Ex Nihilo
The Undergraduate Philosophy Journal of the University of Texas at Austin

The Undergraduate Philosophy Association
Volume I, 1996
Ex Nihilo: The Undergraduate Philosophy Journal of The University of Texas at Austin, Volume 1, 1996.

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Ex Nihilo was produced by the Undergraduate Philosophy Association of the University of Texas at Austin. The UPA web site contains an on-line version of this publication as well as information concerning the organization.

The address is: http://uts.cc.utexas/~barnes/upa.html

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Editor's Foreward

To the reader:

*Ex Nihilo* is a publication which provides a forum for undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Austin to explore philosophy. It is the final result of the effort of many people: the students who produced it, the faculty members who advised, and the students who submitted their work. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them.

The University has a large department with a plethora of interests, a diversity which we hope is reflected in the works selected. Material ranges from analytic to continental philosophy, from the religious to the scientific. Submissions covered the spectrum from essays to poetry. Plato wrote dialogues, Sartre plays, Camus novels, and Parmenides poetry. Since philosophers throughout the discipline have not limited the format which they have utilized, *Ex Nihilo*, in respect to this tradition of diversity, has not done so either. This journal is open to all media through which the authors wish to articulate themselves, and so you will find poetry among the essays in this volumes, and hopefully more and different forms in volumes to come. We have to our best ability preserved the authors' intentions by publishing a piece in the nyle the respective author has chosen. If a minor compromise with an accepted norm was the author's intent, this compromise was preserved intact.

This is the first volume of what we hope will become a tradition of this department. If this journal is a testament to the variety of interest among the students, we also offer it as testimony to the unity among them in their pursuit and love of philosophy.

Christopher Smith
Austin, Texas
Spring 1996
None of...
*Kymberli Thomas*

I.

Aii Aii wailing cry
unsuccessful Apollo
unlucky in love

II.

tabula rasa
as fair as fresh fallen snow
empty upstairs room

III.

the aethetician
blah blah la la blah la la
critique of judgement
Faith and Anselm’s Ontological Argument

Christian Erickson

(Winner, Machette Essay)

Preface.

In this short paper, the author intends to trace the cognitive function of Anselm’s Proslogium argument, to the end that while the work ultimately fails philosophically, it redeems itself in its success as a spiritual exercise.

St. Anselm of Canterbury made an eminent and eruptive contribution to philosophy with the advent of his Proslogium argument, and while its success has often, and probably will always be, debated, a cognitive analysis of his work reveals a splendor far beyond that of his logic. In this paper, I would like to begin with a short discussion of Anselm’s conception of proof, illustrating how that leads into his dialectic of faith and understanding, which in turn evolve his ingenious incarnation of the Biblical fool. While I can only briefly touch upon the great issues dealt with in the Proslogium, I hope I can impart to the reader at least some of the beauty and immensity which is overlooked in the dispute. By the end, I hope to have shown how, even in light of its philosophical scars, it triumphs foremost as a spiritual exercise not just for the believer, but even for the fool who can merely entertain it.

Chapter I.

How Anselm’s definition of God is based on a limiting concept in order that the proof would be more clear, and how such a definition is less presumptuous toward God.

A proper analysis of Anselm’s Proslogium should begin with the question of why Anselm chose the certain design that he did. The first of these is, of course, his definition of God as “that than which nothing greater can be conceived,” which is clearly of a limiting nature. His reasoning for constructing the definition this way, as given in Chapter V
of his reply to Gomilio, is that such a definition as necessary for the proof to proceed most clearly. Has he used the notion of God as "greater than all other beings," the proof, at least, wouldn't have been lucid, for such a definition does not clearly relate whether that being is also a being that no greater can be conceived. Since the argument hinges on the elasticity of the expression "that which nothing greater can be conceived," it must be evident that something "greater than all other beings" is also of this previous nature.

Another advantage to this definition, one that perhaps had significant cognitive force for Anselm, but not necessarily consciously, is that it is less presupposed toward God. To ascribe any definition to God is to limit Him, in a sense, and by defining God from the standpoint of "that than which nothing greater can be conceived," Anselm describes God's greatness not in terms of God himself, but rather in terms of everything else. Essentially, Anselm is limiting everything BUT God by demonstrating that everything else but God is unable to surpass Him; the limitations are in the inability of everything else to be conceived greater.

Alternatively, a definition describing God as "that greater than everything else" shifts the defining quality to God himself, ascribing more to his character directly and making him comparable to all else. Of course, this could be argued that everything else is less great, then God must necessarily be greater in his own right, but Anselm's phrasing nevertheless allays some of the presuppositional nature of defining a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. Later, Anselm further tries to free that limitation by asserting that God is also greater than can be conceived, and in this sense sets the framework for the focus of his paper. If God is greater then can be conceived, then Anselm's proof essentially cannot be about God, else Anselm wouldn't have deemed God conceivable; instead it is primarily a work that serves believers by explicating their faith. Such an endeavor is not without its problems, however, and Anselm recognizes them, the foremost of which is the nature of language.

Chapter II.

That Anselm recognizes language as an inherent problem in proofs, and realizes the limitation this places on his proof in particular.

In Appendix IV, Anselm concedes the difficulty in choosing whether to use "conceived" or "understand" with respect to the non-existence of God. Gomilio had asserted that where Anselm had said God cannot be conceived not to exist, he should have instead said that God cannot be understood not to exist. Anselm replies that anything that exists cannot be understood not to exist, and since this is true of every real thing, we learn nothing distinctive about God. On the other hand, since God and God only can be conceived not to exist, the uniqueness of which punctuates his greatness. In making this argument, though, Anselm states that using "conceived" was merely "more proper," intimating that there is still an inherent imprecision in whatever phrasing he decides to use. This demonstrates his recognition of the slippage inherent in conventional words, and the difficulties this will present in making his claims about God. This example alone is an admission by Anselm that it may be wholly impossible to nail down the proof he seeks due to the ambiguities of language, which marks one of several conscious efforts he makes to highlight the frailties of the logical components of the Proslogion. To compensate for these problems of language, Anselm is very DEF about the cognitive approach he takes, the most powerful aspect of which is the argument's indirect nature.

Chapter III.

How Anselm's indirect approach provides greater cognitive persuasion for the reader.

Anselm's proof takes an indirect approach via reduction ad absurdum, demonstrating the outrageous consequences of taking the fool's position, instead of merely arguing the position of the believer forthwith. For instance, in Chapter IV, Anselm uses the example that no person who understands fire and water can conceive one as being the other, although this is entirely possible with the respective words "fire" and "water." In the same manner, no one who understands God can conceive of his non-existence, although he may foolishly utter the words "God does not exist." Therefore, the position of the fool is necessarily preposterous.

Anselm's technique here is similar to that exhibited by Socrates in Plato's dialogues: he constructs an elaborate set of premises and work to expound the reader by guiding his acceptance of the logic, which helps to disarm much of the reader's hesitation to accept the conclusions. Essentially, it makes it psychologically easier for the fool to accept his own fallibility. This is partly why the argument seems so abrupt; normally, drawing the conclusion of God's existence from the concept would be difficult to accept readily, but through Anselm's presentation, the reader can't help but want to accept it, and once this is achieved, the compactness of the argument stands out. Despite this seeming
compactness, Anselm is able to elaborate the rationale nearly to their logical and spiritual ends, which is one great feat of the work.

Chapter IV.

The genius of the argument lies not in its conclusion, but in its extension.

Although the logic of the argument is essentially the first premise, the brilliance is in extracting as much as possible from within the density of that illustrory premise. In his delineation of the enjoyment of God, Anselm successfully trumps himself, proceeding from the existence of God to the ultimate expression of God's being: that "he alone is what he is" (Chapter XXII)."

For example, once Anselm proves that God exists, he advances to demonstrate that God "so truly Exists" that he cannot even be thought not to exist (Chapter IV). He then illustrates how being that than which nothing greater can be conceived necessarily implies being greater than can be conceived (Chapter XV), for being both of these would be greater than just being either and being greater than can be conceived itself can be conceived.

Anselm does all this in a very clever manner, unveiling each of God's qualities so as to lead sequentially into the next, a technique that allows for maximum appreciation of the proof. As compelling as his discourse is, however, there are serious flaws, and while many philosophers have addressed them, Gaullino's objections stand out, for they represent the most danger to not only the Proslogium, but to Anselm's entire school of thought.

Chapter V.

Why Gaullino, especially, posed such a threat to the integrity of Anselm's argument.

Gaullino's objections are essentially that (1) which nothing greater can be conceived does not exist in the understanding, and (2) even if it did, being does not necessarily follow from thought. Gaullino illustrates his second objection through an argument in which he describes an island greater than all other islands, and then declares its existence from the inference that the island, which is in the understanding, would necessarily exist in reality since that would be greater then existing in the understanding alone. On page 151, Gaullino says that it would first have to be shown "that the hypothetical excellence of this island exists" inductively, since the quality that would infer its existence, namely its excellence, exists equivocally in the understanding in other words, the logical leap can be made ONLY if the island's excellence can first be shown to be true, which of course begs the ontological question. Anselm replies to the first objection by pointing out that God is in the believer's understanding, and further empowers the Proslogium argument with the following argument from Appendix II: anything to which Anselm's logic can be applied (e.g. the Lost Island) must, by his demonstration, exist in reality, and in doing so implies a similarity of the argument-it can only and always refer to God. In Gaullino's example, he must either be referring to an island, where the proof fails, or to God under the guise of an island, in which case the proof succeeds and Anselm will "give him his island, not to be lost again." Anselm here has increased the breadth of his argument in that he has now shown that his reasoning, wherever used, proves God's existence, and no other existence but His; Anselm has effectively patented his logic.

Anselm found it especially compelling to resolve Gaullino's objections, and, to include both Gaullino's and his replies in ill editions to follow for two reasons. The first is because Anselm recognized the extreme danger of Gaullino's objections; since they arise from within and address Anselm's own sphere of thought, they are more valid critiques, but most especially, they threaten the Augustinian hierarchy of words (stemming from the divine word, to created words, to natural words, to conventional words) in that if conventional words cannot give the other words significance through a relationship to them. For this reason especially, it seems Anselm included Gaullino's portion to guard against the deconstruction of the hierarchy upon which his entire argument rests. The second reason I will discuss later. Fortunately for Anselm, these critiques attack his reasoning, yet most of the Proslogium concerns matters other than reason, more of which trace back to faith.

Chapter VI.

That Anselm's conception of proof is not one of reason alone, but rather a trade-off between faith and reason.

Unlike many conceptions of proof, Anselm makes it clear that a proof such as the one be advocates cannot rely on reason alone. If reason's function of explaining God, as it does in the Proslogium, faith must pick up the slack-the proof is essentially a trade-off between the two. This idea that faith is integral in understanding not only Anselm's methods, but his
intentions and solutions as well: a major wealth of the work lies in the dialectic between faith and reason.

Chapter VII.

How faith acts as a catalyst for understanding in the Proslogion, and how Anselm illuminates his faith not by changing it, but by intensifying the grounds on which it is based.

Faith is the greatest single element of the Proslogion, almost ironically so, in that it is both the means and the end of the argument; while it provides the foundation for the argument, it is also delivered as its ultimate consequence. Additionally, faith works to catalyze Anselm’s search for the understanding, in that it remains unchanged, or is at least returned to its original state at the end of the argument. Faith, in a sense, can never actually be changed, only augmented or redirected; either you have faith or you don’t, and faith is not variable in itself. In Anselm’s case, faith is augmented by a rational illumination through a heightening of the grounds on which Anselm’s faith rests-namely, the concept of God. So, while the Proslogion is often hailed as a triumph in illuminating faith, which it is, it does not do so by any operative on faith, but rather by a rational working-through of the groundwork of faith.

At this point, one may say, but if faith is the groundwork for the reasoning in the Proslogion, how can reason illuminate faith? It can do so because faith cannot just exist independently; it must have some intention, or aim. It is impossible to just “have faith,” one must have faith in something. It now becomes clear that the more distinctively one can conceive that in which he has faith, the more fundamental his faith can be. Faith resting on a conception of just God as a great being would be less compelling than faith based on God as that which nothing greater can be conceived. Such a notion of faith and understanding is essentially how Anselm progresses to bridge the gap between him and God, and illustrates that the hierarchy of conception, faith, and understanding is not of mere linear progression, but of more complex organization. However, these elements are not all of equal weight.

Chapter VIII.

Why faith is higher than understanding, and how it stabilizes the hierarchy that allows Anselm to progress from conventional words to the divine.

Between faith and understanding, faith is obviously the higher, for understanding cannot be reached without it. Anselm argues that faith provides the experience for the believer to progress to understanding, and that without it, understanding cannot be logically reached—one would not have the necessary grounds to proceed. Faith, on the other hand, is impervious to understanding, illustrated by the fact that Anselm’s faith would have remained intact regardless of the outcome of the logical argument. Understanding can help to augment faith, but it is not a necessary condition for it, and therefore faith must be higher. However, while faith doesn’t need reason, that is not to say it should exist without it; God purposefully gave us reason, and Anselm has used it wisely in refining his faith.

Faith also performs the integral function of holding together the hierarchy of words that allows Anselm to progress from a conventional premise (albeit with considerable stippling) to the assertion of the existence of God, in that he has FAITH that the words refer to something. At some point, reasoning ends, and this is where faith is useful, for its position does not require a rational grounding—in fact, it is quite the opposite, and it is for this reason that faith is so unrestricted in addition to being incredibly functional.

Chapter IX

That understanding can exist without faith, but is more trustworthy in enhancing faith.

A distinction must be made here between the types of understanding. The understanding that Anselm seeks is one of understanding faith; it represents more of an illumination than an understanding. In Chapter IV, Anselm states that God’s existence is so true that even the unbeliever can understand that he exists, using only his rationality. This is not in conflict, however, with his previous discussions of attaining understanding through belief; it is a different category of understanding and represents solely an empirical embrace of logic. Anselm himself seeks the understanding of a believer.

While understanding may be a result of what faith seeks, it is only worthy in its function to enhance faith, for what can be more worthy than the pursuit of the divine? Because of this, Anselm should describe his endeavor as “faith seeking faith through understanding” instead of “faith seeking understanding,” since that is essentially what he describes.

These issues of faith and understanding are at the heart of another major component of Anselm’s Proslogion: the concept of the fool and his
Chapter XII

As to why we must always embrace the fool, no other explanation is needed. But, rather, it is by the fool that we come to know the truth within us. The fool within each of us is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. The fool within is the true self, the true self is the teacher.

The fool is not always evident, but it is always present. The fool is not always visible, but it is always there. The fool is not always easy to understand, but it is always true. The fool is not always easy to love, but it is always worthy of love.

The fool is the teacher, the teacher of the soul. The fool is the guide, the guide of the heart. The fool is the friend, the friend of the mind. The fool is the companion, the companion of the spirit.

The fool is not always easy to find, but it is always there. The fool is not always easy to understand, but it is always true. The fool is not always easy to love, but it is always worthy of love.

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poverty. Above this is the logical success for the believers, or those who espouse Anselm’s views.

The next rung up corresponds to the failure of rhetoric. Anselm delivers his argument in the form of the prayer, concluding with a postponement of his union of God. By ending with such sentiments as “let the love of thee advance in me here (34),” Anselm demonstrates that he hasn’t fully asserted God and conceives a failure that dismantles each logical success as he constructs it. While Anselm has succeeded in perpetuating intellectual illumination of his faith, as he shows in the end, this is not successful in understanding God; he has simply come full circle in a rationalization of fides. What he learns that which is wholly understood, and this clearly would be unacceptable. Therefore, Anselm perpetuates faith in the most elegant way possible, allowing us to continue from where we left off with a new appreciation of our faith, and just a little bit closer to God.

Kant on Absolute Freedom and the Problem of Grace

Erica Carson

(Winner, Machette Essay)

In the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant postulated the existence of God as a moral necessity whose function is to ensure the happiness proportional to a person’s moral worth in the afterlife. One aspect of this doctrine, called Summum Bonum, is that each person can endlessly progress in the direction of perfect moral worth — hence also in the direction of complete happiness. The idea of reason (God) was essential because Kant had previously asserted that the ground of all obligation was the autonomy of reason, i.e., the moral law, which left no necessary connection between doing one’s duty and being consoled; the Summum Bonum was the synthesis which reconciled the highest good with the highest virtue. Only a rational appeal to the supernatural could explain the apparent disparity between virtue and happiness, and thus render satisfaction to Kant’s demands of a divine justice. But by placing an essentialist emphasis on religious belief and seeking in reason the justification for such beliefs, Kant arrives at a highly restricted notion of faith which is incongruous with the very tenets of religion he seeks to justify.

In Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, Kant seems not to justify theistic faith by means of moral principles, but also to elaborate the Christian doctrines of eternal evil and divine grace which he seems to be within the domain of reason. The difficulty arises in reconciling Kant’s conception of absolute freedom with forgiveness of sins by the Deity; for how could such forgiveness take place if “man himself must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether evil or evil he is to become?” The uncompromising nature of freedom would seem to preclude any such absolution without God violating the moral law Himself. Nor can any appeal be made to a grace motivated by love, for the Kantian God bears scant traces of beneficence and mercy, and he resembles instead a stern and righteous Judge who grants forgive-ness based on merit. Yet if we are to have faith in salvation, we must also believe in the efficacy of divine grace, since (as Kant himself acknowled-
edged). So man stands justified before God. To a discussion of freedom of the will we now turn.

The concept of freedom was established in the Critique of Practical Reason and elsewhere as the transzendental grounding for all accountability. In order to avoid the apparent consequences involved with claiming that man is externally free from determinism influences, Kant distinguished between a phenomenally determined will and a noumenally free will. This impenetrable mystery was one in which we were to have faith, for otherwise an individual could not be held responsible for his actions. Kant rationally justified the absolute claim that the moral law has on the will by equating freedom with the capacity of the will to act in accord with universal law. Only by obeying the categorial imperative can a person truly express autonomy from the slavish whims of impulse and thus authoritatively declare himself self-determined. By contrast, a will which randomly follows the object of its desires is heteronomous and acts parasitically, as if unfree and merely a creature of nature. The highest realization of a free being is therefore the adoption of maxims in accord with the universal moral law. Indeed, Kant goes so far as to call the "moral law...personality itself."2

It follows from the preceding account of freedom that for Kant, it would be a logical impossibility to ascribe an originally depraved nature to man which reflected the traditional Christian view of "inherited sin" from Adam. A being that is bequeathed such a nature could obviously not be imputed for resulting evil actions not originating in freedom. But Kant partially succeeds in finding a rational basis a rational basis for man's evil inclination that does not involve the abnegation of freedom. He does so by affirming an original predisposition to good in the human nature while distinguishing three such dispositions: animality, humanity and personality. These disposition are not in themselves evil, but on which "can be grafted all kinds of vices,"3 such as vices of nature and culture, "while the disposition to personality expresses respect for the moral law legislates unconditionally. Though these predispositions were originally bound up with human nature toward good, man willingly adopts a subjective determining ground which pervents them from willing the maxims of the moral law. For instance, the original predisposition toward self-preservation and self-propagation turn into pugnacity and lasciviousness, called vices of the coarseness of nature, while others such as a desire for equality turn toward jealousy and rivalry, called vices of culture. This Kant describes as propensity, which could be countered by the will's capacity to choose otherwise. However, the propensity is predicated of man as a whole, since it precedes all acts as a subjective determining ground of the will and is not in itself as individual act. Kant intentionally

makes a twofold use of the word "act" by distinguishing between maxims adopted by the will and the individual act of freedom itself. The propensity to evil is thus, in a Kantian sense, "original" only because all individuals freely choose to adopt the incentives of sensuous nature as the supreme maxim and thereby subordinating the moral law to the law of self-love. This propensity toward evil is termed "radical evil" because it corrupts the grounds of all maxims willed. Kant's rational origin of evil accords well with the Adamic myth, since both regard the source of man's depravity as a willful transgression rather than an original state of corruption. However, the Scriptural narrative depicts the event temporally and thus (as Kant pointed out), inherited:

Evil starts from sin (by which is meant the transgressing of the moral law as a divine command). The state of man prior to all propensity to evil is innocence...finally be adopted into his maxim of \(\text{v}\).

Kant concludes the discussion on evil by calling the means by which our original predisposition perturbed itself into corruption "inscrutable" yet hopeful, since man fell into evil through seduction rather than being created so and therefore, capable of moral improvement through re-ascension.

The re-ascension or restoration of the moral good is achievable through the firm resolve made by and individual to adopt the moral law in its purity as the supreme determining ground of all maxims. This resolve represents for Kant a cathartic conversion; he uses the Edwardian-like phrase "a change of the heart"5 to describe the new man whom is morally well-pleasing to God. Though he may be the same as a physical (phenomenal) being, his moral (noumenal) self is regarded as new in the eyes of the divine Judge. Possessing this new moral character does not guarantee that each of one's individual actions will be good, but theoretically the possibility yet remains on the Kantian ought implies can principle.

Difficulties arise, however, when the question of one's evil past is taken into account. For how could such a past be made well-pleasing to God despite our conversion to the good principle? The awesome responsibility placed upon us by the Kantian conception of freedom would
seem to admit of no "remission of sins," not to mention the possibility of 
Atonement. But if we have no grounds for thinking our guilt and wrong-
doings away be undone, then we cannot have faith in salvation, for no one is without sin. Kant was aware of this difficulty and states it thus:

Whatever a man may have done in the way of adopting a good disposition, and indeed, however steadfastly he may have persevered in conduct conformable to a dis-
position, he nevertheless started from evil, and this debt he can by no possibility wipe out... for he cannot regard the fact that he incurs no new debts subsequent to his change of heart as equivalent to having discharged his old ones.6

Are we then forever "accursed" with no possibility of endless progress towards the ideal moral good in immortality? Kant inventively avoids this dark conclusion claiming that the infliction of divine punish-
dment due for our past sins lies within the act of conversion itself, constit-
tuting a renunciation of pleasures and embrace of sorrows for the sake of duty:

The coming forth from the corrupted into the good dis-
position is in itself ("the death the old man," "the cru-
cifying of the flesh"), a sacrifice and an entrance upon a long train of life's ills. These the new man under-
takes in the disposition of the Son of God, that is, merely for the sake of the good, though really they are due as punishments to another, namely to the old man.7

The present existence seems to take on a particularly Christian character in that we must repeatedly reject worldly pleasures in favor of the eternal beatitude which awaits our immortal soul. Kant makes use of Christ in the Religion as a archetype for humanity who embodies his ethical dualism of body and soul, though he regards such use as purely practical and possessing no speculative value whatsoever.

But the person who undergoes conversion to the good principle and thereby painfully enjoys a life of suffering has only made recompense for the radical evil which characterized him before his change. It does not ensure that all subsequent actions will be of an entirely pure nature, only that one is called to moral progress. What about the guilt one incurs in the course of incidental acts of wrongdoing following a conversion?

"June 1, 1996"

...the accuser within us would be more likely to pro-
pose a judgment of condensation. Thus the decree is always on of Grace alone, although fully in accord with 
eternal justice."9

It is problematic to see how one could reconcile the notion of justice with Grace, since act of grace implies something which none of us have a moral claim upon. But Kant's assertion that the disposition of goodness cancels out evil acts we might engage in assumes that such a moral claim. It would therefore be an act of justice for God to fulfill the requirements of the moral order of obligation, not grace. The problem seems to be an inevitable consequence of Kant's project of grounding religion rationally, yet one passage in particular reveals the internal contradiction inherent in such an attempt:

That what in our earthly life is ever only a becoming should be credited to us as if we were already in full possession of it—so this we really have no legal claim.10

If we interpret this to mean that those of good character have no claim on God's forgiveness for their acts of incidental wrongdoing, then there would be no assurance that one is living under a rationally ordered universe in which virtue is rewarded. In a word, we would have to con-
clude that Kant has failed in his own attempt to justify faith in salvation on moral principles. God himself would be violating the moral order if
The concept of the supernatural accounts to our moral understanding as a solution to the problem of evil. Kant later makes an appeal to the concept of the "noumenal world", which is beyond our experience and knowledge. This is because he believes that our concepts are limited and cannot fully understand the nature of the world, and that our understanding is incomplete.

Kant's concept of the moral law is based on the idea of freedom. He believes that the moral law is a law of freedom, not of nature. This means that the moral law is not determined by natural laws or forces, but is a law that we choose to follow because it is necessary for our own freedom.

Kant argues that the moral law is universal and binding on all rational beings, regardless of their specific nature or experiences. This is because the moral law is based on the concept of the "Supreme Being", which is the highest good and the ultimate end of all actions.

Kant's concept of the moral law is closely related to his concept of the "noumenal world". He believes that the moral law is a law of freedom, not of nature, and that it is necessary for our own freedom. This is because the moral law is based on the concept of the "Supreme Being", which is the highest good and the ultimate end of all actions.

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Kant argues that the moral law is universal and binding on all rational beings, regardless of their specific nature or experiences. This is because the moral law is based on the concept of the "Supreme Being", which is the highest good and the ultimate end of all actions.
In the past couple of decades, a new field of study has emerged and seduced philosophers and scientists alike. This field fuses biology and human behavior, from the gene up to the bustling metropolis, to forge a new channel of thought in both modern philosophy and science. Though its examination of the nuances of human nature has remained somewhat hidden since its inception, sociobiology has now moved into the spotlight of philosophical thought.

The research from sociobiology has opened up a huge new arena for investigation into philosophical topics, the most important of which is an area that has perplexed and provoked thinkers since the beginning of civilization: ethics. Evolutionary theory proposes biological explanations for the human system of ethics. And it provides an explanation of this most mysterious and elusive puzzle without necessitating the existence of a supernatural, intangible entity. Philosophers can now draw on concrete, empirical sources to explain human moral systems without (necessarily) an appeal to transcendent or truths, free will, or categorical imperatives. Though, as we will see, these issues have sparked great debate among philosophers and scientists, evolutionary theory ultimately does explain the existence of human moral systems in harmony with philosophical requirements. In the end, it transforms the philosophical approach to ethics in revolutionary ways.

Before we go on, it is important to note that applies is the key word in this debate. Proponents of the sociobiological perspective on morality stress that evolutionary theory merely explains, causally, moral systems. It does not justify moral beliefs. It does not prescribe moral norms. More will be said on this issue later. But first, sociobiologists offer an explanation of morality, its evolution, and the philosophical questions it raises.

Sociobiologists on Morality

Michael Ruse, one of the most outspoken pioneers of evolutionary ethics, sums up the basic principles of morality in his book Taking Darwin Seriously. He notes first of all that morality is "about guides to
With this definition of altruism in mind, its evolution seems a lot more reasonable. The meaning has shifted so that characteristic selflessness of the organism is somehow reinstated, though in the form of the gene it carries. Modern evolutionary theory emphasizes the gene as the basic unit of selection, for it is upon the gene that the primary mechanism of evolution, natural selection, operates. Grouping the gene as the elementary unit of selection is key in understanding the evolution of altruism, for as the sociobiological view it is the gene, not the organism or group, whose interest is served and whose interest is "selected for" in the evolutionary process. Success in evolutionary terms entails the passing on of a gene to offspring. Whether the organism which serves as the vehicle for the gene survives beyond reproduction is not so important in evolution, whether the gene survives, however, is crucial. Thus the focus of our discussion of morality shall revolve around the gene.

Briefly, there are two primary mechanisms for explaining the evolution of the altruistic gene: kin selection, or "hard-core altruism," and reciprocal or "soft-core altruism" (Wilson p. 162). To understand kin selection, it must be noted that members of the same family, especially siblings, carry similar genes. Kin selection takes place, as mentioned before, to provide for the success of a given gene. Therefore, members of the same family will behave altruistically toward and are more likely to co-operate with one another because it is in the interest of the gene that its kin, and therefore, potentially, copies of itself, survive. E.O. Wilson describes a case of this behavior among the African termite Gomphetermes sutherlandi. In this species a special "soldier caste" is produced, bearing glands that eject a fluid which attracts which proves fatal to enemies. Wilson relates this to kin selection:

The self-sacrificing termite soldier protects the rest of its colony, including the queen and king, its parents. As a result, the soldier's more fertile brothers and sisters flourish, and through them the altruistic genes are multiplied by a greater production of termites and nests (p. 158-9).

While the relatively infertile soldier termite cannot be offspring, it protects those of its kin which can, sacrificing itself for its more fertile (non-soldier caste) siblings who will not only maintain the colony, but is doing so, will reproduce copies of the "altruistic" gene. Kin selection also explains the reason for humans' tendency to care for immediate family first, then distant relatives, then friends, and then.
The second mechanism for the evolution of altruism, known as "reciprocal altruism," involves two organisms possessing an altruistic gene engaging in an exchange. The idea behind this process is that reciprocation is expected, whether immediately or long-term. The benefit derived from an exchange of resources enhances the chances of survival and reproduction. As Ruse puts it, "...the cost of co-operation is (on average) significantly less than the hope of return." Reciprocal altruism is more adaptive because the advantages of co-operation exceed those of pure selfish behavior. Ruse offers a hypothetical example:

Suppose we all stand in risk of drowning. I help you from drowning, because of my biological urge to do so. Although this puts me at a 1 in 20 risk of drowning myself, I turn avoid the 1 in 2 risk of drowning were you never to respond to my sometimes cry for help. I may not need such help, but we were all young once, we will all grow old someday, we all fall sick on occasion (1986 p. 219).

Essentially, this kind of "soft-core" altruism evolves because it has become more adaptively advantageous than pure selfish behavior.

That moral behavior can spring from such evolutionary mechanisms is not much at issue among sociobiologists, or even non-sociobiologists, though exactly how it came about has been a subject of some contention. Yet the precise processes of its evolution are not so much of philosophical concern; the fact is, the concept of mortality has come to be, and evolutionary theory offers some explanations for it. The primary philosophical question is: Does evolutionary theory provide an adequate explanation of mortality, given the requirements detailed above? This is a question sociobiologists can't escape. Its components are broken down as follows.

Altruism and Obligation: Reality vs. Illusion

Given the notion of the "selfish" gene, true altruism seems to sink into the ethical mud. Usually altruistic gestures, according to evolutionary theory, are in fact the self-serving acts we feared them to be. Michael Ruse tries to thwart this view by adhering to Wilson's proposal of epigenetic rules.

Epigenetic rules are simply "canalized [biochemical] pathways" that predispose humans to accept certain ways of thinking, in our case, to accepting certain kinds of moral norms. They "shape the development of phenotypic traits in individuals" (Bradley p. 48). Noting that rigid, hard-wired patterns of behavior fail to yield any kind of the adaptive plasticity that enables organisms to adjust to changing environments, Ruse proposes that epigenetic rules evolved along with our increased intelligence and culture to "line us toward actions that are (unbeknownst to us) 'altruistic' in the biological sense." He adds that epigenetic rules provide us with a sense of obligation:

It is fundamental to the Darwinian case that, in order to spur us into action—perhaps indeed to go against other self-directed emotions—we have rules incorporating that prescriptive force which is distinctly characteristic of morality.

... because I think I ought to help... I am much more likely, in fact, to help you (1986 p. 222).

In other words, it is adaptive for humans to act altruistically out of a sense of obligation since that obligation will override other conflicting responses (produced by cultural motives and increased intelligence) that may be less adaptive (Alexander p. 110). Morality, therefore, is an illusion laid over our genes to cost-effectively compel us to behave in a biologically fit manner. But we are indeed acting altruistically, claims Ruse, because our epigenetic rules dictate that we harbor an inescapable sense of obligation. When we act altruistically, we truly believe we are making sacrifices for the benefit of others.

Yet research by R.D. Alexander points to high rates of deception and cheating within this system. Inevitably, he says, organisms will seize the opportunity to take advantage of the altruism of others for their own gain. This can be done by putting on the act that one is an altruist, which may or may not be convincing. Or it can be done by deceiving oneself into believing he is an altruist, when he is actually self-serving, so as to stimulate an authentic impression of being altruistic. This kind of deception would occur during the evolution of epigenetic rules. Natural selection would thus favor the more convincing act (Cronk p. 88).

Though Ruse's theory accounts for our sense of altruism, such instances of deception and cheating undermine Ruse's claim that we do act out of a sense of genuine altruism. Though it may be true at the phenotypic, conscious level that we believe we are moral, when we get down to the base of our behavior, the gene, our selfishness is revealed. And not only is it selfishness, it is almost a system of immorality: cheating and deception. Duping ourselves into believing we are good is not the same as being good. If we examine the most basic source of our motivations, the gene, we see that it is selfish, however genuine our behavior is at the conscious level. Though Ruse's description of genuine
morality works perfectly at the conscious level, perhaps morality needs to be examined from a genetic rather than psychological point of view, given that our behavior may find its origins in the body rather than the mind.

Objective Foundations of Evolutionary Ethics?

We see evolutionary theory account for altruism and obligation, but it transforms our image of these concepts radically. We see now that moral obligation and altruism are nothing more than illusions. Yet there might still be absolute objects, objective truths, independent of our evolution.

This question brings into play the distinction Ruse makes between substantive ethics and metaphysics. The substantive component "offers actual guidance: "Thou shalt not kill."" This is the ethical norm, the specific prescriptive belief by which moral agents are meant to act. Metaphysics, on the other hand, provide "foundations or justification, as in "That which you do is that which God will."" Metaphysics, then, deals with the reasons for obeying the norm. Together, these two elements comprise any moral system (1995 p. 93). Yet keep in mind that evolution theory neither proposes moral norms nor justifies them; the distinction between this approach to morality and conventional philosophical ones is the key to understanding the ramifications of this modern-scientific view on traditional philosophical thought.

The aspect we deal with now is the metaphorical one. Philosopher Robert Nozick argues that evolutionary theory attempts to "explain our evaluative beliefs [substantive norms] without at any point bringing in evaluative facts [metaphysical justification], and so denies that evaluative beliefs track these facts." (p. 342). He believes that evolutionary explanations state that our moral beliefs are acceptable "without any kind of justification, thus showing "that it is unreasonable to believe that there are any such (objective) evaluative facts at all." (p. 342). Since this seems like a contradiction, Nozick continues, it is possible that evolution worked around objective truths. He makes the case that early organisms may have possessed a trait enabling them to recognize the trait 2A=2B. "That, those organisms are there to recognize those truths, and have the capacity to do so, receives an evolutionary explanation," he explains, "but nonetheless truths enter into explaining their behavior...The capacities are adaptive, as is the predisposition to act on the beliefs, because the beliefs are true and acting on them helps." (p. 342).

Ruse would argue that objective moral truths are irrelevant to the processes of evolution. It is possible that we would never muster a trait that would enable us to recognize such truths if they did exist, but would evolve traits that lead us to believe other nonmoral truths, similar because those traits were the most adaptive out of other competing variations when they occurred. Objective moral truth need not be recognized in order for survival and reproduction to take place. He claims that objective morality is therefore redundant when viewed in an evolutionary light and rejects ethical objectivity from his theory altogether (1994 p. 21).

Yet, Ruse fails to recognize that the opposite scenario is plausible. Suppose objective truths do exist. Then it is possible that it would be non-adaptive for intelligent organisms not to recognize those truths, since, in the case of ethics, non-truths apply to optimal behavior, and traits that prevent such recognition would be selected out. If such truths do exist, it would not be expected either that organisms should recognize them with perfect clarity, since natural selection operates only on the best variations at hand and is not perfect. Imperfect recognition would then account for conflicts and moral dilemmas taking place worldwide. Consequently, it is not reasonable to wholeheartedly reject objectivity from evolutionary theory without further investigation. Nonetheless, until additional evidence appears, objectivity must not be a required part of the evolutionary explanation of morality either.

The counterargument then runs: if objective truths don't exist, there is no way morality can have a universal application. This argument, however, misses a key element of evolutionary theory: all humans possess the same genetic base. A gene for altruism is a species-specific gene. For each species which possesses it, the same unique code will occur throughout. It occurs throughout the human species, which, after all, is the set of organisms we are talking about when we speak of morality.

In addition, epigenetic rules direct us toward feelings of right and wrong as they support our biology. "Humans share a common understanding," writes Ruse. "This universality is guaranteed by the shared genetic background of every member of Homo sapiens" (1986 p. 255). The Golden Rule, or Love-Commandment, for example, represents a basic epigenetic rule that crosses cultures and religions worldwide. Though its application may differ from culture to culture (more on this later), the basic commandment, "Do unto others as you would have done unto you," remains the same regardless of societal influences or family upbringing. The discussion of objective truths raises another issue with skeptics of the evolutionary explanation: if objective truths don't exist, why do we think they do? The answer is simple and quite obvious: it is an adaptive feature of our moral system.

The Darwinian argues that morality simply does not work (from a biological perspective), unless we believe
that it is objective... The point about morality (says the Darwinian) is that it is an adaptation to get us to go beyond regular wishes, desires and fears... How does it get us to do this? By fitting us with thoughts about obligations and duties. If morality did not have this air of externality or objectivity, it would not be morality and (from a biological perspective) would fail to do what it is intended to do (Ruse 1986 p. 233).

Just as traditional altruism is an illusion to suit our biological needs, so the sense of objective moral truths serves the same function. As objectivity is a psychological concept, we need to feel a psychological sense of obligation or justification in order to follow up on it and not treat as a mere fleeting desire like “I wish to hunt a saber-toothed tiger” or “I would like to watch TV.” Thus, the evolutionary account of objectivity in ethics stands firm.

**OBSTRUCTIONS TO OBJECTIVITY AND AN ACCOUNT OF MORAL NORMS**

On a sideline to this discussion, anti-grounds to evolutionary theory claim that its account of actually change our perspective on moral objectivity. On the contrary, they maintain, evolutionarily moralists have merely shifted ethical authority from traditional sources of right and wrong to the genes. Richard Busse sums up his view of the “natural command theory.”

Yet nature functions in Ruse’s system, as God, as the forest, as reason did in religious, Platonic, or Kantian ethical theories. This is not to say that there is, in fact, a supernatural reality, yet nature has produced the belief that there are prescriptives. Thus Ruse’s descriptive efforts have slipped into metaethical analysis. Nature functions as the ‘ultimate’ in Ruse’s writings (p. 58).

Busse posits that moral truths cannot be left up to genetic explanations, and that the possibility of finding objective truths in supernatural sources must be left open to further discussion. Another opponent, J. Wesley Robbins, presents a different view of the same issue. Although he poses a similar objection to Busse’s in that he claims the evolutionary causation of morality “relocates the authorizing entities of traditional philosophy from the outside world to inside us,” he feels that notions of right and wrong need no authority other than “what human beings have said and done (p. 359).” That is, the actions of our immediate ancestors in our cultural contexts should be the only justifications for our moral beliefs.

Both men essentially accuse Ruse and his associates of committing G.E. Moore’s dreaded “naturalistic fallacy” (p. 8), an inconsistency in argument in which one confuses a natural object with the quality it possesses, e.g. wavelengths of a given frequency with the color yellow. They are not the same. We perceive one color yellow differently than we do its individual wavelengths. Likewise, in terms of ethics, the naturalistic fallacy consists of confusing a natural system (evolution) with its value laden product (morality). One cannot say that because a given trait is the product of evolution, it ought to be that way or it is right to possess that trait. There is no logical connection between fact and prescription.

Yet both the accusation that sociobiologists commit this crime and the solutions proposed as alternatives to it are easily refuted in evolutionary terms. First, Ruse and his fellow sociobiologists are making no connection between the processes of evolution and their products. In fact, Ruse is careful to note that his theory is an explanation and not a justification of morality. Evolution is merely a cause, not a reason. In addition, most sociobiologists will never propose that moral norms, that is, the substantive element of ethics, are a direct product of our genetic makeup. They believe we are predisposed toward accepting certain kinds of beliefs. Our genes do not tell us exactly what these beliefs are nor are we locked into accepting everything our genes predispose us for. It would be irrational, then, to attempt to justify any specific norm with an appeal to genetics. Rather, the flexibility of our cognitive abilities and our cultural variances are the better explanations of differences among moral norms. Wilson states forcefully:

Let me grasp at once that the form and intensity of altruistic acts are to a large extent culturally determined. (p. 160).

The channels of human moral development... are circuitous and variable. Rather than specify a single unit, human genes prescribe the capacity to develop a certain array of traits. In some categories... the array is limited and the outcome can be altered only by strenuous training—if ever. In others, the array is vast and the outcome easily influenced (p. 58).

Right- or left-handedness, for example, is genetically predisposed but socially alterable. Similarly, the rule “Do unto others as you would have
done unto you" is potentially predisposed, but its interpretation—whether that means to treat your family, your friends, or all people indiscriminately as you would like to be treated—is a question dependent upon culture, not genes (Ruse 1994 p. 15).

Furthermore, natural selection is not perfect. Our adaptations are only the best of what hand over the generations. There is no absolute truth or consistent message to be found in our biology. The only consistency, perhaps, is the amount of conflict of desires we face. This goes back to our discussion of epigenetic rules. They are there to override our conflicts if such an override has proven most adaptive. Such an override, however, does not always take place, so the epigenetic rules themselves cannot be appealed to as moral authorities either. Sometimes we suppress adaptive tendencies to lash out when insulted; sometimes they come out. "Our moral capabilities break down," Ruse points out, "and any decision we may make means that in some respects we must do what we think is wrong." On a more social level, some cultures approve of female circumcision; others deplore it. These subtle differences are explained by Ruse as "secondary, modified consequences of shared moral imperatives" (1986 p. 251). No perfect "ideal" or transcendental imperative can be found in evolutionary processes themselves. Both accusers have misunderstood the sociobiological point of view.

Problems also crop up when these two philosophers propose alternatives. Busse is granted the recommendation that we stay open to the idea of supernatural alternatives. Evolution, it's true, is a theory, and as such, is always open to other explanations. But the point that evolutionary theory makes is that moral objectives can be explained with evidence and without the necessity of appealing to unexplainable entities like God. It is a tighter, more reasonable argument than its supernatural counterparts. There is no need in evolutionary theory for the leap of faith that Busse proposes.

Robbins, on the other hand, calls for appealing to the behavior of our cultural past as justification for morality. Evolutionary theory actually fits in neatly with this proposal if we were only read in closer detail. Evolutionary ethicists put forward that 1) our moral actions spring from our genetics in terms of epigenetic rules and intellectual abilities, 2) our actions along with environmental differences go together to produce culture and 3) culture helps to shape which moral norms we accept. Thus, Robbins is perhaps right that if we need justification for our moral beliefs we should look to the behavior of our ancestors. He is only incorrect in assuming that evolutionary theory requires more than this.

Implications: Philosophical and Practical

We have by now shown that evolutionary theory can adequately account for human moral systems and the norms which accompany them. It explains causally all criteria for code of ethics: altruism, obligation, universality, and objectivity. Yet the theory resolves these issues in a way unfamiliar to conventional philosophy. In fact, it almost destroys the very foundations upon which moral philosophy developed; namely the criteria listed above. This will undoubtably have serious ramifications on modern philosophical thought.

The major consequence of the emergence of this mode of thought is that it will change the kinds of questions contemporary philosophers ask when it comes to ethics. Traditionally, the moral philosopher has sought an eternal, universal, fundamental code upon which all morality can be based. Evolutionary theory seriously questions this kind of pursuit. It forces the philosopher to reconsider the questions he is asking: Should would be looking for an eternal truth? Should we be looking for supernatural justifications? In fact, should we be looking for justification at all? Perhaps we have been asking the wrong questions about right and wrong all this time. Perhaps that is why we seem to yet so far away from an answer.

Furthermore, evolutionary ethics sheds light on other arenas of philosophical thought: free will, existentialism, and so on. It will incite us to yet again re-evaluate that which we call reality, to attempt a new kind of distinction between illusion and truth, and most importantly, to reconnect, or at worst, to diametrically oppose, philosophical and scientific modes of thought.

That evolutionary theory changes the nature of philosophical inquiry in the realm of ethics is not to say that it changes the practical applications of morality. Nothing about evolutionary theory suggests that the criminal is no longer responsible for his actions, that right and wrong are now meaningless, or that the Golden Rule is bogus. Our moral systems are real and viable and healthy. Nor have we uncovered a new source of answers with the advent of evolutionary theory. Michael Ruse and his contemporaries make quite clear that evolution cannot be called upon for solutions. We have uncovered, however, the spur for a revolution in moral thought, a spur which will change the way we investigate moral systems and the norms that bound from them, and which will etch yet another chapter in the book of philosophical history.
Robert J. Weyant, "If our parents are for us, who can be against us?"


What Do People Really Want: The Theodicy of Boethius

Christopher Smith

I. Introduction

One function of any religious tradition is to identify, construct, and respond to evil. The process, called a theodicy, explains why people, even the righteous, suffer, and the manner in which suffering is to be resolved. Anicia Boethius (c. 480-524 CE) constructs his theodicy in the context of a monotheism centered upon an omnipotent, essentially good Deity. His first work, the Consolation of Philosophy, presents a dialogue between Boethius and a personification of Philosophy. In the course of the conversation, Boethius and Lady Philosophy address the issue of evil. An analysis of Boethius’s success at resolving evil with the Deity requires examination of the classic problem the monotheism itself faces. Following the description of the problem, a brief treatment of popular, but inconsistent, solutions clarifies the sort of solution that is insufficient to overcome the problem. Of course, if Boethius incorporates the inconsistent elements of these solutions into his own, his theodicy too will prove insufficient. Summary and elucidation of Boethius’s theodicy presents the case he makes. Given the problem, the solution, and solution area which ultimately fail, valuation of his success proceeds by comparison. Boethius is ultimately very successful on several fronts, but leaves some problems entirely unresolved.

A brief exposition of theodicy at the outset serves to define inquiry into Boethius’s direction. Theodicies perform two tasks. First, a theodicy constructs evil within the framework of the tradition. It answers the questions of the source of evil, its nature, and especially why the righteous suffer. Once these answers are determined, the second objective of a theodicy, the resolution of suffering, can be constructed. If

1 This definition of the role of theodicy in a tradition comes from Dr. Lester Kurtz, Professor of Sociology at the University of Texas (57-64). Kurtz explains that the theodicy is a tradition of righteous persons from the perspective—internal to the tradition—facing evil, suffering, and death. Boethius’s theodicy has the Deity as the transaction of rightness person from the perspective—external to the tradition—facing evil, suffering, and death. This gives rise to adherence to the tradition. An institutional concern for any religion becomes confounding in faithfulness by providing an explanation of evil as well as a solution.
the origin and nature of evil are understood, the solution to the problem follows. One important factor is vital to keep in mind: a theodicy explains suffering and evil from within a tradition. Arguments concerning the validity of the tradition are of no consequence. Thus, if the theodicy calls upon a deity to do the work, questions concerning the existence of said deity have no place - such questions originate from outside the tradition.

II. The Problem

The problem of evil enters a monotheistic tradition through the personification of the Deity (The generic 'Deity' is used here since the problem occurs in any tradition of this type). As well, the problem is specific to a type of monotheism where a transcendent Deity and persons are individuated from each other (as opposed to a tradition like Advaita Vedanta where individuation is ultimately not the case, and the problem is different). The Deity is both omnipotent and essentially good, both characterizations needing elaboration. 'Omnipotent' means able to do anything that can be done. Without digression into logical concerns with omnipotence, suffice it to say that 'anything' includes the elimination of suffering. Essentially good or good in essence means good is identical with the Deity, or the Deity is good by its nature, unable to be otherwise. The classical problem of evil is now evident. The Deity can stop suffering through omnipotence, and, being essentially good, should stop suffering. However, suffering is the case. It is a question of reconciling suffering with the Deity's nature.

Keeping in mind the problem and the Deity, two popular options for constructing evil are no longer available if consistency is to be maintained. Boethius does not want to take the following routes:

The Devil is to blame:

'No one could doubt that God is omnipotent.'
'No.'
'But there is nothing an omnipotent power could not do?'
'No.'
'Then God can do evil?'
'No.' (Boethius, 112).

Involved here is a form of theological dualism, where evil is caused by a force opposed to God and humankind becomes a battleground between the opposing forces. In Boethius' monotheism, evil could not be omnipotent, their being only one God, and would eventually lose the war. If good and evil are opposing forces, however, omnipotence would imply

that the omnipotent can commit evil acts. An essentially good being could not will evil, and being unable to do evil would not fulfill the criteria for omnipotence. Therefore, for God to be both essentially good and omnipotent, evil cannot be a self-existent force.

Humankind is in essence evil:

But you, whose mind is made in the image of God . . .
(Boethius, 67)

In conformity with the Abrahamic traditions, the soul of man is created by God in the image of God. 'Image' does not imply 'equal with'; a distinction elaborated in Book V of the Consolation. Yet if humankind is essentially evil, and is made in the image of God, then God is essentially evil. The premise he is working from is that God is essentially good, therefore, humankind cannot be essentially evil. Since Boethius describes the mind or soul as an image of God that is weaker and incomplete, it is not necessary for the soul to be essentially good either. Rather, Boethius argues, people are potentially good. While God's nature is good, human nature is to actualize its good potential. In both cases, the end is the same. That a person must achieve the end, whereas for God the end and the beginning are not distinguished, is the difference.

III. Boethius' Response

The root premise for the existence of evil comes in the distinction between what people want versus what they think they want. In Book III, Boethius clarifies what people truly want:

In all the care with which they toil at countless enterprises, mortal men travel different paths, though all are striving to reach one and the same goal, namely, happiness, which is a good once obtained leaves nothing more to be desired. It is the perfection of all good things and contains in itself all that is good; and if anything were missing from it, it couldn't be perfect, because something would remain outside it, which could still be wished for. It is clear, therefore, that happiness is a state, which, as we said, all mortal men are striving to reach through different paths. For the desire for true good is planted by nature in the minds of
men, only error leads them astray towards false good
(Boethius, '79).

People really want happiness. A distinction becomes apparent: true happiness and false happiness. True happiness is the perfection of the good, and itself is the ultimate good. Since each person by nature seeks happiness, each person by nature seeks the good. That humans have to seek happiness shows that good is not essential to the nature of man, because a person can lack happiness. The goal of happiness is the same for each individual, but the paths are different. Meaning an individual pursues the good, but may fail to achieve it, or may be using a path which does not lead to the good. The need to seek combined with separation of good from the essence of humankind opens the way to error, so that while the good is sought, it may not be achieved. Returning to "humankind is essentially evil", it becomes clear that Boethius has not taken that approach.

The distinction between true happiness and false happiness mentioned above shows how they differ and what each consists of. Inclusion of all good things brings true happiness, and these good things are:

... self-sufficiency, respect, power, celebrity, and happiness. This is the good that men are looking for in such a variety of pursuits. And it is not difficult to show the hand of nature in this in spite of the variety and difference of their opinions, men are agreed in their choice of the good as their goal (Boethius, '81).

These things are among the various paths people take to achieve the good. Self-sufficiency means a lack of wants, and power the ability to achieve desired ends. Needs and impotence cause anxiety and worry, preventing happiness. Respect and celebrity (fame from a positive perspective) follow from something worthy of renown, but may or may not bring happiness through themselves. Happiness refers to the enjoyment and delight in the good. Each one of these is a good in itself, happiness resulting from the enjoyment and freedom each one brings. However, the distinction between these five is an artificial distinction, so Boethius collapses them into a single 'good' one by one. First, he argues that power and self-sufficiency are identical, "If a being had some weakness in some respect it would necessarily need the help of something else" (Boethius, '94), so that power is prerequisite to self-sufficiency. Next:

"Would you then consider a being of this kind beneath contempt, or on the contrary, supremely worthy of veneration?" 'The latter, there is no doubt about it.' (Boethius, '94)

and respect is joined to power and self-sufficiency. He continues with this being, saying that its glory and fame would be unmatched, "I can only say that in view of its nature it would be unsurpassed in glory" (Boethius, '94).

Lastly:

How any sorrow could approach such a being is inconceivable; it must be admitted that provided the other qualities are permanent, it will be full of happiness (Boethius, '95).

Self-sufficiency and power are identical. Fame and respect proceed from them. Happiness is the consequence of having the above. Therefore, the perfection and inclusion of all good things entail the five given, in combination, permanent, and at their maximum peak. Unfortunately for people, only God is this sort of being.

Happiness and good belong only to the essence of God, as God is goodness itself. But Boethius asserts that humankind, while true happiness is not in their essence, can achieve true happiness. Understanding true happiness helps illuminate why some paths utilized to achieve happiness are more successful than others. The answer given is vague, but comes near the end of Book III:

Since it is through the possession of happiness that people become happy, and since happiness is in fact divinity, it is clear that it is through the possession of divinity that they become happy...

... so those who possess divinity necessarily become divine. Each happy individual is therefore divine. While only God is so by nature, as many as you like may become so by participation (Boethius, '102).

The specifics of what this means (becoming one with God, Beatific Vision) are not really the issue, but rather that the totality of true happiness is not to be found in the material world. Yet just as man is the imperfect image of God, a reflection of true happiness, is that the truest possible happiness to be found in the material world, can be achieved in the present state. This happiness comes through things such as the pursuit of wisdom,
love, and virtue which provide a sort of participation in the divine by mirroring the divine nature through fulfillment of the human nature. Given the true good, and true happiness, where do evil and suffering originate? Returning attention to the first citation in this section, different paths are taken toward achieving the good. Boethius has shown that the good is a unity, simple and individed in the being of God. At first glance though, the good appeared divided, and had to be unified from five component parts. To this seeming divisibility, Boethius answers:

Human perversity, then, makes divisions of that which by nature is one and simple, and in attempting to obtain part of something which has no parts, succeeds in gaining neither the part which is nothing-or the whole, which they are not interested in (Boethius, 95).

In other words, divisions are imposed by the limitations of the human mind, which sees initially only the separate facets of the good without understanding the facets are connected. People try to attain these various aspects of the good through various means, and Boethius makes means with the good to be obtained as follows:

Self-Sufficiency :: Wealth
Power :: Positions of Authority
Respect :: Titles, Great Works
Celebrity :: Fame, Popularity
Happiness :: Physical Pleasure

On the left, the goods people seek are contrasted with common means to these ends on the right. For example, wealth frees the possessor from work, and almost assures food and shelter. Likewise, the greater one’s authority, the less orders taken and the more given. Power frees the possessor from the will of others while subjugating others to his will. Boethius does not classify wealth, power, etc. as bad or evil things. On the contrary, these things are good by the fact that they are sought after (humans seek the good), and that they do bring some share of good, what they are the means to. However, each means, such as wealth, is sought after for a matching end. While each means delivers some part of the good, all of these means are insufficient to accomplish their ends. For example, no amount of wealth produces self-sufficiency, ever. Much of Book III of the Consolation gives precise examples of how each means fails to fulfill the end in detail, but two examples will serve to demonstrate the form of all the arguments. Wealth is sought to secure freedom from want, or self-sufficiency. Yet wealth can be stolen by criminals or confiscated by the local tyrant. Guards can be hired, but then wealth is deployed and more has to be sought to retain wealth. Besides, the need for guards is incompatible with self-sufficiency, which was the thing sought in the first place. Power prevents the holder from being oppressed by others. However, power invariably makes enemies, and enemies cause worry for safety. Worry and anxiety are incompatible with true happiness, and thus good is not achieved. The form of these arguments in general proves that each means, while contributing toward the end, produces further problems that inhibit finally achieving the end. It is a mistake to assume that the means are not good, they do bring a good, it simply is not the whole of what is sought through them. The fault lies in the seeker, who attempts to achieve something through insufficient methods. Wealth and the like provide some measure of the good sought through them, but not the full measure for which the possessor intends them. Humans are unable to achieve their goal because they are in error as to how to achieve the good.

To understand why these errors are the root of evil and suffering, Boethius’ construction of evil illustrates precisely what evil is, at the same time rejecting any attempts at a ‘Devil is to Blame’ approach:

‘No one could doubt that God is omnipotent.’

‘No.’

‘But there is nothing an omnipotent power could not do?’

‘No.’

‘Then God can do evil?’

‘No.’

‘So that evil is nothing, since that is what he cannot do who can do anything.’ (Boethius, 112)

The immediate response says that evil and suffering are something, just ask someone who has experienced it. Actually, Boethius does not mean that evil does not exist, instead, that evil does not exist in and of itself. Evil is a privation of good. Evil’s nature understood, the question of origin arises.

Prior to evil is suffering, the cause of which is the Wheel of Fortune. Fortune’s wheel is a metaphor for life in the changing world of the material. Forces beyond the control of man in combination with the actions of other individuals cause the situation of the present to change and quantities to shift. Wealth and power change hands, moving from individual to individual. Someone loses, another gains only to lose later.
For example, a dictator has power until a revolution deposes him, or a corporation has wealth until a tornado destroys its assets. In the end, no wealth, power, beauty, or enerva truly belongs to the owner because the owner has only so much ability to keep what he has. In the words of Fortune herself:

You have been receiving a favour as one who has had the use of another's possessions, and you have no right to complain as if what you have lost is fully your own... When I come, they come with me, and when I go, they leave as well. I can say with confidence that if the things whose loss you are bemoaning were really yours, you could never have lost them (Boethius, 57).

...So now you have committed yourself to the rule of fortune, you must acquiesce in her ways (Boethius, 56).

Suffering results in the pursuit of good through the material world. Good fortune produces a shadow of true happiness, and bad fortune produces misery and suffering when it takes something away. The suffering is directly proportional to the attachment to what was lost.

Again, evil as a privation of good, is a lack of something. All humans seek the good as the final end. Power, the ability to achieve an aim, will be directed to achieving a goal, the more power someone has, the more likely to achieve what is desired. To achieve the good as a final goal requires the power to do so. Evil actions achieve less good than the rest since evil is a lack of good. Therefore, Boethius argues, evil people lack any true power, because power being the ability to achieve a goal, they do not achieve their natural goal of the good. Boethius wrote:

To the objection that evil men do have power, I would say that this power of theirs comes from weakness rather than strength. For they would not have the power to do the evil had they not retained the power of doing good (Boethius, 122).

When a person commits an evil act, he is seeking through that act to achieve good. Evil acts only increase the amount of means to the good. For instance, theft increases wealth. However, as Boethius said, the material is not sufficient to bring about what is sought, so the act has failed to achieve the goal. Further, evil acts tend to invite retaliation from the wronged or the authorities who will then inflict suffering on the perpetrator. The material gain of evil derives from an obsession with the material, which is the domain of Fortune. Through this obsession, the criminal suffers more thoroughly from bad fortune. And lastly, God, the ultimate authority, eventually imposes penalty and grants beatitude beyond the shadows of happiness to be found in the material. The punishment for evil is thus eventually inescapable.

Quickly taking stock of Boethius, suffering originates in connecting happiness with Fortune's domain. The more one uses the material as the means to happiness, the more one suffers. Evil becomes merely the extreme case, where obsession with the material as a means to happiness results in selfish acts that generally cause others to suffer.

IV. Where Boethius Succeeds

Boethius resolves evil through a mostly eschatological scheme, while also offering a solution to suffering which applies in the realm of material life. Important as well, Boethius makes progress in reconciling the Deity with the existence of suffering and evil, although he does not manage to fully satisfy the problem.

Eschatological theories resolve evil at the end of time. Cosmic justice, though delayed, is ultimately assured by God. Boethius opts for this route, in order to cover the case of wrongs that go unrighted in the world. While hardly a solution unique to him, Boethius manages a slightly new twist on the theme that places some of the consequences in the world essentially. He explores what the intent of the evil is, and measures it against the achievement. The real reason people act is to achieve the good, wherein happiness lies. The real intent of the evil act is the same, but he argues, the person committing evil cannot attain what is sought since both the achievement is material, and anxiety brought on by the potential for trouble. Thus, evil denies the person what is sought, and redress in the end by God. Evil is then reddressed in both the material universe and beyond.

Several objections, however, do come to mind that would say Boethius is setting out a purely eschatological theodicy. To begin, all actions undertaken unwillingly, such as caused by insanity, are immediately excluded as they are not freely willed in context. Insanity, for example, means the person who is insane does not have a proper grasp of reality and therefore cannot make decisions of right and wrong that are in the context of the world. Since his actions are made outside this context, they are not evil. Even though the wrong of an act by an unwilling agent suffers, this is simply suffering, not evil, and is dealt with below. Evil is limited to agents intentionally doing wrong for their own gain.

The criminal intends his own happiness because of his human nature, but two factors prevent attainment of this. First, though he may
profits materially, he lives in constant threat of being discovered and suffering retribution, thereby his freedom is circumscribed by the constant threat of discovery. Though he may gain in material terms, he loses the ability to live freely as a person who makes his gains honestly. This constant anxiety, even if small, still impairs his happiness, which was his goal in committing evil in the first place. Thus whether caught and punished or not, the evil receives some redress in the here and now. Second, material gains are again part of the root of suffering in that there is no permanence attached to their ownership. The gains made through an evil act are subject to the same misfortune as those gained honestly. A thief can be robbed, and a usurper usurped. Moreover, the criminal usually has a greater obsession with the material, willing to risk punishment here and after death to achieve these. Therefore, Fortune has the criminal in a tighter hold; his losses are felt more severely. With his material possessions as vulnerable to the whims of Fortune as anybody else's, he is at least equally likely to have bad fortune, possibly more since he has committed crime, and then suffers the loss more profoundly.

Boethius does not provide merely an eschatological theology, rather part of the punishment for evil is built into human nature. Evil does not only not pay off, but is also the doorway to more suffering.

As to suffering, the comparison between Boethius and the Buddha immediately seizes the reader. The Wheel of Fortune and Samadhi, the wheel of life, both depict the material universe as a spinning wheel on which a point on it will rise to joy, only to inevitably cycle back into misery. The one rule in both traditions is the wheel does not stop. Fair and unfair have nothing to do with the distribution of the material, that is determined by circumstances, and circumstance is determined by an army of forces beyond the control of any individual but an army every individual is a part of. Such is the nature of the universe, and nobody can do a thing about it.

Given the knowledge that reality as a whole is out of individual control, the individual's best choice is to affect what he can best control: himself. Suffering is not rooted in the material, or inflicted by a malignant demon; Boethius instead says suffering wholly originates in the one suffering. The individual inflicts suffering when he attaches himself to the material, this attachment putting him at Fortune's mercy. Detachment from the material eliminates dependence on Fortune, good or bad, for happiness. Boethius's solution to suffering is detachment from the material and ephemeral.

Yet, Boethius does not advocate world-denial. When a person determines to fulfill his goal, happiness, through material acquisition, material acquisition becomes necessary for his happiness, and thus attachment to the material is the consequence. The attachment locks the individual in the ups and downs, the cycle, of Fortune's wheel, and the means become confused with the ends. Detachment, on the other hand, allows the individual to enjoy the resultant happiness of material acquisition, without suffering the which accompanies their loss. At a higher stage of detachment, the individual welcomes even bad fortune. When Fortune inflicts material loss, important things like true friends and lovers, insight into the true nature of fortune, and sources of a more reliable happiness are revealed, things which money or power cannot acquire. Objects of the material world are not to be disdained, only viewed from their proper perspective.

The suffering inflicted by evil may seem to be of a different type. However, while the responsibility for the act falls on the sinner (discussed above), the suffering is purely the responsibility of the victim. Evil actions are a part of the complex of various forces out of individual control metaphorically personified by Fortune. The detached individual does not suffer from victimization, because the criminal can only inflict material losses. Suffering is internal to the victim, and the responsibility for his internal state rests in his attachment.

Boethius's theology succeeds in constructing evil and suffering, and does a thorough job. The proper response to suffering is contained in the construction: if the problem is attachment, the solution is detachment. Yet, does he square suffering with the omnipotent, essentially good God? Boethius succeeds only to an extent in this case. Human freedom reconciles God with suffering. Humans try to actualize their potential for the good, when an individual uses the unsuitable path of the material, he inevitably suffers. But since a given person determines his means to happiness, he bears the consequences of his choice. Also, suffering contains its own corrective, the lessons inflicted by bad fortune signify the insufficiency of the material path. Because suffering originates in the individual, there is no external cause. Thus God's essential goodness has no obligation as the person suffering can change his means to happiness and bad fortune teaches the need to do so. In a sense, continued suffering is willful ignorance or lingering attachment.

V. Where Boethius Does Not Succeed

To understand why Boethius's project does not fully succeed, what he is doing must first be understood. Suffering and evil are part of the human condition, a fact which will not be contested. Boethius, in The
Consolation of Philosophy, gives the reader the origin and nature of suffering for the person, then shows how the elimination of suffering follows. In this light, the theodicy is a practical one, concerned primarily with instructing the individual how he may deal with his suffering and help his fellows to do the same.

The unanswered problem asks why humankind and its situation are such a way that suffering is possible to begin with. Why not create man to participate in the divine from the beginning and exist only in true happiness? Why should the individual be capable of causing his own suffering? Why not dispense with the material universe altogether? Human freedom is not altogether a satisfactory answer, because it could be argued that while people are free to choose, the choices built into the world do not have to be ones that admit the possibility of suffering.

The vestige of an answer from Boethius comes in Book IV, where a description of Fate and Providence assure the reader that even though we cannot understand why man can suffer, God knows why the potential for suffering should be part of the human experience. In essence, he says the problem is unsolved, probably unsolvable by humankind.

The response says that God's nature and the existence of suffering are reconciled even though only God understands the reconciliation. Only, this begs the question, which was "How may God's nature and suffering be reconciled?" Unsatisfactorily, he says in effect that they just are.

VI. Concluding Remarks

If the problem is limited to God being omnipotent and essentially good along side the actual suffering of individuals, then Boethius has reconciled the two. If the problem is limited to God being omnipotent and essentially good, but creating man in such a way that he has the potentiality for suffering, then Boethius says that the reconciliation is there, but the human mind does not, probably cannot, understand it. The problem is only partially disposed of.

Ultimately eschatological, Boethius's theodicy assures evil will be resolved at the end of time. However, the solution to suffering focuses on the practical for the here and now. Every member of mankind has a goal, and suffering is the effect of utilizing insufficient means. Boethius offers hope in that suffering can be mitigated and disposed during the life span. Boethius succeeds on all practical fronts, offering more than a mere explanation for suffering. His only failure is a full reconciliation of God and suffering, though some success comes about. It is not the case that happiness is not possible, just that what people really want and the way they go about getting it often are incompatible.
0 Introduction

Ayn Rand developed, in her novels and non-fiction essays, the outline of a philosophy of modern, scientific Aristotelianism. The most well-known element of this systematic philosophy is her ethics of rational self-interest or enlightened selfishness. Her unique epistemological method, which I cannot detail here, gives her the grounds to provide a unique approach to ethics — an approach that has inspired millions and is a deep, rich, well-considered moral perspective. It is the theme of this essay that Rand’s moral vision is basically true but that friendly criticism and a broader perspective can strengthen her position. Further, rather than myopically pore solely over the works of Rand as some Objectivist thinkers have done, I maintain that a broader, more scholarly perspective will shed more light; hence, I draw from other writers within the Objectivist tradition. I would draw even from outside Objectivism, but contemporary philosophy has not even begun to grapple with Rand’s ideas; I am left with the comments of her friends and little else that is of actual relevance. However, within Objectivism, there has been a conflict between two interpretations of Rand’s ethics: the ‘survival/fourishing’ debate. In their book Liberty and Nature, Douglas Den Uyl and Douglas Rasmussen attempt both to ground their ethics on the phenomena of life, as Rand does, and to employ an inclusive-end teleology, in apparent contrast to Rand. This is the ‘fourishing’ position, which claims that the ultimate end of human action is not mere survival but a more Aristotelian eudaimonia; more orthodox Objectivist scholars such as David Kelley disagree, claiming with Rand that life itself is the only objectively possible ultimate end.

It is my intent here to make clear Rand’s conceptual system and the objective grounding she provides for her ethics, to discuss the survivalism and flourishing debate, and finally to resolve this issue by showing the richness of Rand’s view of human nature and by clarifying, with an Aristotelian concept, an obscured point in Rand. This will ground the ethics completely and objectively.
1 The Concepts of Ethics

Definitions," Miss Rand writes, "are the guardians of rationality, the first line of defense against the chaos of mental disintegration."[1] In accordance with Rand's method, I will begin by detailing the characterization by Rand and certain of her supporters of the meanings of the key concepts in Objectivist ethical discourse.

...morality, or ethics... is a code of values to guide men's choices and actions. Ethics, as a science, deals with discovering and defining such a code."[2] "Value" is that which one acts to gain and/or keep. [3] "Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action." [4] I will put off until later an explanation of how Rand develops her meta-ethical argument with her transcendental question.[5] First, I intend to explain Objectivist view of "life" (and in more detail, human life) and 'value' and the links between these critical concepts. First, though: value means, roughly: telos, end, goal, purpose.

Professor Harry Blasewinger, an Objectivist philosopher, discusses these concepts in length in his fascinating treatise The Biological Basis of Telaological Concepts. He shows that evolutionary biology provides a grounding for telaological concepts. Here, though, I shall explain his characterization of just what telaological action is.

The concept of telos, Blasewinger notes, was originally developed to distinguish purposeful, conscious human action from other types of action. Blasewinger attempts to show that all types of living action, other than the first must instance of a biological function which did not exist in parent organisms, is telaological. He identifies three attributes of telaological action: self-generation, value-significance, and goal-causation.[6]

"Self-generation provides the genus for defining "goal-directed action."

"[7] To act goal-directedly, an entity must first be able to act. [8] Self-generation, for Blasewinger, means that the energy used in an action is in the acting entity. This means that the action of the entity cannot be merely mechanical; the entity must be moving itself in some sense. This rules out planets orbiting and rocks falling as instances of telaological action, because the planets do not orbit and rocks do not fall because they are exerting effort to do so. Only living organisms exert themselves. Clearly, the ultimate source of the energy in the exertion is the environment, but for the action to qualify as telaological, the energy must be stored within the acting entity. To clarify this point:

Self-generation implies an independence of input and output: between the input which triggers the activity and the resulting activity that is the output, there must

be a 'self' which uses its energy supply. And this means that the entity must have some sort of energy-maintaining mechanism(s) regulating what output will follow from what input.[9]

That is, the entity acting must use the energy itself, not solely due to external, mechanical influences.

The second element of telaological action is 'value-significance.' The entity not only acts for the end, it acts for the end. For human action, value-significance is the conscious desire for the end. In non-conscious action, need plays a similar role. Need, for Blasewinger, 'denotes a necessary condition of an entity's very existence. It is 'existence-needs' that provide the basis of value-significance.'[10] That is, human beings are moved toward an end by a desire or conviction, while animals are moved toward the end by need. An action, to be telaological, must be directed at the fulfillment of some objective requirement of the existence of the entity acting, or a consciously chosen human goal.

Finally, not only acts for the end, it acts for the end. 'Goal-causation' is the third attribute of telaological action. The entity uses energy in an action specifically for the end of the action. The goal is the final cause, not just a haphazard effect, of the action. This is easy to understand with regard to human goals: the current existence of a goal in mind is the cause of one's action toward that goal. It is harder to understand how the action of non-human animals can be goal-directed, as they don't have their goal in mind. Blasewinger's novel thesis is that goal-causation on the vegetative level results from the operation of natural selection in evolution. Almost all of the vegetative actions of living organisms can be given an evolutionary explanation in terms of their survival value. This amounts to a telaological explanation of those traits.[11]

The current existence of a structure or kind of behavior in an organism is caused by the success, in evolutionary terms, of previous instances of that structure or behavior. If the first, mutant, instances of the structure or function had failed, the mutant organism would have failed in the Darwinian struggle for existence and not passed the trait on. Since the trait has been passed on, the current organism is acting for goals in the future because of the success of this form of achieving goals in the past.

For Blasewinger, then, goal-directed (telaological) action is 'a self-directed action that has been selected for its efficacy in attaining a
value. [12] The selecting mechanism may have been conscious thought or natural selection. Either way, the action is teleological; thus, teleology is based on biology broadly, rather than just conscious human action. As we will later draw from Rand: value is dependent on life. [13]

But ethics is a code of values for human beings, not just living things generally. Thus, we must distinguish between human beings and other animals. The key fact distinguishing human beings, in Rand’s view, is volition. Therefore, I will turn to volition, discussing the nature of the Objectivist theory of volition and defending this form of volition as an axiom.

Charles Darwin states in the conclusion to The Origin of Species: ‘In the distant future, I see open fields for far more important researches. Psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquisition of each new mental power and capacity by gradation.’ [17] Objectivism agrees, and claims that volition, as a means of cognitive self-regulation, is an evolved trait for human beings to deal more effectively with their environment. As Blinnwanger states,

... the adaptation of biological action by means of natural selection is inherently a very slow affair, with many generations normally required to make the ‘hard-wiring’ changes in the DNA that are necessary to adapt to new environmental conditions. The higher organisms have evolved a means of enormously accelerating the adaptation of behavior to the environment: the faculty of consciousness. Consciousness allows changes to be made, in effect, in software rather than hardware.... As the evolutionary scale is climbed, there is a tendency for an ever greater portion of the animal’s behavior to come under conscious control.... The focus of control increasingly shifts from instinct to reflexes to cognitive processes mediated by the higher brain centers. In the case of man, this evolutionary progression toward conscious self-regulation reaches its highest expression. [18]

I shall turn now to the key Objectivist concept of ‘focus’. The primary choice,” notes Professor Leonard Peikoff in Objectivism: An Axiom. The Philosophy of Ayn Rand, “the one that makes rational activity possible, is the choice to focus one’s consciousness.” [19] Peikoff draws a visual analogy: A man cannot do much with his faculty of vision until his eyes are in focus. Otherwise, his eyesight gives him only a blur or haze, a kind of visual fog, in which he can discriminate relatively little... A similar concept applies to the mind. In regard to thought, as to vision, the same alternative exists: clear awareness or a state of blur, haze, fog, in which relatively little can be discriminated. On the conceptual level, however, one must choose between these alternatives. Intellectual clarity is not given to man automatically. ‘Focus’ (in the conceptual realm) names a quality of purposeful alertness in a man’s mental state. ‘Focus’ is the state of a goal-directed mind committed to attaining full awareness of reality.

Further, ‘To “focus” one’s mind means to raise one’s degree of awareness. In essence, it consists of shaking off mental lethargy and deciding to use one’s intelligence.’

Yet further, ‘[the act of focusing] consists of the exertion of one’s mental capacity. This exertion is work and is experienced as such — not pain, but work, in the sense of basic mental effort. It is the effort required to reach and/or maintain full awareness. “Effort” means the expenditure of energy to achieve a purpose.’ [20] (The reader may notice that Peikoff is using the same phrasing with regard to focusing that Blinnwanger used in discussing teleological action. This is because, for Objectivism, focusing is the key teleological action for human being.)

Finally, it remains to be seen that human beings actually possess the faculty being referred to: an evolved, volitional consciousness, which one can raise and lower in focus at will. Nathaniel Branden notes that this is a key question for ethics and in fact all normative sciences: one can receive ethical advice only if one is a type of entity that can follow or not follow such advice. In ‘The Contradiction of Determinism,’ he explains why volition is an axiom. To set up the opposition, he explains:

The determinist concept of mind maintains that whether a man thinks or not, whether he takes cognizance of the facts of reality or not... [is] determined by forces outside his control; in any given moment or situation, his method of mental functioning is the inevitable product of... antecedent factors...’ [21][emphasis added]
What would determinism imply about human behaviors? Since the method by which we arrive at our beliefs is not under our control, we have no way of checking them for truth. Thus, our beliefs are totally without foundation. This includes the belief in determinism. Therefore, if determinism is true, no argument can be given for it because that argument was not necessarily arrived at by a legitimate method — there is no such thing as a legitimate method, since there is no choice over method. If determinism is true, there is no reasoned argument which might compel us to believe it; if determinism is false, many ought not believe it. There is no reason to believe in determinism. It is not possible to prove human beings have free will, because the method of proof is to assume that we have free will and can therefore check our beliefs. However, for that very reason, opposition to free will also rests on free will, because it is only through belief-checking that one could prove any position, including determinism. Free will is a premise in any statement in a reasoned argument; the presumption in reasoned argument is that a conclusion has been arrived at by a legitimate method. If we have no control over method, no method can be held as more or less legitimate. Vocation is an axiom which must be accepted to enter into discussion about volition.

Hopefully, this section will have made clear the concepts and entries Rand discusses in her ethical argument. Rand’s ethics will describe a system of values to be pursued by a goal-directed entry with a specially evolved capacity of volitional consciousness.

2 Rand’s Meta-Ethical Analysis
My morality, the morality of reason, the hero of Atlas Shrugged states, ‘rests on a single axiom: that existence exists, and a single choice: to live.’[22] I have tried to show the first element: the nature of the existent entities Rand’s elementary and built for. Now I shall turn to Rand’s transcendental question and how it allows her to discover the morality proper to human beings — the morality of reason. Rand asks, in ‘The Objectivist Ethics,’ ‘Why does man need a code of values?’ Further, ‘Let me amend this. The first question is: What particular code of values should man accept? The first question is: Does man need values at all, and why?’[23] Professor Rasmussen and Den Uyl point out: ‘[Rand] feels the threat of the ethical nihilist who denies the existence of moral knowledge.’[24] Further, she asks: what makes values possible? By this question she means not just what makes interests, wants, and pleasures, as opposed to rights, obligations, and duties possible. Rather, she is concerned with what gets the entire normative enterprise — both theories of goodness and theories of right — off the ground. Why, in other words, are things that are considered good or actions one is obliged to perform in the first place?

Rand notes, ‘To challenge the basic premise of any discipline, one must begin at the beginning. In ethics, one must begin by asking: What are values? Why does man need them?’[25] Values, in Rand’s view, are goals or purposes or a set of goals. They are not a primary concept, but rest on an answer to the question ‘of value to whom and for what?’ To be perfectly clear: Rand is being literal. Without an answer to the question ‘of value to whom and for what’, that which we allege to be of value in value to no one and for nothing: good-for-nothing. (This is Rand’s denial of the ‘intrinsicist’ view of ethics or Kantian approaches which state that things are intrinsically good, or good in themselves. This approach, in Rand’s view, is simply incorrect.)

Rand continues, ‘The concept “value” presupposes an entity capable of action to achieve a goal in the face of an alternative. Where no goals and no alternatives exist, no goals and no values are possible.’ Consider Binswanger’s characterization of teleological action. To qualify as teleological, an action must be self-caused for that end which the action is directed at achieving. Here, to qualify as value-oriented (which means teleological), an action is an action of an entity capable of acting, (qualifying as self-caused), ‘to achieve a goal,’ (qualifying as goal-caused), ‘in the face of an alternative’ (qualifying as value-significant — more on this later). This textual analysis proves Rand’s next point: ‘Only a living entity can have goals or can originate them.’[26] Binswanger’s point was that teleological action applies to the actions of living things, whether consciously desired or evolutionarily selected for. Non-living things cannot act for values. Therefore, only life gives rise to values: ‘It is only the concept of “Life” that makes the concept of “Value” possible. It is only to a living entity that things can be considered good or evil.’

Having shown that it is only a living thing that can be values, because only a living thing is capable of acting to achieve goals, Rand has blasted Kantian or other intrinsicist ethics which place goodness in an action, as divorced from its consequences. Moral appeals to the righteousness inherent in an action as opposed to its goal are of no consequence; for Objectivism, value and goodness simply are derived from the phenomenon of life and must be directed toward living. Let us turn back to Rand, as she, with equal ease, dismisses relativistic theories of morality.
Since life is the root of value, Rand observes, it is only life that yields values. A particular value, then, must be derived from the nature of the life in question. For non-conscious organisms, the values to be pursued have been pre-selected for by natural selection. If an organism successfully gains those values which it is designed to achieve, it will remain alive. The organism has no choice in the matter; it must fulfill its nature, and the fulfillment of its nature is the good and is its life.[27] Human beings, too, are specific entities of a specific nature, with specific means of survival (partly discussed above in the section on volition). Therefore, from the nature of human life, all human values are derivable. These are the values which have been selected for us by nature as those which cause us to live. Of those goals we may pursue which are not selected for their survival utilities, some are directly contradictory to life, such as poisoning ourselves. These values are obviously ruled out. Further, there are those goals which do not seem lethal, but which cannot be derived from the requirements of survival, such as compulsive hand-washing. However, any such goal must take energy and effort from the gaining of those values which do possess survival value; that is, they contradict survival if in a more indirect sense. Clearly, then, all goals must be either grounded in survival or rejected as contradictory to that end.

Rand states, "... the functions of all living organisms... are actions generated by the organism itself and directed toward a single goal: the maintenance of the organism's life." [28] Natural selection does not waste energy on side-issues. Living organisms behave for only one purpose: to live qua their particular form of organism. Further, "Life can be kept in existence only by a constant process of self-sustaining action. The goal of that action, the ultimate value which, to be kept, must be gained through its every moment, is the organism's life." [29] That is, life is the ultimate end of all action taken by an organism, and is the ultimate end for which human nature has been selected for as well.

This idea clashes relativist moral theories and the is-ought gap.

Rand states:

In answer to those philosophers who claim that no relation can be established between ultimate ends or values and the facts of reality, let me stress that the fact that living entities exist and function necessitates the existence of values and of an ultimate value which for any given living entity is its own life. Thus the validation of value judgments is to be achieved by reference to the facts of reality. The fact that a living entity is

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determines what it ought to do. So much for the issue of the relation between 'is' and 'ought'.

To be very precise: an organism's values are determined by the fact that it is alive and the specific way in which it is alive. Human values, then, are absolutely determined by human nature. As earlier observed, human beings have volition and can choose to act in violation of their nature. To whatever degree they do so, they will fail to gain the values required for their lives. They will die, just as any other organism would die were it to try not to achieve its proper values.[30] The task of ethics is to discover those proper values.

Let me offer a few more words on the is-ought gap. Objectivism endorses a system of hypothetical imperatives, statements of the type: 'if you want X, you ought to do Y.' Objectivism crosses the is-ought gap with the following kind of syllogism: 'if you want X, you ought to do Y; you want X; therefore, you ought to do Y.' Dr. Ronald Merrill provides some examples of hypothetical imperatives in his book "The Idea of Donald Rand: You ought to adorn a new disk before attempting to write a file to it." and "You ought to first examine the equation to see if the variables are separable."[31] Or, alternately, a hypothetical imperative might be "You ought to kill the animal before you eat it" or "You ought to clean the scalpel in order to save the patient." All these "ought" statements have in common is that they all imply an end, and state an objective requirement for attaining that end. So, assuming that the end is in fact being pursued, an ought-to-get-end statement is a factual statement, an is-type observation. For Objectivism, values are simply facts of a certain kind; evaluative statements are those factual statements which include (implicitly or explicitly) a goal determined by natural selection to be a part of human nature. As long as we are not trying to discover the "good-in-itself" but rather the "good-for-a-goal", the is-ought gap is nonsensical.

Finally, as Rand states, "My morality, the morality of reason, rests on a single axiom: that existence exists, and a single choice: to live." That here is the morality of reason has been demonstrated by the insistence that the view be proved and the success of the proof. The axiom of existence, which in this context refers to the existence of life and human nature and the means necessary for the preservation of a human life has been demonstrated above. The last point is the choice: to live.

"Psychologically," Rand states, "the choice "to think or not" is the choice "to focus or not." Existentially, the choice "to focus or not" is the choice "to be conscious or not." Metaphysically, the choice "to be conscious or not" is the choice of life or death.[32] As observed above,
The problem of human values is the problem of choice or of decision. This is the only role we are ever completely free. In our condition of absolute necessity.

Dr. David Dudley Field, in his book, "The Morality of Choice," states that every value and every virtue that goes to make up a good life must be shown to have a positive effect on the quality of our lives. We are, however, in the position of having to choose among the values that exist. This means that we have to choose the values that we believe are most important and that will have the greatest impact on our lives.

The question of human values is a question of choice. We are not free to choose values that are not available to us, but we are free to choose among the values that are available to us. This means that we are free to choose the values that we believe are most important and that will have the greatest impact on our lives.

The problem of human values is the problem of choice or of decision. This is the only role we are ever completely free. In our condition of absolute necessity.
worth living. If life is the goal for all things, then nothing can make it worth having; rather, it makes all other goals worthy pursuing. Thus Rand is implying that something beyond survival is the proper goal. But how to ground the ethics after that admission? Objectivism is thrown into confusion. Let us examine the flourisher’s position in more depth. Douglas Rasmussen and Douglas Den Uyl began the debate with the ethical grounding of their theory of rights in their text *Liberty and Nature*. Rasmussen and Den Uyl ([draw] a distinction between a dominant- and an inclusive-end theory of endaimonia. An inclusive-end theory holds that the means are part of the end itself, as well as causal factors toward it. Elephant, if one views winning at chess as the process of making moves which lead to victory, each move toward the victory will in fact compose the victory; this is an inclusive-end view of chess. Inclusive-end theory holds that the means are part of the end itself, as well as causal factors toward it. Elephant, if one views winning at chess as the process of making moves which lead to victory, each move toward the victory will in fact compose the victory; this is an inclusive-end view of chess. Rasmussen and Den Uyl continue:

[Our position] depends upon the adoption of an inclusive-end approach to teleological endaimonia. The possibility of an action being both productive and expressive of endaimonia depends upon endaimonia not being a single end which competes with all other ends and thus allows no other ends to have value except as a means to it. We can reject the dominant-end approach and arrive at the conclusions we are arguing for because it is possible within an Aristotelian normative theory for something to be done for its own sake and also for the sake of something else without that being a necessary preliminary to something else. For example, maintaining one’s integrity or having a friendship is something which is good, not merely because it is a necessary means to human flourishing, but because it is an end in itself.

Rasmussen and Den Uyl are saying, then, that endaimonia consists not only in a goal, but in the means to that goal, which are endaimonic themselves. This view looks promising, but can it stand up to analysis? The problem is the circularity of any ethical argument under this meta-ethical

theory. If the value of an action is inherent in the action, it is no longer simply and necessarily derived from the requirements of biological survival. Having served several goals other than survival, the flourishers are now discussing intrinsic value: [integrity] is good, not merely because it is a necessary means to human flourishing, but because it is an end in itself. That is, integrity is good because it is good. Gone is the clarity of Rand’s single choice to live and basic alternative of life or death grounding all morals. Now every end must be consulted on its own, and chosen or not, based on its own merit without necessary connection to survival value. But merit must be judged relative to the achievement of an ultimate end. If an action is included in the ultimate end and is not merely a means to it, it is impossible to know what actions are and are not good.

If we are looking for concrete norms, such as integrity, the flourisher can ground this norm on survival value, while the flourisher claims simply that it is good and seems to have difficulty giving reasons for his claim; that is, his claim is groundless. As we have seen, only the phenomenon of life can yield values. By no other standard but life can any means like integrity be judged. As David Kelley explains, the concept of flourishing is an attempt to skirt the problem of grounding moral claims. By incorporating all the cardinal values and virtues into the ultimate end, the concept attempts to escape the need of proving that they are necessary means to the end. [37] Flourishing ethics involves itself in a circularity, as Biddle observes, flourishers conclude, in effect, a man’s gotta do what a man’s gotta do... [38]

Thus, we can see that the flourisher position loses the grounding Rand provides for survival-based ethics, and slips back into the intrinsic circularity of claiming that a certain goal is good because it is good. However, Peikoff’s aforesaid notion claim that, goal-directed entities do not exist in order to pursue values. They pursue values in order to exist. Only self-preservation can be an ultimate goal, which serves no end beyond itself. [39] seems on surface transparently false. In Rand’s novel Atlas Shrugged, the sympathetic character of a southern sheriff mans that he can understand why some people in some circumstances commit suicide, and one of the characters of the novel, unable to deal with the corruption of the world around her, kills herself without evincing a negative moral reaction from Rand’s spokespersons.

Life is not the goal of suicide. Further, Rand wrote: “virtue is not an end in itself. Virtue is not its own reward... life is the reward of virtue — and happiness is the goal and reward of life.” That virtue is not an end in itself flies in the face of Rasmussen and Den Uyl’s inclusive-end ethics, since inclusive-end virtue is included in the end in itself. But
that happiness is the goal of life flies in the face of the notion that life is the ultimate end! Rand seems to be contradicting both sides as well as herself!

Neither survival nor flourishing ethics seems able to win out over the other. It seems possible to follow the survivalists and ground a pointlessly brute existence, and it seems possible to follow the flourishers and attempt to live a happy but arbitrary life. The task is to ground the full, flourishing kind of life and clarify the assertions that happiness or survival are the goals of our actions.

4. Solutions

There are three arguments which must be made to heal this wound in Objectivist ethics. The first is to note that ‘mere’ survival is unlikely; a higher goal is necessary in order to achieve even this paltry end. The second is to show that, on Rand’s view of human nature, acts with survival value are expanded far beyond what we ordinarily think of as necessary for life. The third is to clarify the relationship between flourishing and life in Rand’s conceptual system to remove the motivation for the Aristotelian objection.

Consider the goal of life. If life is truly our goal, we must adopt principles which objectively maximize our chances of self-preservation. ‘Mere survival’ as a goal, paradoxically, won’t achieve mere survival. If an individual takes as a goal the minimum subsistence existence (which is all that can apparently be grounded on survival), for the longest possible span of time (which is what survival demands) that individual is likely to fail in his endeavours. Who seems likely to live longer, a modern wealthy individual who, when she cuts herself, will clean and disinfect the wound, or the tribeman who, when he cuts himself, will contract gangrene and die? To truly maximize one’s chances for survival, one needs to do more than the minimal exertion to keep food on the table. One must maximize reserves of the basic necessities (food, clothing, shelter) and go beyond them to things like communication and transportation, which maximize the efficient use of one’s time so that one may acquire broader powers to preserve life. It is only this kind of wealth of value that can maximize one’s chances of living. Clearly, the individual who is better able to focus exertion is better able to perform the tasks necessary for her life. As Merrill puts it (while making a logical leap to this conclusion): ‘I therefore suggest that we reformulate Rand’s argument: morality consists not just of preserving life... but of maximizing life...’ [39] Through demonstrating the causal connection between ‘maximizing’ life and survival value, Merrill’s conclusion can be grounded. As Professor Tara Smith writes, ‘When trying to identify the needs of human existence, the level of existence that is the appropriate standard to invoke is not self-evident. Adoption of that standard itself involves assumptions about a minimally acceptable quality of life. Thus we could not eliminate qualitative assessments from an account of “mere subsistence” even if we wished to.’ [40]

The argument, then, is that it is not possible to set a cap on what is ‘mere’ survival. We may start by saying that those principles which most increase our chances for long-term survival are simply those principles which keep us fed at what is thought of as a ‘subsistence’ diet. But are we not more likely to live a long time with a healthy diet? With more than the minimum of food? With a supply of food all year long? With a surplus of food? To achieve these things, especially the latter, complex tools are needed; for complex tools, many skills are necessary. Are we not even more likely to survive if we live in close habitation with other people, so that they can help in an emergency? Are we not more likely to survive if we can concentrate our effort on one field of endeavour and allow others to achieve other values which we need, and then trade our own surplus for their surplus? The end result of this process is that we can ground a maximized, fully flourishing existence on the requirements of mere survival. Thus is much of the flourisher case adopted into the survivalist groundings, as we see that we must not merely gain values, but many values.

Now I will attempt to show that the requirements of human productivity, and hence of human survival, are very broad, not merely a wealth of material factors, but a breadth of spiritual elements, are helpful to us in survival. It is in my assertion to draw on Rand and Branden to show the survival values of four human endeavours: philosophy, self-esteem, romantic love, and art. Hopefully the brief sketches of this sample will go to show that Objectivism’s view of survival is, in fact, what the Aristotlean critic of Objectivism would describe as flourishing.

As a human being,” Rand wrote, in her brilliant speech “Philosophy: Who Needs It, ”you have no choice about the fact that you need a philosophy.” [41] Human beings, as discussed above, are a unique form of animal: we have the volitional capacity for reason. It is by reason that we discover the knowledge of what our values are and how to gain them. To properly use this faculty, we need to know its nature: that is, we need a theory of knowledge and the process of attaining it. That theory is epistemology. In order to preserve our lives, we must know what values will tend toward our self-preservation; that is, we need a code of values to guide us. Such a code, as explained earlier, is ethics. We must know something about the fundamental nature of our surroundings so that we may deal with them; we must know the nature of the things around us.
inasmuch as they are things — that is, we must know the nature of being qua being: ontology.

The argument is that the specific human mode of survival and the fact that it is volitional demands proper use of that mode, the method for which is not given to us automatically. We must discover it. The science which studies knowledge and values is philosophy. Or, as Rand continues, ‘Philosophy’ deals with the most crucial, the life-or-death issues of man’s existence. At the root of every significant philosophic theory, there is a legitimate issue — in the sense that there is an authentic need of man’s consciousness, which some theories struggle to clarify.” [42, emphasis added] That is, the needs of human consciousness to function for self-preservation require philosophy in all its abstract, theoretical glory.

’Self-esteem,’ Nathaniel Branden writes in The Psychology of Self-Esteem, ‘has two interrelated aspects: it entails a sense of personal efficacy and a sense of personal worth. It is the integrated sum of self-confidence and self-respect. It is the conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living.’ [43] Dr. Branden continues:

Man’s need of self-esteem is inherent in his nature. But he is not born with the knowledge of what will satisfy that need, or of the standard by which self-esteem is to be gauged; he must discover it. Why does man need self-esteem? How does it relate to man’s survival? What are the conditions of its attainment? What is the cause of its profound motivational power? There are two facts about man’s nature which hold the key to the answer. The first is the fact that reason is man’s basic means of survival. The second is the fact that the exercise of his rational faculty is volitional — that, in the conceptual realm, man is a being of volitional consciousness. [44]

The fact that human consciousness is volitional allows one to evaluate one’s level of focus in moral terms. The result of this evaluation is self-esteem. It is the fact that self-esteem is the moral evaluation of self that makes it so crucial to us; it is the fact that what is being evaluated is our means of existence itself that leads us toward the grounding of this value. In order to focus one’s mind, one requires a sense that one’s mind is capable of dealing with reality; one, why bother focusing? In order to evaluate the world and make self-preserving plans in it, we must rest on the assumption that our self-preservation is worth the effort. That is, we require a sense of efficacy and worth: self-esteem.

Let us turn to the value of romantic love. Dr. Branden explains, in The Psychology of Romantic Love, that ‘love is the highest, the most intense, expression of the assessment “for me,” “good for me,” “beneficial to my life.”’ [45] Further, ‘love represents a disposition to experience the loved being as the embodiment of profoundly important personal values — and, as a consequence, a real or potential source of joy.’ [46] Branden is led to the conclusion that ‘consciousness is a value to consciousness.’ [47] He suggests that we

Consider the fact that we normally experience ourselves, in effect, as a process — that consciousness itself is a process, an activity, and the contents of our mind are a shifting flow of perceptions, images, organic sensations, fantasies, thoughts, and emotions. Our mind is not an unmoving entity which we can contemplate as a direct object of experience as we contemplate objects in the external world.... Our ‘self-concept’ is not a single concept, but a cluster of images and abstract perspectives on various (real or imagined) traits and characteristics, the sum total of which can never be held in focal awareness at any one time; that sum is experienced, but it is not perceived as such. [48]

Earlier, in the section on self-esteem, I explained why evaluation of self is so crucial to one’s ability to maximize probability for self-preservation. Here, Branden observes that one does not have the capacity to observe one’s self directly. It is hard to see how one might evaluate that to which one has only limited, broken cognitive access. Branden observes that ‘To live successfully is to put ourselves into the world, to give expression to our thoughts, values, and goals.’ This follows from the nature of ethics and ethical action: ethics discovers values; moral behavior creates them.

Yet our most important value — our soul... — can never follow this pattern in a literal sense, can never exist apart from our own consciousness.... Since we are the source of our own actions, since our concept of who we are, of the person we have evolved, is central to all our motivation, we desire and need the fullest possible experience of the reality and objectivity of that person, of our self.
This is the root of love: the need to see oneself. Other people, Branden maintains, provide a mirror, reflecting ourselves wholistically in their behavior toward us. If the other reflects us accurately and positively, we will react very positively toward that other because what we see is our own self — and we like what we see.

In successful romantic love, there is a unique depth of absorption by, and fascination with, the being and personality of the partner. Hence there can be, for each, a uniquely powerful sense of visibility... And this is one of the main sources of the excitement — and nourishment — of romantic love.[49]

Let us turn to the ethereal value of art. Rand defines art as 'a selective re-creation of reality according to the artist's metaphysical value-judgments.'[50] 'The artist's metaphysical value-judgment' refers to the 'sense-of-life' of the artist, which Rand characterizes as, 'a pre-conceptual equivalent of metaphysics, an emotional, subconsciously integrated appraisal of man and of existence.'[51] The sense-of-life of the artist is his sense of the basic nature of the universe and of the place of human beings in it. The artist, in Rand's view, dramatizes his sense of what the fundamental nature of the universe is; what the most important facts about human life are. He does this by 'selective re-creation,' that is, choosing out those elements regarded as essential and re-creating them without accidental traits. For instance, in recent cinema, Mel Gibson views the heroic striving toward a near-impossible goal as important, so he directs 'Braveheart.' Or, George Lucas regards violent, colorful action in a clear fight between good and evil as important, so he writes 'Star Wars.' 'Man's profound need of art,' Rand writes.

lies in the fact that his cognitive faculty is conceptual, i.e., that he acquires knowledge by means of abstractions, and wields the power to bring his widest meta-
physical abstractions into his immediate, perceptual, awareness. Art fulfills this need: by means of a selec-
tive re-creation, it concretizes man's fundamental view of himself and existence. It tells man, in effect, which aspects of his existence are to be regarded as essential, significant, important. In this sense, art teaches man how to use his consciousness. [52, emphasis added]
Rand writes, "Without an ultimate goal or end, there can be no lesser goals or means: a series of means going off into an infinite progression toward a nonexistent end is a metaphysical and epistemological impossibility." [55] Aristotle, too, seeks an ultimate end:

Since there are evidently more ends than one, and of these we choose some as means to something else, it is clear that the means are final ends, whereas the supreme good is obviously something final. So if there is only one final end, this will be the good of which we are in search; and if there are more than one, it will be the most final of these. Now, we call an object pursued for its own sake more final than one pursued because of something else, and one which is never chooseable because of another more final than those which are chooseable because of it as well as their own sake; and that which is always chooseable for its own sake and never because of something else we call final without any qualification. Eudaimonia more than anything else is thought to be such an end, because we choose it for itself, and never for any other reason. [56]

The Greek 'eudaimonia' can be translated either 'happiness' or 'flourishing.' Rand (accidentally) adopts this apparent equivocation very deeply, as shall be seen later.

Rand gives three definitions of happiness, of which the first two are: "the state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one's values" [57] and "a state of non-contradictory joy..." [58]

Consider the implications of the idea that happiness is the emotional state of having achieved values, in combination with the earlier proof that only life gives rise to values and the demonstration that our values are affirmed in survival value. Happiness, then, becomes the emotional state of achieving one's biologically grounded survival values. And, since happiness is a state of non-contradictory joy, it must be achieved only through the achievement of real human values. Or, as Rand puts it,

...neither life nor happiness can be achieved by the pursuit of irrational whims. Just as man is free to attempt to survive in any random manner, but will perish unless he lives as his nature requires, so he is free to seek his happiness in any mindless fraud, but the torque of frustration is all he will find, unless he seeks the happiness proper to man. [59]

Rand notes, "the maintenance of life and the pursuit of happiness are not two separate issues. To hold one's life as one's ultimate value, and one's own happiness as one's highest purpose are two aspects of the same achievement. [60] It seems reasonably clear from context that 'ultimate value' and 'highest purpose' mean the same thing. Unless Rand means that life and happiness are synonymous, she is clearly contradictory there.

This problem is solved, however, when we note the last definition of happiness: Happiness is the successful state of life.[61] But this is what is meant by flourishing. For Rand, as for the Aristotle and the Greeks, happiness is a state of full, successful living.[62]

Now, consider this point in the context earlier developed: that a variety of values and a large amount of value is objectively necessary for maximizing the likelihood of long-term survival. A successful state of life is what one has achieved if one has achieved a vast amount of all the material and spiritual values Objectivism grounds. This is a state of happiness or flourishing: eudaimonia. So the claim that eudaimonia (translated as happiness or flourishing) is the end, rather than life, simply sets up a false dichotomy. Happiness or flourishing is a kind of life: that kind which is most likely to preserve itself. This is "mere survival" and also the richest imaginable flourishing telos.[63]

Starting from the simple requirement of biological survival and proceeding to show why Objectivism 'mere survival' is rather expansive and rich, and clarifying Rand's understanding of the key meta-ethical concepts of eudaimonia and life, we have reconciled the necessity for survivalist objective grounding of values with the rich flourish telos.

Hopefully, through these comments, I will have made clear the meaning of the title of this essay and the oath which the heroes of Atlas Shrugged took as they rebelled against alternative moral theories: 'I swear by my life and my love of it, that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine.'

End Notes


2. 'The Objectivist Ethics', paper presented by Ayn Rand at the

3. ibid. 15

4. ibid. 15, quoting from "This is John Galt Speaking", from Atlas Shrugged


7. ibid. 3

8. ibid. 2

9. ibid. 2

10. ibid. 4

11. ibid. 5

12. ibid. 8

13. It should be pointed out that Rand did not, herself, accept (or deny) the theory of evolution (as Nathaniel Branden points out in a taped discussion). Binswanger’s ideas, however, seems to lay the firmest framework for the existence of final causes, so I am strengthening and deepening Rand’s argument with Binswanger’s insights.


15. ibid. 7

16. ibid. 7


20. ibid. 58-59


23. "The Objectivist Ethics" pg 13

24. "Life, Teleology, and Eudaimonia in the Ethics of Ayn Rand" pg 63

25. "The Objectivist Ethics" pg 15

26. ibid 16

27. One might protest that some organisms are designed to pursue values which are clearly contrary to the best interest of the organism. However, outside of the first mutissiate instance of a trait, the successful pursuit of an organism’s natural functions is always good for that organism. To make this clear, let’s take the most damming case imaginable: the male black widow. Clearly, it is not good for the male black widow to be driven by its nature into suicidal mating. However, which is better for the male black widow: to live for a span and then suicide, or never live at all? The only way for a male black widow not to be driven to suicide is for the suicidal trait never to have existed, which means: for male black widows never to have existed. Thus, even the most counter-intuitive instance of natural function being good is shown to be actually good, despite appearances.

28. ibid 16

29. ibid 16-17

30. There is a certain confusion on the notion of value. Value is that which one acts to gain and/or keep, but it is also predetermined and exists whether one acts toward it or not. This seems contradictory, and it is. However, there is a legitimate conceptual division: the valuable is that which one’s nature determines one’s goals to be, the valued is what one’s consciously chosen goals are. If one values things which are not valuable, one will act against one’s nature and suffer the consequences.


32. "The Objectivist Ethics" pg 21

33. from David Kelley’s review of Liberty and Nature in "Liberty" Magazine, July 1992; unfortunately, I don’t have the original. The statement is quoted to Bidnouto, Robert James. "Survive or Flourish?—A Reconciliation." Full Content 6.6 and 6.8 (February and April, 1994) pg 1

34. Peikoff, pg 211

35. "The Objectivist Ethics" pg 25


37. also quoted on pg. 1 of Bidnouto

38. Bidnouto, April 1994, pg 6

39. Merrill, pg 112

40. Smith, Tara. Moral Rights and Political Freedom. Latham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1995. pg 46. I am indebted to Professor Smith for her hospitality in inviting her Recent Ethical Theories class (in which I am a student) to coffee at her apartment and for her willingness to beat the argument that there is no coherent "minimum subsistence" standard into my head for about an hour.

41. Rand, Ayn. "Philosophy: Who Needs It" speech delivered to West
latterly suffering a fate worse than death. Suicide is justified if it
seems that one's condition is both a consistent loss of value, and
without likelihood of reprise. That is, if one expects to lose more than
one gains for the rest of one's life, one may as well stop losing. In
this sense, maximizing (to zero, rather than negative) life is the goal of
suicide.

Other works consulted but not cited
Rand, Ayn. Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology. New York:
Blauwanger, Harry. The Biological Basis of Teleological Concepts.
Beyond True and False: 
A Fundamental Error in Accounts of Identity

Kishan Ballal

In this paper, after showing the sui generis nature of personal identity, I will argue that variations on the memory theory of personal identity (an internal account of personal identity which is the only useful form for identity judgements) ultimately lack support. The first stated objection, of circularity, is both clear and solid; it forces a radical refinement of any possible memory theory. The second objection, of my own formulation, attacks the only approach left to memory theorists. This objection, asserting the invalidity of certain logical distinctions, pulls the ground out from under the famous Cartesian cogito, showing the transcendental ego to be an unstable position for any rational theory. The bulk of this paper lies in explicating this latter objection. Finally, I will suggest that the impossibility of a rational theory of personal identity is not as problematic as others have feared.

Philosophers analyzing the notion of identity have often centered their theories around identity judgements regarding objects. While most terms should be carefully defined, identity is, as Reid put it, "too simple to admit of logical definition" (Reid, 108). For our purposes, it is enough to use the intuitive notion of identity of which "every man of common understands the meaning" (Reid, 108). The bare particulars and others have argued strenuously over the groundings of our identity statements. While these object-centered cases form the bulk of our actual identity judgements ("Is this my car? No, this Ford Escort has racing stripes"), the focus is somewhat misleading. For while we often apply identity conditions to objects in the world, our philosophically pre-reflective notion of identity is based upon personal identity.

To clarify our intuition, just suppose that personal identity is subject to the same kind of checks which we apply to objects. For example, when I see a purse on the ground, I make an initial judgement as to whether it is my purse or not; if I am about to pick it up and I notice that it is overflowing with dollar bills, I quickly realize that I have made a mistake, and that it is not mine. Now what if I had to make the same kind of judgment as to whether or not I am identical with the person who first
saw the purse? As Reid is quick to point out, when I use my faculties of reason, if I am "without the conviction that the ascertained have been seen or done by me, I could have no reason to proceed to the consequent, in any speculation, or in any active project whatsoever" (Raid, 107). This emphasis on the necessity of personal identity was also argued for (in a different manner) by Descartes in his Medita-
tions, as we will see later. For now, merely notice that two qualitative
differences ground the distinction of personal identity from object iden-
tity. Establishment of personal identity is necessarily prior to tax of
object identity, as Reid so correctly notes. Following from this, personal
identity must be internal. If it were external, we would have to decide
which output information is relevant to establishing identity, putting the
cart before the horse.

Dennett has underscored the natural internal of personal identity. He
has written an illustration wherein a person's brain has been removed
and placed in a vat, controlling its body by means of radio waves. Dennett's
brainless protagonist (or is the protagonist actually the bodyless brain?)
has a disorienting epiphany as he sees his brain in a vat and "tried to
project into the tank . . . but I failed to carry off the exercise with any
conviction" (Dennett, 303). While Dennett's account is as much science-
fiction as it is philosophy, I emphatically support his position that the
experience of intuitively following an internal criterion of personal iden-
tity is philosophically grounded. It is impossible to be rationally swayed
to believe in something which entirely contradicts our true internal expe-
rience. As Wittgenstein so clearly realized, it is nonsensical to suppose
that I could have a pain in someone else's leg. In that case, I would want
to say that the other person's leg was somehow my own, as the intuitive
pull of physical pain (analytically, the pain felt only by myself) would
supersede rationalization.

Having seen that a theory of personal identity must be internally
formulated, we must now investigate possible solutions, loosely termed
"memory theories." As I will refer to them here, these theories differ in
specific content, but share the same methodological approach, as inspired
by John Locke's seminal theory of personal identity:

When we see, hear, smell, taste, meditate, or will any-
thing, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to
our present sensations and perceptions: and by this ev-
ey one is to himself that which he calls self, it not be-
ing considered, in this case, whether the same self be
continued in the same or divers substances. For since
consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is
that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and
thereby distinguishing himself from all other think-
ing things: in this alone consists personal identity, i.e.,
the sameness of a rational being; and as far as this con-
sciousness can be extended backwards to any past ac-
tion or thought, so far reaches the identity of that per-
on (Locke, 39).

While lofty in intent, and perhaps appealing on aesthetic grounds, Locke's
view of personal identity is unclear and as such, has yielded various
memory theories. The theories all use internal mental content (in some
form or other) as the criterion for personal identity, but differ widely in
other respects. For the purposes of this paper, we can divide the Lockean
(memory theorist) camp in two: those theories which depend upon sig-
nificant mental content, and those that do not. The former group utilizes
the "empirical ego" and is inspired by the "... past action or thought, so
far reaches the identity of that person..." portion of Locke's view. The
latter group centers on the "transcendental ego" and hinges on the "con-
sciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes ev-
ey one to be what he calls self..." part of Locke's theory.

Those who favor the "empirical ego" generally try to show that
our memory grounds our identity. Many forms of this view exist, but
they generally claim that the "consciousness of what is past does thus
ascertain our personal identity to ourselves" (Buxler, 100). Thus, if Pat in
1995 remembers kissing Chris in 1990, Pat in 1995 is the same person as
that person in 1990. But two problems present themselves. If Pat is
asleep (and dreams of being a medieval peasant), or has amnesia, we
have to say Pat is not that same person who kissed Chris, failing to find
identity where it exists. Conversely, Pat might have an overactive imagi-
nation and claim to have kissed Marilyn Monroe. Then this theory will
tell us we have a case of identity where none exists. In order to correct
the theory which uses the "empirical ego" we must attend to those cases
where memory fails us as a criterion.

The "empirical ego" theory ultimately fails because it must ei-
ther be circular, or it must use external evidence to fix what must be an
internal notion. The theory could try to cover cases of sleep and amnesia
by inserting a clause to say that the person would remember the previous
experience (e. g., if they were woken up; if they never had gotten amne-
sis). But this just begs the question, as Buxler points out. As he says,
consciousness of past events "presupposes, and therefore cannot consti-
tute, personal identity, any more than knowledge... can constitute truth,
which it presupposes." (Buxler, 100). If the theorist then tries to use
It is generally agreed that the concept of immortality is of more than a theoretical nature. However, the question of what constitutes a genuine understanding of immortality is still open to debate.

While some philosophers argue that immortality is a fundamental aspect of human existence, others believe that it is a concept that can only be understood within a religious or spiritual context. The notion of immortality is often associated with the idea of continuance and the belief that the soul or consciousness survives beyond the physical body.

In recent years, advances in biotechnology and neuroscience have raised questions about the possibility of creating immortal beings. Some scientists argue that with the right technological advancements, it may be possible to extend human life indefinitely.

However, the ethical and moral implications of such technologies are complex and require careful consideration. The concept of immortality raises questions about the nature of existence, the value of life, and the relationship between the individual and society.

In conclusion, the concept of immortality remains a topic of fascination and debate. While it may be difficult to fully understand, the exploration of this concept continues to be an important aspect of philosophical inquiry.

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95. The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely praetially, without learning any explicit rules (Wittgenstein, 15e).

We intuitively feel that personal identity is the paradigm for all other judgments of identity, even though personal identity cannot be justified through purely rational means. However, if Wittgenstein is correct (and I think he is), this case is more problematic than the general case in which we act from general rules (using those rules to determine the truth or falsity of things), although those rules lie beyond the range of the provable. We can only realize that our assumptions are both conceptually necessary and without proof. Personal identity could be seen as an assumption, one which we have learned "purely practically" (Wittgenstein, 15e) and use to construct our system of identity judgements. Like the other elements which form our bedrock of assumptions, personal identity is without proof.

Personal identity considerations deserve special consideration: they are both prior to other rational judgments and they are not externally justified (in fact, they are not justified by anything at all). Many theories of the requisite form follow Locke's unclear "memory" theory of personal identity, and can be separated into two kinds. The first kind of theory uses the "empirical ego," or the notion of the self as essentially connected with memory or experience. This view falls prey to the circularity objection of Butler, and falls back upon external criteria before identity has been established. The second kind of theory uses the "transcendental ego," or the notion of the self as devoid of empirical baggage. This view rests upon the same error made by Descartes, the error of introducing a rational distinction into an activity which is inherently non-rational (prior to distinctions). The honest solution is to modify the general view of the later Wittgenstein and realize that we use personal identity as an assumption to construct our system of identity, but that it itself does not admit of check. As Reid recognized two hundred years ago, personal identity has too strong an intuitive pull to be abandoned; if it cannot be analyzed, then we must hold it as "part of our original constitution, or an effect of that constitution produced in a manner unknown to us" (Reid, 107).

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Note: I am especially thankful to Professor Seibt for help in formulating some of the initially vague (but hopefully no longer so!) thoughts which inspired the above paper.
Hegelianism
Its Relation to Kantianism and Its Standing as a Coherent Political Movement

Jessie Burke

Friederich Nietzsche once said, "We Germans are Hegelians even if there never had been any Hegel, insofar as we instinctively attribute a deeper meaning and greater value to becoming and development than to what "is"; we hardly believe in the concept of "being" " (qtd. in Bekker, *Encyclopedia* ix).

Nietzsche perceived Hegelianism as part of the natural evolution of the German Philosophical Thinker. At the core of Hegel’s philosophy is its dialectic: this is the logic by which a thesis and antithesis are synthetically united, i.e. a single coin consisting of 2 sides. Hegel may have considered his philosophy the opposition to all of those that preceded it including Kantianism. However, in this paper, I propose that Hegelianism arose out of Kantianism, espousing many of the same fundamental ideals, and is, therefore, not a refutation of it. It is the logical conclusion of all philosophy as it has progressed throughout history. I also hope to show that Hegelianism, with its necessity for opposition and change, is a coherent political movement. To do this I have divided this paper into two sections. In the first part I will briefly survey some of the key concepts of these two philosophies to show their similarities. Then, in the second part, I will examine some of the Hegelian thinkers demonstrating how their contributions, staying within the spirit of the dialectic, make Hegelianism a coherent political movement.

In order to compare these two philosophies I have selected three major areas addressed by both Kant and Hegel which most clearly show similarities. The categories are: (1) the necessity of education, (2) antagonism within society, (3) the development of history. Certainly there are differences between the philosophies of Kant and Hegel. This I do not dispute. But these differences, which I will discuss very briefly in the first section, can be attributed to their dissimilar rhetoric.

Keep in mind that Kant’s rhetoric is architectural. He set up an argument, and argued each point, leading his reader to the appropriate
conclusions. Between the times Kant and Hegel wrote, the diction shifted. We have seen how Fichte, Jacobi, and Schelling wrote with a specific audience in mind. They took the emphasis away from the structural logic, and concentrated, instead, on the actual transaction with the reader. Emotion became important if not necessary, for the success of the argument. Hegel did not write against the arguments as Kant did. Instead, he attempted to influence the reader to pursue the argument and conclusion on his or her own. This difference in rhetoric is due to the dialectical method of argumentation. If Hegel had put forth a specific conclusion, then immediately that conclusion could have been opposed by its antithesis. Hegel escaped the possible emptiness of this opposition by compelling his audience to feel a personal connection with the subject matter. Consequently, his dictum equates that of a preacher whose words inspire a congregation. This pursuit of the audience’s emotion reconciles some of the differences between Kant and Hegel in the areas of education, social antagonism, and history.

Both Kant and Hegel would agree that education is necessary to fully develop one’s reason. This ideal was incredibly important to Kant’s Critique of Judgment in which he said that only an educated man may have a refined grasp of “esthetic judgment” and, as such, may leave behind all emotional biases (183). Kant added that only when men are educated “can we tell who among the crowd has taste or not” (Judgment 167). In On History Kant imploled men to “have courage to use your own reason,” saying that men must set themselves free and question all input according to reason (263). Hegel agreed, because what constituted the state, he said, “was a matter of trained intelligence, not a matter of the people” (Reason in History 57). Their views on education are similar although they do differ on the treatment of those who are not educated. Kant says they lack discipline; Hegel considers them not yet as “developed.” The point, however, is that education is paramount to individual and societal success and development.

Antagonism within society is another important part of Kantianism and Hegelianism since both see it as an inescapable fact of human existence. Kant said that antagonism existed as a means of social cohesion allowing men to develop. “The means employed by Nature to bring about the development of all capacities of men is their antagonism in society” (Kant, On History 252). Kant says that man’s natural urges to overcome what is not willed from within is what drives “men to new exertions of their forces” (On History 252). As I stated earlier, the core of Hegel’s philosophy is the dialectic, the antagonism, opposition, or conflict between some thesis and antithesis. And only through this antagonism will any truth be known. An excerpt from Hegel’s

Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline regarding the spirit of knowledge summarizes this dialectic. “Spirit has for us nature as it’s presupposition, of which it is truth. In this truth, it’s concept, nature has disappeared; spirit has therefore produced itself as ideas, of which the concept is both object and the subject” (Hegel 200). This concept as both object and subject is truth, and it is truth only through the synthesis of its opposing parts. Thus, both Kantianism and Hegelianism account for antagonism within society. For the former, it is antagonism that drives mankind toward the fulfillment of its natural end. For the latter it is antagonism that drives mankind toward truth.

Both Kant and Hegel also made considerable contributions to the philosophy of history. To Kant, history “can be seen in the large as the realization of Nature’s secret plan to bring forth a perfectly constituted state as the only condition in which the capacities of man can be fully developed” (Kant, On History 258). For Hegel, history is the autobiography of the Spirit, possibly of God. Particular events and people are reduced to a “restless succession of individuals and peoples who exist for a time and then disappear” (Hegel, Reason in History 68). Hegel differs slightly from Kant by denying the importance of the individual, saying, “what counts is the common will” (Hegel, Reason in History 50). However, Kant and Hegel both agree that man is the vehicle through whom history is developing. Chronologically, Kantianism precedes Hegelianism. Therefore, in light of the similarities between them, it is probable that Hegelianism arose from Kantianism and all of philosophy that preceded it, and, as such, is not a refutation of it.

The second question of whether Hegelianism is a coherent po-litical movement now requires me to define a further set of my parameters. By definition, a development is a movement, and it is a political movement when it has practical implications. In this paper I will focus on theological reformation which is just one of many types of political movements. Coherence is synonymous with logical consistency. Therefore, the question becomes whether Hegelianism affects theology, for example, in such a way that is logically consistent with the Hegelian dialectic. With the works of Feuerbach, Marx, Bauer, and Strauss I will show that Hegelianism is, indeed, a coherent political movement. It embodies the spirit of the dialectic, i.e. truth through the synthesis of two opposing ideas in an attempt to rethink theology

Feuerbach saw the division between ordinary and speculative theology as the difference between thinking that either God is out of this world or God is in the world. His goal was to reform theology in such a way that allowed for these two opposing ideas to become synthesized. This is a clear example of the dialectical method which characterized
Feuerbach as a Hegelian. In his Provisional Theses for the Reformation of Philosophy he said, "only where existence unites with essence, the intuition with the thinking, is there alone life and truth" (Feuerbach 164). Feuerbach aimed to unite the nature of God with the actual occurrences of everyday life.

Karl Marx also worked to unite essence with existence, abstract with the concrete in his attempts to make philosophy and theology work in the here-and-now. To Marx, religion "is the sight of the oppressed creature, the heart of the soulless conditions. It is the opiate of the people" (Marx, A Contribution 310). Emancipation, he said, has two parts: the abstract or philosophical, and the material or proletarian (Marx, A Contribution 322). His critique of religion was an attempt to release man from the "chain" so that man will "think, act, as a man who has lost his illusions and regained his reason" (Marx, A Contribution 311). Thus, through his criticisms of the current establishment, Marx set himself up as the antithesis thereby encouraging others to seek the resolution to the contradictions.

Feuerbach and Marx set up their dialectic, allowing the reader to create his or her own synthesis. Bruno Bauer, however, is not so generous. Instead, he made radical suggestions and exaggerations which forced the reader to construct the dialectic as well as the synthesis. Bauer attacked the stereotypes of religion. To do this he emphatically embraced the stereotype, and exaggerated it to the point where any reader would most definitely counter it, creating the antithesis which would serve as the dynamic force toward a synthesis. Bauer wrote, "[Jews] were thus themselves to blame for the oppression they suffered, because they provoked it by their adherence to their law, to their whole way of life" (The Jewish Problem 189). This incitement is clearly Hegelian since it refrains from suggesting a synthesis, and, instead, provokes its audience to become emotionally involved with the cause.

David Strauss used the dialectic in an attempt to consider the life of Jesus in a rational, Hegelian way. This required questioning the authority of the Bible. Regarding biblical events, he wrote, "It is false to say we have a fact to explain; what immediately lies before us is a statement, respecting which we have to discover whether it embody a fact or not" (Strauss, Life 28). He questioned the absolute credibility of Luke in whose Gospel we are reassured only truth and no myth. Strauss claimed, "It is entirely possible that [Luke] would [misrepresent] this way if he did not know it was myth. And, given the spirit of his age, it is a good probability that he did not know his material was myth" (Life 29). With this Strauss dealt a striking blow to the credibility of the Gospels. By ques-

Volume I, 1996 tioning the authenticity of the Bible, Strauss urged his readers to rethink the traditional systems of religious belief.

All four of these Hegelians, Feuerbach, Marx, Bauer, and Strauss, consistently incorporated the spirit of the dialectic into their philosophies in order to rethink and affect theology. Feuerbach and Marx both attempted to unite the nature of God with everyday occurrences. Bauer and Strauss aggressively provoke their readers to rethink traditional value systems. Their efforts demonstrate that, in the realm of theology, Hegelianism is a coherent political movement. Furthermore, the similarities between Hegelianism and Kantianism that were addressed in the first part of this paper challenge any claim that one is a refutation of the other.

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Enola

Christopher Cade Mosley

To think is to revolt; to ponder is to sin.
Predilection presumes no assumption
Else the lonely man will win.
To be in solitude is to accept the fact
That alone a man still bleeds,
And a forest of ember somewhere falls to its knees,
In silence since no one is listening.

Cage me up in an open cell
Fill that the cup runneth over
And spills the souls to a ripen'd Bell.
Feed me the opium of masses . . .
The flesh of me pains with its void
That, weak save the soul should its willing avoid,
Cries, though no one is listening.

There is no denying to the covenant of Truth I revere,
No question confusion I steal.
There is no doubt the lies in mirror aren’t sincere.
Else I have been fed well or the drug I take is real.