year-olds can truly muster, that the answers to deep questions about consciousness, self-knowledge, and our human natures were to be found in neuroscience. But the decision was also partially circumstantial: my uncle was a professor in psychiatry at the time (he has since retired), and it was very easy for me to join his lab and start working on neuroscientific problems right away. I was hooked, at least for a time.

Jason: You studied some philosophy as an undergraduate as well. What compelled you to pursue a graduate degree in philosophy rather than neuroscience?

Brett: Honestly? I really have no idea. I came to philosophy because I had the sneaking suspicion that the questions I was asking in lab meetings at the hospital were not getting the types of answers that were wholly satisfactory. To be fair to all of the scientists in my life, the questions I were asking were just not ones they have a particular stake in: what exactly does it mean to study a subjective phenomenon like consciousness in an objective way? What is the nature of scientific knowledge anyway, and how is it possible that we can attain it? What is the relationship between the mind as described by neuroscience and psychology, on the one hand, and our everyday talk of things like beliefs and desires on the other? Asking these questions presented me with either gruff rebuttals or eye rolling from the people I was around. It wasn't until I took a philosophy of science class in the department at Iowa that I found a home for these questions.

In terms of the actual decision to go to graduate school in philosophy instead of neuroscience, again I think I lack a ton of insight into my own decisions on this matter. I can easily imagine a life where I am happy as a neuroscientist. Then again, I am very happy as a philosophy graduate student (and continue to work with the cognitive science program at Princeton). I try not to think about the other options too much, as I don't find that such reflection leads to much other than

unnecessary possible dissatisfaction. I like philosophy, and it's a rewarding way to spend one's time. That's enough for me.

Jason: How has your relationship with the philosophical pursuit changed during your graduate studies?

Brett: Perhaps more than other graduate students in philosophy, my interests have shifted somewhat radically since I started graduate school. My writing sample when I applied to graduate school was a fairly technical discussion of the explanatory structure (and metaphysical presuppositions) of certain types of neuroscientific theories. I entered graduate school thinking that such issues in the philosophy of science, especially cognitive science, would continue to grip me. But, shockingly to everyone (including, to say the least, myself) I found myself drawn more and more to somewhat traditional discussions in epistemology about rationality, justification, evidence, and the effect of bias on our beliefs and reasoning. I am just now starting my dissertation work, which for the time being is centered on the epistemology and philosophy of mind of bias and biased mental states (although I retain the right to change my mind on this!). I even find myself attracted to metaethical debates about the nature and epistemology of normativity, something that would have been unthinkable to my past, neuroscience-minded self.

This, I take it, is a general lesson prospective graduate students should keep in mind: no matter how much you think you know what your interests are, it is at least possible that your interests could change radically once you start graduate school. In general, then, it is better to apply to philosophy programs that that are broad in the expertise of their faculty members. If I had accepted a position at a school that specialized in philosophy of cognitive science, say, my transition to these more traditional epistemological topics would have been considerably more painful. At Princeton, a department that is strong in a great number of fields, the transition has been incredibly easy.

Jason: If you have found that the subjects you were most interested in as an undergraduate have changed, could you say a bit about what you think contributed to this change?

Brett: This question, much like the second, probably requires more insight into my own mental life than I actually have. (The opacity of the mental is, funnily enough, a topic in which I have great philosophical interest, perhaps for this very reason.) Part of the transition has to be environmental: being surrounded by people who do impressive philosophical work in a way very different than the way you're accustomed to is bound to shift your thinking on such issues. Part of it, however, may also be a letting go of a certain skepticism about the scope of analytic philosophical projects. Coming as I did from a neuroscience background, I think it took me a lot longer than most people to come to terms with the explanatory aims and ambitions of analytic philosophy as an autonomous discipline. For a while, I think I had a sneaking suspicion that philosophy couldn't answer many of the questions it tried to answer. In a move that will no doubt horrify my old naturalist friends (my wonderful philosophy mentor in undergrad, Carrie Figdor, certainly can't be too happy about this!), I have come to a much more realist position about the aims of analytic philosophy. Freeing myself of my doubts, as it were, probably partially contributed to the change in my interests.

Jason: What was the adjustment to graduate school like for you? Was there anything particularly difficult about the transition?

Brett: I am not particularly representative in this matter, as far as I can tell. I found very quickly that I loved graduate school, and that the combination of high-level philosophical debate with the freedom to pursue my own projects was too tantalizing a concoction for me to avoid. I also am quite close with the other members of my cohort at Princeton, and the friendship and camaraderie I've found in this department is another reason that transitioning from undergrad to grad studies was not too difficult. That being said, there are many difficulties that many people around me have gone through. Most of these problems stem from the crushing senses of imposterdom and isolation that seem to be inherent to graduate study: you're on your own in a way you never were in undergrad, both intellectually and (more often than we might like) socially. This can be an incredibly psychologically crushing experience. Seeking out others, to discuss topics philosophical or otherwise, is the single biggest piece of advice I can give about starting graduate school. Philosophy is hard, but it is also, when done right, a fundamentally social activity. Don't try to do it alone.

Jason: Why did you chose Princeton for graduate studies in philosophy?

Brett: As I already mentioned, Princeton is a strong philosophy program whose faculty cover a very wide range of philosophical terrain. I picked Princeton for that exact reason, wanting a full philosophical education, especially in light of the fact that I had not been a philosophy student from the beginning. Also, I should be completely honest on this: I partially chose Princeton because of its high ranking and its success in placing graduate students in faculty positions. Going to graduate school can be massively rewarding in its own way, but it is also a professional decision and should be treated at least partially as such. Philosophy, for better or worse (my guess is worse), is a discipline that is obsessed with rankings and prestige. Being aware of these facts, and making decisions that raise the probability of ultimately landing a job in philosophy, should never be too far from your mind. But the professional should not be the whole story: also choose a program that excites you, and where you can see yourself living and thriving for 5-7 years (yeah, I know, but 6 or 7 year finish times can happen even at Princeton).

Jason: Do you have any advice for undergraduates considering a graduate degree in philosophy?

Brett: Most of the advice I would give has already been stated above: apply to programs that are strong in many different areas, and make sure to connect with and find camaraderie with your fellow graduate students. Be conscious, but not too conscious, of the professional aspects of graduate school. And finally, make sure you have a life outside of graduate school. Make friends in other departments, blow your money on nice dinners, play in a band, do whatever you can to make graduate school a deepening and expanding of your horizons, rather than a prison of work and stress. It was Hume who admonished us, after all, to still be human in our pursuit of philosophy. In this, as in so many other things, I think we should take Hume's advice.

Reviews

Review: Baehr, Jason (ed.) (2015). *Intellectual Virtues and Education: Essays in Applied Virtue Epistemology*. Routledge.

Jason Messerschmitt

Intellectual Virtues and Education: Essays in Applied Virtue Epistemology contains a collection of essays that span the practical and theoretical concerns of responsibilist virtue epistemology and its application in the field of education. The inquiries provided comprise a rather broad engagement with virtue epistemology and its role education. Generally speaking the essays fall into three categories: those that probe the nature of intellectual virtues, those that concern themselves with the relationship of the intellectual virtues with other goals of education, and those that look more closely at how to practically employ the theoretical concerns of virtue epistemology in the classroom. The intellectual virtues presented in this work are largely construed along Zagzebskian lines. That is to say that the virtues are thought to have both a motivational and a success component. On this construal of the virtues, virtuous agents will be both motivated to act in accord with a particular virtue and will be reliably successful in bringing about the aims of their virtuous motivations. The aim, then, is an inseparable feature of the motivation itself and will be the distinctive feature of any given virtue whereby individual virtues will be delineated.[1] Lani Watson and Ian James Kidd both use this conceptualization of the virtues to motivate reasons for accepting among the intellectual virtues inquisitiveness and humility, respectively. Harvey Siegel uses the framework with respect to critical thinking. Open-mindedness and understanding are also among those possible intellectual virtues discussed in the collection.

As the first and as yet only one of its kind, the collection is difficult not to recommend. There is much here to think about with respect to education and the virtues. Jason Baehr begins the collection by providing an interesting survey of the historical and contemporary background of the intellectual virtues in fields from ethics to education. In the first of the essays, Wayne D. Riggs attempts to provide a theoretical account of understanding, open-mindedness and insight and their roles in education. Some of the following essays attempt to add some intellectual virtues to the canon as well as to motivate their pedagogical roles. In chapter 7, Duncan Pritchard attempts to appropriately situate technology and its use in the role of educating for understanding. Perhaps more directly to the practical point, Heather Battaly, in chapter 10, proposes specific pedagogical strategies for educating undergraduates in responsibilist virtues. This is not to leave anyone out, as there is much else here for the inquisitive reader to examine. That this is the only extant collection of its kind, is reason enough to give it a look; however, given the breadth of the engagements, and the skill with which they are delivered, this is a difficult book not to recommend for anyone involved in both philosophy and education.

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[1] Zagzebski, Linda Trinkaus (1996). *Virtues of the Mind*: *An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*. Cambridge University Press.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>