The Oracle

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A Note of Thanks

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Sincerely,

Marilena Danelon
Editor in Chief, *The Oracle*
York University, 2013

Letter from the Editor

What is "Philosophy"? A start to answer this question can be found in the Ancient Greek term "Philosophia". The translation of "Philo" is "love", and the translation of "Sophia" is "wisdom". Philosophy is a beautiful union of these terms; philosophy is the love of wisdom.

The love of wisdom brings people together to investigate the secrets of existence. For thousands of years, people have been investigating the metaphysical secrets of the universe, the depths of knowledge, the existence of God, the values of morality, the principles of justice, the capacities of language, the power of consciousness and mind, and far, far beyond. So long as there are questions to be asked, and answers to be found, Philosophy will always have its place in the world.

What is "Philosophy"? York University's Undergraduate Philosophical Review, *The Oracle*, is a philosophical journal that contributes to answering this question. *The Oracle* is published by York University's Undergraduate Philosophy Association, "Philosophia". Philosophia is a group of students with a love of wisdom. Each year, members of this association come together and compile the most profound undergraduate papers into one review. This philosophical review embodies some of the most prominent topics in philosophy. Philosophia by its basic definition is a love of wisdom. *The Oracle* is here to show you where that love of wisdom can take you.

Sincerely,

Marilena Danelon
Editor in Chief, *The Oracle*
York University, 2013

Examining the Role of Rational Decision-Making in Moral Theory: Towards a Eudaimonist Framework

MICHAEL GORDON BEDFORD

Recent developments in cognitive psychology found that human beings generally operate based on various intuitive personal biases. This type of behaviour is a result of our operating according to what Kahneman describes as System 1, intuition, rather than System 2, reason. This seems counterintuitive to the concept of moral education through the development of one's own reasoning faculties, as suggested by classical Virtue Theory argued by Annas. Instead, though, through the process of System 1 - System 2 skill transference, one is able to develop their reasoning faculties in much the same way that is discussed by Annas. Kahneman's work, rather than discrediting classical Virtue Theory, actually works to support it.

INTRODUCTION:

Annas's work in chapter seven of *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* represents a step forward in the situationism debate for virtue theorists. Cognitive psychology has, in Kahneman's work, prepared a rebuttal for Annas's claim that practical reasoning plays an important role in Virtue Theory. Kahneman claims that we largely cannot know our own will, and that any practical reasons we engage with in decision making are reasons built on interactions with a part of our minds that we cannot have a conscious relationship with. Kahneman

states, "The central characteristic of agents is not that they reason poorly but that they often act intuitively. And the behavior of these agents is not guided by what they are able to compute, but by what they happen to see at a given moment." (Kahneman, 2003). While the above can be seen as evidence to support the situationist critique, it is nothing that outright refutes Virtue Theory. In fact, Kahneman goes on to say "...this mode of analysis also allows for differences between individuals, and between groups. [...] new behaviors become intuitive as skills are acquired." (Kahneman, 2003). This supports rather than detracts from Annas's view that virtues are developed over time by way of practical reasoning. Kahneman, here, makes a strong case for the prudential good of moral training, also stressed in Virtue Theory, in order to ensure that, through practice, living according to different virtues will become intuitive, a process of System 1. Kahneman's work also supports Virtue Theory on another front. System 2, reasoning, describes the act of using one's practical reason critically which, according to Annas, is exactly what one does when engaged in the ongoing process of moral training.

THE STORY SO FAR...

Before engaging in the debate I have provided above, it is important to consider its context within the Situationism/Virtue Theory debate. As stated above, Annas, in chapter seven of *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, describes the function of rational decision-making in Virtue Theory, "A virtue, unlike a mere habit, is a disposition to act *for reasons*." (Annas, 2005a). This aspect of Virtue Theory is precisely what the second phase situationists (e.g. Doris, Ross, Nisbett) failed to take into account when mounting their attack on Virtue Theory.

Instead of the overly restrictive view of character traits that Doris attacks in "Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics", Annas presents an explanation of moral thinking which in no way relies upon the definition of virtue or character trait that Doris uses. Doris's conception of a virtue in "Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics" is of something static, an immutable idea of good action in any given scenario. He argues that based on clinical studies in which people's actions were not consistent with reasonable actions, e.g. the Milgram experiment among others, it can be shown that people do not have robust character traits as he believes is demanded by Aristotelian Virtue Theory. In doing this, as Annas points out, Doris "...sets up as opponent only a radically unintellectual version of virtue." (Annas, 2005b).

Instead of attacking classical Virtue Theory, as Doris claims to do in "Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics" and his book *Lack of Character*, he employs a straw man argument against Virtue Theory, setting it up as a lazy disposition following a moral habit. As Annas points out, Doris at frequent points throughout *Lack of Character* seems to be unwittingly supporting the normative framework of Virtue Theory in discussing what may be required of an ethical framework given situationist findings, "When Doris says things like, 'our duties may be surprisingly complex, involving not simply obligations to particular actions but a sort of "cognitive duty" to attend, in our deliberations, to the determinative features of situations' (p. 148) the virtue ethicist can cheer all the way..." (Annas, 2005b).

SOME KEY FEATURES OF CLASSICAL VIRTUE THEORY:

Since Annas has argued that Doris's idea of what is entailed in reasoning by way of Virtue Theory was

wrongheaded, the onus of defining Virtue Theory's lexical terms rests with Annas. Without a definition of virtue it is equally impossible to support or deny Virtue Theory. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer primarily to Annas's definition of classical Virtue Theory as presented in chapter seven of *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*.

Annas defines the classical idea of a virtue as "...a disposition to act on reasons...these are reasons which apply in the agent's life overall." (Annas, 2005a). This is in sharp contrast to Doris's account of the classical virtue, a type of rigid habit, "...Aristotelian virtues are *robust*, or substantially resistant to contrary situational pressures, in their behavioral manifestations." (Doris, 1998). Annas's account of virtue involves a great deal more practical reasoning than Doris's account and makes no reference to the consistency of an agent's action being any factor. In fact, Annas, paraphrasing Sreenivasan, states "...a virtue is a disposition to act *for reasons*, and claims about frequency of action are irrelevant to this, until some plausible connection is established with the agent's reasons..." (Annas, 2005b).

RATIONAL DECISION-MAKING VIA PRACTICAL REASONING *IN SITU*

What does this mean for the import of the evidence that Doris and other second phase situationists use, e.g. the Milgram experiment? Where it was previously argued by situationists that the Milgram findings support a lack of broadly defined character traits, the virtue theorist, in reference to Annas, can now claim that the unexpected results that Milgram achieved in his experiments were a result of some type of interaction of practical reasons within the mind of the 'teacher' subject who administered

the 'shocks'. Rather than the findings showing that there are conclusively no broadly defined character traits (virtues), the virtue theorist can claim that the application of practical reasoning *in situ* resulted in the 'teacher' subject's obedience to the experimenter. It might be asked, though, what kind of practical reasons could lead to the rational decision that it would be appropriate to shock someone potentially to death?

The answer to the Virtue Theorist while not necessarily clear is available. In the situation provided by way of the Milgram experiment, those who proceeded to administer 'shocks' after hearing the 'learner's' protests seem to have been deeply affected by practical reasons to be obedient and less by practical reasons to minimize suffering. The minority who did not continue to administer 'shocks' after hearing the protests of the 'learner' seem to have been less affected by practical reasons to be obedient and more affected by practical reasons to minimize suffering in the situation. The virtue theorist claims that the reasons that these two groups responded differently was not due to the fact that they lacked robust character traits. Instead, it is because different reasons affected these different people in different ways. The virtue theorist believes this is due in large part to differing types of moral training.

One might argue that the fact the majority of participants continued to wilfully 'shock' the 'learner' implies, in a Virtue Theory framework, that these participants were the recipients of bad moral training. Instead, though, it could be the case that these participants' moral training was largely structured around being obedient, especially to those in formal positions of power. The moral training of the minority of subjects in

the Milgram experiment who would not continue the experiment, on the other hand, may have focused more on minimizing harm to others and standing up for one's and others' rights, having less concern with obeying perceived formal authority figures.

Virtue Theory demands that one use one's own reason to determine what it means to live virtuously, "Virtue ethics develops from the reasonable thought that *I* have to improve myself; no teacher or book can do the job." (Annas, 2005b). While self-directed morality is appealing in its mutable nature, it could be subject to uneasy initiations by the moral majority.

Suppose, for instance, that the participants in the Milgram experiment who continued to 'shock' the 'learner' after hearing him protest the continuation of the experiment had been virtue theorists. It is conceivable that they may have walked away from the experiment feeling that they had acted in accordance with a virtue for practical reasons, e.g. in accordance with the virtue of helpfulness for practical reasons of obedience. Since virtue theorists cannot rely on a 'teacher or book', they are forced to make moral decisions *in situ*. Inadequate or improper moral training, e.g. moral training which does not take into account the potential negative effects of acting in a certain way for what appear to be good reasons, can easily lead to bad moral choices.

The fact that the majority of subjects failed to make what seems like the clearly obvious moral choice, to refuse to participate in an experiment in which a man is being restrained against his will and tortured, is inconsequential. Living virtuously is not necessarily easy, making missteps, moral or otherwise, for reasons of

underdeveloped reasoning is. In showing this I will return my focus to the effect of Kahneman's work on the situationism/Virtue Theory debate, specifically "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics".

THE REVIVAL OF THE SITUATIONIST CRITIQUE OF VIRTUE THEORY

In "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics" Kahneman shows, through extensive clinical studies in human behaviour, that the operations of the human mind are intensely reliant upon intuition. I will reiterate only general claims that Kahneman makes without going into the specifics of his extensive research, "The central characteristic of agents is not that they reason poorly but that they often act intuitively." (Kahneman, 2003). Kahneman, in this quotation, is referring to his two system theory.

The above quotation claims that people's reasoning skills are not necessarily poor even when engaging in what appear to be totally unreasonable activities (they may just be acting intuitively), while also highlighting the fact that agents usually tend toward what Kahneman refers to as System 1 in their day to day functioning. In using System 1 agents process information automatically (intuition). In System 2 agents process information more slowly and deliberately (reason). In everyday life, agents use a mixture of both of these systems, although agents more frequently use the intuitive system. Also, decisions to act according to either system are not conscious to the agent. (Kahneman, 2003)

This seems similar to the critique used by Doris, that agents do not determine the answer to ethical questions

by reference to a normative feature of their minds such as reason, as Annas suggests. Instead, according to Kahneman's research, agents are often powerless to resist the influence of situational factors. We must proceed very carefully, then, to determine if Kahneman's remarks unwittingly support Virtue Theory as Doris's were shown to by Annas.

One cannot deny the applicability of Kahneman's findings to the situationism debate. Kahneman shows his true colours in his conclusion to "Maps of Unbounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics" when he says "The origins of this approach are in an important intellectual tradition in psychology, which has emphasized 'the power of the situation' (Lee Ross and Nisbett, 1991)." (Kahneman, 2003). Kahneman's work proves beyond reasonable doubt that agents are often affected by situational factors and rely heavily upon intuition to live their day to day life. However much this information may prop up the situationist, though, it does nothing to tear down the virtue theorist. Instead, Kahneman validates an important claim made by virtue theorists.

At least some of the time, though not that often according to Kahneman, human beings do engage in the rational process, system 2, when deliberating on decisions. This provides the role of practical reasoning in decision-making scenarios as discussed by Annas some, though not much, support. It is other claims made by Kahneman, though, that indirectly support the concept of moral training which show that practical reason as it relates to virtue theory is an integral part of a desirable moral framework.

MORAL TRAINING AS PRUDENTIAL GOOD

Kahneman states "...people mostly do not think very hard and that System 2 monitors judgments quite lightly." (Kahneman, 2003). This is not in contrast with Virtue Theory as described by Annas. Annas describes Virtue Theory's "...commitment to virtue as an *ideal*, and the insistence that ethics involves *aspiration* to an ideal." (Annas, 2005b). So, to put this into Kahneman's terms, the fact that people are generally unable to use their System 2 reasoning powers effectively is surely no evidence against its existence. While it may be impossible to live one's life in total accord with System 2 processing there is no obvious harm in aiming for that ideal. In fact, aiming for ideal System 2 processing in one's deliberations, while probably unattainable, would likely garner an individual, through extensive practice, a relatively strong capacity to engage in System 2 processing effectively by way of System 1. This claim is supported by Kahneman's statement that "...new behaviors become intuitive as skills are acquired." (Kahneman, 2003). Much like Kahneman's chess master who has learned to solve complex System 2 problems intuitively through practice (Kahneman, 2003), so might the skill of solving complex moral dilemmas become intuitive to one who is dedicated enough.

Counterintuitively, Kahneman's claims echo those of virtue theorists. The way in which skills are transferred from System 2 to System 1 via a continued effort on the part of the agent to improve on that skill bears a striking resemblance to the way that moral training is undertaken by virtue theorists. Compare the above with Annas's claim, "It is unrealistic to think that your ethical views are all completely disposable, and that you can become a

better person by overnight conversion." (Annas, 2005b). Virtue Theory demands a strict regimen of perpetually attempting to become more courageous, generous, prudent, etc. The virtue goals that one sets for oneself continue to become more and more demanding as an agent progresses morally throughout their life. This does not imply that reaching one's virtue goals is impossible. Rather, it means that the attainment of one's current virtue goals acts as a springboard toward addressing the next level of dedication to that virtue.

This framework, like Kahneman's System 2-System 1 skill transference, demands constant effort towards self-betterment. This framework also allows less pressing, lower-level virtue concerns to be addressed more automatically through the betterment of one's practical reasoning skills. Most similarly to Kahneman's findings, though, is that it is through the betterment of one's practical reasoning in decision-making scenarios that one achieves better levels of virtuous behaviour.

For instance, imagine a subject is afraid that they will be hit by a bus when they attempt to cross the street. The obviously employable virtue in this case is courage. So, the subject employs the virtue of courage *for a practical reason*, being that the subject wants to sit on the sunny side rather than the shady side of the street, in the situation of crossing the street. However, once the cowardly subject reaches the crosswalk and the crippling fear of being hit by a bus sets in, the desire to be in the sun diminishes as a viable practical reason to attempt to cross the street. In this cowardly subject's case, the only acceptable practical reason for crossing the street in light of the subject's intense fear of being hit by a bus is that the subject will in all likelihood not be hit by a bus. So,

armed instead with the practical reason that the subject will in all likelihood not be hit by a bus the subject, though very hesitant to start and fearful throughout the crossing, employs the virtue of courage and crosses the street arriving unharmed at the other side. Again, while the change may not occur overnight, eventually the cowardly subject will likely, through repeated successful street-crossings, become more courageous simply because the subject's fears become increasingly unreasonable. Why would one fear being hit by a bus if the statistical probability of being hit by a bus continues to approach 0% every time one successfully crosses the street? The subject is presented on all sides with reasons to act according to dispositions of courage and deny their own obviously irrational fear. Having discovered, though, that fears in this instance were unjustified it is possible, if not likely, that this will engender further courageous dispositions in other arenas for similar reasons.

My final remarks on the place of rational decision-making in moral theory before I conclude pertain to the concept of *eudaimonia* or 'flourishing' as Annas refers to it (Annas, 2005b). This concept is very tightly knit with classical Virtue Theory. "...virtue ethics tells us that a life lived in accordance with the virtues is the *best specification* of what flourishing is." (Annas, 2005b). Much like the commitment to the virtues in the realm of ethics, a commitment to *eudaimonia* is a commitment to use one's rational decision-making processes in order to come up with a worthwhile and rewarding potential life to grow into. While it may be argued that any life plan that an agent envisions becomes no more likely simply by envisioning it, it is difficult to see what benefit could be had in abandoning a *eudaimonist* framework and

adopting, instead, a strictly situationist one wherein I can never know much about myself or my future desires beyond some vague idea of my situational history. Accepting Kahneman's evidence, the *eudaimonist* is well equipped, if they so desire, to aim for a virtuous life lived intuitively by way of significant System 2-System 1 skill transference.

Concluding Remarks

In examining the role of rational decision-making in moral theory I have determined that there is nothing to be gained, and likely much to be lost, in abandoning or even briefly turning away from rational decision-making. Even though Kahneman's successful work points to the fact that the majority of people will seldom know their own wills and that agents more often than not operate intuitively and without the constraints of rationality, the claim that we never use our rational decision-making capabilities is not made. System 2 is used in a variety of settings. The fact that skill transference is possible shows that steps towards making informed, conscious, rational decisions can be made by any individual so long as they are willing to put in the time and effort.

It is worth noting that the data which Kahneman presents regarding key aspects of the cognitive makeup of the human mind has significant parallels with classical Virtue Theory, especially where moral training is concerned. This is a clear indicator of classical Virtue Theory's applicability over more abstract ethical frameworks such as Utilitarianism or Deontology. While all three ethical frameworks make reference to deep-seated beliefs we have, only Virtue Theory bears such striking similarities with the ways in which our minds actually function. The type of sustained effort required to

bridge the System 2-System 1 skill transference gap is strikingly similar to the type of sustained effort required to live according to the virtues.

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Commentary

MARILENA DANELON

Bedford's contrast between *Eudaimonia* Virtue Theory and Situational Theory was really enlightening. It was a pleasure to read about how particular arguments against Virtue Theory are actually to the benefit of the theory itself. However, I feel that while one problem of Virtue Theory has been addressed, there still remain problems to be solved.

I felt that Bedford's paper could have spent more time discussing *exactly where* reasoning comes into play for Virtue Theory. The example given about crossing the street did not do this part of the paper justice. I don't think it requires as much moral reasoning to cross the street as Bedford implies it does, despite the virtue laden terminology used.

Taking into consideration that Bedford could not have possibly addressed all the criticisms of Virtue Ethics in one short paper, I still think it is important that I bring up a common criticism of Virtue Theory, which is the problem of cultural relativism. It is easily possible to imagine a culture which teaches its citizens that virtues—for example, piety—are commendable. Seeing where virtues of piety have often lead society, such as into war, inequality, genocide, and the likes, perhaps it is important for Virtue Ethicists to explain exactly what is meant by "universal virtues", and more importantly, *what line of reasoning* is acceptable when considering virtuous thought.

I would image the virtue ethicist would argue that perverse virtues are not the "universal" virtues it is referring to. This defends Bedford's case regarding the Miligram experiment. The Miligram experiment is a widespread case exemplifying the unnerving rationality of people. But, in the same way that hyper-obedience appears to be widely taught, it is possible that good universal virtues, perhaps honesty, courage, or generosity, could also become widely taught. It becomes a question of what virtues are good and what line of reasoning should people be taught for virtuous thinking.

All in all, I think Bedford's case in favour of Virtue Theory, contra the Situationist, was persuasive. He counters the argument in favour of intuition well, and exemplifies that reasoning is imperative for Virtue Ethics.

Luck Egalitarianism: A Defense

ERICA LAVECCHIA

The purpose of this paper is to provide a defense of G.A. Cohen and Richard J. Arneson's understanding of luck egalitarianism. In particular, it will be shown that luck egalitarianism is both a feasible and coherent conception of what equality demands so long as individuals' decisions are well-informed and willingly made. This argument will be formed in the context of objections against luck egalitarianism that have been formulated by Elizabeth Anderson and Samuel Scheffler. By responding and refuting to (what this author takes to be) nine main criticisms of luck egalitarianism, it will further be demonstrated that luck egalitarianism can withstand philosophical criticism.

INTRODUCTION:

This paper seeks to critically evaluate and offer a defense of luck egalitarianism as it has been articulated by G.A. Cohen in, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice" and by Richard J. Arneson in, "Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare". I will first begin by providing a brief overview of luck egalitarianism, introducing its main concepts, arguments and implications. The second half of this paper will be directed towards outlining nine main objections against luck egalitarianism that have been put forth by Elizabeth Anderson in, "What is the Point of Equality?" and by Samuel Scheffler in, "What is Egalitarianism?" Each of these critiques will subsequently be refuted by demonstrating that they rely on a

categorical mistake, are largely misplaced or focus on the application instead of the conception of luck egalitarianism. By demonstrating that luck egalitarianism can withstand philosophical criticism, I seek to assert that, insofar as individuals' choices are informed and willingly made, luck egalitarianism is a feasible and coherent conception of what equality demands.

LUCK EGALITARIANISM: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Cohen and Arneson's understanding of luck egalitarianism has a very narrow focus in strictly asking what (distributive) equality (rather than justice) demands. In specifying what ought to be equalized, Cohen makes what he calls a "weak equalisandum claim": people should be as equal as possible in some dimension, but subject to whatever limitations or considerations that may be imposed in deference to other values.[1] To contrast, a strong equalisandum claim would insist that people should be as equal as possible in the dimension specified.[2] It follows that equality, under the luck egalitarianism framework, may be one component (among many) specifying what justice demands.

The principal distinction made by luck egalitarianism is between choice (or responsibility, insofar as one is responsible for one's choices) and luck, which is especially relevant in distinguishing between brute luck and option luck.[3 & 4] Brute luck refers to instances of (mis)fortune that result from an individual's circumstances that are beyond the individual's choice or control, whereas option luck involves cases in which an individual's (mis)fortune is attributable to the choices that the individual has made.[5] Accordingly, a person suffers from bad brute luck when the misfortune that he/she experiences is not the result of a gamble or risk which could have been avoided,

whereas a person suffers from bad option luck when the resulting misfortune is a product of a gamble or risk that could have been avoided.[6]

Luck egalitarianism advocates that people should be made equal (through state compensation) only in cases involving misfortunes that are beyond their control. Such instances are to be equalized precisely because circumstances of misfortune are morally arbitrary in the sense that they are not the product of an individual's choice. (If choice is a reflection of moral personhood (in the sense that one is responsible for outcomes resulting from one's choice), the aspects of an individual's abilities or situation that are not a product of choice are what equality is concerned with.) By extension, inequalities (or differences between peoples' advantages) are permitted so long as they are the result of or accord with a certain pattern of individual choice.[7] In short, luck egalitarians hold individuals to be responsible for the foreseeable consequences of their voluntary choices, in particular for that portion of consequences that involves their own achievement, gain or loss of welfare or resources.[8]

Along with extinguishing the influence of (bad) brute luck on distribution, luck egalitarians also seek to eliminate the exploitation of others.[9] The underlying rationale is that individuals who are subject to misfortune because of bad option luck should bear the cost of their choices and that it is not the state's (or others') prerogative to provide assistance or compensation in these instances. To suggest otherwise would exploit the public. Providing state compensation for others' misfortunes would involve using funds from the public purse, which (directly or indirectly) requires individuals to pay for misfortunes that they themselves did not

choose but are the product of another's choice. Requiring others to pay for misfortunes that they did not chose, according to luck egalitarians, is equivalent to taking advantage of the public.

Following these claims, Cohen eventually develops and argues for a position where individuals are granted equal access to advantage.[10] Arneson follows similar lines in advocating for equal opportunity for welfare, suggesting that the best interpretation of distributive equality is when all persons effectively face an equivalent array of options to secure.[11] For brevity's sake, further articulation of these theories will not be provided in this paper.

OBJECTIONS TO LUCK EGALITARIANISM

The remainder of this paper will be dedicated to outlining and responding to objections against luck egalitarianism that have been put forward by Elizabeth Anderson in, "What is the Point of Equality?" and Samuel Scheffler in, "What is Egalitarianism?" In essence, Anderson argues that luck egalitarians, by focusing on compensating individuals for undeserved bad luck, have lost sight of the political aims of egalitarianism. In exposing what she believes to be serious flaws with luck egalitarianism, Anderson aims to demonstrate the superiority of democratic equality as a conception of justice. Scheffler also seeks to illustrate that a plausible form of distributive egalitarianism should be anchored in a general conception of equality as a social and political ideal.

INSTANCES OF BAD OPTION LUCK

One of the main objections raised against luck egalitarianism criticizes the consequence that individuals subject to bad option are not entitled to compensation. By failing to provide compensation for this "class" of

individuals, it has been said, luck egalitarianism fails to treat (equally) unfortunate individuals with equal respect and concern.[12 & 13] Anderson specifically appeals to a variety of cases she feels are problematic for luck egalitarians in order to substantiate this claim.[14] Although these cases differ in scenario, the common theme is that the individuals in question explicitly (and sometimes prudently) chose their situation, are now in a state of misfortune and are not entitled to compensation under the luck egalitarianism framework. These examples, Anderson ardently argues, demonstrate a weakness of luck egalitarianism because the denial of assistance to individuals who are in desperate or critical need of assistance, regardless if their circumstance was brought about by choice or not, seems counterintuitive and morally wrong.[15] In essence, the claim here is that a society that permits its members to sink to any such depths due to entirely reasonable (and sometimes obligatory) choices does not treat its citizens with equal respect and concern .[16]

To respond, luck egalitarianism, in refusing to compensate individuals in instances of bad option luck, may actually demonstrate respect for this "class" of individuals because it views such individuals as autonomous beings with distinct conceptions of the good (assuming, of course, that the individuals in question have mature cognitive capabilities and are in a position to execute moral agency). Part of respecting an individual's agency arguably entails respecting an individual's decisions (insofar as such decisions are informed and willingly made) and any consequences that are the product such decisions, regardless of their nature. If conceptions of the good vary amongst individuals (for example, a person may view the risky life as their

conception of the good while another person's conception of the good life may entail a risk-neutral or risk-averse life), interfering in the decisions (and outcomes that derive from decisions) that individuals make not only fails to demonstrate respect for an individual's distinct conception of the good, but further presumes that there is a "one size fits all" conception that can be applied to all persons. Granted that the decisions individuals make are informed and willingly made, luck egalitarianism seems to demonstrate respect for individuals' (ability to make) decisions while acknowledging that individuals are distinct entities with diverse conceptions of the good and are capable of leading their own lives.

Moreover, it is worth recalling that luck egalitarianism, as articulated here, has a limited focus and is concerned only with the scope of distributive equality. That is to say, luck egalitarianism is only concerned with whether or not an individual's choice was voluntary; it does not speak to or rule out other moral considerations in favour of assisting persons in dire straits or those who took prudential measures so as to ensure that they made a "good" choice.[17] Given that Cohen's articulation of luck egalitarianism makes a weak equalisandum claim, luck egalitarianism does not prohibit appealing to other principles when the case at hand falls under other domains (such as that of basic needs or providing assistance to prudent decision-makers).[18] In short, there may very well be moral reasons (such as principles of basic rights) for assisting persons in distress, it is just that these reasons are distinct from considerations of what equality demands. As such, it may be the case that the objection that luck egalitarians neglect the imprudent relies on a category mistake; the objection mistakenly applies the luck egalitarian principle to a category of cases

(such as cases of urgent and basic needs) which it is not designed to apply.[19]

DOES LUCK EGALITARIANISM HAVE SEXIST IMPLICATIONS?

As a subset of the first objection concerning instances of bad option luck, Anderson claims that luck egalitarianism fails to recognize (if not indirectly promotes) sexist implications.[20] By denying assistance to dependent caregivers (usually women) whose occupation does not generate any market value, luck egalitarianism seems to endorse the financial poverty and vulnerability of individuals who chose to forfeit a "formal" occupation in order to take care of children, the needy, sick and elderly.

It may be the case that these concerns should more properly be directed to present-day social institutions, cultural norms and economic machinery rather than luck egalitarianism. The fact that women are susceptible to financial poverty, dependence and vulnerability in choosing to become caregivers may be a well-taken criticism of current social institutions and cultural norms that (subliminally) encourage women to assume a caregiver role. In addition, luck egalitarianism should not be interpreted as promoting the financial poverty of caregivers; rather it seems to be the case that this is a fault of the current market system that does not account for (in terms of a dollar amount) a caregiver's role and contribution to society.[21] Even if it is the case that a woman's nature is generally more inclined to care-giving than a man's it is, ultimately, still a woman's choice to pursue the role of a caregiver. So long as a woman willingly adopts the role of a dependent caregiver and understands the potential consequences of this choice, it is difficult to see why one would feel sympathetic to

claims she would make for state compensation. Arguments for the reform of social institutions, cultural norms and market machinery so as to allow for gender equality are well-taken, but are certainly not faults of luck egalitarianism.

INSTANCES OF BAD BRUTE LUCK

Critics have also refuted luck egalitarianism's claim that all persons should be entitled to compensation in any and all natural misfortunes. For example, it seems counterintuitive to provide plastic surgery, free of charge, to the physically ugly (regardless if ugliness be real or perceived).[22] Yet, under luck egalitarianism, this seems to qualify as an instance of bad brute luck, entitling the individual to state compensation.

This objection is likely misplaced given that luck egalitarianism is not strictly based on increasing or maximizing individual welfare.[23] Referring to the example described above, a person who has less welfare relative to others in society as a result of his/her appearance, albeit a case of bad brute luck, would not be entitled to state compensation under luck egalitarianism precisely because such a claim would be based on the person's level of welfare.[24] At very best, the objection that luck egalitarians are committed to providing compensation in all cases of natural misfortune can only be directed towards those who are also welfare egalitarians, which neither Cohen nor Arneson claim to be.[25]

DOES LUCK EGALITARIANISM INVOKE PATERNALISM?

According to Anderson, adopting a mandatory social insurance scheme in order to provide compensatory relief to individuals potentially subject to bad option luck (as some luck egalitarians would suggest) is problematic because it conveys the message that citizens are, "too

stupid to run their lives, so Big Brother will have to tell them what to do".[26] Interpreted along these lines, luck egalitarianism is not only paternalism in guise, but moreover does not consider individuals to be capable of making their own decisions. Claims advocating that luck egalitarians treat individuals with respect are, therefore, rendered contradictory from the point of view of citizens who are forced to join mandatory insurance schemes.[27]

It is worth mentioning that Anderson does consider a possible response to her own objection, suggesting that paternalism need not necessarily or always encroach upon individual liberty and that there can sometimes be honest and compelling rationale for "paternalistic" legislation (consider, for example, seatbelt legislation).[28] Regardless, relying on paternalistic laws, Anderson claims, raises the question of how to justify liberty-limiting laws that aim to benefit individuals.[29] Paternalistic rationale under the broad claim that "the state knows best" is deemed insufficient and consequently requires a more "adequate" justification.

Here, is will be suggested that mandatory insurance policies and paternalistic laws at large can be justified other than by appealing to the notion that, "the state knows best". Arguably, paternalistic legislation is the product of (in the sense that is causally linked or correlated with) the choice individuals make to live together in society. Part of being a member of society is to recognize and agree upon certain measures that need to be taken in order to make life conducive and "worth living" for all. Mandatory insurance policies, consequently, are justified by appealing to the notion of a social contract; individuals have agreed to adopt certain legislation requiring them to purchase mandatory

insurance in order to live together in society. "Paternalistic" laws, therefore, may be viewed as cases of option luck where individuals in society have knowingly and willingly chosen (through democratic machinery, for example) to adopt certain laws (such as those requiring the mandatory purchase of insurance) and need not be considered paternalistic.

COMPASSION VERSUS PITY

It has additionally been argued that luck egalitarianism expresses disrespect towards the very persons it offers assistance to. Under a luck egalitarian framework, people make a claim to the resources of distribution in virtue of their inferiority to others, rather than in virtue of their equality to others.[30] Moreover, the rationale for providing compensation to an individual subject to bad brute luck seems to be based upon the premise that the individual in question is living a life that is less worthwhile or not worth living at all.[31] As a result, recipients of aid are said to be shown pity instead of compassion. While compassion and pity can both move a person to act benevolently, only pity (which is aroused on comparison of the observer's condition with a condition of objectivity) is condescending.[32] To contrast, compassion is based on an awareness of suffering (as an intrinsic condition of a person) and aims to relieve suffering (rather than equalize it) without passing a moral judgement on those who suffer.[33] By basing compensatory claims on considerations of pity, luck egalitarianism seems to fail to express equal respect for all persons and thereby violates a fundamental expressive requirement for any egalitarian theory.[34]

The claim that luck egalitarianism exhibits disrespect through invoking pity on those who are subject to bad

brute luck may be misplaced, as it (falsely) assumes that luck egalitarians must necessarily be welfare egalitarians in order to pass judgements on the quality of a person's life (as previously argued, this is not necessarily the case).[35] Compensating individuals for misfortunes that are beyond their control can, instead, be viewed as respecting a person by recognizing that they are entitled to assistance for consequences that are not a product of their willed and informed choice. If luck egalitarians adopt a resource egalitarian approach, such judgements about the quality of a person's life are not made; rather, the concern is with a person's legitimate resource entitlements.[36] The state, in providing compensation, may thereby be seen as saying, "We, the state, view you, the individual, as an active being responsible for the consequences that derive from your choices. Given that your misfortune derives from circumstance, we respect you in such a way as to view you as deserving of compensation in order to put you on a level playing ground with other members of society who are not subject to such a misfortune". The guarantee to all persons of compensation in cases of bad brute luck can then be interpreted as a mark of equal respect and compassion (rather than disrespect or pity) precisely because it is given on the basis that the misfortune was beyond one's choice and control.[37 & 38]

LUCK EGALITARIANISM AS IMPLAUSIBLY ASOCIAL

The whole point of equality, it has been suggested, is to regulate the relationship between persons as they interact in society.[39 & 40] Allowing people to relate to one another as equals in society is, in other words, the motive behind any quest for equality. Luck egalitarians, by focusing strictly on mitigating the effect of luck on individuals' lives, seem to have misplaced their focus by

not factoring the way by which individuals relate to one another in society in their conception of what equality demands.

To counter this objection, it may be said that luck egalitarianism does not disregard relational equality but rather, "recognizes that the motivation of distributive justice is to secure the relationship among persons that best reflects their equal status vis-à-vis each other".[41] The choice to focus on luck (no pun intended) and providing compensation in instances of bad brute luck can be viewed as an alternative interpretation (or one of many aspects) of what social equality amongst persons demands or of what is required to ensure that individuals are able to relate to one another as equals in society.[42]

On Grossly Intrusive and Moralizing Judgements

Luck egalitarianism has further been critiqued on grounds that its application requires others (in essence, the state) to make judgements of moral desert or responsibility in assigning outcomes to instances of option and brute luck.[43] In other words, because luck egalitarianism is based on the premise that no one should suffer from undeserved misfortune, luck egalitarianism seems to require the state to make grossly intrusive and moralizing judgements of an individual's past choices and private affairs. This particular form of state intervention, it has been argued, is problematic not only because it demonstrates disrespect (in terms of passing judgement on the extent of responsibility in cases appealing to an individual's expensive tastes and imprudent choices), but further interferes with an individual's privacy and liberty.[44]

Here, one may be inclined to suggest that any such "judgements" passed by the state should not be

interpreted as such. To pass a judgement requires an individual to form an opinion on a particular matter prior to reaching their decision; to a certain extent, this may be a matter of subjectivity. Whether a person's misfortune was or was not an instance of brute or option luck, however, may be a mere matter of fact; the decision to be made may therefore be objective in nature. This is not to say, of course, that all cases are or can be viewed as "clear cut", as certainly it may be difficult to ascertain the extent to which an individual's misfortune was beyond their control (see subsection i) below). The purpose of this argument serves only to provide a possible refutation to the claim that luck egalitarianism necessarily requires the state to pass judgement on an individual's private affairs in all cases.

Even if the above comment is incorrect and the state, under the luck egalitarianism conception, must indeed pass judgement on individual affairs, the objection raised may be misplaced altogether. That is to say, this criticism seems to be directed towards the application of luck egalitarianism rather than towards the conception of luck egalitarianism . "Probing" for information and the methods through which this is done is a concern of how to effectively and practically apply luck egalitarianism and does not contest the claims of luck egalitarians. Regardless if state intrusions do or do not infringe upon an individual's privacy, this objection may be more properly directed towards the practical application of luck egalitarianism rather than luck egalitarianism itself.

Luck Egalitarianism as Denying Personal Responsibility

Another critique voiced by Anderson is that luck egalitarianism does not promote individual responsibility.

Instead, she insists, luck egalitarianism provides individuals with an incentive to deny personal responsibility for their misfortunes and to represent their situation as one in which they were "helpless before uncontrollable forces".[45]

Although this may be a worthwhile claim, this argument appears to assume that individuals are somehow (naturally) inclined to deny personal responsibility, which may not be the case. Even if individuals are inclined to deny personal responsibility, an argument justifying this claim is required. If, however, individuals are viewed as autonomous beings, it may be unlikely that they are willing to so easily forfeit or dismiss their responsibility in order to receive state compensation. Even in instances where individuals falsely deny personal responsibility of their misfortune, this action itself (insofar as it is informed and willingly executed) would speak of their "true" character. If such is the nature of a person's true character, it may be paternalistic to "force" individuals behave otherwise.

In response, one might argue that allowing such behaviour to flourish, even if it is representative of the "true" character of a person, would generate a huge deadweight loss to society.[46] However, if a person is genuinely informed of the consequences of their actions (namely in terms of the additional financial burden that their potentially frugal compensatory claims would make on the state, especially in the context of scarce resources) it seems likely that any such deadweight loss to society would be minimal if not obsolete altogether. To argue otherwise would require and rely upon additional assumptions about human nature which are beyond the scope of this paper and of luck egalitarianism.

To reiterate, this concern also seems to fall in the scope of the practical application of luck egalitarianism rather than luck egalitarianism (which asks what equality demands) itself. Questions concerning how to organize, administer or apply a conception differ from questions about what a conception demands. It is worth recalling that the luck egalitarianism conception discussed here makes a weak equalisandum claim; the adoption of additional principles, which may be required for the practical execution of luck egalitarianism, has not been ruled out.

LUCK EGALITARIANISM'S RELIANCE ON METAPHYSICS

The main claim of luck egalitarianism (that individuals are entitled to compensatory relief so long as their misfortune does not derive from their choice) may also be problematic as it appears to rely heavily on the metaphysical debate of free will and determinism.[47] That is to say, the extent to which certain outcomes are or are not tied to an individual's personal will (assuming individuals even have free will!) may be a matter of debate and is therefore not so easily "determined".[48] If the distinction between choice and circumstance is philosophically dubious and morally implausible, and given the amount of weight luck egalitarianism places on this distinction, the very underpinning of luck egalitarianism seems to rest on a very unstable foundation. For brevity's sake, a discussion on the free will debate, albeit intriguing, will not be discussed in any great lengths.

It is worth mentioning that Cohen does briefly consider a possible response to the critique that luck egalitarianism's reliance choice (particularly if it is genuine or not) is problematic. From the point of view of

egalitarian justice, says Cohen, all that needs to be ascertained is that the more relevant information the individual has, the less cause there is for complaint of misfortune.[49] To expand, one may contend that there surely are some cases where it is less difficult to distinguish whether an individual's misfortune was or was not a product of choice or circumstance.[50] These cases may not only demonstrate that an "educated guess" concerning the extent of an individual's agency in their misfortune can be made, but may further be able to provide a good starting point for assessing other (potentially similar) cases. In short, if the notion of choice is social rather than purely metaphysical for luck egalitarianism, what is crucial for luck egalitarians is that society can, ordinarily, distinguish between instances where an individual acted freely or not.[51 & 52]

Secondly, luck egalitarians may be able to dismiss accounts of "hard determinism" by appealing to the feelings individuals tend to have that they willingly make (at least in some instances) their own choices. The degree to which these choices and their outcomes are influenced by external factors may indeed be a separate issue from whether or not an individual willingly made a choice. The notion of individual agency, in other words, may not only be relevant, but may also be independent and distinct from determinism. Regardless, even if hard determinism is correct and no person is responsible for any of his/her action, the luck egalitarian conception still remains coherent, as this would just entail that all persons are entitled to compensation for disadvantages that are beyond their control.

Alternatively, it may be held that metaphysics, particularly the free will and determinism debate, cannot

be separated from conceptions of justice and equality. Although involving metaphysics in luck egalitarianism is likely undesirable (given the difficulty and uncertainty of the question at hand), it does not mean that it should not be pursued. If metaphysics and luck egalitarianism are inextricably interlinked, this may suggest that, philosophically speaking, we need first to do "good" metaphysics and that the metaphysical debate must be "properly" settled. Again, this is not to say that such a task is easy, only that the difficultly of the task, although daunting, should not be a reason to avoid or dismiss the claims of luck egalitarianism.

Concluding Remarks

This paper sought to provide a critical discussion and defense of luck egalitarian as it has been developed by G.A. Cohen in, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," and by Richard J. Arneson in, "Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare". A brief overview and introduction of the main concepts and arguments associated with luck egalitarianism were first given. The latter portion of this paper presented nine objections against luck egalitarianism that have been voiced by Elizabeth Anderson in, "What is the Point of Equality?" and by Samuel Scheffler in, "What is Egalitarianism?" Each of these critiques were addressed and refuted, demonstrating that luck egalitarians can provide an answer to philosophical concerns. Insofar as individuals make choices knowingly and willingly, it was argued, luck egalitarianism does appear to be both a feasible and coherent conception of what equality demands.

NOTES

1. G.A. Cohen, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," *Ethics* 99, no. 4 (July 1989): 908, accessed 13 Oct. 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2381239.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 922

4. G.A. Cohen, "Luck and Equality: A Reply to Hurley," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 72, no. 2 (Mar. 2006): 442, accessed 26 Nov. 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40040935.

5. Cohen, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," 908.

6. Ibid.

7. Cohen, "Luck and Equality," 440.

8. Richard J. Arneson, "Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 56, no. 1 (May 1989): 88, accessed 13 Oct. 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4320032 .

9. Cohen, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," 908, 931.

10. Ibid., 907, 916.

11. Arneson, 77, 86.

12. Elizabeth S. Anderson, "What Is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109, no. 2 (Jan. 1999): 295, accessed 6 Nov. 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/233897.

13. Samuel Scheffler, "What is Egalitarianism?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 31, no. 1 (2003): 32, accessed 27 Oct. 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3558033.

14. Anderson, 295-299.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 301.

17. Kok-Chor Tan, *Justice, Institutions, and Luck* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 119.

18. Ibid., 119-120.

19. Ibid., 121-122.

20. Anderson, 297-300.

21. A similar discussion is provided in: Carl Knight, "In Defence of Luck Egalitarianism," *Res Publica* 11, no. 1 (Mar. 2005): 59-62, accessed 26 Nov. 2012, DOI 10.1007/s11158-004-4973-z.

22. Anderson, 335.

23. Tan, 126-128.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Anderson, 301.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 302.

30. Ibid., 306.

31. Ibid., 303.

32. Ibid., 306-307.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.
35. Tan, 129.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Knight, "In Defence of Luck Egalitarianism," 64-65.
39. Anderson, 312-316.
40. Scheffler, 21-24.
41. Tan, 131.
42. Ibid.
43. Anderson, 309.
44. Ibid., 305, 310.
45. Ibid., 311.
46. Ibid.
47. Scheffler, 18.
48. Ibid., 19.
49. Cohen, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," 934.
50. Carl Knight provides an expansion of this argument by using notions of "thin" and "thick" luck in: Carl Knight, "The Metaphysical Case for Luck Egalitarianism," *Social Theory and Practice* 32, no. 2 (Apr. 2006): 177-180, accessed 26 Nov. 2012, http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docview/199402725?accountid=15182.
51. Ibid., 183-188.
52. Tan, 137-139.

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Commentary

ZACHARY LAW

Although a subject of philosophical discourse in ancient philosophy, the subject of luck has been absent from substantive philosophical discussion until Bernard Williams and Thomas Nagel resurrected it. In the almost four decades since Williams and Nagel reintroduced luck to philosophical inquiry, it has had an impact upon many areas of thought. Erica Lavecchia's paper explores the relationship between egalitarian theory and issues presented by luck, and responds to recent objections against G.A. Cohen's and Richard J. Arneson's formulation of luck egalitarianism.

Lavecchia's paper makes a defence of luck egalitarianism by exploring how various critics have misunderstood the concept to which they are objecting, or how such critics miss the mark. This structure allows the author to respond to critics while at the same time elaborating on the nature and merits of luck egalitarianism. This model allows the author to flush out the preliminary definition offered at the top of the paper in an organic manner.

Luck egalitarianism is quite relevant in the current political climate, and its defence is doubly relevant for those concerned with justice. In a time when governments and other structuring institutions seem eager to lessen their social obligations, in accordance with an ideology of austerity, it is necessary to restate what justice demands. If we take it seriously, then luck egalitarianism pushes us to examine, as a subject of

justice, not only the choices that individuals make, but also the antecedent conditions that pertained when the agent to make that choice.

The understanding of luck egalitarianism presented in the paper insist that those things which affect the agent, but which the agent has no control over, are the proper subject of justice. Such an understanding of justice calls out attention to those things that have an effect on many, but only controlled by a few; those things that benefit a few while disadvantaging many. The understanding of luck egalitarianism provided in Lavecchia's paper allows us to better understand some of the problems that currently confront the world.

Schopenhauer vs. Nietzsche: Resignation vs. Affirmation

Z. DA COSTA

The aim of this paper is to explicate and evaluate the pessimism of Schopenhauer in light of Nietzsche's critique and his philosophy in the broad sense. The subjects of suffering, happiness, and pity will be paid special attention. In the end, it will be suggested that Nietzsche's view is preferable to Schopenhauer's.

INTRODUCTION:

"Unless *suffering* is the direct and immediate object of life, our existence must entirely fail of its aim". This is the opening line of Schopenhauer's famous essay, 'On the Sufferings of the World'. In that essay and in other works, Schopenhauer develops his unique and radical philosophical pessimism. It is the purpose of the present essay to understand this pessimistic thought, its basis and its justification, and to investigate not whether it is deserving of our time, for its massive influence leaves no question on that matter, but to ask instead whether it is compelling enough to persuade us of its truth. We will also consider in detail the writings of Nietzsche, whose main philosophy can be seen as a direct reaction to Schopenhauer's pressing concerns. If this essay is successful, it will be seen that although the problem Schopenhauer poses is one we should take seriously, his answer to this problem is ultimately unsatisfactory and we would be better off siding with the alternative

response from Nietzsche. Thus, this essay is fundamentally a debate between pessimism and optimism, though both, in this case, originate from opposite sides of the same source— namely, Schopenhauer's contention that, regarding existence, "it would be better not to have it" (WWR, 2, XLVI, 575)

I

The reason Schopenhauer puts forth this view, that it would be better for all of us if we did not exist, is because he sees everywhere, perhaps more vividly than anyone before him, the essential role that suffering plays in nature and in man's interactions with one another. All of the well-known and easily observable instances of suffering are assumed, but not argued for, since they are evident to anyone with enough life experience to be able to read his writings. Schopenhauer needs no argument that natural disasters, human greed, and all too often, simple cruelty causes immense suffering. What he is really interested in proving, and what we should be interested in investigating, is why suffering is not merely abundant, but *necessary* to life. If man had the technology to calm the seas and the skies, and the ethical sensibility not to inflict senseless pains on each other or use each other as disposable means, the sufferings mentioned already would cease to be, and all would be seemingly well. But Schopenhauer's insight is that this is not at all the case. Existence is *essentially* suffering for him because of two indisputable facts about nature.

First, he says, "Time is continually pressing upon us, never letting us take a breath, but always coming after us, like a taskmaster with a whip. If at any moment Time stays his hand, it is only when we are delivered over to the misery of boredom" (Benatar 432). The point here is that

due to the fleeting nature of time, any pleasures we may have are gone in an instant, and when finally time does seem to slow down and allow us a breath, we feel no rush, no drive, no purpose, and become stricken with boredom. The second fact Schopenhauer would have us realize is that all willing, striving, desiring necessarily contains a not insignificant ingredient of suffering. This follows from his claim that "Happiness and satisfaction always imply some desire fulfilled, some state of pain brought to an end" (Benatar 432). In other words, happiness is purely negative and evil or suffering is the positive element; it has a positive presence in us (Benatar 431). Since happiness is only the absence of suffering and all desiring is seen as lacking something, this lack is a source of suffering.

A further point Schopenhauer makes to cement his case is that when we finally do achieve satisfaction, or rather, when we *think* we've achieved it, really we have simply gone from desire to boredom, for these are "the twin poles of human life" (Hollingdale 45). He further writes that "great intensity in willing is in and by itself and directly a constant source of suffering, firstly because all willing as such springs from want, and hence from suffering" (WWR, 1, 65, 363). So, Schopenhauer's ultimate prescription is to achieve a state of complete resignation where no willing occurs and thus we have no perception of lack or of desire, whether to end pain or to gain happiness. We simply cease to will altogether. The question then remains whether or not such a state is possible and, even still, whether it is desirable[1]. But before

[1] It is no objection to Schopenhauer that he did not follow his philosophical prescription. In fact, Walter Kaufmann has argued on behalf of Nietzsche that we should instead commend Schopenhauer for

we deal with this question, it would be wise to also consider the details of Schopenhauer's account to determine if his pessimism is even justified on its own grounds. This determination will be the subject of the following section.

II

As intuitively compelling a writer as Schopenhauer is, there are several claims he makes in regard to the sufferings of existence that are less than *a priori* certain. For instance, he says that because we perceive time as being slower when bored or in pain, and faster when in a state of enjoyment or pleasure, "it is [proven] that our existence is happiest when we perceive it least; from this it follows that it would be better not to have it" (WWR, 2, XLVI, 575). But this does not follow. Our existence may be happiest when we perceive *time* least, but that says nothing of perceiving existence itself. In fact, several states of extreme perceptual intake are generally thought of as the most pleasurable states of being, such as when engaged in intellectual, aesthetic, or sexual stimulation. All Schopenhauer's present point proves is that we should not worry over or pay so much attention to time, not that perception (in other words, life) itself is undesirable. His is a point against alarm clocks and wrist watches, not sunsets or brilliant landscapes.

Secondly, Schopenhauer writes, "Every great pain, whether bodily or mental, states what we deserve; for it could not come to us if we did not deserve it" (WWR, 2, XLVI, 580). This is plainly false. While of course we do deserve some of our pains because they are the direct result of shortcomings on our part (e.g. a broken arm from an unsatisfied loan shark, or a demolished house

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his intellectual honesty: "Although Schopenhauer was very different from what he desired of man, he showed his intellectual conscience by not compromising and by not adjusting his 'will' to his 'being'" (GS 99, n 43).

built in Tornado Valley), there are a great number of pains, both mental and physical, that we could never have control over, and so we cannot be responsible for their presence in our lives (e.g. the untimely death of a loved one, or a random stray bullet in an otherwise safe neighborhood).

Another such claim is found in the essay 'On the Vanity of Existence', where Schopenhauer expounds his presentism (i.e. the view that only the present time is real; past and future times are unreal). He writes, "That which *has been* no longer *is*; it as little exists as that which has *never* been. But everything that *is* in the next moment *has been*... Time is that by virtue of which everything becomes nothingness in our hands and loses all real value" (Hollingdale 51). The point Schopenhauer is trying to make here is that since everything is fleeting, our existence seems meaningless and valueless. He also seems to be implying that happiness and pleasure are merely momentary experiences and do not last. But if this is so, it seems reasonable to expect pain to be the same way. Furthermore, we have good reason to doubt the truth of presentism as a philosophy of time in its own right[2].

The last claim we will analyze in this section is as follows: "For that thousands had lived in happiness and joy would never do away with the anguish and death-agony of one individual; and just as little does my present well-being undo my previous sufferings" (WWR, 2, XLVI, 576). Of course, nothing can *undo* suffering or anything past, but suffering need not be undone; it only need be given a purpose, a justification, a redemption. This purpose or redemption must surely not be of the religious variety usually offered, for neither Schopenhauer nor we would be satisfied with such an appeal. But instead, have most, if not all of us, not experienced some spread of time, however brief, in which we think to ourselves, 'This is it. This moment is what makes the countless others that

[2] See relevant works in the philosophy of time.

preceded it worth the endless pains they inflicted upon me. This moment overrules all others. It is in spite of the others that this moment occurs— nay, *thrives*!'? Is this not the feeling we get when we reach the top of Mount Everest, give birth to a healthy baby, or publish our first book? This argument by intuition is certainly not expected to convince everyone to the same extent, neither in my own formulation nor in Schopenhauer's counter formulation. It hinges on the writer's and reader's perspective, and thus, cannot be concrete; further support must be given if either side is to triumph. The following section will attempt to provide such support by drawing from the writings of a fellow German and near-contemporary of Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche.

III

The interesting thing about Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is that they grew up in the same country, in roughly the same time, in the same post-Kantian tradition, and accepted a number of the same philosophical presuppositions (e.g. atheism, the pertinent nature of the question of the value of existence, etc.) but that they interpreted these presuppositions in entirely different ways and founded diametrically opposed philosophies based on more or less the same foundation. In this section, we will continue our examination of Schopenhauer's thought, this time considering objections from a Nietzschean standpoint.

It seems to me that people always exaggerate when they speak of pain and misfortune… while one keeps studiously quiet about the fact that there are innumerable palliatives against pain, such as anaesthesia or the feverish haste of thoughts, or a quiet posture or good or bad memories, purposes, hopes, and many kinds of pride and sympathy… and at the highest degrees of pain one automatically loses consciousness… somehow it also

brings us some gift from heaven—new strength, for example, or at least a new opportunity for strength (GS 326)

In this passage, we see Nietzsche's general critique of Schopenhauer's pessimism, as well as his own upshot of such a view, namely, that suffering, though it is not quite as prevalent as some would suggest, even if it *was* so pervasive, still has at least the potential to lead to an increase in strength and power. Indeed, On Nietzsche's view, suffering is *the only thing* that has such potential. "It never occurs to them that, to put it mystically, the path to one's own heaven always leads through the voluptuousness of one's own hell" (GS 338). One reply Schopenhauer might have to such a passage regards the claim that "at the highest degrees of pain one automatically loses consciousness", to which he would respond, 'In cases of physical pain, yes, we often go into shock and can no longer immediately perceive the pain we are undergoing, but this does not apply to emotional pain. If emotional shock exists, it does not have the same numbing effect as in the physical case. If anything, emotional shock is the realization of how bad our present suffering actually is.' The Nietzschean reply to this objection by Schopenhauer will make itself clear as this section unfolds.

The chief difference between Schopenhauerian and Nietzschean thought is the way in which each deals with suffering. For both, suffering abounds everywhere; but, whereas Schopenhauer found in this fact reason to condemn the world, Nietzsche found in the same fact reason to love it. This difference stems from the ways each thinker dealt with the realization that there is no God, no absolute Being and lawgiver. For Schopenhauer, this

meant that the value of existence must be called into question, but Nietzsche recognized that it meant something more— "the value of these *values themselves* must be called into question" (emphasis mine. GM, P, 6). Thus one of Nietzsche's main objections to Schopenhauer is that he does not push his atheism far enough. We see this in a section from *Beyond Good and Evil* in which Nietzsche says of Schopenhauer, he is "one who denies God and the world but *comes to a stop* before morality" (BGE 186). We see evidence of Schopenhauer's clinging to Christian morality in his writings when he says things such as, "Like the children of a libertine, we come into the world with the burden of sin upon us" (Benatar 436). This is a perfect example of how Schopenhauer's philosophy is essentially Christian in all important aspects, according to Nietzsche. Its pamphlet contains different bullet points, but they all lead to the same conclusion— nihilism, a point even Schopenhauer recognizes (WWR, 2, XLVI, 584). For where else would Schopenhauer, who openly states his admiration for the myth of the fall of Adam, derive the concept of original sin, if not from Christianity or some equivalent (WWR, 2, XLVI, 580)?

Consider also the different ways each thinker dealt with the satisfaction (or lack thereof) of the will. Schopenhauer writes of man in general, "The unnatural way in which he lives, and the strain of work and emotion, lead to a degeneration of the race, and so his goal is not often reached" (Benatar 436). This is the exact opposite of Nietzsche's view of satisfaction and progression. For Schopenhauer, work, emotion, striving, toil, and hardship lead to degeneration; for Nietzsche, these things alone provide the basis for any logical progression of man at all. And when Schopenhauer writes, "All that we lay hold on resists us, because it has a will of

its own that must be overcome", this sounds like Nietzsche lifted it right off the page, but the two authors interpret it in such vastly different ways (WWR, 2, XLVI, 577). For Schopenhauer, everything has its will that must be overcome in order to satisfy us in any way, but it is ultimately too great a force of resistance for us to work against. And even if we could finally overcome such a resistance, the end result would be little more than a disappointment and certainly would not be worth the pains it took to achieve. For Nietzsche too, this process of overcoming is not an easy one in many cases, but therein lies the greatness of our eventual success. Through this process we strengthen ourselves; and our satisfaction lies not in the ending achievement, which in all fairness Nietzsche would admit will inevitably be a disappointment, but in the very process of overcoming itself. We see evidence of this in section 656 of *The Will to Power*: "The will to power can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore it seeks that which resists it". This leads into the next aspect of thought we will consider, the respective conceptions of happiness.

As we saw in Section I, for Schopenhauer, happiness is the experience of being free from pain, but this experience never lasts due to its purely negative character. A corollary of this, though, has been offered by Bernard Reginster, who points out that this analysis of happiness also applies to Schopenhauer's concept of resignation, "which therefore proves not to be the 'cure' Schopenhauer takes it to be" (Reginster 289, n. 20). In other words, if a necessary (but perhaps not sufficient) condition for happiness is freedom from want or pain, and resignation is the total cessation of all willing *in order to achieve a state characterized by freedom from want or pain*, then not only happiness, but resignation too must be merely

temporary, given Schopenhauer's view of the nature of time.

On the other hand, Nietzsche's conception of happiness rests on an entirely opposite foundation. Concerning those who are constantly trying to make things easier and less hard for themselves and for others he writes, "How little you know of human *happiness,* you comfortable and benevolent people, for happiness and unhappiness are sisters and even twins that either grow up together or, as in your case, *remain small* together" (GS 338). What this somewhat cryptic passage means is that happiness and unhappiness are inextricably tied together. Where one grows, the other grows with it. But in cases like the one Nietzsche is condemning, when unhappiness halts, true happiness does so as well, for each one is needed to achieve any sort of progress. Thus, when we focus our energy on simply eliminating unhappiness, we "remain small"; we do not grow higher or progress. Happiness for Nietzsche is not unending pleasure or the total cessation of pain, but "the feeling that power is *growing*, that resistance is overcome" (A 2). And a fundamental aspect of resistance is at least some amount of suffering. Therefore, happiness presupposes intermittent sates of unhappiness, as can be seen explicitly from some of Nietzsche's unpublished notes, which provide a more clear-cut explication of this essential tension. He writes, "The feeling of pleasure lies precisely in the dissatisfaction of the will, in the fact that the will is never satisfied unless it has opponents and resistance… This dissatisfaction, instead of making one disgusted with life, is the great stimulus to life" (WP 696, 697). It is this notion of stimulus that sets the tone for the last theme we will discuss in this section— the debate over pity.

The conception of pity plays a pivotal role in both the philosophy of Schopenhauer and that of Nietzsche. For the former, pity serves as the basis for morality. Schopenhauer regards "tolerance, patience, regard, and love of neighbour, of which everyone stands in need, and which, therefore, every man owes to his fellow" to be "that which is after all the most necessary thing in life" (Benatar 439). Because we all suffer so much and so frequently, indeed because we are all *essentially* suffering beings, we have a duty to do what we can to relieve as much of this inevitable suffering as we can, for ourselves and for others.

Nietzsche, on the contrary, denounces pity as traditionally conceived as "the *practice* of nihilism" (A 7). He sees in pity "a will to the *denial* of life, a principle of disintegration and decay", because "life is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker, suppression, hardness", etc. (BGE 259). In other words, pity, for Nietzsche, attempts to make life something other than what it is; it attempts to "preserve what is ripe for destruction" (A 7). Thus, he writes, "This depressive and contagious instinct crosses those instincts which aim at the preservation of life and at the enhancement of its value… Schopenhauer was hostile to life; therefore pity became a virtue for him" (A 7). Schopenhauer denied life and viewed it as something to be diminished to the greatest extent possible; thus, he valued pity as that which "persuades men to *nothingness*" (A 7). But Nietzsche loved life and its enhancement, and thus abhorred Christian pity, as that which attempts to level the playing field and negates rather than affirms, which stagnates and drags down rather than progresses and pushes up. Thus, he writes, "To those human beings who are of any concern to me I wish suffering, desolation,

sickness, ill-treatment, indignities… I have no pity for them, because I wish them the only thing that can prove today whether one is worth anything or not—that one endures" (WP 910).

In summation, we see that Schopenhauer denounced suffering and praised pity, while Nietzsche did just the reverse, but with the same benevolent intentions. Thus, he says, "I want to make them bolder, more persevering, simpler, gayer. I want to teach them what is understood by so few today, least of all by these preachers of pity: *to share not suffering but joy*" (GS 338).

IV

We have now examined the majority of the primary points of contact between the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. We have understood the motivations of the former and the criticisms of the latter. In closing, we will analyze one final passage, one which permits of two very stark interpretations and which highlights the differences in thought this essay has tried to illuminate. Schopenhauer writes, "We console ourselves with death in regard to the sufferings of life, and with the sufferings of life in regard to death" (WWR, 2, XLVI, 579). If this is the case, as it may well be for some, could we not instead console ourselves regarding the sufferings of life by noting that what does not kill us makes us stronger, and regarding death, that we have (at least potentially) led a life that is *worthy* of death? I mean by this, that our life is made more valuable by its impermanence, that being immortal is of no use to one who makes good of his time. Mightn't we ask, in Nietzschean fashion, 'Who is the one that fears death, that wants eternal life?' The answer, of course, would be:

he who *denies* life, who clings to *being* in a world that is essentially *becoming*, who is not strong enough for life.

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Commentary

WILLIAM CODDINGTON

To be blunt, this is a very important paper. In our current social and political paradigm, it is very easy to resign oneself to a pessimistic outlook. In the face of uncertainty and suffering—whether by our own hand or by the hand of another—it is common to think that life may not be worth living. It may appear to us, as it appears to Schopenhauer, that suffering is the sole central point of existence. This leaves human existence as simply a trail from cradle to grave interrupted only by instances of pain.

Harrowing as this notion may be, Da Costa makes the argument that Nietzsche's position on the meaning of suffering is more correct and more fruitful. This is grounded by showing how, by Nietzsche's logic, Schopenhauer refuses to let go of his notions of Christian morality and he misuses the notion of resistance and will. The positive thesis of the essay rests on Nietzsche's argument that while suffering is essential and inevitable, it is a part of true happiness found by overcoming hardship and pain.

This flies in the face of modern intuition of "cut out suffering so all that is left is happiness". This becomes especially terrifying when looking at the pain and suffering that occurs in the world today as a result of economic inequity, oppression, and bare human cruelty. In essence, this essay presents a rational argument for a thoughtful and hopeful worldview that conquers suffering in a positive and fruitful way. I am glad that this article is published, since it is a necessary and useful position that

more people need to understand and use. Beauty is found in impermanence and suffering is what makes happiness meaningful.

For want of an example, the damage done by the doctrine of pessimism is evident in voter apathy found in the western world. By resigning to a two—or three—party system, we are complicit in our own suffering, too fearful to make any attempt at surmounting political issues. By taking an optimistic and Nietzschean worldview, we allow for hope in overcoming the obstacles presented by current climate of stagnation. An example of this hopeful worldview can be found in modern critical theory and its redefinition of accepted terms as we can see in work done on gender relations or the personal/political divide.

Are A Properties Primitive?

ARASH KHAYAMIAN

Markosian argues that there really are A properties and they are excellent candidates for the kind of property that should be taken as primitive. Zinkernagel argues that our usual notion of time is necessarily related to physical systems that can serve as clocks. In this essay, first I will argue why, if time is necessarily related to physical systems that can serve as clocks, A properties can't be taken as primitive. Secondly, I will argue against Zinkernagel's argument regarding the necessity of physical clocks for the meaning of time. Finally, I will argue that we should reject A properties as primitive based on the verification principle.

PRIMITIVE A PROPERTIES OR A BEGINNING FOR TIME?

Markosian makes the claim that A properties are excellent candidates for the kind of property that should be taken as primitive. A properties refer to temporal properties such as *pastness*, *presentness* and *futurity*, that cannot be correctly explained in terms of *earlier than*, *simultaneous with* and *later than*. For example, if I were to say that 'I was born 25 years ago', if '25 years ago' has a property that cannot be explained by saying '25 years earlier than this token', it is its A property. By primitive, Markosian is referring to concepts that can't be analyzed in terms of other concepts. It is important to note that Markosian thinks that there is a close connection between conceptual analysis and the nature of things. I say this because Markosian is referring to A properties as

primitive in response to questions about the *nature* of A properties. Consequently, primitive should be interpreted as linguistic and metaphysical. Moreover, Markosian says that A properties are genuine and objective facts about the world.

Markosian gives two reasons for why we should accept A properties as primitive. First, he can't imagine what an analysis of A properties would look like, and second, since everything cannot be analyzed, A properties are excellent candidates that we should take as primitive. Markosian's second reason will be discussed later in the paper. In response to his first reason, he is begging the question. B theorists exactly try to analyze talk about A properties in terms of B properties: *earlier than*, *simultaneous* with and *later than*. Moreover, if A properties can't be analyzed using other concepts, that might just indicate that they are confused rather than primitive.

Let us now consider the following argument:

P1. The beginning of the universe is an event.

P2. If something is an event it has a past, present and future.

C1. The beginning of the universe was at one point in the future.

P3. If the universe was at one point in the future, there was time before the universe existed.

C2. Time existed before the universe began.

The controversial premise of this argument is P2. If we accept Markosian's account of A properties, then there always has been a pure passage of time and events have been going from future to present and past. On this account there cannot be a singularity event without a past, present or future because first we know that an event has a past, present and future and then we know other things about the world such as the laws of physics. If there is a contradiction, the latter has to be given up for the former.

Zinkernagel, on the other hand, thinks that physical systems that can serve as clocks are logically necessary for the meaning of time. By a physical clock, he is referring to any physical system undergoing change. Zinkernagel's account of meaning is that of Wittgenstein; meaning as use. So the meaning of time is its use in ordinary language. Zinkernagel's meaning of time provides us with a cosmological model of the universe in which time and physical change (the big bang) began simultaneously and there was no time before the big bang.

P4. Time is necessarily related to physical systems that can serve as clocks.

P5. Before the big bang, there wasn't a physical system that could serve as a clock.

C3. There was no time before the big bang.

Zinkernagel considers three versions of metaphysical time that can allow for earlier times than the big bang: *mathematical time, container time* and *counterfactual time*.

Mathematical time is time that might be independent of physical states of affairs and can just be represented mathematically. For example, the time after the big bang might be represented by the positive part of the real number line and time before the big bang can be represented by the negative part of the real number line. However, Zinkernagel argues that this is not what we mean by time when we use it in our ordinary language. He says that if we are given the real number line, we won't know that it is representing time. It might just be a representation of spatial dimensions so the meaning of time is underdetermined by formal mathematical structure and there has to be something more to time. What is missing is the physical clock that is necessary for the concept of time.

Container time is a kind of container in which physical objects and events are placed in. Even if there were no physical objects and events, the container time would still exist. Consequently, on this account there is time before the big bang and the big bang itself happens in the container of time. However, against this view Zinkernagel says that there is no way to clarify what the container is without explaining it in mathematical terms or by reference to the content of the container. If we explain it using mathematical terms, then it is mathematical time. And if we explain it using its content then we are referring to physical objects and events, and this is just Zinkernagel's account of time as dependent on a physical clock.

Counterfactual time takes advantage of counterfactual conditionals to express time. According to the Oxford dictionary of philosophy (2012): "A counterfactual is a conditional of the form 'if p were to happen q would', or 'if p were to happened q would have happened', where the supposition of p is contrary to the fact that not-p." A counterfactual in regards to time and the beginning of the universe is that 'if the universe began with a bang 14 billion years ago, it might have begun at an earlier point.' or 'if there was a sun and an earth before the big bang, it would have taken one earth year for the earth to revolve around the sun.'. On this account it is meaningful to talk about time before the universe existed. In response, Zinkernagel says that the possibility of time before the universe is not an indicator of the actuality of time before the universe, and that, each possible world has its own time dependent on physical clocks but we can't use a possible world example to talk about our actual universe.

If the big bang is the beginning of the universe, then we can replace C2 with C2': there was time before the big bang. C2' and C3 are contradictory. Based on the law of noncontradiction, we have to either reject Markosian, Zinkernagel or both.

Are Physical Clocks Necessary?

Zinkernagel's main thesis was that the meaning of time necessarily depends on physical clocks and he was defending this notion against metaphysical time. Somehow when it came to counterfactual time his argument switched to the actuality of time in this universe with these laws. However, metaphysical concepts in general don't have to depend on how this world is. The same is true about a metaphysical account of time and counterfactual time which is a metaphysical account of

time. People can talk about time before the big bang and by talking about it they can just *mean* something like 'if there was a sun and an earth, it would take the earth an earth year to revolve around the sun'. This statement is meaningful, especially in the sense that Wittgenstein defines meaning as use. People refer to counterfactuals in everyday use of language and it seems to be a sensible thing to do. In this respect Zinkernagel might be begging the question against his opponent when he refutes the counterfactual account of time based on the fact that it doesn't say anything about the actual world. Thus, he cannot say that the meaning of time *necessarily* depends on physical clocks. *Necessary* includes metaphysical possibilities and Zinkernagel has not been able to successfully refute at least one metaphysical account of time (counterfactual time) that does not depend on a physical clock.

A VERIFICATIONIST ACCOUNT OF TIME

Aside from Zinkernagel's concept of time that necessarily depends on a physical clock, a weaker claim can be made that time depends on a physical clock to be verified:

P6. In order to verify something, there has to be some physical evidence.

P7. There is no physical evidence for the existence of time before the big bang.

C4. Time before the big bang cannot be verified.

I will also make the normative claim that if something cannot be verified it's best to assume that it does not exist. Otherwise, we would have to remain agnostic

regarding gods, ghosts and demons that don't leave physical evidence of their existence behind.

C4. Time before the big bang cannot be verified.

P8. If something cannot be verified, it is best to assume that it does not exist.

C5. It is best to assume that time does not exist before the big bang.

On the other hand, if we take A properties as primitive, we will be left with a concept of time that existed before the big bang. Therefore, if we accept the normative verificationist assumption, we have to reject A properties as primitive. In response to Markosian's second argument that was mentioned earlier, I think that a good normative principle should be taken as primitive and not a descriptive one. Therefore, I'm inclined to take P8 as primitive as opposed to A properties.

CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have argued that if A properties are primitive, there cannot be a beginning to time. I have used this to show that there is a contradiction in accepting A properties as primitive and thinking of time as necessarily being dependent on a physical clock. I explained why time does not necessarily lose its meaning if it is not dependent on a physical clock. Finally, I argued that it is best to reject A properties as primitive in the face of a verification principle.

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Commentary

ANDRE GORDON

For elucidation purposes, I will quickly summarize a few background points for Khayamian's paper. The philosophy of time, in the plainest sense, attempts to ascertain the metaphysical nature of time itself, beyond simply our physical understanding of it. In an attempt to understand the nature of time, philosopher J.M. E McTaggert formalized 2 ways of understanding how time works: (1) *A* series time and (2) *B* series time. *A* time for McTaggert is the assertion that all events in any time line have necessary property of pastness, presentness, or futurity. Events in time working in a manner of their relation to time is an absolute, mind independent idea, so there is only ever one possible way of an event being past, present or future. Events in time move from one absolute past, through the present, and into the future. As such, the A properties of Khayamian's paper says that all events have an inherent pastness, presentness, or futurity to them.

B series time says the exact opposite of *A*-series time. It asserts that all of time does not hold necessary functions of past, present and future. Rather, all events on a time line exist in simple relations with each other. When one thinks of time on a timescale, the properties of past, present or future, are not inherent in every event in *B* time. The points are only points in relation to each other. The present, then, has no true absolute notion; it is merely one's point of reference on the timescale. Points in the time scale are merely presented in terms of being before or after any other point in time. Much like there is no absolute "left" or "right" of the universe, only a point of

reference from which one constructs left or right, *B*-time has no mind independent way of thinking of tense.

A response one may rally towards Khayamian's paper would be to argue for the way Zinkernagel defines time as use in his article. Khayamian argues that counter factual statements about time do have meaning, therefore they are prescribing use, and therefore Zinkernagel is being circular. I would argue however that being meaningful and being real or actual do in fact have a distinction, even in a counterfactual world. It is possible for non-existent properties to have power in our metaphysical framework, but this does not refute the fact they do not in fact exist. The only reason why we feel this has any meaning is because of an error in our language, in giving meaning to meaningless portions of our language. As such, the meaning and usefulness of the "year" Khayamian argues to be is only useful in the context of the logic of that sentence. Zinkernagel may argue that going beyond this argument and talking about time is only issuable because of our illogical imaginations. The leap in logical foundations is the assertion that “this sentence is meaningful in that alludes to something our minds find tolerable” to “This sentence is meaningful in that it grasps something beyond itself”. The second statement is not the first rephrased, but this is something that may have been missed in the paper.

Time is something beyond one's meaning towards it, and human imagination and understanding can allow things that are unfounded to be true, but that may not be right. If the "year" of Khayamian's understanding of that sentence is unfounded, then it does not have to hold beyond that sentence itself. Words may have meaning,

but they may be interpreted into ways that go beyond their allowable use.

Nietzsche's Will to Power: With an In-Depth Analysis on the Psychological Interpretation

STEPHEN FIRANG

The 'Will to Power' has come to be known as one of the central tenets of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy. However, today there continues to be a debate as to whether Nietzsche's will to power is ontological, physiological, or a psychological thesis. This paper examines Nietzsche's 'Will to power' (WTP) with an in-depth analysis of the psychological aspect of WTP. The psychological interpretation of Nietzsche's WTP aims to evaluate human behavior and motivation such as the belief in morality, free will, power, domination and subjugation, and the ascetic life. This paper argues that Nietzsche's WTP as a psychological thesis renders human values as delusional, and so, human nature as mechanistic and predetermined by the forces of WTP.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO NIETZSCHE

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) as documented in Parkes (2005) was born in Rocken, Saxony, and educated at the universities of Bonn and Leipzig. He was appointed Professor of Classical Philology at the age 24, but resigned due to prolong ill-health. Between then and his death, Nietzsche devoted his time to thinking and writing. During the years between 1872 and 1888 he published his

first work, The Birth of Tragedy in 1872, and numerous other philosophical books. With topics ranging from ancient Greek arts to the pervading moralities of his contemporary European culture.

In one of his most famous philosophical interpretations Nietzsche argues that "one (physiologists) should think again before postulating the drive to self-preservation as the cardinal drive in all organic being. Rather, a living thing desires above all to release its strength- life as such is the will to power" (Hollingdale, 1990, p.44). In other words, for Nietzsche, the essence of life is the will to power. In this paper, I aim to investigate and evaluate the psychological aspect of Nietzsche's WTP. However, to help support my argument and develop my thesis, and in order to somewhat clarify Nietzsche's WTP; it is important that I outline the paper into three sections. Drawing upon scholarly interpretations of WTP, section one discuss Nietzsche's WTP. This will include scholars such as Walter Kauffman, Martin Heidegger, R.J. Hollingdale, and Michel Harr. The idea of WTP as a psychological thesis is explored in section two. Section three focuses on possible objections and arguments against Nietzsche's WTP as a psychological thesis. My critique of Nietzsche's WTP as a psychological thesis aims to highlight the impact WTP has on agents in the area of action theory. Finally, the paper concludes by arguing that as a psychological thesis Nietzsche's WTP necessitates that human values and freedom are delusional. As a consequence, human nature becomes a product of the forces of WTP.

WHAT IS THE WILL TO POWER?

Since its introduction, Nietzsche's WTP have come to be interpreted differently by various scholars from

different school of thought. As a consequence, there have been numerous interpretations of Nietzsche's WTP ranging from various fields such as metaphysics, physiology, and psychology. The metaphysical aspect of WTP as indicated by Haar (2006) "is something totally different from the psychological and physiological insofar as it is concerned with the totality of beings rather than the forces that underlie psychic and physical phenomena (e.g., the body-mind relation) in the world" (6-7). In other words, the totality of existence and everything that exists according to Haar (2006) is driven by the will to power. However, Nietzsche's concept of WTP is not an original concept that he revolutionary developed. Following Schopenhauer, according to Renginster (2006), Nietzsche intended to present "his concept of WTP as a substitute for the Schopenhauerian notion of the will to live" (105). His critique of Schopenhauer aimed to enlighten philosophers that Schopenhauer's philosophical analysis of life and truth missed the mark. For in laying emphasis to the view that the essence of life is the will to live, Schopenhauer negates the existence of things already in existence as if they are in the process of coming into existence. Such negation Nietzsche asserts is absurd and contradictory. Thus, as a response to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche raises the question that it is indeed axiomatic and true that "what does not exist cannot will; yet what already exists, how could that still want existence?" (Parkes, 2005 p. 100). Hence, Nietzsche explicitly thinks that Schopenhauer's concept of the will to live is implausible, and contrary to evidence. As an alternative to Schopenhauer's concept of the will to live, Nietzsche presents his concept of WTP by asserting that wherever "one finds the living; there one finds the will to power, and even in the will of one who serves, there one finds the

will to be master" (Parkes, 2005, p.99). This assertion by Nietzsche, according to Heidegger (1991) implies that WTP "is the basic character of life for the reason that anything dead cannot 'Be', as a result, 'life' in the Nietzschean term, notes Heidegger, is just another word for 'Being' and the expansion of power" (p.194).

In social animals like humans, one wills to be master and commander as a means to overcoming one's present individuality and condition. The will for self-mastery "prevails even in the willing of servants, not insofar as he strives to free himself from his role as underling, but rather, to command the object of his labour" (Heidegger 1991, p.194). Such evidence shows that everything that exists has their affirmation in WTP. Also, WTP, Nietzsche argues, has become a prevailing force among organic creatures that the incentives and affirmation of all organisms have come to be perceived as WTP. In other words, the satisfaction of the fundamental desires of organic beings is the product of WTP. For this reason, Nietzsche urges that it is proper to propose a principle of valuation; a revaluation of all values based on WTP.

THE WILL TO POWER AS A REVALUATION OF ALL VALUES

Values hitherto have come to be interpreted differently by various socio-political groups. The will to power as a principle of a new valuation is a crucial component of Nietzsche's philosophical project. It serves as the basis to Nietzsche's critique of all existing values. As Heidegger (1991) noted, valuations has come to have different phrases such as "the cultural values of a nation, the vital values of a people, and of moral, aesthetic and religious values" (15). All these values share common characteristics, that is, they all partake in the appeal to what is supreme. However, the word value according to

Nietzsche should not only be conceived in the traditional sense, but rather, "values should be perceived as a condition of life, of being alive; a condition which supports, furthers, and awakens the enhancement of life" (Heidegger 1991, p.15-16). This means that WTP is a force that seeks new values to make life qualitatively better and enduring. However, traditional values such as religious and cultural values according to Nietzsche are decadent in nature, and life hindering. These values through moral commands and religious zeal strive to devaluate and negate life by postulating a world beyond. For this reason, Nietzsche emphasizes that the old values are life-hindering, for they devalue one's natural instinct to self-overcoming and life enhancement.

The WTP as the principle of a new valuation serves to replace old values with new values, values that are life enhancing and affirming. For unlike the old values which were hostile to life, WTP as a new valuation is amicable to life, one that recognizes the natural world as meaningful. Thus, as a new valuation, it is plausible to perceive WTP as a life-affirming force which seeks to replace old values with new values by transforming the psychology of the individual to accept the natural world as meaningful and doubt the metaphysical (world beyond). This psychological regeneration according to Nietzsche empowers individuals to affirm life and overcome the propagandas instilled by the old values.

THE WILL IN WTP

Thus far I have given insights into some of the possible interpretations of Nietzsche's WTP and its underlining nature. I now want to turn to the issue of the will in WTP. The will has come to be perceived as a mental phenomenon that can only be projected onto creatures

that possess intellect. However, as noted in Hollingdale (1990), willing is a highly complex phenomenon that takes place outside one's consciousness and control" (45-48). In rational creatures the will is inseparable, for the reason that such creatures are equipped with both sensation and intellect. This means for example, a person's strong sensation of hunger or thirst is simultaneously accompanied by the powerful thought to drink or eat. Hence, for humans, the will is perceived as a bundle of thought and sensation which accompanies one another. This shows that organism varies from one another on the basis that some organism are configured and equipped by nature with sensations, yet lacking intellect. While possibly some organism like plants may possess neither. With this it is plausible to argue that WTP as a force helps us to differentiate living creatures from non-living on the basis that inanimate objects lack the subjectivity to will, whereas, animate things which possess subjectivity can will. While WTP helps us to differentiate the essence of living and non-living entities, nonetheless, this does not negate the fact that inanimate objects (e.g., plants, trees, etc.) lack WTP. Like humans, a plant for example will seek to grow its roots and gain resources within its environment as the activity towards power.

Furthermore, to clarify the concept of WTP, Nietzsche explains the will by using birds of prey as an analogy. According to Nietzsche, the natural behavior of birds of prey has shown us that things operate according to their essential nature, and the essential nature of birds of prey is to kill. For Nietzsche this means that the nature of a thing is identical to its will, for insofar as all things moves towards its object (e.g., the will of the bird of prey is to kill the lamb), the will as a result is something inseparable

from its object. In the Genealogy of Morals he further explains this by asserting that it is absurd to assume that lambs bear a grudge towards birds of prey or view them as evil. Instead, birds of prey do not bear a grudge towards lambs; in fact, they view lambs as tasty and as an objects of their prey" (Nietzsche, 1994, p.28). In other words, Nietzsche is arguing that for one to assume the bird of prey would not kill the lamb is to negate the will of that species of animal to a different animal. For by nature, the will of the bird of prey is to always hunt the lamb as its object of desire .This for Nietzsche affirms that all natural things- including humans are one and the same with its will.

As noted above, unlike other organisms, WTP in human is accompanied by a bundle of powerful thought and sensation which drives persons to their ultimate goal: self-overcoming and life enhancement. This means that values such as ascetic value which a person strives to overcome nihilism (metaphysical meaninglessness and suffering) by willing nothing, nonetheless still remains a will. For by willing to not will, the ascetic individual affirms their will to power, which is the will to overcoming all that is biological and natural. Thus, according to Nietzsche, as noted by Tanner (2000), even the ascetic life of a priest or moralists essentially shows that by nature "humans would rather will nothingness than not will" (p.88). This will towards nothingness reaffirms one's drive, the will to power. For this reason, as Heidegger (1991) notes, Nietzsche conceived of WTP as psychological. However, he does not describe the will according to traditional psychology; rather, he defines psychology (the will) according to the essence of WTP" (193). The next section then will examine the

psychological interpretation of Nietzsche's WTP for the reason that it provides an account for a wide range of human motivation, thoughts, and behaviors. Also, it will shed light as to whether human nature is mechanical and predetermined or free.

THE WILL TO POWER AS PSYCHOLOGICAL

This section examines the psychological thesis of WTP and its impact on human behavior. Since the birth of Western philosophy, moral philosophers contend that human beings are psychologically motivated by aversions and appetites. That is, a person by nature desires to maximize pleasure and minimise pain. With this interpretation of nature, moral philosophers have come to hold the view that human beings are psychologically driven by their ego. In other words, according to the psychological egoist, humans are driven by an egoistic motive-stimulant which acts as a legislature in human behavior. Such behavior according to the egoists is stimulated by the desire for self-preservation, happiness, self-respect, self-assertion, and ownership. Thus, these egoistic desires, evident in empirical psychology, shows that human inclinations towards self-preservation, happiness, and respect are one of the attributes in life that humans esteem the most. As a result, empirical psychology, according to the egoist has demonstrated that whatever satisfies our desires for self-preservation and happiness is what has intrinsic value for humans.

Contrary to the thesis of the psychological egoist, Nietzsche sets out to propose a psychological thesis of human behavior as an alternative thesis to the egoist. As Soll (2012) indicates, Nietzsche's psychological thesis of "human behavior is aimed to show that human actions are ultimately motivated by a 'will to power' rather than an

egoistic stimulant motivated by the desire to attain pleasure and avoid pain and displeasure" (118). In a way, WTP serves to analyse different types of human behavior as motivated by power. Hence, one can argue that the principle of revaluation in conjunction with the psychological thesis as described above is intended by Nietzsche to enhance and affirm life, despite the pain and suffering in the world. It serves to give us a basis on the origin of all values. One of the values as already described above is the ascetic value. This value motivated by the will to power functions as a motive stimulant which empowers an individual to overcome pain and suffering through a new affirmation one that is anti-biological and transcendental.

THE WILL TO POWER AS VALUES

The psychological belief in morality, religion, domination, and asceticism all functions as a means to power. Psychologically, morality has come to serve as a dominating force insofar as it is used by the value-positer as a tool to dominate others. On the surface it reveals itself as a principal force that negates the world of existence (natural world). However, in essence, it functions as a dominating force aimed to control the behavior and belief of others. Second, although morality is anti-biological on the basis that it negates and denounces the natural, yet the hypocrisy of the moralists is that they strive to attain power through the passing of moral judgements. In doing this, the moralists create a system intended to subjugate individual conscience by casting judgement on an agents' behavior and intention wherein those actions conforming to the moralists' imperative are judged as good, vice versa. Hence, Nietzsche argues, driven by WTP, the moralists (the

priest-philosopher) aimed to control and dominate the non-moralists (the common person) through the creation of moral systems that casted judgement on human action. "It is from these that the notion of 'Good' and 'Evil' arise, and also 'conscience' is created to adjudicate the value of every action in regard to its consequences and intention"(Kaufmann & Hollingdale 1967, p.90). It is from here that Nietzsche thinks the master-slave moralities arise. The master (the moralists), conceiving his/her actions as the epitome of all good behaviors in contrast to the feeble and common person, felt the right to create moral values in society. However, by contrast, WTP working in ways to enable the common person to overcome themselves, and the harsh environment created by their masters, psychologically empowered the slaves to establish their own values. As a result, from the slaves' perspective, according to Tanner (2000), "slaves regarded their masters as evil, and defined 'good' by what is unlike them. Through this psychological hegemony, the slaves exercised their will to power in ways that were effective; even to the extent of converting the masters to their own values" (82-83). Thus, WTP as a psychological symptom, replaced old moral values with new values; a symptom that psychologically motivated individuals (slaves) to enhance and affirm life by overcoming psychological and physiological hardship and domination produced by master-morality.

Like morality, religion, as Kaufmann & Hollingdale (1967) notes is driven by WTP as another "principal means by which one can make whatever one wishes out of man insofar as one possess creative forces in the form of a priestly class" (93). Religion driven by the will to dominate, overpower, and self-overcoming serves as a will

to live. This will in particular attains the love of God as the ultimate justification to rising above moral values and legal codes. Such metaphysical justification is brought about by the species of man who perceives themselves as superior to the moralists. This species of man, "the priest, feels itself to be the norm, the high point and the supreme expression of the type of man humanity ought to epitomize" (Kaufmann & Hollingdale 1967, p.92). Also, as a means to powering and subjugating those conforming to their systems of thought, the priest using the holy lie (the propaganda of punishment and rewards in the after-life) were able to maintain their position of power in society. The only way to overcome religion and the value system of a priestly class Nietzsche argues, is to show that their errors have ceased to be beneficial – that they rather do harm than good" (Kaufmann & Hollingdale 1967, p.97).

EVALUATION

ON HAAR'S METAPHYSICAL INTERPRETATION OF WTP

Following an exposition of Nietzsche's WTP and the psychological aspect of WTP, this section evaluates Nietzsche's WTP along with some objections and arguments. First, as indicated in the section "What is the Will to Power?" Haar (2006) highlights that WTP if interpreted as a metaphysical thesis grants us the view that the whole totality of existence is the will to power. However, such interpretation of WTP consequently follows that the concept is unfalsifiable. This is because if the totality of all that exists is the product of WTP, then it necessary follows that all events in existence should be perceived as driven by WTP. Hence, there is no method that one can use to falsify WTP, since such method itself would be a product of WTP. Nevertheless, I think Haar's account of WTP is implausible on the basis that one can

reasonably substitute WTP with any other concept to explain the totality of existence such as the concept of "God", "the invisible hand", "metaphysics" etc. Thus, although it is somewhat plausible to assume WTP as the essence of reality, however, it should not be concluded that WTP explains the totality of everything, for similarly one can postulate a new concept to explain reality.

Haar might object that WTP is the only plausible theory that best explain why things behave a certain way, which is the impulse towards power. The problem with this response is that one can equally attribute such behavior to the laws of metaphysics, God or, the invisible hand, wherein instead of things having their impulse towards power, their impulse will be such that it seeks God's acceptance or material prosperity .Consequently, although this response necessarily implies that organisms will vary in their telos (depending on the concept one adopts). Nonetheless, regardless of their ends, it is still conceivable that things which have their affirmation in either WTP or the invisible hand will behave parallelly on the basis that the means (actions-events of organisms in the world) might somehow be the same, while their ends (such as material prosperity, heaven, and power) will be different.

THE NATURALISTIC FALLACY OF NIETZSCHE'S WTP

Nietzsche's assertion that the essence of life is the will to power in a way is meant to show that whatever is natural and biological is that which is good, and that which is unnatural and anti-biological is bad. This is because for Nietzsche, if one looks at history and the natural world, one comes to the conclusion that "life itself is essentially about appropriation, injuring, and overpowering those who are foreign and weaker"

(Hollingdale, 1990, p.44). For example, in the animal kingdom there is always bound to be one species dominating and overpowering those species who are weaker (e.g., the birds of prey overpowering the lamb). Thus, to accept the will to power is in a way affirming life and taking joy in exercising power. The problem with this philosophical interpretation of life is that it commits the naturalistic fallacy. This is because Nietzsche's description of life as WTP assumes that what is natural necessarily entails goodness. In a way it moves from a factual claim to a prescriptive claim by confusing natural properties (e.g., nature and organisms) with non-natural properties (Good). Just because it is a fact that an organic being by nature strive for preservation through an instinctual will to power, however, does not make it the case that life itself ought to be the will to power. For one cannot make a prescriptive judgement based on the description of things. In other words, one cannot derive an 'ought' (goodness) from an 'is' (nature). For if it is the case that all natural things strive for self-preservation through an instinctual will to power; nevertheless, such descriptive fact concerning instinct within an organic being does not make the will to power the essential value of life.

Nietzsche might object that although WTP is intended as a prescriptive evaluation of life, however, it is still meaningful and valuable insofar as it examines life from a particular perspective. For the world is about perspectives, and whatever has value is valuable because it is interpreted from a particular perspective. Perspectivism is what justifies all beliefs and understanding in the world. Thus, any value or perspective that denies and impoverishes life undercut and contradict its own foundation, which is the will to

power. The problem with this response is that if Nietzsche thinks perspectivism is what counts in life, and that the attempt to remove it is doomed to fail, then his perspectivist philosophy must also be a product of a particular perspective. Thus, truth and our evaluation of the world become subjective and relative to each person. Also, I think Nietzsche's attempt to explain the world from a subjectivist philosophy is contradictory because that philosophy itself must be objectively true if it is to have any meaning or value, even for Nietzsche himself.

Interpreting Nietzsche, Heidegger asserts that Nietzsche intended WTP to be viewed as the basic character of life for the reason that anything dead cannot 'Be'. As a result, 'life' for Nietzsche according to Heidegger is just another word for 'Being' and 'Power'. If Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche is factual and accurate, then the problem I find with Nietzsche's conception of life is that he equivocate 'life' with two meanings. First, life understood in a metaphysical context, that is, life qua existence and reality; and second, life qua biological life strongly expressing itself. Nietzsche's account of 'life' is taken from the latter, wherein the essence of life is the expression of all organic beings striving for power and preservation. However, even though Nietzsche's account of life is somewhat true, nevertheless life in the metaphysical sense (the existence of a reality independent of organic entities) takes precedence over the Nietzschean concept of life as WTP. This is because Nietzsche's WTP which views the basic character of life as 'Being' and 'Power' is only possible insofar as it is dependent on 'life' qua a reality independent of organic beings. Thus, I think Nietzsche's conception of WTP as the essence of life

should be conceived as a descriptive secondary evaluation of life rather than a primary prescription.

CRITIQUE OF WTP AS VALUES AND THE ULTIMATE MOTIVATOR OF AN ORGANISM'S BEHAVIOR

Nietzsche argues that WTP is the prevailing force that motivates organic creatures to act and behave in a certain manner. In other words, the fundamental desires of organic beings have their affirmation in WTP. This is because for Nietzsche, like the analogy on the nature of birds of prey, the will is inseparable from its object. That is, the essence of organic being is one and the same with its will. Thus, to believe that an organism can will contrary to its nature is like believing a bird of prey would not kill the lamb. This may be true with organisms like plants and animals which lack intellect, but not true with organisms like humans. Hence, the problem I find with Nietzsche's analysis is that although it negates a creature's freedom of action yet, it only applies to organisms like plants and animals that lack intellect. Also, if Nietzsche's analysis WTP applies to humans, then it necessarily follows that human beings cannot act contrary to their will.

Nietzsche might object that the point of WTP as a prevailing force that motivates organism is simply to show that one is still accountable for their actions insofar as they act in accordance with the forces of their will (WTP), thus becoming adjudicators to themselves. The weakness with this objection is that it still leaves open the question of how free will is compatible with one's action when in reality actions are inseparable from the will. For even in the case where freedom is viewed as acting in conformity with WTP, it still does not make it the case that such being is free. Rather, free will as the operating force of

WTP becomes an illusion, since the behavior of organic beings develops as the product of different forces acting in accordance with the nature of the organism.

A second counter-argument Nietzsche might use to reply to the critique on free will is that free will along with morality is delusional. It is an imaginative force that moralists and priests invent as a tool to overpower individuals (non-moralists) by ascribing guilt or praise to their behavior. Thus, moral values and free will for Nietzsche are only meaningful and possible insofar as the forces and will of the moralists ascribe meaning to them, and the common person through ignorance conforms. Also, the priestly class, Nietzsche asserts, invents the concept of "free will", "metaphysics", and "God" as a way to insure that every suffering and guilt has an eternal purpose and meaning behind it. Rather, values have meaning and purpose only because it is governed by the will to power. Hence, the will to power for Nietzsche is what give rise to new values, a perpetual state that constantly re-evaluates all values.

This counter-argument although somewhat conceivable nonetheless does not negate the fact that moral responsibility is real. For if morality is a human invention; then all human behavior are permissible insofar as good and evil is a human construct that do not exist independently from society or humans. Thus, Nietzsche's WTP intended to reject normative ethics (the ethics of how one ought to act) by replacing it with new moral values that are non-universal leads us to moral relativism and nihilism, since morality and free will are delusional.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion this paper has provided an in-depth analysis of Nietzsche's WTP, and more importantly, its psychological interpretation. The paper has demonstrated that Nietzsche's WTP if taken as a psychological thesis necessarily entails that the belief in morality and free will are delusional, and that it only serves as a tool for power. Also, I have shown that since moral responsibility is a phenomenon that is taken to be factual, hence it necessarily follow that morality and free will are real state of affairs that exists. For without such state normative ethics would be impossible and thus all moral actions would be permissible. Thus, psychologically, the problem with Nietzsche's WTP is that it entails human values and freedom as delusional. Yet, since moral responsibility do exist, therefore Nietzsche's WTP is somewhat implausible.

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Commentary

TOMASZ PIEKARSKI

Stephen Firang's paper on Nietzsche's Will to Power (WTP) aims to present both the original argument as well as various scholarly interpretations serving the function of elucidation. Firang wishes to provide the reader with an in-depth analysis of the psychological implications present in WTP, including relevant information from the metaphysical and ethical aspects of Nietzsche's work on the concept. Firang's argument centres on a rejection of WTP as a theory of values and morality, as interpreted through psychological analysis, due to its relativistic, deterministic, and nihilistic tendencies.

Structurally, Firang does well in his organization of the various stages of the argument, as well as in his inclusion of a good amount of secondary literature. Nonetheless, the included scholarly interpretations seem misplaced within the paper, and do not seem to add much critical value to Firang's work. While quotations from Kauffman, Heidegger, Hollingdale, and Harr help the reader in grasping some aspects of WTP, the placement of the quotes seems haphazard, thus providing a sufficient but disjointed foundation for the reader. The paper would benefit from a more organized application of secondary sources with the general aim of providing a clear and concise summary of what Nietzsche's concept entails. Likewise, the overall quality of Firang's work is diminished by the occasional inclusion of overly general introductory statements (particularly those in the sections

"The Will to Power as a Revaluation of all Values" and "The Will to Power as Psychological").

Firang generally provides his points with enough space and argumentative rigour to be effective, but there are a few cases for which this is not so. In his discussion of the implications of WTP on free will, Firang does well in pointing out how one might arrive at a form of biological determinism given aspects of WTP. The strength of this section is undercut by unsupported comments, specifically that "moral responsibility is real" and must "exist independently from society or humans" or otherwise all behaviour is permissible. In this respect, we see some areas of Firang's paper as underdeveloped or unnecessary. The author's brief discussion of perspectivism suffers from similar drawbacks. While his mention of the classic rebuttal against relativism, that it is self-defeating, is relevant and holds weight in discussions on relativism, Firang doesn't spend enough time explaining how such an argument might diminish the strength of Nietzsche's perspectivism as much as it does more classic forms of relativism. Firang's call for objectivity at the end of the section in question can easily be interpreted as projecting realist requirements onto a relativistic argument (as is often argued).

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