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Ex Nihilo

Volume II

Ex Nihilo is a publication which provides a forum to explore philosophy for undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Austin. It is the 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.

This volume contains reflections concerning faith, science, ontology, and society. Since all philosophical thought is not contained in hard essays, several poems and a short story have been included among the works presented. Philosophy is a discipline whose history spans millennia and several continents, possessing a diversity which we hope is reflected in this volume.

The second volume which you hold in your hand or see on your monitor is a testament to the dedication of the University of Texas undergraduates for the pursuit of knowledge. May there be many more in future years. Philosophia Regina!

Christopher Squier
Austin, Texas
Summer 1997

Editor's Foreword
The Algorithm I

Christopher Cade Mosley

The mass is panting, seething amongst the distant roar of the near past,
Waiting and wallowing in a hollow, black following,
Never crossing their thoughts or scut or whim.
They look up towards the dais, raised a hundred feet ...
Stare blankly at the hazed faces they swore they'd never meet,
And stomping to the front, as the drapes around applaud,
A solitary figure took his stand amongst them all.
There was yelling and curse
Within rhythm and verse,
Within translucent words about honors, and nations, and crushing, and patience.
No syllable was split so no ear discerned
The relatively genius words among the rhetoric's turn.
Every withe was willing, surfacing as worms.
The mass shut out the wisp of what was once before
And opened up their hearts to pride as their conscious slammed the door.
Jamesian Faith

Jesse Bailey

(Winner: Matchette Essay Contest, Hibbs Scholarship)

In the end it is our faith and not our logic that decides such questions, and I deny the right of any pretended logic to veto my own faith.” —William James

William James, in his lecture entitled The Will to Believe, outlines a method for determining our beliefs based upon faith in the belief’s validity. In that essay, he states that this method is applicable to determining our beliefs in religious issues. The purpose of the first part of this paper is to outline James’s method, and test its applicability to the religious question. The second part of this paper is going to require a change of gears. The primary purpose of this section will be to determine whether or not the kinds of arguments that James makes for faith, and the kinds of arguments that I use to critique him, are applicable to the real question of faith, as it applies to people’s lives. To do this, we will be taking a step away from James’s views on faith, and take a more general approach to the subject.

The first step that James takes in laying the groundwork for his views on faith is to draw the distinction between live and dead hypotheses. A live hypothesis is one which seems to articulate a real possibility to a person. If a hypothesis does not appear as a possibility to a person, then the hypothesis is dead for that person. A hypothesis is dead for a person if the person sees that the hypothesis contains a fallacy or contradiction, and thus they reject it on rational grounds. It could also be dead if, because a hypothesis is foreign to the thinker, they view it as not being a possibility, even though it is coherent and non-self-contradictory. For example, if I present you with the theory of the “Chicken God”, who created the world in such a way that there would be no evidence for its existence, and I am its only prophet, you would probably consider this a dead hypothesis. Thus, even though the theory may be worked out to the most minute detail, it can still be dead for the thinker because it holds no appeal to the individual.

It is important to note that the liveness or deadness of a hypothesis is dependent upon the perspective of the individual thinker. Whether or not a hypothesis is alive is not a matter merely of what is claimed by the
hypothesis, in the sense of it being a quality inherent in the hypothesis, but rather its likeness stands in relation to the thinker considering the hypothesis. It could be argued that surely some hypotheses are objectively dead, i.e. for all thinkers these hypotheses do not present a real possibility. For example, it would seem that the hypothesis that the world is flat is an objectively dead hypothesis. However, even this hypothesis, which for virtually all educated people is really dead, may present itself as a real possibility to some thinkers. For example, a totally uneducated African tribesman might not only see it as a possibility, but may even think to doubt that it is true. For the tribesman, the hypothesis that the world is flat is certainly live, even though, unknown to the tribesman, it has no possibility of being true.

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just like deciding yes or no, and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth. (Will to Believe, 11)

We will refer to this assertion as Jamesian faith, and let our "passional nature" decide our beliefs in such cases as the method of faith. James sets up this thesis in opposition to what we call the skeptical attitude. He characterizes this attitude with the skeptical statement made by Clifford, "...it is wrong always, everywhere, and for every one, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence." (Will to Believe, 9)

James begins his attack on the position stated by the skeptical statement by drawing the distinction between what he calls the absolutist and empiricist views of truth. The absolutist view states that not only can we attain to knowing truth, but that we know when we have reached truth. The empiricist view states that while we can attain truth, we cannot infallibly know when we have reached truth. James contends that while most of us are absolutists by instinct, we should realize that we are in fact fallible, and adhere to the empiricist view of truth; "...the intellect, even with truth directly in its grasp, may have no infallible signal for knowing whether it be truth or no." (Will to Believe, 16) He states that the enormous vacillations in the theories throughout history which have been labeled "true" only to be later rejected, and the fact that so single standard for deciding objective truth has ever been agreed upon, should lead us to realize that we are fallible. We cannot know for sure when we have reached truth, and thus we should eschew the empiricist view of truth.

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appealing by stating the dilemma in these terms, in the sense that no one wants to admit to believing something out of fear. James goes on to state that in cases where it is possible to avoid error by suspending judgment, we should wait for evidence upon which to make our decision. However, there are certain cases where we are unable, by the nature of the dilemma we face, for such evidence. In cases where the option is forced, and the cost of losing the truth is momentous, we have no choice but to make a decision. James uses moral questions as an example of such a case. He states that in any moral dilemma, we are forced to make a decision, and do not have the luxury of waiting for evidence to arise that will tell us which is the right choice to make. Moreover, in most moral dilemmas, such evidence is not forthcoming, i.e. it is irrational to wait because we have no reason to expect such evidence to arise at all. Therefore, moral cases are an example of genuine options, where we cannot reasonably hold the skeptical attitude, and wait for certainty.

James further states that there are cases where our faith actually helps bring about the fact that we are able to resolve these cases. One example that he uses is interpersonal relationships. For example, if we are to go on a picnic with complete strangers. We cannot know beforehand whether or not we are going to get along with the strangers, but unless we act as if we knew that we would get along, unless we give them the benefit of the doubt, and have faith that things will work out, a positive result cannot occur. If we stand aloof and venture no trust, we are sure to ruin the picnic with our lack of faith. James states that examples such as this prove that there are times in life where our faith is some fact, with sufficient evidence to convince us of its truth, actually helps create that fact. James states that since such cases exist, any position that cuts us off from realizing such truths, such as the skeptical attitude, should be rejected.

James then takes the decisive step in his argument by attempting to apply this method of faith to religious questions. James states that since the method of faith only applies when both alternatives are living, thus for any person who is a hard-line atheist- to whom religion and spirituality offer no appeal- he has no answer. He speaks to "the 'saving remnant' alone", i.e. to those who see religion as a possible truth. James further states that the religious question is a momentous option. The good to be gained- salvation- is vital, and religion is our only, unique opportunity to achieve this good. He then states that the religious question is a forced option. He states that by being skeptical towards the question and suspending judgment, we lose the good as surely as if we had chosen to be atheists. In other words, we either live our lives as if there existed a spiritual reality, or we do not, and the middle is excluded. James thus

states that the religious question is a genuine option, and, in his opinion, unsolvable on purely intellectual grounds, and thus the method of faith is applicable.

James goes on to state that following a logic that excludes belief based upon our faith is shown to be even more illogical when it is considered that to some, the eternal, i.e. religious, aspect of the world is seen as not just an impersonal it, but as a soul, or a personal being of some sort. In this light, James completes the analogy to interpersonal relationships by stating that if, in fact, the eternal aspect of the universe is a personal being, we may lose our opportunity to gain the good that religion offers if we refuse to meet the hypothesis "halfway". In other words, if we attempt to stand aloof and not "encourage our trust in any religious reality until evidence presents itself, we may be cutting ourselves off from the realization of existent, spiritual truths. These truths might, in fact, be made more readily apparent to us if we venture our faith before hand, without waiting for such evidence to come to us. Just as in earthly personal relationships, where we often need to trust others, we will be accepted, without any evidence to that effect, before our acceptance even becomes a possibility.

The first point of contention that I have with James is in the applicability of his method of faith to the actual choice of a religious faith. We shall use for our example the choice of whether or not to be Christian. For the method of faith to be applicable this would need to be a forced option.

The first question to be asked is what to we mean by "being Christian"? The obvious answer is: to follow the dictates of Christianity, as presented in the Bible. This answer is insufficient, in that we do not know which ones we necessarily must follow to be Christian. Surely the different denominations within the kingdom of Christianity : Protestantism, Catholicism, etc., all follow different dictates, yet the followers of each are referred to as Christians. Surely, then it is not necessary to follow all the dictates of the Bible to be considered Christian. But then the problem arises: which dictates must necessarily follow to be Christian? If there is no set rule to answer this question, then the option between following the dictates of the Bible, i.e. being Christian, or not is not a forced question; it could be avoided by following some of the dictates. It can be seen that developing such a decisive set of beliefs is near impossible with any religion, Christianity included. If we tried to narrow it down to one belief which delineated Christians from non-Christians, for example, belief in the divinity of Christ, then perhaps the question would be a forced
option. But the problem that arises is that someone who believes in the
divinity of Christ, yet perhaps feels that the Apostles misrepresented his
teachings, and believes it is really O.K. to rape and murder, would be
considered a Christian under this rule. If you then change the rule to
something like: believes in the divinity of Christ and follows the teachings
of the gospel, you again run into the problem of the indeterminacy of
which teachings are necessary.

Further, even if a set of necessary teachings, which must be
followed to be a Christian, was agreed upon, additional problems would
arise concerning the myriad of interpretations of those teachings. For
example, what is really meant by “divinity.” What we see here is that
there is such a deep ambiguity between what it means to be a follower of
any religion, that the question of whether or not to follow any specific
religion is not clear enough to be a forced option. There will always
be third and fourth and infinite alternatives; the answer can never be a
simple yes or no.

Another problem arises when we consider the practicability of
James’ method of faith. If we are supposed to believe that the purpose
of living our lives as if some religious hypothesis is to “test” that hypothesis,
and hope that by living our lives in that manner we will one day gain
evidence which will prove to us that the religion we have chosen is true,
or accurately reflects reality, then a problem arises. In most religions,
the achievement of enlightenment, at the level where all doubt of the
hypothesis is vanquished, takes years of single-minded devotion, and for
some, never comes at all. If James is preaching that we should have faith
in religious hypotheses as a sort of guess-and-check metaphysics, and
hope that we will happen to choose the correct one, and reach true
enlightenment, I must call the practicability of his method into question.
Being mortal, it is impossible, or at least impractical, for people to just
“try out” religions, on the hope that evidence will present itself along the
way.

Another alternative that James may be presenting is that if living
as if a certain religious hypothesis were true holds out the possibility for
making our lives better, then we have a right to live that life as a value
experiment. In this light, James’ guess-and-check method would be more
practicable, as it would take infinitely less time to determine if a certain
religious path was making your life better than it would to determine if it
were true. However, unless we adhere to the pragmatic view of truth, the
fact that a certain type of religious life makes our lives better has little or
no connection to whether or not it is true. In this light, James’ method of
faith is useless to any seekers of truth, and would be better suited to the
direction of happiness. For those of us who look to religion for truth and
abstracto. James needs to make an argument for why the concept of religion necessarily excludes the agnostic, or the atheistic for that matter, from its scope of protection or favor. It does not seem theoretically impossible for a religion to protect an agnostic or an atheist who lives by certain rules, by a certain code of conduct, even without that individual believing in the religious hypothesis. In this light James cannot make the statement that the agnostic loses the good as surely as the atheist, in fact, he cannot even state that the atheist stands to lose it either. So it seems that the method of faith does not apply to the religious hypothesis, in that this hypothesis seems to be neither necessarily forced nor momentous.

Another question arises when we look at the wording of the statement that James is trying to defend. James states that the method of faith applies to a question that, ... cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds... (TWU to Believe, 11) James does nothing to show why the religious hypothesis cannot, by its nature, be decided on intellectual grounds. In fact, there have been a great many people throughout history who have spent much of their time and energy trying to do just this: determine whether or not a spiritual reality exists on intellectual grounds. This is one of the primary functions of the philosophy of religion.

In conclusion, James’s method of faith fails to prove applicable to religious questions. It seems that neither in issues dealing with specific religions, nor religion as an abstract concept can James’s method of faith be employed.

“Faith is letting go.”

Now for the change of gears. In this section of the paper I want to take a step back, if you will, and examine whether or not the kind of argument that James gives for faith, as outlined in the first section, and the arguments that I make against faith, have any meaning for the people for whom faith is an issue. By this I mean that the question we are to deal with is whether or not people in whose lives faith, specifically religious faith, plays a role heed such arguments, and the type of argumentation employed by philosophers to both attack and defend faith on philosophical grounds.

When I first address this question, the answer seems to be obvious: that the people for whom faith is an issue are not interested in, much less convinced by, such argumentation. This does not mean that such arguments are useless—they may be of interest to some philosophers—but it is to say that such arguments are not to be directed at the very people for whom faith is a real issue. What I mean by a "real issue" is an

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issue that directly affects the living of their lives—the way that they interact with the world. For certain people—religious people—faith is not a concept like "intentionality" or "idealism", which is to be debated independently of life, independently of any application to the debaters’ lives. Rather, faith can only be discussed as it relates to the lives of people, as it functions in their lives.

The religious person chooses to rely on faith, to let that faith determine what they believe to be real, and what they believe to be right. The argumentation that philosophy is so often reduced to by the very philosophers who engage in it seems to have no answer to the individual’s faith. Thus, the gap between the philosophy and the lives of a people, and of a culture, widens. People stop listening to the intricacies of argument, of rationality, and follow instead their own hearts. This choice is itself healthy—it is beneficial to the individual to assert their right to choose, to struggle with the questions of life on their own grounds, and in their own way. It is the affirmation of each person’s right to choose how to believe.

It is the affirmation of the right to choose what is good for ourselves, what is healthy for ourselves, in the face of cold logic telling us—indeed attempting to force us—inconclusive, mechanistic, "nasty, brutish and short" existence to which we are bound. This affirmation of choice, of individuality, is itself healthy, but what does the religious person choose? Faith. To understand what this choice fundamentally entails, to see what births it and what it means for the religious life, we need to examine faith as it acts, in all its variety, in peoples’ lives. It is important to note that faith takes a slightly different form every time it acts in a persons life. In the words of my Christian neighbor, “Faith is a little different for everyone, every time they need it. Just like God takes different forms; sometimes he is my rock, my salvation, my shelter...” Thus, in talking about the different types of faith, we must bear in mind that these are only classes of faith, and that the different instances of faith only generally fit into these classes. Thus, by way of a definition of faith, I can only say that what faith is can only be expressed in how it functions in peoples’ lives. There can be no definition independent of the different roles that faith plays in life, and thus what faith really is will have to be unraveled as we deal with its function.

Faith of Sacrament. When Catholics say their “Hail Mary’s” and go to church every Sunday, or when the Muslim faces East and prays every afternoon, or when the Buddhist monk meditates, they need the Faith of Sacrament. This is the faith that their sacrament is ordained by God, or by reality, such that there is a reason or a purpose to their perseverance. When someone resolutely performs an act, without fail,
again and again every day or every hour, we say that they do it "religiousiy". This expression comes from the fact that the religious man has the Faith of Sacrament. They perform these rituals with such uniting devotion because they have faith that the acts will lead to a vital good-salvation. The religious person needs something, some act or ritual, that makes them feel like they are working towards something; when the Catholic lights caret his or her spirit every day, they really feel like they are working towards salvation. In this sense, ritual is healthy for the religious person; they need ritual for their psychological well-being. Rituals allow them to feel good about themselves; to feel good, happy and new: this can be healthy. And to perform the rituals religiously, they need the Faith of Sacrament.

We see here that rituals can be a healthy practice for the religious person, but this function of faith, if abused, can become unhealthy as well. Sacraments are said to be outward expressions of inward devotions. When people begin to lose their inward passion and devotion to a religion, they first lose their will to perform the duties and sacraments of that religion. When someone claims to be a Christian, yet only goes to church on Easter or Christmas- or maybe Mother’s Day- we say that they are not "devout Christians" literally, they have lost their devotion. We see here the link between the sacraments and the inward passion with which the religious person holds the “truths” preached by their chosen doctrine. The religious person needs the sacraments to measure and test his or her own piety. Too often, though, the sacraments hide inner apathy-the sacraments are upheld only to maintain appearances. It is then that the Faith of Sacrament no longer fuels the ritual, rather embarrassment or fear drive the actions, and only the shell of a religious person is left. Religion must beware that its rituals reveal a true devotion and not merely devotion in name. The way that this is traditionally done is through massochistic sacraments: fasting, sacrifice and the extreme, sacrifice or ritual suicide. The disciple is expected to demonstrate their devotion by hurting and denying themselves in ways that only the truly devout could endure. It is then said that those within a religion who hurt and deny themselves the most are the most respected for their zealfulness. “At least they really believe it. You have to respect that kind of devotion.” The Christian who really gives up, or the Mormon who never even drinks whiskey is seen, even by the non-religious, as respectable for their devotion, while we scoff at those who are Christian in name alone; the hypocrites. It is here that we see the evil in the perversion of the Faith of Sacrament. When the rituals are no longer a healthy expression of devotion; when they are no longer a healthy way for the religious to feel fulfilled in the knowledge that they are actively working towards God, and for God-Jesse Bailey

the rituals lose all value. It becomes another Self-denying, unhealthy aspect of religion, and the most devout are hurt all the more by their devotion. Faith of Trial. What is faith’s purpose, why do the faithful need it? They need the faith to hold out the hope that their struggles will pay off. The hope that the trials of this life, which seem to be never-ending, have a purpose, a telos, which will justify the enduring. Faith of Trial is the need to see purpose in our pain. As we lie in a ditch, bleeding and broken, if we can see our suffering as something, as for some good yet to be reaped, it helps us to struggle on. We need some goal, some reason to survive the trials- but what could this suffering possibly be for? Some of us are able to see the benefit of the suffering within ourselves; we see the suffering as for the betterment of our Selves. We develop, we become stronger, tougher, and the enduring and the struggle itself rewards us in its completion. We find the strength to fight in the fight itself, for the fight itself, and need no Other to justify the struggle. These are those of us who even seek out trials, new ways to test ourselves, and make ourselves stronger- to make our Selves stronger. But the religious person does not value strength the way we do. They have come to resent the strong, and thus strength, and find value in its opposite. “The meek shall inherit the Earth.” Thus, they come to need the Faith of Trial. The religious person sees these trials as being sent by god, to test our faith or to teach us a grave lesson. Often, the reason behind life’s sufferings are simply to too difficult to ascertain, and no silver lining can possibly be seen. It is then that the need for faith comes about. “The Lord works in mysterious ways.” We all need to see purpose to the pain of life, to help us endure. The religious person finds this strength to endure in the Faith of Trial. However, often life seems to be nothing other than suffering. The trials of life come to define that life, and suffering becomes the routine. As the religious attempt to find the purpose for their pain in the Other, they too come to see the purpose of all life in this Other. They begin to seek to justify life with the Other, and the reward which it promises to bring in the afterlife. Their lives become for this Other, for the afterlife, and they begin to deny the value of the life. They seek external justification not just for the pain in this life, but for life itself. This refusal to see life as valuable, to embrace life as valuable leads to a total denial of life. Life becomes a means to an end, and in this means the value of the self gets lost. They lose sight of their own value, as their individuality is embraced by and dissolved into the glory of their duty to god. The Faith of Trial is the blatant desire, no, to justify life with something other than life, which takes the act of valuation itself out of the hands of the individual, and denies the individual the right to choose.
This denial of the value of the individual leads to another need for faith for the religious person: the Faith of Abstinence. There are, for each of us, things from which we must abstain. Things which, because of who we are, post-appear to us as both a logical and psychological well-being: things which stifle and impede our development—things which are detrimental to our health. From these things we must abstain. But why? If we value our Selves, the answer is obvious—but if we put our value elsewhere? What if the value behind what we do, the telos of our actions, is not in the actions themselves nor their effects on our lives? Why, then, must we abstain? Is it clear that we must survive, but why? The religious man, for the answer, is the Faith of Abstinence. The faith that the struggle with temptation will be rewarded, again, by some Other. In the after life the religious person finds these rewards. However, we know that what things should be abstained from differ for different people. Of course, there are some things which everyone should avoid, like drinking, eating, but for the most part, what is an addiction and a vice for one person, is merely harmless indulgence for another. For example, take the case of two people, one who smokes cigarettes and another who drinks alcohol. Can we say, without further evidence, which is damaging themselves more, or even if either are damaging themselves at all? It could be the case that the cigarette smoker is addicted and is developing lung cancer, while the drinker drinks only casually. On the other hand, the drinker could be an alcoholic, actively destroying their life through heavy drinking, while the cigarette smoker smokes only once in a while, and is doing no real damage to their health. The point is that the objects of the addiction or the temptation are not the problem. The problem lies in the user’s attitude towards the object, and the effects that the object has on their life, on their Self. In this light, the attempt to build a code of conduct that is supposedly objective, and not open to the individual’s interpretation, is ill-founded. The inevitable result of such a code is that people who choose to follow that code will find themselves abstaining from things that are harmful to them, and in some cases, even healthy. When a person finds themselves abstaining from things that they know, or at least feel to be harmless, or even beneficial to them, they need the Faith of Abstinence. They need to feel that their struggle with temptation, a prima facie good and misdirected struggle, will find reward in some Other, from some Other, since no such reward can be seen in their lives.

**Faith of Omens**

This is the faith that everyday events have some inherent meaning. Seeing a rainbow after getting out of job interview is an omen that you will get the job, hitting nasty traffic or getting a flat tire on the way to buy something is an omen that you shouldn’t buy it. These omens can also come in more direct forms, as in answers to prayers. This is the faith that certain events in life need to be interpreted. That there is behind these events meaning imposed, not by the Self— that requires no faith—but by some Other. Meaning that is there for us to see, and that the realization of this meaning will help us in our lives in some way—help us better serve god. This requires the faith that there is some being who is imposing meaning, and directing events in our lives in such a way that there is meaning for us to see. It also requires that this being is good—that the meanings to be found are not misleading. Thus, the being must be genuinely interested in directing our lives. By seeing the meaning, i.e. interpreting the events correctly, we can get hints, premonitions, and directions for action— the faith that omens correctly direct our actions.

All types of this faith take the form that the being who is directing these events wants us to depend on him to decide what to do, and how to be, and not to trust or follow our Selves. The Faith of Omens is the paradigm of faith. It tells us that god wants to rule our lives, wants to make our decisions for us, wants us to follow his lead. This is the central issue of faith: **abandonment**.

When we engage in faith, we abandon the responsibility of running our lives, the duty to run our lives. We abandon the driver’s seat, and let God decide what path we should follow. As my neighbor put it, “Faith is letting go.” “Faith is the hardest thing anyone ever had to do. It is letting someone else run your life.” It is exactly that.

Faith of Abstinence is abandonment of our responsibility of deciding for ourselves what is wrong. Clearly, not everyone must abstain from the same things, the same acts; then who is to decide what is right for each individual? It must be the individual—it is the individual’s duty to define what is unhealthy for their Self. We must, each of us, decide for ourselves— for our Selves, for our health—from what we need to abstain.

1 It might be objected that not all faith necessarily involves the abandonment of this duty. A person could engage in faith in some doctrine which dictates that they rely upon themselves, and not look to an Other to decide, in any grand sense, what to do. In response, such a faith would, obviously, and in a very important way, be different from the faith with which I am dealing in this paper. An example of such a faith can be seen in the works of Kierkegaard, who will be discussed a little more fully later. For example, in his journals. When I really think it is not in my mind what I am to do, nor what I am to know, ... The thing is: it is not in my mind, nor what I am to do. In other words, the way to determine what God wants me to do is to look within ourselves, to allow the Self its expression, and thus determine what God wishes for us. This is obviously radically different from the type of faith addressed by this paper, and tragicory, all too uncommon. The existence of such faith, however, does nothing to diminish the applicability of the issues raised in this essay to the vastly more prevalent faith to be found today.
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Faith of Sacrament is the abandonment of our responsibility to decide what we should do. Every religion has positive dictates; they tell the disciple how to pray, when to rest, when to work, when to be humble, and when to be charitable. How do I live? What do I do, what do I believe is right? How do I know what is right? These are the central questions of life, and the religious person abandons the duty to answer them—abandons this duty with the Faith of Sacrament. They give it, they pray every night, they do charitable work but not for the needy. Then for what? For God? Does God really need our help? They act in expectation of reward. They act for themselves—never for their Selves. Religion is a manual for life. “Live this way, and you’ll go to heaven!” In this light, all action becomes sacramental. All action is for the Other, the afterlife.

It becomes apparent here that the distinctions between the different classes of faith are becoming fuzzy, and we see the idea which links the different classes of faith to one concept—abandonelement. The reason that these different classes of faith, these different functions of faith, begin to seem indistinct is that they are just that—classes of functions of faith. The central issue of abandonment is seen to be present in all of these instances of faith, and we can begin to form a definition, I think a very illustrative definition, of the term around this abandonment.

Why do religious people do what they do in their lives, with their lives? For the afterlife. The deeds of life are for anything other than life. This is the most direct and unhealthy form of life-denial that faith takes. The Faith of Sacrament denies that our acts, our thoughts and our deeds have any meaning for our lives. We can never act to better our Selves, or better our position—the motivation of every act of the faithful is reward in the afterlife.

We can now begin to see why religious people do not accept arguments, or other subordinate logic and reason to their faith. The common thread that runs through the issue of faith is abandonment. But, what is it that is being abandoned? We know that they abandon the right, the responsibility, to run their own lives, and to decide who they want to be, but what motivates this release? Ironically, it is a lack of faith.

A lack of faith in their Selves. What the religious person fundamentally denies when they abandon responsibility for their life is their own ability to run their life. What they claim that the religious make is, as humans, i.e. mere mortals, we are incapable of determining what is right or wrong for ourselves. They deny the ability of the human mind to choose the right path in life, and they deny the ability to discover truths about the world.2

Perhaps one would want to argue here that the religious person does in fact choose the religion they do to follow, and thus they do choose their own path in life. However, we need to remain clear on the issue of choice, and what the religious person is choosing. As stated earlier, the impulse of the religious person to choose their own way of looking at

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Jesse Bailey

When a person turns to a prophet or a religious text, they turn to it looking for answers. They feel incapable of answering the secrets of life, and they create the illusion that the only way to answer these questions is by abandoning the rational search for truth, and accepting, with infinite faith, what religion tells them is true, is right, and is good. To quote Kierkegaard, “...and thus it is also one proves God’s existence by worship...not by proofs.”3 They no longer heed such arguments, because they no longer heed the rationality, and manufactured logic, that faith argumentation...

the world, and to act subordinate that right to choose to any sort of eudaimonial criteria for truth, in self-hatred. We need to keep in mind, however, that while that initial affirmation of choice is healthy, the seed—on which a religious person, who chooses the type of faith outlined here, comes to it not healthy. In the first, their affirmation of the individual’s choice denies the validity of the individual, in a sense, they choose to despise. They choose a prophet or a text to tell them how to live their lives, and it is the living of life which is in-responsibility of the individual, and any choice which denies that duty is not a choice of a path of life, in the sense of a choice of how to live. Rather, it is the choice of who—other than themselves—have to rely on to tell them how to live. It is the standard of choice that is different; do we choose how to live, or do we choose which commandment, which decision of a way to live is right, and by what standards do we choose this doctrine by our own, or our parents, or our culture?

This is a subtle, but crucial distinction, and I feel that it warrants further examination elsewhere.

It is important that I set aside this space to talk a little about Kierkegaard’s particular version of faith, and its relation to this essay. In short, I do not intend for the arguments made in this essay to apply to Kierkegaard’s theory at all. The type of faith that Kierkegaard espouses is radically different from the types with which I deal in this essay. This quote was chosen because it expresses, more eloquently than I could, the abandonment of reason that all faith entails, and also to allow me the excuse to add this section to deal with Kierkegaard, in hopes that my theories would not seem to address his. The unhealthy aspects that come with the abandonment do not seem to apply to Kierkegaard’s faith. However, it is pertinent for me even to make that statement, as I am, in honesty, do not yet fully understand what Kierkegaard’s version of faith is. In any case, it would be impossible, and indeed would do the depth and genius of his writing a great disservice, to attempt to deal with his version of faith at the same time as common faith is discussed. It is a shame that they must be labeled “faith.” Kierkegaard himself felt that the type of faith with which I deal in this essay was not to be described by “faith,” but no one seemed to listen, and neither the term nor the institution of faith have been reformed since the time of his writing—they may have even gotten worse.

One means that Kierkegaard’s faith does not fit the mold that I have outlined here is that his version, instead of denying individuality, celebrates it. For example, in Fear and Trembling, Kierkegaard states, “If faith is in just this paradox, that the single individual is higher than the universal...” 4

Kierkegaard’s version of faith also differs from common faith in that the object of one’s faith, i.e. the hope for release, are not to be found in some Other above, like to the very life which common faith denies. When talking, ever-present, about faith, “His faith was not that he should be happy sometimes in the hereafter, but that he should find blessed happiness here in this world.” In stead of being one act of life-denial, Kierkegaard gives it a faith for life, and for the individual.

The most marked difference that, to my mind, separates Kierkegaard from the majority of the faithful, is his commitment that faith only comes in the face of uncertainty.
Christopher Furlong

Error In Descartes

Christopher Furlong

(Winner: Hibbs Scholarship)

At the end of Meditation III, Descartes seems to have solved the problem of knowledge. He has removed the possibility of doubt by proving the existence of a perfect God who is unwilling to deceive. If God will not deceive me then I can never be wrong and would therefore have no reason to doubt my judgments. Unfortunately, however, the fact of the matter is that I do err and this error must be accounted for. A further consideration is that if I do err, then how do I distinguish between the causes of error and of truth? This distinction is vital to the validity of science since if we do not know why we are right at one time, and wrong at another, then science becomes a guessing game. The project of the Fourth Meditation then is twofold. First, Descartes must show how the existence of error is possible without God being its cause. Second, in order to validate science, he must explain how error comes about, or what causes it.

Descartes' solution to the problem is presented in two parts. In the first part he provides a metaphysical framework for explaining the possibility of error, and the second part deals with how error actually comes about. Both parts of the solution are vital since neither one can solve the problem on its own. In the first part, Descartes supposes a metaphysical hierarchy where being and non-being are opposed as veracity and deception.

Thus insofar as I have been created by the supreme being, there is nothing in me by means of which I might be deceived or be led into error, but insofar as I participate in nothingness or non-being, that is, insofar as I am not the supreme being and lack a great many things, it is not surprising that I make mistakes.7

What he seems to be saying is that error should not be conceived as having a positive existence, but that it is merely a negation of truth. Descartes has been forced into this solution because from the Third Meditation it has been established that all things which have a positive existence are caused by God (proof from contingency). So if error were positively conceived, then God would have to have been its cause even if only
indirectly. Clearly this cannot be the case since God is perfect and would not cause an imperfection; so Descartes must conceive of error as non-being. What it means for error to be a negation of truth is that God has given us a faculty for making true judgments, and not one for making false judgments. ...it just so happens that I make mistakes because the faculty of judging the truth, which I get from God, is not, in my case, infinite. So God has given us a finite faculty for discerning the truth. Everything it discerns must have positive existence since it can only discern things that exist. Conversely, what cannot be discerned by this faculty must not exist, therefore error cannot exist positively.

There is an important distinction to be made here. Descartes does not think of error as a privation of truth, but merely as a negation of it.

...it must not be said that, strictly speaking, I am deprived of these ideas but only that I lack them in a negative sense. This is because I cannot adduce an argument to prove that God ought to have given me a greater faculty of knowing than he did.

This is an important distinction because if God ought to have given us an infinite faculty for discerning truth and did not, then he would be responsible for error. According to Descartes, however, God is in no way compelled to give us an infinite faculty, and therefore any error that comes from our finite faculty is not attributable to God.

It seems, however, that Descartes employs an unjustified conceptual scheme; unjustified in the sense that it doesn't necessarily correspond to reality. He claims that veracity exists and that error is merely a negation of it. This choice appears groundless. If the claim is that veracity exists because we have postulated that God gave us a faculty for discerning truth, then we would simply postulate the reverse: That God has given us a faculty for discerning error, and that truth is the negation of error? Descartes would answer that if we were to postulate the reverse, then God would necessarily be the cause of error which is an impossibility. What is being done, is trying to reconcile the notion of error with his conclusions from the previous meditations. But to posit a conceptual scheme (error "participates in non-being") in order to justify a previously supposed truth (God is not a deceiver) does not necessitate its (the scheme's) truth. For example, in order to explain gravity, physicists posit the existence of gravitons. Theoretically, gravitons are the particles which "carry" the force of gravity. Without them, gravity would simply be action at a distance, which is a conceptual impossibility. Supposing

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that God is not a deceiver forces us to conclude that error has no positive existence just as supposing the theory of gravitation forces us to conclude that gravitons exist. But this clearly does not necessitate their existence or the truth (accuracy) of Descartes' conception of error.

Moreover, Descartes metaphysical hierarchy is unjustified. What exactly does it mean to "participate in non-being"? It is very convenient for Descartes to say that error has no positive existence and is therefore not caused by God, but he does not really explain what that means. He says that error has no positive existence because since God has not given us a faculty for discerning error, then teleologically, we cannot positively discern it. So what we think of as error cannot actually exist, but must be a mere negation of truth. As nonsensical as this may sound, there is a way to make sense of Descartes' scheme by making full use of the charity principle. We could suppose that Descartes does not mean to say that false propositions don't exist, since they clearly do, but that he means that a false proposition simply has no truth-maker associated with it. If 'x' is a proposition which corresponds to facts (a true proposition), then there is a property T (truth) which is predicated to 'x'. If the contrary were the case: If 'y' were a proposition that did not correspond to facts, then there would be no property T (error) which would be predicated to 'y' since error cannot have any positive existence. We would judge the proposition 'y' to be false simply because it lacks the property T.

Under this conception, however, one could never affirmatively say that a proposition is false, merely that it is not true. This may smell of sophistry, but there is a distinction. If someone told me that 5+7=13, I would positively affirm that the proposition is false. I would discern it as false in the same way that I would discern the proposition 5+7=12 as true. In each case, I judge the proposition by discerning a property of it (either T or E). If the proposition corresponds to my knowledge of arithmetic, then it possesses T and is true; on the other hand, if it is contrary to my knowledge, then it possesses E and is false. Under Descartes' metaphysical system, he is forced to say that propositions possess T or -T exclusively. Though it is a tautology to assert that a proposition 'x' must be predicated by T or -T, it is not obvious why -T must lack positive existence. Could we not simply define -T to be E and agree with Descartes that a proposition must be predicated by T or -T? The answer is clearly no, since Descartes does not conceive of -T as being a property, but merely the negation of the property T. Descartes is effectively making a distinction between the act of discerning 5+7=12 as true and of discerning 5+7=13 as false. But this is radically counter-intuitive, though the properties discerned may be different, the act of discerning them is intuitively the same. In saying that my reaction to these two propositions
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His final stipulation, though, seems rather problematic. If one is faced with the proposition 'all triangles have three sides,' he is, in a sense, compelled by the light of nature, to affirm it. One could mount a negation of it but he could not actually negate it and therefore his faculty of willing is not infinite. Descartes tries to sidestep this issue by stating that:

Were I always to see clearly what is true and good, I would never deliberate about what is to be judged or chosen. In that event, although I would be entirely free, I could never be indifferent.

Effectively what he is saying is that we are always free to will anything, but in some instances (when the truth or falsity of the matter is plainly evident) we are not indifferent. This is another instance of Descartes playing with words. He can call it what he may, but no one can deny a self-evident proposition, and therefore in those cases we would not be free and our will would not be infinite. On the same point, Descartes claims that:

In order to be free I need not be capable of being moved in each direction: on the contrary, the more I am inclined toward one direction... the more freely do I choose that direction.

This is hardly illuminating to Descartes' view because it is blatantly contrary to common sense. In the example of the triangle, if I am compelled to affirm the proposition then I am not free to negate it. I may want to affirm it, in which case negating it would be irrelevant (although one desire to have a triangle have 4 sides is nonsensical — what would it mean for somebody to want a triangle to have three sides?), and this may be what Descartes has in mind, but the fact still remains that even if I wanted to deny it, I could not do so, and therefore our will is not infinite.

But leaving this aside, we move on to Descartes' formulation of the solution. He states that the power of willing by itself is not the cause of error. And within his conceptual scheme, it clearly cannot be. Though the two parts of the solution are somewhat independent they do work together and can therefore not contradict each other. The metaphysical solution of the existence of error conceived of error as a negation of truth, and since it exists only as a negation of something with positive existence, then it cannot have a positive cause. If error does not exist (in the strong sense of the word) then it cannot have a real cause; except for God of course, but God would not cause error since it is an imperfection. Nor could error be caused by my faculty of understanding since it is a God-

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are, in some way, fundamentally different, Descartes seems to be making an unqualified distinction to support his project.

So the first part of the solution has been laid out. Descartes has explained how error can exist (as a negation or lack of truth) and how God is not responsible for it. I have argued that the metaphysical scheme with which he justifies this is based on an unqualified distinction necessitated by previous concessions on his part. Moreover, even if the distinction were intuitively true, there is still no guarantee of certainty since Descartes is only postulating the nature of error to justify his beliefs (induction cannot yield absolutely certain results). But leaving these objections aside, now that he believes he has shown how the existence of error is possible and how God is not its cause, what is left is to be shown is how error comes about.

Descartes develops the second part of the solution by first discussing freedom and the faculty of willing. He begins by claiming that our faculty of understanding is limited because clearly, we cannot understand everything. This is evident from the simple fact that error exists. Though, in the Fourth Meditation, Descartes does not precisely define intellect it seems safe to assume that, by it, he means seeing things by the light of nature. Therefore if our powers of intellect were indefinite then the light of nature would make all truth evident to us and consequently we would never err. He then claims that our power of willing is infinite, and that it is the only one of our faculties which is unlimited. Conventionally though, one would be tempted to say that I am not able to will anything. Clearly, I can not will the earth to stop rotating around its axis because as much as I will it, it will not come true. In the Cartesian sense, though, willing does not imply an actual effect, or a fulfillment of the will. According to Descartes I certainly can will the earth to stop rotating; the fact that it does not stop is irrelevant, because I am free to want it to stop and that is all that is meant by "willing." Important to note here, is the fact that freedom of the will is necessary for an infinite will. If I am predetermined to choose something, then I am not free to choose it or to deny it, and therefore I cannot will its affirmation or negation.

Willing is exactly a matter of being able to do or not to do the same thing, that is, of being able to affirm or deny, to pursue or to shun; or better still, the will consists solely in the fact that when something is proposed to us by our intellect either to affirm or deny, to pursue or to shun, we are moved in such a way that we sense that we are determined to it by no external force.
This discussion is of vital importance to Descartes’ project of securing a foundation of knowledge for science. Without knowing how to avoid error, the knowledge of what causes it is somewhat irrelevant. And Descartes’ suggestion for avoiding error accords perfectly with his view of the boundaries of science discussed in the Sixth Meditation, and in parts five and six of the Discourse on Method. In order to avoid error, science should concern itself with clear and distinct ideas (primary qualities) and not obscure and confused ones (secondary qualities). Of course the set of all clear and distinct things is not limited to the set of things that should be dealt with by science. The existence of God, for example, is clear and distinct, but according to Descartes it is outside of the realm of science. But the fact remains that the reason for delimiting the boundaries of knowledge as such was to limit, protect, and validate science.

The Fourth Meditation then, though it may seem to be a digression, is of vital importance to the progression of the Meditations. Without an account of error, the Cartesian scheme would be incoherent since the existence of error would be a counter-example to Descartes’ claims. Moreover, science would be impossible. If scientists did not know what the cause of error was, how to avoid it, or even that it was possible, then there would be no way of evaluating scientific theories.

As has been mentioned, the solution to the problem of error is presented in two parts. The first part deals with the existence of error and the improbability of God being its cause. The second part explains the cause of error which then allows Descartes to discuss how to avoid error.

Concerning the validity of the solution, I believe Descartes coerced himself into the first solution of postulating an unqualified distinction, and therefore compromising the validity of his entire solution. The second solution, though logically sound, rests on a false premise, namely that our wills are infinite. Though this objection can be easily matched, the fact that the metaphysical solution is questionably grounded call this
portion of the argument into question as well. But if we grant Descartes
his conclusions, then his project for avoiding error is clearly valid. If in
fact error is caused by the overextension of the will with respect to the
understanding (if error, then overextensions of the will), then by simply
not allowing the overextension would negate the possibility of error
(~overextensions, therefore, ~error).

End Notes

1 Meditations on First Philosophy, AT 54
2 Ibid, AT 54
3 Ibid, AT 56
4 Ibid, AT 57
5 Ibid, AT 58
6 Ibid, AT 57-58
7 Ibid, AT 38
8 Ibid, AT 61

Why Eternal Recurrence?

Karen Sokol

(Winner: Matchette Essay Contest)

"I myself have now slain all gods in the fourth act, for the sake
of morality. Now, what is to become of the fifth act?" (The Gay Science,
135). Although Nietzsche questions what is to be done after the death of
"all gods," he does not question that there is something to be done; there
will be a fifth act. He seems to offer previews of this concluding
performance in the rest of The Gay Science, which previews are perhaps
best summarized in section 299: "we want to be poets of our life—first of
all in the smallest, most everyday matters." He ends the book by pointing
his reader to Zarathustra’s story, in which the star of the fifth act is revealed:
 eternal recurrence. However, the notion of eternal recurrence in Thus
Spoke Zarathustra is often ambiguous, and at times it even seems to drawn
out the poetry of “everyday matters.” Why does Nietzsche need a fifth
act in the first place, and why is he not satisfied with merely shifting
significance from gods of the heavenly realm to everything in this world,
including everyday matters? Why eternal recurrence?

Although Nietzsche develops the concept of eternal recurrence in
Thus Spoke Zarathustra, he introduces it in section 341 of The Gay
Science. The concept as it is rendered in the latter is compatible with
embracing this world and its everyday matters just as they were left after
the death of God. In fact, the event described in this section could take
place at the very time when one is mourning, for a demon appears during
one’s “loneliest loneliness.” In Zarathustra, however, the concept of
eternal recurrence often appears to be an attempt to transfer ideas and
feelings that had been associated with the godly realm to the earth, thereby
facilitating the acceptance of God’s death and its consequence that the
earth is all there is.

The demon in section 341 bears the news that “This life as you
now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and
innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every
pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh and everything
unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you..." The
emphasis, however, is not on the demon’s words as a description of time
and metaphysical reality. What is important is how one, who now is in a
moment of anguish and who most likely thus far in life has experienced many more, takes the demon’s words: “Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the day you were born? Or is something greater than that?”. The presence of a demon and the idea of the moment of one’s “lowest loneliness” strongly suggest this is an individual experience. Nietzsche asks his reader to consider the moment that only she knows, and to respond to the demon.

The demon episode is a thought experiment, a test of whether or not one gives every part of earthly life an “ultimate confirmation and seal.” As a result, the idea is never expounded in such a straightforward manner as it is in the demon passage of The Gay Science. However, the mystical dreams and visions, which are the most common media through which Nietzsche communicates the idea in Zarathustra, do provide insight into eternal recurrence conceived as a metaphysical reality. As such, it becomes part of life that must be affirmed, rather than a way of affirming life.

The difference between affirming life by accepting eternal recurrence and affirming eternal recurrence as the structure of life may be subtle, and one may even argue that there is no difference. The contrast can perhaps be sharpened by a clarification of two paths, one corresponding to the thought experiment offered by the demon and the other to the metaphysical reality with which Zarathustra struggles. Both paths begin at the death of God. The demon path veers immediately away from God, the idea of an afterlife and the meaning with which both inhere life and leads toward the earth on its own terms. The idea of eternal recurrence tussles not only whether one accepts these terms, but also whether one sees them with a passion. The turn which Zarathustra’s path makes away from the godly realm is not quite as sharp as that of the demon’s path, for it brings a characteristic of the other world into this world before the question of the affirmation of this world is asked. That characteristic is eternity, and it saves godless humans from having to accept one of the most disturbing possibilities that must be faced if earthly characteristics are the only characteristics. One lives and dies, and there is nothing else.

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The demon version of eternal recurrence does not offer certainty that one’s life will recur forever; it offers merely a way to ask oneself if one places significance on this life with the same fervor and ardor as to how he spoke that? Or, would you explain, “You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine?” The presence of a demon and the idea of the moment of one’s “lowest loneliness” strongly suggest this is an individual experience. Nietzsche asks his reader to consider the moment that only she knows, and to respond to the demon.

The demon episode is a thought experiment, a test of whether or not one gives every part of earthly life an “ultimate confirmation and seal.” (The Gay Science, 341) What makes life worth affirming is not the fact that it is eternal in the sense that it will recur eternally; one asserts its worth to oneself by accepting it as completely as possible, that is, in its entirety “innumerable times.” In Zarathustra, this distinction becomes blurred.

Zarathustra is angi-st ridden over that which his role as the teacher of the idea of eternal recurrence demands of him: his complete acceptance of eternal recurrence. As a result, the idea is never expounded in such a straightforward manner as it is in the demon passage of The Gay Science. However, the mystical dreams and visions, which are the most common media through which Nietzsche communicates the idea in Zarathustra, do provide insight into eternal recurrence conceived as a metaphysical reality. As such, it becomes part of life that must be affirmed, rather than a way of affirming life.

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applies his claims to the moments he and the dwarf are experiencing at the time: "And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together...of eternal things...must not all of us have been there before? And...must we not eternally return?" The spirit of gravity need not weigh humans down after God’s death because eternal recurrence gives every moment on earth meaning. Rather than seeing each moment as insignificant because it is part of one’s journey into eternal afterlife, one can see each moment as significant because it is itself eternal.

When the idea of eternal recurrence is interpreted in this way, it can be understood as providing an essentially non-earthly meaning for life on earth. How is it, then, different from the religious doctrines which had supposedly died with God and which Nietzsche deemed as the product of diseases? Nietzsche suggests in *The Gay Science* that God’s death will allow humans to celebrate the religion of the earth and to see that the divinity that humans had attributed to God originated from within themselves. Glorification of the earth and one’s life rather than of God and the afterlife is essentially what Nietzsche wants eternal recurrence to accomplish, and this glorification in itself is not what resembles the religious doctrines that Nietzsche so despises. However, seeking a justification of earthly life outside of earthly life does, and a justification of that sort is what eternal recurrence often appears to be in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

A great part of the reason Zarathustra finds eternal recurrence disturbing is that he knows that in accepting it, he must also accept that “the small man recurs eternally.” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 331) However, some of his misgivings result from his fears that his teachings could be used for purposes antithetical to his own. At the beginning of the Second Part, Zarathustra ruckles down his mountain to redeem his teachings, which, as has been revealed to him in a dream, are being distorted. (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 195) His reaction to what he learns in his dream provides further evidence that the eternal recurrence of Zarathustra is more than a thought experiment. If Zarathustra saw eternal recurrence as a thought experiment, there would be nothing to defend. And, as was discussed above, Zarathustra does come to its defense with a proof of its necessity. In explaining the meaning of the gateway and paths to the dwarf, Zarathustra teaches him the concept of eternal recurrence. If the dwarf responded in the same way to the demon of *The Gay Science* as he does to Zarathustra, he would have denied life, but he would not have disdained anything.

Nietzsche ultimately wants eternal recurrence to give resonance to the idea that God was a mere “conjecture” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 197) and therefore that the earth always was and always will be all there is. Nothing more than this can be derived from the demon passage. More can, however, be derived from Zarathustra’s teaching; namely that eternal recurrence is the perspective from which life must be viewed. There is a place in the text in which Nietzsche expresses doubt that this kind of certainty is possible. When Zarathustra is speaking with “life” in the second section of “The Other Dancing Song,” she expresses sadness over his desire to die soon. He acknowledges this desire, and then qualifies it with “but you also know...” Although the rest of his sentence is hidden from the reader, the context strongly implies that Zarathustra reassures her that he will return. Assuming this is what he whispers into life’s ear, her response is intriguing: “You know that, O Zarathustra? Nobody knows that.”

Nietzsche’s “fifth act” does not require eternal recurrence—either conceived as a thought experiment or as a metaphysical statement—to assert that the earth is all there is nor to locate the divine in human life. Ultimately, in fact, the way in which Zarathustra portrays eternal recurrence diminishes both of these assertions. The earth is all there is over and over again, and this eternity is in itself a kind of divinity. What if the demon’s news had been that there is nothing outside of this life? Although this can be inferred from the idea of eternal recurrence, that there is nothing outside of this life does not imply eternal recurrence. Suppose the demon’s words are the only thing about the passage that changes. The two possible reactions, condemning or praising the demon, can still be understood as a denial or as “the ultimate eternal confirmation and seal.” If one praises the demon that declares that this life encompasses everything there is and everything there will be, one still gives life “eternal” confirmation because one’s life becomes one’s eternity—whether it recurs or not is irrelevant.

It may at first appear as if during one’s “loneless loneliness” one would prefer the demon to say that there was nothing else other than this life than to declare that life will eternally recur, and therefore a confirmation of the latter would be the “ultimate.” However, the two actually are different in only one respect, and this difference shows that its fact the confirmation of the former is the “ultimate.” After both of these declarations by the demon, one will live knowing there is nothing outside of this life. However, the declaration of eternal recurrence provides something that the other declaration does not: the idea of eternity. Is this idea so different from the “conjecture” of God? One’s initial response may be that yes, the concept of eternal recurrence is quite different from that of God. However, what Nietzsche found disagreeable was not the idea of God itself (indeed, he encourages projecting this idea back onto its origins: humankind.), but the destructive effect it had on the
relationships between humans and themselves as physical beings and between humans and the earth. The possible effects of the ideas of God and of eternal recurrence on these relationships is where their similarity lies. Like the idea of God, the idea of eternal recurrence provides a way for people to look beyond earthly life.

As discussed previously, the idea of eternal recurrence as it is expressed in the demon passage is not a metaphysical reality, but a thought experiment which lends itself to the consideration of one's disposition toward this life. Thus, the demon’s eternal recurrence cannot act as a substitute for the idea of God. It is not until the "fifth act" of the tragedy of God’s death, when Zarathustra’s teachings introduce the element of certainty into the idea of eternal recurrence, that it can be compared to the idea of God.

Nietzsche frequently weaves hints of the figure of Jesus into the character of Zarathustra, and one parallel between the two that elucidates the comparison between the idea of eternal recurrence and that of God is the doctrinal nature taken on by the ideas when they are taught. (It should be noted here that the difference being examined is between the eternal recurrence of the demon passage and that of the character of Zarathustra, not necessarily Nietzsche.) At the beginning of the book, Zarathustra declares that he has decided to leave his mountain home: "Behold...Zarathustra wants to become man again." (122). Jesus "became man" only once, but the significance here is that Zarathustra separates himself from man, not only physically in the solitude of his mountain, but also somehow in his very state of being, for he becomes man. Since he often speaks of the transition from humans to Übermenschen, but never teaches that he is himself an Übermenschen, his becoming a Mensch cannot imply that he began as an Übermenschen. Also, since the term Übermenschen should be understood not only as referring to someone who is "over" man, but also as referring to a man who can be described as being "over," Zarathustra in some sense distinguishes himself from Übermenschen when he distinguishes himself from man. After he comes down the mountain, he speaks from a strikingly god-like point of view. He knows about both men and übermen and thereby appears "over" both of them. Although he condemns evaluation in moral terms, he clearly communicates that endeavoring to achieve the transition from man to überman is the "right" way to live. In the prologue to Zarathustra’s notebooks, "I love him who works and invents to build a house for the overman and to prepare earth, animal, and plant for him..." (127) These considerations demonstrate that something other than Übermenschenheit explains Zarathustra’s separation of himself from humans.

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The most logical distinguishing characteristic is Zarathustra’s status as a teacher and his "overflowing wisdom" that he is compelled to descend his mountain in order to impart to humans. This wisdom is that the structure of life is one of eternal recurrence; it is the fifth act that can somehow make the death of God and the predictions of the Übermenschen come together for humans. Zarathustra is not another demon. Eternal recurrence is not something one posses in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, it is something in which one believes. The question is not whether one embraces all of life as much as whether one embraces eternity. After much doubt and torment over his own acceptance of eternal recurrence, he finally answers "Yes!" in "The Yes and Amen Song" at the end of the Third Part. It is not life which he affirms, however, but eternity: "For I love you, O eternity!"

It is not by any means clear that Nietzsche’s idea of eternal recurrence is the same as the one of Zarathustra’s teachings. In fact, this "fifth act" can be understood as an exploration of one way of seeing the world after God’s death, rather than as an end to the tragedy begun in The Gay Science. The character of Zarathustra may have been Nietzsche’s elaboration on one possible consequence of the concept introduced by the demon. What if someone appeared and taught this concept to people, similar to the way in which Jesus brought people the "Good News"? Perhaps, then, there is a sense in which Zarathustra is also a thought experiment.
that wants to overflow, that the water may flow from it golden and carry everywhere the reflection of your delight. Behold, this cup wants to become empty again." (122) The water, Zarathustrua's overflowing wisdom, carries "the reflection" of this "great star." In another passage, Zarathustrua offers his listeners a maxim which is enclosed in quotes within Zarathustrua's speech, as if he were relating someone else's words: "And whoever cannot bless should learn to curse..." He then says that "this bright doctrine fell to me from a bright heaven; this star stands in my heaven even in black nights." (277). The last part of his statement, that the star endures, "even in black nights," encapsulates what life on earth lacks: permanence. A promise of permanence at some point in the future was provided by the idea of God, and the idea of eternal recurrence, conceived as a metaphysical reality, provides the sense of permanence at every moment in one's life. The idea of God gave life on earth meaning because it ensured that all these moments would not be wasted, that they would not disappear into nothingness because they were being lived in order to achieve a sacred, enduring existence. Although Zarathustrua's eternal recurrence (rather than the demon's) does not include another existence, it does include the same one eternally. No moment disappears, and the living of each moment has meaning because one will see it again.

Nietzsche's last poem in the Prelude in German Rhymes of The Gay Science, "Star Morals" offers insight into the way in which stars, like the idea of God, are at once divorced from and connected to humans and their world, thereby offering them access to meaning that is not of the earth:

Called a star's orbit to pursue,
What is the darkness, star, to you?
Roll on in this, reverse this age—
Its misery far from you and sewage.

Let farthest world your light secure,
Pity is sin you must abjure.
But one command is yours: be pure!

The star is unhindered by fears of darkness that those on earth experience and untouched by their misery and pain, yet at the same time the star need not be completely "strange" to human. In German, the first line of the third stanza is: "Der fernsten Welt gehört dein Schein." A more accurate rendering in English (although not more poetic) is: "Your light belongs to the most distant world." Life on earth is not permanent, but the light of the stars is.

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III

Nietzsche does not always portray stars as awe-inspiring and permanent, as the passages discussed above suggest. Some of Zarathustrua's references to stars do not imply that they are estranged from humans and enduring, but rather that they are part of the beauty in earthly life and even a possible result of human creation: "I say unto you one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star. I say unto you: you still have chaos in yourselves." (129)

Nietzsche may be playing with his imagery of stars in the same way he plays with the idea of eternal recurrence. Section 341 of The Gay Science does not offer the same vision of eternal recurrence as Zarathustrua does, whose own vision of it is not always consistent. Although one of his visions can be compared to the idea of God, the fact this is just one of the visions makes eternal recurrence different from the idea of God. If Zarathustrua's teaching of eternal recurrence as a metaphysical reality is Nietzsche's investigation into one of the ways to expand upon the idea put forth in the demon passage, it seems that he finds the results to be self-defeating. Examining the structure of the book in light of the suggestion that Zarathustrua's teaching of eternal recurrence is an exploration, the first, second and third parts can be seen as the exploration and the fourth part as a comment on the discoveries. In the first three parts, Zarathustrua's descriptions of eternal recurrence as a metaphysical reality become increasingly explicit as he begins to win the struggle with his resistance to accept the idea. The third part ends with his passionate praise of eternity; it seems that he could be more confident neither of its actuality as the structure of life nor of his intense desire to teach it innumerable more times. His intensity of feeling, however, is considerably diminished in the fourth part. The characters he encounters and dines with at "The Last Supper," are, in a sense, the result of the exploration. They all claim to have been inspired by him and to conduct their lives according to his teachings.

Zarathustrua encounters these "higher men" as he searches for the source of "a long, long cry, which the abysses threw to each other and handed on, for none wanted to keep it; so evil did it sound." (354) Zarathustrua's repeated condemnation of unfavorable views of "evil" could lead one to conclude that this sound did not disturb him. However, when Zarathustrua paints evil in a positive light, he is trying to inspire a revaluation of those things which are the referents of the word used as a value judgment and of value judgments in general. In certain circumstances, such as those in the above passage, in which Zarathustrua *I would like to cite Dr. Kathleen Higgins's comments as an impetus for these ideas. (Seminar: "Nietzsche," class discussion on November 19, 1996)
calls something evil, and at these times he is not trying to say anything about value judgments; he means the cry sounded evil. Zarathustra uses ‘evil’ at another point in which it is clear that value judgments have nothing to do with what he expresses and which offers insight into his desire to find the source of the cry. At the beginning of the third part, Zarathustra looks out onto the sea from the peak of his mountain, and said to it, “How it groans with evil memories! Alas, I am sad with you, you dark monster, and even annoyed with myself for your sake. Alas, that my hand does not have strength enough! Verily, I should like to deliver you from your evil dream.” (266) His words can be interpreted as referring to God’s existence (“evil memories”), the question of human existence after God’s death (“evil forebodings”) and his teachings and their ability to reach people. In the second part, Zarathustra’s character was oppressed with doubt about whether he would be able to accomplish his mission and teach eternal recurrence, the thought of which he continually refers to as “abysmal.” He thinks of humans as he speaks to the sea, wishing he had enough strength to reveal what he knows, for in so doing he would “deliver” them from their “evil dreams.” Perhaps he wants to “deliver” the one who he hears crying out in the fourth part. After speaking at length with the pope, Zarathustra explains to him that he must be on his way: “...now a cry of distress urgently calls me away from you. In my realm no one shall come to grief...” (374).

“Deliver” is translated from erlösen, which, like its English counterpart, is used in the line of the “Lord’s Prayer” which reads: “Deliver us from evil.” The demon does not describe eternal recurrence in order to deliver anyone, but rather to challenge one to deliver oneself. Zarathustra realizes in the fourth part that perhaps he, like the demon, can inspire self-delivery, but he cannot deliver others or ensure that any delivery his teaching inspires will look like his own vision of it. When he returns to his guests and finds them worshipping the ass, he is at first furious, accusing them of betraying his teaching. The ugliest man’s defense of their “ass festival,” however, appears to cause Zarathustra to reconsider his disappointment: “Whether that one still lives or lives again or is thoroughly dead—which of the two of us knows that best?...But one thing I do know; it was from you yourself that I learned it once, O Zarathustra: whoever would kill most thoroughly, laugh!” (215) Laughter is an important concept in The Gay Science. Indeed, when Nietzsche talks of the need for a “fifth act,” he says, “From where am I to take the tragic solution?—Should I begin to think about a comic solution?” (153)

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There is a sense in which the doctrinal nature of the idea of eternal recurrence in the first three parts of Thus Spoke Zarathustra motivates Zarathustra’s strong defensive reaction to the idea that his teaching is being distorted. (In both the second part, when he charges down his mountain after his dream of the child and the mirror, and in the fourth part, when he finds the highest men praying to the ass) His anger softens following the ugliest man’s remarks because he realizes that there is no creation without distortion. The lion must kill for the child to come, and the process does not occur only once, but eternally repeats itself. He proclaims to the higher men: “Do not forget this night and this ass festival...This you invested when you were with me and I take it for a good sign...” (428-429) Nietzsche presents the tragic solution in the first three parts, and as a result, earthly life is relegated to the background, as it was during the reign of the idea of God. Presented as a doctrine of a metaphysical reality, eternal recurrence requires praise of eternity, not of life. As Zarathustra says at the very beginning of his mission: “I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes.” (125) Eternal recurrence, as a metaphysical reality that one is taught and in which one is to believe, becomes this kind of hope.

IV

In the speech from which the quote above was taken, Zarathustra also speaks about the overman: “Behold, I teach you the overman. The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman shall be the meaning of the earth!” (125) He says this immediately before he “beseeches” his audience to “remain faithful to the earth,” as if the latter is a way to accomplish the former. Two questions come to the fore: i) What implications for earth does Zarathustra’s claim that the overman is the meaning of the earth have? and in light of the foregoing discussions, ii) Is the concept of eternal recurrence necessary if one is to “remain faithful to the earth”?

The first question can perhaps be addressed by looking at another way in which the word Übermenschen can be interpreted. Nietzsche makes it clear throughout Zarathustra that he is primarily thinking of the preposition aber as meaning “over” or “across.” However, Nietzsche often plays with language by making use of double meanings, and aber does have another meaning that is lost in its translation as “over”: “about.” Although referring to someone as an “aboutman” does not make much sense, Zarathustra often speaks of the overman as if it is a concept that will be understood and accepted in the future rather than as an actual being whose arrival is pending. In the section “Upon the Blessed Isles” of the second part, Zarathustra says: “God is a conjecture, but I desire
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that your conjectures should not reach beyond your creative will...you could well create the overman..." (1974) God is a human "conjecture." As such, it contradicts itself because part of this conjecture is that God created humans and therefore that they could not have created God. In the above passage, Zarathustra asks his audience to make a conjecture that does not include a concept that contradicts the fact that it is a human conjecture. The idea of God had to die as a result of its contradictory nature. The idea of the overman, however, is within humans' "creative will."

Replacing "overman" with "abohuman" (conceived of as an idea) in the passage in question results in: "The abohuman is the meaning of the earth." Godless humans must look to themselves and to the earth for meaning. There are no longer any "otherworldly hopes," for everything after God's death must be "about man" and human existence on earth.

Life on earth is not "about" attaining a perfect, permanent life beyond earth. The meaning of earth is humans and everything else that is the earth.

Before addressing the second question asked above, it may be enlightening to consider the connection that Zarathustra seems to imply exists between willing that the overman "shall be the meaning of the earth" and remaining "faithful to the earth" in light of the possible answer to the first question, that is, the idea of the "abohuman." Indeed, it does appear that remaining faithful to the earth would be a way in which one could will that "abohuman" be the meaning of the earth. As stated above, the idea of "abohuman" establishes that there is nothing outside of human existence on earth. Remaining faithful to the earth is a way of confirming this idea, and thus understanding it as the meaning of the earth.

Viewing the second question (Is the concept of eternal recurrence necessary if one is to "remain faithful to the earth"). In the context of the foregoing line of thought, it may be useful to consider the necessity of eternal recurrence to remaining faithful to the earth in the sense of confirming the meaning of the earth to be "abohuman." Two main ways of interpreting the idea of eternal recurrence, as a thought experiment and as a metaphysical reality, have been discussed. Assuming the earlier claim, a) that Zarathustra itself is Nietzsche's exploration of the consequences of teaching eternal recurrence, and b) that in part four Zarathustra (and Nietzsche) concludes that eternal recurrence, when taught as a doctrine to which one must adhere, is self-defeating in that it praises eternity rather than life, are true, the thought experiment interpretation is the only viable option. If Nietzsche rejects eternal recurrence as a metaphysical reality in part four, he would not consider it necessary for remaining faithful to the earth, which he consistently upholds in both The Gay Science and Zarathustra. Therefore, the question is whether

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remaining faithful to the earth requires that one answer the demon affirmatively, giving life the "ultimate and eternal confirmation and seal." Suppose the alternative scenario occurs and the demon is curved and teeth are gnashed. Does this prevent one from being faithful to the earth? The answer depends on what being faithful to the earth entails. Considering the view of earthly life Nietzsche expresses in the passage cited in the first paragraph (above), being faithful to the earth would mean much more than merely believing that the earth is all there is: "we want to be poets of our life—first of all in the smallest, most everyday matters." In order to be this kind of poet, one would have to proclaim to the demon that one had never heard anything so "divine" as living life innumerable times more.

V

For Nietzsche, the death of God allows humans to be faithful to themselves, to see ideas of the divine as emanating from their true source, humans and their earthly lives, rather than from God and an otherworldly life. Eternal recurrence as it is presented in the demon passage is a demonstration of what it would be like to see the earth as divine; whether life really does eternally recur is irrelevant. Since God is dead, humans are free to play with creating poetry on earth, especially when the subject is an "everyday matter." The idea of eternal recurrence is one of these poems.

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A crazed, cat-like funk lounges in the room. A playful tiger air puffs and rubs against your nose. The sheets, crumpled into one corner of the bed, resemble a Martian landscape. She sits nude at the other corner. The dim light of the room barely illuminates the woman's form that faces away from you. Her sweet taste is still on your tongue and exhaustion keeps one pace in front of your breath. Following the tanned curves of your lover's body, your thoughts slide down the nape of her neck, and bump along the raised flesh of her spine. A smile curls your lips, and lusty eyes count freckles lounging on soft shoulders.

You lean over and reach for a cigarette, never minding the clichés. The lighter's flinty scratching breaks the silence and moves through the salty air, slowly and deliberately. Taking a deep, hot breath, the smoke trails rise into your vision. Their grey bodies swirl around each other to the beat of an inaudible song. The bed's weight jostles, and she is standing. The shadows casually move around her body with a grace complementary to her form. Every movement and motion is caught in the gaping black holes of your eyes. Delicate hands pick through the hastily removed clothes that now lay on the floor. The deliberation in her search resembles a grocer stand customer pursuing that perfect, red tomato. A pair of panties embraces the leg of your blue jeans. She drops the clothes in her hand, and picks up the silky garment. You watch her waist wiggle into the panties. A hot pressure builds at your temples, and you look up to notice she is watching you with a vague ferocity. Her eyes glow like forgotten forests full of enchantments. The light behind them flickers their olive-colored messages. Their intentions are unclear, and your brow drops quizzically. She sits on the bed, closer to you, and without breaking the silence signs her eyes communicate. Poised to leave the room, she seems to be thinking of the appropriate good-bye. Your eyes move to safe fields of vision. You watch her motionless lips, and trace their mimson turns around the mouth. They part slightly, and two, bold, white teeth peer out. Her throat clears to push out the silent communication her eyes could not articulate.

"?" Her words are clicked out with insect direction.

" Pointed questions beg the meaning behind her eyes. "

?"
out the syllables, and lets each word arrive at your ears individually and
full of their own consequences. You sit up straight, and move your body
closer to hers. There is no response, except — “?”
."
."
.” Your mind attempts to keep
pace, but it was not ready for the assault. Fatigued from sex, it is slow
to raise its defenses against a former ally. Her words fall like bombs.
They hit hard and effectively. This attack was planned, and calculated.
The target exposed and weak. While you bled down with her Trojan flesh, and while your mind was on leave enjoying the relaxation of her
pleasures, her mind sent its agents, and issued its orders. There would be
no retreat. She would not stop, until every semblance of what you were
was destroyed.

”. “With a breach in the flank, the pincer attack is
forth coming. You stage one last counterattack. Banish!

."

Your missiles bounce away harmlessly, and you hear the rumbles of a
countermeasure behind her threat. In her eyes, it wells up with salty
munitions. There is no hope. The battle is lost.
."

Looking up in reflection, she pauses. “”

."

Explosions come as heavy door knocks. These, sharp,
wooden thuds enter the room without permission granted. You wince,
thinking it to be another wave of verbal infantry. She responds by
collecting her clothes, and opening the door. Your present self stands at
the doorway with the guilty arm still raised for another barrage of
knocks. Several things tell him of his inopportune entrance. You lay on
the bed barely covered by a tangled sheet. The air tickles with luscious cat
scents, and your half nude girlfriend just rushed past him. She stops
behind him and turns toward you.

”. “After her sentence, she lets her gaze
linger to survey the battle scene. She seems pleased. Your Present self
puts on his best astonished face. Former self draws his body closer to
itself. You watch his form shrink. His eyes close and look for sleep behind
heavy lids. His pale skin seem to meld with the white sheets. It becomes
impossible to see where skin ends and the sheet begins. The wrinkles and
creases in the blanket become smooth. Every detail becomes washed away
and worn flat by the ivy of white light crawling into the room from behind
you. The white drowns the clothes on the floor. You watch the top of a
boot’s black rim linger before a flood of blankness pours into its cavity.

Jarred P. McGinnis
The bland intrusion has risen to the height of the bed. Formless, in fetid
position, watches the pale lick at his feet. You try to step into the room,
but your legs are unresponsive. A tension sinks up your throat, and pulls
on your larynx forcing words of unknown origin to rush past your lips.

”. “A tangle of light pours into your mouth.
It has the taste of moist soil. It seems to be warm as it flows into your stomach.
Your thirsty cells drink the resonating light with polite sips, pinkie
extended. The luminescence pushes against
your eyes, flooding their hollow bodies. Your weight becomes lifted, but
your body feels no pressure. An indifferent force, desiring to be unnamed,
craddles your body. Looking around,
everything has lost its detail. A stark white, endless and empty,
swallows you. Thoughts and words crowd your mind.
They move like a startled audience running from a theater fire.
Wide-eyed images panic
and confused.

Trampling each other,

Syllables, Foreign words rudely push their way
into your attention. You remember hearing
them before, and you feel you should recognize their
meaning. They echo their
empty
symbolism. In your own speaking voice, they converse with
you, but your replies are muted. More and more
of these alien sounds greet you.
They start organizing into
complete, incoherent sentences. The
gaps between known words are becoming more
cavernous.

Your own thoughts become foreign to you.
There is nothing but a continuous stream of
sounds. The tone of the voice
sounds
digital and mechanical. An unseen tongue forms these antagonizing
noises close to your ear.
Every moment breaks into

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There is a

You

Nirav S. Desai
In Defense of a Progressive Military

Nirav S. Desai

Part I: Hypocrisy in American Civil-Military Relations

During the two years that Henry David Thoreau spent on the banks of Walden Pond he proclaimed, "No way of thinking or doing can be trusted without proof" (Thoreau 10). For years America has accepted the legitimacy of the existing military establishment without thinking about the inconsistencies of the value systems of society at large and the military. Society, while it might try to balance military and democratic values, has never actually questioned the legitimacy of the military. David Segal\(^1\) notes, "the history of national security concerns in the United States of America can be seen as a continuing pragmatic attempt to balance fundamental democratic values and ideals against elements of their defense that have at times intruded upon the rule of law, individual freedom, and popular participation." (375). From immediate inspection one clearly sees that the existing values of American Society and the values of United States Armed Forces are in direct opposition as society promotes Liberalism and individuality while the military promotes duty and collectivism. This begs the question of whether this is a legitimate, legal arrangement. If the system is not legitimate, then why is it not? What would constitute legitimacy? In order to attempt to justify the current state of the military the central nature of the value systems of both the civilian population and the military population must be examined. Having understood the two value systems, the moral mutual exclusiveness of these systems should be inspected; should the two value systems coexist? Third, if they can coexist, the conditions of the system where this is possible must be examined. If they cannot, the characteristics of the system that preclude coexistence and a remedy to these inconsistencies deserve examination. This inspection of civil and military relations will reveal if society is being true to itself and, if it is not, it will aid in the development of a strategy to combat the inconsistency.

The primary question to ask is whether the current status of civil and military relations is legitimate. Most obviously, the civil government and the military do not share the same value system. Again Segal observes,

\(^1\) David Segal is a foreign policy analyst specializing in military affairs.
In the context of the American Revolution, Thomas Jefferson is credited as the author of the Declaration of Independence, emphasizing the idea of natural rights and the right to revolution against a tyrannical government. However, the persistence and success of the revolution required a broader movement and support from various elements of society. For instance, in the aftermath of the revolution, women's roles were not limited to domestic chores but expanded to include participation in various aspects of the new nation's governance. Women wrote letters,engaged in debates, and contributed to the nascent legal and political frameworks. This shift in societal norms and expectations was significant in shaping the future of the United States.
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professionalism, hierarchy, and order. Philosophically, the military is especially goal-oriented. The goal is to defend the country and thus civilian values of individualism take second priority next to the duty to serve. Soldiers are to serve and serve. They act as the servants of the state and, though they voluntarily subject themselves to military discipline, in doing so they must subdue any claims for individual rights. Political philosopher William Godwin argues that this voluntary submission is more degrading than being conscripted. 

"Whatever I submit to from the irresistible impulse of necessity is not mine, and denote only as it tends gradually to shackle the iniquity of my character. But, when I make the voluntary surrender of my understanding, and commit my consciousness to another man's keeping, the consequence is civil society. The action is as mischievous and pernicious as animals. I annihilate my individuality as a man."

They join the core and thus, giving in to the hierarchy, they become a more part in the military machine destroying their own person.

The laws of the military code help to enforce rights violations that are suggested in the military's philosophy. This is seen in what constitutes a court martial. In the military, insubordination and cowardice are crimes while in civilian life they are the rights of every individual. Soldiers must be given permission to speak freely while in civilian society free speech is a fundamental right. Furthermore, during the early 1900's Congress banned enlisted men from going on strike. This law clearly infringes on a soldier's First Amendment rights of petition and peaceful assembly. Of course, soldiers are not allowed freedom of movement. An enlisted soldier who leaves a military base without permission is subject to legal action. Civilians, conversely, are free to travel as they please. Throughout history the Armed Forces have censored the press and promoted secrecy, for example, the Pentagon Papers incident and the Bay of Pigs fiasco. These covert operations clearly violate the civilian ideals of democracy and freedom. These legal restrictions placed on America's fighting men displays the military's maltreatment promotion of duty over rights and the collective over the individual.

The difference between the values of the Civil Government and the Military Establishment is evident when the two systems are compared, but before questioning the legitimacy of this societal organization a second

5 William Godwin is contemporary political philosopher who desires obedience in three categories, the first two comprising authority. The first form of obedience is submission to the self. The second is submission to the respected. The third is submission to force. He argues that the second form of obedience is the most degrading.

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question must be asked: how do the two systems interact with each other in the status quo? It is well documented that the civil government has authority over the military establishment in America. This authority takes shape as the history of the American military and its legal framework are studied. Most obviously, the professional military we currently have in the United States developed from civil government actions like funding the military, instating military academies, and opening military bases. Thus, the military is a creation of the state. Second, George Washington's resignation of his command helped establish the supremacy of the Civil Government. It clarified the duties of a soldier and therefore prevented a government overthrow (Bou Mele 23). President Harry Truman further solidified the authority of the civil government in his removal of General Douglas MacArthur after MacArthur ignored a direct Presidential Order. There are also legal reasons why the Government has control over the military. First, Article One of the Constitution gives Congress control of the military budget. This control prevents the military from growing beyond the limits that the civil government mandates. Second, the Constitution appoints the President Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, where as the highest-ranking military official he is the leader of all branches of the service (Segal 376). Third, the Constitution is the law of the land. The military is simply a institution intended to defend the Constitution. It has no inherent purpose but rather is the servant of the civil government. The military is clearly inferior to the civil government in the power hierarchy.

Having established the nature of both civil government and the military and characterized their relationship with each other, the question now remains of whether these two value systems may legitimately coexist. According to the Liberalism, rights are what make human life worth living. The Declaration of Independence argues that these rights are inalienable; therefore they cannot be relinquished. Furthermore, the Constitution grants these rights to all persons, regardless of their enlistment status. Because civil government has authority over the military the values of the civil government take precedence over all subordinate parts, including the military. The military, with its duty-based philosophy, places individual rights of its soldiers second to the mission and thus dehumanizes soldiers by reducing the value of the individual. In doing so it violates the values of the civil government. Despite that soldiers volumes, to join the military, and though they might know what to expect, the dehumanization that occurs in the military is not diminished and does not lessen the moral justification to avoid such consequences. Each person has a right to life, liberty and property; when these rights are removed, either voluntarily or otherwise, the end which the American value system most seeks to avoid
Part II: Analyzing the Options for Removing the Hypocrisy

This is a dangerous and changing world. It is not practical for America to go without a defense force. Accepting that a goal-oriented military is not compatible with the individualism required in liberal democracies, a suitable solution is needed. When considering solutions, two ideas immediately come to mind: first, if a democratic, Liberalism-based, rights centered military was plausible, then this would remove the problem of legitimacy; second, the empowerment of militias, both State and local, governmental and civilian, would also meet the needs of the Constitution. The remainder of this essay will be devoted to weighing the practicality of each.

What would define a democratic, rights-centered military? Primarily it would need to have the same values as the civil government to which it is subordinate. For the United States it would require a representative democracy. This would mean that the enlisted men and officers would vote on promotions. Secondly, it would call for the removal of such crimes as insubordination and cowardice, for these rights are defended in the First Amendment. It would have to allow for the freedom to leave the base or station without permission as well as the respect of property rights. Soldiers would have to be returned the right to strike, to form a peaceful assembly, and to petition to their superiors. Basically, soldiers would be given all the rights of any civilian, on and off-duty. Their military service would need to be treated as a job. Officers would not be able to ask any more of the enlisted man than an employer could ask of his employees. Of course this would lead to serious problems in combat situations. In the heat of a battle there is no time to discuss options democratically. As an employer cannot require an employee to suffer a dangerous situation against his will, the military would not be able to do so. Anyone who refuses to fight would be within his right to refuse. Also, allowing democratic elections for officer promotions would empower field soldiers, who have no experience with the officer in question, and who have not been academically trained for such decisions, to decide who decides military strategy. This clearly would not be successful, or a realistic way of providing for the common defense.

The second option is the use of militias for national defense. Militias would be justified primarily because they are specifically called for in the Second Amendment of the Constitution. Halfbrook argues...

As noted militia defense system would remain in accordance with Locke and Rousseau's philosophies. The founders, including Jefferson and Washington, believed sincerely in the legitimacy and effectiveness of militia defense. In fact, during his Presidency, Jefferson cut the standing army to less than 3,000 men in order to promote the growth of militias and protect the Union from the prospect of federal tyranny (Davidsohn 221). In 1792 the Federal Government enacted legislation to aid states in establishing State Militias, however because they were not as successful as hoped in the wars of the past, more value was later given to the standing army. Richard H. Kohn claims, "the creation of a standing federal army in 1792 was a death blow to the mission of the state militia." (Gustafson 303) It is clear that the existing system of national defense is not what the founders envisioned but rather the change in foreign policy goals and different understanding about the way the standing army and the militias should interact with each other has created the current confrontational state of Military-Militia relations. Militia, besides having the support of the founders, respect the rights of the citizenry. The people would be defending their homes and land. Thus they would not be giving up their autonomy to another person. Rather, they would be protecting this autonomy. They would be entitled to free speech, assembly and petition, and they serve to advance democracy. Charles Knight notes, promoting the formation of a progressive militia and reserve intensive defense force, that there is currently "an opportunity to speak out for the ideal of a citizen's army or militia in today's form, the National Guard and other service reserves. Putting more emphasis on reserves would not only save tens of billions of dollars a year, it would also put a constraint on the capacity of political leaders to go to war without the backing of the American people.
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Greater reliance on the reserves would serve the interests of the economy and democracy (463). The idea of a citizens' army would certainly uphold America's value system and, if a vertebrate of securing the Nation's defense, would invariablely be to the country's advantage.

If militaries can defend the nation, the possible changing of the system can be discussed. The defense of militaries relies centrally on two premises. First, the military should have the capability to "provide for the common defense" and secure the "Blessings of Liberty" as the Constitution prescribes. Its duties in humanitarian aid and involvement in foreign wars are secondary if necessary at all. Second, technology is constantly advancing, decreasing the need for direct human involvement in all types of labor. As printing presses now print books that were once copied by human labor, guided missiles destroy strategic sites that once needed to be attacked by soldiers or bombed by an aircraft.

With the above goals, can militaries effectively provide for the common defense? History shows that the American militaries, essential during the American Revolution and the War of 1812, have been capable of performing this function though only at great risk. However, the South in the early part of the Civil War shows instances where militaries have proven to be extremely effective. Particularly, the South Carolina State Militia prior to the Civil War was strong and effective in servicing the State and had 55,209 battle-ready troops (Eysterfried 303-316). Even now, it is alleged that the Florida State Militia currently has the capability to combat biological and chemical warfare. As Kohn points out, some of the ineffectiveness of the militias in the past is due to a reluctance to the standing army because citizens do not feel the need for militaries with a capable army in existence. It may be argued that these examples are outdated and that warfare has changed greatly since the Civil War. Thought that is true, the changes in warfare have only made military reorganization less necessary. Today America has a wide array of technological hardware that deter the use of ground combat troops. This technology will further the effectiveness of the militaries defense force. The last two conflicts with Iraq in 1991 and 1990, in which militaries were fired at strategic sites, require only a naval presence in the Red Sea which show that American soldiers do not necessarily need to get involved to secure America's international goals. Likewise, the Gulf War demonstrated the superiority of American weapon systems in preventing missile attacks. Continued mechanization of military hardware, like Patriot Anti-Missile defense, actually makes troops less instrument in war. In addition, America has

4 The intention is not to provide a system that would promote existing foreign policy but rather to formulates a system in which civil defense would be legitimate and militaries. Because of this law focusing primarily on national defense and not on the protection of national interests.

Defense promoting militias would also serve to "promote the General Welfare" as the Constitution commands. A move to militias would naturally be accompanied by stepping up the United States diplomacy efforts. Knight extends his discourse on progressive militarism; "Several goals would distinguish a progressive military. The first is an effort to effect the structural guarantees that armed forces will be properly used, that is, with restraint and for truly defensive ends" (462). Militias would serve this purpose because of their nonprofessional status. Their primary purpose would be to defend citizens homes and communities. Second, an effort to ensure that the maintenance of a strong military is met in ways consistent with progress towards other national goals," in accordance with civilian ideals (462). Militias again would serve this purpose as they promote democracy by remaining true to democratic values in their day to day operations. "Finally, a progressive military policy would aim to meet today's defense needs in ways that help create global conditions in which nations can confidently attempt general demilitarization" (462). Militias further this goal as well. Defensive restructuring of the military prevents arms races and war escalation because it seeks to deter aggression rather than combat it with aggression (463). Mahatma Gandhi once said, "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." Likewise a defensively structured military would not only protect America but it would aid in promoting international peace.

From analyzing the relationship of the civil government with the military of the United States, the illegitimacy and contraction of the current system crystallizes. This analysis also gives rise to a possible solution to the contradiction. The solution presents itself in the establishment of a progressive military based on voluntary militaries. The establishment of militias not only provides for the common defense as the Constitution commands the government must, but it has the advantages of promoting international diplomacy and intergovernmental trust and goodwill. It provides for a safer world order and ensures the liberties of
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America's fighting men and women. Having established a goal, the American people must decide if this is what they want and then work to make it a reality. New York, NY, reprinted 1960.

Works Cited


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A Modernist and Postmodernist Approach to Notes From The Underground

Jerry Pinkston

I. Modernism & Postmodernism

In his essay, Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?, Lyotard makes clear the distinction between the notions: modernism and postmodernism. He holds that they both set out to put forward the unrepresentable - the sublime - but they differ in virtue of the means they implement to present the unrepresentable. Those artists and writers working under the rubric of modernism attempt to put forward the aesthetic of the sublime by virtue of 'nostalgic' means. Modernism, thus seen, can be characterized on the basis of its therapeutic qualities.

The avant-gardes of the Enlightenment succeeded in parceling out the 'totality of life' into independent specialties which were, then, only cognitively available to the 'narrow competence of experts'. Art, during this time period, existed in a sphere independent of ideals or cultural objects which served to unify human experience; "Art for art's sake" became the ideal for the avant-gardes and the Enlightenment. There was no criterion by which the artist could be determined to belong to this group. There was only that criterion which separated the good from the bad. Thus, the aesthetic experience which characterized this movement was principally expressed on the basis of style. The avant-gardes threw into question all of the values upon which contemporary society was founded, thus undermining the significance of cultural objects therein. Such objects could no longer be easily defined or interpreted. Art was no longer a thread which unified human experience. Rather, the avant-gardes desired a separation from contemporary society and the maxims therein, and this separation resulted in what Lyotard refers to as a 'splintering of culture'. The culture itself dissipated on the basis that its verities no longer had any recognizable meaning. This idea of 'splintering' serves as precisely that mark where the aforementioned notion of nostalgia and the therapeutic qualities of modernism can be interjected.

According to Lyotard, the modernist work to bridge the gap that was created by the avant-gardes. Like the avant-garde, the modernist supports an aesthetic of the sublime, or, in other words, desires to put forward the unrepresentable, yet the modernist wants to propagate the
sublime in a manner that will reconcile the security that the human spirit, prior to the Enlightenment, found in art, thus reuniting human experience. Modernists implement forms which are recognizable unlike the obscure forms of the avant-garde. Of this modernist practice, Lyotard writes, "It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing content; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure." (What is Postmodernism?, p. 81). Such is the therapeutic purpose of modernism—to offer up the sublime by virtue of forms or a language that is itself a part of the knowledge or experiences shared by humans. The modernists want to return to a language that is understood by all. They desire to put forward the unrepresentable while restoring the 'totality of life'.

For postmodernists the picture must be painted differently, so to speak. Artists, writers, and other creators working under the rubric of postmodernism would battle for a return to avant-gardism. Like the modernist, the postmodernist wants to put forward the unrepresentable, yet he will attempt to do so without the safety of recognizable forms or language. The postmodernist, like the avant-garde, call for a separation from contemporary society, especially the rules established therein which create a sort of determinism concerning the nature of artistic criticism and, subsequently, artistic freedom. The postmodern artist wants to do away with such rules in order to facilitate the possibility that other rules could exist. Lyotard writes, "Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done" (What is Postmodernism?, p. 81).

The postmodernist, like the avant-garde, will split the culture. He will call for a dissipation of those human experiences which, upon converging, constitute the axioms upon which contemporary society is built. He will cry out for the uplifting of personal creativity. Lyotard writes, "... let us wage a war on totality; let us be witness to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name" (What is Postmodernism?, p. 82).

II. A Modernist Approach to Notes From The Underground

One can argue that the Underground Man is a modernist on the basis that he is also a nihilist in the Nietzschean sense. Upon an examination into excerpts taken from The Joyful Wisdom, one can see how the Underground Man fits into this category.

For Nietzsche, nihilism is the serious problem for which he attempts to provide a solution by virtue of his thesis: "God is dead". In his writing, Nietzsche refers to himself as a nihilist, but this is merely a poetic device which draws the reader's attention and establishes a foundation upon which he can build. Nietzsche attempts to prove that nihilists are not those who do not believe in God, but, rather, are those who claim to believe in God and do not practice, or actively manifest, their faith to its utmost capacity. Nietzsche claims that the nihilist will undoubtedly believe in a philosophical proposition stating that God, or a supreme being, exists, but Nietzsche would argue that the nihilist does not believe in the real God, because nothing more than a lack of faith can characterize his belief. The nihilist's belief is an empty one in that it lacks faith to support it.

This lack of faith is a condition that Nietzsche attributes to the majoriy of the Christian population. Nietzsche holds that most Christians exercise nothing more than empty beliefs, so, in essence, they exercise nothing at all. They remain incapacitated—unable and unwilling to act on the beliefs they claim to have. They are inactive, and inactivity is what Nietzsche holds to be the very core of all possible things. Christians, as nihilists, rest too contentedly with their empty beliefs. They justify their inactivity by suppressing their humanly desires. They do not act on their natural impulses, which is, undoubtedly, a misfortune, or lack thereof, that the Underground Man continually manifests. Nietzsche would argue that Christians, for the most part, truly ignore the life they are currently living on the basis that they believe the real life, or true life, to be a transcendental one, which is to say that it exists beyond this life. Their true life awaits them in some other, heavenly, realm. This ideal is, in itself, a justification for their inactivity. It necessitates the suppression of one's desires, especially if one desires to make the most of the life he is currently living. One will not search for truth in the now, if he holds it to necessarily exist in a realm beyond the now. So, it is on these grounds that Nietzsche claims that the Christian God is dead. One might argue that indulgence is responsible for the death of God. This is no stopping point for Nietzsche. He not only rejects God but Christian morality as well, and it is precisely here, at his rejection of Christian morality, that one can see modernist ideals, as set forth earlier, in Nietzsche's assertions. Nietzsche writes, "By moribund the individual is taught to become a function of the herd, and to ascribe to himself value only as a function" (From The Joyful Wisdom). This parcel of Christian morality is very similar to what can be referred to as the essential purpose of the modernist movement, as proposed by Lyotard. Remember that the modernist set out not only to put forward the unrepresentable but to consolidate human experience with the purpose of supporting the 'totality of life'. The connection is quite easily made between this modernist ideal and Christian morality, as set forth by Nietzsche. The modernist defines
himself as such on the basis of his functioning for the whole - he is a slave to the 'totality of life'.

One might wonder why I have gone such a distance to relate modernist ideals to Nietzsche, when the purpose of this portion of the paper is to relate precepts of modernism to Dostoyevsky's, *Notes From The Underground*. The answer is: it was a necessary undertaking, especially the portions concerning Nietzsche's notion of nihilism. For it can be argued that the Underground Man, the protagonist of Dostoyevsky's novel, manifests nihilistic tendencies, which will serve as a link between the modernist and Nietzsche's novel itself, but before this connection if brought about, another look into Nietzsche should be made in order to strengthen it even further.

Nietzsche posits to his readers the notion of the Ubermensch, or the "more-than-human-all-too-human". The Ubermensch, or this superhuman-like figure, is put forward by Nietzsche with the purpose of serving as the new human ideal. The Ubermensch is faced with the notion of 'eternal recurrence', which is to say that he is confronted with the idea that he will have to live the life he has led hitherto and innumerable amount of times, and each time there will be nothing new. He will, simply, have to relive everything over and over again without change.

Faceted with 'eternal recurrence', the Ubermensch feels contempt for himself. He makes haste in evaluating himself by virtue of assessing his desires. He will assess his desires so that he may change them in order to achieve a transcendental happiness. It should be noted here that this happiness is not transcendental in the Christian sense, which is to say that it exists in a realm exclusive to this one, rather it is transcendental in that it exceeds that happiness that the Ubermensch has experienced hitherto. The Ubermensch feels this contempt for himself, yet he never successfully and completely changes his desires so that he may achieve a transcendental happiness. Rather, like the nihilist, the Underground Man is left incapacitated. He is torn between the established moral codes of his contemporary society and the hint that an alternative society may exist - a society composed of new conventions exclusive to those already existing.

The Underground Man (like the Christian) rue too contentedly in his self contempt. Of this, Nietzsche writes, "There is indeed too much carelessness, too much taking lightly, too much looking away and impatience involved in contempt, even too much joyfulness ...". (From *The Genealogy of Morals*). The Underground Man remains inactive. He does not act on his impulses, and he never follows his desires completely so that the potential ascends into the realm of the actual, and a new, transcendental happiness is, thus, materialized. This is an occasion that

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can be supported by the Underground Man's refusal or inability to keep Liza in his life. He if fully aware of the pivotal significance that Liza represents. For, in a conversation with Apollon, the Underground Man's servant, he says, "You don't know what this woman is. ... This is everything! You may be imagining something... But you don't know what that woman is..." (Notes From The Underground, p. 83).

The Underground Man is fully conscious of the potential which Liza constitutes. She could be that impetus that would compel him to follow to the utmost his desires, thus calling for a materialization of that aforementioned alternative which is tearing away at him, but he lets Liza walk out of his life. Thus, he is incapacitated like Nietzsche's nihilist. The Underground Man remains inactive, and it is precisely upon this basis that one can attach a modernist reading to Dostoyevsky's, *Notes From The Underground*.

III. A Postmodern Reading of *Notes From The Underground*.

One will recall that the postmodern move called for a return to the avant-gardism of the Enlightenment, which, in itself, was a call for artistic freedom. The postmodernist wanted to revitalize the ideal: "Art for art's sake", so postmodernist artists and writers very emphatically avoided the notions of subject matter and content when creating their works. This avoidance served a necessary role in the postmodernist's goal to revitalize avant-gardism. For, central to the avant-garde culture was the principle that: "Content is to be dissolved so completely into form that the work of art or literature cannot be reduced in whole or in part to anything not itself" (Greenberg, *Avant-Garde & Kitsch*, pg. 8). This principle, it can be said, serves primarily the role as that precursor from which the postmodern movement originated, or was begotten. For, central to the postmodern culture was the destruction of any barrier that was presumed to exist between the artist and his art, or between the representor and his representation. Thus, the postmodernist placed the emphasis upon the form, instead of content and subject matter, as well. Moreover, fundamental to the postmodernist view of the human being was the notion that the individual undergoes the process of self creation by virtue of a "creation of representation", and, thus, it is precisely here, upon this foundation created by these postmodern ideals, that one can attach a postmodern reading to *Notes From The Underground*.

The Underground Man undergoes this aforementioned process of self creation by virtue of his writing. He creates his self through his creation of his novella, which serves to embody the postmodern notion of 'creation of representation'. But the Underground Man is a liar. He lies when he makes his speeches; this is something that even he
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move forward from the ‘motionless Alexandrianism’ which surrounds him. He, through unrecognized behavior, embodies the avant-garde ideal of “Art for art’s sake”. His countenance, or, in other words, his content, will appear so unconnected, so dissolved into his form, or his behavior, that his behavior will be irreducible into anything not itself. The Underground Man, thus characterized, is inseparable from his art, or his representation, and, so, once again, he can be defined from a postmodernist standpoint.

IV. Conclusion

Dostoevsky’s “Notes From The Underground” can be read from both a modernist and a postmodernist perspective. The Underground Man manifests behaviors or interests which facilitate his placement into both of these categories, but, in a complete sense, he is neither one nor the other. The Underground Man wants to put forward the sublime, present the unrepresentable, yet he is torn between the conventions of his contemporary society, previously referred to in Greekehian terms as a ‘motionless Alexandrianism’, and the possibility that an alternative society exists. He feels spite for the ‘motionless’ which surrounds him, yet he never follows his desires to the utmost, as seen with Nietzsche’s Übermensch. The Underground Man never ascends that ‘motionless’ to attain that transcendental happiness, which, in fact, can exist in the now, and actually does so for the Übermensch. For the Underground Man, as presented in the novel, the alternative society will never materialize. He remains incapacitated, and never practices, despite his avant-garde tendencies, what Nietzsche calls the ‘admirable art’. Nietzsche writes, “One Thing is Needful...” To “give style” to one’s character - that is a grand and a rare art! He who surveys all that his nature presents in its strength and in its weakness, and then fashions it into an inquisitive plan, until everything appears artistic and rational, and even the weakness enchant the eye - exercises that admirable art...” (From Joyful Wisdom). The Underground Man never practices this ‘admirable art’. He feels self contempt, yet he never ‘fashions’ the plan which will allow him to ascend his contempt. Rather, like the nihilist, the Underground Man rests too contentedly, which is, obviously, the source of his incessant spite. But this is enough. I no longer want to write anything more in spring semester in 1997.

Notes from the Underground, page 45.” The Underground Man wants to

acknowledges more than once in his novel. And, in light of this, one might argue that the Underground Man does not create himself, by virtue of representation, in that he is, by definition alone, preclude him from representing anything at all. This is a good argument, but a further look will show its antithesis, that the Underground Man does, in fact, represent something, holds to be true.

The Underground Man does lie in his novella, but this is something that he is fully aware of. For, he does readily admit to it. He is conscious of his lying, which is to say that his lying is a part, or a component, of his consciousness. The Underground Man, like any man, is the synthesis of mind and body - this is a notion that is widespread among both philosophy and science, if one considers these two mutually exclusive - and it is easily argued and, subsequently, easily accepted that the consciousness is a necessary component of the mind. So, now, when one says that the Underground Man is conscious of his lying, one is actually saying that he is conscious of a component of his mind, which is, essentially, to say that he is conscious of himself, especially when one recalls the notion that the mind is a necessary component of the self. Thus, when the Underground Man lies he is, in fact, representing not nothing at all, but representing himself. There is no barrier between the Underground Man and his representation, as it can be said that he is an advocate of the postmodernist view of the human being. The Underground Man is, in fact, a postmodernist. This connection between the Underground Man and postmodernism can be further strengthened if one looks to the method of not only the Underground Man’s lying but his behavior overall. The Underground Man, like the avant-garde, wants to ignore the notion of content and subject matter and lose himself in form. He wants to be seen as repulsive by those around him. Through his behavior, the Underground Man, will throw recognizable behavioral verities into confusion so as to appear ‘tactless’ and ‘unseemly’. The Underground Man, at some point in his novel, invites himself to a dinner in which one of his school mates will be the honorary guest. The Underground Man invites himself on an impulse (one of the rare instances when the Underground Man actually acts on an impulse), but then realizes that he does not even like the guest that will be honored. He is at a crossroads. He is not sure what he should do, but after much deliberation, of course, he writes, “that what made me furious was that I should go, that I should make a point of going; and the more tactless, the more unseemly my going would be, the more certainly I would go” (Notes From The Underground, pg. 45). The Underground Man wants to confuse those around him, but this is merely a hint at a larger goal of his. The Underground Man, like the avant-garde, wants to

Ex Nihilo
"We ought to stop saying things that are obviously false."
— John Searle

I. Introduction

Karl Popper's monumental *Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1934) is one of the key texts in 20th century philosophy of science. Indeed, to listen to people, professional scientists and "men on the street" (who have never heard of Popper) included, no one else has ever said a word on the subject of science and how it ought to be done; such has been the success of Popper's theory in filtering its way through academia and into the culture.

However, Popper's theory of scientific methodology is quite wrong. Its broad popularity has more to do with his intemperance than the actual theory. Popper's positive suggestions are not totally without merit. But Popper eliminates induction and leaves unsolved all of the problems that surround it; in this negative context, Popper's accomplishments seem to be nil.

In this paper, I intend to demolish the opening essentials of Popper's methodology. I'll start with the customary setting-up of the target. My focus is drawn from the early chapters of his book, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. The technical details of the later chapters draw out the consequences and shore up the method; the whole is eminently logical once the general idea is accepted. It's the general idea with which I differ. Then I shall go through several objections to Popper. Some of these arguments -- the best -- are not original to me. A few of them are mine, including the bizarre claim that Popper and Paul Feyerabend (known for his methodological anarchism and bitter hatred of Popper and his philosophy) are of a piece philosophically.

II. What Popper Says

*Induction*, says Popper, is untrustworthy: "...it is far from obvious, from a logical point of view, that we are justified in inferring 'universal statements from singular ones, no matter how numerous: for any conclusion drawn in this way may always turn out to be false.' (27) That is, however many times one has a report of a certain event occurring
under certain circumstances, one is never justified in claiming that such an event will, in every case, occur under those circumstances. He argues that a principle of induction ("a statement, with the help of which we could put inductive inferences into a logically acceptable form") which is analytic - purely logical - would not be a principle of induction, and that a principle of induction which is synthetic - empirically derived - would begin a regress. Kant's attempt to provide an a priori ground for induction, by determining that causality is a mental imposition upon the world, is said to have failed, and so Popper abandons induction. Even an induction that yields only probabilities has the same problems. If the principle of probabilistic induction were analytic, it would be neither probabilistic nor inductive, and we were synthetic it would still begin a regress; a p r i o r i s dismissed again. The solution to scientific method is not to be found in inductive or scientific. It is worth mentioning that few indutivist philosophers ever advocated the induction-by-enumeration that Popper rejects. Rather, such philosophers as Bacon and Mill discuss methods of excluding possible causal factors until one has narrowed in on the actual causal factor, and others such as H. W. B. Joseph defend a view of the ontology of causality which undergirds this approach and conflicts with the modern concept of causality as the dependence of actions on prior actions. Popper tries to construct science as a purely deductive endeavor. Science starts with hypotheses. (I use the words 'theory' and 'hypothesis' interchangeably.) Conclusions of various sorts are drawn from an hypothesis. An hypothesis is tested for consistency among its conclusions, for whether it is empirical or tautological, for whether it represents progress beyond other theories or is identical with them, and most important: for whether it stands up to empirical tests (32-33). It's the matter of empirical testing which most concerns Popper. Here enters the crucial difference between Popper and inductive views of science. For Popper, empirical tests do not provide evidence for the truth of a theory. They can only refute, or falsify, the theory (33). Falsificationism rests on basic facts about universal and particular statements, especially in modern symbolic logic (41). A universal statement can never be derived from particular statements: in deductive logic, there is no way to go from "There exists x or 'For Any.' However, a particular statement can contradict a universal. I say, for example, that 'For any day, it will rain on that day.' It does not rain on some day, and I observe, 'Today is a day on which it does not rain.' The existential, particular statement contradicts the universal statement. So if a scientific theory makes predictions, the predictions coming true doesn't show the
science, he claims, and the task of a philosophy of science is to work out how falsificationism functions.

However, methodological decisions are, for him, conventional. He thinks of them "as the rules of the game of empirical science." (53) He suggests two which summarize his philosophy of science:

1) The game of science is, in principle, without end. He who decides one day that scientific statements do not call for any further test, and that they can be regarded as finally verified, retires from the game.

2) Once a hypothesis has been proposed and tested, and has proved its mettle, it may not be allowed to die out without "good reason." A "good reason" may be, for instance: replacement of the hypothesis by another which is better testable, or the falsity-of-use of one of the consequences of the hypothesis (C3-54).

Popper regards a definition, like that of 'science' as being falsificationism, as of instrumental value. Scientists and philosophers will accept his definition if it has consequences which they can accept.

III. What Popper Did Right

Certain elements of the above are obviously valuable. The notion that good science is testable science is right, of course. But it must be remembered that this observation was also a commonplace among Popper's contemporary positivists. Popper can be read as a nihilistic variant of the very positivist theme of seeking a criterion to distinguish good science from bad metaphysics. The only distinction is that Popper would remove 'bad' from in front of 'metaphysics'.

He is also right to argue that science should not do things like ignore data or introduce ad hoc hypotheses, at least beyond a point. But of course no one ever said it should. Duham said that it could in his Aim and Structure of Physical Theory (1905), but saying that something can happen and saying we obviously different things. And of course the logical positivists also had a revulsion for such metaphysical behavior. Popper is making the same claim, but without venin.

I also want to point out that, though I don't think Popper's idea has much applicability to science (beyond a bare minimum requirement on scientific theories) it may be an excellent description of market phenomena.

My conclusion here is that, in light of the following criticisms, Popper's contribution was slight; he repeated something the logical positivists had been saying all along.

IV. What Popper Did Wrong

Formally, Falsificationism Works No Better Than Verificationism. Popper's work takes place in the context of the Vienna of logical positivism; his peers sought a criterion to demarcate metaphysics from science. Their criterion, verification, is reviewed and criticized by Carl Hempel, in an essay entitled 'The Empiricist Criterion of Meaning.' But as he explains the errors of each verificationist theory, he turns the expression of verificationism on its head to generate a falsificationist version. Reverse problems arise for Popper's theory.

For Hempel, the basic verificationist theory is the 'Requirement of complete verifiability in principle: A sentence has empirical meaning if and only if it is not analytic and follows logically from some finite and logically consistent class of observation sentences.' (111) An observation sentence is one that 'asserts of one or more specifically named objects that they have, or that they lack, some specified observable characteristic.' (110) He states the reverse position: 'Requirements of complete falsifiability in principle: A sentence has empirical meaning if and only if its denial is not analytic and followed logically from some finite logically consistent class of observation sentences.' (113) Now, this is not entirely accurate; Popper did not regard his theory as a theory of meaning. But the actual formal problems with the two theories do not turn on this element; rather, the problem is that some statements are admitted as verifiable or falsifiable which one would wish to reject. This happens three ways, and I shall go over the problems applied both to verificationism and falsificationism.

The first is a simple problem of induction. The verificationist theory rules out universal statements. Recall what Hempel means by 'observation sentences'. It seems that all observation sentences are existential in nature: 'There is a book which is red', or '(Ex)(Rx & Rx)' (where 'E' is the existential quantifier, and 'B' and 'R' signify 'book' and 'red', respectively). But it is impossible to move from an existential or any set thereof to a universal quantifier. No amount of 'There exists a swan that is white' justifies the move to 'Every swan is white.' But many scientific laws of the sort that the positivists (and Popper) seek to permit are universal: F=MA, for instance, means 'For any force, that force equals the mass times the acceleration of the object' and no number of 'There is a force which equals the mass times the acceleration of the object' justifies the universal statement.

But Popper's inverted theory runs into the reverse problem: he disallows existentials. It is quite easy to falsify a universal: '(Ex)(Fx) ->
If there is a universal claim ‘All pigs fly’ a single non-flying pig falsifies the claim. But one cannot falsify an existential. An existential statement like ‘There is a flying pig’ could not be falsified by any finite set of observation sentences, because there is no way to know that the next observation sentence does not say ‘There is a flying pig.’ As a less trivial example, consider the consequences for science of disallowing, as unfalsifiable, the statement ‘The earth is 93 million miles from the sun.’ Russell argues in ‘On Denoting’ that this statement should be symbolized as existential statements; there is an earth, there is only one earth, and furthermore it is 93 million miles from the sun. But in Popper’s system, such a statement, because existential, is unfalsifiable and hence not scientific.

The second problem with the verification principle is that the disjunctive of a verifiable sentence and a non-verifiable sentence is verifiable. For instance, ‘Carl Hempel is a person or God loves Karl Popper’ is verifiable despite the nonsense clause ‘God loves Karl Popper’ because Carl Hempel’s status as a person is verifiable, and anything which implies a sentence implies any disjunctive statements which includes that sentence. This is due to the truth-condition of disjunctive statements: a disjunctive is true if either or both of its components is true. So, ‘If Carl Hempel is a person, then either Carl Hempel is a person or God loves Karl Popper’ is a true sentence. But clearly such disjunctives are not something which either Popper or the positivists would want to sanction as scientific: one could give the aura of science to any sentence simply by attaching it disjunctively to a sentence known to be scientific.

Likewise, Popper’s falsificationism entails the reverse problem. As a consequence of his theory, a falsifiable statement conjoined to a non-falsifiable statement is falsifiable. For instance, since we can falsify ‘Carl Hempel is a stapler’, we can falsify ‘Carl Hempel is a stapler and God loves Karl Popper’ simply by falsifying ‘Carl Hempel is a stapler’, despite the nonsense about God’s regard for Popper. But Popper would wish to keep such a statement out of science for the same reason as above.

Finally, the verificationist theory also condemns certain universal statements, a problem which would remain were the earlier problem with universals to be somehow solved. A universal followed by a negated claim is the equivalent to the denial of an existential. An existential might say ‘There is a red thing’, while the denial of an existential might say ‘There is no unicorn’. But this latter must be expressed in logic as universal: (∀x)(¬Ux), where the ‘x’ appearing in parenthesis means universal quantification over ‘x’. So, though ‘there is a red thing’ is verifiable, its denial is not. The positivists, however, would certainly want to accept as verifiable the denials of verifiable sentences. That is, ‘Force never equals mass times acceleration’ is just as scientific as ‘Force always equals mass times acceleration’, regardless of the truth-values of the sentences.

Popper’s theory does the same thing in reverse. A universal claim like ‘Everything is a unicorn’ is unfalsifiable. But its negation, an existential statement ‘Something is not a unicorn’, is unfalsifiable on the same grounds as the first problem. It is easy to verify that something is not a unicorn: produce a non-unicorn. But producing a unicorn won’t falsify the claim: the existence of a unicorn does not imply that there is something which is not a unicorn. (That is, the presence of a unicorn does not imply that everything is a unicorn.)

Popper toes his theory as solving the problems which accrue to verificationist philosophy of science. But as Hempel’s arguments show, his falsificationism is, in symbolic logic, as formally disastrous as verificationism.

If Any Method Can Work, It is Induction

Let us turn to questioning Popper’s first, negative, thesis: that induction is an invalid form of reasoning. Hans Reichenbach provides an interesting and simple argument that, if any form of reasoning other than logic is valid, then it is induction.

Consider the possibilities of successful prediction under the following circumstances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 (65)</th>
<th>Nature is uniform</th>
<th>Nature is not uniform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We use induction</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don’t use induction</td>
<td>Success or failure</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To figure out how well induction works, we must compare it to some non-inductive method, such as guessing at crystal balls or making random guesses. We must further place each possibility into the two ways the world might be: either uniform or not so.

By uniformity I mean that nature acts, according to laws, which are regularities like gravity, electromagnetism, the consequences of acidity, the law of supply and demand, and so forth. If nature exhibits such regularities, then induction can discover them and make successful predictions. If nature exhibits no such regularities, then induction will fail of course fail.

However, this is no reason to give up on induction. A non-inductive method suffers even worse problems - it can’t work at all unless induction works. If the universe displays regularities, then random guessing will occasionally yield a successful prediction. Random guessing
will also occasionally yield a successful postdiction if the universe exhibits no regularities. But if random guessing (or some other method) continually leads to successful predictions, then the fact that random guessing leads to successful predictions is a regularity exhibited by nature, showing that nature is uniform and hence that induction will work. At a minimum, if random guessing always works, we can induce from the successful guesses that guesses work. So, if there is anything that will work, induction will work. If induction doesn't work, nothing else will either.

Also, I regard the problem of induction as long since solved. It would detract from the focus of my paper to discuss why I think this, but I will refer the reader to page 19 of H. W. B. Joseph's 'An Introduction to Logic' for one approach in the Aristotelian tradition which I think highly promising.

**Popper Implicitly Accepts Induction**

Consider an additional argument dealing with induction. Popper writes, as above:

> Once a hypothesis has been proposed and tested, and has proved its mettle, it may not be allowed to drop out without 'good reason.' A 'good reason' may be, for instance: replacement of the hypothesis by another which is better testable; or the falsification of one of the consequences of the hypothesis. [53-54]

Popper believes that we ought to preserve theories which have passed tests. This means that, when faced with two theories, neither one of which is any more verified than the other (because there is no verification), we should choose the one which has been more severely tested. But this is an admission that passing tests actually renders the theory more believable, more likely to be true - more verified. This is an expression of induction. Unless Popper is willing to accept that no theory is ever more worthy than any other under any circumstances whatsoever (excepting the falsificationism of one or more of them), he implicitly accepts induction.

The point is not that Popper makes a statement contradictory to his project. The point is that this shows up a problem with the project. Were Popper fully consistent, he would admit any unfalsified but falsifiable theory to be just as likely to be true - and hence just as deserving of the attention of scientists - as any other theory. For instance, I theorize that all species have existed since time immemorial, and that Saturnians sometimes zap whole species and eliminate all the remains of some other species, thereby creating the fossil record and the appearance of evolution by natural selection. It's possible to falsify this theory: go to Saturn and check to see if there are any Saturnians with vile schemes up their sleeves. (Ad hoc theses, like 'The Saturnians are invisible', or 'The Saturnians always run away when people come near', would be disallowed.) This is exactly the kind of nonsense which Popper and all those who love science would wish to deny the name of 'science'. But Popper has no principled reason to regard these ravings as any less likely than the neo-Darwinian synthesis. It is testable, and orthodox biology is not verified on grounds that nothing is verified.

**Conventionalism and the Defense of Falsificationism**

We have dealt so far with problems of two kinds: the formal failure of Popper's system to succeed where verificationism had failed, and the lack of necessity for Popper's system given the success of induction. Let us turn to problems arising in the attempt to defend falsificationism. What kind of defense could one give of falsificationism? Is falsificationism proved by induction (a serious contradiction)? Is it an empty tautology (a painful admission)? Or is it a prejudice on a line with witch-doctory?

Popper states: 'My only reason for proposing my criterion of demarcation [falsifiability as scientific method] is that it is fruitful: that a great many points can be clarified and explained with its help.' [55] That is, Popper suspects that, if we accept his theory, science will advance more successfully than if we do not. Carl Menger's assertion that 'Definitions are dogmas; only the conclusions drawn from them can afford us any new insight,' according to Popper,

> ...is certainly true of the definition of the concept 'science.' It is only from the consequences of my definition of empirical science, and from the methodological decisions which depend upon this definition, that the scientist will be able to see how far it conforms to his intuitive idea of the goal of his endeavors. The philosopher too will accept my definition as useful only if he can accept its consequences. [55]

Popper's theory, then, is valid because it will lead to good effects for scientific practice. But how might the theory be justified but by consulting the history of philosophy for evidence? To validate falsificationism along these practical lines, we might make such statements as 'Newton's successful work on optics worked by Popper's method' and 'Einstein's successful theory of special relativity was conceived and tested by Popper's method.' The two statements must be ignored, as they could
only verify, and not falsify, Popper’s theory. Recall the third problem we noted in the section dealing with induction: that Popper, to sustain his anti-inductionism, must confess that no unfalsified theory is ever to be preferred to any other equally unfalsifiable theory regardless of how many tests have been passed by one rather than the other. So Popper’s (presumably unfalsified) theory is no better than any other theory of scientific methodology which one can generate, no matter what historical evidence one can adduce in its favor. According to falsificationism, falsificationism cannot be inductively proved.

What, then, could provide justification of falsificationism? He writes in further elucidation:

We must satisfy [the philosopher] that these consequences of accepting falsificationism as scientific method enable us to detect inconsistencies and inadequacies in older theories of knowledge, and to trace these back to the fundamental assumptions and conventions from which they spring. But we must also satisfy him that our own proposals are not threatened by the same kind of difficulties. This method of detecting and resolving contradictions is applied also within science itself, but it is of particular importance in the theory of knowledge. It is by this method, if any, that methodological conventions might be justified, and might prove their value. (55)

To what method is Popper referring? Since he maintains that his criterion of falsifiability is that method which ‘is applied also within science itself,’ and is comparing conflicts between theories of scientific method with conflicts between theories in science, it seems that this criterion of falsifiability is that by which the criterion of falsifiability is to be evaluated, circularly.

But things are even worse. Note Popper’s current situation: he is proposing a method for science which cannot be proved or justified in any way; for which there is nothing which recommends; and whose only hold on usefulness is itself. It is here that Popper’s view of his method as a convention becomes applicable to our attack.

Popper claims ‘Methodological rules are here regarded as conventions.’ (53, italics his) ‘What does he mean by ‘convention’? In a different context (discussing ‘basic statements’) he states, ‘Basic statements are accepted as the result of a decision or agreement; and to that extent they are conventions.’ (106) This suggests that ‘that which is accepted by decision or agreement’ is what Popper means by convention. There is a certain arbitrariness implied. We think of eating three meals a day as a convention; we could as easily have elected to eat four. But that we (at least try to) eat a certain amount of food every day is not a convention; there is a natural necessity which transcends any mere agreement about how many meals to eat.

Such conventions as falsificationism ‘might be described as the rules of the game of empirical science.’ (53) He continues: [Methodological rules] differ from the rules of pure logic rather as do the rules of chess, which few would regard as part of pure logic: seeing that the rules of pure logic govern transformations of linguistic formulae, the result of such an inquiry into the rules of chess could be entitled ‘The Logic of Chess,’ but hardly ‘Logic’ pure and simple. (Similarly, the result of an inquiry into the rules of the game of science - that is, of scientific discovery - may be entitled ‘The Logic of Scientific Discovery.’) (53)

The point here is that Popper is calling falsificationism a ‘convention’, accepted ‘by decision or agreement’, the ‘rules of the game’. This all implies a lack of any sort of natural necessity or in fact anything whatsoever that recommends the theory.

Paul Feyerabend, in Against Method, states Galileo’s scientific research as being wildly against Popperian falsifiability, since he had to adopt a great many ad hoc hypotheses to make acceptable the Copernican astronomy which he adopted more or less as a matter of faith. Since Galileo was demonstrably making scientific progress, Popper’s method (and method generally) is seen to contradict the requirements of scientific progress. For this and other reasons, the best way to ensure the progress of knowledge is to adopt methodological anarchism and insist on no method; any means of pursuing knowledge, whether it be Popperian falsifiability, Baconian induction, Christian revelation, or sheer witch-doctory, is equally valid.

I claim that this is totally consistent with Popper’s position, despite the protestations of both Feyerabend and Popper. If we do not defend falsificationism by induction, and also do not apply falsificationism to itself as sole justification, we are left with the simple declaration that falsificationism is a convention. And conventions are, as Popper wrote, ‘...accepted as the result of a decision or agreement...’ (106) Since there is no prior appeal behind the agreement, there is no problem grounding falsifiability as much as anything can be grounded; remember that falsifiability ‘might be described as the rules of the game of empirical science.’ (53) There is no particular reason to play science rather than witch-doctery; indeed, ‘Although logic may perhaps set up criteria for
deciding whether a statement is testable, it certainly is not concerned with the question whether anyone exerts himself to test it. (54) Since there is no reason to do science rather than revelation, Popper's convention can be accepted perfectly well as the method of those who adopt it, and rejected by those who reject it, with no appeal beyond the conventional decision to accept these rules and play this particular game rather than another.

Let me summarize the arguments of this section. Since falsificationism rejects induction, it cannot call on scientific practice or history to justify itself. It if seeks to act as a theory of methodology just as it maintains theories in science ought to act, and survive if it goes unfalsified and die if it becomes falsified, then 1) the 'justification' is circular, and 2) there is never anything to recommend it as opposed to an alternative unfalsified hypothesis of methodology (as per the final argument in the section on induction). Since there can be no argument for or even about falsificationism, it is lucky that Popper regards it as a convention. This provides a secure, albeit rather pointless, grounding for his theory.

The catastrophe for the dignity of science becomes even more apparent when we are reminded that Popper believes that science is and has always been falsificationist. Since science, for him, is falsificationist, and, as a consequence of his views, falsificationism is an arbitrary convention, science is an arbitrary convention.

Note on Works Cited:
All the quotes from Popper are from his Logic of Scientific Discovery published by Routledge. The quotes from Hempel are from his paper on 'The Empiricist Criterion of Meaning', reprinted in the Free Press collection Logical Positivism, edited by A. J. Ayer. The argument from Hans Reichenbach about the success of induction is from a chapter on "The Confirmation of Scientific Hypotheses" by John Earman and Wesley C. Salmon in the Introduction to the Philosophy of Science, by the Department of History and Philosophy of Science of the University of Pittsburgh, published by Prentice Hall. The argument by Paul Feyerabend is drawn from his book Against Method published by Verso. The argument that falsificationism implicitly rests on induction, or else accepts as scientific any theory however wild, is not original to me. However, it's an 'around-the-campire' argument. I believe that it is discussed one of the papers in the Open Court volume on Karl Popper in the Library of Living Philosophers, in which Popper is supposed to have admitted that he allowed a 'whiff of induction'. Unfortunately, I have no access to that volume or inclination to read all of it to see whether the argument is actually in it. As always, an argument must stand on its own merits. H. W. B. Joseph's 'Introduction to Logic' is, so far as I know, out of print, but I recommend it highly.
May God have mercy on our cosmopolitan soul;
The virtue of self-actualization lingers in this, my work.
There, that mine seat, even now you learn in anticipation,
Hoping aesthetics will grant you support.
Rather demean you the tax of weight?
It is you my people hate.
There is too much tableness in this room.
Accosted fatigues fashioned this look, see?
A perpetual plane... 'tis the work of a buffoon.
My soul! My blood bled fabric.
What do they know?
The day Christ overturned the tables I cried.
A Carpenter o'erthrowing the worm-wood the week before he died.
I'll bet He made good furniture,
That Lebanon by him did shake.
And e'en now His footstool boys
In the resurrection's wake.
By God, would I to make a several single seat.
To chorne the thirty some old master makers I e'er did greet.
And know beauty... It is no here in design.
People of the sofa today are quite sadly, disinclined.
So much so, I weep.
May my tears the seal yet stain.
The makers of the furniture died not in vain.