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Editor's Introduction

The staff of Logos is very proud to present the latest issue—Volume III Issue 1—of our journal. This is our first issue since the founding members have left and we are pleased to continue the work they began. We are grateful to them for establishing both the journal and a tradition of excellence for it and we hope that our efforts maintain and extend that tradition. It is our aim to continue publishing the very best undergraduate work in any and all philosophical traditions and to make Logos a facilitator for philosophical exchange outside of the classroom—both at Cornell and in the larger undergraduate community.

The past two semesters at Logos have seen continued expansion of philosophical activities outside the classroom. With formal presentations on current research from both faculty and students, as well as informal gatherings amongst the staff to discuss current and enduring issues, Logos has developed a sense of community and established a reputation as being a forum for serious philosophical and interdisciplinary activity. We hope to see Logos carry on this tradition of combining publishing and community for undergraduates to pursue philosophical interests and to gain from each other's experience and perspective.

Thus far, Logos has established a tradition for being innovative among the undergraduate philosophy journal community. In past issues we have introduced things such as short introductions to papers, further readings lists, staff contributions which introduce various philosophical topics, and book reviews. We are pleased to continue that tradition of innovation in this issue with a panel interview on the philosophical movement of phenomenology. The panel consists of six of the leading experts in the phenomenological tradition: William Blattner (Georgetown), Taylor Carman (Barnard College, Columbia University), Hubert Dreyfus (Berkeley), Sean Kelly (Princeton), Iain Thomson (New Mexico), and Mark Wrathall (Brigham Young University). These six were interviewed in a roundtable format by Enoch Lambert on December 3, 2005 at Brigham Young University (BYU) at the end of a mini-conference on contemporary European philosophy. Published here is an edited transcript of that interview, topics

of which include figures from the phenomenological tradition (e.g., Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty), current issues in phenomenology, and the relation of phenomenology to analytic philosophy and the sciences. We have attempted to maintain the flow of the original interview as much as possible and so we have also included a short, historical introduction to phenomenology by Lambert, as well as a list of key readings, to help those new to phenomenology find a footing for the interview. We are grateful to the six professors for their willingness and time in participating in the interview, as well as in editing the transcript and providing some additional thoughts to polish it off. We wish to thank them, as well as Genevieve Dreyfus for technical and logistical help. We also especially wish to thank our Department Chair, Gail Fine, and the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell for helping to make the interview possible.

In this issue, we also continue past practice of including both contribution from the staff as well as a book review. In his contribution, Wesley Mattingly takes up enduring issues in the philosophy of language concerning the status of proper names. In particular he sympathetically, yet critically, takes up Tyler Burge's theory of proper names as modified predicates—defending it against alternatives and critiques, while also providing some concerns of his own.

In her review of Leibniz in China: A Commerce of Light by Franklin Perkins, Chloe Layman explicates some of the key doctrines in Leibniz's philosophy and examines his relationship to ancient Chinese philosophy. She highlights Leibniz's remarkable appreciation for Chinese philosophy and considers how it results from his own philosophical views. She also examines both the advantages and limitations of Perkins's interpretation.

We continue to be encouraged by our submissions pool, which was again highly competitive. Our final selections were chosen for their philosophical rigor and clarity, breadth and depth of research and inquiry, originality and comprehensiveness of argumentation, and accessibility.

Josh Mund offers his take on a debate in the problem of evil. In particular, he examines a recent exchange between Rowe and Wykstra over whether our inability to detect any event or state of affairs that would justify horrible evils provides evidence

that no such justification for such evils exists. Mund explores the options available to both sides and ends with consideration of issues that keep the debate unresolved as of yet.

Wes Holladay--our Fall 2005 Essay Contest Winner—replies to the luck objection concerning libertarian free will. He gives an in-depth, yet accessible, account of the quantum physics that are often appealed to in order to assert the indeterminism of the universe. Using this account as a basis, he then goes on to argue that the luck objection to libertarian free will is not decisive against it due to some faulty assumptions that libertarians need not ascribe to.

Finally, we would like to thank and express our gratitude to all those who make Logos possible. We thank the founding staff for making the transition smooth (especially Carlos Zednik and Reza Mahmoodshahi for continued consultation to help iron out the details). Our funding comes from the Cornell University Student Assembly Finance Commission and the Sage School of Philosophy. We are grateful to all the faculty and staff of the Sage School for their support, but especially to Professors Andrew Chignell and Tamar Gendler for their extra involvement, encouragement, and support. Finally, we must thank the office staff, Marlene Reitz and Sarah Weibly without whom we would be lost and who are endlessly patient with our problems and requests.

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The Evidential Argument from Evil

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I

In this paper I want to examine Stephen Wykstra's 1996 article, "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments from Evil." The Rowe-Wykstra exchange, of which this article is one installment, addresses the question of whether the evils we observe in the world provide evidential support for atheism. William Rowe's 1979 paper, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," lays out such a case, arguing that while one cannot build a deductive proof against theism using only virtually indubitable premises (e.g. that *some* sort of evil exists), a deductive atheological argument can be constructed with propositions that we have excellent reason to believe. Thus, Rowe suggests that while theism is not rendered utterly absurd, it can be maintained only with a measure of irrationality[1]. Following Wykstra, the move I'll scrutinize in this paper is Rowe's inference from our inability to see any good state of affairs that might justify some particularly distressing instance of evil, to the claim that there *is* no such good. Wykstra argues that because of the divine nature of the terrain, we're in no position to make the necessary inference, and much of his argumentation consists in establishing a general epistemic formula, CORNEA, to capture the putative illegitimacy of Rowe's move. With this in mind, I want to discuss what I take to be Wykstra's two main goals in "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments." The first is to counter what he sees as Rowe's misinterpretation of CORNEA; that is, to make clear the ground rules for assessing whether there are goods for the sake of which God might permit the evils we observe and endure. With that foundation secured, Wykstra again takes up the argument that certain facts of the matter prevent one from justifiably asserting that there are no such goods; and so Rowe's case fails. My aim in this paper is first to lay out Rowe's original evidential argument (section II) and the broad strokes of Wykstra's response (section III). In section IV I'll make more precise Wykstra's task in "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments," develop Rowe's competing formulation of CORNEA, and explain an interesting limitation in place on Wykstra's resources. In section V, I'll examine Wykstra's revitalized case against the claim that one can justifiably assert that there are no justifying goods, and argue that, in part because of questionable restrictions, his case fails. Finally, in section VI, I'll return to consider how unresolved issues, some bracketed in the course of my discussion, may affect the broad Rowe-Wykstra debate.

II

Rowe's original formulation of the evidential argument from evil consists of two premises, an existential and a conditional, which entail an atheistic conclusion:

1. There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
2. An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.

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3. There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being (1979, 127-128).

Wykstra grants that this argument is valid; further, given an interpretation unlikely to affect the validity of the argument, he accepts premise two (Wykstra 1984, 142). Theism, then, can be maintained only by resisting premise one; that is, by resisting the claim that there exists intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse (I'll call such suffering 'gratuitous evil'). To focus the issue of premise one, Rowe proposes a specific instance of putatively gratuitous evil:

> Suppose in some distant forest lightning strikes a dead tree, resulting in a forest fire. In the fire a fawn is trapped, horribly burned, and lies in terrible agony for several days before death relieves its suffering (Rowe 1979, 129-130; hereafter I'll refer to this instance of suffering as 'E').

Crucially, Rowe does not maintain that the gratuitous nature of E can be *known*. Instead, he claims that, "so far as we can see," E could have been avoided by an omnipotent, omniscient being without the loss of a greater good or the permission of an evil equally bad or worse (Rowe 1979, 130). This evidence, while insufficient to *know* the truth of premise one, does provide "*rational grounds* for believing (1) to be true" (130). To the extent that premise one is reasonable to believe, so too is atheism. Rowe further augments this argument by reference to suffering beyond E: if our inability to see any good attainable only via E (for brevity I follow Wykstra in omitting the 'avoiding evil' clause) makes premise one reasonable, how much more reasonable is it considering "*all* the instances of seemingly pointless human and animal suffering that occur daily in our world"? (1979, 131). The idea that *none* of this suffering could have been prevented without thereby losing a greater good "seems an extraordinary absurd idea, quite beyond our belief" (1979, 131). Theism, via Rowe's deductive argument, is irrational to an equal extent[2].

III

Wykstra's response is to challenge the rationality of believing premise one to be true. Importantly though, his tactic is not to assert that premise one is false. Instead, Wykstra remains skeptical about human capacity to accurately gauge whether an instance of suffering is truly gratuitous, and holds that any definitive answer will exceed our epistemic justification[3]. To substantiate this skeptical position, Wykstra begins with an analysis of Rowe's existential premise and its justification.

As Wykstra reconstructs the argument, premise one is supported as follows:

> (1) We see no good for which God would allow [E]
> (1.9) There appears to be no good for which God allows [E]
> (2) There is no good for which God allows [E][4] (1996, 127).

At first glance, (1.9) seems not to move much beyond (1). For this reason, it's important to understand the 'appears' claim of (1.9) "in its so-called 'epistemic' sense rather than its weaker comparative or phenomenological senses" (Wykstra 1996, 128). Taken this way, we can see the move from (1) to (1.9) as an inference from the 'raw data' of not seeing any good for which God might allow E, to a claim which has *evidential weight* (Wykstra 1984, 147). Thus, (1.9) asserts more than just our inability

to see any God-justifying goods for E; it further holds that these observational data are evidence that there are no such goods. From this claim, from a properly understood (1.9), it is a very short and easy step to the rationality of believing (2), and so to rational atheism (Wykstra 1996, 127). Wykstra hopes to halt Rowe's argument before he reaches (1.9); that is, to deny him the claim that our inability to see any God-justifying good for E carries evidential weight. With this aim in mind, Wykstra scrutinizes the general schema of Rowe's inference—'we can see no X' thus 'there appears to be no X' and asks, Is such a move always justified? (Wykstra 1996, 128). To motivate a negative answer, Wykstra begins with an example:

> Searching for a table, you look through a doorway. The room is very large--say, the size of a Concorde hangar--and it is filled with bulldozers, dead elephants, Toyotas, and other vision-obstructing objects. Surveying this clutter from the doorway, and seeing no table, should you say: 'It does not appear that there is a table in the room'? (1984, 151).

Wykstra suggests that the moral of this type of example is that "a situation of seeing no X" (hereafter 'noseeum evidence') does not *just by itself* justify the epistemic claim that 'there appears to be no X'[5] (1996, 128). To capture his view of the something else needed, Wykstra lays out his Condition of Reasonable Epistemic Access--CORNEA. According to this principle, any inference from noseeum evidence to 'there appears to be no X' is legitimate only if *it is reasonable to believe that X is something to which we would have epistemic access*; put another way, only if it is reasonable to believe that X is something with 'seeability'[6]. Now what is it for X to have seeability? Roughly, it is for the following condition to be satisfied: if there were an X, we'd see it. More succinctly, CORNEA holds that an inference from noseeum evidence to 'there appears to be no X' is legitimate only if it's reasonable to believe that if there were an X, we'd see it. In a cluttered airplane hanger, it's not reasonable to believe that if there were a table, we'd see it. In such a situation, tables lack seeability and so the inference in question founders. Equally true, Wykstra will argue, for goods which might justify God in permitting E. God-justifying goods are the kind of thing we cannot reasonably expect to see, and so noseeum evidence does not carry evidential weight against their existence. Wykstra concludes his skeptical critique by defending this claim; that is, by explaining why one should doubt that, if there were a God-justifying good for E, we'd see it.

IV

In this section I want to provide a closer examination of the task Wykstra sets for himself, show how two divergent formulations of CORNEA bear upon that task, and consider a further complication in Wykstra's skeptical project. To ease the exposition, I'll first lay out some terminology. What I'll hereafter call 'the seeability question' is the following: 'If there were a God-justifying good for E, then would we see it?' Now what possible attitudes could one take in regard to this question? It may be helpful in considering these attitudes to think in terms of an *epistemic spectrum* which contains the three distinct positions one might take on the seeability question. At one end of the epistemic spectrum lies what I'll call the 'Optimistic Epistemic

Conditional' (OEC): 'if there were a God-justifying good for E, then we *would* see it'. At the opposite end lies what I'll call the 'Pessimistic Epistemic Conditional' (PEC): 'if there were a God-justifying good for E, then we would *not* see it'. Finally, one could remain skeptical on the seeability question: we don't know if we'd see a God-justifying good for E, were it there; I'll call this the 'Skeptical Epistemic Conditional' (SEC). Now consider how the reasonableness of believing OEC, PEC, or SEC, indicated by our location on the spectrum, shifts in response to different types of seeability evidence. Imagine that we're faced with strong evidence in favor of PEC and that we have no other evidence on the seeability question. We might say, then, that *it's reasonable to believe* that PEC. Now suppose that an argument surfaces which undercuts this evidence. In this case, would OEC be the appropriate attitude? Would it be appropriate to move from one edge of the spectrum to the other? I don't think it would. Rather, the most appropriate attitude to adopt would be the middle position of SEC: we just don't have a justified answer on the seeability question. Certainly, if this undercutting evidence were supplemented with moderate evidence in favor of OEC, then OEC would be reasonable to believe. But there is an epistemic middle ground-skepticism-that is most appropriate given a certain mixture of evidence.

Now what does CORNEA say in regard to these three epistemic positions? Again, Wykstra's formulation of CORNEA holds that Rowe's inference from noseeum evidence to 'there appears to be no X' is legitimate only if…

…it's reasonable to believe that OEC.

In other words, Rowe's inference is legitimate only if we occupy one particular third of the epistemic spectrum. Clearly the inference is *illegitimate* if we occupy the pessimistic third of the epistemic spectrum; that is, if it's reasonable to believe that PEC. But Wykstra's CORNEA goes further than this: one also can't make Rowe's inference if we're in SEC territory, if the appropriate position on the seeability question is skepticism. Anything short of the positive reasonableness of OEC is sufficient to block Rowe's move.

Rowe's formulation of CORNEA (which he exposits in his 1984 response to Wykstra) is subtlety but importantly different. On his view, an inference from noseeum evidence to 'there appears to be no X' is legitimate only if…

…it's not reasonable to believe that PEC.

So, on his view the inference in question goes through if we occupy either of two epistemic positions. Clearly the inference is legitimate if it's reasonable to believe that OEC. But (and here's the tricky point), to be skeptical on seeability is *another* way for it not to be reasonable to believe that PEC, another way for the 'only if' condition to be satisfied. Thus, Rowe's CORNEA makes the further claim that if we don't have a good answer on the seeability question, if we're skeptical, then noseeum evidence supports an 'appears' claim. Anything short of the positive reasonableness of PEC allows Rowe his inference[7].

There are two points I want to make about this disagreement. This first is its centrality in the Rowe-Wykstra debate. These two competing versions of CORNEA, again, diverge just on the implications of a *skeptical* position on seeability. This discrepancy is of vital importance given that Wykstra's *expressed goal* in "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments" is to compel

skepticism on seeability. Taking his version of CORNEA as the operative notion, Wykstra thinks that success in this narrow project implies a theistic victory in the larger debate. Rowe's CORNEA, on the other hand, dictates that a skeptical position on the seeability question amounts to a larger theistic *defeat*. Thus, the implications of the narrow project, to which I'll turn in section V, depend crucially on the accepted formulation of CORNEA.

Is it possible to adjudicate between these competing epistemic standards? In answering this question, it's important to note how the CORNEA disagreement stems from underlying views about the rules of inductive inference. On Rowe's version of CORNEA, noseeum evidence is, *all by itself*, sufficient justification for his 'appears' claim. Certainly, this evidence can be defeated by other considerations, namely, the positive reasonableness of believing that PEC; but no other proposition must be reasonably believed in order to make the inference. Rowe's CORNEA seems just a formulization of this epistemic principle: that noseeum evidence is defeasible but sufficient justification for an 'appears' claim (Wykstra 1996, 134-135). Wykstra's CORNEA, on the other hand, maintains that noseeum evidence, by itself, does not even defeasibly support an 'appears' claim. Rather, an 'appears' claim is legitimate only if we have noseeum evidence *and* it's reasonable to believe that OEC. Not only must we see no God-justifying goods for E, it must be reasonable to believe that they're the kind of thing we'd see, if they existed. Wykstra's CORNEA seems just a formulization of *this* epistemic principle: that noseeum evidence by itself is not even defeasible justification for an 'appears' claim (Wykstra 1996, 135). So, the influence which a theistic success in the narrow project (that is, suspension of belief on the seeability question) may exert on the larger debate depends crucially upon one's understanding of CORNEA, and so on one's view of induction. I'm not in a position to take a firm stance on this very interesting epistemological question. Here I just want to make clear how this rather fundamental divergence bears upon the Rowe-Wykstra debate.

Before turning to the narrow project, I want to address two final issues, both regarding the ground rules of Wykstra's argument. The first is an examination of exactly how Wykstra hopes to prod Rowe into the center of the epistemic spectrum; that is, what does he take to be sufficient for compelling a suspension of belief on the seeability question? In "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments," Wykstra claims that he need *not* show the following: "that if God exists, there is a probability of 1 or very nearly 1 that many evils will be noseeums…" (137). Instead, he holds that we must suspend belief if he successfully demonstrates "that if God exists, [noseeum evidence] is as (or more) likely than not…" (137)[8]. Thus, SEC becomes the only appropriate attitude if Wykstra shows that, if God exists, it's at least as likely as not that we wouldn't see the goods which justify E. My goal in section V is to lay out Wykstra's case for suspension of belief and argue that he does not meet this 'as likely as not' standard.

A final preliminary concerns Wykstra's deference, in his narrow project, to an interesting limitation on his resources. Briefly, this restriction charges the theist to justify skepticism about seeability using only the claims of core theism; that is, the claim that there exists an omnipotent, omniscient, infinitely good being who created the world (Rowe 1984, 161). Now why

should the theist labor under this increased burden? In Wykstra 1984 this limitation is self-imposed. Though one could more easily promote seeability skepticism by reaching beyond core theism, Wykstra worries that to do so

> will then seem to increase what must be believed to believe theism. And with its content so 'increased', theism may then seem more top-heavy than it did, relative to whatever evidential base one takes it to have. And this might well reduce one's confidence that it is true...(159).

This top-heaviness, Wykstra suggests, is responsible for the worry that, in spite of a successful argument for skepticism on seeability, E and sufferings like it nevertheless do *weakly* disconfirm theism (1984, 159-160). A skeptical argument which proceeds just from core theism, Wykstra hopes, will defuse this concern and so completely exonerate theistic belief.

Wykstra's position in "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments" is less clear. Officially, he disavows the charge that noseeum evidence must be shown to be expectable "from the *mere* hypothesis of [core theism]" (140). This notwithstanding, he seems very much to proceed in deference to this charge, and revels in the conclusion that "[a]ccepting Core Theism greatly increases our reason to think such goods would often be in the [invisible to us] distant future" (145). I'll return to this uncertainty in section VI, but want to note here that Wykstra's position on this restriction is not entirely clear.

V

Wykstra's original case for skepticism about the seeability of God-justifying goods draws heavily from a comparison of human and divine cognitive abilities. As a first approximation, he suggests that we think of the difference in intelligence between an adult human and a one-month old infant. Given this disparity, Wykstra asserts that

> if outweighing goods of the sort at issue exist in connection with instances of suffering, that we should discern most of them seems about as likely as that a one-month old should discern most of his parents' purposes for those pains they allow him to suffer--which is to say, it is not likely at all (1984, 155-156).

Rowe concedes that the intelligence disparity does proceed from core theism and so is a legitimate premise. Yet he is not convinced that Wykstra's conclusion, that the goods for which God might permit E would be beyond our ken, follows *just* from the intelligence claim. Rather, this step requires the additional premise that

> the goods in question *have not occurred*, or, at the very least, that if they have occurred they, nevertheless, remain quite unknown to us (in themselves or in their connections with the sufferings in our world). And, so far as I can see, the mere assumption that [God] exists gives us no reason to think that either of these is true (1984, 164).

Unbounded intelligence is reason to think that God could see temporally distant or inscrutable goods, if they exist. Rowe argues that it is *not* by itself reason to think that the goods which justify E are of this sort.

In "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments," Wykstra responds to this objection by drawing an atheistic-theistic comparison. What is likelihood of PEC, he asks, given atheistic background beliefs? Further, how does this likelihood *compare* to the likelihood of PEC, given the background beliefs of core theism? In other words, Wykstra begins by considering how likely it is, given a view which denies any supernatural force (what Wykstra calls 'core naturalism'), that the goods for which God permits E would be visible to us; he then examines the likelihood of the same visibility, given core theism. The dramatic shift in probability, Wykstra hopes, will persuade us to suspend belief on the seeability of God-justifying goods.

What, then, given core naturalism, is the probability that goods which might justify God in permitting E are in the (invisible to us) distant future[9] (I'll call this 'the futurity claim')? Without the power, intelligence, and benevolent intent of a deity, this seems extremely unlikely[10]. Now Wykstra suggests that the relevant probability changes in a significant way as one abandons core naturalism and embraces core theism:

> If Core Theism is true, the universe itself is the product of God's design, much as the "life situation" of a child is the product of her parent's design. Suppose, then, we are considering an incident of suffering in the life of a child, and the question is raised whether, if there is a good justifying the allowing of this suffering, this good is at all likely to lie in the considerable future. Should our answer to this question be affected by our view as to whether the child's life situation is the result of the planning of parents rather than mere chance? And if so, should it also be affected by our estimate regarding the parents' intelligence, character, and ability? (1996, 143).

Wykstra argues that as we come to believe that the parents are intelligent rather than half-witted, concerned with future events in their child's life rather than apathetic, and in possession of the power necessary to affect the considerable future rather than overwhelmed by immediate concerns, we should likewise come to see it as more likely that if there is a good justifying a certain instance of suffering, it lies in the considerable future. In the same way, as one moves from core naturalism to the view that a being with supreme power, intelligence, and benevolent concern created the universe, it becomes more likely that if there is a good justifying current and past suffering, it lies in the considerable future.

In objecting to Wykstra's revitalized parent analogy, I want to first attend to where I think it's correct and so explain its rhetorical force. The comparison of core theism and core naturalism, along with their respective implications for the futurity claim, correctly highlights a significant shift in the relevant probability. On core naturalism, again, the absence of a guiding divine hand seems to render the futurity of goods extremely unlikely. Core theism posits an omnipotent, omniscient, infinitely good guiding hand, and so alters the probability, making the futurity of goods a possibility that, we might say, is on the chart. Thus, shifting from core naturalism to

core theism does have important implications for futurity, and so for the seeability of God-justifying goods. But to correctly note that such a shift in background beliefs greatly increases the probability of futurity is *not*, I suggest, to correctly claim that it makes futurity probable, if probable means 'at least as likely as not'. I think that to make futurity as likely as not, Wykstra requires *some* additional claim: perhaps that future goods are the type of good that God cares most about (because they're the *best* goods perhaps), and so are likely to enter the divine plan. Without an additional claim of this sort, I think Wykstra's shown that futurity is a real possibility, but not that it's as likely as not.

Consider an example which I think is roughly analogous to Wykstra's naturalism-theism shift. Pity poor Mikey; he never graduated from high school or passed the GED (let's call this proposition 'H'). Now how does H bear on the likelihood that Mikey will ever complete college and receive a Bachelor's degree (let's call this proposition 'C'; maybe I'd better also stipulate that Mikey is athletically and artistically mediocre, and has parents and relatives who aren't friends of college deans)? C, given H, seems extremely unlikely. Now how would the probability of C change if we abandoned H and came to believe H*, that Mikey *did* graduate from high school? Clearly, this changes things significantly. My reaction is that where once Mikey's college prospects were virtually nonexistent, now he's in the running. That isn't to say, though, that he's *likely* to graduate from college, or that C, given H*, is probable. If we knew some other facts about Mikey, say that he graduated at the top of his high school class, or just that he has a burning desire to spend his life in a profession that requires a college degree, then C, given H*, might be as likely as not. But, given nothing beyond H*, C is still not statistically as likely as not[11].

I suggest that Wykstra's naturalism-theism shift is importantly similar to the poor Mikey case. The beliefs of core theism greatly enhance the probability of the futurity claim (vis-à-vis core naturalism as one's background assumption), but that is just to say that what was once extremely improbable becomes less improbable. Core theism *by itself* is not adequate support for the stronger claim that the futurity of God-justifying goods is as likely as not.

VI

In section V, I concluded that according to the carefully specified ground rules of "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments," Wykstra's case is unpersuasive. This, however, is far from the end of the matter. In the remainder of this paper I want to quickly examine how unresolved issues, either bracketed in the course of my discussion or as yet unmentioned, might bear on the Rowe-Wykstra debate.

I've already noted Wykstra's ambiguity on the question of what resources can be deployed in the narrow project. His position might be substantially strengthened were this restriction removed, as a number of different plausible claims could be imported to support the inference from core theism to the futurity claim[12]. One attempt, mentioned above in passing, might begin with the hypothesis that sentient beings are such that, for them, many of the best possible goods are goods that are a very long time in developing. To see that this claim is at least plausible, one might consider some uncontroversial examples of great human goods. The accomplishment of a lengthy, difficult, and worthy project (e.g. a doctoral thesis, a symphony, or the repeal of an oppressive law) might be such a good. Certainly, the development of

close personal relationships will count. If this is right, then perhaps the theist can make some justified projections about the as yet unimagined goods that God may have in mind in permitting E: she can project that such goods may well be in the distant future.

One problem appears immediately. Perhaps my suggestion looks reasonable in regard to human goods, and so might justify the projection that the goods which justify intense human suffering are beyond our ken. But given that all the goods mentioned above seem strictly human goods, doesn't my claim about sentient beings overreach? Is there any reason to think that many of the best possible goods for the fawn of E are a very long time in developing (let's call this claim 'F')? In responding to this worry, I first want to be sure that our lack of support for F is seen in the context of our corresponding lack of information. We have some good reason to think that for humans, many of the best possible goods are a very long time in developing, and very little reason (some might say 'no reason') to think that F; but we also have much less information on what's good for fawns. Am I claiming, perhaps in a Disney-induced haze, that it's reasonable to think that long-developing, intimate relationships are among the best possible goods for fawns? No, I'm not. What I'm suggesting is that, where we have the most complete picture of goods (that is, among humans), it's reasonable to believe that many of the best possible goods are a very long time in developing; where we have comparatively miniscule evidence, the situation is not clear. If we allow powerful instinctual compulsions, say between a parent and offspring, to count as some analogue of human emotions, then it does not seem widely implausible to postulate some analogue of close personal relationships among animals. Further, all such discussion must be seen in light of the modesty of the theist's aim: to tentatively project the characteristics of as yet unimagined goods for sentient beings. Absent rebuttal from animal psychology, I think this projection may be legitimate. If it is, then Wykstra's narrow project is in much better shape. Given the divine characteristics laid out by core theism, together with our moderate evidence that many of the best possible goods for sentient beings are a very long time in developing, *and* the absence of evidence *against* the futurity claim, I think it seems as likely as not that if there were a God-justifying good for E, we wouldn't see it.

Other plausible claims, I think, could be advanced in support of the futurity or inscrutability of God-justifying goods. Or, a theistic argument might be developed to the effect that we can't see the *connection* between visible goods and current and past suffering. Certainly my suggestion requires a good deal of further work. In the remainder of this paper, however, I want to very briefly note other unresolved issues that bear crucially on the larger debate.

First of all, if Wykstra's narrow project is successfully revamped, perhaps with the aid of premises external to core theism, then Rowe might exert pressure on the epistemic ground rules of the debate. His version of CORNEA, recall, would render empty a modest theistic victory on the narrow point. If Rowe can successfully defend his underlying view of induction, then even skepticism about seeability will reward the *atheist* in the larger debate.

Still, even excellent reasons to prefer Rowe's CORNEA would not invalidate a *decisive* theistic demonstration on seeability. Perhaps the theist, equipped with a battery of auxiliary claims, can do more than compel skepticism on seeability; perhaps he can make reasonable PEC. This would, even given Rowe's CORNEA, block the

inference from noseeum evidence to 'there appears to be no X'.

Finally, as Wykstra notes in his conclusion, the atheist might put forward an argument in favor of OEC. Thus far the Rowe-Wykstra exchange has focused on reasons that support PEC and criticism of those reasons. If a theist pursuing Wykstra's line proves capable only of compelling suspension of belief on seeability, then even moderate support for OEC might make OEC reasonable to believe[13]. The state of Rowe's evidential argument will hardly be final without a determination on these unresolved issues.

Endnotes

[1] More precisely, Rowe holds that, given the evidential picture *he* possesses, theism is irrational. He allows that one might have evidence that he doesn't, personal religious experience for example. Thus, while theism would be irrational for him (or someone with identical evidence), someone with different evidence might rationally be a theist. In this paper I follow Wykstra in considering just whether *Rowe's* evidence makes theism irrational.

[2] In the rest of this paper I'll generally refer just to E, but don't mean to lose sight of other seemingly pointless instances of human and animal suffering which could be cataloged, perhaps indefinitely.

[3] As a theist who accepts premise two and the validity of Rowe's argument, Wykstra is clearly committed to the falsity of premise one. His skepticism in regard to the gratuitous nature of evils, then, should be understood as the view that all of our evidence directly regarding evils and their relation to goods is insufficient to justify the claim that there is a truly gratuitous instance of suffering.

[4] Rowe's argument is later formulated as an inductive inference from "All goods we see lack J" to "All goods there are lack J," where J is the property of being capable of justifying God in allowing E (Wykstra 1996, 128). The two versions don't seem to diverge significantly; at least Wykstra doesn't seem to think that one is more or less successful. I'll consider only the 'appears' version of the argument in this paper.

[5] One might worry that the scope of the negation changes as we move from Wykstra's example to his general schema. In his example, Wykstra takes himself to be following Rowe in formulating the 'appears' claim as 'there does not appear to be any X'. He argues that we should interpret this claim "in accord with ordinary English, but not strict philosophical precision" to mean 'there appears to be no X' (1996, 128). Wykstra sees this as a charitable interpretation because, so interpreted, Rowe's 'appears' claim seems more likely to justify his existential premise.

[6] Rowe 1984 formulates CORNEA in terms of 'we have reason to think' and 'we have no reason to think' rather than 'it's reasonable to believe' and 'it's not reasonable to believe'. In regard to the think/believe discrepancy, Wykstra notes that Rowe has indicated in conversation that he takes these to be interchangeable (1996, footnote 8). There is also evidence that the substitution of 'it's reasonable to believe' for 'we have reason to believe' (and the substitution involving their negative counterparts) is acceptable to both authors. Wykstra's original formulation of CORNEA is in 'it's reasonable to believe' terms and Rowe, in responding to Wykstra in 1984 and 1986, doesn't object on this point.

[7] My exposition, one might worry, sometimes slips into discussion of sufficient, rather than necessary, conditions. Both versions of CORNEA state a necessary condition "only if it's...", while my explanation at times suggests that lack of reasonableness, in the case of Rowe's CORNEA, is *sufficient* for the inference in question. I allow this shift only because it seems to me to ease the exposition of these difficult views. Within the confines of Wykstra 1996, however, seeability is the only condition under discussion.

[8] A difficulty in my Wykstra exegesis involves what I take to be an ambiguity in his view of what

compels suspension of belief. Above, I've described one such standard presented in "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments." This standard, however, conflicts with earlier discussion in the same article. Earlier Wykstra suggests that suspension of belief is appropriate when the probability of a given question is between .05 and .95 (132). In other words, to assert OEC, one's evidence in regard to the seeability question must put the probability that we'd see God-justifying goods above .95, and so the probability of PEC below .05. Clearly Wykstra is in a better position to show that the probability of OEC is less than .95, than he is to show that it's less than .5, the task laid out above. The 'as likely as not' standard is recommended by its placement just before the narrow project. Nevertheless, there remains a tension in "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments" concerning the operative (let alone correct) requirement for suspension of belief.

[9] In arguing for the futurity of God-justifying goods, I take Wykstra to be pursuing just one of three possible theistic lines. As Rowe indicates in the quotation on previous page of the current paper, the theist might argue, not that the goods which justify E are in the distant future, but that they obtain in the present but remain invisible to us. A third option, also suggested above by Rowe, is that we fail to see, not the goods which justify E, but their *connection* to E. Wykstra seems to pursue just the first option in "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments," and so argues just for the futurity claim.

[10] Perhaps the futurity claim, given core naturalism, appears not just extremely unlikely but a conceptual impossibility. How, one might wonder, could divine-justification exist given atheism? Core naturalism, I think, proscribes the existence of God but not the existence of goods *which, were God to exist, might justify God in permitting current and past suffering.* Thus, the question is posed in terms of the probability that goods which *might* justify God in permitting E are in the distant future.

[11] The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 2004, 181,010,000 persons 15 and older had received at least a high school degree. 54,099,000 persons 15 and older had received at least a Bachelor's degree. Assuming that the at-least-a-Bachelor's-degree population is close to a subset of the at-least-a-high-school-degree population, I put the percentage of high school graduates who receive a Bachelor's degree at around 30.

[12] Also, in "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments" Wykstra abandons, or has abandoned, his 1984 reason for limiting himself to core theism: in order to show that theism is not even *weakly* disconfirmed (his footnote 12). Thus, I can see no reason for Wykstra not to deploy claims external to core theism.

[13] William Alston notes such a consideration in "The Inductive Argument from Evil": the fact that we can see no good justifying E *is itself* a source of anguish. Thus, an infinitely benevolent God, all other things being equal, would fill us in on his reasons for permitting E.

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A Defense of Burge's Modified Predicate View of Proper Names

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In his paper entitled "Reference and Proper Names", Tyler Burge introduces a novel account of proper names within the framework of a formal semantics. Adopting a Tarskian truth theory for natural language, Burge claims that such terms play the logical role of predicates. Though innovative, this "modified predicate view" springs from a long tradition in the philosophy of language inaugurated by the work of those such as John Stuart Mill. In view of this theoretical lineage, Burge expounds his account as a reaction to two extant twentieth-century theories: one which construes proper names as disguised definite descriptions, and another according to which they are individual constants. My aim in this essay is first to unravel Burge's account against the backdrop of its precursors, and second to evaluate the former with an appreciation of the commentary it has motivated. I have divided what is to come into five sections concerning: (I) the descriptive theory of proper names: viz. the work of Russell and Quine; (II) Burge's appraisal of this theory; (III) an exposition of his alternative, the modified predicate view; (IV) Steven Böer's critique of Burge (i.e. the individual constants view) together with some remarks in Burge's defense; and lastly (V) some brief concerns regarding Burge's account and final comments by way of evaluation.

(I) Russell and Quine: the Description Theory of Proper Names (or Traditional Predicate View)

According to Russell's description theory, proper names are not logically singular terms but "abbreviated" descriptions which the speaker associates with the putative designation of the name. That is not to say that names abbreviate descriptions like 'POW' abbreviates 'prisoner of war'. Rather, he proposes they are somehow equivalent in meaning (viz. they possess the same sense). To unpack this I shall turn to Russell's analysis of presumed singular terms.

The prevailing view prior to Russell held that all syntactically singular terms denote a particular object in the given domain; they are referring expressions that pick out some individual. Pace such theories, he initially demonstrated that a class of such terms is in fact quantificational. These definite descriptions he characterized as noun phrases introduced by the definite article 'the', such as 'the author of Waverly' and 'the smallest city'. Russell propounded an indirect demonstration of the logical role of these terms by examining sentences of the archetypal form, 'The F is G'. This expression, he claimed, possesses a complex, logical construction comprising the conjunction of three quantified general statements: (1) at least one F is G; and (2) at most one F is G; and (3) whatever is G is F. Accordingly, Russell concluded that definite descriptions, though superficially singular terms in the surface grammar, play the logical role of complex quantificational structures. And insofar as they abbreviate such descriptions, so do proper names.

The chief advantage of the Russellian description theory of proper names is its capacity to circumvent the problem of apparent reference to non-existents. By embracing his approach one may meaningfully use empty names (particularly in negative-existential statements) without presupposing the existence of the named entities. The Russellian semantics of such descriptions removes the burden of reference from the description itself and thus the name it translates. For instance,

one may paraphrase 'Pegasus' as its expressed description: 'the winged horse'. The unanalyzed statement 'Pegasus does not exist' thus becomes 'The winged horse does not exist' which is formalized roughly as 'It is not the case that there is a unique thing such that it is a winged horse'. And one can say that this sentence is true and meaningful without being committed to the existence of Pegasus. The Russellian account thereby sidesteps the rather counterintuitive Meinongian thesis that there is a class of non-existent entities which empty names pick out.

In order to parry numerous objections raised by Searle and Kripke et alia concerning the determination of the description(s) a particular name expresses, Quine modified the Russellian translation of proper names by proposing the use of artificial predicates. Quine suggested in the above translation the appeal to an unanalyzable attribute of being Pegasus - adopting the verb 'pegasize' - to describe that which any object named 'Pegasus' does. The translated description then becomes 'the thing that pegasizes'.

In sum, the description theory maintains that the relation of reference between a proper name and an object is mediated by the conditions of satisfaction obtaining uniquely between that object and the description(s) it expresses (whether postulated as a uniqueness operator together with a predicate, or an artificial predicate tout court). It is this description(s) which expresses the sense of the proper name.

(II) contra Russell/Quine: Counterintuitive Aspects of the Description Theory

The description theory, pioneered by Russell and elaborated by Quine, has been criticized from all angles by subsequent commentary. As Burge remarks, one may group most of these objections under the heading of artificiality. For that reason he notes three principal preconceptions upon which the Russellian account encroaches.

First, whereas the traditional predicate view fundamentally advocates the treatment of proper names as abbreviated descriptions, intuitively names do not describe the objects they purportedly designate. Hearing that a person is named 'Alfred', for instance, does not seem to contribute any information about that individual (apart from perhaps the trivial fact that he is named Alfred). In this respect the description theory appears ad hoc. Afterall, weren't the bountiful puzzles which the Millian account left unresolved among Russell's most primary motivations for its conception?

A second element of artificiality in the traditional predicate view derives from its treatment of names as incomplete symbols, expressions which possess meaning only in virtue of the sentential contexts in which they occur. At least prima facie, however, names play the syntactic and semantic roles of singular terms which possess meaning independently.

Finally, Burge raises the notorious Strawsonian worry that according to Russell's picture, all sentences that contain a name which fails to designate are false. Many such sentences, he argues, seem neither true nor false; they are simply meaningless. Take for instance 'The present king of France is bald'. Upon first hearing that sentence uttered it seems most people would not respond by saying 'That's false', but more appropriately 'What are you talking about?' or 'I don't

understand what you are trying to say; there is no king of France'. The worry is that 'The present king of France is bald' does not seem to express any proposition at all, much less a false one.

Of course, Burge concedes that both Russell and Quine have acknowledged and responded (sometimes at length) to the above concerns. It is therefore important to note that he does not consider them irrefutable grounds for dismissing the traditional predicate view. They are merely intuitive incongruities for which he intends his own account to account. Among them it is the first source of artificiality: "the claim that proper names are abbreviated or manufactured descriptions," against which Burge foremost argues (593-4). To facilitate this argument he develops his own alternative constructed from two basic contentions: first, "proper names do not abbreviate predicates but are predicates in their own right"; second, "they do not abbreviate the roles of predicate and operator, but...in some of their uses they play the role of predicate and demonstrative" (595).

(III) Burge's Alternative: the Modified Predicate View of Proper Names

Embarking upon an exposition of his theory of proper names vis-à-vis the traditional predicate view, Burge divides the content of his paper into three parts. The first addresses the logical role that proper names play in a formal theory of language. The second addresses the conditions under which a proper name designates an object. And the third addresses how best to construe empty names in both semantic and pragmatic contexts (593).

Burge's claim that "proper names are predicates in their own right" is a commitment to how these terms function in a finite, formal theory of meaning which is inseparable from a theory of reference. Recalling Davidson among others, it is a theory which is constituted by a Tarskian definition of truth applied to sentences that speakers utter at particular times. It demands that in order to establish a semantics (i.e. a definition of truth) for a natural language L one must establish a recursive formula for the truth-conditions of every sentence in L with regard to speaker and time. Further, Burge places an explicit condition of adequacy on this model, approximating its mathematical and scientific applications: "that is, that the sense and reference (if any) of every expression of the theory should be determinable from its form" (ibid.). So for the truth theorist the only unavoidable contextual allowance is that he may construe the symbols of the metalanguage in his own natural tongue. Nonetheless, any other contextual features in the object language – including demonstratives and ambiguous constructions - are prohibited in the truth theory

With this Tarskian framework in place, Burge repudiates the Russellian truth-conditions for proper names since they entail a theoretically superfluous abbreviation rule - superfluous, Burge avers, because proper names are predicates tout court. His surrogate (bereft of reference to abbreviation) is the following: "A proper name is a predicate true of an object if and only if the object is given that name in an appropriate way" (596). I shall hereafter refer to this as Burge's T-thesis. Of course, inasmuch as he endorses the T-thesis as an axiomatic element in a Tarskian theory of truth, Burge consigns the task of elucidating 'given' and 'appropriate way' to empirical investigation. In other words, the onus is on the sociologist or psychologist etc. (not the truth theorist) to develop a comprehensive account of how objects are

named (602-3). The only restriction Burge places upon naming is that it be literal, not ironic or metaphorical, since the resulting (metaphorical) appellation would truly apply to objects that were never actually given it. This restriction is motivated by the aforementioned condition of adequacy, which in no way obligates the theorist to account for cases such as 'George Wallace is a Napoleon' (cf. 596-7; 601).

Burge's central claim that proper names are predicates acquires its force from the ease with which it accounts for their modified uses: occurrences of names which take the plural (e.g.' There are many Stephens in the classroom'), definite and indefinite article (e.g. 'The Stephen seated in the front row is outspoken'; 'A Stephen walked into the classroom'), and quantifiers (e.g. 'Some Stephens are bald') (cf. 596). If indeed proper names are "general terms which, together with a copula and an indefinite article," sometimes function as predicates in a formal semantics, then ipso facto instances are justified in which names resemble common nouns in the surface grammar (cf. 606). This seems an ostensible improvement over the description theory. How does the Russellian, for whom a name must be uniquely true of a designated object if it is to be true at all, account for the fact that there are many Stephens, each of which abbreviates a distinct description? He cannot rely on context to resolve the ambiguity, for the truth theorist is denied that privilege by the condition of adequacy set forth above. In Burge's picture, there is no semantic ambiguity between unmodified uses (qua singular terms) and modified uses (qua general terms) of proper names; they share the same truth-conditions per the T-thesis above. Burge evinces this relation with the sentence:

(1) Jones is a Jones.

As stated by the T-thesis, provided it is uttered literally, (1) is tautological; and this seems to confirm our ordinary intuitions (598).

Notwithstanding their common semantics, modified and unmodified uses of proper names diverge in that the latter is used to pick out one particular object. Indeed, Burge does not wish to claim that when a speaker utters the sentence, 'Stephen is hairy', he ascribes hairiness to every Stephen in the domain. As a result, Burge proposes that in their unmodified use, proper names play the role of predicate and demonstrative. That is to say, they have the same semantic structure as expressions such as 'that book'. This explains why both 'Jim is 6 feet tall' and 'That book is green' lack truth-values apart from speaker-reference or context. In order for the sentence to be true or false at all, the speaker must pick out a specific Jim or book (599).

A hearer can usually rely on some extrasentential action or contextual cues in determining to which particular Stephen the speaker refers. But provided the truth theorist must respect Burge's condition of adequacy, he cannot directly appeal to such features. For this reason, Burge formally construes the demonstrative element in unmodified uses of proper names as a set of reference clauses with regard to speaker and time: for instance for the sentence 'Aristotle is human' the corresponding T-sentence in the metalanguage becomes:

(2) (x) (y) (Reference (x), & By (x,t) & With (x, 'Aristotle1', 'Aristotle is human') & To (x,y) □ ('Aristotle is human' is true with respect to p at t □ Human ([y]Aristotle (y))))

Read: For all x and y, if x is an act of reference by person p at time t to y

with the first occurrence of 'Aristotle' in 'Aristotle is human', then 'Aristotle is human' is true with respect to p at t just in case the object which is y and is an Aristotle is human (600-1).

In the second part of the paper Burge adumbrates the conditions under which the use of an unmodified proper name occasions a successful semantic reference to the speaker's intended object. He thus draws a sharp distinction between speaker reference and semantic reference, citing that it is sometimes undesirable to identify the object "designated" by the former. One case in point is misidentification, whereby the speaker uses a proper name to attempt a reference to an individual that was never so-named. In such cases Burge appeals to the T-thesis. He evokes semantic reference to argue (pace the Strawsonian) that designation occurs between name and object, not person and object. Hence, properly speaking, for the person who points to Stephen and mistakenly says, 'Miles Davis is a great musician', his appropriation of 'Miles Davis' fails to designate. On this account, a proper name occurring as a singular term in a sentence, uttered by a speaker at a time, designates (semantically) an object iff the following conjunction obtains: (a) the speaker refers to that object at that time with that name (through its demonstrative element) and (b) the name (qua predicate) has been given to that object in an appropriate way (i.e. it is true of that object) (cf. 601).

Burge devotes the final part of his paper to a terse sketch of how best to interpret empty names in both semantic and pragmatic contexts. With this in mind he confronts the notorious problem of negative existentials, which (as demonstrated above) the Russellian overcomes by proposing a quantificational formal structure for proper names. Burge, on the other hand, approaches sentences like

(3) It is not the case that Pegasus exists.

by maintaining its truth if either 'Pegasus' is true of nothing in the language, or its utterer refers to nothing that 'Pegasus' is true of. Since there are many objects appropriately named 'Pegasus', it is the latter half of the conditional that he must elucidate. So bearing in mind the conditions for designation proposed in the preceding, Burge arrives at the following two possibilities for the failed designation of 'Pegasus':

either (a) the speaker referred to something that is not Pegasus (as in the misidentification example above),

or (b) the speaker referred, but referred to nothing at all.

Burge does not commit himself, he simply concludes that the truth of (3) obtains if either (a) or (b) obtains, and that in neither case is the speaker obligated to the existence of Pegasus (603-5).

(IV) The Individual Constants View and Böer's Critique of Burge

In brief, exponents of the individual constants (IC) view maintain that proper names are semantically singular terms - logical constants that have no descriptive content and are always true of one particular object. A fortiori they are not predicates, nor do they abbreviate them in a complex quantificational structure. This theory is thus antagonistic to that of Burge, which explains his "derogatory remarks" about it throughout his paper (particularly in section IV).

Burge argues against the IC view by claiming inter alia that it accounts only for unmodified uses of proper names (i.e. unless the IC theorist postulates a semantic ambiguity between them and modified uses). On pain of parsimony, this IC theorist must then justify his semantic divide – a task unnecessary assuming the modified predicate account.

Steven Böer, one advocate of the IC view, was evidently affronted by Burge's "derogatory remarks". In his paper "Proper Names as Predicates", he defends his convictions by launching a twofold assault on Burge's theory. In his first effort he hypothetically grants Burge's claim that proper names are predicates in order to challenge his opponent's proposed conditions for their true application. In his second Böer attacks the theory at its roots and proposes that proper names are not predicates at all. Instead he characteristically emphasizes their role as individual constants with disparate truth-conditions for different uses. In the following section I shall present Böer's binary critique of Burge together with an evaluation of the cogency of each argument.

Böer launches the first horn of his critique by supposing that proper names are predicates but that their truth-conditions differ from those provided by Burge's T-thesis, which states that a proper name is true of an object iff the object was given that name in an appropriate way. To substantiate this claim Böer instances surnames:

If John Smith discovers that his son Fred was fathered by Tom Jones, he can truly say

(4) Fred Smith is not a Smith after all – he's a Jones.

in spite of the fact that his son's legal name is 'Fred Smith'. And if John Smith is the real father of little Billy Jones (putative son of Tom Jones), then John Smith can truly say

(5) Billy Jones is in reality a Smith.

In such cases the ambiguity of family names (as names of genetic kinds) is all the more apparent, since there are many unrelated Smith-families and Jones-families. Talk of 'being a Jones1' as opposed to 'being a Jones2' seems inevitable if we are to be faithful to the facts of natural language [emphasis mine].

In Burge's defense, this argument seems less than compelling. It appears rather that Böer assails a straw-man (though vigorously, one must admit) when he implicitly employs "legal" convention to determine whether a name is true of a particular object. That is to say, in the T-thesis he supplants Burge's deliberately vague "given in an appropriate way" with a more precise, yet tenuous, social construction. Böer's counterfactual that John Smith can truly say (4) holds water if the sole condition for appropriate application is a process of "legal" naming, but who's to say that this is what Burge has in mind? On the contrary, Burge refuses to further define "given" and "appropriate way" since, as he reasons, it is not incumbent on the truth-theorist to do so. Rather, as noted above, he believes this a project for empirical inquiry (602-3). Burge consequently has recourse to the following reply: upon discovering that his son was fathered by Tom Jones, John Smith has eo ipso

discovered that his son was not given his name in an appropriate way. Therefore, in the above context, (4) is false. It's utterer (i.e. John Smith) uses 'Fred Smith' in a way which fails to designate (cf. Burge's conditions for designation, 601), and a fortiori he cannot say anything true of that which is designated.

So Burge can argue that as long as they are given in an appropriate way, family names are not ambiguous in the manner his critic intends. Böer has merely demonstrated the inadequacy of an exclusively legal definition for the conditions under which a name is appropriately given – an empirical detail that simply doesn't carry weight against the truth-conditions proposed by Burge's T-thesis.

The second horn of Böer's critique is more fundamental than the first, for if he can establish a more plausible semantics for modified uses of proper names, one which does not involve them functioning predicatively, then he effectively undermines Burge's further explication of their truth-conditions. Although he raises several subsequent objections against the modified predicate view, they all hinge on the success of this account.

Böer's task then as a proponent of the IC view is to offer a semantics for modified uses of proper names by way of their unmodified uses. To this end he offers two paradigmatic sentences representing these two syntactic roles:

(6) Alfred is tall.

(7) An Alfred joined our club today.

for which he suggests the following alternative T-sentences:

(8a) X is the referent of 'Alfred' in (6) iff X uniquely satisfies the identity-criterion which the utterer of (6) associates on that occasion with the use of 'Alfred' in (6).

(8b) X is in the extension of 'Alfred' in (7) iff the generalized intersection of the sets of identity-criteria which the utterer of (7) associates with different singular-term-uses of 'Alfred' provides a criterion satisfied by X.

Recalling Jennifer Hornsby in "Proper Names: A Defense of Burge", one advantage of the modified predicate view is that by positing an explicit semantic relation between modified and unmodified uses of proper names via the T-thesis, it easily accounts for inferences between instances of one use and instances of another. For example, ostensibly (7) should imply:

(9) Alfred joined the club today.

and

(10) All Alfreds are crazy.

should contradict

(11) Alfred is sane.

assuming the tokens of 'Alfred' receive the same semantic analyses. But how does Böer, who maintains that proper names play the role of individual constants, account for these inferences? Assuming each 'Alfred' is inflexibly indexed to a one object, it seems that in order to say anything of implication between (10) and (11), one must resolve the domain over which the universal quantifier in (10) applies and then

determine whether the indexed 'Alfred' in (11) is present in that domain. Can Böer's alternate T-theses accommodate this move?

As Hornsby notes, it is unclear how (8a) and (8b) could function within a Tarskian truth-theory. They cannot serve as axioms since they apply to particular utterances for which there is a potential infinite to account. Thus, "to proceed Böer's way sentence by sentence, would require a non-finite theory which failed to meet the normal constraints on a Tarskian truth-theory". So Hornsby attempts to provide Böer a finite schematization of (6):

For all speakers p and all times t Alfred is tall is true as uttered by p at t iff the unique satisfier of the identity criterion which p associates with 'Alfred' at t is tall. (where coming to have the name 'Alfred' is a necessary condition for satisfying the identity criterion associated with 'Alfred).

According to this proposal, in order to give the truth conditions for a sentence containing the unmodified mention of a proper name, the truth theorist must first determine which object was identified by the speaker of the sentence and then establish an individual T-sentence for the sentences of each indexed name-type. Burge argues that this is a very impractical task. Once again the theorist cannot rely on context owing to the aforementioned condition of adequacy. And unfortunately there is no foreseeable limit to the number of objects bearing a given name in the object language (cf. 605).

Nevertheless, Böer may reply that his t-theses preclude this possibility by restricting the number to those objects with which the speaker associates an identity-criterion on the occasion of use. The claim is that the truth theorist need only provide a denotation for each indexed-name relativized to that domain (cf. 605). However, turning again to the problem of implication between (10) and (11), how does this theorist then accommodate speakers who know different sets of Alfreds? It appears that (10) does not contradict (11) provided the indexed name-type in (10) is not one of the name-types the utterer of (11) associates with an identity criterion. Hornsby notes that by relativizing the extension of 'Alfred' to some specific set of individuals who are thusly named in the speaker's epistemic domain, Böer cannot even make sense of a speaker's beliefs (together with their corresponding utterances) that there are many Alfreds to whom he shall never refer, or likewise, that there will be many Alfreds after he dies.

The difficulty with Böer's account of proper names is that by specifying the conditions under which a name applies to an object in terms of speaker knowledge, he renders the task of the Tarskian truth-theorist infeasible. Furthermore, we often speak meaningfully about sets of objects using shared names without ever encountering the set of specific objects named thus. People understand that any object given that name - even those they shall never encounter - is one to which that name truly applies. And implications between sentences which include proper names should, given the most basic logical laws, obtain notwithstanding the semantic knowledge of particular speakers. Consequently, insofar as it fails to meet the conditions proposed not only by a Tarskian theory of truth, but by the phenomenology of a grammatically correct discourse, Böer's proposal seems an unlikely alternative to Burge's modified predicate view.

(V) Brief Concerns and Concluding Remarks

It is difficult not to be sympathetic to Burge's theory. The simplicity with which it explains the fact that we frequently use proper names as general terms is a significant advantage it possesses over rival accounts. Intuitively, proper names more closely resemble free variables (coupled with a relativizing element) than individual constants or abbreviated definite descriptions. Burge's account also appears more congruous with the ordinary ways in which speakers learn a language. When one teaches a child how to use names, one need not teach him the set of all individuals given that name. And one is careful to point out, much to the child's dismay, that although it is correct to describe Tom as bearded just like Daddy, calling the former by the latter's name is mistaken. The modified predicate view captures the phenomenology of language acquisition accurately because it entails that mastering the use of proper names simply demands learning the rules for a type of predicative construction.

Though Burge's theory befits such intuitions, I shall nonetheless voice three brief (largely practical) concerns which render some features of his view suspect. By no means do I think them insuperable, but perhaps their disentanglement would bolster the arguments that he employs.

My first worry involves Burge's T-thesis. Several commentators are understandably hostile to the inclusion of the vague 'given' and 'appropriate way' on the right of the biconditional. As demonstrated above, Böer misguidedly supposes that the clause bespeaks specific social implications, and others incorrectly assign it a Kripkean sense. But Burge deliberately maintains its vagueness. Perhaps there is a shed of truth in the first horn of Böer's critique, afterall. For, there is no mistaking that much of the practicability of Burge's view rests on the possibility of unpacking this clause empirically. My concern is that it may be, for all intents and purposes, impossible to do so. It simply appears that there can be no common appropriate way that objects are truly named. At one point, Burge offers the notion of social propriety to clarify things (597), but even this nebulous constraint is too inflexible. Is it not evident that individuals are regularly given their names by utter accident? Such baptisms transgress any socially acceptable constraint, but that doesn't seem to preclude their true application. The difficulty seemingly arises from Burge's inclusion of 'given' in the T-thesis. The fact that a proper name designates an object appears to have little to do with how the name was given, but instead with whether that object possesses that name at the time of utterance. Defining 'possesses' without making the T-thesis circular may yet be impracticable. Still, something should be said for the problems that 'given' creates for Burge's arguments.

My second concern involves the possibility of adequately formalizing the demonstrative element for unmodified uses of proper names. Employing the metalanguage, Burge analyzes salient extrasentential actions or contextual cues with a set of reference clauses, relativizing truth to speaker and time. These are not the only contextual factors that affect truth value. Burge notes that his formalization, as it stands, is inchoate. However, could any truth theorist's attempt ever approach completeness in view of the potentially infinite number of contextual provisions he would need to make?

My final concern involves the formal framework in which Burge conceives

his modified predicate view: the Tarskian definition of truth. Thus far, like both Hornsby and Böer, I have assumed that this theory is the preferred one. I rejected Böer's alternative semantics of proper names largely on the basis that it was unsuited for incorporation into a truth-definitional theory of language. But several commentators, among them John Etchemendy, consider it doubtful that Tarski himself intended his theory's application to natural languages, and the fact that it has been applied seems merely incidental. Moreover, there are scores of alternative theories antagonistic to the Tarskian strategy. Included among them are those formulated by thinkers who advocate a more pragmatic semantics centered on speaker meaning. Perhaps this is partially why Böer's account became so untenable. That is to say, perhaps the view that proper names play the role of individual constants is better suited to a more pragmatic perspective. For these reasons, if the advocate of the modified predicate view wishes his theory to stand on its own and endure a more critical eye, I think it obligatory that he offer a thorough defense of his Tarskian preferences.

Despite the above concerns, Burge's modified predicate view of proper names is the most credible account of their role within this formal theory considering its unique aims. And insofar as it offers the semantic theorist a more workable alternative to both the traditional predicate and individual constants approaches, I believe that it accomplishes precisely what its author intended.

Endnotes

[1] Burge, Tyler. "Reference and Proper Names." in *Readings in the Philosophy of Language.* Ed. Peter Ludlow. (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997). All further citations are parenthetical and to the compendium pagination unless otherwise noted.

[2] Sources for the Russellian material adumbrated in this section include: Russell, Bertrand. "Descriptions" (*ibid.*); and *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism.* Ed. David Pears (Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1985).

[3] Or more succinctly, in first-order logical notation: Ex(Fx & Gx & (y)(Gy '! x = y))

[4] the burden of reference is placed instead on the bound variable (*e.g.* the name may fail to refer simply by violation of the uniqueness clause it abbreviates).

[5] *viz.*Searle, John R. "Proper Names"; Kripke, Saul A. "Lecture II of Naming and Necessity"; and Donnellan, Keith S. "Reference and Definite Descriptions" in the Ludlow ed..

[6] Quine, William V. "On What There Is." in *The Review of Metaphysics, Vol. 1, Issue 5.* (Washington, D.C.: Philosophy Education Society, 1948), 25-27.

[7] It is beyond the scope of this paper to do justice to this commentary; *vide* Donnellan (1966) and Kripke (1977) for two notable examples.

[8] *cf.*Davidson, Donald. "Truth and Meaning" in Ludlow ed., 95 *etc.*

[9] At the risk of over-simplifying the traditional predicate account, the truth conditions would (respecting Burge, 594) be something like 'A proper name abbreviates a definite description (or set of descriptions) which is true of an object iff the speaker associates it with a putative designation of a name'. For Searle this would include a cluster of descriptions *etc.*

[10] As I shall demonstrate, this detail is frequently misconstrued in the critical literature. Peter Eichman, for instance, erroneously commits Burge to "a sort of Kripkean baptism process" (Eichman, "Theories of (Proper) Names" 2004).

[11] *nt.* I should clarify that, *for my purposes*, it is the final part; in point of fact, Burge does not conclude the paper until he recapitulates his objections to the individual constants view (which I shall tackle in the ensuing section).

[12] Böer, Stephen. "Proper Names as Predicates." in *Philosophical Studies* 27, (New York: Kluwer, 1975).

[13] Böer, 391.

[14] Böer, 395.

[15] Hornsby, Jennifer. "Proper Names: A Defense of Burge." in *Philosophical Studies* 30, (New York: Kluwer, 1976).

[16] *cf.* Hornsby, 229.

[17] *Ibid.*, 230.

[18] *Ibid.*, 230.

[19] *cf.* Hornsby, 231.

[20] *cf.* Hornsby, 232.

[21] As Hornsby notes, even if one modifies Böer's proposal to indicate that the extension of a quantified use of a proper name is given by the intersection of *all* sets of identity criteria associated by any speaker with that name, the result is inadequate. For, it requires that a speaker possess knowledge of the conditions for applicability for individuals whom others know, but whom he does not (232).

[22] *nt.* This includes the use of proper names in the future tense and between speakers with vastly different epistemic backgrounds.

[23] *cf.* Etchemendy, John. "Tarski on Truth and Logical Consequence." in *The Journal of Symbolic Logic*, Vol. 53, No. 1. (Mar., 1988), pp. 51-79.

[24] *i.e.* those following in the footsteps of Strawson, Donnellan *et alia.*

• *Logos Essay Contest Winner* •

Replies to the Luck Objection against Libertarian Free Will

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I (Introduction)

According to *determinism*, the view of the world supported by classical physics, it is true of the world at any given time that there is only one physically possible future[1]. According to *indeterminism*, the view of the world supported some now say by quantum physics, it is true of the world at any given time (or at least at some times) that there is more than one physically possible future. To appreciate the difference between these two views, consider a time at which you raise your arm. *Just before* you raise your arm, it probably seems to you that there are a number of physically possible futures: if you raise your arm, that will be one future; if you lower your arm, that will be a different future; if you do not move your arm, that will be a still different future, and so on. According to determinism, however, that there are multiple physically possible futures at the time just before you move your arm is an *illusion*: there is only one physically possible future, the one in which you will raise you arm. Indeed, you *will* raise your arm. It is *determined* indeed it *was* (perhaps always) determined that you will raise your arm. At the moment before you move your arm, there is *no physical possibility* of doing anything other than raising your arm, even though you probably think that there is. Or so it is according to determinism. By contrast, according to indeterminism, there really could be multiple physically possible futures at the time just before you move your arm at the least, different futures for each different movement of your arm you might make. Which of these physically possible futures the world will "enter" at the moment you move your arm remains *open* until that very moment.

It is not at all difficult to see why many have taken determinism to be incompatible with free will: take the case where you raise your arm; if, before you even *think* of raising your arm, determinism rules out the physical possibility of your doing *anything other* than raising your arm, do you really raise it freely? Of course, one might think that *indeterminism* is the way out of this puzzle of free will and determinism. However, it is not terribly difficult to see why many have taken indeterminism to be incompatible with free will as well. The latter problem is this: if, at the instant just before an agent makes a choice, there are a number of different ways the choice could go, *given the same antecedent deliberations, reasoning,* etc., then what controls which way the choice will go? Evidently not any beliefs or desires of the agent, for we can hold these fixed and yet the indeterminist says that the agent's choice could *still* go a number of different ways. But then isn't the outcome of the choice just going to be a matter of chance, a matter of *luck*, out of the agent's control? This is the "luck objection" to an indeterminist account of free will. Proponents of the luck objection argue it shows that free will is not possible in an indeterministic world, because free will requires a sort of control over outcomes on the part of the agent that indeterminism seems to subvert.

Among those who hold the view that free will *is* possible in an indeterministic world, the view of *libertarianism*, the philosopher who has given the most thorough treatment of the luck objection is Robert Kane. Kane responds to the luck objection in the context of a sophisticated libertarian account of free will he has developed in a series of recent works. Consider one of Kane's most recent

formulations:

> ...undetermined [...] actions [...] occur at those difficult times of life when we are torn between competing visions of what we should do or become. Perhaps we are torn between doing the moral thing or acting from ambition, or between powerful present desires and long-term goals, or we are faced with difficult tasks to which we have aversions. In all such cases, we are faced with *competing motivations* and have to make an *effort to overcome temptation* to do something else we also strongly want [...]. The uncertainty and inner tension we feel at such soul-searching moments of self-formation is thus reflected in the *indeterminacy of our neural processes* themselves [...]. When we do decide under such conditions of uncertainty, the outcome is *not determined* because of the preceding indeterminacy and yet it can be willed (and hence rational and voluntary) *either way* owing to the fact that in such self-formation, the agent's prior wills are divided by conflicting motives [...]. If [an agent] overcomes [...] temptation, it will be a result of her effort, but if she fails, it will be because she did not allow her effort to succeed. And this is due to the fact that, while she willed to overcome temptation, she also willed to fail, for quite different and incommensurable reasons. When we [...] decide in such circumstances, and the *indeterminate efforts* we are making become *determinate choices*, we make one set of competing reasons or motives prevail over the others then and there by deciding. [emphasis added] (Kane 2004, p. 80)

To unpack Kane's detailed picture, the key facts about the etiology of the libertarian free action or choice are these: (i) the agent has (at least) two sets of competing motives; (ii) the agent makes an *effort* to overcome temptation, in order to try to act in accordance with the moral set of motives (for example); (iii) the effort she exerts is *indeterminate* due to quantum mechanical effects, as Kane explains elsewhere[2] so whether or not she will succeed at resisting temptation and making the moral choice is *undetermined* until the very moment of choice; (iv) when the effort finally terminates, it issues in a *determinate* choice one way or another; (v) the resulting choice will be rational, *either way the choice goes*, because the agent has reasons for making the moral choice (reasons that will rationalize the moral choice if she makes it) and incommensurable reasons for making the non-moral choice (reasons that will rationalize the non-moral choice if she makes it instead).

By showing how an undetermined choice could be "more-than-one-way rational" (Kane 1995, p. 114) as stated in the last condition above, Kane's picture of competing motivations and indeterminate efforts answers the old worry that an undetermined choice would be some sort of fluke, out-of-the-blue accident, as some have imagined indeterministic agents might produce. Nevertheless, contemporary proponents of the luck objection though they may agree that Kane has shown how undetermined choices could be more intelligible than once thought still maintain that there is an element of chance or luck in whether or not Kane's imagined agent will be able to resist temptation and make the moral rather than non-moral choice. This

element of luck, they say, subverts the free will that Kane is after.

Thus, the luck objection survives and I will consider it at length in Section IV below. There I will argue that the various luck arguments are not nearly as powerful as their proponents imagine, especially when posed against a Libertarian Free Choice Model, inspired by Kane (1995), that I develop in Section III. The luck arguments are less powerful than imagined because (a) these arguments wrongly conclude that an explanation is not available for why an undetermined agent resists temptation *rather than* giving in to temptation (or *vice versa*), (b) these arguments do not sufficiently appreciate Kane's identification of the indeterminate neural processes with the agent's effort, such that the indeterminate processes are *experienced* by the agent as an *active* exertion of her *own* effort, and (c) these arguments wrongly assume that the indeterminate process is a highly *localized* affair that is largely detached from the agent as a whole. I will argue that when (a), (b), and (c) are taken into account, we will start to doubt the claim that undetermined choices resulting from indeterminate efforts are matters of control-diminishing luck. This argument aims at what Kane (1995) has called the "intelligibility question" about free will whether or not we can make sense of free will in an indeterministic world and my goal will be to defend the conceptual coherence of libertarian free choice against challenges of incoherence due to problems of luck. In other words, I will try to defend the notion that we can at least conceive of possible worlds in which agents exercise libertarian free will.

Before presenting the luck objection, I will spend some time in the next section discussing quantum mechanics. I do so with hesitation, since the interpretation of quantum mechanics opens a can of worms all its own; however, I will do so anyway out of a suspicion that debates over libertarianism would be clarified if arguments on both sides were couched in terms of the concepts of the quantum theory from which indeterminism is supposed to draw its support. My hunch is that if we use some basic quantum mechanical concepts in describing cases of libertarian free choice, we will be able to get straight on the strengths and weaknesses of the libertarian account in a way otherwise not possible. Thus, when in Section III I develop a Libertarian Free Choice Model against which to test the luck objection, I will draw on the quantum mechanical concepts developed in the next section.

II (The Quantum Theory)

In this section, I want to introduce three main concepts from quantum mechanics, including some associated concepts necessary for understanding the big three. Here they are I will discuss each in turn:

(i) The state vector, $|\psi>$, of a physical system.

(ii) Continuous, deterministic evolution of the state vector, $|\psi>$, (in the absence of measurement/observation) according to Schrödinger's law.

(iii) Discontinuous, nondeterministic "collapse" of the state vector, $|\psi>$ into a particular *eigenstate*, $|\psi_n>$ upon measurement/observation.

(i) *The state vector.* The quantum mechanical representation of the *state* of a physical system is given by a mathematical object, $|\psi>$, called the "state vector." Most of the time, when we think about a physical system, we probably think of a classical representation of the state of that system, where this is like some sort of perfect 3-D photograph of exactly how the system is in all respects at a given time. But this is not the representation of a physical system given by the state vector. The state vector in quantum mechanics gives a sort of *probabilistic* description of the system. Think of quantum mechanics as a tool for predicting the results of measurements: if we are going to make a measurement[3] on a system at a time, t, then the state vector of that system tells us the *possible results* of the measurement at t and the *respective probability* of each possible measurement result. One can see how this would be extremely useful. If we are interested in predicting the energy of a system at time t, then the state vector of the system will tell us that the possible results of a measurement at t are energy levels $E_1, E_2, \ldots, E_n$, each with respective probabilities $P_1, P_2, \ldots, P_n$, etc (see Hodgson 2002, p. 88 for a more detailed discussion in these terms). In such a case, energy is called an "observable" of the system and, when the system is not being measured, the system is said to be in a "*superposition*" of particular energy states, these states corresponding to energy level values that might each with some probability be indicated by a measurement (see Loewer 1996 for more on this). The point to take away is that as useful as the state vector is, it still cannot tell us *with certainty* that a certain measurement result will obtain, but rather can only assign some probability (less than 1) of the result obtaining. Thus, the state vector should be thought of as a mathematical object that, for a given time, tells us the probability of obtaining various measurement results should we make a measurement on our system at that time.

(ii) *Schrödinger's law.* Another useful feature of the state vector of a system is that (so long as we have something called the "Hamiltonian" for the system[4]) we can calculate how it will evolve through time, that is, how the probabilities of obtaining various measurements will *change* as our system changes through time. According to standard quantum theory, there are two laws governing the evolution of the state vector, one applying only when the system goes unmeasured, the other applying only when the system is measured. *In the absence of measurement*, the law that specifies the evolution of the state vector is Schrödinger's law. For our discussion, all we need to know about this law is that it is, like the laws of classical physics, perfectly *deterministic* and, as Loewer explains, "it is deterministic because it describes the trajectory of the state of a system [...] in such a way that if isolated systems are in the same initial state, then their evolutions will be identical" (Loewer 1996, p. 96). Thus and this will become important later if two systems start out with state vectors that are the same (and Hamiltonians that are the same, as noted in note 4 above), then Schrödinger's law dictates that they will evolve identically over time that is, *until one (or both) of them is (are) measured.*

(iii) *The collapse postulate.* What happens when a system is measured by an outside observer cannot be described by the continuous Schrödinger's equation. Instead, when a measurement of an observable of the system is made, the state vector of the system undergoes a discontinuous and *not perfectly predictable* "collapse" into a particular *eigenstate*, $|\psi_n>$, associated with a particular, determinate measurement value for the observable of interest. For example, if the result of the energy measurement

above were to be energy level E_3, then the eigenstate into which the state vector $|\psi>$ collapsed would be $|\psi_3>$. If the energy level were E_4, the eigenstate would be $|\psi_4>$, and so forth (again, see Hodgson 2002 for a more detailed discussion of these terms). The first key point is that the process of measurement results in a *determinate* reading for the value of the observable at the time of measurement. The second key point is that, since the result of the measurement (i.e. the particular energy state to which the *superposition* of energy states will collapse) cannot be known with certainty ahead of time, the eigenstate to which the state vector will collapse upon measurement cannot be known with certainty ahead of time either. All that we have are probabilities that the state vector will collapse into particular eigenstates upon measurement, particular eigenstates that correspond to particular values of the measured observable.

Having introduced the necessary concepts from quantum mechanics, I will try in the next section to use these concepts to further clarify the picture of libertarian free choice presented by Kane in the excerpt above.

III (A Libertarian Free Choice Model)

In this section I outline a model of libertarian free choice that makes use of the quantum concepts from the last section[5]. Consider a sketch of such a model, given by Nozick (1981):

> According to the currently orthodox quantum mechanical theory of measurement, as specified by John von Neumann, a quantum mechanical system is in a superposition of states, a probability mixture of states, which changes continuously in accordance with the quantum mechanical equations of motion, and which changes discontinuously via a measurement or observation. Such a measurement "collapses the wave packet," reducing the superposition to a particular state; which state the superposition will reduce to is not predictable. Analogously, a person before decision has reasons without fixed weights; he is in a superposition of (precise) weights [...]. The process of decision reduces the superposition to one state (or to a state corresponding to a comparative ranking of reasons), but it is not predictable or determined to which state of the weights the decision (analogous to a measurement) will reduce the superposition. (p. 104-105)

I think something like Nozick's picture[6] must be what Kane has in mind, but instead of the superposition being a superposition of weights of reasons, the superposition would be a superposition of levels of (or strengths of) *effort*. Perhaps Kane would finish the paragraph above like this:

> ...a person before decision exerts *effort* without a fixed strength; he is in a superposition of (precise) *strengths of effort*. The process of decision reduces the superposition to one state, but it is not predictable or determined to which state of strength of effort the decision (analogous to a measurement) will reduce the superposition.

I need to be more specific about the quantum mechanical picture of this process, so I now describe my Libertarian Free Choice Model:

At t_1 in world W, the state of an individual human, A, is represented by the state vector, $|\psi>$. At t_1 in (a possible) world W^*, the state of an individual human (A's counterpart), A^*, is represented by the *same* state vector, $|\psi>$. That is, A and A^* start out at t_1 in the *same state* in their respective worlds (and with the same Hamiltonians, as in note 4 above). At t_2, A and A^* will both begin to exert *effort* to make a moral choice (rather than a nonmoral choice, say) in each of their respective worlds[7]. At t_3, A and A^* will make *either* the moral choice *or* the nonmoral choice in their respective worlds, depending (causally) on how much effort they exert toward resisting temptation and making the moral choice. Before the choices are made, but *after* the efforts have begun, that is, between t_2 and t_3, the state vector of A and the state vector of A^* will evolve identically according to Schrödinger's law, since Schrödinger's law is deterministic. However, as noted, *at* t_3 choices will be made by A and A^* and at t_3 we will observe which choice is made (i.e. whether the agents start to do the moral thing or the nonmoral thing). Thus, at t_3, the state vector of A will collapse and the state vector of A^* will collapse, according to the collapse postulate. The key then, is that the two state vectors might well collapse into *different* eigenstates, corresponding to *different* determinate exertions of effort. That is, suppose that 'effort level' supervenes on some physical observable, E. For example, suppose that when we make an observation at t_3 in W, A's state vector collapses into a particular eigenstate, $|\psi_1>$, corresponding to effort level E_1. However, when we make an observation at t_3 in W^*, A^*'s state vector collapses into a particular eigenstate, $|\psi_2>$, corresponding to a *greater* effort level, E_2. Suppose that effort level E_1 is not great enough to cause the moral choice, so A makes the nonmoral choice at t_3. By contrast, effort level E_2 *is* great enough to cause the moral choice, so A^* makes the moral choice at t_3. The picture, then, is this: we began with two agents in the same state in their respective worlds at t_1; the agents both began exerting efforts to make the moral choice at t_2; however, at t_3, agent A made the nonmoral choice and agent A^* made the moral choice, and the explanation of the difference in choice-outcomes is that ultimately A^* exerted *more effort* toward making the moral choice than did A (E_2 for A^* versus E_1 for A).

I think this is the free choice model that a libertarian like Kane ought to hold[8]. For one thing, what is the alternative? What could we change about the model to yield a different libertarian free choice model? Instead of thinking in terms of two agents, A and A^*, in different possible worlds, W and W^*, we could just think in terms of one agent, A, who makes a nonmoral choice at t_3, but who, after we "rerun" his evolution starting from the beginning (back in the same initial state), makes the *moral* choice on the rerun. I assume Kane must endorse such a picture, for this is, after all, exactly what it means to say "A could have done otherwise given the same past and the same laws of nature," which is just what the libertarian wants to be able to say about cases of *undetermined* choice. In any case, whether we think in terms of possible worlds or "reruns," the logic of the free choice model is the same.

As far as I can tell, the only other feature of the model up for dispute may be *how* the collapse of the state vector occurs. The first thing to note is that a collapse of the state vector *must occur* at t_3 if we are to see A make one choice at t_3

and *A** make another at t_3, for without a collapse, we just get identical deterministic evolution of *A* and *A** right through t_3 according to Schrödinger's law. Kane never says anything explicit about an *outside observer* collapsing the agent's state vector at the time of choice[9], a feature I have implicitly built into my model. In fact, there is some indication from Kane (and from Nozick above as well) that even without an outside observer, the *choice itself* (whatever in *A*'s brain corresponds to the choice) will collapse *A*'s state vector and likewise for *A**. But this is not possible. O'Connor (1996) points out this key problem:

> But now, on the orthodox interpretation, the resolution of the indeterminacy is a consequence of a quantum mechanical measurement event. This, of course, raises puzzling questions of its own. However, my purpose is not to raise those questions but instead to note the apparent need for a special kind of "trigger" event to induce *determinacy* in the system [to collapse the state vector into a particular eigenstate]. It's hard to see how Kane can accommodate this need within his picture of free choice. For if the choice which induces determinacy is disconnected from the indeterminate process itself, it will not admit of a causally indeterministic explanation in terms of that process's antecedents. (p. 154)

The problem is this: the physical process of choice cannot collapse the state vector describing the system (i.e. human *A*) *of which that choice is a part.* If *A*'s choice is to be undetermined, as Kane wishes it to be, then the physical process of choice must be described under *A*'s state vector. *But then*, the choice cannot act like the "special kind of "trigger"" needed to collapse the state vector of *A* (and thus the superposition of effort levels), because that special kind of trigger must be a measurement apparatus or observer *outside* of the system, *A*. Thus, we must have an outside observer check *A*'s behavior at t_3 in order for *A*'s state vector to collapse at t_3. My point, here, is that the presence of an observer to collapse the state vector of the agent at t_3 is a non-negotiable part of any libertarian free choice model; nothing *internal* to the system described by the state vector like a "choice event" in the agent's brain can bring about the collapse of the state vector of which that very thing is a part[10]. I conclude that the libertarian should operate with the model of free choice given above.

IV (The Luck Objection)

The luck objection challenges the coherence of the concept of an undetermined free choice. Roughly, the objection says that undetermined choices would be subject to luck, but that luck subverts freedom-level *control* over such a choice, so that undetermined choices could not be *free* choices at all. In this section, I will assess how the Libertarian Free Choice Model developed in the last section fairs against the luck objection and I will argue it fairs well.

The essence of the luck objection is this:

> ...when Jones does *A* and his doing of *A* is undetermined, and when his counterpart, Jones*, in the nearest possible world in which the

> past and the laws are held constant until the moment of choice does *B* instead, there is no explanation (deterministic or indeterministic) of the difference in outcome Jone's *A*-ing but Jone*'s *B*-ing in terms of prior reasons or motives of either agent. [...] Jones's *A*-ing and Jones*'s *B*-ing are matters of luck. (Haji 2000, p. 211)

So we are to imagine two agents, one of whom (suppose) succeeds at resisting temptation, the other of whom fails, even though their worlds were in the *same state* (same past, same laws of nature) up to the moment of choice. But then what could have accounted for the difference in the agents' acts (or choice-outcomes), other than just dumb luck?

4.1 Kane's "No Sameness" Reply

A reply of Kane's to the luck objection that has received much attention is what I will call the "No Sameness" reply. The reply is that, if there is any quantum indeterminacy in either of the worlds, then "one cannot assume to begin with that the pasts of these agents are exactly the same or that they are "really identical"" (Kane 1995, p. 171). The first thing to be said about this reply is that, if Kane is right that we cannot assume that the agents are really identical, then we cannot endorse indeterminism and deny determinism. In order to get indeterminism at all, it is necessary that we be able to say that two agents start in the same initial state and yet that their later evolutions diverge. Indeterminists, after all, must *deny determinism*, the thesis that "the laws of nature are such that two possible worlds that agree on their state at time *t* and on the laws of nature agree on their state at all times" (Loewer 1996, p. 92), and the only way to deny this is to say that there are two possible worlds that agree on their state at time *t* and on the laws of nature and yet *do not* agree on their state at all times. If two worlds cannot be said to start out in the same state at all, then their later non-identical evolutions may just be due to differences in initial conditions, which is compatible with thoroughgoing determinism.

Kane says more about the No Sameness reply in an oft-quoted passage:

> With indeterminate efforts, exact sameness is not defined. Nor is exact difference either. If the efforts are indeterminate, one cannot say the efforts had exactly the same strength, or that one was exactly greater or less great than the other. That is what indeterminacy amounts to. So one cannot say of two agents that they had exactly the same pasts and made exactly the same efforts and one got lucky while the other did not. Nor can one imagine the same agent in two possible worlds with exactly the same pasts making exactly the same effort and getting lucky in one world and not the other. *Exact sameness (or difference) of possible worlds is not defined if the possible worlds contain indeterminate efforts or indeterminate events of any kind.* (Kane 1995, p. 171-172)

The last line is the most problematic[11]. The problem turns on whether Kane adopts a realist or nonrealist interpretation of the quantum state of a system as represented

by the state vector. If Kane adopts a realist interpretation of the quantum state, according to which the quantum state is, as Loewer (1996) puts it, "the fundamental physical ontology" (p. 96), then sameness *is* defined if the *quantum* states of two objects are the same (i.e. if their state vectors are the same), then their states are the same *simpliciter*. Moreover, if we are concerned only with the question of whether two *efforts* are the same, then, supposing again that effort supervenes on some physical observable, E, sameness and more importantly *difference* of effort is also defined: if two indeterminate efforts, both in superpositions of effort levels, collapse into different *eigenstates* upon measurement which would be the case if measurements indicated effort level E_2 for one effort and E_3 for the other, say then the states of efforts are different.[12] As we have already seen in Section III, the superposition of effort levels (and the state vector more generally) *must be collapsed* to a determinate effort level if we are to know the choice-outcome at all[13]. In any case, the point remains that if one interprets the quantum state represented by the state vector along *realist* lines, then sameness of states is defined and it is defined as sameness of state vectors.

It seems that Kane does want to hold such a realist view, as he rejects the view that the probabilistic nature of the state vector is just a reflection of our imperfect epistemic situation with respect to the underlying world: he says that "the uncertainty and indeterminacy of the quantum world, according to the prevailing view, is not due to our limitations as knowers but to the nature of the physical systems themselves" (Kane 1995, p. 9). Elsewhere he writes of "...the fact that indeterminacy was an ultimate feature of the cosmic order" (*ibid.*, p. 142). This sounds very much like a realist interpretation. However, if Kane does hold a realist interpretation of the quantum state, then his reply to the luck objection fails, because sameness is in fact defined on the realist interpretation.

On the other hand, Kane might adopt a nonrealist interpretation of the quantum state. On such a view, the probabilistic description of an object given by the state vector might just be due to our ignorance of the underlying "exact" values. However, this nonrealist view is compatible with the view that "what is really going on" at the microlevel is *determinism* and that the world just *appears* probabilistic because we have imperfect information (imperfect information that is perhaps in principle not perfectible). Galen Strawson (2000) seems sympathetic to this view[14]:

> As far as I can see, the situation is this: Not only are we unable to prove determinism is false; we cannot even say that current physics gives us *more reason* to believe that determinism is false than to believe that it is true. For we do not (and can never) have anymore reason to believe that the appearance of objective indeterminism in a particular case is a product of objective indeterminism than to believe that it is a product of limits on our ability to know the nature of things. (p. 154)

Clearly, though, *Kane* cannot hold such a nonrealist view of quantum mechanics. Moreover, as we just saw, Kane claims that quantum indeterminacy "is not due to our limitations as knowers but to the nature of the physical systems themselves" (Kane 1995, p. 9). It is thus strange that he later sounds so receptive to these nonrealist views in one of his notes:

> ...these wave functions are abstract descriptions of the real brains that do not tell us what the exact position and momenta of the component particles are [...]. And if the particles of the two brains cannot be described as having exact positions and momenta, then the two brains cannot be said to be in exactly the same states despite the sameness of their abstract descriptions. Of course, it is precisely this sort of situation that leads people to think that quantum theory must not be telling the whole story and that there must be more to say about the physical reality in the form of hidden variables or some new theory. Or, it leads others to instrumentalist or nonrealist interpretations of the theory, in which the wave or other representations of quantum states do not represent or picture states of reality, but are merely instruments for predictions. The latter position would seem to support the claim that exact sameness is not defined, while the former (some new theory) is at this stage only a wish. (Kane 1995, p. 237)

However, as I said, the latter, nonrealist position is compatible with the view that what is really going on at the microlevel is determinism. This is worth stressing: on such a nonrealist view, whenever the evolutions of two systems happen to diverge, it might just be due to the fact that the systems had different "exact" initial conditions that were hiding, as it were, beneath their probabilistic descriptions. So Kane cannot hold such a nonrealist view if he wants to retain the genuine indeterminism necessary for libertarian free will. He must be a realist. But if so, sameness and hence difference *is* defined for him, defined in terms of same state vectors (or just same eigenstates, when superpositions of effort levels collapse to the same effort level), and so his reply to the luck objection does not work.

4.2 The "Different Efforts" Reply

But there is a better reply to the luck objection, a reply that I will call the "Different Efforts" reply. This reply is suggested in Mele's own presentation of the luck objection, now taking "Ann" and "Ann*" as our imagined agents:

> If Ann failed where Ann* succeeded because the latter tried harder or more intelligently than the former to resist temptation, then we might be inclined to regard Ann as morally responsible for her failure and Ann* as morally responsible for her success. But this is not the tack Kane takes. (Mele 1999a, p. 98-99)

Kane may not take that tack, but the Libertarian Free Choice Model above suggests that this is just the tack that the libertarian ought to take: the different choice outcomes of Ann and Ann* are to be explained by their different exertions of effort. The reason that Kane does not pursue this Different Efforts reply is that his No Sameness reply discussed above precludes him from doing so. As Mele goes on to note:

> On Kane's view, given that the agents' efforts are "indeterminate," it

> cannot properly be said that the latter agent (Ann, for example) tried exactly as hard and intelligently as the former (Ann*, for example). But given that the difference in outcome in the two cases successful resistance and a subjectively morally proper choice in one and unsuccessful resistance and subjectively morally improper choice in the other is not to be explained by a difference in the amount of effort or in the intelligence of the effort, this alleged implication of the efforts' being indeterminate seems insignificant. (*ibid.*, p. 99)

However, since we have rejected the No Sameness reply and affirmed that sameness and difference is in fact defined, we can explain the difference in the agents' outcomes in terms of their different efforts: at the time of the collapse of their state vectors, Ann* was measured to have exerted more effort than Ann it is as simple as that. It was *because of* Ann*'s greater effort that she succeeded in resisting temptation and it was *because of* Ann's lesser effort that she failed. And, if the Libertarian Free Choice Model is sound, all this is consistent with Ann and Ann* starting out in the same state in their respective worlds.

Given this model, it seems we can blunt Mele's main point in advancing the luck objection, which is that "If Ann's effort to resist temptation fails where Ann*'s effort succeeds, and there is nothing about the agents' powers, capacities, states of mind, moral character, and the like that explains this difference in outcome, then the difference really is just a matter of luck" (Mele 1999a, p. 99). The reply to Mele, then, is simply that it is the different levels of effort exerted by Ann and Ann* that *explains* the difference in outcomes. Notice that Mele's argument has a conditional form: *if* there is nothing about the agents to explain the difference in outcome, *then* the difference in outcome is a matter of luck. But there *is* something about the agents to explain the difference in outcome different levels of effort exerted so Mele's inference to luck does not go through. Of course, this simple reply can hardly be the end of the matter, for as we shall soon see, the luck objection can be pressed even if differential exertions of effort are taken into account.

4.3 Explanation and Control

One of the main worries behind the luck objection is a worry about explanation. Even if one accepts Kane's suggestion of "more-than-one-way" rationality, the suggestion that we can explain why the agent resisted temptation (if she did so) in terms of her reasons for wanting to resist temptation and we can *also* explain why the agent failed to resist temptation (if she did so) in terms of her reasons for wanting to give in, there is still the additional problem of explaining why an agent resisted temptation *rather than* failing to resist temptation or *vice versa*. As Almedia and Bernstein (2003) have stressed, plain explanations are one matter and *contrastive* ("rather than...") explanations are another. As Haji (2001) notes, now imagining an agent named Jones (and now using a *rerun* model rather than a possible worlds model), "it is the lack of contrastive explanation in terms of prior elements in an action's

trajectory why Jones [gave in to temptation] rather than not that fuels the intuition had by many that what Jones does in each of the reruns is a matter of responsibility-subverting luck" (p. 189). However, we have seen that the Different Efforts reply to the luck objection does provide a contrastive explanation in terms of prior elements in an action's trajectory: the prior elements are efforts and the contrastive explanation is given in terms of different levels of effort exerted. As we saw in Section III, Agent *A** succeeded at resisting temptation *rather than* failed because the level of her effort terminating at t_3 was above the threshold necessary for successful resistance (and had it been *below* the threshold, she would have failed *rather than* succeeded).

The importance of contrastive explanations of outcomes is that they are supposed to be related to an agent's *control* of the outcomes. As Almedia and Bernstein put it, "only contrastive explanations of undetermined events will suffice for an agent's *having control* over such events and [...] Kane's libertarianism is impotent to yield these explanations" (*op. cit.*, p. 111). However, Kane's libertarianism seems compatible with the Libertarian Free Choice Model of Section III (so long as he gives up the No Sameness reply) and, using that model, we can give contrastive explanations for the undetermined choices in terms of the agents' different levels of effort more precisely, in terms of the different determinate effort levels to which their superpositions of effort levels collapse at the moment we observe their choices.

However, it is sometimes suggested (Haji 2000; 2001), that what is required is a contrastive explanation in terms of prior *reasons*: we are asked to show that the agent had reasons for choosing morally *rather than* nonmorally (and *different* reasons for choosing nonmorally *rather than* morally, if the agent did that instead) in order to say that the agent was in control of her choice. Such a contrastive explanation in terms of different reasons is clearly not provided by the Libertarian Free Choice Model, which supplies the contrastive explanation in terms of different efforts. But it seems wrong to require that contrastive explanations be given in terms of reason. Let me explain why.

It seems clear that a good theory of action ought to accord contrastive explanatory power to differential exertions of effort. It is important, in this context, to realize that exertions of effort are not somehow uniquely determined by a mere vector sum of reasons (i.e. given the same reasons, you always get the same effort-output), because exertions of effort are to some extent *independent* of the deliberative process. Certainly, one might exert more or less effort if one thinks one has comparatively better or worse reasons for what one is trying to do. However, one might also exert more or less effort depending on, for example, mundane *physiological factors*, like whether one is sleep-deprived or has low blood sugar or for any number of other deliberation-independent factors, *holding reasons and prior deliberation fixed.* Moreover, in many cases even in deterministic cases given two agents with the same deliberations leading up to a choice (though not the same pasts in every detail), one of whom succeeds in resisting temptation, one of whom fails, the most illuminating explanation of the successful agent's success might simply be that "she tried harder" (certainly, if determinism is true, there are some prior sufficient causal conditions for her trying harder, but in the case of indeterminism, even the prior sufficient causal

conditions might be absent). But one might press: why did the agent try harder this time (compared with last time, say)? What was her *reason*? My reply is: *she doesn't need a reason*. Forgetting about the issue of determinism and indeterminism, when an agent is attempting to complete a bench press at the gym, and, in one possible world, he just barely succeeds at bench pressing 200 lbs., and, in a nearby possible world, he just barely fails, the contrastive explanation is in terms of a difference in efforts, not in terms of a difference in *reasons*.

However, even granting contrastive explanation of different outcomes in terms of different efforts exerted, one might now argue that the agent was not really in control of *how much effort* she ended up exerting. On this view, the ultimate level of effort she exerted just sort of "happened to her." Her ultimate level of effort was not something that was "up to her." After all, while there may be contrastive explanations of why an agent made one choice rather than another in terms of different efforts, there is no similar contrastive explanation of why an agent exerted one level of effort rather than another. So the question is: are agents A and A^* in control of how much effort they exert?

There are two powerful ways in which proponents of the luck objection try to shake our confidence that these agents are in control of how much effort they exert: first, there are examples in which the indeterminism normally coming from the agent's "effort of will" is produced instead by a *randomizing device* over which the agent is supposed to clearly lack control from which it is argued that the agent has no control of the effort of will *in the normal case*; second, there are examples where a number of *reruns* of the agent's choice are made (re-starting from the same initial conditions) and from the fact that there is some statistical description of the distribution of indeterministic choice outcomes, it is argued that the agent could not have been in control of any of the choice outcomes as she was issuing them.

4.4 Challenges from Randomizing Devices

Imagine that rather than an indeterminate effort of will causing a choice outcome to go one way or another, a "little randomizing device" in the agent's head does so (Mele 1999b, p. 277). Mele asks us to "[p]icture the device as a tiny, genuinely random roulette wheel, half of whose slots are black and half red. The ball's landing on black represent the prevailing of the thief's reasons for refraining from stealing, and its landing on red represents the other reasons' prevailing [...] But in that case, if the thief is not morally responsible for what the device does, it is hard to see how he can be morally responsible [...] for refraining from stealing in the actual world" (*ibid.*, p. 277) where it is the indeterminate efforts that are operative. The idea is that the probabilistic nature of the roulette wheel can be matched to the probabilistic nature of the indeterminate effort; but since the agent is not responsible for the outcome of a roulette spin, it is supposed to follow that she is not responsible for the outcome of an indeterminate effort either.

One obvious objection to this example, an objection once given by Van Inwagen (1983, p. 135), is that there is an important difference in these cases between

a little randomizing device and a *natural part* of the agent's brain. Before outlining what I take to be the important differences, though, I should say that Almedia and Bernstein seem quite sure that there are none:

> ...it is mysterious why the nature of the cause of the probabilities should be of any consequence. After all, once the indeterminism sets in be it as a product of motives and character or by the spinning of a roulette wheel the agent disappears from the scene. After the moment that the indeterminism is produced in the agent, the agent loses any influence that he allegedly had. (*op. cit.*, p. 100).

Here, I think, we see where the luck objection goes fundamentally astray: *pace* Almedia and Bernstien, the nature of the cause of the probabilities makes all the difference in the world. Two aspects of the source of the indeterminism are relevant: first, whether or not the source is experienced as an active exertion of the agent's own effort; second, whether the source is a highly localized affair that is largely detached from the agent as whole or whether, rather, the source is thoroughly enmeshed (literally, that is, *physically*) with the agent herself.

The first question is: does the agent experience the spinning roulette wheel implanted in her head as an active exertion of her own effort? I think not. Does she in the normal case of the natural indeterminate neural processes? She certainly does. Hartshorne points out that "chance or randomness is one thing, and moral freedom quite another. Dice, it is caustically pointed out, are not free" (*op. cit.*, p. 798). But do dice have an *experience* of making an *active* exertion of their *own* effort to land on a higher number? This seems to be the key difference between randomizing devices and indeterminate efforts, one which Kane rightly emphasizes:

> I agree that if the physical descriptions of these events were the only legitimate ones, then free will would look like nothing more than chance or probability. When neuroscientists described it in physico-chemical terms, all they would get are indeterministic chaotic processes with probabilistic outcomes. In short, when described from a physical perspective alone, *free will looks like chance.* But the physical description is not the only one to be considered. The indeterministic chaotic process is also, experientially considered, the agent's effort of will; and the undetermined outcome of the process, one way or the other, is, experientially considered, the agent's choice. From a free willist point of view, this experiential or phenomenological perspective is also important, it cannot simply be dispensed with. (Kane 1995, p. 147)

If we find no principled distinction between an indeterministic roulette wheel or pair of dice, on the one hand, and an indeterministic process of exerting effort on the other, then the luck objection might seem very powerful. However, there is an obviously principled distinction: the former are phenomenologically dead and blind, as it were, whereas the latter *feels* purposive and active. I admit, with Kane (1995, p. 148), that it is a remarkable fact about the physical world that parts of it can have

these purposive and active phenomenological *feels*. But, as Kane points out, this is a fact with which both the libertarian and his opponent must come to terms. Moreover, when we take these facts into account, the analogy with the randomizing device breaks down.

The second way in which the luck objection goes astray is by implying as the example of the "little" or "tiny" roulette wheel in the brain (Mele 1999b, p. 277) indicates that the source of the indeterminacy is somehow a highly *localized* affair that is largely *detached* from the agent as a whole. Again, Hartshorne nails the intuition on the head: "the freedom of the electrons, if it be called that, is their freedom, not ours" (*op. cit.*, p. 797). But this is why it is important that Kane does not do as early libertarians did when invoking quantum mechanics, which was to have a single quantum event determine that a choice go one way or another (see Popper 1972 for a discussion of these "master-switch" libertarian theories). Rather, Kane (1995) imagines that a whole neural network (what he also calls the "self-network," p. 140) is implicated in the indeterminism:

> As long as effort is being made and the will is in tension, the micro indeterminacies are being fed upward to the neural net as a whole, which is continually reorganizing in response to micro indeterminacies and is in turn influencing individual neurons. There is an ongoing mutual feedback from the net to its parts and back, and this continuing process *taken as a whole* is the experienced effort. (p. 151)

The fact that the whole neural net is implicated in the indeterminism is an important block to a whole class of slippery slope arguments[15] in which a little randomizing device gets closer and closer to being a natural part of the agent's brain (through a series of modifications of the scenario), until finally *it is*, whereupon the philosopher concludes that since no fundamental changes took place during the various modifications between the fully artificial and fully natural "randomizer," then there must be no difference between an artificial randomizing device and a natural part of the brain. Such slippery slope arguments cannot be leveled if the whole neural net is implicated in the indeterminism, because we cannot imagine running through a continuum of benign modifications between an artificial randomizer and a *whole natural neural net* without introducing devastating problems dealing with the agent's consciousness and personal identity.

4.5 Challenges from Reruns

But even if we think in terms of a whole neural net that is implicated in the indeterminate processes and even if we realize that we experience those processes as, phenomenologically, the active exertion of our own effort, one might press the luck objection with a rerun scenario:

> God has a thousand times caused the world to revert to precisely its state at the moment just before Jones decides to smoke, and that on about half these occasions, Jones decides to smoke and acts

> accordingly. We can go so far as supposing that in each of the reruns, Jones was trying to do two competing tasks he was trying to smoke and he was trying to refrain and that whatever he eventually did, it was done voluntarily, intentionally, and for reasons. Yet, in half of the reruns he decides to smoke and in the remaining half he decides to refrain. Suppose, watching a playback of the recorded runs, Jones himself wonders: "I realize that I was trying to perform two competing tasks in each of the reruns; still, given relevant type-identical pasts, why did I decide one way in about half of them but another way in the others?" (Haji 2001, p. 189)

Suppose that Jones somehow *remembers* each of the many reruns. Would he still be puzzled by the question of why he decided one way in about half of the cases but another way in the others? Given that those cases involved efforts on his part, I do not think he would. He would say to whomever asked him the question (or to himself): "I remember it all very clearly. In about half of those cases, I tried like hell and succeeded in resisting. In the other half of those cases, well, I hate to admit it, but, I didn't try as hard."

If someone tells Jones that there is a statistical description of the way he chose over a number of the reruns, does it follow that Jones ought to conclude that he was not in control of which way he chose after all? Does this follow just because there is some number that indicates the relative frequency of his choices over a sequence of reruns? Such a conclusion seems to me unwarranted. Jones would reply: "well *of course* there is some statistical description of my choices; after all, I didn't choose the same way every time, so there must be a relative frequency; moreover, it is *hard* to resist a man cannot do it every time so surely there is some probability that he will fail. *So what?*"

Van Inwagen says, "Is it not true that as we watch the number of replays increase, we shall become convinced that what will happen on the next replay is a matter of chance?" (Van Inwagen 2000, p. 172). My answer is "no," we will not. At least Jones will not; he will say, "From the fact that I cannot exert a herculean effort every time and therefore that there is some statistical description or another of my attempts you conclude that it is not up to me (if that is what "matter of chance means")? How did you figure that?" From the fact that there is some probability that Jones will succeed and some probability that he will fail in other words, from the fact that he is not an infallible agent Van Inwagen concludes that "this, surely, means that, in the strictest sense imaginable, the outcome of the replay will be a matter of chance" (*ibid.*, p. 173). I'm afraid I don't follow; at least I don't follow if 'chance' here is suppose to imply that the outcome was not really the agents "own." As Ekstrom (2003) points out, in critique of Van Inwagen's position, we must be careful to distinguish three senses of 'chance': "one on which Chance is a mysterious force or Determiner; another on which a chancy event is one having no purposive explanation [...]; or a third on which a chancy event is one the probability of which, prior to its occurrence, is less than 1.0" (p. 167). As Ekstrom also points out, what the rerun arguments attempt to show is that the probabilistic sense of chance *implies* the non-

purposive chanciness (*ibid.*, p. 170). This is the implication that I still cannot accept, especially as I reflect on the active and purposive phenomenological feel of efforts of will.

V (Conclusion)

The key question, I suggest, is this: what is the nature of the thing producing the probabilistically describable phenomena? Sure, there is a statistical description of just about everything (especially if quantum mechanics is true). Does it follow, then, that *nothing* is active, purposive, and controlled?[16] I admit I see the intuitive link here, but I also can't believe that the second premise really follows from the first. I wish I had more to say about this, but for now I will just point out that what we need is, as Hodgson says, a view:

> ...according to which genuine choice coexists with statistics within a unitary universe, and within certain unitary systems of that universe with the statistics being apparent to an objective, third-person, physical viewpoint; and choice being apparent to a subjective, first-person, mental viewpoint, and involving real selection between alternatives which the physical viewpoint can only treat as statistical probabilities. In such a universe, there could be compatibility between (apparent) randomness and choice. (Hodgson 2002, p. 255)

Appreciating this compatibility must have something to do with getting straight about consciousness and its relationship to physical events. Not surprisingly, I do not have any answers now.

However, I agree with Kane (1995, p. 148) that the mind-body problem has more to due with the luck objection than one might initially suppose. My suspicion is that what is ultimately driving the luck objection is the unspoken (and apparently hard to kill) intuition that an agent just *must be* something more than a purely physical system. With such intuitions ingrained, it is no wonder that we have trouble comprehending how such an agent could identify with an indeterminate physical process and consider it "his own." As Hartshorne expresses the intuition, "A man is not identical with super-billions of particles, rather he is one human individual [...]. The statistical laws of particles can hardly tell the whole story of human behavior, for there is at least one more entity present in that behavior besides particles, namely the human personality..." (*op. cit.*, p. 798). This intuition, I suggest, might be what is driving the luck objection and the central difficulty of reconciling the statistical description of the physical world with the purposiveness and activity we want to ascribe to agents.

However, once we put the agent and the physical system back together again, we can see that what the proponents of the luck objection make out to be a mere physical process that is detached from the self and thus "out of our control" is in fact what we as physical systems ourselves experience phenomenologically as an *active* exertion of *our own* effort. The physical processes involved in exertions of effort,

far from being detached form the self, are physically bound up with who and what we are: as Kane puts it, "The first thing we have to remind ourselves here is that the indeterminate processes in the brain [...] are *also* physical realizations of the agent's efforts of will and are experienced by the agents as something they are *doing*..." (Kane 1995, p. 131) Thus, "from the inside," the ultimate magnitude of the indeterminate effort, terminating at the moment of choice, is experienced as the direct result of our actively trying harder or not as hard. What more could we want?

This concludes my discussion of the luck objection. I am ultimately not convinced by the objection, at least when it is levelled against the Libertarian Free Choice Model. In Section IV, I tried to make plausible the idea that controlled libertarian free will is a coherent concept after all, despite the challenge of the luck objection. If this were really so, then at least there could be possible worlds in which agents are libertarian free. Whether our *actual* world is one of the libertarian free worlds is another matter for another time.

Endnotes:

[1] A physically possible future at a time is a future that is consistent with the laws of nature and the past up to that time.

[2] Kane suggests that quantum indeterminacies at the neuronal level might be amplified perhaps by chaotic processes into macro-indeterminacies in the brain (see Kane 1995, p. 128-129; Kane 1989, p. 142). Some philosophers have dismissed the relevance of quantum indeterminacies to macro brain processes (see Honderich 2002; 2004), but I do not see good reason to do so. There are macroscopic objects measurement apparatuses all over the world that are coupled with quantum systems and so influenced by quantum indeterminacies. It is an empirical question as to whether anything in the brain can be in an entangled state with a quantum system in some way. See Hodgson (2002) and Bishop (2002) for some ideas.

[3] For now I will remain rather vague and noncommittal about just what a

'measurement' in quantum mechanics comes to. As Loewer notes, "Among the suggestions that one finds in the literature are that measurements involve interactions with laboratory devices, with macroscopic systems, and with conscious observers"(Loewer 1996, p. 95).

[4] The Hamiltonian of a system is the observable corresponding to the total energy of the system. For the sake of brevity, I will not mention the Hamiltonian much in what follows. However, in the various scenarios I present later, in which I describe two systems that begin evolving from the same initial state, note that I am always assuming that these systems have the same Hamiltonians as well as the same initial state vectors.

[5] This model of libertarianism is to be distinguished from what has recently become known as "modest" libertarianism. According to a modest libertarian account, of which Mele (1995) is an example, the indeterminism in the agent occurs during deliberation, but is not allowed to reach as close to the moment of choice as it is on the libertarian account presented here, which, like Kane's libertarianism, places the indeterminism in the agent just after deliberation but just before choice.

[6] It is important to note that Nozick did not mean to suggest that quantum uncertainty was actually

involved in the weighting of reasons. He used the quantum mechanical process only as an analogue to the sort of nondeterministic weighting process he had in mind, in order show that the notion of nondeterministic weighting was coherent (Nozick 1981, p. 104).

[7] I will assume that 'effort' corresponds to some physical process of the brain that is represented.

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Book Review

Leibniz in China: A Commerce of Light by Franklin Perkins

Review by Chloe Layman

I (Introduction)

GW Leibniz (1646-1716) wrote extensively on China throughout his life. He first mentions China in a 1666 writing, *De Arte Combinatoria*, and one of his final works, *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* (Winter, 1716) is an attempt to analyze and defend classical Chinese philosophy in a Christian context. Starting in 1689, he corresponded with Jesuit missionaries in China, sending them lists of questions about Chinese industry, science, religion, and culture. He published their responses in a collection of writings called *Novissima Sinica* (*The Latest from China*) and contributed a preface in which he claims that the Chinese "...surpass us [Europeans]...in practical philosophy, that is, in the precepts of ethics and politics adapted to the present life and use of mortals" (NS §2). His respect for the Chinese and their intellectual tradition led him to defend Confucian philosophy against his contemporaries' charges that it was materialistic, atheistic, and barbarian.

However, Leibniz's defense reveals the extent to which he was limited by the theological, philosophical, and cultural assumptions of his times almost as much as it demonstrates his remarkable open-mindedness and willingness to treat Chinese philosophers as intellectual equals. In the *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, for example, he attempts to demonstrate that the Chinese share a Christian conception of God, spiritual substance, matter, and heaven and hell. Such an approach ignores some crucial differences between European and Chinese philosophy, betraying a Euro-centric outlook that fails to take seriously the Chinese conception of "...a universe without a conscious director and...non-substance based theory of the self" (P 196).

In his new book, *Leibniz in China: a Commerce of Light* (2004), Franklin Perkins argues that Leibniz's successes and failures as an interpreter of Chinese philosophy should be understood in the broader context of Europeans' engagement with non-Western sources and in the narrower context of Leibniz's own philosophical commitments. Perkins begins his book by describing Europeans' attitudes towards non-Western texts and cultures, focusing especially on Leibniz's contemporaries or near contemporaries, Descartes (1596-1650), Spinoza (1632-77), and Locke (1632-1704). He contrasts their relative indifference to diverse cultures with Leibniz's enthusiasm for inter-cultural exchange. This enthusiasm, he argues, comes from two features of Leibniz's epistemology, his beliefs that: (1) all substances represent the

same universe, but from different points of view (M §60) and (2) all human minds are created with ideas of necessary truths "...whose proof...does not depend on the testimony of the senses" (AG 292). On Perkins' account, these epistemological commitments both explain why he is more open to learning from non-Western philosophy than his contemporaries and account for his limitations as an interpreter.

In the first section of my review, I offer a brief summary of the parts of Leibniz's metaphysics and epistemology that are relevant to Perkins' argument. Next, I describe Perkins' arguments, focusing especially on the role he assigns to Leibniz's epistemology. Finally, I question Perkins' claim that Leibniz regards natural theology as merely a means to the end of spreading Christianity (cf. P 124-5, 134). While Leibniz considers natural theology a vital part of the missionaries' efforts, it is not merely an *ad hoc* method of enticing new converts. Instead, he has significant philosophical reasons for embracing natural theology.

II (Summary of Leibniz's Metaphysics and Epistemology)

Although Perkins provides a detailed exposition of Leibniz's philosophy (Chapter 2), a short summary of some of the crucial features of Leibniz's metaphysics and epistemology will make it easier to discuss Perkins' arguments. Since most of Perkins' focus is on Leibniz's epistemology, my discussion of his metaphysics will be especially brief and concern only what is necessary for understanding his epistemology.

A. Metaphysics: simple substance

Leibniz begins his *Monadology* (1714) by claiming that everything that exists is either a simple substance (monad) or an aggregate of simple substances (M §1-2). Although monads lack parts, they have qualities which allow them to be distinguished from one another. Initially, it seems that he will have trouble explaining how monads come to have these qualities given his belief that they cannot be "...altered or changed internally by some other creature..." (M §7). In another writing, the *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), Leibniz claims that God alone can act on monads (§37). However, God does not act directly on monads the way that a clockmaker would "... adjust [two faulty clocks] and get them to agree at every moment" (AG 148). Instead, He has created the world so that monads have their distinguishing qualities through "...an internal principle, since no external cause can influence [them] internally" (M §11).

According to Leibniz, this principle is the variety of perceptions, or internal states representing the external world, within each individual monad (PNG §4; M §13). It is important to note that he uses the word 'perception' idiosyncratically. On his account, all simple substances have perceptions, but only monads with the ability to remember, the souls of beasts and human beings, are aware of their perceptions (M §14-9). However, beasts and human beings are not always aware of their perceptions. In those cases, they represent "...impressions [that] are either too small or too numerous or too homogeneous..." to notice (AG 295). Even though these perceptions escape our notice, they are sufficient for individuating monads and allow Leibniz to claim that monads have changeable qualities although no external being, except for God, can cause them to change.

Therefore, Leibniz's account of perception in simple substances plays two roles. First, it supports his metaphysical claim that everything that exists is a monad itself or an aggregate of monads. It allows him to anticipate the objection that such a system implies that it is impossible to distinguish one substance from another, a claim that both he and his contemporaries believe is false (M §8-9). Second, it serves as a basis for his epistemology by explaining how we gain knowledge in a world in which substances have no real causal relation to one another[1]. Furthermore, it offers Leibniz a reply to an objector who rejects his account of innate ideas on the grounds that everyone would know sophisticated logical and mathematical laws if they existed in us innately. I will discuss these epistemological claims in the following subsections.

B1. Epistemology: perception and apperception

It seems that knowledge, especially sensory knowledge, is the result of some causal process. For example, the presence of a squirrel in the yard seems to cause me to know that there is a squirrel outside. No matter what details we add, it seems that factors such as the presence of a squirrel, the condition of my eyes, and my brain's ability to process sensory input play real causal roles in my knowledge that a squirrel is outside in the yard. However, we have seen that Leibniz would reject such an account since he denies that anything but God has causal influence on monads. Moreover, he denies that God intervenes to allow for causal interaction between created things (cf. AG 82-4) or gives us knowledge by allowing us to see His ideas (cf. DM §29). How, then, can Leibniz explain knowledge acquisition?

Leibniz's answers this question by appealing to his discussion of perception. On his account, each monad "...has relations that express all the others and...is a perpetual, living mirror of the universe" (M §56). Although each monad perceives the entire universe, it perceives it from a particular point of view. Furthermore, each monad's perceptions are limited by its awareness of them. Some monads will apperceive some of their perceptions, that is, they will perceive them consciously, while others will merely represent them without any awareness of what they are representing. Of the perceptions we apperceive, some will be quite distinct while others will be more obscure (M §57-60). In another work, *The Principles of Nature and Grace Based on Reason* (1714), Leibniz relates the strength of our knowledge to the distinctness of our apperceptions. He writes, "since each distinct perception of the soul includes an infinity of confused perceptions which embrace the whole universe, the soul itself knows the things it perceives only so far as it has distinct and heightened perceptions...each soul knows the infinite knows all but confusedly" (PNG §13).

Thus, our knowledge can be explained in terms of the clarity and distinctness of our apperceptions. Since Leibniz holds that our perceptions are the result of an internal principle, he seems to have avoided an account of knowledge that depends upon external causal influences. At the time of creation, God creates monads and endows them with a multiplicity of perceptions. Monads pass from representing one perception to representing another through the internal principle of appetition (M §11-3). These perceptions become knowledge when minds, monads with the ability to perceive, remember, and reason (M §30) distinctly apperceive a perception, that perception counts as knowledge. On Leibniz's account, there is no need for external causation in either perception or knowledge acquisition.

We might wonder whether Leibniz has succeeded in developing a non-causal account of knowledge, especially in light of his claim that there is an "...essential relation between perceptions and their objects..." (AG 297). Some of his comments about innate ideas, to be discussed below, also suggest that there is some causal relationship between our perceptions and their objects. However, we needn't accept Leibniz's epistemology in order to understand how it motivates some of his claims about Chinese philosophy. Perkins does not raise these worries, so I will set them aside and move on to Leibniz's discussion of innate ideas.

B2. Epistemology: innate ideas and sensory knowledge

As a rationalist, Leibniz believes that "...necessary truths...must have principles whose proof does not depend on instances nor, consequently, on the testimony of the senses..." (AG 292). That is, we know certain truths about logic, mathematics, and theology independently of our experiences. Thus, on his account, any human being living anywhere in the world at any time in history, will know the Principle of Sufficient Reason, the Principle of Non-Contradiction, mathematical and logical laws, and everything entailed by them, regardless of the experiences she has had.

However, we do not always attend to these ideas. Although they are in us innately from birth, we are neither aware of them nor what they entail until something draws our attention to them. To use Leibniz's language, we perceive our innate ideas, but we do not apperceive them until something makes us aware of them. He writes, "all attention requires memory, and when we are not alerted...to pay heed to some of our own present perceptions, we let them pass without...even noticing them. But if someone alerts us to them right away and makes us take note, we remember it, and we consciously perceive that we just had some sensation of it" (AG 295). That is, if the right stimulus calls our attention to an idea we have innately we will appear to be learning something new, but we will really be remembering an idea we have had since birth. Therefore, our ideas are in us innately, but we will not become aware of them without some sort of stimulus, namely sensory experience.

This aspect of Leibniz's epistemology is also not uncontroversial. We might ask how he can deny that knowledge is causal[2] while holding that we become aware of our innate ideas through sensory experience. Given the rather low regard in which he holds sensory experience (cf. AG 292-3), it seems that he would resist assigning it too great a role in his epistemology, so we might wonder whether there are other ways of becoming aware of our innate ideas and to what extent experience ought to be involved.

Since Perkins' goal is understanding why Leibniz interprets Chinese philosophy as he does rather than assessing whether or not his metaphysics and epistemology are defensible or even plausible, I will not discuss some possible avenues of reply for Leibniz. In the remaining two sections, I will present Perkins' arguments and raise some questions about his comments on natural religion.

III (Perkins' Argument)

Perkins divides his book into five chapters; the first two place Leibniz's engagement with Chinese philosophy into a broader historical context (P 1-44) and

provide a basic introduction to major themes in his metaphysics and epistemology (P 45-107). In the first chapter, he also gives a brief but informative summary of Chinese intellectual history from the earliest works of the Zhou Dynasty (1027-221 BCE) to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasty neo-Confucian texts that the missionaries encountered in China (P 13-23). Helpfully, he includes valuable background on Jesuit, Franciscan, and Dominican missions to China and the information they conveyed to their European correspondents[3]. These features make *Leibniz and China* an extremely accessible resource for readers who are unfamiliar with Leibniz's thought or the Chinese philosophical tradition.

In the final three chapters, Perkins argues that Leibniz's interpretation of Chinese philosophy is motivated by three hermeneutic principles: (a)universality of reason: all human beings have access to necessary truths and reason (b) generosity: no text says anything contradictory or absurd and (c) ancient texts are a more reliable source for Chinese philosophy than modern ones[4] (P 160-5). Rather than being arbitrary principles, Perkins argues, (a)-(c) are the types of principles we would expect someone with Leibniz's philosophical commitments to hold. As Perkins points out, these principles make Leibniz a more charitable and enlightened reader than many of his contemporaries. Unlike his correspondent, Father Antoine de Sainte-Marie[5], who thought that the Chinese, and non-Christians in general, were apt to contradict themselves and believe absurdities, Leibniz believed that Chinese philosophy had something valuable to teach Europeans. Where others like Sainte Marie and Niccolo Longobardi (1565-1655) saw contradictions, Leibniz saw ambiguities that could be resolved in a way that is reasonable and compatible with Christian theology and practice (cf. DNC §11). However, as Perkins also notes, these principles cause Leibniz to take an overly Euro-centric (and ego-centric) view of his Chinese sources. He writes, "facing the thought between his own thought and the thought of another [Leibniz] almost always decides that he is right. His way of being 'generous' to the other is to show that they actually agree with…his own views. In other words it is difficult to distinguish [his] Euro-centrism from his ego-centrism" (P 195).

Thus, Perkins also identifies two reasons why Leibniz's principles prejudice his interpretations towards Euro-centrism and ego-centrism: (i) the inescapable influence of Western culture and religion causes Leibniz to misapply them (P 194) and (ii) his failure to recognize "…the radicality of cultural difference" (P 195). Perkins argues that Leibniz is guilty of (ii) because of his epistemology. On Perkins' account, Leibniz's belief that "…nothing can be taught to us whose idea we do not already have in our mind…" (DM §26) prevents him from recognizing the role that culture plays in the formation of our beliefs, religious and otherwise. For example, in the *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, Leibniz notes that a just king rewards his good subjects and punishes the wicked ones. "Thus," he writes, "…this kingdom… under [God] cannot be less orderly than a kingdom of men, and consequently, it follows that virtue should be reward and vice punished under this governance, justice being insufficiently done in this life" (DNC §65-66a). That is, Leibniz believed that the Chinese had an innate idea of a perfectly just being, God, and the experience of good rulers that could call their attention to their idea. Therefore, on his account, they should recognize that their idea of God and experience of good kings entails that heaven and hell exist. However, as Perkins points out, the Chinese did not believe that the existence of a source of wisdom and justice entails post-mortem

punishment and reward. This is "..not because [the Chinese] could not realize the consequences of their beliefs, but because Leibniz misrepresented their beliefs... Leibniz's generosity leads him to identify Chinese philosophy too closely with 'the truth', i.e. with his own philosophy" (P 196). Not only must the Chinese accept the existence of an anthropomorphic God and a heaven and hell, but they must have known that idea since birth. Thus, their failure to recognize a heaven and hell does not come from cultural difference but rather from their failure to attend to an innate idea and its consequences. Even if Leibniz had been less Euro-centric, his rationalist epistemology would have lead him to "...remain confident in his ability to judge the reasoning of the Chinese...there is no chance that [,for example,] from [the Chinese perspective] God is a world-soul, because God's separation from the world is a universal, necessary truth of reason" (P 162).

In his concluding chapter Perkins argues that Leibniz's acceptance of innate ideas sometimes conflicts with his belief that each monad expresses the world from its own point of view (P 201-3). As I have presented it above, these two facets of Leibniz's epistemology seem to be not only compatible but mutually supportive as well. Considerations from metaphysics tell us that knowledge cannot be causal, so we cannot get knowledge from the outside world. If we accept Leibniz's account of innate ideas, this is not so much of a problem since we already have the relevant knowledge in us. Furthermore, Leibniz's account of perception and apperception allows him to hold that we can have ideas innately without being aware of their content. This helps him to answer objectors who argue that we do not have innate ideas because we everyone would know very complicated mathematical or logical truths if we did. Leibniz's commitment to innate ideas does not commit him to this claim; he can reply that we perceive mathematical and logical laws but do not apperceive them.

However, Perkins also seems right to argue that (1) and (2) conflict. Leibniz does not only intend (1) to explain how knowledge and perception could be non-causal. Instead, he also intends it to show that knowledge is perspectival. That is, our knowledge of the world depends upon the point of view from which we come to know about it. In light of this claim, it seems difficult for Leibniz to hold that all human beings have access to the same set of universally valid innate ideas. An example will make this conflict clearer. Suppose a photographer takes several pictures of a single tree using different lenses and camera angles. When he uses some lenses, it will be obvious that the picture represents a tree, but in others, extreme close-ups, it will be very difficult to tell what the picture represents. If we only see the close-ups, we will not know that what we are looking at is a tree. Furthermore, we will not know what is entailed by the photograph's representing a tree. For example, we don't know that what appear to be grooves are patterns in the bark and that the streaks of blue are the sky seen through the branches. We can plausibly understand (1) as claiming something like this about our knowledge of the world[6]. If this is true, the innate ideas we apperceived would depend upon our point of view. Therefore, Perkins argues, it seems wrong to say that our innate ideas are universally valid and accessible to any human being. In assuming that reason and our innate ideas are universal and independent of our perspectives, Leibniz "...risks erasing cultural diversity by projecting a fundamental, trans-cultural agreement on the truths of reason" (P 161).

This is a very interesting claim of Perkins', and I wish that he had given

more arguments in support of it. While Leibniz probably wrong in believing that we can arrive at a Christian conception of heaven and hell through reasoning alone, it does not seem obvious that he is wrong in believing that we know at least some truths innately, regardless of the culture or religious tradition in which we were raised. Perhaps our cultural background might explain why we interpreted those truths as we did, but the truths themselves might be the same across cultures. This is also not uncontroversial, but Perkins' claims would have been even more plausible had he spent more time arguing for them.

IV (An Objection: The Role of Natural Theology)

A. Perkins on Leibniz's natural theology

Another controversial aspect of Perkins' argument is his treatment of natural theology, philosophical inquiry into the nature and existence of God without the use of revealed texts (P 4). On his account, Leibniz merely views natural theology as a means to the end of converting the Chinese to Christianity. Thus, Perkins does not seem to believe that natural theology is valuable for Leibniz in its own right. This seems to conflict not only with some of Leibniz's statements about natural theology, but with some of his philosophical commitments as well.

Perkins argues that natural theology is attractive to Leibniz for four reasons: (A) it prepares the Chinese for the introduction of Christianity, (B) Leibniz believes that it is compatible with the Confucianism that many Chinese already practice and accept, (C) it is a point of agreement for all Christians, regardless of their sect, and (D) it allows missionaries to respect Chinese believes without compromising important revealed doctrines (P 124-5). Therefore, Perkins seems to believe that natural theology is subordinate to revelation for Leibniz. It can smooth over the difficulties that revelation-based proselytizing might invite, but it is only valuable insofar as it entices new converts to accept Christian revelation. While Leibniz certainly supported missionary efforts[7], it seems that he held natural theology in a higher regard than Perkins suggests he did. In the following sub-section, I consider some reasons why we might want to question Perkins' claims on Leibniz and natural theology.

B. Leibniz's natural theology, an alternate approach[8]

Although Perkins' focuses on Leibniz's epistemology rather than his metaphysics, Leibniz's metaphysics are relevant to an assessment of his natural theology. On Leibniz's account, we know the first principle of metaphysics, the Principle of Sufficient reason innately (PNG §7). Rational reflection on this principle is supposed to show us that God exists and is perfectly, good, powerful, and wise. Since the Principle of Sufficient Reason and what it entails are necessary truths that we know innately, we know them regardless of the culture and religion in which we were raised. Recognizing that God exists and has these properties allows us to enter into a relationship with Him and thereby achieve the greatest happiness any human being could hope to gain (PNG §18). While revelation makes us aware of our idea of God and what it entails, Leibniz often seems to argue that natural theology brings us into a relationship with God in accordance with our essentially rational natures.

Initially, the textual evidence suggests that Perkins is right in believing that

Leibniz values natural theology less than he values revelation. In the final section of the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, Leibniz discusses the importance of Christian revelation. He writes, Jesus Christ "...has brought us to know the kingdom of heaven, or that perfect republic of minds which deserves the title of City of God, whose admirable laws he has disclosed to us. He alone makes us see how much God loves us and with what exactitude He has provided for everything that concerns us..." (DM §37). This description of Jesus' revelation suggests that we do not need natural theology or any exercise of reason to assure ourselves that God is perfectly powerful, just, and wise. Instead, we can learn all we need about God and His works by reading the gospels and trusting in their revelation. However, relying on revelation or some other means to regulate our behavior seems to ignore our rationality. As God's only rational creatures, we glorify Him by "...act[ing] with knowledge in imitation of the divine nature..." (DM §36). That is, we glorify God by using our reason in imitation of His perfectly rational nature. If God were to communicate with us through revelation alone, our rationality would not be an important element in our relationship with Him.

However, Leibniz believes that our rational nature that allows us, and no other creatures, to have a relationship with God. Although Leibniz believes that we cannot come to know all of God's plan without revelation, he holds that reason is the most important element in our relationship with God. He writes, "...although reason cannot teach us the details of the great future, which are reserved for revelation, reason itself assures us that things are made in a way that surpasses our wishes" (PNG §16). While revelation can make our relationship with God more complete, Leibniz suggests that it is insufficient for a relationship with Him. Instead, reason must be part of our relationship with God as well. He writes, "...we have known for a long time that those who wished to destroy natural religion, and reduce everything to revelation, as if reason taught us nothing about it, have always been held suspect, and not always without reason" (AG 306). That is, reason contributes something to our relationship with God that revelation alone could not provide. Revelation tells us that the world is the best possible, and reason confirms it through philosophical and theological arguments.

Furthermore, reason, along with experience of the natural world, allows people who have not encountered revealed texts to form an accurate idea of God and come to love Him. If reason had no place in our relationship with God, many people would fail to achieve their greatest possible happiness since they lack access to revealed texts. It seems that a perfectly good, perfectly just being would not deny many, if not most, of his rational creatures their greatest possible happiness through a mere accident of birth. Instead, God allows all rational creatures to come to know Him through their innate ideas, capacity for abstract thought, and experiences of natural laws. If we are assured of the goodness of God's creations through reason, we can achieve our greatest possible happiness regardless of our familiarity with revealed texts.

Therefore, Perkins' interpretation of Leibniz's position on natural theology is puzzling. While Leibniz surely grants some role to revelation in his philosophy of religion, it seems that natural theology occupies an equally significant, if not more significant role. Perkins claims about Leibniz and natural theology seem especially strange because he argues that natural theology is one of early modern Europeans' primary ways of engaging with non-Western thought (cf. P 2-6, 172-84). It would

be interesting if Perkins were to explain why he believes that Leibniz's privileging of revelation over natural theology is so obvious that it does not require elaborate argument to establish. The relationship between faith and reason is an important part of Leibniz's philosophy and is rooted in his other, non-explicitly religious philosophical commitments, as I have tried to note above.

V (Conclusion)

Perkins has written a useful and thought-provoking book on Leibniz's engagement with Chinese philosophy. He provides his readers with a thorough yet accessible background in Leibniz's thought and early modern European philosophy in general. His introduction to Chinese intellectual history is equally informative and accessible, especially for readers who have little knowledge of Chinese philosophy, culture, and history. Furthermore, his strategy of locating Leibniz in a broader intellectual context allows him to point out Leibniz's successes as an interpreter of Chinese philosophy as well as allowing him to give philosophical rather than biographical or cultural reasons for Leibniz's interpretive shortcomings. Although I do not agree with all of the conclusions for which Perkins argues, his arguments are clearly presented and well grounded in an impressive number of primary sources, many of which are unpublished letters. Whether or not scholars of early modern European and East-Asian philosophy accept the details of Perkins' account, it is sure to provoke new and philosophically interesting discussion of Leibniz's epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion as well as discussion of broader questions about European cultural exchange with East Asia.

Endnotes:

[1] Leibniz only denies transitive causation, causation involving a transfer of parts or properties. He gives an alternate account of (ideal) causation in *Monadology* §49-52 and *Discourse on Metaphysics* §14-5.

[2] "...[N]othing ever enters into our minds naturally from the outside; and we have a bad habit of thinking of our soul as if it received certain species as messengers and if it has doors and windows" (DM §26). Leibniz denies that knowledge is causal and argues that our ideas are in us innately in *Discourse on Metaphysics* § 26-8.

[3] Although Leibniz's primary correspondents were Jesuits like Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730), one of the sources to which he responds in the *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* was written by Antonio Caballero a Santa Maria (1602-69), a Spanish Franciscan (see fn. 4). Unlike most Jesuits who believed that Chinese rights in honor of one's ancestors are compatible with Christianity, the Franciscans and Dominicans were less accommodating and believed that Chinese converts would have to give up much of their cultural and intellectual heritage. The Vatican settled this dispute in favor of the Franciscans and Dominicans with a Papal order (*Ex quo singulari*) in 1742 (RC 13).

[4] Some examples of the three principles in primary sources:

> (a) universality of reason: "...[T]rue reasoning depends on necessary or eternal truths such as those of logic, numbers and geometry... those who know these necessary truths are properly called minds" (PNG §5). Since knowing necessary truths is supposed to differentiate human beings from animals, human beings, by nature have access to reason and necessary truths.
>
> (b) generosity: "...I do not see at all how it could be possible for the Chinese to elicit

from prime matter…the origin of activity, of order and of all forms. I do not believe them to be so stupid or absurd" (DNC §12).

(c) "The Father [Longobardi] says through out his work that the ancient Chinese were as atheistic as the modern" (DNC § 50). Leibniz goes on to refute Longobardi's claim and argue instead that the modern Chinese are atheists while their ancestors were (mono)theists. Since monotheism is closest to European Christianity, Leibniz believes that the ancient sources must be right.

[5] There is no record of anyone named Antoine de Sainte Marie outside of *The Mission Treatise*, one of the sources Leibniz attempts to refute in the *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*. He is probably the same person as Antonio Caballero a Santa Maria, a Spanish Franciscan who proselytized in China 1633-69, but biographies and Catholic encyclopedias do not mention his writing *The Mission Treatise* (RC 46).

[6] "Just as the same city viewed from different directions appears entirely different and, as it were, multiplied perspectively, in just the same way it happens that, because of the infinite multitude of simple substances, there are as it were, just as many different universes, which are, nevertheless, only perspectives on a single one, corresponding to different points of view of each monad" (M § 57).

[7] In addition to the textual evidence I present below, biographical evidence suggests that Leibniz became skeptical of revealed religion at the end of his life. Leibniz rarely attended church, did not take communion, and refused Extreme Unction when he was dying (SA 5).

[8] Special thanks to Prof. Andrew Chignell for his comments on an earlier draft of this section.

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Interview

Panel Interview on Phenomenology

Introduction by Enoch Lambert

Introduction to Phenomenology Interview

Enoch Lambert

We at Logos are happy to present a panel interview on phenomenology that took place during a colloquium on contemporary European philosophy at Brigham Young University (BYU) on December 3, 2005. We are grateful to the participants, William Blattner, Taylor Carman, Hubert Dreyfus, Sean Kelly, Iain Thomson, and Mark Wrathall for their time and willingness to collaborate on this interview. We are also thankful to the Cornell philosophy department for making this interview possible. In recognition of the fact that Logos is primarily an analytic journal with an analytic audience, I thought it would be best to preface the interview with an introduction to phenomenology that relates it to philosophical problems that both it and analytic philosophy share. In the course of the introduction terminology that is distinctive to phenomenology and used in the interview are explained through illustrations of what kinds of phenomena the concepts are supposed to capture.

One useful way of introducing phenomenology is by focusing on a major philosophical problem that both it and analytic philosophy have been concerned with. In this case, I will focus on the problem of intentionality. The word "intentionality" is often used in philosophy to denote the quality of *directedness* or *aboutness* that is supposed to be distinctive of mental phenomena. For instance, beliefs, paradigmatic cases of mental phenomena, are always *about* something (propositions, states of affairs, etc.). By contrast, neither stones nor their properties are *about* anything. Beliefs may also be *about* or *directed* at non-present (to the current perceptual range of the

entity holding the belief) or even non-existent things (unicorns, for example). On the other hand, it seems difficult to see how purely physical things, such as atoms and molecules, could be *directed* (in any sense of the term) toward non-existent things. Of all known entities, it is only human beings to whom intentional phenomena are attributed without controversy. Since their beginnings, both analytic philosophy and phenomenology have attempted to understand and account for intentionality.

Franz Brentano revived the use of "intentionality" to refer to the mark of the mental in the late 1800's and passed it along to his student Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. Husserl then set the framework for approaching intentionality that subsequent phenomenology and other continental philosophy would either take up or respond to. Another German philosopher, whom Husserl corresponded with, Gottlob Frege (who was very influential on such early analytic figures as Russell, Wittgenstein, and Carnap), similarly set the initial terms in which intentional phenomena would be approached in analytic thought, and continues to be an influential force in analytic philosophy today. Though I am unaware of Frege using the term "intentionality", his distinction between sense and reference, and argument that multiple, non-equivalent senses could pick out the same referent, effectively captures much of the same phenomena that Husserl was interested in. In fact, it has been pointed out that Husserl's ideas of "meaning-giving act(s)", "ideal meaning", and "fulfilling intuition" exactly correspond to Frege's distinctions between idea, sense, and reference (Dreyfus 1972).

Husserl, Frege, and the analytic tradition have primarily focused on intentional phenomena in so far as they are conceptual and/or propositional. This can be seen in the analytic tradition's commitment to linguistic and logical analysis as the primary method of philosophy, as well as its attention to accounting for the propositional attitudes (such as knowledge, belief, intentions, desires, etc.) as its primary subject matter (when it comes to intentionality). However, in phenomenology after Husserl there arose a movement opposed to treating propositional intentionality as primary.

Existential phenomenologists, the most prominent of which were Husserl's student Martin Heidegger and the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, argued that conceptual and propositional intentionality needed to be accounted for in terms of more basic kinds of intentionality. Furthermore, they held that because these more basic kinds of intentionality were below the level of fully propositional thought, any sort of conceptual analysis would be insufficient to appropriately characterize them, and so they advocated special methods of paying attention to and describing the phenomena distinctive of these other kinds of intentionality. The philosophers interviewed here carry on, each in their own way, this tradition of existential phenomenology that seeks to discover the conditions of the possibility of fully propositional intentionality in more basic, everyday phenomena of human existence. In the remainder of this introduction I will briefly attempt to characterize the more basic forms of intentionality that the existential phenomenologists claim to have discovered as a background that will hopefully be helpful for reading and studying the interview.

Underlying conceptual and propositional intentionality, argues Heidegger, is a kind of intentionality that has been called "existential intentionality" (see Dreyfus and Wrathall 2005b). Merleau-Ponty also argues for a kind of "motor intentionality" that serves as a basis for higher cognitive functions. In the next paragraph, I try to introduce some of Heidegger's unique terminology in order to set the stage for his account of a fundamental existential intentionality.

Propositional attitudes (the focus of Husserl and analytic philosophers of intentionality) are typically attributed to subjects. However, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty argue that the world of subjects and objects is not ontologically basic. For them, there is no fully cognitive subject that infuses the world with meaning and primarily experiences entities within that world as objects with context-independent properties. Rather, they think there is originally a unitary phenomenon of what Heidegger calls "being-in-the-world" (a term Merleau-Ponty picks up on) that is inherently meaningful and that gives rise to subjects and objects. Rather than "subjects",

Heidegger uses the general German word for existence, "Dasein" (drawing on its literal meaning: "being-there"), to refer to the mode of being characterizing us, the ones at the center of the phenomenon of being-in-the-world (see Heidegger 1962). On Heidegger's account, there can be no Dasein without being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world essentially involves existentially ordered activity where "existentially ordered" refers to the network of pragmatic and cultural equipment and on-going human identities, projects, practices, etc., that make up a "world" in Heidegger's sense of that term (see Heidegger 1962: 93). Such existentially ordered activity, then, necessarily involves both an agent and things that the agent has commerce with. Such things are thus bound up with the actor's very identity and ways of interpreting itself. Because such existentially-ordered activity fundamentally conditions Dasein's identity and understanding of itself, one cannot deny the existence of the elements of that activity without denying the possibility of any identity for Dasein. Thus, as being-in-the-world, Dasein is primarily loci of active involvement that experiences things in terms of their place in, and relevancy for, an existentially ordered situation.

The kind of existential intentionality that Heidegger identifies out of the phenomenon of being-in-the-world has been summarized by many (including Heidegger himself in "Letter on Humanism", see Heidegger 1977) as *thrown projection.* Dasein's throwness characterizes the way in which it always encounters things as mattering to it in a certain way—a way that is *given* to it (which it does not will or posit as a subject) and which it can never get fully clear about. Out of this throwness, Dasein *projects* itself by "pressing into possibilities"—possibilities for action that make sense in terms of the existential identities Dasein is socialized into (Heidegger 1962: 184-185). (Dreyfus gives great examples of how Japanese babies and American infants already [pre-linguistically] begin to understand things and act in ways that are appropriate to the cultural identities they are being socialized into [see Dreyfus 1991: 17-19]). This thrown projection constitutes a specific way in which Dasein non-cognitively *understands* what it is for anything, including itself, to *be* (Heidegger's "under-

standing of being"). Thus, Heidegger's understanding of being is primarily embodied and performative rather than reflective (since it determines what shows up as worthy of reflection), and consists in a kind of readiness for the world—in our case, say, a readiness to encounter and engage the contemporary, cyber-infused, individual and consumer-oriented American world as opposed to, say, the old honor and duty-based world of the Japanese Samurai, or even any previous Western historical epoch (cf. Wrathall 2000).

Division I of Heidegger's *Being and Time* articulates thrown projection in terms of our practical dealings with the world, the existential ordering of the "equipment" we use and the identities for-the-sake-of-which we use it, and the way in which *moods* or *attunements* condition our throwness. Such moods are not psychical colorings of the world. Rather, they can be public and dispose how the world as a whole matters to us and, thus, how individual things within the world show up for us. An example of a public mood is the reverence of a religious service. In such a setting, certain actions do not even show up as live possibilities; our comportments toward each other take on a distinctive style; and certain things show up for us as holy, and separated from the profane (the holy thus soliciting much different kinds of responses than the average, everyday things of the world). Division I of *Being and Time* also discusses how subjectivity and objectivity arise from being-in-the-world and takes up certain other ontological and epistemological issues, as well as critiques of traditional philosophical positions.

Division II of *Being and Time* seeks to characterize thrown projection in terms of more basic existential phenomena and concerns—death, anxiety, guilt, conscience, history, tradition, a distinctive form of human temporality, and Dasein's capacity to achieve an authentic relationship to its throwness. Heidegger seeks to characterize each of these things in a more fundamental ontological sense, rather than in the common-sense way of understanding them. For example, death is characterized as a distinctive possibility for Dasein, toward which it can meaningfully comport

itself. It is called the "possibility of the impossibility" of existence (Heidegger 1962: 294, 307). If one worries that Division I presupposes too much of what it is supposed to explain (e.g., already established cultural worlds for Dasein to be socialized into), Division II may be seen as an attempt to identify the most basic and universal elements of Dasein's mode of existence that make it the inherently meaningful kind of existence that it is.

Merleau-Ponty and Motor Intentionality

Out of the phenomenon of being-in-the-world, Merleau-Ponty identifies a form of intentionality that he calls "motor intentionality" and which he thinks is characterized by pre-predicative and direct bodily sensitivity to the world. He thinks that attention to perceptual experience uncovers this phenomena (hence the name of his major work, *The Phenomenology of Perception*). Two key phenomena Merleau-Ponty identifies which can help to characterize motor intentionality are the *intentional arc* and *maximal grip*.[1] In regards to the first, Merleau-Ponty (1962) says:

> Let us therefore say … that the life of consciousness—cognitive life…is subtended by an 'intentional arc' which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation…It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility (157).

On Merleau-Ponty's account, motor intentionality is a necessary and fundamental part of the intentional arc. Hubert Dreyfus illustrates this by characterizing the motor intentional aspect of the intentional arc in terms of the way experience allows us to make finer and finer perceptual discriminations in the environment (see Dreyfus 2002). The seasoned basketball player perceives opportunities for action that the novice does not. The biker perceives the same road in a different way than the car driver.

For example, the biker perceives dangerous spots and opportunities for short cuts that are not available to the driver. Sean Kelly, in his paper on the logical form of motor intentionality argues that motor intentional states cannot be divided up into components of content and attitude—an essential distinction to propositional intentional states (see Kelly 2002).

If justification is the primary normative concept for propositional intentionality, *maximal grip* captures the normative aspect peculiar to perception and motor intentionality. The idea is that there are perceptual norms in the world that solicit our bodies to get an optimal grip on. An example Merleau-Ponty uses is getting into the best position from which to observe a painting in a museum (Merleau Ponty 1962: 352). A more everyday example can come from bicycle riding. When hitting an unexpected bump, we may often get dislodged from our comfortable position on the bike. In situations such as these, our bodies unreflectively move to get properly realigned with respect to the seat, pedals, and handle bars, all while maintaining the proper balance and direction of the bicycle. According to Merleau-Ponty, our normal perceptual relation to the world is best characterized by examples like these. On his account, the world is filled with perceptual norms that are *motivating* us to get into a proper bodily position with respect to. Our perceptual relations to things are experienced as "tensions that fluctuate around a norm" (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 352). Thus, we do not experience these norms as propositionally specifiable conditions of satisfaction. Rather, we experience felt bodily tensions that *move* us to *improve* our position with respect to the perceptual norms of the concrete situation (cf. Dreyfus 1999 and Kelly 2005).

Merleau-Ponty uses motor intentionality to propose an alternative solution to problems of how the mind is related to the world from those offered by the empiricist and rationalist traditions in Western philosophy. Throughout the Phenomenology of Perception, Merleau-Ponty critiques both the empiricist and rationalist ("intellectualist" as he calls it) traditions. The rationalist tradition fails to see the pre-predicative mode of relating to the world and that perception does not have to be cognitive all

> the way through in order to be meaningful. And the empiricists, according to him, cannot churn out the kind of minds we have based solely on sense-impressions and associations. The empiricistic associations of ideas in the mind, he argues, presuppose precisely what they are supposed to explain (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 20).

Thus, with motor intentionality, Merleau-Ponty seeks to capture the way in which our understanding of the world is embodied and practically oriented with respect to such embodiment. On the other hand, Heidegger's "existential intentionality" seeks to show how we are ontologically oriented to the world not just in terms of immediate practical situations, but also in terms of our existential care and concern over our identities and understanding of being.

Finally, one of the participants in our panel interview, Hubert Dreyfus, who has been very influential in interpreting Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty for the English speaking world, has developed his own notion of *absorbed coping*, which incorporates elements from both Heidegger's existential intentionality and Merleau-Ponty's motor intentionality. On Dreyfus' account, absorbed coping occurs when experts in some skill domain are completely and unreflectively involved in their skillful activity. To take an everyday example, most of us are experts in practices of socially appropriate posture and distance-standing when engaged in conversation with people of varying levels of acquaintance and mood. We unreflectively cope with the particular demands of each conversation-situation. Dreyfus thinks that this absorbed coping activity not only lies at the base of human intentionality, but also constitutes human activity at its best, including in even highly intellectual skills like chess (see, e.g., Dreyfus 2005b). He attempts to back up this claim (and also add to the work of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty) by giving a phenomenological account of how absorbed coping skills *develop*. To do this, he and his brother Stuart Dreyfus, in multiple works, have proposed a five-stage phenomenological model of skill development [see Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986] (which Hubert Dreyfus has recently expanded; see Dreyfus 2005b). Based on phenomenological description and empirical evidence, Dreyfus claims that this model

accounts for how grandmaster chess players can become (primarily) absorbed copers at their skill level of chess, rather than reflective decision makers about possible moves. In his description of skill development from the level of novice, to that of expertise, Dreyfus has emphasized both the essential role of embodiment and bodily abilities (Merleau-Ponty's motor intentionality), as well as the essential role of existential context and concern (Heidegger's existential intentionality) [see Dreyfus 2005b and 2005c]. He has also appropriated the perceptual psychologist, James Gibson's, term, "affordances", to gloss what he takes to be Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's accounts of perception (see Dreyfus 2005c). According to Gibson, perception does not consist in the interpretation of passively registered sensations, but in the direct pick up of information from the environment that *affords* certain kinds of actions (see Gibson 1966 and 1979). For example, we directly perceive the ground as affording walking and handles as affording grasping, etc. Dreyfus is interested in the way absorbed coping shapes and is shaped by the affordances of the environment.

Dreyfus has used his account of absorbed coping in his famous critiques of certain, dominant approaches to artificial intelligence and cognitive science (see Dreyfus 1992). He has also extended it to the critique of analytic accounts of meaningful action. Thus, he has argued that philosophical theories that aim to account for the intentionality of discrete actions in terms of propositional conditions of satisfaction fail to recognize such actions' dependency on on-going activity that has non-propositional conditions of improvement (conditions that are given in terms of felt deviations from normative situational gestalts) [see Dreyfus 2005a and 1999]. This is just one example of many areas in which he has applied his phenomenological theory of absorbed coping (both in and out of philosophy) [see Wrathall and Malpas 2000a and 2000b].

Let me conclude by making it clear that the phenomenologists mentioned here and in the interview are by no means denying the existence or importance of conceptual and propositional intentionality. Their only contention is that exclusive attention to such intentional phenomena leaves out both much that is essential to

human existence, as well as important tools for handling philosophical problems. In this introduction, I have tried to give the reader a sense for this. Besides the works referred to here, I list in the bibliography at the end of the interview several useful volumes and papers for those interested in learning more about the issues I have discussed (there are works from each of our panel participants, for example). With that, let us turn to the interview itself.

Phenomenology Panel Interview

Panel Participants:

William Blattner, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Georgetown University

Taylor Carman, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Barnard College, Columbia University

Hubert L. Dreyfus, Professor of Philosophy in the Graduate School, University of California, Berkeley

Sean Dorrance Kelly, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Princeton University

Iain Thomson, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of New Mexico

Mark A. Wrathall, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Brigham Young University

Interviewer:

Enoch Lambert '06, Cornell University

Phenomenology, Cartesianism, and Cognitive Science

Logos: A common theme in the phenomenological tradition has been to try and develop an alternative ontology of human being to oppose the dominant Cartesian one. In his recent book, Reconstructing the Cognitive World, *Michael Wheeler praises Dreyfus for putting the confrontation between the Cartesian ontology of human being and the Heideggerian ontology of human to the test in the empirical realm. However, whereas Dreyfus only made negative empirical predictions about the viability of artificial intelligence (AI) and cognitive science research programs that were based on the*

Cartesian ontology, Wheeler argues that the time has come for a positive Heideggerian empirical approach in the cognitive sciences and says that the emerging embodied-embedded paradigm in the field is a thoroughly Heideggerian one. Do you agree with his characterization?

Hubert Dreyfus: This extended mind approach claims to be Heideggerian just because it's not Cartesian. There seems to be for Wheeler only two categories. But the extended mind approach is not Heideggerian *at all.* You will not find Heidegger arguing about whether the mind is extended out into the notebooks we keep, or the computers we use when we're thinking. They haven't understood that on the most basic level Heidegger's talking about absorbed coping. So they are still Cartesian in trying to solve the problem about how to get the mind and the world together on the level of problems in the world and "sub-agential" problem solving in the mind. Heidegger, however, is not interested in problem solving, except as a very derivative form of activity.

All you get in the extended mind literature is a lot of clever examples that supposedly motivate changing one's vocabulary so that the mind turns out to be out there in what equipment I'm using to help me think. Why should we care about that when Heidegger points out that when we are absorbed in coping, we are in the world in a way in which we lose ourselves and the distinction between ourselves and the world. When we are in flow, when we are absorbed in coping, the distinction between mind and world disappears. As Heidegger puts it: "Dasein is its world existingly". So we've already got a totally embodied, embedded, extended story in Heidegger, and it's not even that they're giving better examples of situated cognition; they're just missing it.

According to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, at the most basic level of being-in-the-world, the distinction between inner and outer representations is irrelevant. Heidegger's insight is not that, when we solve problems, we sometimes make use of representational equipment outside our bodies, but that *being-in-the-world* is more basic

than *thinking* and solving problems, and, indeed, not representational at all. That is, when we are coping at our best, we are drawn in by affordances and respond directly to the affordance, not to some piece of equipment as offering that affordance.

Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's understanding of embedded embodied coping, therefore, is not that the *mind* is sometimes *extended into the world* but rather that, in our most basic way of being, -- that is, as skillful copers, -- we are not minds at all but *one with the world.* Heidegger sticks to the phenomenon, and says that, at its most basic way of being, "Dasein is its world existingly."[2] Thus, for Heidegger, all forms of *cognitivist* externalism presuppose a more basic *existentialist* externalism compared to which extended-mind externalism is contrived, trivial, and irrelevant.

Mark Wrathall: Well, so just to sum it up in a slogan: one thing that's wrong with the extended mind thesis is that it is still worrying about minds.

Hubert Dreyfus: Exactly. That's what I meant by saying that they were still Cartesian. The issue is that they have come into the whole story one level too late. They're worried about how minds with beliefs and memories relate to the world, and they've discovered that some of our memories could be out there on pieces of paper.

Sean Kelly: It's even worse. It's as if they simply take it for granted that there is a mind and that the essential question is where it's located. Cartesianism, on this view, amounts to the claim that the mind is in here (referring to head), whereas anti-Cartesianism amounts to the claim that it's out there in the world somewhere. But the anti-Cartesianism of Heidegger is not about where the mind *is*, it's about whether minds characterize us in the first place.

Hubert Dreyfus: And when you stop thinking that mind is what characterizes us most basically but, rather, that absorbed copers are what we most basically are, the

inner/outer distinction disappears.

Sean Kelly: Because there's not an easily ask-able question about where the absorbed coping is--in me or in the world.

Hubert Dreyfus: Right. And they're still trying to do something with the inner/outer and move a lot of the inner over into the outer. They haven't gotten rid of the inner/outer distinction.

Logos: However, Alva Noe has a different version of the extended mind hypothesis from Clark and Chalmers. Whereas Clark and Chalmers (1998) have a content-vehicle externalism, Alva Noe (2004) has an experience-vehicle externalism. According to Noe's thesis, phenomenological experience doesn't supervene on the brain, but supervenes on our activity in the world. What do phenomenologists make of this thesis-- that the brain is not sufficient for phenomenological experience?

Sean Kelly: I think that said *that* way it's something that many of us will find more or less compelling. It's just that the devil is in the details, and a lot of the details the way Alva describes them, I think don't capture the phenomenology right. But if the question is just whether experience supervenes on our absorbed coping practices or whether it supervenes on our brain, well, it causally supervenes on the brain. That's certainly true. But the question is whether that's going to tell us anything interesting about the intentional, meaningful structure of our experiences, and I think the answer there is probably no. And Alva's right, and in that sense he is sort of in the phenomenological camp, namely, he *does* think that what he calls sensorimotor contingencies are what ground our experience. And if that means our absorbed coping practices, which it probably doesn't quite, in Alva, then I think it is something many of us could agree with. I would certainly agree with it. The problem is that it doesn't exactly mean absorbed coping practices. Sensorimotor contingencies are given a sort of intellectualist

interpretation on his account, and that is where the disagreement comes.

William Blattner: You know, I would want to add something to that. I haven't read Noe, but from what Bert and Sean are saying, it sounds like his views may actually be a lot closer to John Dewey than to phenomenologists. I find that fact interesting, because the erasure of John Dewey from the philosophical scene at prominent universities is itself evidence of the ideological character of the analytic/continental divide. If you divide the world into analytic and continental philosophy, what are you going to do with the pragmatists? The articulation of philosophy is much more complicated and messy than simple ideological distinctions would be able to capture. When I hear that, I hear, you know, well Noe's rediscovering something, and probably doing it in much more sophisticated and contemporary ways, something that John Dewey argued for a long time ago. I'd like to see a multi-directional conversation in philosophy, rather than attempts to bridge a divide that is only chimerical anyhow.

Logos: One thing you said in response, Sean, I think is important because it points to a commitment I think a lot of phenomenologists have that people are unclear about. And that is that accounting for phenomenal experience (such as qualia, etc.) is not sufficient for accounting for intentionality and the meaningfulness of our relation to the world. Could you clarify this distinction more, that is, the difference between our bare phenomenal experience and the intentionality and meaningfulness of that experience?

Sean Kelly: Well, it depends how you use the word 'experience'. If you use the word 'experience' in a way that traditional contemporary analytic philosophers use it, it is a very constrained phenomenon. It tends to be identified with a kind of pure qualitative aspect--what's going on inside of you when confronted with a certain kind of sense-impression, say, or something like that. And if that's all you mean by experience, then it's certainly true that the stuff that phenomenology is meant to describe,

which the phenomenologists called our lived experience, is a much broader category. You're never going to be able to recover all the descriptive detail of what goes on in our lived experience just by paying attention to the little qualitative feels that we have when presented with a red sense datum, for example. So that is certainly true. But if you use the word 'experience' in a broader way, I do think that one of the basic projects of phenomenology is the descriptive project of just plain describing our everyday kinds of lived experiences, where I take that to mean the experiences that we have all the time in the most basic cases when we're not even paying attention to the fact that we're having experiences. That's a broad category--it turns out to be very hard to describe--but if you are capable of describing it you will have gotten something very fundamental about the kind of being that we are. I take it that that's the phenomenological project.

Logos: I want to generalize this question more now. Wheeler and Dreyfus do seem to agree that we cannot decide the confrontation between the Cartesian and Heidegerian ontologies purely philosophically, but must put them to the test in the empirical sciences. I'm curious whether you all agree with that. Could the confrontation be decided philosophically? Are there other aspects of our lives besides the empirical sciences where we can see the implications of the two ontologies played out?

William Blattner: Well, I think that there's an assumption there, though this is not a criticism of your question, that there is a bright line distinction between philosophy and other kinds of enterprises, and I'm not sure that's true. And the other thing is, one wouldn't want to focus exclusively on the empirical sciences as that phrase is normally used. I think that what goes on in the social sciences, so-called, is of equal import. You see that playing out in the work, say, of Charles Taylor, where he wants to argue that a bad ontology of human life has led to distorted political and social practices. And I think that is equally important. Actually, to my taste, it's a lot more important. But it's certainly equally relevant.

Hubert Dreyfus: You can't put rival philosophies to the test just by picking up whatever is claimed by the empirical sciences. One can only learn from the social sciences or the cognitive sciences if they've got the right ontology to start with. If not, what they produce is just a lot of artifacts. Of course one can still learn something from the failure of a research program. Cognitivism is an example of such an illuminating failure. But you're asking on what basis can we decide which social sciences, cognitive scientists, and types of psychology we can learn from. I think, there, the answer is on the basis of phenomenology--we've got to go back to our experiences--seeing things, and coping with things, and developing skills, and so forth. Where else could we turn?

Sean Kelly: I'll add something from the other direction, though. Because I do think there is a way in which phenomenology comes to a halt. I mean if you run into a situation, which you can, and I have before, where you give what you take to be a compelling phenomenological description and you use it as a way of criticizing a view that an opponent has, say, an opponent in the sciences--I deal with psychologists a lot, for instance--and they just say, "no, I don't take that to be the right description", you can come to an impasse that phenomenology by itself doesn't seem capable of solving. You get this sort of foot-stomping contest that I think is the bane of phenomenology. And I think when you get to an impasse like that it is important, at least in some circumstances, to try to find other kinds of evidence that the description you've given is the right description. Or, at any rate, you need to find some empirically testable way to distinguish between the validity of the two descriptions. And certain kinds of psychological experiments, if done properly, have a chance at doing that. So I think it's not only that phenomenology needs to be criticizing the sciences, both natural and social, but also that it needs to be using them to help further good phenomenological description.

Taylor Carman: Yeah, I was goint to add to that--I think we should think of phenomenology more as a tool than a method. So sometimes people think of phenomenology as an entire strategy, a self-contained, discipline or enterprise, and maybe it was in Husserl's mind, but only then. And it's sort of a tradition, but more now it's become absorbed into philosophical discourse so that it is something that everbody ought to be able to appeal to, or rely on, namely, "Well, what is it like after all? What does our experience tell us?" It may be a bit of an overstatement to say that findings in the empirical sciences will just be useless if they've not already been philosophically clarified, because sometimes you get empirical results that are really surprising, and you need to learn from them. But then the question always is, well how do you interpret that finding? I think there is always going to be evidence that is relevant. Merleau-Ponty was someone who recognized the relevance of empirical results. Even before they've been quite properly interpreted , you still need to do justice to them. You wouldn't have arrived at those same conclusions just by your own phenomenological resources. But I think phenomenology is one resource among many, and the empirical sciences sometimes present us with findings that you've got to take into account, but the big questions always end up having to do with what you make of that result. Does it turn out to be something trivial or something deep?

Sean Kelly: Just to add to that--I think that phenomenology is not *just* a resource, I also think it is a set of values. I mean it's the idea that the thing that you're trying to characterize when you're characterizing human being isn't just the pure qualitative aspect of experience, it's not *just* the pure "what it's like" in Nagel's phrase of "what it's like", it's the description of aspects of genuine lived experience. So it's not just the tool of introspection, it's also a set of values about what kinds of experiences you ought to be thinking about. So, in a way, I think a slogan could be that phenomenology shouldn't just criticize the sciences, it should colonize them. It should infect them with its values--the values that when you're studying human being, you are studying

the aspects that phenomenologists try to emphasize. Those are the central ones.

Iain Thomson: I'd like to pick up on that, because I'm very interested in the way the later Heidegger developed beyond this critique of Cartesianism. The problem is not just the Cartesian one that I'm "in my head" somehow and I've got to get out to the world, a problem one might think we can fix by just thinking that our heads are somehow already out in the world. The history of ontology didn't stop with Descartes, and the later Heidegger thinks that we are not just unconscious Cartesians, with the familiar problem of being trapped in our heads, but also that we are increasingly becoming unconsciously Nietzschean. Our Nietzschean ontology is that of eternally recurring will-to-power--that's what Heidegger calls an ontotheology--and our Nietzschean ontotheology reflects and reinforces our sense that everything is just forces coming together and breaking apart with no end beyond the augmentation that perpetuates those forces. The later Heidegger thinks this Nietzschean understanding of what everything is has become the taken for granted presupposition of all our sciences. So biology tends to think that life is just a self-replicating system. Here biologists take over their understanding of the being of life from this Nietzschean ontotheology without recognizing it, and we all do the same. This is increasingly the ontology we all share, and we've all taken it over without noticing it or its often disastrous effects. This is where I wanted to build on what Sean was saying. From the later Heidegger's perspective, the first thing we have to do is notice the way these unnoticed ontological lenses are coloring our view of reality, and then we will be able to look at the actual results of science and see how when they examine life, for example, they produce results that can't be understood in terms of this Nietzschean ontotheology--life shows up as more than just a self-replicating system. Hopefully there are already such anomalies within biological research, or the psychological research...and if we can notice these anomalies, then perhaps we can build on such scientific results in order to undermine and overcome our broader nihilistic ontotheology.

Phenomenology, Science, and Naturalism

Logos: This discussion leads to a question I was going to bring up later, but might as well ask now-- some often sense something of an anti-naturalistic tendency in phenomenology. Do you all agree with that? Do you have anti-naturalistic leanings?

Taylor Carman: I think it is very hard to specify what naturalism is, what naturalism requires, and what it would be to be naturalistic. I think that almost everybody nowadays likes to advertise their own view as naturalistic, or more naturalistic than somebody else's, and to accuse somebody of anti-naturalism. It's a rhetorical move that people make now. I don't know what naturalism would require of me, so I never feel compelled to side one way or the other, for or against it.

Logos: What about physicalism? Does it (phenomenology) have any stand there?

Taylor Carman: Even that is a little unclear to me, because physicalism sometimes sounds to me like something trivial, and other times like something outrageously implausible. But there is a kind of naturalism, let's call it reductionism, which is the idea that the problem to be solved (and I think John Searle thinks this way nowadays), that the big problem, the main problem of philosophy, is how there can be consciousness and culture and society, and all these complicated phenomena, if what there really is at bottom is particles, or what physics tells us there is. If that's naturalism, if naturalism means trying to understand how all these higher order phenomena can somehow supervene on particles, then that doesn't interest me at all, and I don't see the philosophical urgency of it. There are a lot of other kinds of naturalism. For example, Nietzsche is naturalistic because he is telling us a story about how things came about. And that has nothing to do with reduction to physical particles.

The history of attempts to reduce one thing to another has been a series of huge, huge failures. I mean there are very few successful reductions of one thing to another in the sciences, and I think the effort is often an unhealthy philosophical obsession.

Logos: What if we defined naturalism in terms of the idea that things like meaning are causally epiphenomenal to brute forces that really drive everything?

Taylor Carman: I don't know that I have a view about that, but it sounds like it is in the neighborhood of the problems that I'm not sure we need to worry about. And I'm not sure phenomenology requires you to have a position about that. In other words, it sounds to me a bit like the supervenience or the reduction problem. Is meaning epiphenomenal, and how does it relate to the underlying physical structure of the world? That's a very traditional metaphysical problem and I think that phenomenology moves orthoganally to that. You might have any number of opinions about that. But I don't think that is what phenomenology is concerned about. In fact, I don't know that any of the phenomenologists were interested in that, including Husserl.

William Blattner: One way to think about that, if we are going to respect the solicitations of phenomenology, is that it doesn't come naturally to people to talk about meaning in terms of causality, so it's not clear where the problem comes from, except as a position developed from traditional philosophical assumptions. So it feels like an artificial problem from a phenomenological point of view.

Mark Wrathall: I think we could say something positive, though, and that is that none of us are hostile to the physical sciences. None of us wants to dismiss, say, brain science as irrelevant to what we're doing. If people think that phenomenologists are

dismissive of the natural sciences, then they are making a bad assumption. In any case, we most certainly are not.

Iain Thomson: I just want to distinguish between science and scientism. Sciences get things right, they are getting at the truth--and telling us truths--but science isn't telling the complete story, they're not exhausting reality with their descriptions. There are lots of other interesting ways of understanding reality out there, letting reality show itself in different ways, and some of these, in fact, challenge and call into question some of the fundamental presuppositions of the different sciences, the ontotheological understanding of the being of entities as mere forces that we are taking for the whole story leads us astray, historically...

Taylor Carman: I have related worries about the nature of philosophy as a discipline. What kind of discipline is philosophy, after all? It's a humanistic discipline and so I have worries -- this is not a rhetorical statement but a confession of perplexity -- that there is a way of going about philosophy in imitation of the procedures of the sciences --that there is evidence, that we've got to construct theories, make hypotheses and test them, and so on. That's a style of research, and I think phenomenology sometimes has that character. It's tempting to think about phenomenology as a way of approaching a certain domain of evidence. What you said before, Sean, about introspection is right, phenomenology is not as if you've just got a certain domain of evidence available to introspection and that evidence sits alongside a bunch of other evidence, because that's just to absorb phenomenology into a purely empirical, scientific program. I think philosophy is not like that, and the scientism that Iain was referring to is a tendency to think that only what looks like the hard sciences in method and character and procedure has intellectual authority, or ought to have any. I think philosophy in a lot of areas is a very deeply different kind of program from that. So to be honest, I have real worries about what phenomenology is after all. Is it

just another branch of scientific inquiry, or is it a kind of interpretation, which makes it more like a humanistic discipline, like history and the study of literature, and so on. I think it is hard to tell where phenomenology belongs. But I think that it can do a number of different things usefully.

Mark Wrathall: Well, if the goal is to get to the things themselves, we wouldn't want to answer the question what kind of discipline phenomenology is. At least, we wouldn't want to answer that question in general and *a priori*. There could be phenomenological inquiries which are going to have to rely on scientific approaches much more closely than others. If you do a phenomenology of art or something like that, then your approach is going to be very different. The whole nature of the enterprise, as Sean was saying, leads us to avoid prejudging the kind of phenomena we are going to explain or explore.

Taylor Carman: Right, so that makes sense of what Sean was saying too, that you can think of phenomenology as a set of values you bring to inquiry. You shouldn't think of phenomenology as one inquiry among others. You should think about it as a certain style or set of values about inquiries. The inquiries might be more or less empirical or scientific or humanistic/historical.

Iain Thomson: There is a reasonable question about where that impression comes from, that phenomenology is anti-science or anti-naturalistic. One place, I think, is that later Heidegger kept saying that science doesn't think. I remember Paul Churchland asking me what Heidegger meant by that. And I think that when you understand what Heidegger really means then it's not offensive. In Kuhnian terms, he means something like normal science as such can't do revolutionary science.

Mark Wrathall: Heidegger also says that we philosophers are still not thinking....

Iain Thomson: And that's not to talk against the sciences, but rather for them, in the name of their essence....

William Blattner: There is the historical dynamic that Husserl really broke through to a distinctive place that inaugurated a new tradition when he moved to the transcendental ego and took a kind of idealist direction. And that put its stamp on everything that's followed, and it has affiliated phenomenology with idealism and anti-naturalism. If you talk to someone like Steve Crowell, he would tell you that phenomenology is inherently anti-naturalistic, but most of us in this room, probably all of us in this room, think that Heidegger was rebelling against that. So there are idealistic and anti-naturalistic forms of the phenomenological movement, but *we* see part of the virtue of Heidegger as a return to embodied subjectivity.

Mark Wrathall: And even more clearly in Merleau-Ponty.

Logos: In one of your papers, Sean, you wrote that you see the relationship of phenomenology to science as that between data and model where phenomenology supplies the data, which science explains through a model (see Kelly 2000). Are you changing that idea somewhat in saying that it is more than that--that phenomenology is a style of research or a set of values?

Sean Kelly: Well, I think both can be true. I think that what I meant when I said that-- that the relation between phenomenology and psychology or brain science was the relation between data and model -- was simply that when you describe aspects of lived experience you are describing those things that the psychologists and the brain scientists ought to be paying attention to when they try to give psychological and neuroscientific accounts of us. Now they don't always do that, because after all those are very hard parts about us to explain. But I think that if you don't pay sufficient atten-

tion to those aspects of lived experience then you run the risk of being like the man who was looking for his keys under the light, because that's where the light was best. So if the brain and psychological sciences end up giving really good explanations of totally marginal and peripheral and uninteresting aspects of our experience, well, that's not much of a victory. What you want to be doing is giving explanations, of some sort, of central aspects of our experience. I think the value of phenomenology is that it tries to give descriptions of the full range of our experience and not just the stuff that's out on the margins and the periphery that might be easier to explain.

Mark Wrathall: One problem with thinking that phenomenology just provides the data is that that means there's a point at which you stop doing phenomenology. You merely provide the data and then turn it over to the sciences. I don't think any of us would want to say that. Phenomenology has a continual role in the critique of the sciences. But it also has a responsibility to revisit the descriptions that have been offered and try to clarify them and make them better and more precise.

Sean Kelly: That's right. So there's more of a hermeneutic relation between phenomenology and the sciences than the data/model analogy implies.

Human and Animal Existence

Logos: Let's move on to thinking about the phenomenological account of the difference between humans and animals and what is distinctive about being human. Particularly since phenomenologists like Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have resisted the traditional philosophical account according to which rationality is what distinguishes the human...

Mark Wrathall: They would say that that is *a* distinctive characteristic. But it is not necessarily the essential one. Our rationality alone is not going to let us grasp what it is to be human.

Logos: So what is?

Mark Wrathall: Well, on Heidegger's account, it is having an understanding of being and being open to receiving new understandings of being. We would want to cash that out in some sort of way, and it's actually quite hard to do that. One piece of it was, I thought, provided very elegantly by Sean yesterday when he discussed how humans have a certain power over the way they're tied into the world, or bound to the world. Focusing on our freedom with respect to our form of life is one phenomenological way of exploring the nature of human existence that doesn't focus on cognition, mentality, or rationality. Our humanity is seen instead in terms of a certain way of standing in relationship to our projects and the things around us, in our finding and inhabiting new modes of making our lives intelligible to ourselves...

Taylor Carman: The status of animals and the relationship between animals and humans has been a thorn in the side of philosophy, going back a long time. It's a subject people don't want to think about, and views about it swing back and forth in a pendulum-like way. Sometimes it seems like people want to emphasize or pinpoint a property that distinguishes us from animals and other times you'll get accused of being an anti-naturalist if you say that, and you're supposed to think about the continuities between animals and human beings. Things go back and forth and for lots of different reasons. So it seems like a topic that needs to be thought more about and talked more about now because there are very influential philosophical views that have robust consequences about how to think of us in relation to animals. So, for example, there's a huge difference between us and animals if what's crucial about us is that our experience is thoroughly conceptual and animals' experience is not. That's a big difference, but believing that may blind you to the continuities between animal intelligence and human intelligence. So there are a lot of different ways of approach-

ing that question, and it seems to be philosophy's bad conscience not to have thought about it enough.

Mark Wrathall: One problem with the question is that it presumes an answer to what we started out by saying is the essential problem of phenomenology: namely, figuring out what human existence is so we get clearer about that. Until we solve that problem, we can maybe say some tentative things about how we differ from animals. But unless we have that answer completely worked out, it would be very hard to say anything definitive.

Taylor Carman: Some of Bert's work recently and some of what Tyler Burge was talking about at the APA in San Francisco was responding to what you might call a new chauvinism about us, which may be grounded in that stress on the conceptual dimension of our understanding. That stress on the conceptual puts animals in a completely different category and my own suspicion is that that's a bad move, because it misunderstands the nature and dimensions of our intelligence, and therefore also cuts off the interesting continuities between animal intelligence and human intelligence. I think there's a lot more to be thought about in terms of how we move around in the world and find our way around, which is after all perceptually and in motor ways something like what animals are doing when they move around and find their way around the world.

William Blattner: This is another example of an area of contact between philosophy and empirical science. The truth is that most philosophers know far less about animals than they should in order to make any statements on an issue like this.

Logos: Mark, what you just said seems to me to be in tension with what you were talking about yesterday in the sense that Heidegger thought that it was right to start out on the assumption that man is

a transcendent being rather then it being a purely open question about what is man. Could you clarify your ideas here?

Mark Wrathall: Well, I'm not sure about the status of the claim that man is a transcendent being. I'm not sure that that's an assumption that we are going to start from. The whole problem of the relation between humans and animals is that we don't have either end of the relation very clearly worked out. There are obvious differences, and so one thing we can do to try and clarify what it is to be human is to look at those differences and try to think through them and offer an illuminating description of them. The claim that human being is a transcendent being, then, has less the status of an assumption, and more the status of a description of human existence. As you think about what it is to be human you see that we transcend the particular situation, we transcend the particular constraints of the situation. That means that you can't define us by listing all the properties that I happen to possess. So that's all arrived at phenomenologically. The next step would be to ask whether animals have that kind of transcendence.

Sean Kelly: The way I understand it, I think it is true in a sense according to Heidegger that our experience is different through and through from animal experience. So the fact that we are an animal doesn't actually give us any first-person access at all to what animal experience is like, because our experience is totally different from the ground up--not because from the ground up it is linguistic or conceptualized or anything like that but because every time we experience a solicitation of the environment, we are the kind of being that has the capacity to resist responding to that solicitation, whereas animals are not. And the question how you get to say that animals aren't like that, qua phenomenologist, I think is a *hard* question.

Hubert Dreyfus: I just want to say one more thing, not about Heidegger, but about

Merleau-Ponty. Just to be provocative, I can understand that Heidegger's got this important distinction that Sean is talking about, about us being free to resist the pull of the affordances, but I've always thought of Merleau-Ponty as emphasizing the total continuity and similarity between us-organisms and animal-organisms and I was just wondering, does anyone here have a view about what Merleau-Ponty thinks is distinctive about us vis a vis animals?

Taylor Carman: In a word, it's "culture", but that's just a name for it, so what is that? The way I think about it is (and I'm not sure where to back this up in Merleau-Ponty's text), there's a kind of explosion of normativity and expressiveness that allows us to augment whatever animal features we have. There's a passage in *Phenomenology of Perception* [p. 101] where he talks about makeup and dress and jewelry which transforms your physiognomy, and that's what culture does to nature. Nature looks different when it has become cultural. So too, human nature becomes something different once it's got this cultural dimension.

Pre-Conceptual Experience/Non-Conceptual Content

Logos: I think now we can move to talking about non-conceptual content. Among phenomenologists it has been a recurrent theme to talk about and emphasize our pre-thematic, pre-predicative comportment with things and relations to things. How does this relate to analytic discussions of non-conceptual content? And how does non-conceptual content on the phenomenologists' account differ from the so-called 'Myth of the Given"?

Sean Kelly: Two good questions. I think that the sense in which the phenomenologists think that there is a kind of what they call pre-conceptual or pre-linguistic meaningfulness to our experience and our active engagement with the world is very different from the sense in which analytic philosophers of mind and philosophers of perception and epistemologists sometimes talk about the possibility of a kind of

non-conceptual content. I think they are very different things. I think that it tends to be the case that when philosophers of mind talk about non-conceptual content, they mean, if they mean anything, they mean that there is a kind of perceptual experience we can have whose content is articulated by concepts that the subject having the experience doesn't possess. That's a standard way that analytic philosophers of mind will think about the question of the possibility of non-conceptual content. And so someone like McDowell will say that no, if it's your content then you've got to possess the concepts that are articulated by it and someone like Peacocke will say, no you don't. And I think that phenomenologists can agree with the "no you don't" side, but I think that the intuition that motivates them is something much deeper than the intuition that often motivates people who believe in non-conceptual content in the analytic philosophy world. I mean, those discussions are about what it takes to possess a concept and how finely grained demonstrative concepts are--they are sort of technical questions that I think don't get at what is very much interesting at all in the genuine phenomenology of lived experience. What motivates the phenomenologist to say that there is a kind of pre-conceptual meaningfulness to our experience or intentionality in our absorbed coping with the world, is something very different than that technical stuff. And it has to do, I think, at the most basic level with the fact that in our most skillful absorbed coping activities, there's no room in the phenomenology of the agent involved in those activities for a distinction between the world in which they are acting and the experience of the world on the basis of which they are acting. So that there's really no room for a story about a representation of the world, in virtue of concepts that the subject possesses; the distinction between active agents and world in which active agents are acting just isn't found in the phenomenology of those kinds of activities. And so I think it's a much more fundamental issue that the phenomenologists are concerned with when they make the claim using very similar terminology that there's a kind of pre-conceptual meaningfulness to certain kinds of experience than the issues that the analytic philosophers are talking about when they

engage in these discussions of the possibility of non-conceptual content.

Now, about this question why the phenomenologist's kind of pre-conceptual meaningfulness isn't the same as the myth of the given. The answer to that is easy: although it's not a conceptualized kind of meaningful experience of the world that phenomenologists are talking about, it's nevertheless *meaningful.* The myth of the given was the myth of the completely non-intentional, non-meaningful, non-significant datum of experience, that didn't have any intentionality at all. The phenomenologists aren't at all interested in that kind of thing. What they're interested in is a *different kind* of meaningfulness. So you might think that once you reject the idea that the kind of experience you're talking about is conceptually articulated then the only thing that's left is a sort of non-intentional given. But the whole point of the phenomenologist's position is that there's a whole range of meaningfulness that's pre-conceptually articulate, but nevertheless meaningful.

William Blattner: Well another way you can put that is that in Sellars, Brandom, and McDowell you've got this bimodal distinction between the conceptual/inferential and the causal, and that is suspiciously simplistic.

Sean Kelly: And the phenomenologists are interested in what is in between those.

Mark Wrathall: Another difference is that phenomenology isn't from the outset involved in an epistemological project of grounding knowledge. So it just comes from a whole different context of issues. Now you *can* ask about knowledge and justification, because phenomenologists do sometimes make the claim that this pre-conceptual level of meaningfulness undergirds the higher linguistic forms of meaningfulness. And so you have an analog of the traditional epistemological problems. But the whole project is different once you start from the phenomenology of everyday meaningful, skillful comportment.

Sean Kelly: And the analogy, as Bert points out in his APA address (see Dreyfus 2005c), between the sense in which experience undergirds language according to the phenomenologist, and the sense in which experience undergirds language according to the epistemologist--the analogy between these breaks down completely. Because for the epistemologists it is a justificatory question--how does perception justify thought or belief?-- whereas for the phenomenologists, it's more of a disclosive question--how does experience open up a world?--and that's not a question about how experiences justify anything. It's just a totally different kind of question. So there's room for the questions about the relation between experience and thought in the phenomenological model, but it's a very different kind of relation than the epistemological one and, as Bert argues, a more fundamental question.

Hubert Dreyfus: So the phenomenologists had better explain how the conceptual level arises out of the world opening activity. Once the world is open then you can make judgments about it, but there's a whole story to be told in between that nobody has told very well yet, and we're waiting to hear about it.

Taylor Carman: There's a question that's close to the justificatory question though, isn't there, about how thought can be at least responsive to experience? I mean, there's a way of putting it, which is midway between how thought arises, and how judgments can be justified, because there's something phenomenology has to worry about, which sounds like McDowell's problem about how thought manages to be responsive to experience rather than just brought about by it. But responsiveness can be a broader notion-- responsiveness can be something like what Merleau-Ponty talks about, "motivations," how thought is brought about by being responsive to experience. And again, that's not the same as just how you justify belief, but it's some kind of normative relationship between experience and thought that's neither justificatory

or epistemological on the one hand, nor merely causal on the other.

Mark Wrathall: Yeah, I think that's right and that's a better way to put it. If you start with that way of framing the question, then you are not forced from the outset to the idea that the only way that thought can be responsive to the world is through these kinds of justificatory relationships. Then I think you're on the path to saying something about this problem.

Hubert Dreyfus: McDowell seems to be on the phenomenological path but not radical enough. He wants to say, just like the phenomenologist, that perception gets us in touch with the world, but then, when the chips are down, like a rationalist he thinks that the only way of getting in touch with the world is conceptual. He says, after all perception has to justify inferences, and how could it do that if it weren't conceptual...

Taylor Carman: And yet what you don't get is an account of how you get from some sort of non-conceptual or un-conceptualized experience to conceptually structured experience. And so I think what remains to be described is the normative relation between conceptual and non-conceptual contents of experiences.

Logos: Mark, you have written on this idea of motives as being a third category in between the space of reasons and the space of causes (see Wrathall 2005). What exactly is a motive in this phenomenological sense? And what would you say to a philosopher who countered that the space of motives is just a third ontological realm with its own metaphysical difficulties?

Mark Wrathall: It's precisely right to see it as an effort to change the ontological options we have available to us when we're thinking about human existence. The point is that the existing ontological categories don't do a very good job of describing what it is like to be a human. When, for example, my hands go out to type words on my

keyboard, the traditional options for explaining this action are not very satisfactory. In one is to describe my action as if it is merely the necessary outcome of the physical forces in play completely, then one completely misses the sense in which I am responding to meanings in a meaningful world. If one is to describe it as the intentional response to determinate features in pursuit of a determinate goal, then one mischaracterizes the experience of having my hands moved or "motivated" by the overall, indeterminate situation. The talk about motives is an effort to more aptly describe the situation. Does the idea have its own metaphysical difficulties? I'd be happy to see an argument to that effect. It's in the course of responding to objections that we can revisit and refine our descriptions.

Phenomenology and Humanistic/Artistic Disciplines

Logos: People think of phenomenology as describing the characteristics of our lives in the here and now. Yet Heidegger thought that history was just as much a part of his phenomenological investigations. Indeed, he came to think that history was essential to his question of being. What is it to engage in a phenomenology of history?

Iain Thomson: That's an interesting question. In the early halcyon days of phenomenology, Husserl assigned each of his students a different ontological region to study, and the domain of being that he assigned to Heidegger was history. Not surprisingly, then, the question of the being of history plays a large role in *Being and Time*. The basic issue is, What makes something *historical*? Not everything old is historically significant, so how do we distinguish those things from the past which belong in museums and history books from those headed for garbage dumps and oblivion? This is what *Being and Time* calls the "historicality" of the historical: What makes something properly historical or historically significant? Heidegger's answer in *Being and Time* is to understand the being of history in terms of those decisive persons, events, and projects which shape a generation, giving its members a sense of who they are, what

their lives are for, and where it's all heading. Heidegger suggests that those who help shape their generations do so by choosing their heroes authentically, which means actually seeking to live up to a chosen hero's example, appropriating his or her defining mission while updating it so that if fits the changed needs of the contemporary world. If we can keep what our heroes stood for alive in our own lives, we thereby transform an always ossifying tradition into a living heritage, and so help provide our historical generation with a robust and historically continuous sense of its own identity. The early Heidegger suggests that this is what history *is*.

Of course, there are some real problems with this view. As I show in detail in my book, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*, Heidegger himself chose Nietzsche as his hero, and so sought to update Nietzsche's defining struggle against the problem of historical nihilism, that is, our growing sense that everything is ultimately meaningless. Unfortunately, Heidegger's effort to combat nihilism "by way of the university" led to his infamous decision to join the National Socialist movement in the early 1930s. But this same path also led Heidegger through and beyond Nazism, and encouraged him to take history even more seriously in his later work. To simplify, Heidegger initially believed he would be able to deconstruct the history of ontology in order to recover a "fundamental ontology" beneath Western history. He believed that discovering this "meaning of being in general" would allow him to reunify the disparate academic disciplines, unifying the university and restoring it to a leading role in deciding the identity of the German nation as a whole. *Being and Time* failed to deliver on this overarching aim, however, and when Heidegger actually carried out his deconstruction of the history of ontology in the 1930s what he discovered was that there is no "fundamental ontology" beneath history waiting to be recovered. Instead, he concludes that history is shaped by a succession of five different ways of understanding the being of entities, five "ontotheologies" which each temporarily unify an historical epoch or constellation of intelligibility. Heidegger becomes convinced that our current Nietzschean ontotheology is the source of our

most pressing historical problems, so he dedicates his later work to uncovering and contesting this "technological" understanding of the being of entities, which pre-understands everything as intrinsically meaningless resources awaiting optimization.

As your question rightly suggests, it's not obvious how you should do a phenomenology of history. The only epoch of history we have direct experiential access to is our own, and it's notoriously difficult to understand the historical age in which you live. But Heidegger's view is that the great metaphysical texts preserve their age's understanding of the being of all entities, historical entities included. Indeed, Heidegger thought that the core of history is this series of different conceptions of the being of entities. The later Heidegger reads the great metaphysicians precisely to understand how their ontotheological conceptions of the being of entities shaped us, thereby helping us to recognize the contingency of our own sense of reality and begin to contest some of its most damaging consequences.

Logos: One area of general contemporary concern in which thinkers have drawn on the phenomenologists has been environmentalism and environmental ethics. Can you give us a sense for how phenomenology is relevant for these issues?

Iain Thomson: Sure. This too is a complex matter but, building on what I just said, I can be brief. The later Heidegger has long inspired environmental philosophers, in large part because his later work suggests that our environmental crisis is itself a predictable consequence of our technological understanding of being, the Nietzschean ontotheology which reduces all entities to intrinsically meaningless "resources," *Bestand*, standing by to be used with optimal efficiency and flexibility. The later Heidegger suggests that the only way out of our environmental crisis is to radically transform our way of understanding and approaching reality by being sensitive both to previous ways of understanding being that were not ontotheological (in Parmenides and Heraclitus, for example) and also by being attentive to those practices and experi-

ences at the margins of our own world that resist being understood as mere resources.

Logos: The phenomenologists have often claimed that literature, art, movies, music etc. often capture in different media what they try to articulate philosophically. Do any of you have any examples, either classic or contemporary, that you think really capture phenomenological insights well?

Mark Wrathall: I think this in some ways ties back to what we were saying earlier about phenomenology and its ideal of what philosophy ought to be (I'm not sure I like thinking of this in terms of phenomenology's "values"). The point of phenomenology is not to offer some sort of correct, factual account. Instead it aims to help us better understand and grasp the meanings that we, in some sense, already understand, although we may not understand them very clearly. If that's what were up to--understanding human existence and essence -- then there's no reason why the sciences would have any kind of privileged insight into human existence. We have to look everywhere. Merleau-Ponty seems to think that artists are in a better position than even philosophers and phenomenologists for capturing perceptual experience, painters in particular. I think phenomenology is often interested in the big questions about life and how we ought to be living. It is in this sense that someone like Dostoevsky is a wonderful example of a phenomenologist. His novels both give us insight into what it is like to be a human being, and also some sort of normative sense of how to live.

Taylor Carman: I could add something to that too. There are philosophy classes in which you read literature or watch films in order to isolate the philosophical problem that could've been framed perfectly easily on its own and the films or the literature are just heuristic instruments to motivate people's intuitions. But there's another role that they can play, they can be in conversation with philosophy. Merleau-Ponty drew heavily on the arts, and so did Heidegger. And there's a whole tradition in philoso-

phy, much more in European philosophy than in Anglo-American philosophy, about trying to find real insights, differently formed insights in other media, in literature and in art, and so on. And that's to put it in the neighborhood of philosophy, for this reason, that there are two competing conceptions of philosophy at either end, you might say, of the spectrum. On the one hand, since Quine, people like Dennett think of philosophy as just the conceptual end of scientific inquiry; it's just absorbed into scientific inquiry, there's nothing distinctive about it, really. That's one way in which you can preserve the idea that philosophy is aiming to get at the truth, because that's what science is doing and philosophy is continuous with science. On the other end of the spectrum is an idea of philosophy as pure clarification -- and I think Wittgenstein is probably the best example--that philosophy is not trying to get at the truth, or present theses or propositions; it's just trying to shed light on the inner structure of our thinking and our concepts. It's not about getting at the truth at all; it's about gaining a clarification that draws a very sharp distinction between philosophy and the sciences, and it's not as fashionable these days, but it means that philosophy is really not about getting at the truth. I think that phenomenology is somewhere between those two ends of the spectrum because phenomenologists think that they're getting at the truth, but they don't think that they're doing it just by being a branch of the sciences, and there are works of art that get at something true, but not in the way that the sciences do by trying to say something, as Mark said, factually correct, on the basis of evidence. So I think that's what some philosophers find in some artistic forms of expression and representation that are allied to their efforts, namely to gain insight in ways that aren't scientific.

Werner Herzog, for example, says that he's interested in the difference between fact and truth. And what his films are getting at is what he calls an "ecstatic truth," and it's a perfectly Heideggerian distinction to draw: there's a kind of truth, which is not just facts, but it's a real truth that philosophy is interested in getting at. So you don't have to be a kind of pure Wittgensteinian, who just thinks that under-

standing and clarification are all philosophy is about and truth is for the sciences. But you also don't just have to sell the store to the sciences and figure that philosophy is just continuous with the sciences like Quine and Dennett and a lot of so-called naturalistic philosophers think. You can think that there's a different kind of way of aiming at the truth that's not limited to the accurate representation of facts. I think that's essential to philosophy and to phenomenology, and you can find it also in artists. A filmmaker like Werner Herzog happens to be very self-conscious that that's what he's up to, that's what he's doing.

William Blattner: Well, there's also another task that philosophy classically embraced, which was something like cultural criticism, and you can see it in people like Nietzsche and the later Heidegger and Foucault, and I think phenomenology is continuous with that kind of enterprise. You know, I've said several times during the discussion today that I'm suspicious of lines that are drawn too heavily between different disciplines. Philosophy contributes many different kinds of things to the life of a university. And I think that a lot of us, when we teach, when we're not trapped into teaching a very narrow and technical course, we try to reach out into cultural criticism, and into the art of living, and into many other things that phenomenology has a lot to contribute to by exploring the texture of human experience.

Iain Thomson: Yes, and as I understand the later Heidegger there is kind of a hard line here. He believes our sense of what entities are gets shaped by the great metaphysicians. So we're living in an understanding of being shaped by Nietzsche, basically. I think Nietzsche just generalized the understanding of being as the mere accumulation of competing forces that was already in Darwin and in Adam Smith but he universalized the view and made it a metaphysical doctrine concerning the totality of entities as such: they are eternally recurring will-to-power, forces begetting more forces, and things understood in those terms seem like nothing more than intrinsical-

ly-meaningless resources standing by to be optimized for efficient use. So, thanks to Nietzsche's ontotheology, we all have this sense of what reality is. Nietzsche focused and disseminated this changed sense of what it means to be; because everything is, he thereby changed our sense of everything. So the later Heidegger thinks that everything is moving historically toward an increasing reduction of everything to intrinsically meaningless resources. But the problem is that we don't notice this transformation, we just enact it without thinking about it. So just noticing it helps, but that's not enough to get us to think about things in a new way. There's thus an important question about how we might begin to think about reality in a way that wouldn't just reduce it to a resource to be optimized, and that's where, I think, the poet and artist come in for Heidegger. He thought a lot about Van Gogh and Hölderlin for this reason. Van Gogh's a nice example because he's a painter who for Heidegger painted what painting is. His paintings weren't just paintings; they were paintings of what paintings can do. They embody and express the idea that painting discloses a tension between our worlds, the sort of intelligibility in which we understand things, and earth, that which resists and yet informs those worlds--the tension between earth and world, as he puts it. For the later Heidegger, art helps us get in touch with this non-thematically exhaustible level of experience he calls earth -- which we might be able to understand in the terms that we've been talking about as non-conceptual content or the un-conceptualized familiarity we have with the world -- and we might be able to draw on this experience so as to help us to articulate an understanding of things in which they can't just be reduced to "Bestand", as he puts it, that is, mere resources to be optimized. And I think that's the hopeful aspect of later Heidegger, and why he treats art with such reverence.

Hubert Dreyfus: Then there are Heideggerians, who actually go from philosophy to art to find a way to show the world in a new way. I want to put in a plug for Terrence Malick's new movie *The New World.* Malick translated one of Heidegger's books, *The*

Essence of Reasons, and taught my Heidegger course at MIT when I was away. His movies are something like what Iain is talking about. He can't talk about them but that's just what you'd expect from an artist. He shows the world as, according to Heidegger, it was experienced by the Pre-Socratics -- in this case the Native Americans – perhaps helping to preserve some of our marginal practices and sense of the earth.

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Footnotes

[1] Another essential component of motor intentionality which Merleau-Ponty discusses and which I did not have the space or time to mention in this introduction is his notion of the *body-schema*. See Carman 1999 for a good account of Merleau-Ponty's views about this phenomenon.

[2] *Being and Time*, 416. To make sense of this slogan, it's important to be clear that Heidegger distinguishes the human *world* from the physical *universe*.

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